



Calling's Way

The Art Of Guiding
Others To Live Their
Unique Mission

by Pete Richardson



A MADE FOR MORE RESOURCE

Callings Way: The Art Of Guiding Others To Live Their Unique Mission

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ISBN: 978-0-9889311-0-7

Distributed via Exponential Resources

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Introduction

My turn was up. I would fly to Palm Springs, CA and spend two days with Tom Paterson talking about myself. I was not excited. I had never met him before. I had been traveling a lot. The thought of spending three days away from my family talking about myself to a person I'd never met before made my gut heavy. I wanted to be home with my family. And honestly, fear was chirping in my ear. I was afraid I might discover something I didn't want to know. But this was a gift from the board of Promise Keepers to its leadership. With clenched fists and all, I would take it.

I flew into LAX. Arriving at the rental car counter, the agent offered me a free upgrade to a convertible Ford Mustang. "You're going to Palm Springs," he said, "then you've got to have a convertible." I took it. With the top down the evening air was unusually clear and felt refreshing as I descended into the valley of Palm Springs. The sun had set, and the scene was surreal and majestic when I experienced one of those God-whispering moments. You know, one of those times where you just know that you know that God by his Spirit is engaging your human spirit. "Pete, I have something for you," said the whisper. "I want you to receive it." My clenched-fist attitude relaxed. I would engage the next two days with greater expectation.

Those two days with Tom changed my life. He guided me through his LifePlan process. He affirmed my role and new assignment as a Vice President at Promise Keepers. He led me to discover and own my God-given talents, passions, and burdens for the world. He helped me understand how I am wired, to identify my high contribution zone or sweet spot, that place where I thrive. After a day-and-a-

half of gaining perspective and clarity, we created LifePlans around my personal, family, vocational, church, and community life domains. This LifePlan has helped me navigate unforeseen changes, opportunities, and obstacles for the past twenty years. I constantly review it, update it, adjust it, and renew it. I would be in a very different place in life without it.

The following year, I attended Tom's training class, "The Art Of Facilitating LifePlans." As Tom guided me through the process he, tapped into something deep within me—a desire to guide other people to discover and live their created purpose. I began to use the process to help family, friends, and employees. Word of mouth spread, and they began to refer their family and friends to me. When I left the staff of Promise Keepers in 2000, I integrated LifePlan facilitation into my new practice. Since 1994, I have guided over six hundred individuals through the LifePlan process; people from all walks of life, ages, ethnicities, backgrounds, and geographies. And now I train others to facilitate LifePlans through the Paterson Center. So, when I say that my two days with Tom changed my life... everything changed. Today, during one time or another in almost every workday, I'm using some kind of process that I learned from Tom to engage, guide, and help others as they discover and live their God-created purpose and calling.

I believe that God created each of the 7.1 billion people on earth as individuals—each with a unique set of experiences, talents, passions, and wiring—and each with a specific calling to contribute to His creation in some way. I also believe one of the greatest gifts we can give to a person and to God is to help that person gain clarity regarding God's specific calling for their life. My hope is that this

book inspires you to clarify God's calling on your life as well as helps you guide others to discover and live God's unique calling on their life.

Chapter 1

Calling Defined

When I was in Seminary in the 1980s, the word *calling* was associated with a bad rap. It was tainted by the previous generation. A common storyline had the missionary or pastor-dad neglecting his wife and their kids because he was “called to preach the Gospel.” The world needed him. Too many families took the hit. Wasn’t ministry-man also called to be a husband and father? Vernon Grounds, one of my professors, called it the “Junior Messiah Complex”—*the world needs me, so I’ll leave lesser things like raising the kids to my wife*. So back then, my generation avoided the word *calling*. It’s good to know, however, that words have life cycles too. “Calling” was on the decline then. It’s getting new life now.

Scripture is full of scenarios where God called a person to do or become something. He called Noah to prepare for the mega-flood. He called Abraham to be the father of Israel and Moses to lead the exodus. He called Joshua to enter the Promised Land; Elijah to confront false prophets; Ruth to save the lineage of Israel; David to lead God’s chosen nation; Isaiah to confront leaders gone bad; Esther to call a drifted nation back to God; Jeremiah to confront more leaders gone bad; John the Baptist to prepare for Jesus’ mission to seek and save the lost; the twelve disciples to launch the church; Peter to reach the Jews; Paul to engage the Gentiles. God interrupted each one’s day-to-day routine. Then, he spoke to them, instructing them to do something. Each one answered the call and did it.

Do you think God still call individuals like this? Can a mere man like me presume to know God's call on my life? Does God still jolt the mundane routine in our lives to call and invite, and lure and instruct us to do or become something for His sake?

Why not?

If your boss calls you into their office and asks you to do something for the organization, you do it. When God communicates to a person's human spirit by calling him or her to do or become something specific ,if that person accepts the call, something special is set in motion that becomes a reference point of resolve when the call is tested.

Simply put: Calling is what God wants us to do or become. We can either accept or reject *the call*.

Now let's be clear. There are both general and specific calls from God.

Jesus' invitation, or call, to pursue the way of God's kingdom goes out to everyone. Jesus said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." He told numerous stories about the structure and reality of God's kingdom now on earth: stories of fields with wheat and weeds; of lost pearls and coins; of goats and sheep; of maidens, unmerciful servants, virgins, talents, little children, and vineyards. God's kingdom—a new reality, structure, authority, and spiritual government had entered time and space through him. His kingdom invaded in stealth-like fashion the kingdom of darkness to declare a new day and a new offering for anyone who had open ears and a response of, "Yes!" How to get it? Jesus made it very clear, "No one comes to the Father but through me." And, "I am the way, the truth and the life." This

invitation into a new life with Jesus and God's kingdom extends to everyone. Some accept it while others reject it.

At age nineteen, I clearly heard this call. I had tried living life my way but woke up one morning with a wilted spirit and tired soul. I wanted something different. I opened the phone book and searched under the heading churches, finding a college group meeting that evening. Johnny Square taught that night. I introduced myself after the meeting, "Do you have a minute. I need to talk." Johnny guided me as I recommitted my life to Jesus Christ. My life hasn't been the same since.

This call of Jesus goes out to everyone. It's an invitation to another way of life—to follow him on the path toward life, truth, and freedom. For those who embrace it, life is never the same. When he merges into a person's life story, they are forever different.

We are all called to learn the way of love. If we are married, we're called to learn to love and serve one another. If you are a spouse, you're called to be a loving spouse. If you are a parent, you're called to be a loving parent—providing, protecting, and guiding your children into adulthood. We are called to love our friends, care for the helpless, and be there for our friends and family. These types of "callings" are common-sense callings that require conviction, commitment and practice. To rationalize our way out of these general callings to pursue a more specific calling is...well...self-deception and irresponsible. I've done it. I know others who've done it too. Ultimately, this mindset always backfires and minimizes or destroys the impact of our specific calling.

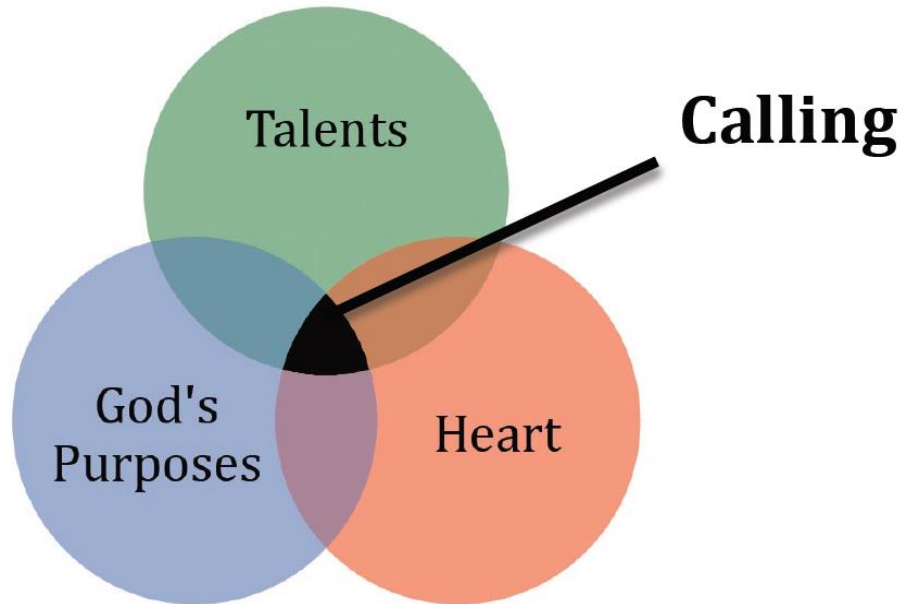
So what is a specific calling? Simply put: It is God's special assignment for you to do something or become something. When God calls a person to do or become something, he always gives them the talents to do it and the desire to pursue it. Does everyone have a special calling? Yes. But very few pursue it, discover it, embrace it, own it, and live it.

"Okay," you say. "I believe God has a specific calling for my life. But how do I discover it?" That's a good question. I have yet to find a prescription or cookbook-like recipe for a person to use to find their calling. It is always a journey. In mapping out over six hundred life stories, I have seen some discover it in a more random, unexpected episode or encounter with something or someone. Afterward, they just knew what they were called to do. I've seen others struggle in the pursuit of their calling for years, even decades, before they fully understood their calling. And, yes, I've seen others never discover or live God's call on their life.

Certainly, hearing one of those "God-whispers," where you just know-that-you-know that God's Spirit has communicated to your human spirit, trumps everything. God is the ultimate creative being and has endless ways of communicating his calling to a person. When one's soul hears his call and accepts it, a reference point is established serving as an anchor in future storms that test the call.

But is there a way to discern, or hear, God's calling apart from those unpredictable God-whisper experiences? The short answer is, yes. That's what this book is about. I believe we can discover his call on our lives by gaining perspective

into the intersection of our God-given core talents, our God-induced heart desires, and the purposes of God's kingdom on earth.



In this diagram, our talents are what we are good at. They are gifts from God. We are all born with natural talent. Scripture also talks about spiritual gifts. These are gifts that God gives to an individual at his own discretion. For discussion sake here, we clump natural talent and spiritual gifts into one word—talent. Everyone has three to five core talents. These talents must be discovered, owned, cultivated, and matured.

“Heart” in this diagram represents the desires, passions and burdens God has given us for his world. Passions are the things that we love to do. If we happen to get paid for what we love to do, work is play. Burdens are those things that gnaw at our gut and drive us to action. Often, burdens represent something that is not right in the world and occupy our thinking. It's as if we can't help but think about this

burden. It needs our attention in some way. In such cases, God is burdening us to apply our talents to a specific part or place in his creation— for example: to a specific people-group, geography, industry, or cultural problem.

“God’s Purposes” in this diagram represents his purposes for his kingdom to be present, alive and expanding on earth—for his kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:10) His kingdom is his spiritual government, ushered into time and space by Jesus, in opposition to the kingdom of darkness and evil. Like any human government, God’s kingdom has a purpose, strategy, and vision. During our lifetime, when our God-given talents and heart’s desires contribute to the expansion of his kingdom on earth, we are living in our God-created sweet spot.

Now think about this for a minute. If God is the giver of all talents in each of the 7.1 billion people alive right now, doesn’t he intend for these talents to be used in his creation for the betterment and restoration of his creation and for the illumination of his reality and glory? And when applying these unique talents and gifts, doesn’t it make sense that he would ignite special passions and burdens in a person for his world?

Whenever he gives someone a passion or a burden for something, he always gives them the talents to make the difference he envisions. Granted, talent, by itself, does not self-activate and self-mature. One must invest in, cultivate, and grow God-given talent. Talent left alone stagnates. We see this in athletics when a naturally gifted athlete is lazy, and others with less talent—but with a stronger work ethic—leapfrog them on the depth chart. The same thing happens in the arts, sciences,

business world, and in ministry. Graveyards are full of God-given talent that was never fully activated. It is the world's most wasted resource.

In the same way, God-induced passions and burdens for the world must be pursued. This pursuit always involves risk of some kind, surrender to its fullest level, and facing the multiple voices and faces of fear, the great nemeses whose primary purpose are to silence and thwart God's call on one's life. We will address this great fear-nemesis later. It's real. It plays a role in everyone's storyline to some degree or another. Fear, addictions, debt, work-life imbalance, out-of-control emotions, and unhealthy relationships can minimize if not silence our full pursuit of God's calling on our life.

Simply put, our specific calling is the intersection of our God-given talents with our heart's passions and burdens for the world. When this intersection is clearly, succinctly, and truthfully described, a seed is planted, a vision is birthed, and a target to aim for is established. As it is pursued and cultivated, it grows, becomes clearer, and pulls us into deeper layers of understanding as we fulfill the call.

Chapter 2

Calling's Perspective

*Everyone has a calling. Every calling has a story.
Every story is a journey. Every journey needs a map. Every map needs a guide.*

These five sentences evolved in my thinking through the process of engaging hundreds of individuals through the LifePlan process. Every unique calling has a back story that once understood brings context to the calling. Once the story is understood, the calling makes sense. Story is movement, with a history and a potential future yet to unfold. Movement is journey, the opposite of static. A good journey needs a map to help navigate expected turbulence and opposition. And maps need guides who have experience from navigating similar terrain.

Every Calling Has A Story

Ask anyone to tell you his story, and you'll have a conversation. It's the most intimate gift we can give to someone—the true back-story of how we got to where we are.

Most of us like to tell our story. It's the exception when someone doesn't. But we need to be asked. We need to know that someone is curious enough to inquire and cares enough to listen. When a person feels safe—that place where the good, bad, and ugly can emerge without judgment—a foundation is laid that ushers in discovery, clarity, and breakthrough. When this occurs, the result is movement forward in understanding and experiencing one's life calling.

I've charted hundreds of life stories over the past twenty years. No two have been alike. Sociologists estimate that approximately 110 billion people have lived in human history. Here's a big thought—no two stories out of that number are alike! No one ever has had nor will have the same life story that you do. Each life story stands on its' own.

What does this have to do with helping someone discern his calling from God? It has everything to do with it, because God's calling always emerges out of one's story. If we are going to guide others to discover and live God's call on their life, we must care enough to curiously engage ourselves with their stories. When we approach their life as a story with a past and present, we gain from them the credibility and trust to guide them to see hope for their future.

Every Story Is A Journey

Stories move. They journey forward, toward somewhere. Even during those times when we feel stuck, we are on a path going somewhere. Have you seen those bizarre rocks in Death Valley, CA that mysteriously move across the sand leaving tracks like a slithering snake in their wake? We all are moving somewhere. Most don't know what path they're on let alone where it's headed. But they are moving. Without a meaningful plotline or purpose, we can easily feel the impact of life chapters gone badly in our past or feel that our life events are random and disconnected episodes.

In LifePlanning when we chart out a life story, we do so through a concept called turning points. A turning point is when your life is going in a certain direction

and something happens and because of that turn your life is now going in a different direction. We'll get into how to guide someone to identify their life turning points and to make sense of them later in the book.

For now, it's vital that we understand that neither the back-story nor the present realities need to define a person for the rest of their life. When we zoom out and guide someone to see more of a bird's eye view of their life journey, dots connect, and life plotlines and themes emerge. Even the darkest chapters in our past serve some kind of greater purpose in shaping us into who we are today. We see hints of God-given talents and God-induced desires. Perspective of the journey—with all of its twists and turns, seasons and eras—prompts us to make choices and seek help as we move forward. As we direct our perspective, we find there is hope for the future.

As a guide, you have got to believe that we're not defined by episodes in our life journey but ultimately by where we end up and how we got there. In believing this, you'll be able to authentically guide someone else to see the truth.

Every Journey Needs A Map

My mom asked me some time ago, "Peter, what is it, exactly, that you do? My friends asked me the other day what you do, and I had a hard time answering them."

"Mom," I said. "Tell them I'm a mapmaker. "

"That doesn't help me."

I smiled. "Mom, I help people figure out where they are, where they want to go, and how to get there. It's like Google mapping. You type in where you want to go

and hit route from your current position and then follow the blue dot.”

Okay. It’s not that simple. But it’s a good metaphor for what I do.

Any significant, or semi-complex journey needs a map. If you’re going to hike the high country of the Colorado Rockies, you better have a map with some navigational equipment. Those who attempt to do it without these tools often end up being the tragic story in the newspaper.

Why wouldn’t we map out a life path that aligns with our life calling? Can the map anticipate and predict the unknowns of the future? Of course not, but what we can do is craft a map that flows from our back-story and moves us forward based on what we know to be true about our self and God. A good map helps us navigate the unknown crossroads in the future. A good map helps us assess opportunities, mitigate risks, and keep moving toward the desired destination.

What’s the other option? Is it knee-jerk, emotionally-driven decision-making? Or maybe simply following the big money, even when it doesn’t align with our calling and when it’s detrimental to our marriage and family? Or could it be losing our soul and burying our calling to pursue what others thought we should do with our life?

Occasionally, I encounter people with an anti-planning bias. “If we just listened to God and did what he said, we wouldn’t need plans. Planning is just a waste of time,” they say.

The Bible I read is an adventurous story of an intentional, strategic, highly creative, and ultra-powerful God who is driven by an intense, jealous love for those he created... you and me. This same God is willing to go to amazing extremes to lure

us with love and confront any opposing forces. He's a visionary, intentional and purposeful in all he does, and at times intensely detailed in his planning. Consider the detailed plans God executed during creation in Genesis. Study the extremely detailed plans he gave Moses for the Tent of Meeting, the Ark of the Covenant, and the sacrificial procedures. Analyze the specific specs he gave to David and Solomon, as well as to Nehemiah and Ezra for temples, palaces, and walls.

Or consider the strategy behind God the Father commissioning Jesus the Son to enter time and space through the womb of a virgin, the young woman Mary. I'd say that's about as creative and strategic as anything we could conceive. I wouldn't be surprised if God had an angelic R&D team in the heavens, with the responsibilities and roles to conceive ideas that impact planet earth and a method to plan accordingly.

I think God is the ultimate strategic, creative planner. And he made us in his image. Why shouldn't we be the most informed, savvy, strategic planners, and mapmakers of anyone on earth? The sooner we understand he created us with a desired purpose, the sooner we will discover it and follow the path to fully realize his calling. Once this adventure begins, the more joy we realize, and the greater difference we make in the world—all for God's glory.

