

Growth Track Session 3 (Discovering Your gift)

Intro: I'm sure you've heard these phrases & slogans to describe our society "dog eat dog", "only the strong survive", "survival of the fittest", "a rat race", "every man for himself", "look out for #1". I'd say they are accurate portrayals, we're rushing here & there, meeting deadlines, filling quotas, schedules & lifestyles are chaotic, hectic, & frantic, because we're trying to stay ahead of the pack, because we can get swallowed up or worse still get eaten alive.

And this has spilled over into the church, because we now feel we don't have time to get to know God. We want the blessing w/out the blesser, provisions w/out the provider. God is treated like a spare tire, we only take Him out of the trunk when we need Him. We're so busy & preoccupied, but when trouble comes knocking we suddenly He takes center stage & is foremost & forefront in our lives.

Here's the thing, most of us started out just like that & God graciously came to the rescue & it took hold so I'm not discounting it, but the basis of the relationship must change so that we're not serving God for loaves & fishes, to keep us out of the poor house, or jail house. We must mature to say, **whether the Lord is giving or taking away we'll be blessing the name of the Lord**. This was the saints of **Heb. 11** who **endured trial of cruel mockings & scourgings, bonds & imprisonment: stoned, sawn asunder, slain w/the sword: wandered about in sheepskins & goatskins; destitute, afflicted, tormented; wandered in deserts, mountains, dens & caves**, but still kept to their faith.

I. There needs to be maturity, growth, & development, herein lies the problem; **Heb. 5:12, ye ought to be teachers but still need to be taught yourself**. It's described also as **staying on the milk when we ought to be on the meat**. We still think that God should serve us; but **we ought to be serving Him**. That's the heart of Jesus who said, **I come not to be ministered to but...**

A. We are by nature selfish people. Just watch kids playing "mine, mine". You have to teach sharing. God wants us to stop placing all the attention on getting & start placing more emphasis on giving. God didn't put you here just to be served, but to serve, **freely ye have received freely give. Silver & gold have I none...give I thee**. You shouldn't just come to this or any church just to hear good singing & preaching, make a few friends so you can have someone to eat with. You come to serve. I preached at a church that had a sign over the door, "enter to worship, exit to serve".

1. JFK, "ask not what your country can do for you but...country". We can apply that to church too... I have people to ask, "why do you have to offer? & I jump into the list of things we offer, but should ask, "what do you have to offer?" This should not be 1 sided, Dead Sea... There are some areas where you could help, for some it's finances, you have means & resources. There are some classes you could teach, media, children, security, camera, vans.

2. God sent you here to make a difference & some are sitting on your ministry, talent, skill, & gift. Serve the Lord, serve His people, & serve His church, **work while it's day...no man can work**. God has a pressed down, shaken together & running over blessing for you, but you have to be in your place to get it. Your blessing may be in the drivers seat of the church van, in the nursery, foyer, has a broom or paint brush attached, a TV camera. If you aren't in your place you miss the blessing.

B. No one is above or beyond service. **Jn 13** we see the Master in the role of the Servant. He eats the "Last Supper" w/His disciples. In Bible culture eating w/a person meant something. Today we sit down & eat w/anyone, but in Bible times eating w/someone was a sign of intimacy.

1. Jesus ate the Passover w/them, because He was the fulfillment of... **When I see the blood...** First, He took the bread. The bread spoke of Him, the true & living bread come down from heaven. Then He brake it & poured the wine which represented His blood. Then He served it to His disciples. The Lord and Master

became the servant. [He riseth from supper](#). Can I tell you God doesn't have as much trouble getting us to the table as He does away from the table.

