



#Called
Camilla Klockars

called .

Introduction:

Welcome to a five week long course on finding and understanding your God-given calling! It is my prayer that the teaching will help you respond to God's purpose and plan for your life. You are gifted and valuable, created by God. He has a plan and a desire to reach this world with His good news, His message of salvation and restoration in Jesus. You are needed in this. May He give you grace to see it!

You can study this material alone or together with some friends. The questions in the end of every chapter are there to challenge you to think, to pray and to act.

God bless you!

Camilla Klockars



*Calling starts
with willingness
and readiness.*

Week one: Basics about the calling.

The foundation

In a world where it is important to “be somebody” or “become somebody”, every child of God has a great advantage and starting-point. We are all loved and highly valued by God. We don’t need to prove anything to anyone, we don’t need to be ashamed of who we are, we never need to belittle ourselves for any reason. Instead, we start in and from the Father’s love. We are His sons and daughters, His royal priesthood, called to serve Him in joy and with love. God is not wondering whether you have the x-factor or not. You are created in His image, you are creative like Him, full of gifts and potential. Now the question is: How can you serve Him to the best of your ability, because that is what you were created for. *“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again”.*

It starts with willingness and readiness.

Throughout the years, God’s calling has been sent out and people all over the earth have responded. Isaiah, the prophet, is a good example. God revealed Himself to Isaiah in a powerful way and he saw Him high and lifted up on a throne in heaven. In that moment Isaiah heard God say: *“Whom shall I send, who will go for us?”* It was a general question but Isaiah heard it and took it seriously. He, kind of, raised his hand and responded willingly: *“Here I am, send me!”* Isaiah, in other words, heard the cry from the heart of God and answered. He was willing and ready. From there his calling took off.

Jesus is an example of the same willingness. Before being sent as Savior to this earth, He says to His Father: *“I have come to do your will, my God”.* His plan was not to make

*All callings start when we
are willing to serve.*



something great of His life, He had no ambitions of His own. He stood before His loving Father and said: *"I will do whatever you have for me"*. This is all that it takes and this willingness to serve is something Jesus continues to underline during His earthly ministry. He says: *"...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve"*.

When we say to God *"I am willing to serve"*, we tell Him that we are ready for anything. No task is too small, too unimportant or too big. A servant is ready for whatever. This is where it all starts. Your attitude determines your altitude.

God does "nothing" without us.

Yes, God is omnipotent (He is almighty), omniscient (He knows everything), omnipresent (He is present everywhere), but He has chosen to work through Christ's body on earth, which is the church. If we sit and wait for Him to do things He already has told *us* to do, we will be greatly disappointed in the end and miss the train. Our lives will pass without us doing what we were meant to do. In His Word, He has given us clear instructions about what He expects from His church. The question is: Do we, like Isaiah, hear the calling and respond?

Read Ex 3:7-10. In the story we see God fully aware of the fact that the Israelites in Egypt are suffering terribly. He knows every detail of the situation. He tells Moses that He has heard the people cry for help. He also says that He has decided to do something about it. But then comes the big surprise. God says: *"I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians...So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."* Do you see it? God says *He* will do something about the situation and then He continues: *I am sending you*. I am sending *you* to them, to deliver them and

them and to lead them out of Egypt, into the promised new land.

God had a plan and it was connected to a promise: He would set the people free. His plan included Moses. He needed a man who would be willing to be His vessel. He would not do it on His own, He needed a person, a human being. In the same way, God has a plan to reach out to this world, but He continually needs people to be His hands, feet and mouth. Otherwise the job will be left undone.

Your calling is always connected to others' callings.

The good news is that none of us needs to do this on our own. When Paul, the apostle, writes to one of his new churches, he explains that every believer who has been baptized into Christ, is baptized into a body. Through baptism, every believer in Jesus belongs to a fellowship and that fellowship is the family of God. This means that we are no lone rangers or soloists. Everything we are and do is connected to the flock. The church is not a building that we come to and go from, the church is a body of which we always will be a part. We are called to live and function together with others in the body of Christ. This is a great gift and a real opportunity! We don't have to be strong on our own, we are created to function in teams. I read somewhere that the word TEAM stands for **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore. Being part of a team releases potential in you that you never thought you had. Your input in and through a team will be much stronger than if you tried to do the work on your own.