If you want to get to where you want to go, you better have a strategic map that points you in the right direction. Any excuse not to plan is an excuse to be lazy and wasteful. Planning should in no way strip away the fluidity and involvement of God's Holy Spirit to guide us. A good map is designed with constant adaptation in mind and the ability to listen and respond to God's leading. Our life map should have

the same creativity, strategy, and responsiveness to unforeseen opportunity and obstacles. A guide helps another person to create this kind of a map so they can use it to navigate forward in the direction of God's created purpose and calling.

Every Map Needs A Guide

A guide knows the territory. He's been there before. He knows what to avoid, what to look for, and the best way to navigate the map. This means that someone who guides another to discover and live God's calling has discovered and is living his own calling. I don't want to follow a guide up Mount Evans who hasn't been there before. I don't want someone performing brain surgery on me if I am his first subject. I don't want someone telling me how to live my calling who is not living their own calling.

Great guides lead and navigate with skill and wisdom. They offer just enough guidance to help others reach their destination, navigate surprises and obstacles, and experience the full joy of an adventure lived. I'll never forget Roger, our fishing guide in Alaska. He knew where the fish hung out. He knew how to navigate the ever-changing waters around Kodiak Island. Our goal was to catch as many fish as we could. His goal was to help us catch our limit every day, and we did. But he didn't fish for us. He guided us, instructed us, cheered us on when we hooked one, and swore us up and down when we let a big one get away. He was raw and wild. But he knew what he was doing.

A highly-skilled guide has put enough time into living their own calling and has guided enough people in their own journey that they have become

unconsciously competent in guiding others to discover and live their life calling.
I don't want a life guide talking to me about life when its obvious he's spewing out theories and thoughts that he's never personally experienced or processed. No one wants to be the object of a lecture.

*Everyone has a calling. Every calling has a story.
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Chapter 3

Calling's Context

"Taken out of context I must seem so strange."

-Ani DiFranco

"Sometimes one can be so closely involved with things that the larger context is lost to view."

-Brian Ferneyhough

Every story has a context to it, a setting in which it plays itself out. *The Lord of the Rings* has middle earth. *Casino Royale* has modern-day Venice. *Cinderella Man* has New York City during the Great Depression. My boy and teenage years had the context of rural Southern Colorado, the son of a pastor, raised on a ranch in a home defined by an entrepreneurial spirit, authentic faith, a loving culture and a hard work ethic. Your story has its own unique context. So will every person you guide to discover their life calling. It is critical that we as guides take the time to fully understand another's full story, including its context.

Even more important is our point of view on the larger context of the world as it is today and the human journey within it. How we view the world and people within it is our philosophy of life. Our philosophy of life frames how we think, live, and relate. It is our point of view on things, the glasses through which we see and frame the world. It also affects how we guide another to fully understand, embrace, and live their life calling.

For example, if my philosophy of life believes that we are all broken; that we all live with a quiet desperation in our hearts that longs to discover our created purpose; that we all ultimately long to deeply know and be captured by the life-

changing love of God our Father, then, I listen to another's story without judgment and guide a safe and open conversation. But imagine if someone guiding you in this way had a philosophy of life that ranked sin from the most abominable to the most acceptable. Imagine your response if they scoffed at your choices when you strayed from God, and they translated the essence of the Christian faith into a list of activities and expressions that gutted the life out of God's loving pursuit of you. No thanks.

We all see the world through an invisible set of lenses that frame and filter how we have processed our own stories and how we guide others to process theirs. Effective life-calling guides believe that beyond the unique settings of our individual stories is a universal context that engulfs every life calling—the context of a broken war zone.

The World Is Broken

For something to be broken, it means it was at one time unbroken or whole. When I say that the world is broken, I mean “everything” in the world is broken—creation in its entirety, organic life, weather patterns, humanity, the animal, plant, and insect kingdoms, nations, governments, businesses, churches, institutions, families, marriages, parents, kids, employees, bosses, every individual in every country in every generation. It's all broken, no longer existing in the form it was once created.

The earth's crust slips and causes a tsunami that destroys the living on land. Hurricanes engulf coastline cities, and ravaging fires devour forests and homes.

Animals either kill or they are killed. Ethnic groups spew hate toward other ethnic groups. Nations war against each other. Governments crumble from corruption within. Marriages break apart and fracture families. People kill each other and steal and destroy another's property. I'm broken. You're broken. Every person you will guide to discover their life calling is broken. When we are in touch with our own brokenness, it is more difficult to judge another person for their brokenness.

Everything hasn't always been broken, and it won't always stay broken. Genesis 1-2 describes an unbroken world. After every phase of creation, God paused and "saw that it was good." But the context changes in Genesis 3. Satan through a snake deceives Eve. Eve does what God told her not to do and Adam passively participates. The once perfect whole setting given to them by God is fractured and now broken. Because of this, everything in the Bible from Genesis 3 to Revelation 20 plays itself out in the context of a broken creation filled with broken people. But it won't always be this way. In Revelation 20-21 we are given a glimpse of a restored creation and humanity, no longer infected by the presence of sin, evil, and darkness—all directly linked to the return of Christ. Until then, all of creation waits for its day of restoration. (Romans 8:18-27)

Without the hope of a restored creation, cynicism and pessimism frame one's perspective. When I really believe that things are not what they were created to be and will not stay as they are, I have more compassion and understanding toward my own brokenness and the brokenness of those I guide. Who am I to judge or gawk at another's brokenness when I've faced and owned my own? When someone entrusts his life story to me with all its ups and downs and brokenness, I have learned to

receive it as a gift. He has taken a risk to give it to me. Who am I to judge it? If judgment is in my heart toward another's story, the conversation changes, doors slam shut in one's soul, and truth no longer safely emerges into the light.

Practically, this means that I must never lose sight of my own brokenness as a guide. Owning my own story means that I remember the chapters in my life when I have crashed and burned due to my own choices to stray down paths that led me into deep darkness, empty of God. It means I never forget what it is like to be on the cusp of wanting to take my own life. It means that I understand what it is like to be trapped in my own sin because of my own pride and choices. It means that I never forget the life-changing confrontation with God's grace and how this gift continues to seep deep into my soul and convince me of God's profound love and forgiveness toward me. It means that I remember what it is like to be the recipient of someone's brokenness toward me and how God's Spirit guided me to forgive another and release them from their sin against me.

If we endeavor to guide another person to discover and live their life calling and to guide them through their own brokenness, embracing our own brokenness is foundational. If Adam and Eve hadn't messed up, I would have. And you would have too. But they messed up. So do I. So do you. So does everyone. Why...because we're all broken.

The World Is A War Zone

Any war has casualties—lists of the wounded and the dead. Over 620,000 people died in the U.S. Civil war and over 412,000 more were wounded. Over

seventy-two million people died worldwide in World War II. The United States lost 291,557 soldiers in it. War—by nature of its violence and conflict—kills life, destroys cities, scars landscapes, and breaks things. War torn nations and generations understand this reality.

What if the signs of destruction in the spiritual war were as evident to us as the sights, smells, and sounds of physical war? What if, in addition to the world being broken within and around us, it is also at conflict—within and around us? What if the lens by which we viewed and guided others through was framed by a spiritual collision between God’s kingdom and authority warring against the authority of Satan and his dark following?

Jesus was compelled to “preach the good news of the kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43). He was the master storyteller creatively describing the nature and way of God’s kingdom through stories of fields with wheat and weeds; through stories of lost pearls and coins; through stories of seeds scattered on different kinds of ground; through stories of mustard seeds, yeast, and nets; and through stories of unmerciful servants, workers in vineyards, ten virgins, talents, sheep, and goats. He said, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:1) He said it was hard for rich people to enter the kingdom; you must become like a child and be born again to enter into it. He said “the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it” (Matthew 11:12). He said, the “prince of this world now stands condemned” (John 16:11) and his “kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

Do you get the picture? We live in a war zone—a spiritual one—God’s kingdom at war against Satan’s kingdom. What’s a kingdom? Think of a kingdom as a nation. Nations have structure to their authority. In the United States, we are structured as a Republic of fifty states. States have certain rights under the federal authority, balanced by the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative branches of power. We have a structure and process by which laws are made, enforced, and changed. Every nation—whether they are a democracy, monarchy, or totalitarian system—has its own way of enforcing its power and laws.

Now, think of God’s kingdom as a spiritual structure, system, and authority that is as real as the air we breathe though not seen with the physical eye. Think of love as the currency of this kingdom and the human spirit its target. When the human spirit understands and embraces the life-transforming love of God personified through the life, message, and death of Jesus, one becomes a citizen of God’s kingdom through the miracle of God’s Spirit breathing new life into a person’s human spirit. It’s as if they are born in a new way, a spiritual way, and a new DNA has been planted internally within them just as a mustard seed is planted in the ground. As a person progressively yields to the structure, system, and authority of God’s kingdom now residing within them, this mustard seed, figuratively, begins to grow within as well—framing and transforming the way a person thinks, lives, and relates.

Now, add to this mix an antagonist (every good story needs an antagonist). The dark opposing force of Satan and his kingdom is the antagonist. If the currency of God’s kingdom is love, the currency of Satan’s kingdom is fear. Dark forces will

use multiple voices of fear and distraction to oppose this newly injected DNA of God's kingdom in a person's spirit. Now, more than ever, the battle is on within a person—God's kingdom is at war with Satan's kingdom.

Just like brokenness, the war is within and around us—all of us. No one is exempt. And just like physical war, this spiritual war has its casualties—broken marriages and fractured families, bitter relationships, wounded, trapped, and imprisoned spirits, frightful and angry hearts. If our eyes are open to see, we see, not only in our own lives but in the lives of those around us, the scars left by the battles of this conflict. Once I understand this war of kingdoms, I should not be surprised nor taken aback by the visible scars left by the collateral damage in my own or other's lives. No one is exempt.

The World Is A Broken War Zone

Every one has a calling, and every calling is a story. Every story has a context, and every context is one of a broken war zone. Things do not always appear as they were created to be. All God's spiritual structure and authority represent is opposed by a just-as-real enemy—Satan... and his dark following.

As we attempt to guide another to discover and live their life calling, we will frame our guidance based on our view of the world and life. As a guide, others will open up by sharing their stories with you only to the degree they view you as a safe recipient of their story. They will discern this degree of safety based on how you view your own life as well as how you view theirs. When you are in touch with the reality of your own brokenness and the very real conflict between God's kingdom

and Satan's—both within and around you—they will be more inclined to open up about their own brokenness and struggle in this spiritual conflict.

Chapter 4

Calling's Way

"Distance lends enchantment to the view."
-Mark Twain

"The trick to forgetting the big picture is to
look at everything close up."
-Chuck Palahniuk

When I take pictures with my camera, my point of view frames what others see later. The angle I take, the light I use, and the speed of the shutter all influence what I want to capture in the moment. I have found it is possible to frame-in beauty while cutting-out clutter. I realize the more I zoom out, the more perspective I offer for others who weren't there to see the live picture in person.

In the same way, the point of view we have on God's calling on our life determines what we do or don't see. If we are zoomed in too closely, we see only what fits in the lens we are looking through. It is essential we understand where we're at on the journey to discover and live our life calling within the broader context of the journey. It's like the forest analogy—we need to know where we're at when we get deep into the forest and only see trees.

With this in mind, I offer the following map to illustrate the way in which one awakens to their longing to know, be, and do God's call on their life. Once they know the call they must also follow the journey to discover, own, and focus on it by continually renewing this call. Not everyone we guide is at the same place on this map. Nor do we stay static on it. God's calling, if understood, always awakens us to

deeper encounters and applications on which we must discover, own, choose to focus, and continually renew.



I'll briefly overview each phase of this journey in this chapter and then dive in deeper in each phase in the following chapters.

The Awakening Phase

It is here we begin to ask ourselves questions that we haven't asked before. Why am I not content with who I'm becoming or what I'm doing? Why am I alive? Is there more? Is there a greater reason for my existence? If so, what is it? How do I discover God's calling on my life? These questions often emerge for a season, only to

submerge again for another season. Over time, the questions resurface with greater voice and gnaw away at our gut and thinking until we move toward them. When we do, we move into the discovery phase.

The Discovering Phase

Once awakened to our questions, we must find answers. We are propelled into search mode and find ourselves going to others for help. We may read things we've never read before intent on discovering what we are made to become and do. Here we gain clarity on our life story (how we got to where we are), what God has gifted us to do (our God-given talents), what God has burdened us with (our God-induced desires), and how we long to play a role in his spiritual kingdom on earth. God's calling becomes clearer and the vision of where he sees us in our future begins to emerge.

The Owning Phase

Discovering God's calling on our life does not guarantee ownership and activation of this call. We must embrace it and own it. The portal to ownership is surrender. In surrender, we confront the voices of fears, anxieties, and apprehensions that oppose God's calling by fully entrusting the journey ahead into God's care, faithfulness, presence, and love. This internal conflict between God's calling and its antagonists is necessary to help us fully own his call to us. Without full surrender and ownership of the calling, we lack an anchor, a reference point, a

stake in the ground, or firm foundation that allows us to weather the challenges and storms ahead.

Focusing Phase

Here we begin to focus our life, time, and energy on our calling. Here we learn to manage our time and resources to live as close to the bulls-eye of our calling as we can. Here we learn to filter out the clutter and distractions that threaten to dilute the full experience and impact of God's calling in our lives. Here we learn to say 'no' and 'yes' in order to focus on the best things. Here we learn to keep doing some things, to start doing new things, and to stop doing other things.

Renewing Phase

Change is a part of the created order. New seasons of life birth new opportunities and challenges. For example, life in the twenties isn't the same as life in the fifty's. New life events can surface suddenly or emerge over time. Some of these events turn our life in new directions. In the renewing phase of our calling, we learn to zoom out once again, regain perspective on God's calling on our life, adapt to change, embrace opportunity, and reinvent and reapply our calling in light of it all.

A Never Ending Journey

This journey is really more like a spiral moving forward, a three-dimensional cyclical flow through life. As we learn to rhythmically adapt and renew God's calling

on our life we are awakened to deeper discoveries of it; prompted into searching and discovering other insights and applications of it; challenged to surrender and own these new discoveries; as well as to filter out distractions in order to focus on what we know we must do. Boredom, then, should not be a concern when we see God's calling as a never-ending journey of awakening, discovery, owning, focusing, and renewing.

As guides, understanding the journey of living our life calling is important both for our own journey as well as our role in guiding others. In the following chapters, you are asked to assess where you are on the Calling's Way map; and you are given tools and resources to guide others in their pursuit.

Chapter 5

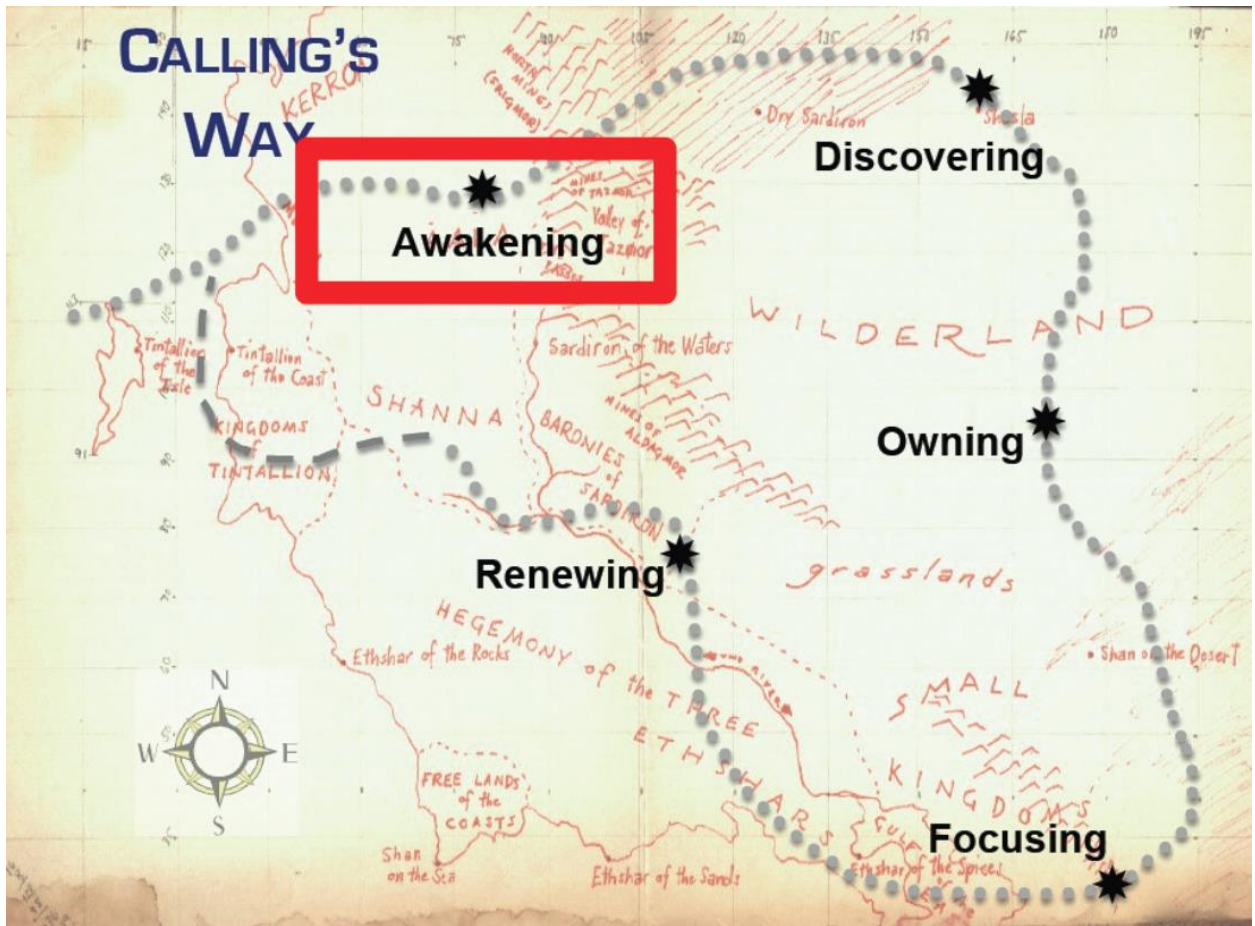
Phase 1: Awakening

“Once the soul awakens, the search begins and you can never go back. From then on, you are inflamed with a special longing that will never again let you linger in the lowlands of complacency and partial fulfillment.”

-John O'Donohue

“When one realizes one is asleep, at that moment one is already half-awake.”