2. [He laid aside His garments](#). This reminds us of what the High priests used to do. As he walked around in the outer court he was dressed to the 9's. He wore this to represent Gods glory, but before he passed through the veil & entered the holy of holies he'd remove it all leaving only the white under garment, because God won't share His glory. Do you see the meaning of this? When you get ready to serve you have to lay down your pride & ego & titles & humble yourself. You can tell whenever God's getting ready to take someone into the next level, because they go through a stripping & removal. The things that use to be funny aren't... some of the people you used to hang around... because you're getting ready to go through the veil. [Forgetting the things that are behind...](#)

3. [He took a towel & girded Himself. He poured water into a basin & began to wash... & to wipe them w/the towel wherewith He was girded](#). The Master performed the ultimate act humility & service by washing feet. Bartholomew, Simon the Zealot; Andrew, Phillip, Matthew; James the less, Thaddaeus, James & John. Peter, the one that would later curse & deny he ever knew Him. Thomas, the doubter. Did I forget anyone? Judas. Did He wash the feet of Judas? Yes! He knew what he had in his heart & yet He still served him & washed his feet. [If I your Lord & Master wash... how much more... one anothers feet?](#) When you're called to serve you'll be called to serve all types of people, not just those in your little click & group, not just your social & economic class, political persuasion religion, race, family & friends, but even [love your enemies and bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you](#).

C. No one is [beneath](#) service. [Matt. 11](#), we see [the colt is tied up at a cross road](#). He sees both ways, has a hoof pointed in both directions, but can't go in either direction.

1. [Tied up](#). He can move, but not far. Here's good news, even though the colt was tied up Jesus still wanted him. "He's not free, but I still want him. I'm gonna use him, but loose him first." Whatever is holding you can come off. That strong hold & yoke can be removed. Just because you can't free yourself doesn't mean He can't. I wanna thank Him, because when I couldn't break myself free, He could. Free doesn't mean out of control, free to go & do as he pleased. He was free to be under Jesus' control. Being free doesn't mean w/out supervision or guidance. [Job 39:5](#) talks about, [a wild ass being set free](#). He has great strength, but it has to be controlled. The only way to use him is harness the power & point it in the right direction.

2. [Loose him and bring him](#). "Loose him" deals w/what you're taking him out of while "bring him" deals w/taking him into. It's not enough to be loosed from unless you are brought to. If you thought it felt good to be loosed from wait until you are brought to your purpose.

3. [If any man try to stop you tell him I have need of him. They brought him to Jesus, Jesus got on him, spread out their coats, laid down palm leaves... Hosanna... Blessed...](#) No one had ever ridden this colt, his first rider was the King of kings & Lord of lords. Jesus didn't come riding a chariot drawn by a stallion, he rode a colt.

a. The lesson is little is much when God is in it. [God chooses the foolish things...](#) Rahab's rope, Moses staff, David's sling, Mary's ointment, a lad's lunch, Paul's bucket. It may only be a small seed, but from that small seed can come a great harvest.

b. There is a realm of glory Gods waiting to release on you when you surrender to what He's calling you to do. Service doesn't go unnoticed or unrewarded. [Ps. 75:6-7, promotion comes not from... but God is the judge, He puts down one & sets up another. Be faithful over few things... 1 Pet. 5:6, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time](#).

II. We are called, invited, sent for, beckoned, or **summoned by God**.

A. We're summoned or called to repentance. Acts 17:30, God commands all men everywhere to repent. Do an about face, turn around, change. When you repent & are saved, born again, washed in the blood you are a new creature, old things pass away... You become part of the ekklesia, the church, the called out ones. Eph. 2:2, Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: our conversation was about the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh & mind & were by nature the children of wrath. But God, who is rich in mercy, loved us when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ & raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor. 6:9-11, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

B. God summoned you because He wanted you. We never call anyone we don't want. Some things may wander into our life or cross our path that we don't want, but if we call it it's because we want it.

1. None of us came to Him on our own. If you came unto Him it was because He called you, Jn. 6:44, **no man cometh unto me except the Father, which sent me, draw Him**. When God calls it's to your benefit to answer. God can take your options away. While you're trying to decide if you want door #1, #2, or #3, God can close #3, #2 and leave you w/1 door Jonah.

2. God called you out of His longing to have you. If He hadn't called you, you'd still be searching for Him. **Seek the Lord while He may be found, call while He is near**. The only reason you found Him was because He put Himself in a place where you could find Him. He put Himself in your way & across your path like He did Paul on the Damascus road. That's why Paul wrote Rom. 2:4, **the goodness of God led to repentance**. Look back over your life & you'll see that God's been calling you all the time.

