

3 Helpful Filters to Discern Your Specific Calling

We spend a great deal of time in ministry talking about our *calling*. I was called to children's ministry out of Bible college. My calling then shifted to youth ministry, then to teaching ministry and currently to disability ministry. But what does this actually mean? Did God keep changing His mind about my career? Was I really terrible at my previous ministry positions and have finally found a position that fits my strengths?

I have worked with countless people over the years who are desperately seeking God's calling for their lives. Ultimately, there is only one calling: to live a life that brings glory to God. This might happen through sports, writing, parenting or vocational ministry. What matters is that, according to 1 Corinthians 10:31, we do everything for the glory of God.

However, we are each called to specific spheres of influence and no, I don't believe God changes His mind concerning our influence. Rather, our calling is flexible according to several factors. Over my years in ministry, the following three components have been a wonderful filter through which I determine where I should serve, and I hope they might help you as well.

Skills: I feel that within the Christian community, we often overlook skills, saying if we are called to serve we shouldn't be stopped by whether we are the best fit. While this is true when it comes to meeting an immediate need, I can tell you that you do not want me serving as a long-term counselor, the overseer of the benevolence fund or many other church ministries for which I simply do not have the skill-set. We need to serve with excellence (not perfection), and God has provided each of us with areas where we are a "10." Finding

those areas is a great start to determining our calling.

Passion: Passion is an essential component of calling. God will not ask us to serve long-term in a position that drains the life from us. That would be detrimental not only to ourselves, but to those we are serving. Yes, there are seasons of serving outside our passion to meet a need, but ministry calling should fire you up and fuel your passion, not suck the life out of you. What keeps you up at night? What do you hear on the news or from friends that deeply moves your heart? What would you do every day even if you were never paid for it? Ask yourself these questions to help identify your passion.

Opportunity: It is extremely difficult to engage in your calling if there are no open doors to walk through. When I transitioned from children's ministry to youth ministry, it was not because I was tired of children's ministry. Rather, a door opened for youth ministry and as I prayed and considered the opportunity, my excitement and passion grew. Be encouraged that your time might be better spent seeking the open doors God has already placed in your life instead of attempting to knock down the locked door in front of you.

So, what now? I encourage you to create some sort of chart that highlights your skills, your passions and the opportunities before you. Spend some time in prayer, then jump in, serve well and allow God to shape your calling in the midst of your work. He is faithful, He has plans and dreams for you, and He will call you to a position where your skills, your passions and your opportunities come together in perfect harmony. {eoa}

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