-P.D. Ouspensky



When an individual approaches me for a LifePlan, I ask questions to discern their readiness for the experience. *What prompted you to call me? What questions are you asking yourself these days?* I want to know their frame of mind and heart. I

want to discern how ripe they are for the discovery phase of this journey. If they are ready, I tell them. If they are not ready, I tell them.

Levels of Awakening

Just as we experience levels of awakening when we emerge from a deep sleep and move toward full-alert mode every morning, I have noticed different levels of awakening related to one's desire to pursue clarity on God's calling for their life. The following chart illustrates this progression.

Asleep	Drowsy	Awake
Stubbornly Arrogant		
Cluelessly Selfish		
Critically Wounded		
	Hopelessly Defeated	
	Fearfully Paralyzed	
	Consciously Frustrated	
		Cautiously Curious
		Openly Desperate
		Aggressively Hungry

On one extreme, the *asleep* state, represents the stubborn, arrogant, clueless, and selfish individual. They are not interested in what God has called them to be and do. They rarely end up seeing me. If they do, it's because someone sponsored them to do so. I have made the mistake of investing time and energy in guiding them through the discovery process concluding it almost never works. It is best to communicate to them they are not ready for this journey and they need to think

about pursuing it at a better time. I can't guide someone who is stubbornly arrogant or unconsciously self-centered or lazy. They are trapped in their own framework and haven't reached a place of curiosity or desperation for another point of view. Their attitude and perspective is all about them and does not include others. They are in the red zone. They need to live life their own way until they reach the end of the road they are traveling. Perhaps they need to crash and burn. Afterward, we can have a meaningful conversation.

If someone is deeply wounded or in a season of grief and loss, they are not ready for this kind of dialogue either. They need time to face their loss and grief—and heal. This kind of plunge into their life will only heighten their pain and dominate the process.

Others are not necessarily asleep to these life-calling questions but neither are they fully awake to them. They are drowsy, somewhere in between asleep and awake—in the yellow zone. They may feel defeated, paralyzed by fear, or frustrated by the path they have been traveling. There is no guarantee they will overcome their hopelessness or fears or sort out their frustrations. Yet, there is a high-probability that the discovery process will help them see what they can't see and move forward. If a person in this drowsy stage is at least willing to discover who they are and are not, acknowledge their fears, insecurities, and hurts, and are willing to explore how they might move beyond these obstacles toward something that has greater meaning and purpose, then they are ready to be guided into the discovery phase.

Now if someone is curious, desperate and hungry, there is nothing more rewarding than guiding them to discover truth, gain clarity on their calling, and to

help them chart out a map to help them move in the right direction. They are fully alert and awake to that which they long to discover. They are in the green zone.

Discerning One's Readiness

Bottom-line, I'm looking for hints that a person has a decent degree of self-awareness and a good dose of desire to discover God's calling on their life.

Statements like the following are good indicators that a person is ready to move into the discovery phase.

- I want clarity on who I am and what I should do.
- I want to know what I should say 'yes' and 'no.'
- I want to know my gifts and talents.
- I don't know my purpose in life, but I want to discover it.
- I want to know God's call on my life.
- I want to make a difference with my life. I just don't know how.
- I have dreams I've never pursued. I want to know how to do this.

As life-calling guides, we must learn to trust God with the right timing to help another address these kinds of questions and issues. We cannot force another to awaken. It's not our role, it is God's role. Our role is to play our role and trust God to do his.

To effectively screen a person, you will want to ask enough questions to discern their readiness. It is okay to tell someone that you don't think it's the right time. Usually, a person agrees. I don't have to tell many people that the time is not right, but I have learned not to disregard this awakening phase. You will invest a

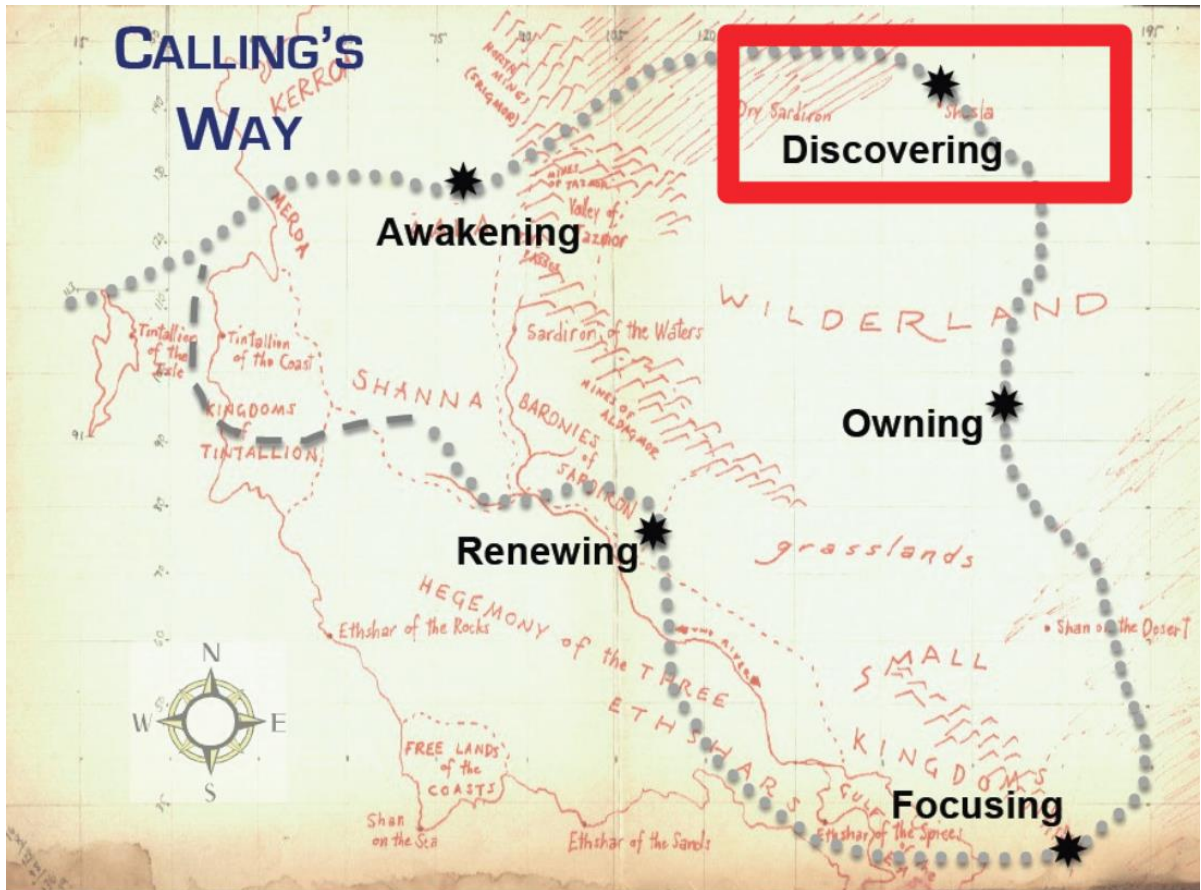
good amount of your own time in guiding another person. For their sake and yours, inquire enough to determine their readiness before thoughtlessly moving into the discovery phase.

Chapter 6

Phase 2: Discovering

“For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”
-King David, Psalm 139:13-14

“I know, O Lord, that a man’s life is not his own;
it is not for a man to direct his steps.”
-Jeremiah, to God, Jeremiah 10:23



In the discovery phase, we guide another person to self-discover God’s calling on their life. Initially, this feels like a daunting role to play. But when we create the right conversations by asking good questions and then help a person identify the

emerging truth from these interactions, we do just that—we guide them without the need to lecture, judge, or correct. Our role as guides is to point the way, bring truth into the light through the process, and facilitate the discovery and application of this truth.

Our objective in this phase is to guide a person to discover and clarify God's calling on their life in the context of how God defines them (their core identity), why



God created them (their life purpose), what direction they must head (their life vision), and what strategic steps they must take (their life strategies). I know, it sounds like a lot. And it is. But with the right approach, process, and tools, it can be

done. In this chapter, I'll give you the process and tools to help you create the right conversations that will guide another person to discover these insights.

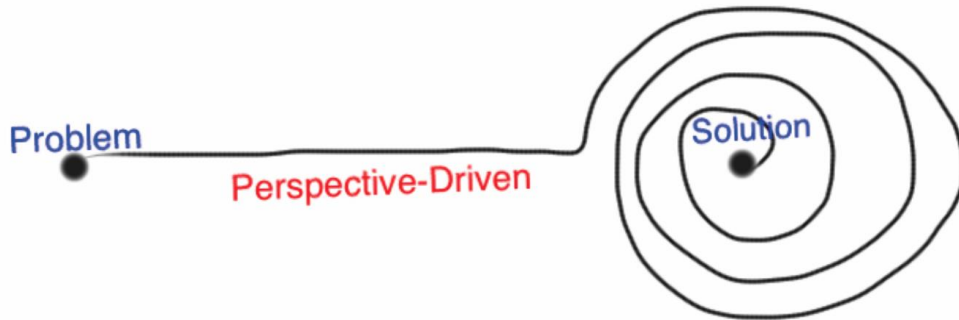
We dare not preload these conversations with prescribed outcomes and use the tools to manipulate one toward predetermined results. Think of the discovery process as an investigation or a treasure hunt. The tools offered in this phase will help on this hunt and, if used correctly, will validate, refine, focus, and perhaps correct one's assumptions about his talents, heart, and role in God's kingdom.

Having the right mindset and approach in the discovery phase is essential for a successful outcome. To illustrate the right kind of approach, a drawing is in order. It's called the "Chinese Spiral." I learned it from Tom Paterson. He was a part of a team of consultants assigned to help Chinese economic thinkers and leaders in the 1980s strategically engage the emerging global economy. He fell in love with the Chinese people and used the Chinese Spiral to illustrate how the Chinese-eastern thinking approaches problem-solving and discovery processes compared to the American-western mindset. I have validated these diagrams myself through my own work in China.

When we, in the American-west, confront a problem and look for a solution, our approach is typically linear in nature and driven by speed (see the following diagram). This mindset is a "just git 'er dun fast" approach. Consequently, we run a high risk of creating an impartial solution or outcome with this speed-at-all-cost thinking.



Now, compare the typical Chinese-eastern approach to identifying a problem's solution in the following diagram. This thought process is perspective-driven, circling a problem from multiple vantage points until all points of view are seen and understood.



If you flip this circular approach sideways for a three-dimensional view, it looks like this.



When we take the time to gain full perspective and ascend to the highest point of clarity, this is where we discover the “Aha!” breakthroughs. We now see clearly what we could not see before. It’s as if we have reached the summit of a 14,000-foot peak on the spine of the Rockies. We are above the valley floors of life and have a greater clarity of perspective.

How does this apply to the discovery process of one’s life calling? It’s an illustration of the approach we want to take in guiding another person to clarity. As guides, we must appropriately slow down the thinking and discovery process until we make visible the invisible. If we move too fast, we run a high-risk of accelerating past the signposts of insight. So, slow down and circle each conversation until you have reached clarity. It will help if you draw out the Chinese and American ways of thinking for the one you are guiding and refer to the Chinese Spiral throughout the process.

Discovering Our Core Identity

Within all of us is a core truth that answers the question, “What defines me?” Our answer to this question is our core identity. From our answer, we think, live, and relate. Our answer colors everything else about our life. It is possible to have great clarity on our life purpose, calling, and direction and still feel adrift if this core identity is skewed, tainted by lies, or attached to the wrong thing or person.

I am a recovering people-pleaser. I’ve spent three-quarters of my life driven to make those I respected happy and riddled by the fear that I wouldn’t. The fear of man mastered me until 1996. Over the next year it endured a suffocating release. Though its voice can still surface, it no longer masters me.

I thank God for using Bill McCartney (Coach Mac) to expose the people pleaser in me. It was June 6, 1996. I was a Vice President for Promise Keepers (PK). I was agonizing over a leadership decision I had made. Some people were very happy I made it. Others were angry. Some gave me high-fives. Others sent nasty letters. It felt like a helpless, no-win situation in my people-pleaser frame of mind.

I needed someone to help me process my thinking and feelings. I was losing perspective. I remember walking upstairs to the second floor of the PK building and seeing Coach Mac sitting at his desk. It was unusual for him to be in the office at this time of day. I asked him if I could talk to him for a few minutes. He motioned me in.

I sat down and began to explain the situation. He saw the heaviness in my shoulders and face. Less than five minutes into explaining the situation, he cut me off, pointed his finger toward my chest and said, “Do you know what the problem is

with Pete Richardson?”

I shook my head side to side.

“He fears men more than he fears God,” he said.

I heard an invisible arrow whisk through the air that day and slice its way into my soul. And you know what? Though it stung, it felt good, because it was true.

I thanked Coach Mac for his time, quickly exited the building, and drove my old Toyota truck north on I-25, headed to nowhere. Tears streamed down my face. “God, I know Mac is right. I don’t want to be driven by the fear of man any longer. Would you free me of it? I’m tired of living this way.”

Now fast forward the story fifteen months. We were on the backside of conducting twenty-two stadium events from coast to coast. We were two months away from staging the 1.4 million-man “Stand In The Gap” event on the Washington D.C. Mall. It had been an intense year of activity with great reward and great pressure.

In the midst of it all, a film-making company from the Netherlands wanted Mac to narrate a multi-million dollar project on the Ten Commandments. They were in town for their sales pitch. Mac wanted me in the meeting for my perspective. At one point, he turned to me, “I want to know what Pete thinks about this.”

Without hesitation, I said, “Mac, you’re a motivator of men, not a film narrator. I don’t know why we are even entertaining the thought of taking this project on.” Mac looked at me in front of the executives from Holland and said, “You know what? I don’t see the fear of man in you anymore. I’m proud of you.”

That day, the deep resolve from the year before was validated as well as a

memorial monument was built inside me. The fear of man's control and grip had been snapped. In the past, I would have tried to work the deal to please the film company, entertain how Mac could do the project, and it would have been the wrong thing to do for all of us.

That day was a turning point for me. Even though I do, at times, still struggle with the people-pleasing tendency, it no longer has me on its leash. I'm learning to live each day of my life out of and from what God thinks about me, says about me, and how he feels about me. This truth is sinking deeper into my soul the older I grow: "I am His son." He cares for me deeply. He loves me beyond anything I can fathom. He is incredibly present, engaged in my world, proud of who I am and what I do. He loves my heart for life, his kingdom and his people. God is committed to me without wavering. He smiles when I use the talents he's given me to guide others to discover and live their life calling.

Through my work in guiding others toward life calling clarity, I have learned the importance of starting with the core identity conversation. I no longer assume followers of Jesus and people in ministry are operating from a core identity defined by God. Too many other factors and voices from one's personal history clutter this conversation.

In this section, your goal as a guide, is to help a person clarify their core identity and to assess how this definition aligns against the truth of how God defines them. Any gap between one's current definition of self and how God defines them must be addressed. The nature of the gap will determine the process and length of time to close that gap.

Review the following two tools. The first one is a tool to help a person discover what currently defines them. The clue questions are designed to bring to light what *really* defines a person. We can be defined by our work, our family, our past, our money and possessions, our status in society, our title, our body image, our nationality, on and on. Use the clue questions to create a conversation that uncovers the truth of what and who really defines a person. If what emerges is anything other than how God defines a person, use the second tool to help them identify how God thinks and feels about them.

It's taken me years to fully own and believe that God defines me as his beloved son. Because of the nature and depth of his love, he is capable of relating to all of us personally as a beloved son or beloved daughter. And when the truth of his love for me as his son permeates how I think, live, and relate, than anything else that I do is motivated from this profound, life-changing truth. I am defined by him.

Discovering My Core Identity Tool

(What Currently Defines Me)

My Core Identity		
My Identity (What Currently Defines Me)		
Clues	Who do I look to for validation?	
	Who makes me feel the most valued?	
	Where do I feel the most valued?	
	What makes me feel the most valued?	
	What messages about myself dominate my thinking?	

Discovering My Core Identity Tool (How God Defines Me)

My Core Identity		
My Identity (How God Defines Me)		
Clues	Psalm 139:13-16	
	Luke 15:11-31	
	Romans 8:12-17; Galatians 3:26-4:7	
	Hebrews 2:10-11	
	1 Peter 2:9-10	

Ideally, how God defines us should be the personal operating system of all followers of Jesus. However, we are all human and broken in some way. Consequently, each of us must go through our own process in our relationship with

God to allow the truth of how he feels and thinks about us to seep into and define our minds and souls. As a guide, you will want to discuss any gap between their current definition of self and God's definition. However they define it, God's definition about them should say something to the effect of, "I am God's son." "I am God's beloved daughter." "I am God's beloved!"

Discovering Our Life Purpose

Just as there is common definition in how God thinks and feels about all of us, there is common definition to our purpose in life. Some theologians call this our primary or common calling. In my work of helping others, I call it our life purpose. One's life purpose answers the questions, "Why do I exist?" Or "Why did God create me?"

Your goal in this phase of the discovery process is to create a conversation around the Scripture and insights in the following tool. You will also want to add your own examples and life story as you guide another toward clarifying their life purpose.

I start this conversation by discussing the way Jesus summed up the entire Old Testament law in Mark 12:28-31. "One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, 'Of all the commandments, which is the most important?' 'The most important one,' answered Jesus, 'is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself.'

There is no commandment greater than these.”” God’s passion for us is to learn to love him with all that we are and have and to learn to love others as ourselves is weaved throughout the Old Testament. I’ve listed just a few verses to consider in the following tool.