Paul explains this deeper. He says, even if you would say: *"I am not a hand"*, in other words, "I am not like him or her, I don't belong", you are still needed. Likewise, we cannot say or think: "I don't need him or her". We are always connected, baptized to

*Your calling is always
connected to other's callings.*




belong to one another. When the different parts learn to function together, much more power is released than if we would be soloing on our own.

We also need to remember that if 75% of the body of Christ is “sitting”, simply watching when others are doing things, we get a dysfunctional body. We might also end up in an unhealthy admiration of a few people and their gifts. Also, when we make too big a deal of the words “clergy” and “laypeople”, we might easily make people think some are meant to sit and some are meant to serve. Peter underlines that we all belong to a “*royal priesthood*”. Think about how it feels if one part on your own physical body is not working as it should? All parts in the human body have a purpose and they are needed, including those that are small, seemingly unimportant. They have a reason for being there. And so it is with the body of Christ.

The main purpose of your and my calling is to glorify God.

Finding our calling is not about becoming famous. The church is not meant to be a platform where we admire people and what they can do. As children of God we are *all* here to glorify Him. Like the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei discovered in the seventeenth century we too have to realize: It is not the earth or I that is the center of everything. Everything is not supposed to revolve around me. But in the same way as the earth revolves around the sun, we are called to be turned towards God and our hearts turned towards Him in worship. He is the center. Our eternal position and corporate calling is to be in a place and position of worship before Him: “*The heavens declare the glory of God*”. And Isaiah, the prophet, underlines that we are all created to glorify Him: “*...the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise*”. When we, the disciples of Jesus, bear much fruit, we bring great joy to the Father in

A person is holding a bouquet of pink peonies and greenery. The person's arm, which has a tattoo, is visible in the foreground. In the background, their feet wearing orange sandals are visible on a wooden deck. The text is overlaid in the top right corner.

*The main purpose
of your calling is to
glorify God.*

heaven and He is glorified, Jesus says: *“This is to my Father’s glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples”*. Also, wherever the Holy Spirit, our power in ministry, is poured out, He seeks to bring glory to and shine on Jesus.

You are accountable to God for your (not anyone else’s) life and calling.

We are accountable before God for our lives. Our focus should always be on how we run our own race and not so much on others. Am I doing what God created me to do? Brian Houston puts it like this: *“A career is what you are paid to do, a calling is what you are made to do”*. Sometimes we will find our calling where we have our career, sometimes the calling will extend beyond that. Wherever we are placed in society, we are called to serve God and to zoom in: How does He want to use me where He has placed me? Sometimes people spend more time watching how others live their lives instead of focusing on their own. It is, of course, always easier to sit in front of the TV and make comments about how the football team is playing, instead of taking your place in a team. But in the kingdom of God, we were never called to be mere spectators and commentators. We were called to serve and involve.

Questions that might help you find your calling.

Finally, to help you as you seek your own calling, think about the following two questions:

What am I passionate about?

Where do I see my passion changing others?

See John 16:13-14. John 15:8

See 2 Cor. 5:9-10 and Rom. 14:7-8, 11-12.



*Serving together,
protecting each other.*

Week two:
Equipped for ministry

Serving together, protecting each other

Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and especially chapter four, is, in my opinion, one of the most important chapters in the Bible about the calling and the equipment God has for us. Paul starts with some great values in the beginning: *"Live a life worthy of your calling...bearing with one another in love...make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit, through the bond of peace."* The apostle talks about love, unity and peace. They can all be linked to our relationships with one another. Since church in practice is all about relationships – with God and with one another – we can be quite sure that our enemy will do his best to attack them. The temptation to get frustrated with one another, to give up and draw back will most likely be there at some point. In the book of Nehemiah, where the people of God were working together as a team, rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, we find a good example of this. As the people were constructing the walls, they were attacked by enemies who spoke negatively about them and their project. They solved the problem by working with one hand and carrying their weapon - to protect themselves and one another - with the other hand. This is a good reminder for us too. Let's work and protect each other and our relationships – at the same time!
Eph. 4:1-3.



*You are a gift
and you have gifts.*

to pioneer and have a heart for new fellowships for new people. Some are great teachers with the ability to present eternal truths in an understandable way. Some are soul-winning evangelists with a blessed ability to reach out to new people. Some have a strong prophetic and visionary calling. They are a voice from God into the church and the society. Unfortunately, we sometimes fail to see these differences because we place the label “pastor” on everyone that has a so called full-time ministry.