C. Summoned to Serve.

1. He called you from the womb for a selected purpose. Jer. 1:5, **Before I formed you in the belly I knew you & I sanctified thee & ordained thee a prophet unto the nations**. Jeremiah was called before birth, but not realized till 17. God knows when to make you aware of your call. He knows when you're ready. Don't force or rush it, you'll serve the dish before it's done or pluck the fruit before it's ripe.

2. 2 Tim. 1:9, **Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose & grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began**. He called us because He saw something valuable in us. We were worth something to Him, a prized possession. **He bought the field to get the treasure**. That's why **we were bought w/a price**.

a. God called you not man. Rom. 8:29-30, **For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate them He also called & whom He called them He also justified & whom He justified them He also glorified**. Gal. 1:1, I am an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ. Eph. 3:7, I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. 1 Tim. 1:12, I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.

b. When God calls you it's for life. That call isn't removed even if you sin. The anointing can leave because of sin, the favor can fade, the glory can go, but the call is still there. Rom. 11:29, **the gifts and calling are w/out repentance** (irrevocable).

aa. God isn't talking about man's repentance. If man falls He has to repent & be restored. This doesn't mean you can continue in sin, [Rom. 6:1-2, What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? SPEAK TO LEADERS...](#) accountable, integrity, above reproach (FB, places...associations)

bb. The call doesn't make you immune to errors in judgment, exempt from failures, but regardless of these things God still wants to use you. If God only used perfect people the stage would always be vacant. We forgive & restore. We may sit people, but we don't throw people away. We want people to come, the KOG is not for a select few. We don't get to include people we like & then exclude people we don't. It's not for us to pick & choose & not right for us to beg entrance & then shut the door behind us. The only time I don't want them is when "I'm in this sin, gonna stay in this sin, & gonna spread this sin." Not gonna endanger the flock, otherwise **whosoever will let him come.**

cc. We gotta get away from double standard. If someone fails we treat them differently than we want to be treated. [Gal. 6:1, Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.](#)

c. God's talking about His repentance not ours. He's saying, "regardless of how far you drift or fall, I haven't changed my mind about you." He already knew everything about you before He called you. He knew your shortcomings, had moments of weakness, character flaws, & kinks in the armor & still He called you. Nothing you have ever done or will do can shock God. You might shock family, church, even self; but never God & He still called you.

D. We are put w/in His body to function. [1 Cor. 12:12, we're 1 body w/many members](#) that are different, distinct, & unique & yet our success depends on how we relate to the other members of the body. Union & harmony are essential. There can be no dissension or division w/in the body, my right foot can't work against my left foot & the blood can't boycott the kidneys.

1. My body members don't compete, they compliment & complete. When there's something heavy or awkward to be picked up my left hand doesn't refuse to work w/my right hand because it's on the wrong side of the body, [it bears one another's burdens](#). When 1 member hurts I hurt all over. Stub your toe & your hand will grab it & rub it, the hand doesn't say, "you're beneath me" [it cares one for another](#).

a. My members work as a team. We are a community, common unity. None of us are self sufficient, your last name is not Shaddai (almighty or all sufficient one). It takes us all. [The disciples caught fish w/a net](#) (net working), [cast nets on the other side](#) (plural) [they cast net](#) (singular)... I know my strengths, where I excel, but I also know areas where I don't shine. I'm not gifted to do all things well. There are places where I strike out & I must rely & depend on the rest of the body to take up my slack.

b. One of the things I know now more than ever is people matter. We are greater together than we will ever be apart. There are things that can only happen through united & combined effort. I can't bind everything & loosen everything. Apparently I have limitations otherwise some verses in the bible make no sense like [1 shall chase 1,000 & 2 put 10,000 to flight & if any 2 of you agree...](#)

2. Malcolm Gladwell (*The Tipping Point*). It's the name given to that moment when a virus becomes an epidemic or reaches critical mass. He says the way change often happens, especially socially "The Law of the Few". The success of any kind of social epidemic is heavily dependent on the involvement of people with a particular & rare set of social gifts.