Discovering My Life Purpose (Why God Created Me)

My Life Purpose		
My Life Purpose (Why God Created Me)		
Clues	Exodus 20:1-6	
	Deuteronomy 6:4-9	
	Joshua 24:14-15	
	1 Kings 18:21	
	Mark 12:28-34	

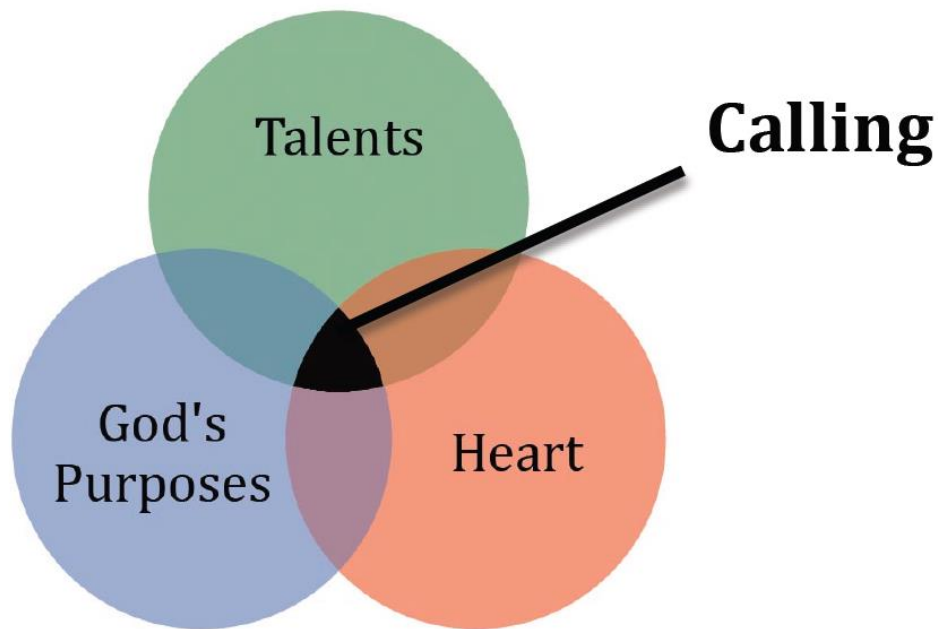
The biblical truth is that God created us to love him wholeheartedly and to love others as ourselves. He created us to learn the way of love, the power and force of love, and to grow in our ability to receive and give love in the way that he receives

and gives it. Grounding our purpose for living in this truth keeps us from creating a life calling statement (later on) that might otherwise become self-serving and detrimental to those we ultimately care about the most.

To learn to love in this way, we must answer the call of Jesus to follow him, the same call he gave to his twelve disciples and the same call that he extends to anyone who wants to hear it (John 1:43; John 17:20-23; Rev. 3:20). Consequently, my personal life purpose statement reads, “I exist to follow Jesus and learn the way of love—toward God, others, and myself.” I guide others to create a similar statement in their own words. As a guide, you should have this framed for yourself before you guide others to do the same.

Discovering Our Life Calling: What I Must Be And Do

We are now ready to create a life calling statement that is grounded in the truth of how God defines us (core identity) and why He created us (life purpose). Recall the following diagram from Chapter 1. Our unique calling from God is discovered and described in the intersection of our God-given talents, our God-induced desires, and how these talents and desires play a role in God’s kingdom on earth. Our objective as guides is to help a person gain insight and clarity into this intersection and to create a clear, crisp, compelling personal life calling statement.



To create this statement, we use three discovery tools: (1.) The Life Story Discovery tool which answers the question, *How did I get to where I am now?*; (2.) The Talent Discovery tool which answers the question, *What are my God-given talents?*; and (3.) The Heart Discovery tool which answers the question, *What passions and burdens for the world has God put within me?* Each of these three discovery tools represents a Chinese spiral around a person's life and each adds perspective to God's calling. Together, these discoveries help you guide another toward insight and clarity on what God made them to be and do. From these discoveries you will be given a tool to help you guide another person to craft their life calling statement.

Life Calling Perspective: Learning from our Life Story

Every life story has been and will be an adventure filled with unanticipated and unpredictable twists and turns. Every life journey has had its ups and downs, its mountaintop experiences, and dark valley seasons. With this tool, you will learn how to guide others through a process to develop a life-graph of their significant high and low points, how to help them identify the critical lessons from their life story, and how to identify plot lines in their life story that are clues to God's calling on their life.

We do not know the number of days God gives us on earth, but we do know that he knows. David captures this truth in Psalm 139:13-16: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Not one day, week, month, or year of your life—past, present, or future—is a mystery to God.

The Life Story Discovery Tool helps us gain perspective into God's calling on our life by helping us understand how we got to where we are—that is, to gain insight into our life story. We can learn from our past—not to stay stuck in it—but to glean the right insights and truth to help us move forward more intentionally. To do so, you will learn how to map out one's life on a life-graph. A life-graph offers a snapshot picture of all the turning points in one's life and how each turn plays into the overall story of one's life.

What is a turning point? A turning point is something that turned the direction of one's life down another path. They were going in one direction and because of what happened their life direction was altered. Turning points can be internally induced when we make a decision, for good or bad, and because of that decision we go down a different path. Additionally, external forces beyond our control can change our life direction by various degrees.

A turning point is a decision, event, person, episode, or period of time that turns our life in some way. Turning points can be negative or positive. They can be spiritual, personal, occupational, and family or community related. Or they might impact all areas of our life. Together, these events, experiences, and people significantly shape who we are today. Turning points include:

- Spiritual Turns. When the Holy Spirit convicts a person of their need for God and that person turns toward God with faith, it is a turning point. When we hear or discern the whispers of God and respond to them with new decision-making and action, it can significantly turn our life toward a different direction.
- Relationships. Oftentimes, God brings a person into our life at a critical juncture that changes our life. Camp counselors, coaches, parents, teachers, friends, and mentors can all leave their imprint on us and shape who we are today and what we do, but some of them really turned our life.
- Season of Life Events. Graduation from college, marriage, the addition of a first child (and perhaps additional ones), the death of a parent, and other profound season-of-life events can also alter the course of life.

- Life-Changing Experiences. Positive and negative experiences can alter the course of our lives. Examples of positive events include overcoming the odds in an athletic sport or other interest, gaining acceptance into an institution or new job, helping another person succeed, a summer at camp, or other experiences that have helped shape the person you are today. Examples of negative events include personal illness, bankruptcy, divorce, adultery, addiction, or getting caught doing something illegal.

As guides, we want to create conversations with others that allow them to tell their life story through the filter of turning points. It is our job to probe with questions in order to help identify the real turning points in one's life. Some life memories are so monumental in a person's memory they are unforgettable, but they didn't turn a person's life a different direction. Some turns, although they seemed subtle at the time of the event, now in hindsight, actually played a significant role in where a person is today. We don't want to miss these (a ten degree turn can land one in a very different place a decade later). I often ask a person when they are telling me about a life event, "Did it turn your life?" Or, "How did it turn your life?" If it was a turn, they will tell you. If it wasn't, they'll say something like, "No, it didn't turn my life. It was just an event."

There are three parts to the Life Story Discovery Tool. On the following page, the first part captures the direction-changing turning points. In this process, you will guide another to identify *all* of the events that have altered the course of his or her life journey (positively or negatively). Once all of the turns are identified, you will

later discover connections, patterns and themes as the life story is charted on a life graph. Together, you will glean valuable insights into God's calling on a person's life.

Be careful not to add memories to this list that didn't necessarily turn the direction of one's life (things that a person will never forget, yet didn't really turn their life). For each turning point, identify one's age at the time, what specifically happened, whether it was a high point (10), low point (1), or something in between on a 1-10 scale, and the outcome (a high point was very positive and life giving; a low point was very negative and difficult—both at the time of the event and as one reflects on it). I encourage people not to over think these ratings and to find the right zone on the 1-10 spectrum by asking questions like: "Was it a low point?" If so, "How low was it? In what range between 1 and 5?" I may even say, "It sounds like a 2 or 3 on this scale?" A completed, and fictional, turning point list is offered as an example to illustrate how to use this tool.

Turning Points

People, Experiences, Events That Have Turned The Direction of My Life

My Age	Details	Rating (1-10)	Outcome

Turning Points

People, Experiences, Events That Have Turned The Direction of My Life

My Age	Summary	Rating (1-10)	Outcome
8	Gave my life to Christ at Mountain View Community Church	10	Forged a life long relationship with George B. who invited me to church.
10	My parents divorced	1	I was torn between mom and dad. Dad abandoned us.
12	Confronted a neighborhood bully	5	I learned to confront opposition in a positive way.
15	Desire To Compete is Awakened in Me	8	Coach Stife helped me see my potential in football and incited the desire in me to excel.
17	I got my girlfriend pregnant and she had an abortion.	2	The unthinkable happened. I was devastated and carry the pain of what I did today. Dad was absent.
19	Rededicate my life to Christ	10	I realized how far I drifted from God. Drew S. led me back to God at S.U. my freshman year.
24	I married Lauren	10	She is God's gift to me. I would not be who I am today without her.
26	Fired from my first job	4	I questioned my abilities and purpose in life
29	Mentored by Rich H.	7	God sent him to guide and mentor me and help me discover what it means to be a godly husband and worker
31	Our first baby, Caleb, was born	10	There is nothing like seeing your own flesh and blood born. I will never forget this experience. Our family expanded.
34	Dad died of lung cancer	2	We never connected like I long to connect with my kids. He died angry and lonely. I wish we could have reconciled our past.
38	Launched my new business	7	I have learned that I have more potential than I thought. I love the freedom, creativity, and leadership opportunities.
41	My current life juncture	5	I am at a crossroads. I want to be more of a spiritual leader to Lauren and my kids. I am not content to just work to make money. How can I connect to God's Kingdom more actively? What does God want me to do?

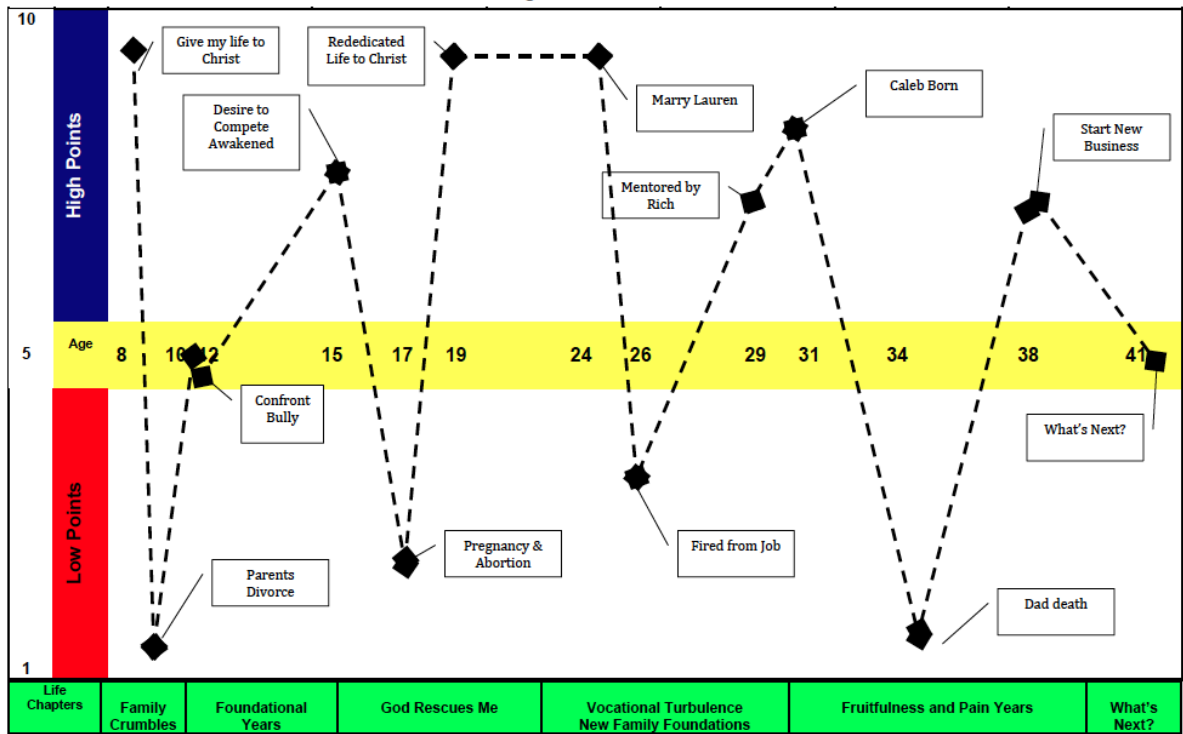
Now that you have identified all of one's turning points, plot them on the following life-graph to the degree that they were high and low (1-10). A completed life graph is provided for illustration. Use the middle row to plot one's age span and

the bottom row to identify the life chapter themes of the different seasons of one's life journey. For example, one might have a life chapter entitled "Foundations Laid" or "The Dark Years" or "Sowing My Wild Oats Years" or "Return to God Years." Look at life breaks in the life graph and then guide the conversation to summarize each life chapter.

My Life Story
How I got to where I'm at.



My Life Story—Example *How I got to where I'm at.*



To view our life on a life-graph helps us connect experiences that otherwise feel random and haphazard. When we see the continuity and themes of our life story, we begin to understand in new ways God’s faithfulness and our calling. We see that he has been present in the highs and lows of our life story and has rescued us even in and through the dark, painful seasons of life. We come to terms with controlling forces, other than God, that have restricted us for entire chapters of our life—forces like an absent dad, the pursuit of money and position, or a drive to prove ourselves to others. We may also discover that God used an experience or person in our youth to plant a seed in our life that later took root and prompted us to become or do something we wouldn’t have otherwise pursued (e.g., a leadership talent awakened playing sports, an artistic interest sown by a patient teacher, a desire for third world missions awakened on a trip to Latin America, etc.).

When we see our story from this zoomed-out perspective, we think, live and relate more freely absent are the controlling forces of our past. We are also free to follow Christ wherever he might lead us, in a way that is true to our life calling and his vision for us. But first we must gain clearer perspective on our life story. In doing so, we answer the question, *How did I get to where I'm at today?* This perspective adds to the discovery of God's calling on our life.

Now that you have helped one map out their life-graph, use the following chart to capture the critical learning points from it. Prompt appropriate reflection and analysis of the life-graph and extract and capture valuable learning's from their story.

I like to encourage a person to see their life from a third person perspective. "Imagine this life graph is an overview of a movie about your life. What do you learn about the lead character—you—in this movie? How has this character grown and changed over the years? Who is the antagonist? If the movie ends right now, where do you think this lead character will end up in life? What are the major and minor plotlines of this movie? What are the writer and producer of this movie trying to communicate to the audience? What talents does this character have? What's important to him? What are his passions, dreams and desires?" Use the following questions to help you guide the conversation to capture themes, patterns and the critical takeaways from this perspective tool. Again a fictional example is provided.

Life Story Learnings
What Must I Learn From My Life Story?

Questions	Insights
<p><u>Governing Factors</u> What forces have governed the direction of my life at various stages?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
<p><u>Key Connections</u> Are there any significant connections between events in my life story?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
<p><u>Patterns</u> What patterns emerge in my life story?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
<p><u>God's Faithfulness</u> Where do I see God's faithful presence guiding my life?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
<p><u>Implications</u> What do I learn about who God wants me to be and what He wants me to do in my future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
<p><u>Other Discoveries</u> Do I learn anything else from seeing my life turning points with all the high and low points?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Life Story Learnings—Example
What Must I Learn From My Life Story?

Questions	Insights
<p><u>Governing Factors</u> What forces have governed the direction of my life at various stages?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My dad's abandonment of our family left a void in my heart at a young age. Though I never reconciled with him before his death, I now see how God wants me to forgive him and allow Him to fill that void in my heart. • Where was he when I encountered the bully and was going through the tough years as a 17 year old?
<p><u>Key Connections</u> Are there any significant connections between events in my life story?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God sent Rich into my life at a critical time in my life to be a spiritual dad to me and help me understand God's desires for me as a follower of Christ, husband and dad. • Coach Stife was also a God-send at a critical time in my life and helped me to transfer my competitive drive to positive outlets in business.
<p><u>Patterns</u> What patterns emerge in my life story?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have always been a leader and survivor. • I am not afraid of risks. • I have learned that God brings fruitfulness and wholeness out of pain and brokenness.
<p><u>God's Faithfulness</u> Where do I see God's faithful presence guiding my life?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God helped me through the pregnancy and abortion as a teenager. I know He has forgiven me and that I will meet my unborn child in heaven some day. • Coach Stife and Rich were gifts from God to me. • Where would I be without Lauren? I want to learn how to love her more and grow in our relationship.
<p><u>Implications</u> What do I learn about who God wants me to be and what He wants me to do in my future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not want to repeat the mistakes of my dad in my own family. I feel that any problems and issues in my marriage and family can be worked out. It is not worth running like my dad did. • I am a natural leader and entrepreneur. When I feel boxed up in a situation, I get bored and need change or I lose heart.
<p><u>Other Discoveries</u> Do I learn anything else from seeing my life turning points with all the high and low points?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am at a "What's Next?" juncture. My heart wants to live my life not for myself but for God and His Kingdom. I am open to going and doing whatever He wants me to do. • I'm eager to discover God's purpose and vision for my life.

As guides, we must trust the discovery process to lead toward clarity. Avoid premature problem solving or life calling clarification. The life-graph exercise is

simply one Chinese Spiral of perspective. The conversations you'll now create around talents and desires will add to this perspective.

Life Calling Perspective: Discovering Our God-given Talents

You have God-given talents. He gave some of them to you when you were born. Some people call these natural talents or abilities. In athletics, we say that a kid has God-given speed, jumping ability, or arm strength. In music, we say that a person has a God-given ability to listen to music and then play what he hears. Or we say that someone is a natural leader or natural actor. When we apply discipline, repetition, and practice to our natural talent, we become a master, expert, or professional in that area of expression. We all have natural talent, and God is the giver of all of it.

God also gives spiritual gifts to those in Christ at his discretion. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:4 that, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit." He doesn't forget anyone. "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines." (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

Both your natural talents and spiritual gifts come from God. They are his gifts to you. He gives them to you with the hope that you will use them in some kind of common-good expression, contribution and outcome in his world. If you are going to fully discover and live your life calling, then you must gain clarity on what gifts and talents he has given you.

The goal in this conversation is to guide another person to identify their three to five God-given core talents. Less is more here. We may have skills and abilities outside of these three to five core talents, but if we know our core talents we can become strategic in how we invest in them, optimize their potential, and leverage them for the common good of the world and the expansion of God's kingdom on earth.

The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 best captures the importance of this conversation. In the story, a master gives one servant five talents, another two talents, and third servant one talent. After a long time, the master returns to collect his investment. The first two servants gained a one hundred percent return on his investment (ROI). The third servant gained zero percent because he buried his talent out of fear for the master. He was severely reprimanded and what he had been given was taken from him and given to the first servant. Could it be that the one thing God wants us to do in our lifetime is to cultivate, grow, and apply the talent he's given for the common good of his world in order to get the highest return on his investment? If we're going to do this, we must first be clear on what the talent is that he has invested in us.

The following tool will help you guide others through a process to discover their God-given talents with a series of questions in the left-hand column. Use the statements and questions on each topic to create dialogue and insight. Like a detective, peel away the layers in each category to discover the underlying truth embedded in superficial responses.