The primary calling of these five ministries is to train and equip God’s people, not to perform nice speeches on Sundays and have a cup of church-coffee afterwards. They are meant to raise us up in our ministry so that the whole church becomes effective and focused in its’ work for the kingdom. In the early church these five offices (apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor, evangelist) were travelling ministries, giving their input in many churches. That is probably what apostle Paul had in mind when he said: *“All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas... - all are yours”*. In other words, all these persons were gifts to the whole body of Christ, the early church of that time, and all were needed in their own way.

The five-fold ministries express, in a sense, the fullness of Christ. He covered all the five areas in His ministry. And His church, of which we are part, will together cover all the areas. Therefore, you can look at each one of these five as a headline. One way of finding your gift and your place in the body is to look at each headline (see picture) and ask yourself: Is this an area where I fit in? 1 Cor 3:21-22.

You are a gift and have gifts

“He gave gifts to his people”. God did not only give us gifts. He gave us one another as gifts: you are a gift to me, I am a gift to you. You are a gift to the church, I am a gift to the church. He gave us gifts to serve with, yes, but we ourselves are gifts to one another as well – we do not just have a gift. This is something to really practice as you look at your sisters and brothers in the church: This fellow is a gift to me, I am a gift to him. How can I be a gift in this friend’s life? What does God want to give me through this person? Let’s be open-minded and see beyond what we normally see. Didn’t Paul say: *“So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new creation is here!”*.

The five-fold ministries

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers”. God gave His church five different types of ministries to make the people of God, the whole church, ready, mature and equipped for service. He did not just give us “pastors”, as we often call it, but five different ministries with different types of gifts. In other words, your pastors are *gifts* to you. Some pastors are real shepherds with a protective heart for the flock. They nurture and keep the people safe. Other pastors are apostolic in their way of thinking and how they function. They have a passion to

pioneer and have a heart for new fellowships for new people. Some are great teachers with the ability to present eternal truths in an understandable way. Some are soul-winning evangelists with a blessed ability to reach out to new people. Some have a strong prophetic and visionary calling. They are a voice from God into the church and the society. Unfortunately, we sometimes fail to see these differences because we place the label “pastor” on everyone that has a so called full-time ministry.

The primary calling of these five ministries is to train and equip God’s people, not to perform nice speeches on Sundays and have a cup of church-coffee afterwards. They are meant to raise us up in our ministry so that the whole church becomes effective and focused in its’ work for the kingdom. In the early church these five offices (apostle, prophet, teacher, pastor, evangelist) were travelling ministries, giving their input in many churches. That is probably what apostle Paul had in mind when he said: *“All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas... - all are yours”*. In other words, all these persons were gifts to the whole body of Christ, the early church of that time, and all were needed in their own way.

The five-fold ministries express, in a sense, the fullness of Christ. He covered all the five areas in His ministry. And His church, of which we are part, will together cover all the areas. Therefore, you can look at each one of these five as a headline. One way of finding your gift and your place in the body is to look at each headline (see picture) and ask yourself: Is this an area where I fit in? 1 Cor 3:21-22.

“...to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”. Paul puts the focus in an interesting place. When we “come to church” (although, to be honest, we can’t come to anything that we are continually part of), the focus should not be on the “platform”, but on the body of Christ. We are there to build each other up, so that *all* can return home edified. This The Greek word for “building up the body” here is the same as in 1 Cor. 14:4 where we read about the gift of tongues and the gift of prophecy and how they build us up, both individually and corporately.

The goal for this training (done by apostles, prophets etc in our lives) should be *“unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature”* in line with the fullness of Christ. Unity in faith is not just about unity in doctrine, but unity in our expectations (how do we expect God to move when we come together), in our walk in faith, in our attitude before God. Maturity speaks of balance and stability, as well as a *readiness to serve and act* and a *right attitude in ministry*. You serve out of love and are inspired and motivated by your calling.