- *Passions: What do you love to do?* We all love to spend our time and energy doing certain things. What do you love to do so much that when you do it—time speeds up? You can burn hours doing things you love and not realize it. For example, some love to build things, fix things, and learn how things work. Others love the world of thoughts and ideas. They love to read and debate and think about something from all different angles. Others love to compete in sports or participate in the arts.

When we are paid to do what we love, work is play. Ask the question: What do you love to do?

- *Drives: What fuels what you do?* Some are driven by results. Others by the process that yields the results. Some are driven by compassion. Others to end world hunger. Some are driven to build things and others to fix them. Some are driven to confront and overcome the impossible or break some kind of human record. Some are driven to contribute to the world in a way they deem vital and all-important. Others are driven to lead in some way, while others are driven to support and influence those who make primary decisions. Ask the questions: What sets you into motion, almost unconsciously? What drives you?

- *Obsessions: What can't you help but think about?* An obsession is something that we can't stop thinking about. It is like an octopus tentacle that has wrapped itself

around our brain, pulling our thinking toward the obsession. Ask questions like: Where does your thinking drift when it is free to do so? When the weight and pressure of the world is off your shoulders, what do you think about? Do you think about restoring, rebuilding, or inventing things? Do you think about helping people? If so, how do you imagine yourself helping them? Do you think about engaging people in some way? If so, what are you doing? And where are you doing it? Oftentimes, we gravitate in our thinking toward zones of activity and contemplation roused by God's giftedness in us.

- *Qualities: How do others describe what you're good at?* Ask questions like: If I were to ask those who know you best to give me a handful of words that describe you, what do you think they would say? Here we want to discover what they actually say. For example, you may not feel that you have an inquisitive, sharp mind; but other people consistently tell you that they are amazed at how you think. Or other people may have told you that you listen very well or that you have an ability to teach complex concepts in a clear and understandable way. What have others told you over the years that you are good at?

- *Longings: What must you do or become in your lifetime?* As you contemplate the next two to three decades of your life, what do you long to do or become? There's most likely a few things that rise above all the possibilities. It is these things that would incite the harshest regret if you didn't become or do them. For some, they long to take the risk of launching their entrepreneurial business concept. For others, they long to invest their talent and time to help restore, rebuild, or remedy

something broken in their industry or community. Ask: What do you long to become or do in your lifetime that if you didn't do it, you'd really regret it?

- *Expectations: What do you expect from yourself and others?* As you engage each day, you expect certain levels of engagement and performance from yourself and from others. Some people expect to exceed their own expectations and for others to apply their best talent and energy to a project. Others expect to be fully present, to listen well and for others to do the same. Others expect transparent communication and calm under pressure. Ask: What do you expect from yourself and from others?

- *Achievements: What are you proud of that you've accomplished?* In this conversation, I want people to brag about their achievements. Ask: What are you proud of that you've done or contributed to that may or may not ever show up on a resume? These things could include projects you've participated in, relationships that you've created, family successes, work related breakthroughs, educational achievements, etc. What are you proud of that you've achieved in your life so far?

Once you have captured the details from these questions, guide the conversation to summarize key themes that weave their way through the details column. In the provided example, you see themes of primary leadership, communication, entrepreneurship, and creating things. Once the themes are captured, summarize them into three to five core talents in the right-hand column.

My Core Talents

What has God gifted me to do?

Key Questions	Details	Themes	My Core Talents
PASSIONS What do I love to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	•	1.
DRIVES What fuels what I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	•	2.
OBSESSIONS What do I constantly think about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	•	3.
QUALITIES How do others describe what I'm good at?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	•	4.
LONGINGS What must I do or become in my life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	•	5.
EXPECTATIONS What do I expect from myself and from others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • 	•	5.
ACHIEVEMENTS What I am proud of that I've accomplished?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 		

My Talents—Fictional Example

What has God gifted me to do?

Key Questions	Details	Themes	My Core Giftedness
PASSIONS What do I love to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about history and contemplate the nature of God. • Create return on value in business invest-and invest in God's Kingdom. • Design and build homes and developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am good at strategy and identifying new opportunities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Entrepreneurial Creator</u>: I have the ability to find new investment opportunities with high-yield return on investments. 2. <u>Communicator</u>: I have a gift to teach complex concepts in clear, compelling deliveries. 3. <u>Primary Leader</u>: I am gifted to lead teams and have the experience to do so. 4. <u>Bulldozer</u>: I have the skill to build and fix things, and can do so by leading a project or doing it myself.
DRIVES What fuels what I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensing out new opportunities and figuring out how to seize them. • Bringing ideas to life. • Leading teams to accomplish the impossible. 		
OBSESSIONS What do I constantly think about?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding good investments with a good return rate. • Negotiating deals. • Building trust and team. • The world economy and market. • Best business practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am an effective team leader. 	
QUALITIES How do others describe what I'm good at?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That I work good with people. • That I'm a savvy businessman. • That I'm a clear communicator. • That I'm a good, strategic thinker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a clear communicator. 	
LONGINGS What must I do or become in my life?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be faithful and balanced in my marriage. • Be fully engaged with my kids. • Take some risks to pursue my entrepreneurial drive. • Help bring entrepreneurial thinking and growth to impoverished, under educated parts of the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a gift to find strong return on investments. 	
EXPECTATIONS What do I expect from myself and from others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full engagement • Team collaboration and hearing various perspectives. • Justice: doing the right thing and bringing justice to things that are unjust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am good fixing things with my hands and figuring out how to do so. 	
ACHIEVEMENTS What I am proud of that I've accomplished?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped our church save thousands of dollars on its building project. • Leading the building crew on the missions trip in Brazil. • Helping 85 year-old Mrs. Abers get her furnace fixed. • Teaching next level leadership to the international siter company when I worked in my last job. andw they can know him. 		

Life Calling Perspective: Discovering Our God-Induced Desires

Discovering what God has written on our heart is one of the most difficult things for most to see and clarify. Wounds, sin, years of status-quo living, boredom, living other's dreams for our lives, fear of failure, and a myriad of other things can silence and put layer-upon-layer over our hearts.

The following tool is designed to help you begin to peel away these layers and expose what's in a person's heart. Follow these guidelines that explain the column headings on the heart discovery tool.


- **Heart Probes.** Address the categories and ask the questions in the left hand column and write the responses from a person in the next column. Because story is a primary language of the human heart, many of the probes focus on stories, movies or other artistic outlets that rouse one's heart to life. These probes are designed to help one identify what they prefer and enjoy from different angles of interest. Ask questions like: What Bible stories stir the most emotion in you? What Bible characters do you relate to the most? What movies and characters are your all-time favorites? What are your favorite sports, artwork, leaders, and heroes? Other probes help one to identify the specifics about their dreams as a kid, their hopes for the future, what they would do if they knew they wouldn't fail, and what they ultimately care about as well as how they want to be remembered after they die. Capture all of this content in the "Specifics" column.

- **Themes.** In this column, ask questions like: When you look at that which stirs your heart and ask why, what themes emerge? Do you see any similar traits or patterns in your answers? You will need to inject your insights to the degree needed to help

one see these themes. For example, one might discover a heart for the underdog, disadvantaged, or poor. Others might see a theme for tackling large and seemingly impossible odds. Others might discover a heart for the marketplace or restoring something gone awry in their industry. Be as specific as you can in describing these themes.

- **My Heart.** Now write one sentence or phrase that captures the essence of the themes identified. Again, you'll need to guide one to the degree they need to create this statement. For example, you might discover a person has a heart to teach inner-city youth through sports and after school activities. You might discover a heart to bring one's faith into their company through their influence. You might discover a burden to start an initiative that would bring some kind of restorative outcome to an industry. Take time with this statement. It should stir an energy and excitement within the one you are guiding because it is tapping into God's burden in their heart. As guides, it's more important that the statement resonates with the one we are guiding than for it to resonate with us.

My Heart
My Heart's Burden Is For The World

Heart Probes	Specifics	Themes	My Heart
My Favorite Biblical Stories & Characters		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • • • • • • • 	
My Favorite Movies and Characters			
My Favorite Sports and/or Art			
My Favorite Authors/ Writers			
My Favorite Leaders			
My All Time Heroes			
What I Would Do If I Knew I Wouldn't Fail			
What I Dreamed To Be and Do As A Kid			
What I Hope To Be and Do In My Future			
What I Ultimately Care About			
How I Hope Others Describe Me When I Die			

My Heart—Fictional Example
My Heart's Burden Is For The World

Heart Probes	Specifics	Themes	My Heart
My Favorite Biblical Stories & Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David: His confrontation of Goliath and courageous leadership. Peter: His passion and risk-taking. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A "freedom of the heart" theme. The need for challenge and adventure in my life. The desire to help other entrepreneurs to optimize their potential and love and serve God, especially the disadvantaged and underprivileged. To give my love and life freely to my kids and wife. 	<p>My heart's burden is to give my love and life freely to my family and friends and to use my talents to help young, disadvantaged entrepreneurs to explore and pursue their dreams and ideas.</p>
My Favorite Movies and Characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Braveheart: William Wallace and "Freedom" Lord of the Rings: Sam Wise Gamgee It's A Wonderful Life 		
My Favorite Sports and/or Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soccer: The "team" and competition of it. Football: The energy and pace. Monet: Colors and Setting 		
My Favorite Authors/Writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eldredge: He stirs my heart Grisham: How he weaves faith into fiction Coelho: The Alchemist and life journey 		
My Favorite Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winston Churchill: Never, Never Give Up! Abraham Lincoln: Equality of all. George W. Bush: Conviction & Freedom theme 		
My All Time Heroes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My dad: his perseverance and faithfulness Jesus: gave up his will for the Father's William Wallace: Gave the commoners a vision for freedom. 		
What I Would Do If I Knew I Wouldn't Fail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an international company that would train third world entrepreneurs to start businesses. 		
What I Dreamed To Be and Do As A Kid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To play professional football. To find the love of my life, travel the world and have a large family. 		
What I Hope To Be and Do in My Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a close, loving family with many grandchildren, to pour my life into younger entrepreneurs and share my faith with them. 		
What I Ultimately Care About	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loving those who God has put in my life: my family and friends. Using my resources and leadership to help young, disadvantaged entrepreneurs to take the risk and have the opportunity to pursue their concepts. 		
How I Hope Others Describe Me When I Die	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He kept the big picture in mind. He used his talents and resources to help those who without an advocate. 		

Discovering Our Life Calling: Bringing It All Together

It is now time to create a short, crisp, compelling, and unique life calling statement. Less is more here. Simple is better. Ideally, we want the statement to be twelve words or less. This sounds like a daunting task to many, but remember we are not trying to create this statement out of a vacuum. We have a lot of perspective up to this point and a process to help craft this statement. Here's how it works:

1. Create a long list of verbs and nouns/objects (see the following chart): Where do we get these verbs and nouns/objects? From the Talent Discovery and Heart Discovery tools. Go through each statement on each chart and write any verbs and nouns/objects in the appropriate columns. See the following example for an

illustration. These are long lists or brainstorm lists. Don't over think it here, just list out the words.

2. Ask the person you are guiding to identify their top three verbs and top three nouns/objects when asked the question, "What must I be and do?" For some, this is easy and fast. Others need more guidance. You can use the life graph as a reference point, identifying events that support a highlighted verb or noun/object of that verb.

3. Now it's time to wordsmith. Guide the one you are helping to begin to mix and match the highlighted verbs with nouns/objects. Create a long list of six to ten phrases and/or partial sentences in the center column. Once you have exhausted the combinations of highlighted verbs and nouns/objects, move on to combinations of verbs and nouns/objects that were not highlighted. Feel free to add descriptive words not on the long lists in order to create coherent phrases, partial sentences and even full sentences. Once you have six to ten options, ask them to pick their top two statements when they think of what they must be and do.

4. Combine the two highlighted statements into one life calling statement in the bottom box of the tool. Less is more here. Express the thought as simply and succinctly as you can. You may have several editions that become clearer and sharper with each version.

5. Now, look to see that the statement aligns with the flow of their storyline, their God-given talents, and God-induced desires. The statement should flow with their life graph and make sense from a story perspective. And the statement should describe the intersection of their God-given talents and God-induced desires. It

should answer the question, "To what end?" And this answer should play a role in God's kingdom on earth: for example it might respond to something that is broken among humanity or in creation in some way by making it better. It might bring hope to those who are hopeless and helpless. It might be to create a new type of common good that fills a void in order to help contribute to a broken part of God's world.

6. Now, read the statement out loud. It should evoke a smile while bringing joy and affirmation from the person you are guiding. Again, what you think about it is not important here. What matters most is it aligns with the truth of the intersection of their God-given talents and God-induced desires and plays a role in expanding God's kingdom on earth in some way.

Discovering My Life Calling

(What God Wants Me To Be And Do)

My Life Calling		
Verb Long list	Verb and Noun/Object Combination Long List	Noun/Object Long List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn • Contemplate • Create • Invest • Design • Develop • Lead • Find • Negotiate • Communicate • Help • Collaborate • Engage • Teach • Love • Pursue • Use • Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead others to help create opportunities • Create value that helps others have opportunity • Pursue opportunities that create value and justice • Build companies that bring value to communities and create opportunities for others • Teach others to bring value and create opportunity • Develop others to create value and opportunity in their world • Collaborate with others to build communities that provide value and opportunity for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value • Developments • Opportunities • Ideas • Teams • Investments • Deals • Practices • People • Others • Strategy • Risks • Perspectives • Justice • Poverty • Poor • Freedom • Relationships • Family
<p>My Life Calling (Why God Wants Me To Be And Do)</p>	<p>I'm called to collaborate with others to build communities that provide value and opportunity for all.</p>	

In this illustration, this fictional person's talents and desires intersect to make communities healthier. Does this person have the talents to do this? When you look at his talent discovery, the answer is yes. Does he have the passion and burden

to do it? When you look at his heart discovery, the answer is absolutely yes. Does this statement play a role in expanding God's Kingdom on earth? Again the answer is yes. Communities that foster opportunity, creativity, and value for those who live in them play a part in God's greater purposes for his creation.

I mentioned earlier that I call myself a "Mapmaker." I'm called to help others discover and live their life calling. I do this with organizations and individuals. It is my greatest joy. Does this contribute to God's kingdom on earth? Absolutely. When God uses me to help another person or organization gain clarity on their calling and to create maps or plans to live it out, his kingdom expands as they focus on their role in his greater unfolding story.

I know people who are called to start companies that create jobs for others, and I know people who are called to plant churches in new communities. I know people who are called to tackle the diminishing clean, water supply in the world, and I know people who are called to serve the visions of other primary leaders by building teams to execute toward the vision. I know people who are called to teach and mentor high-potential young leaders, and I know people who are called to teach kids with learning disabilities. I could go on and on.

Does God call everyone to a unique contribution to His world? Yes. Does it always align with our work and occupation? No. But in lands of opportunity like America, I believe it is more possible to align our calling with our occupation than ever before. We'll get into this more later.

For now, it is important that we help a person gain clarity on God's unique calling on their life—what he created them to be and do.

Life Vision Discovery: Where I'm Headed

When we envision something, we see it in our mind's eye before we make it real. Our God-created imagination comes to life. Artists envision their art before they create it. Architects and builders do the same. Everything made by humankind in the world was conceived by human imagination before it was created.

One's life vision is the imagining forward of one's life calling. It's as if we are fast-forwarding the DVD of our calling into the future, pushing the pause button, and then describing what we see on the screen. When one's life vision is rooted in the truth of one's calling and that calling is grounded in the truth of how God defines them (identity) and why he created them (purpose), it is realistic to believe that the vision can unfold. When one's vision for life is not rooted in these truths, we call that a delusion or pipedream.

Does this mean that everything expressed in one's life vision will unfold as stated... of course not. We can't predict the future, but we can create it. The power of a life vision statement rooted in the truth of one's calling is that it creates a word picture for us to move toward. It takes on a gravitational pull and lures us toward it.

The concept of numbering our days and having a vision of our future that is hopeful is a biblical concept. For example, David reflects in Psalm 39:4-5: "Show me, Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure." Proverbs 23:18 says, "There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off."

Creating a conversation around imaging one's life calling played out into the future causes us to appropriately number our days and put into words God's future hope for us.

When I guide another into the life vision conversation, I ask them to tap into their imagination. Their current age dictates how far in the future I ask them to imagine. If they are thirty, I'll ask them to imagine themselves at the age of sixty. If they are fifty, I ask them to imagine themselves at seventy. A good two to three decades forward typically works and creates the right kind of thinking. Then I ask them to begin to describe how they see themselves as a person—what is their frame of mind and heart. Are they a bitter, old, and grumpy or do they see themselves as content, thankful, and encouraging? What does their relationship with God look like? What does their marriage and relationship with their spouse, children, and grandchildren look like? If they have lived out their calling (with all of its twists and turns) for the next two to three decades, what will they have become and what will they have done? What does their portfolio of contribution to the world look like?

Use the following tool to put into words what a person envisions for their future if they faithfully pursue and live out their life calling. In the first part, brainstorm and bullet point the conversation. At the bottom of the chart, summarize the content into one long sentence or string of sentences. The final statement should create a word picture of the one's calling lived out in the future. Because of the descriptive nature of vision statements, life vision statements are typically longer in nature, unlike life calling statements (see the fictional example).

Discovering My Life Vision

(Where I'm Headed)

My Life Vision (What I see in the future if I faithfully live out my life calling in the next 20-30 years.)	
Brainstorm	
Vision Statement	

Discovering My Life Vision (Fictional Example) (Where I'm Headed)

My Life Vision (What I see in the future if I faithfully live out my life calling in the next 20-30 years.)	
Brainstorm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see myself more rooted and grounded in God's love and learning how to love others in practical, giving ways. • I see myself more content and at peace with my life and how I think, live and relate. • I see my marriage grounded in God's love for us and our love for each other. I see us enjoying our kids and grandkids and enjoying the presence of one another. • I see communities that I've played a part in creating with others that provide opportunities for others to pursue the development of their gifts and the pursuit of their passions. • I see communities that I've helped actually build as a general contractor, collaborating with city officials and social agencies that are designed for and functioning as examples of thoughtful design that promotes value and opportunity for everyone who lives in them. • I see communities that have been conceived and launched from the ministry of our church that serve the needs of the less fortunate in our city and that help those with less opportunity to pursue their dreams through practical skill development and education. • I see a community of friends around us whom we have grown older with and who encourage each other in all that we do.
Vision Statement	<p style="text-align: center;">I see myself grounded in God's love and loving others out His love for me. I see myself at peace, content and enjoying my marriage, kids and grandkids. I see a portfolio of different communities that I have helped conceive and create—communities that bring value to our society and provide opportunities for growth for those who live in them.</p>

Life Strategy Discovery: How I'll Get There

When we have created a word picture of where we're headed (our vision) and it's rooted in the truth of what we must be and do (our calling), we can now think strategically and ask ourselves, "What are the strategic steps that I must take to move toward my vision while staying true to my calling?"

At this point in the process, we want to guide people to think strategically, not tactically. We want to help them identify the strategic stepping-stones that will lead them toward the stated vision. They may need healthier personal rhythms that cultivate physical and/or spiritual health. They may need to rekindle their marriage relationship by pursuing and making time to be with their spouse. They may need to pursue additional education. They may need a strategy and plan to reengage their talents in their current occupation in order to bring some greater good to their company and industry. Or they may need to create an exit plan from their current work in order to move toward an emerging opportunity that is more aligned with their calling. We're looking for four to five strategic steps that move a person toward their vision and calling. Chart them on the following tool. An example is provided.

Discovering My Life Strategies (How I'll Get There)

Strategic Steps To Move Me Towards My Vision While Staying True To My Calling

-
-
-
-

Discovering My Life Strategies (Fictional Example) (How I'll Get There)

Strategic Steps To Move Me Towards My Vision While Staying True To My Calling

- Reinststate my physical and spiritual replenishment disciplines in order to cultivate physical health and to grow in my relationship with God.
- Take the initiative to rekindle my friendship with my wife by planning weekly time alone together and by planning quarterly trips with just the two of us.
- Get out of operations and focus my leadership impact in my company on the conceptual and design phases for the communities we build and hire a team around me that executes the designs.
- Become more of a community influencer by cultivating and leveraging my community network to collaborate building healthy communities together.
- Stay connected to my close friends and continue to stay open, honest and real.

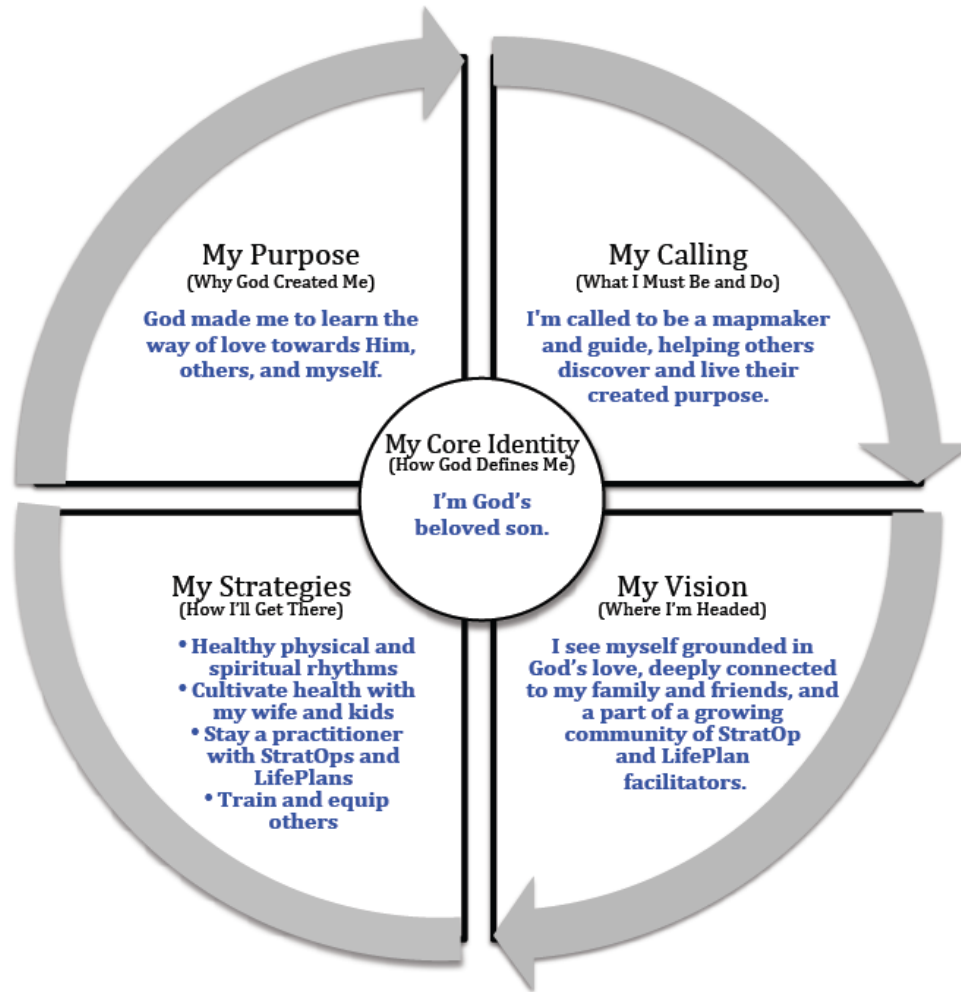
Bringing It All Together

It's now time to bring the key discoveries together in one visual that captures one's calling in the context of identity, purpose, vision, and strategies. I use the following tool to do this.



The following example is my own personal life calling summary. Am I fully living all of this right now? For the most part... yes. But there's always more I can do

to optimize this focus. These statements have evolved over the years for me and have progressively become clearer. At age fifty, this current version is a visual to keep me focused, and serves as a target for me to aim at for the next twenty-five years (or how every many years God gives me).



When I guide others through the discovery process, I emphasize that this is a first version draft. It's a starting point that can be refined, edited, and sharpened over time. As they learn to regularly manage and renew their calling, subsequent versions will increase in clarity. If you are old enough, you'll remember the Polaroid cameras of yesteryears whose film developed slowly before your very eyes. This

first draft is like that developing film. As we begin to pursue God's calling in our lives over time, the picture becomes clearer as we walk into it. So make the first version as clear as you can, knowing that later versions sharpen in clarity and focus.

Chapter 7

Phase 3: Owning

“If my life is surrendered to God, all is well.
Let me not grab it back, as though it were in peril
in His hand but would be safer in mine!”
-Elisabeth Elliot

“God is ready to assume full responsibility for
the life wholly yielded to Him.”
-Andrew Murray

“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup
be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”
-Jesus, Matthew 26:39



It is possible for a person to discover God’s calling on their life and never pursue it. We must receive, accept, and own what God has called us to be and do.

This process of fully owning our calling is different for each of us. I've seen some people own it immediately. These people are totally in and fully sold-out to going after God's calling once they discover it. I've seen others wrestle with their discovery for months, even years, until they embrace it and begin to experience the fullness of what it means. And I've seen some paralyzed for whatever reason and return to their former way of living, never to fully own that which God called them to be and do. God gives us a choice. We can choose to embrace his calling on our lives or not, but he never forces us to own it.

Tom Paterson taught me the Commitment Pyramid.



There are many things that we could do. The world is filled with so much opportunity, especially in the current information and digital era. In fact, too much opportunity can paralyze us like a long menu of really great food at a great restaurant. At the bottom of this pyramid is the “I Could” level. As one looks at their discovered and clarified life calling, the attitude at this level is, “Yes, I could do that.” It’s an option among many choices. In the “I Should” layer, one declares that they really should move in the direction of their calling but doubt and other obstacles still cloud their resolve. In the “I Must” level, they are closer to full ownership but still haven’t crossed over the line. In the “I Will” layer, they have fully bought in. They are sold out to pursue their calling. They don’t know how it will all play itself out, but they have resolved in their will to fully embrace their calling and trust God in the process by learning to focus on it and build their life around it.

How do you cross over into the “I Will” category? Surrender. It’s the only portal to get there.

Surrender is not a hot topic among followers of Jesus. I don’t hear it talked about a lot, though it is getting more airtime these days. It is often misunderstood and misapplied. But the life and way of surrender is the only way to experience the fullness of freedom that we have as followers of Jesus and the only way to move forward in our journey of understanding and living God’s unique calling on our life.

A few years ago in Grants Pass, Oregon, Tom Paterson facilitated a simple “Surrender Moment” with me and five Directors from one of my client companies. He handed each of us a blank sheet of paper, asked us to write anything on it that we needed to surrender to God, had us seal it in an envelope, and place it on a flip-chart

stand underneath a highlighted cross drawn on a large sheet of paper. He then read a simple prayer of surrender from his book “Deeper, Richer, Fuller.” Afterward, he asked us to retrieve our envelope. The content in the envelopes were not shared. We then moved into our morning training session.

This kind of experience does not usually happen in business meetings. The idea of integrating faith into the workplace treads on controversial ground. But if you were to cut Tom Paterson, he would bleed surrender. He lost his twelve year-old daughter, Debbie, to bone cancer in the 1970s. Tom Paterson Jr. drowned in Alaska at age thirty-six when his floatplane flipped on a lake. Jim Paterson was killed at age sixty-three when a car hit him while he was helping a woman with her broken-down car alongside a Virginia highway. Ginny Paterson, Tom’s first wife, died of lung cancer in the late 1990s after fifty-four years of marriage. Meryl Paterson, Tom’s second wife, died of Alzheimer’s some years later. He knows something about moving on from life’s losses. Today, you’d never glean from his view of life that he has suffered so much loss.

Suffering, pain, trials, and tests encounter all of us. But what allows a man who has experienced so much loss in his lifetime to have peace of mind and soul? To have no observable signs of bitterness toward God, life, other people, the world in general?

Surrender.

The concept of surrender evokes quitting, giving up to an enemy. It’s usually applied to competition or combat. “The enemy surrendered.” “The team gave up.”

Surrender also evokes the imagery of the defeated waving a white flag from the trenches of conflict, communicating, “We’re done. We’re laying down our guns.”

There is a time to fight for what is noble, right, honorable, and just. Where would the world be had Churchill and Roosevelt surrendered to the German dictator? Where would our nation be if Lincoln had quit in his relentless pursuit of the human dignity and freedom of the enslaved and the integrity of the Union?

What Tom talked about in the business meeting is a different kind of surrender... *A spiritual surrender.* (By the way, several of my client’s Directors told me later that Tom’s facilitation of the surrender moment was the highlight of the week for them.)

So what is surrender from a spiritual viewpoint? How does it fit in the journey of discovering and living God’s calling on our lives?

Before I unload my thoughts and learning’s, I must frame what I have to say by emphasizing that I’m in the process of really understanding the depths of this subject. The topic of surrender is worthy of your own study, and I encourage you to plunge into it on your own. After fifty years of living as well as through my work of guiding others to discover and live God’s calling on their lives, here’s my key learning’s so far:

1. Surrender entrusts something I am hanging on to, to God, and believing, when compared to what I am holding on to, he has something far better to replace it with.

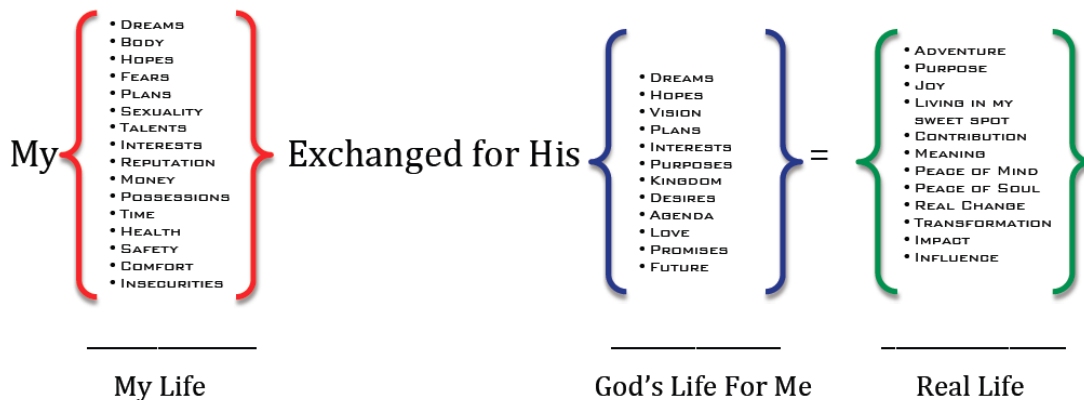
What might these “somethings” be? Certainly, fears of all kinds: fear of failure, fear of losing something or someone, fear of not pleasing someone, fear of finances, fear of not having health insurance, fear of my future, fear of what others might think of

me, fear of my health. Fear has so many faces, doesn't it? It's the great paralyzer of dreams and callings. Then there's all the other "somethings" that fall into the bucket of unhealthy self-indulgences. Too much of anything can become destructive. Think about the things that end up paralyzing your growth, choke the life out of you, master your mind and time, and threaten the full activation of your life's calling. Bottom line: when we give up the lesser things, God replaces it with far greater things.

2. Surrender is an internal transaction between my human spirit and God's Spirit.

It's a mystery and truth that I choose to believe: God's Spirit lives in my body. Crazy concept, isn't it? But true. And so the language and interaction between what goes on in my head and heart is a spiritual connection between God and me. That's why real surrender is deeply personal between God and us. It happens in the core of our gut/spirit. It's either real or not. But when it is real, it is really real.

SURRENDER



3. Surrender often emerges out of life's losses, brokenness, failures, sufferings, and a self-discovered deep disgust with one's current life path and way of life. If you breathe, you will take your hits in life. Death will come your way. Loss will confront you. Some kind of failure and suffering will knock on your door and enter your space. Do you know someone who has had more than their share of life's hardships and yet possess no sign of bitterness toward God and others? I do. Do you know others who have grown calloused, angry, and bitter at God and others for their own experiences with loss and failure? I do. You've heard the cliché: In everything we face, we can choose to become better or bitter. It's true. When we surrender to God the pain of life's dark realities, he guides us through losses, trials and suffering.

4. Surrender is a way of life. Surrender is motivated and energized through daily choices and challenges. Surrender is ongoing, with multiple layers that never bottom out. Surrender is a life practice of trusting God with the things outside of my control and moving toward that which is in my control. I used to be gripped by the fear of my future. What would I do for a living? Was there a place for me in the world? Did I have what it takes to succeed? Could I provide for my family? Did I have any skills that others would want? For the most part, I'm free of those fears and worries. I have learned to yield my talents, dreams, and contributions to God, to be guided by him and his presence in my life. I'm still concerned about my family: their physical and spiritual health, their futures, and the fulfillment of their dreams. I'm learning to entrust these concerns into God's control and guidance, exchanging fear, anxiety, worry and an acclivity to lesser things for God's peace of mind and soul.

5. Surrender leads to freedom of mind, spirit, relationships, and creativity.

Surrender leads to real freedom--that's an oxymoron, isn't it? In God's culture, it's true. Jesus said, "If you want life, you must die." So it makes sense that if we want real freedom in our heads and hearts then we must surrender all of our concerns in this short, little life to the one who created us in the first place. When this happens, we are free to travel the path of discovering and living God's call on our life. If I'm preoccupied with self-indulgence and driven by self-absorption, then my capacity to optimize my talents, pursue my calling, sow seeds of life into the lives of others, and bring a sense of restoration to a part of God's broken world is increasingly minimized and paralyzed. But with each healthy extraction of my self-centeredness and unhealthy indulgences, God's presence expands in my life, creativity increases, and the joy of giving expands.

Out of all the great messages I heard at Promise Keepers over seventeen years from nearly two-hundred different speakers, I have not forgotten a message by Gary Smalley delivered at the now-destroyed Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis, Indiana. He had called me the week before with one of his many creative ideas. He wanted to drive a hearse into the dome, around the circumference of the floor, and stop it in front of the stage. He wanted six men in black and white tuxedos to remove a real oak casket from the hearse and carry it up the stairs onto the stage and open the lid. He would take it from there. And he did.

He told 60,000 men that day that he was going to talk about how he had learned to die to himself, and how he had learned to surrender his life and be free of the controlling mastery of anything other than God. He explained that his message

was wrapped in an acrostic, a word without vowels. He spelled it out: F-R-M-P-T-H.

I'll never forget what FRMPTH stands for:

- F--Future^[SEP]
- R--Reputation^[SEP]
- M--Money^[SEP]
- P--Possessions^[SEP]
- T--Time^[SEP]
- H--Health^[SEP]

He explained each letter of his acrostic with a story from his own life and some kind of visual prop that represented the story. After he finished a story about each letter in the acrostic, he threw prop into the casket. For example, he told a personal story about how he had learned to surrender his future to God, represented by a letter he had written. Then he wadded up the letter and threw it into the casket. Then he told a story about how he had learned to surrender his reputation to God and threw the prop representing surrender into the casket. The same scenario played out with his story about money, his possessions, his time, and his health. That list pretty much cuts to the core of the things that can lock their death grip around our souls and strangle the life out of us, doesn't it?

Every year, between Christmas and New Year's, I rewrite my "Letter of Surrender" to God as part of my LifePlan update and renewal. For years, I have used FRMPTH as an outline guide upon which to reflect. I've added other things to FRMPTH, like my family, my sexuality, my talents, and my dreams.

The bottom-line is that a fully surrendered life is the freest life of all.

My dad taught me that we can only surrender at any given time what we know to be true about ourselves to what we know to be true about God. When I guide others to discover and live their life calling, I ask them to write a letter of surrender to God based on what they know to be true of their life currently and what they know to be true of God currently. I preface the assignment with my thoughts on surrender, my experience with it, and give them the Gary Smalley FRMPATH acrostic as a framework to write. I emphasize that surrender is a way of life and that we will never fully pursue God's calling until we have gone through the portal of surrender.

I don't request to read someone's letter of surrender. If they want to read it to me, it's a gift. Ultimately, it's between them and God. As a guide, speak from your own active experience with surrender and use the following tool to guide another to begin this surrender conversation with God.

Letter Of Surrender

Date:

Dear God,

Chapter 8

Phase 4: Focusing

“See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.”
- Paul in Colossians 4:17

"I don't care how much power, brilliance or energy you have, if you don't harness it and focus it on a specific target, and hold it there you're never going to accomplish as much as your ability warrants."
- Zig Ziglar



It is possible to discover your life calling and completely own it through a process of surrender and still not live it. One must learn the art and discipline of focusing their best time, resources, and energy on their calling. We must expect distractions and opposition to our calling and become equipped and skilled sifting

out any clutter and learning to say 'no' and 'yes' strategically. In this phase, I will give you some of my learning's on the topic of focus and some tools to help you guide others to focus on their calling.