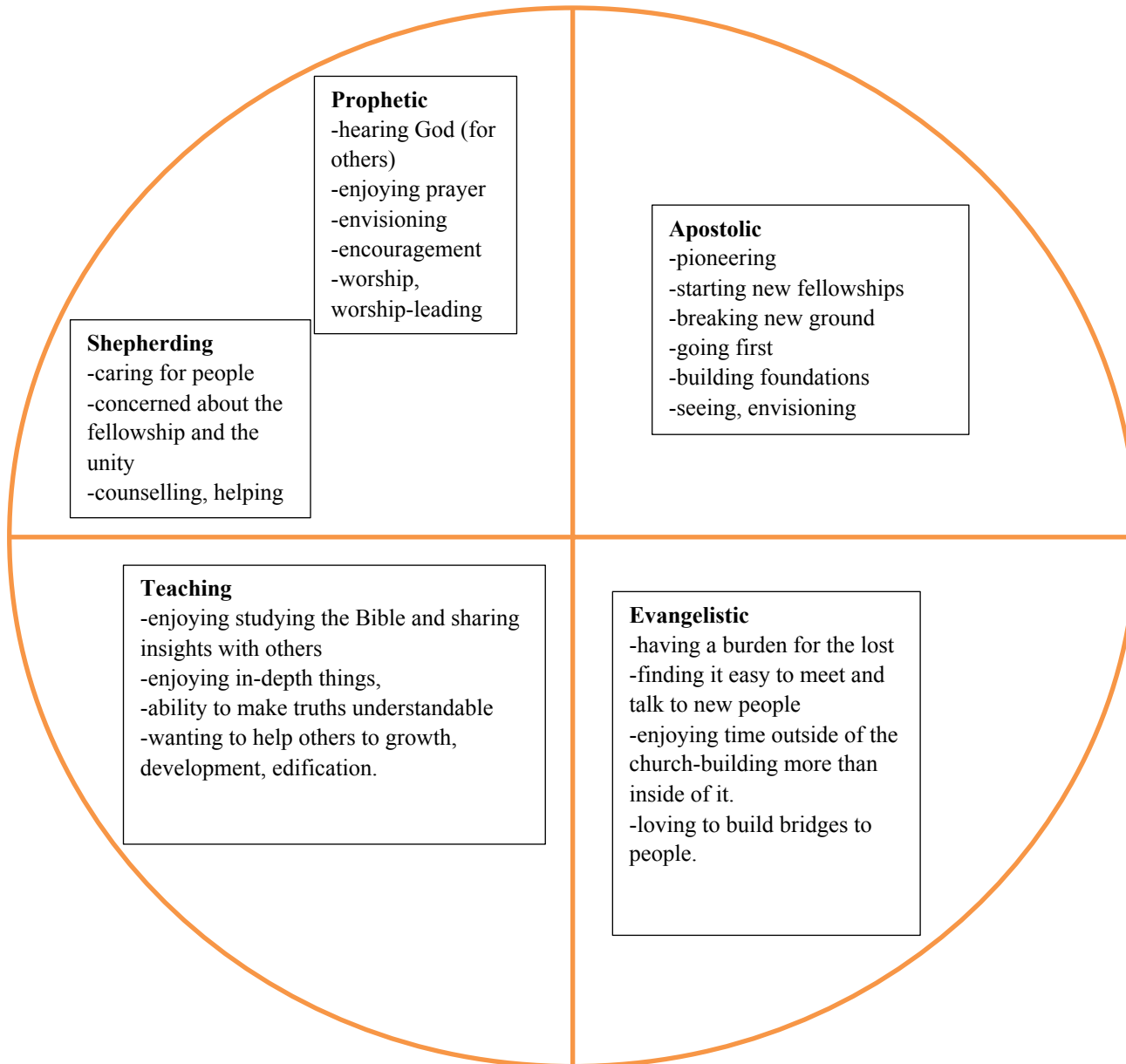
Questions:

When you look at the description of the ministry-gifts (apostle, prophet and so on), where do you fit in?

Have you experienced that relationships in your church were attacked by the enemy?

Was the situation ever solved?

Do you feel that you are equipped in your church or are you mostly just passively sitting and listening?



Prophetic

- hearing God (for others)
- enjoying prayer
- envisioning
- encouragement
- worship, worship-leading

Shepherding

- caring for people
- concerned about the fellowship and the unity
- counselling, helping

Apostolic

- pioneering
- starting new fellowships
- breaking new ground
- going first
- building foundations
- seeing, envisioning

Teaching

- enjoying studying the Bible and sharing insights with others
- enjoying in-depth things,
- ability to make truths understandable
- wanting to help others to growth, development, edification.