I realize I'm moving into territory that has been abused by some people. I've seen individuals neglect their calling as a spouse or parent in the name of their vocational calling. Let's be clear: God's calling on our life applies to all of our life, not just our vocation or career. His calling applies to our relationships at home and to the communities we live in. His calling always transcends the work we do for pay and applies to all areas of living. So we dare not neglect common sense applications of our calling as an excuse for work-a-holism or ministry. It is possible to faithfully live God's calling in all areas of our life.

The first thing we want to do is filter current activity and options through layers of perspective that were clarified in the discovery phase. We call this the Life Perspective Filter in LifePlanning. The following tool is a simplified version of it. To use it, first identify a list of any current opportunities that have surfaced in your dialogue with one another. Add to this list your current vocational role. I focus this conversation on one's vocation since this is the primary arena of confusion when it comes to aligning God's calling to the vocational path we pursue. Once we have a list of one's current vocational role and any other viable vocational options, we pick the top four. I like one of these top four to be the current role since we need to see how it aligns with the discovered perspective.

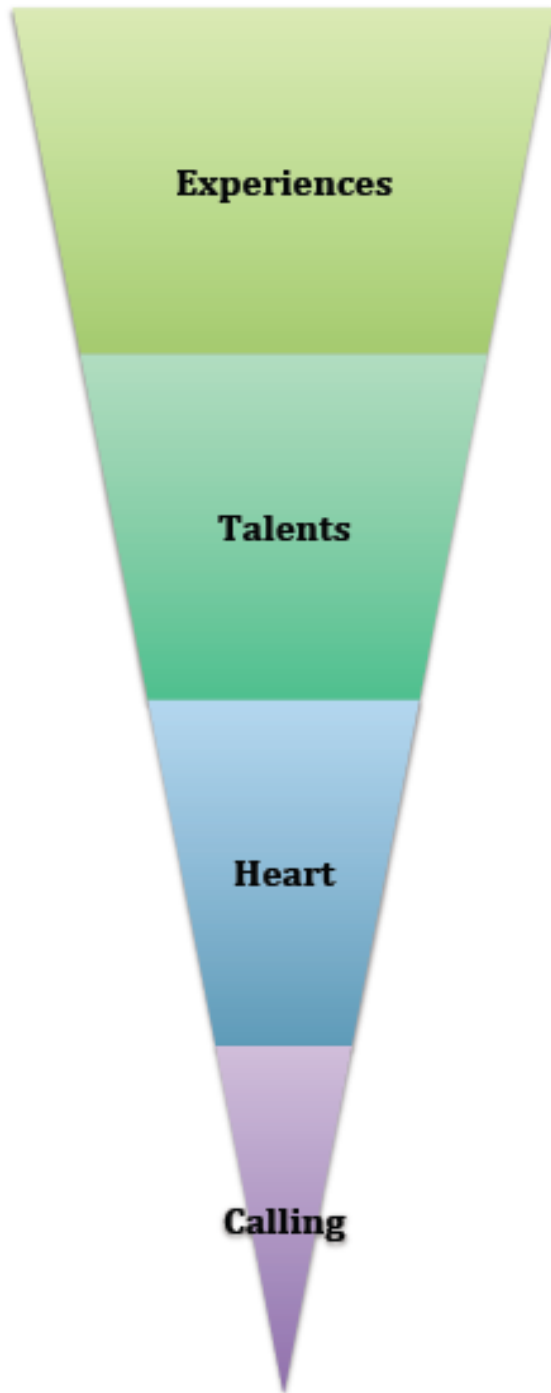
Then I explain that we are going to run each option through four layers on this filter and rate each bubble red, yellow, or green. A green means that it has good

overall alignment. It doesn't have to be perfect to be green, but it must be a good match. A red means it does not align. It's not a good match. A yellow means that it aligns in part. There is a degree of caution with a yellow. We do this for each of the four options.

I like to work from top to bottom on this filter addressing one vocational option at a time—starting with option “A”. The “Experiences” layer asks the question: Based on your life graph and experiences so far in life, do you have the necessary experience to match this vocational option? The “Talents” layer asks the questions: To what percentage are your talents tapped into and activated in this role? If they are tapped into at a percentage of seventy-five percent or higher, it's a green. If it's fifty to seventy-five percent, it's a yellow. Below fifty percent is a red. The “Heart” layer asks the question: How does this assignment align with what you discovered about your heart? If I were to put a gauge on your heart, what does the gauge read when you think about this vocational option? If it stays flat-lined, it is a red. If it goes to full throttle, it's a green. In between is ho-hum, and a yellow. The “Calling” layer asks: How does this option align with your calling and vision? Does it allow you to follow your calling and advance it forward toward your life vision? If it does, it's a green. If not, it's a red. If it does in part, it's a yellow.

See the hypothetical example as an illustration of how a completed filter tool might look.

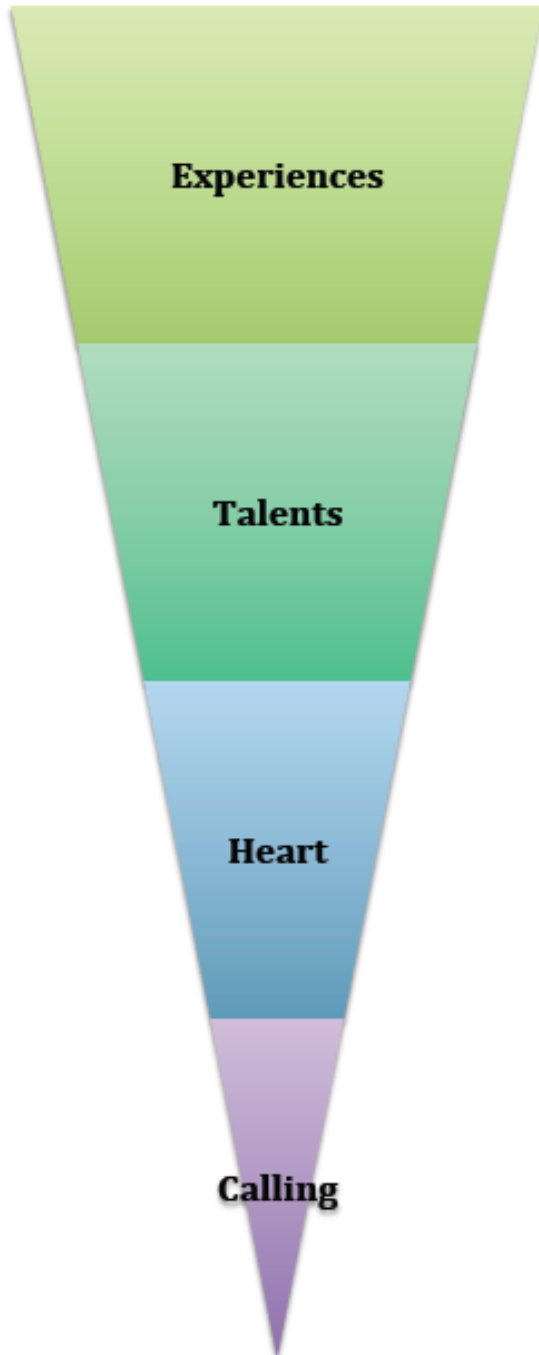
Life Perspective Filter



A	B	C	D
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Results

Life Perspective Filter



	A Current role as VP of Sales	B GM role in Current Company	C Start My Own Company	D Partner- ship Oppor- tunity
Experiences	Green	Green	Yellow	Green
Talents	Green	Green	Green	Red
Heart	Red	Green	Green	Yellow
Calling	Red	Green	Green	Red
Results	Red	Green	Yellow	Red

After we rate each bubble for each layer in each option, I communicate that one red means an option is dead. Really? Yes, really. With one possible exception—a red in the experiences layer when all the other layers are green. That is because we can gain experience over time if we have the talent, heart, and are called to do it. But think about this for a minute: Why would you want to invest the best of your time, talent, heart, and energy into something that is a red in any of these areas? You don't. If it's red, it's dead. Through a process of elimination in the illustration, options A and D died, B and C survived. In this case, this person would need an exit strategy from their current position and a plan to research and pursue options B and C (and any other options that might surface in the future). We have to eliminate options that do not match who we are and what we're called to do. Use this tool to guide a person to filter out options that are not a match.

The second focusing tool helps us determine what we must keep doing, what we must start doing, and what we must stop doing as we consider our life calling and vision. There are some things discovered that need attention, energy and activation. If we're going to move toward embracing and living our calling—over time—we need to start doing these things. There are other things being done that are the right things to do, and they need to continue to be done. There are other things that must stop. They are drainers and distractions. See the following tool to guide the conversation around these three categories and capture pertinent insights.

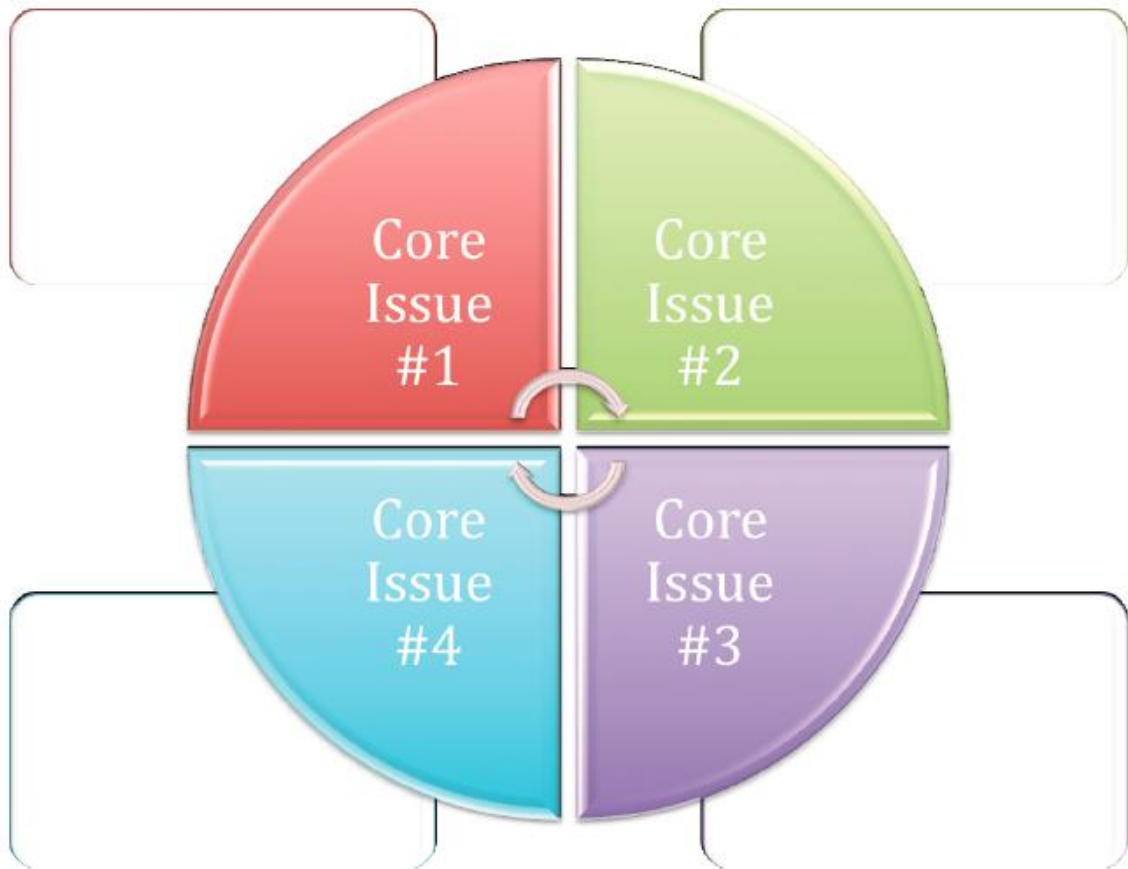
Focus Tool

What I Must Keep Doing	What I Must Start Doing	What I Must Stop Doing

It's now time to create a focused action plan. To do so, I like to first create an action long list on scrap paper. To create this long list, I work through each chart and tool starting with the last one completed and work my way backward to the first one. You will find action steps begin to repeat themselves as you create this long list. My goal in doing this is to identify the various "buckets" or categories that need attention and some kind of action. You will most likely end up with six to eight of these "buckets." Any sub points under each "bucket" can be captured on the long list. These will become action steps within that action category. Once you have a completed action long list, guide the person to identify their top four most important action steps to take. We call these WIN's, an acrostic for "What's

Important Now.” We can’t do everything at once. We must prioritize and focus on the most important things before us—trusting that if we do these things, we will move toward our vision and begin to fulfill our life calling. List these top four WIN’s on the following Core Issue WIN Wheel. The action categories that did not make the top four, can be put in a queue (a holding bucket) and added to the W.I.N. Wheel when one of the top four WIN’s are successfully accomplished.

My Core Issue W.I.N. Wheel (What’s Important Now)



Now, on the following tool, guide the conversation to create an objective for each core issue. An objective should be verb-driven and identify the desired outcome of the activity. For example: “To create a robust business plan to develop and bring to market my new technology platform.” Or, “To identify ways in my industry in which I can create win-win opportunities for the labor pool and business owners.” Or, “To develop an exit strategy and plan from my current job that does not burn bridges and that positions me to move and start my own company.” You get the point. Objective statements are action oriented.

Then identify the next steps for each core issue. Next steps are tactical in nature. If accomplished, the objective is accomplished. These action steps are the necessary tactical stepping-stones—taken from the action long list that you’ve already created—and listed in a logical, sequential order. Each action step, like the objectives, should be written as a verb-driven action statement. You don’t necessarily need three next steps for each objective. You may have more or less than three. Then identify the timeline for the objective to either be started, completed or both started and completed. Most “Today’s Status” ratings are red in this first draft action plan (or they wouldn’t need attention). Use the following Focused Action Planning Tool to write out the top four core issue objectives and action steps for each one.

Key:

- In Trouble, Fix
- Caution, Watch Closely
- OK, Good Progress

Life Calling Action Plan

#	Core Issue Objectives	Next Steps	Timeline	Today's Status
1.		a.		○
		b.		○
		c.		○
2.		a.		○
		b.		○
		c.		○
3.		a.		○
		b.		○
		c.		○
4.		a.		○
		b.		○
		c.		○

You've now helped create a plan from which a person can begin to work. As a guide, I emphasize, plans don't self-execute. Even the best of plans must be worked and reworked. We'll address the practice and discipline of managing and renewing the plan in the next phase, the Renewing Phase.

Chapter 9

Phase 5: Renewing

“Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us,
and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.”
-David in Psalm 100:3

“Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him
king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.”
-John 6:15



As I study the way Jesus lived life on earth, I'm struck by a subtle theme of Jesus retreating to be alone, sometimes for nights and days, in the midst of a very busy pace and ministry (see Matthew 14:23 and John 6:15 as examples). How he slipped away from the crowds to be alone is a mystery. But he knew when his body

and soul needed to be alone with the Father and was not timid to do so. It's as if he knew when to sprint and when to rest. He certainly knew his own need to be renewed in solitude with the Father.

If we are going to faithfully fulfill God's calling on our life, we will need our own rhythms of renewal too. The specifics of these rhythms differ for each of us but are essential for all of us if we are going to keep the flames of God's calling on our lives well-stoked. Renewal and reflection allow us to adapt our calling to new seasons and to respond to unforeseen challenges. In this phase, I offer a few tools to help you guide others to create their own strategy for renewing God's calling on their life.

Replenishment Cycle

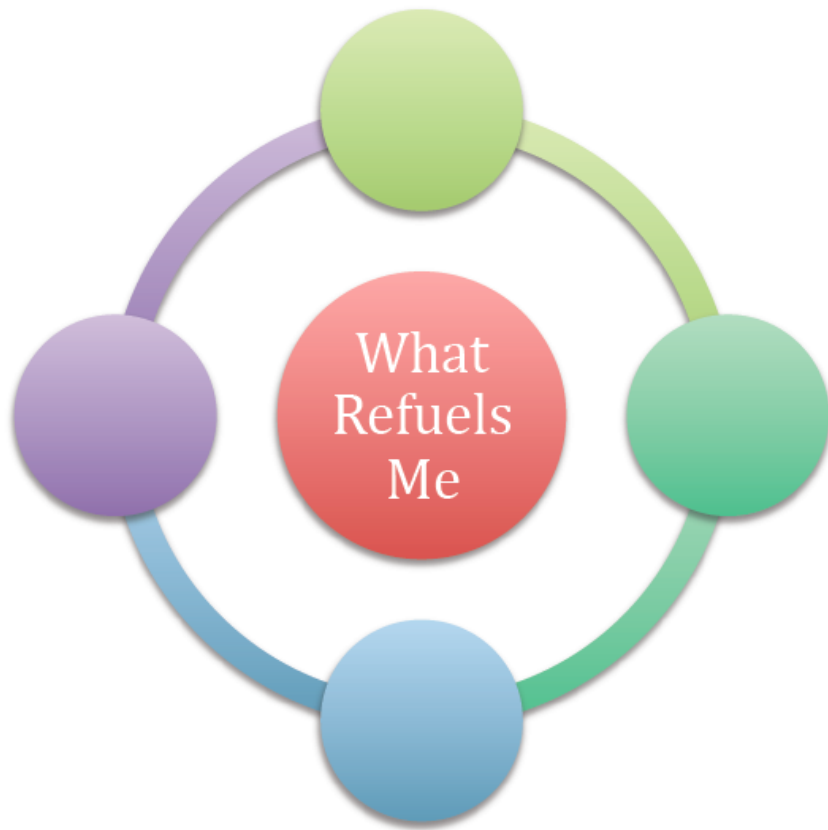
Information abounds in today's world on how to replenish the different areas of our life. The premise that I communicate when guiding some to think about this is if we do the right things in our personal life—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—then we'll stay focused on the right things, creatively adapt to change, and increase our creativity, productivity, and connectedness to people in the other areas of our life (family, work and friendships). It's a proven premise. The sprint-rest rhythm that Jesus lived validates this thinking.

In today's world of constant connectedness and stimulation through technology, discussing practices of silence, reflection, and refueling can feel like you're speaking a foreign language to someone. If we are going to stay connected to our calling, we must identify and practice rhythms of renewal that replenish us

physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. It is in these practices, that we hear his Spirit whisper to our human spirit. Here, we reaffirm God's calling, and discover deeper layers to its applications and make adjustments to how it is expressed when change comes our way.

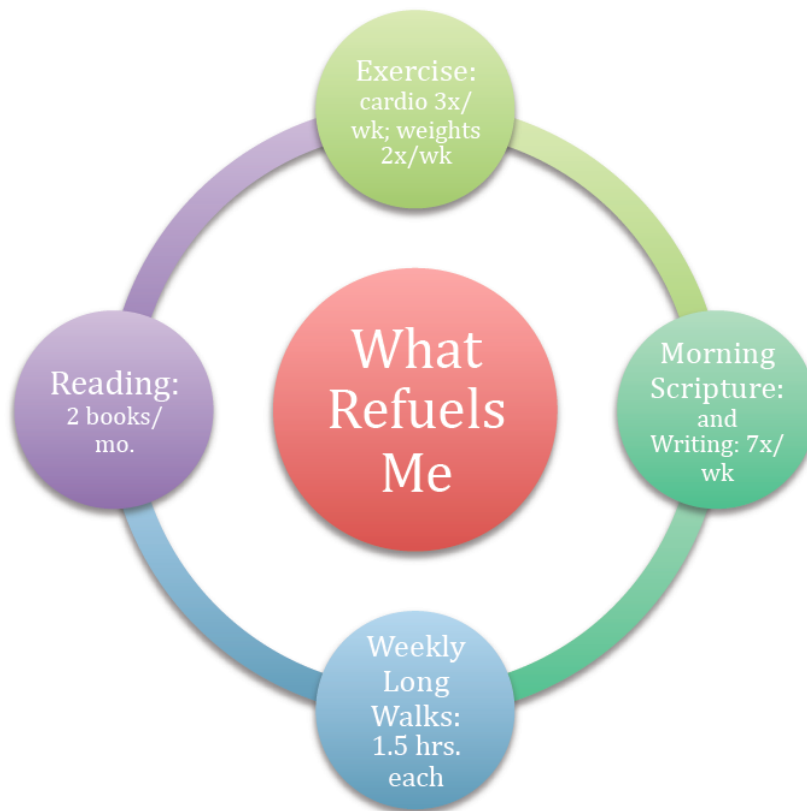
To help one think in this manner, I use the following Replenishment Cycle Tool. The tool is intended to guide a person to create a first draft version that they can begin to experiment with and edit as needed. Whatever gets on their replenishment cycle must refuel them physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually (thus the acrostic PIES). It must put more fuel in their so-called fuel tank so that they have the energy to more fully activate their life calling. See the tool and example to illustrate.

Replenishment Cycle



P-Physical
I-Intellectual
E-Emotional
S-Spiritual

Replenishment Cycle-Example



P-Physical
I-Intellectual
E-Emotional
S-Spiritual

The example above is my current personal replenishment cycle. I've learned that if I rhythmically do these things, then I have more creativity, productivity, and energy to engage my work and be fully present with others. To make these things happen, I had to turn back my clock and go to bed earlier so that I could wake up earlier. I've come to treasure my early mornings (4:30 a.m.-7:00 a.m.). These are my replenishment hours when I read Scripture, write, read, and exercise. I usually take my long walks on the weekend—this is my time to reflect, ask God questions, and listen.

Note that less is more here. We want three to five things on our replenishment cycle, detailed out, that we can begin to put into practice. Some of

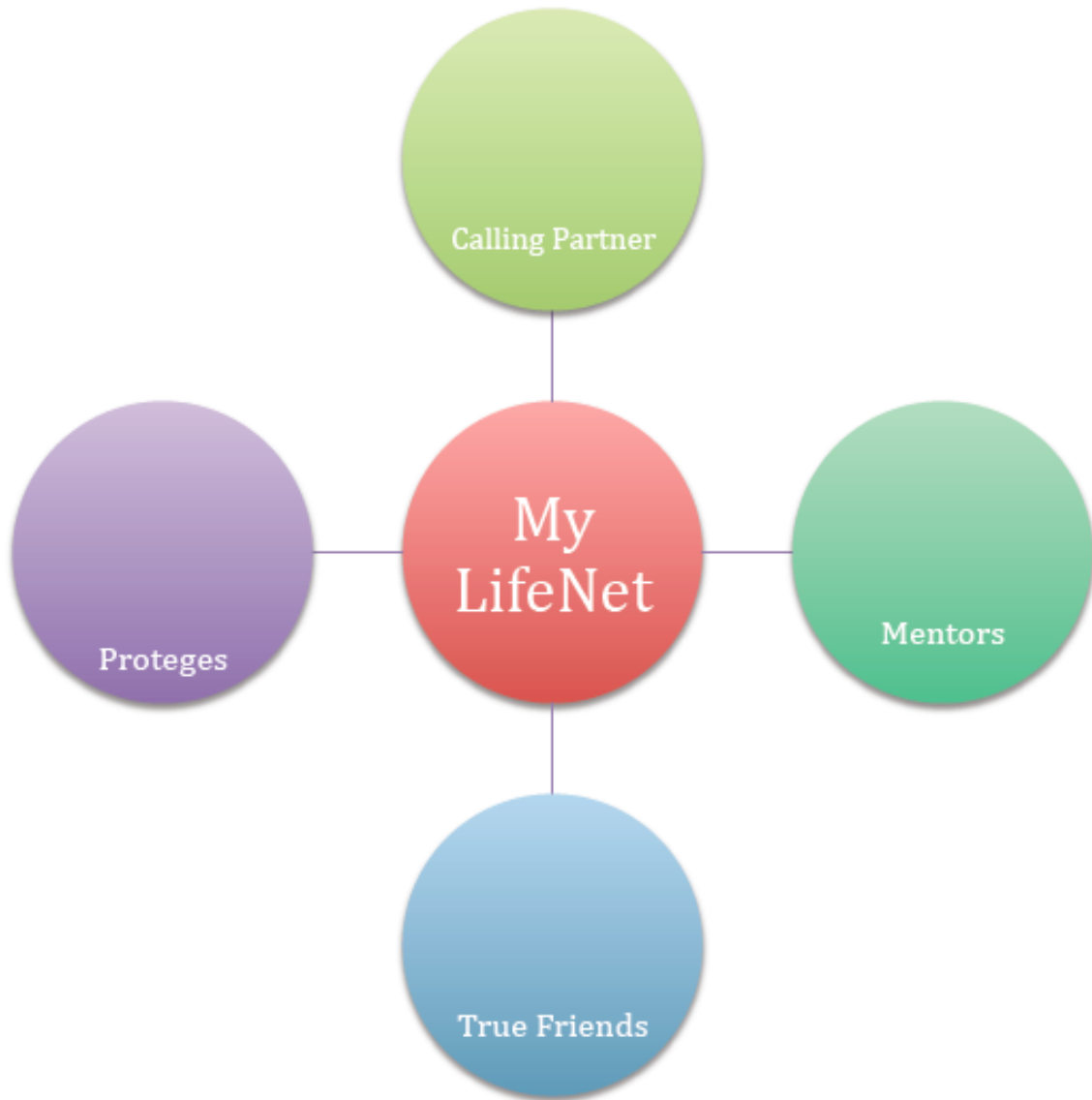
these things may be things we are currently doing, some may be things we used to do and want to reactivate, and others may be new things with which to experiment. Again, guide the conversation to create a first draft replenishment cycle and encourage experimentation and adaptation if something isn't working. This conversation assumes that you, as a guide, are actively working your own replenishment cycle and can speak from your own experience doing so.

Building A LifeNet

If we try to pursue and live our life calling alone, we're an easy target for opposition and will surely fall short. To keep our calling renewed and activated, we need to invite a select group of people into our calling. Here we identify a Life Calling Partner, Life Calling Mentors, True Friends, and Protégés. A Life Calling Partner is usually our spouse (if married) but may also be a person whom we know we'll be connected to for life. We meet at least annually with this person to focus on the discussion of our life calling, to sharpen it, renew it, and make any necessary adaptations to it. Life Calling Mentors are not necessarily connected to us for life. Often, we're connected to them for two to four years with a focused purpose of learning something specific from them that we need to grow. For example, some need a spiritual mentor. Others need a business mentor, or a marriage or parenting mentor. Some need a financial mentor or an entrepreneurial mentor. It is our responsibility to pursue and hunt down mentors. Waiting for them to pursue you will leave you frustrated. But if we pursue a mentor, it's essential to surface well-thought out questions that can extract important learning's from their life. True

Friends are two to four friends who know us fully and still love us. These friends speak truth and encouragement, sharpen us and keep God’s calling alive in us.

Protégés are typically younger in age than we are; one to three individuals whom we see potential in and are inclined to pursue and offer to them what we have learned in the pursuit of our calling. By helping them with their calling, we keep our own calling renewed. Use the following LifeNet Tool to guide the conversation to identify these individuals and write their names in the appropriate spaces.



Seasons Of Life

We must cultivate God's calling on our life, adapting and renewing it as we progress into new and different seasons of life. For example, our calling lived out in our thirties may be expressed very differently in our fifties or seventies—without changing the essence of our calling. Additionally, new turning points often require adaptation of our calling.

The need to renew and adapt our calling often emerges with a gnawing feeling in our gut and grows in intensity over the next twelve to eighteen months. This is a signal that we need to push the pause button, zoom out, gain new perspective, and discover how God wants us to adapt, renew, and reapply his call. When this happens, we need to invest more time into processing this change in the context of our calling in order to discern God's leading and adapt accordingly. In these seasons, our replenishment cycle must focus on listening to God's whispers, tapping into the wisdom of our mentors and close friends, and processing our thinking with our life-calling partner.

Perspective really is everything. When we lose it, we lose clarity, focus, balance, purpose, context, and a sense of contribution. Argentinean Poet Antonio Porchia says it well, "If you don't raise your eyes, you will think you are the highest point." The following 4 Helpful Lists Tool is designed to help you cultivate your calling and identify what must adapt and change. You can also use it to guide another person to gain perspective in a season of change.

In this tool, we ask four questions: What is right? What is wrong? What is confused? And, What is missing? If parts of your understanding are right, identify

them. You'll want to optimize these in the future. If other aspects are outright wrong and need to be right, identify them in the "What is wrong?" column. Some things are simply confused. We don't know if their right, wrong, or missing. Put these in the "What is confused?" column. Where you feel voids and something is missing, identify these in the "What is missing?" column.

My Life Calling
Where Am I Now?

4 Helpful Lists				
What is Right? (optimize)	What is Wrong? (change)	What is Confused? (clarify)	What is Missing? (add)	Core Issues Needing Action

After you have populated the four questions, reread each bullet point in each column and move any core issues that emerge from this perspective to the column on the far right. Typically, four to six core issue themes surface that need some kind thoughtful action and response. I use this tool when I am feeling out of balance and confused about what I'm doing. It helps me sort out the clutter in my head, refocus on the right things and cultivate God's calling on my life.

Final Thoughts

I know God has called me to help others discern his call for them. It's always rewarding when I do this—not always easy and oftentimes intense—but always rewarding. I've learned not to underestimate how God uses us when we help others process life-changing questions like, "What has God called me to be and do?" We'll never know the return on investment to his kingdom on earth in this work this side of death. Perhaps we'll have a better understanding of it on the other side.

I wonder how different our churches and the world would be if more people knew what God called them to be and do. It's my hope that this short e-book has inspired you to both clarify God's call on your life and to be a more effective guide in helping others do the same. If it helps you more effectively guide others in your church or community network, then it has served its purpose.

My encouragement to you is to first discover, clarify, and begin to live God's call on your life. We dare not attempt to guide others into conversations and territory that we ourselves have not traveled. This doesn't mean that we must have all of the answers, but it does require us to speak honestly and with integrity from our own journey in helping others.

I named this book *Calling's Way: The Art Of Guiding Others To Live Their Unique Mission* because it is an art. Each life is different with its own unique story and complexities. As art, its approach is highly relational, requiring a guide to have fully attentive ears, curious minds, a heart postured and delighted to help another

clarify and discover, and the creativity to create customized outcomes. Don't try to make this into a cookbook program. To scale it, we must patiently train up guides who are gifted in this art and called to its work. This approach takes thousands of hours for one guide to become effectively competent in the art of guiding people in this way.

If you are interested in more intense training in helping guide others in this way, the Paterson Center is designed and equipped to train you. You can learn more about it at www.patersoncenter.com. We offer basic and advanced certifications and a pathway to mastery for LifePlan facilitators. We envision a growing community of facilitators and guides who are called and passionate to help others fulfill God's calling on their lives. Perhaps I'll meet you one day in one of those venues.

Calling's Way never completes. It is an ongoing journey. If we stay on its path, we will continually awaken to new truths, discover new depths, own new applications, focus more clearly, and adapt accordingly. May God guide you on your journey to fulfill his calling on your life. May you learn the way of discerning his Spirit's voice. And may his kingdom's purposes advance exponentially as you guide others to embrace and fulfill God's call on their lives.

Grace. And cheers.

About The Author

Over the past twenty-one years, Pete has been immersed in local and para-church ministries and various forms of for-profit industries, ranging from start-ups to multi-national entities. A native of Colorado, he has held dynamic and diverse positions including those of Vice President of Communications and Creative Services at Promise Keepers for ten years, Senior Consultant to numerous book authors for Yates & Yates, LLC in Orange, California, for two years, President of Convergence Planning for the past nine years, and Lead Trainer for the Paterson Center for the past five years.

He was the fifth employee hired by Promise Keepers in 1991 and helped to develop the event platform's message, including theme selection, program development, speaker selection, and program integration. He also led the publishing and video production teams and media and public relations entities for the ministry through the 1990s. In 2000, he worked with numerous Christian and business leadership authors as a message development consultant and publishing plan writer for Yates & Yates, LLC, a law-firm and literary publishing agency representing many of the top Christian authors in the United States. In 2002, he ventured out on his own, formed Convergence Planning, a consulting firm focused on helping individuals and leadership teams focus, plan, and execute. Additionally, he was the President of the Paterson Center for two years and is a principle owner and lead trainer and content developer for the Paterson legacy classes that train and equip individuals in the LifePlan™ and StratOp Paterson Processes™.

As a certified LifePlan™ facilitator, he has guided over 600 individuals over

twenty years through a two-day intensive life perspective and life purpose process. As a certified StratOp Paterson Process™ facilitator, he has worked with over sixty for-profit and non-profit leadership teams.

Pete has a B.S. in Biology from Colorado College with Phi Beta Kappa honors. He earned his Masters of Divinity with honors from Denver Seminary. He continues to serve as an understudy to Tom Paterson, an established author, inventor, and strategic process facilitator for Fortune 500 companies. He has been married to his best friend and bride, Janet, since 1985 and they make their home in Colorado. They have two awesome children: a daughter and a son.

Acknowledgments

I thank Jesus for his love, leadership and patience towards me. Where would I be if he was not alive in my life? Scary thought. And I thank Janet, my wife and best friend for the past 28 years. Where would I be if she was not grounded in Jesus' love and had a heart to forgive me and love me while having insight to everything about me? Scary thought. I love growing older with her.

I know that in the end all that matters is whom you love and who loves you. I'm so thankful for my kids, Jordan and Pearce. They're each following God's calling in their own way. I've grown so much as their dad. They've taught me to chill out, to adapt, to love and laugh.

My mom and dad raised my brother, sister and me to create things, innovate, dream, experiment and pursue what God led us to do. They taught me the way of the kingdom, encouraged me to listen for the Father's voice, and continue to affirm the path God has me on. Today, it's a joy to see them and their families following Jesus and God's calling on their lives.

Doug Slaybaugh and Michael Murphy, my partners at the Paterson Center, are gifts from God. May we discern God's leadership as we dream of a community of facilitators leading others to clarity, breakthrough and exponential kingdom results.

And then there's Tom Paterson. Where would I be if my story had not intersected with him? Everything I do now weaves its way back to him. He believed in me and equipped me and now encourages me to build on what he gave me. I'm very thankful.

When I reflect on the past 20 years, so many names come to mind. Like all of us, each person and experience shapes us in some way. I think of the over 600 people I've spent two days each with. They met with a stranger, unzipped their souls, and shared the gift of their story and life with me. I'm very thankful to them.

I think of all the great people I met and the things I learned at Promise Keepers and Yates and Yates. These organizations and environments allowed me to cut my teeth as a facilitator and guide, all very formative in my development.

I think of OtterBox LLC, by brother's company. Curt Richardson and Brian Thomas invited me into OtterBox in the early years of the company to facilitate all of their strategic sessions and install LifePlanning into their people development systems. What a joy it's been to see these processes fully installed, to witness the profound growth of the company, and to see so many individuals impacted by the StratOp and LifePlan sessions still going on to this day.

I think of all the friends I've shared life with on deep levels. There are many, but here's a few: Buddy Owens, Mark Danielson, Harold Velasquez, Jeff Rasor, Randy Phillips, Jerry Donaldson, Greg Thompson, Tom Shirk, Brad Prill, LV Hansen, Dave Runyon, Isaac Slade, Gabe Lyons, Adiel and Laura Brasov, and Scott Douglas. I'm sure I'm forgetting others. I'm thankful for each of them.

About The Paterson Center

The Paterson Center's history began with Thomas G. Paterson. For decades, Tom worked in the corporate planning arena inside companies like Douglas Aircraft, IBM, and RCA. In 1970, Tom launched a new career as a consultant. Tom and his associate Ted Smith designed an innovative approach to planning that could accomplish clarity, alignment, and breakthrough in less than a week. Over the next twenty years, through Paterson and Company, Tom advanced his signature processes, The Paterson Strategic-Operating Planning Process and the LifePlan Process. Peter Drucker once told Tom that he was the most effective consultant in the country.

Masters pass on their craft through identifying and investing in younger, passionate protégés committed to mastery. Tom has done this. In the early 1990's, Doug Slaybaugh partnered with Tom to launch the first Paterson StratOp and LifePlan training courses in Southern California, designed with the intention of equipping gifted facilitators with Tom's processes. These trainings waned and halted in the late 1990's as Tom faced the loss of his wife Ginny. In 2006, Tom and Pete Richardson resuscitated the trainings, building the foundations for an annual calendar of training offerings. In 2008, Michael Murphy and Pete Richardson formed the Paterson Center, LLC and began to build scalable systems for training others in Tom's processes. Doug Slaybaugh formally joined the leadership team in 2010. In 2011, Tom officially transferred over 36 years of intellectual property to the Paterson Center.

Today, the Paterson Center is based in Littleton, Colorado. Our vision is to equip and cultivate a community of facilitators, each using signature Paterson Processes, to guide individuals and organizations toward clarity, breakthrough, alignment, optimal health and exponential results. You can learn more about the Paterson Center at www.patersoncenter.com.

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