Evangelistic

- having a burden for the lost
- finding it easy to meet and talk to new people
- enjoying time outside of the church-building more than inside of it.
- loving to build bridges to people.



Are you hiding or using your gifts?

Week three: Stepping out of the comfort zone

Are you hiding or using your gifts?

Outside the comfort zone – that is where the magic happens. A calling and a gift from God is not a medal to keep in a nice box somewhere or something to simply talk about. The gift will never grow and develop until you start using it. Once you start using it, you can be sure that your gift will expand and become more than it was in the beginning. Remember what Jesus said: “...every branch that does bear fruit he [the Father, who is the gardener] prunes so that it will be even more fruitful”. It is, however, important to see that it is *you* who decide *how, when and if* you are going to step into your calling. You can either hide your gift in the sand, or bring it into the open. No one else can make that decision for you. It is technically possible to live all your life without ever daring to step out and begin to use what you have. Jesus talked about this in the parable about the talents and He also addressed it as He shared the story about the lamp hidden under a basket. If you always have been very silent, shy and careful, *it will* be a challenge to dare to step out and use your gift. Also, whenever you are challenged by God into a new area of ministry *it will* be tough to step out of your comfort zone, even if you are experienced in other areas. When I, some years ago, felt the call to start to go out in the streets to share the gospel, it felt terrible in the beginning. I was so afraid! But the more I did it, the easier it became (I am still a bit afraid). Please don't wait until someone “discovers” you and your gift – tell your pastor what

you have and what you would like to do! Keep eyes and ears open: Are there others in the church with the same or similar kind of gift – maybe you can work together, start a team? You might come from a church-background where this was not possible, but let me make it as clear as I can: We believe *all* parts of the body of Christ, every member, plays an important role in the kingdom and can make a difference. We *need your gift* in order to function well.

Led by fear or led by the Spirit?

Those who are led by the Spirit are sons and daughters of God, Paul writes. However, it is also possible for a believer to be led by something else than the Spirit of God. One person might be led by fear (this is quite common, to be honest), another by bitterness, unforgiveness, ambition, pride or something else. God wants us to be led by His Spirit and to move in our gifts led by Him. If we are led by fear, we might never dare to do anything with our gift. It will always be “the wrong time” or “not the right situation”. In this way, we might be digging our calling into the ground and maybe keep it there for years. Don’t allow shyness to win in your life! The latin word for the verb “to be motivated” is “movere”, which means “*to set someone into motion*”. The Spirit of God wants to set you into motion, to motivate and inspire you into new things. Jesus says: “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*”.

Rom. 8:14, Acts 1:8.

*Those who are led by the Spirit
are sons and daughters of God.*



All people need encouragement.



Encouragement

Encouragement helps people to take steps with their gifts. Lack of encouragement and good, positive feedback can have devastating consequences on us.

Encouragement should be like a yeast that saturates the whole church. *All people* need encouragement and *all of us* can give and should learn to give encouragement. None of us is so professional or experienced that he or she doesn't need encouragement. When the atmosphere of a church is filled with encouragement and a positive, uplifting spirit, it becomes like a bathtub filled with warm water. In that atmosphere it is easier for people to dare to step out in boldness. Sometimes we sit and expect that someone else should encourage us. However, we can take the first steps and be someone who encourages others. A good ground rule is: You can *never* encourage anyone too much. Never.

Imagine a church that sees it as one of its' goals to develop *a culture* of encouragement and positive feedback. Jesus uses the picture of a yeast working through a dough when He talks about the kingdom powerfully influencing its' surroundings. We need a lot of encouragement put in practice in order to see a whole fellowship saturated by it.

See fex Hebr. 3:13, 10:25, 1 Thess. 5:14.

Matth. 13:33.

Hold on, don't give up.

One of the major problems in our society today is lack of faithfulness. We are simply prone to give up too early. People take off when things are not fun anymore, when the costs are too high or when they get bored and want to try something else. If we, as a church, are to build something lasting, each one of us needs to hold on to what we've started and not jump onto something else instead. Of course there sometimes might be reasons to choose another path, simply because you are in the wrong place or because a new season is about to begin in your life. But be sure to check with yourself why you feel like taking off. Are you simply bored or really, truly in the wrong place? Things seldom become ready fast. Endurance is what we need in order to finish what we've started, the Bible says. It takes time to develop fellowships and teams and it takes time to see a breakthrough in an area. Hold on and serve faithfully where you've started. Receive encouragement and give encouragement – it helps to keep the water in the bathtub warm.

Questions:

Think about it: Are there times when you have been led by fear and not by the Spirit of God? Do you honestly feel that you are led by the Spirit of God on a daily basis? Has anyone ever challenged you to step out of your comfort zone?

Hebr. 10:36 and Rom. 15:5.



*Hold on,
don't give up!*

We are part of a bigger picture.



Week four: Your calling and the big picture

We're part of a bigger picture.

In an individualistic world, people easily see themselves as islands. It is a challenge to see things from a community perspective. The focus often falls on *me, myself and I*. I try to make something out of *my* life. This is far away from kingdom mentality. Jesus shows us that we are part of something very different. We are *kingdom-people*, we are part of God's people and we have a role to play in a bigger picture: "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations*". People have served God before us and, unless Jesus comes back soon, people will serve God after us. The same vision unites us and we will always flourish with others.

In our local church we have summarized Christ's vision for the church in four points. We have done this to make our corporate call clearer for ourselves and for those that visit us. For us, step number one is: *Welcome home*. We want to become effective in helping people find Jesus as their personal Savior, to "come home" to their heavenly Father. We also want to welcome them into our local church. Step number two is: *Be rooted*. We want to help people establish roots in their faith and in the fellowship. This because we know that no plant grows without roots. We develop roots when we make friends with one another, do things together, serve together, have fun together.



Step number three is: *Be equipped*. We want to help people be equipped and trained to serve Jesus with their gifts and God-given abilities. Step number four is: *Be sent*. We want to send people out to serve Jesus – all over the earth. We believe people are with us to be trained and then sent out. Mission is the vision. In 2008, as we were right in the beginning of a re-planting process of our church, one of the most meaningful, encouraging prophetic words that was given to us was a picture, a sequence from the movie Pearl Harbor from 2001. In that sequence, the Americans sent B-25 planes to Japan, planes that had been emptied of all unnecessary stuff and made as light as possible. The planes had a specific mission. We felt that God wants our church to be like an airport where people fly in, are emptied of all unnecessary stuff in their lives, are re-filled and equipped to take off for their God-given mission in the world.

Eph. 4:11-12.

I attended a conference for Free church pastors in Finland and one of the colleagues from the Pentecostal church shared this picture with me, as they prayed for me. We have tested the word and seen the good fruit of it many times.



*Run you race fixing
your eyes on Jesus.*

Running your race.

When apostle Paul summarizes his life, he uses the picture of a race to describe his life and his God-given calling. He writes to one of his spiritual children, Timothy: *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”*.

When you are part of a team and you run a race together with others, there are several things to keep in mind. First of all, you need to be ready to start running when you get the baton. If your focus is somewhere else, you will lose time in the start. In other words, when it is our time to respond to God’s calling, may we have ears that hear. You also need to run in a focused way. You can’t be looking in all directions as you run your race, being distracted by everything you see. You need to do your job. The author of the letter to the Hebrews puts it like this: *“...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus”*. If I am too focused on how others run their race, or if I have too many distractions that keep me from running, I will miss my race.

2 Tim. 4:7.

12:1-2.

The three seasons of your calling.


The way I see it, every race or every calling has three seasons: *A season of preparation, a season of ministry or service, and a season of transmission.* The seasons might flow into one another and should not be seen as strictly separated from each other. You might want to mirror your life in these seasons and ask yourself: In which season am I right now? Am I doing what I ought to be doing?

Preparation. Everyone who wants to run the race that God has set before him needs to *prepare*. Preparation means getting ready, shaping up. If I intend to climb Mount Everest, I can't just pack my backpack tomorrow and jump on the first possible plane to Nepal. I need to start to prepare. During my life as a pastor, I have met people that have clearly expressed that they have a calling. This is always such a joy! But sometimes, for some reason, things seem to distract some of these people from taking the calling seriously. They know that they are called, they even express it, but they don't start to prepare. When you prepare you study, you seek God seriously concerning the calling, you look for mentoring or advice from someone that has run the same type of race that you will run, you try to learn from others. If you want to do a good job, you always need to prepare well. And if you want to continue to do a good job, the preparation and learning never ends. If preparation is what you should be focusing on right now, then ask yourself: What do I need to do? What is my plan for learning and studying? Whom can I learn with and from?

Ministry. The second season in the calling is *the actual ministry* and time when you run fully the race that is yours. If that is where you are now, go for it! Don't let anyone or anything stop you.

Transmission. The third season is *transmission*, the time when your mission is transferred to someone else. The most sensitive part of a race run together with others is the baton-changing. You easily drop the baton when it is supposed to go from one hand to another. In our churches we have not always thought through how we should change batons well. Sometimes we take it for granted that God will make sure there is a person that picks it up when I am through. I think we should be better prepared than that. Paul worked on his spiritual son Timothy and trained him for service. In the same way you and I should live with eyes and ears open to see if there are spiritual sons and daughters we have the responsibility to raise up and encourage. If we are really good worship-leaders or cell-group leaders, we will not just lead our team well, but make sure that there is a small tribe of future leaders learning from us, taking their own place when it is time for that.

All of us can have disciples that learn with and from us - you don't have to be a pastor or a full-time worker for that. Shortly after Paul had become a believer in Jesus, the Bible mentions his "disciples" that helped him in a tricky situation. In other words, he did not have to wait until he was an old, experienced man until he could have a team of disciples that he raised up. Likewise, we can give some of our time to head-hunting, encouraging potential where we see it, actively praying like Jesus exhorted us: "Ask the



the harvest to send out workers". To be faithfully doing your job until the end does not have to mean that you die with your boots on, but that you have transferred the mission to as many as possible during your life-time and the work continues after you have run your race.
Matth. 9:38.

In which season are you right now?

Timing

The big picture also tells us something important about timing. We often say “timing is everything” and mean that it is crucial to be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing. To me, one of the most important scriptures on timing is found in John’s gospel. Jesus talks about the harvest, i.e. people that are ready to receive the gospel, and says: *“Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest”*. It is interesting that Jesus says: The fields are ripe *now*. Our focus should, in other words, be on “now”, not on “later”. So often we say “we need to pray for revival” and we wait for something “big” that will come in the future. In our minds, this big revival often involves hundreds or even thousands of people being touched by the gospel. Jesus has a totally different approach. When He says these words about timing and the harvest, He has just come out of a conversation with a woman who has been deeply touched by His words and had the revival of her life. One woman. One life that has been changed. That is harvest to Jesus. You see, what happens with one person can lead to the revival of many others: *“Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me everything I ever did’”*.

John. 4:35.

John 4:39.



*We need to get ready
for God's now.*

If we spend our life waiting for this big thing some preacher somewhere has prophesied about, we might be missing the train. The harvest is now, Jesus says. Therefore, we need to prepare and get ready for this God's "now".

Questions:

Are you running your God-given race or just living your life?

In which of the three seasons described in the chapter are you now? Are you doing what you ought to be doing?

*Be bold and
coraungeous.*



Week five: Leaving insecurity, serving with a steady heart.

A new mind-set.

The people of Israel that left Egypt and headed towards Canaan is in many ways a great example for us, the body of Christ. There are many similarities between us. We, too, are leaving a place of captivity. We leave the bondage of sin with all its' consequences, like fear, anxiety, shame and insecurity. We too are called to inherit a new land as a new people with a new identity: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"*. I wonder if we sometimes underestimate the huge change of mind-set that had to take place in the minds of the Israelites as they started to approach Canaan? They had been slaves for generations. They had seen their fathers and grand-fathers in slavery. They were used to oppression. They could see nothing but bondage and slave-masters in their future. They were not used to taking their place, initiating new things, they had only seen and experienced obedience out of fear and anxiety. They were living inside of a very narrow box. And suddenly these people were supposed to inherit and conquer a new land.

I don't know if you've heard it before, but I believe there is much truth in it: *"It is easier to take a people out of Egypt, than to take Egypt out of a people"*. A huge change in our way of thinking has to take place as we leave the old and step into the new where we boldly serve God. Moses experienced this, as he tried to paint the vision of freedom before the eyes of the Israelites: *"Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and harsh labor"*. The road from slave to child, from fear to freedom, is not always that short. It might take some time to leave

oppression and become a person who influences others. But what a joy it is to leave meaninglessness in life and see God-given purpose, value and destiny! The Israelites had been a people without a calling. They got a calling that probably was way bigger than their minds could handle. No wonder God had to say *“Be bold and very courageous”* to Joshua, their leader, over and over again and many, many years later, in order to convince him and the people to be strong.

When the apostle and spiritual father Paul instructs his son in the faith, young Timothy, he reminds him to fan into flame the gift that is in him. And he tells him to be bold and self-controlled, not timid or led by fear. We are called to serve almighty God, not in timidity or a wrong kind of carefulness, but with strength and God-given authority. We have nothing to be ashamed of and have no reason to move in fear. Jesus said: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations”*.

Responding in obedience to God.

A calling is not a “reward”, or something that makes church-life a little less boring. A calling is the voice and will of God speaking into our life. He has an agenda, a salvation plan for this earth. He, the King of kings and Lord of Lord, is speaking. How can we but respond in obedience. The Hebrew word for *“to hear”* (shama) is the same as *“to obey”*. In other words, when we really hear God, in a true, biblical sense, it also means that we obey Him. We have heard Him only when we have taken a step of obedience. If there is no action from our side, we really haven’t heard, have we? See Josh. 1:1-9, 2 Tim. 1:6-7, Matth. 28:18-19.



Holding on to the calling.

As we say yes to our calling, we take responsibility for something we have heard or understood from God. We are not just “playing” called. We decide to walk in a certain direction, until we have fulfilled our task or until God shows us a new direction. Once one of my pastor-friends said: *“Sometimes we fail to take steps and act based on decisions we have made. We make a good decision to do something, but then we hesitate, stop and end up doing nothing”*. Therefore, it might be good to hook up with a coach or a mentor that can check up on you, on a regular basis: Are you holding onto your calling, fulfilling your task? Or are you walking in fear or just day-dreaming?

See 1 Peter 3:15-17 and Neh. 2:18.

Hold on the calling.



Serving with passion.

Jesus served His Father passionately. This is the word used about Him as He drove out those who abused His father's house, the house of prayer. Jesus did not serve the Father with a lukewarm, indifferent heart. The original Greek word for the passion Jesus expressed in the temple is "zelos". It is an onomatopoeic word, a word that imitates a sound associated with the objects or actions it refers to. In other words, Jesus was truly on fire and passionately upset in the situation in the temple. He was ablaze with the consuming fire of God.

The early church was a very passionate, fervent church: *"As for us, we can not help speaking about what we have seen or heard"*. The same kind of passion can flow through our lives as well and be our inner motivation, our fire, when we are set free from insecurity and fear. "Egypt" truly needs to be uprooted from our minds.

Matth. 21:12-13.

Heb. 12:29.

Acts 4:20.



Serve with passion.

*We are called to excellence,
to give and to do the best we can.*



Doing our very best.

God wants us to fully live out our calling and to do our very best in it. This is one way of showing that we love and serve Him wholeheartedly. We are called to *excellence*, to give and do the best that we can. Daniel, the prophet, stood out from everyone else *“by his exceptional qualities”*, the Bible tells. He was gifted but He also did his very best. Or, as the book of Proverbs puts it: *“Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank”*. This is exactly what happened to Daniel. He was brought before kings because he was skilled and served wholeheartedly and with excellence.

I would like to challenge you to give God the best of your life! Give Him your time, your abilities, your passion and your love. He is worthy of it all. Trust Him – He will help you find your gift and your calling: *“...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”*.

Questions:

Do you agree that it is easier to “take someone out of Egypt than to take Egypt out of him/her”? Has Egypt been taken out of your life?

Are there times when you only “heard” something from God or through teaching in your church without “obeying”?

Dan. 6:3, 22:29, Phil. 1:6.

“This is a course in line with its’ slogan "called-equipped-sent". I was equipped with valuable spiritual knowledge and with great fellowship. After the course, we formed our “Avocado-team” that serves free lunch every Friday in our church. These Fridays have been a big blessing, not only for the people who come to enjoy lunch and fellowship, but also for us who have been serving”. Ti.

“The course was very inspiring with good and clear teaching. Thanks to it I rediscovered my gift/calling”.

Miia.

“The course gave me fresh, new perspective on calling and ministry”. Risto.

“It was an encouraging course. Good teaching. I realized that I, too, have a calling from God”. Maria.

Layout: Maria Jyrkkä

Pictures: Unsplash

Published by: Metsku, Kokkola, Finland.

www.hometonightchurch.fi