a. *Connectors*, people that know large numbers of people, they know everyone & everyone knows them, known across an array of social, cultural, professional, or economic circles.

b. *Mavens* are "information specialists". They know how to get the word out.

c. *Salesmen* are "persuaders", charismatic people w/powerful negotiation skills, they sway people. He suggests that in elections candidates target 5-7%, persuaders or salesmen.

d. Economists often talk about "*the 80/20 principle*", which is the idea that roughly 80% of the "work" will be done by 20% of the participants. In most societies 20% of criminals commit 80% of crimes. 20% of motorists cause 80% of all accidents. 20% of beer drinkers drink 80% of all beer. I wonder if 20% aren't doing all the work & giving all the \$?

3. You have the 1st responders & non responders or none responsive. Some are working others won't ever work, no matter what they will come get their church on but never give back. To turn things we need people in the middle. Explain the sin of commission & omission ([Jam. 4:17, if you know to do good & do it not it is sin.](#))

4. [I follow after...been apprehended.](#) Law enforcement... I know why I needed to be saved but why did He need to save me. God saved you because He had a plan, not for PITY, but PURPOSE.

III. The grace place.

A. I have "a grace place". I know we all have "saving grace", but there is a "grace place" a place where I'm graced or called or gifted to serve. Paul said, "[there are some things I do because I'm graced to do them.](#)" [1 Cor 3:10 according to the grace given to me by God I was the master builder laying the foundation. 10:10, by the grace of God I am what I am. Eph. 4:7, But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.](#) When I work w/in my grace place I am effective, but outside of that I struggle or it's harder. I pastor here because I'm graced to. I'm not graced to pastor elsewhere.

1. The point is we are not called to the same place. I am graced to do what I do & not what pastor Tommy does. I love kids but am not graced to sit back there for 3 hours on Sunday. I'd go crazy, because not graced to do it. I have a grace place, he has a grace place. I can't compare my place or call or grace to his & he can't compare to mine, [it's unwise.](#)

2. Everyone has a place. [1 Cor 12:18, He sets us where He wills.](#) I don't get to pick & choose my place. He places me. I "sit" in the "set" seat. If I don't sit in the set seat I get "upset". When I get out of my grace place I am in disgrace & get disgraced.

a. You can never make a person what they are not called to be. I can look @ apple & call it "orange", but me calling it something other than what God called it doesn't change it. Calling yourself a woman when you're a man doesn't change things. Calling yourself a "preacher" doesn't make you a preacher. You can use my notes, but that won't make you a preacher if God hasn't called you one.

b. You need to be able to hear specifics. God is clear and concise in His direction. He didn't tell Israel to "get their buddies, grab any material lying around & build a tent". He was specific in His instruction. He knew who was to build it, the size, & the materials. [Lean not to your own understanding, but in all your ways acknowledge Him...](#)

3. There are many callings. Primarily we think about preaching, but that's only 1 calling. We feel like if the Lord needs us to do anything that He needs us to preach. Don't think the only callings are the "glamorized callings." God doesn't need everyone to do the same thing. [1 Cor. 12:4-6, There are different gifts, but the same Spirit; different administrations, but the same Lord; different operations, but the same God worketh all in all.](#)

4. God calls you & then equips you. When your parents used to call you it was "come here, now go to the store." They didn't just tell you to "go to the store" because they knew you didn't know what to get & didn't have

any money to get it with. They have to call you to them so they could send you forth for them. God is too fair to give all the talent & skill to everyone except you.

a. When God calls you & you come He enables you to do after what you couldn't do before. Simon walked on water after he was called. If God called you into the music ministry you will affect it. If you are really called to it there's no way you will leave it like you found it. If you're called you will take it to another level. When you're called to it everyone will know you're called to it, because the results will be undeniable & indisputable.

b. It's foolish to fight against a man that is called, because he couldn't do what he's doing unless he was called by God. In the words of Gamaliel from [Acts 5:38-39](#), *If it's of man it will come to naught, but if it's of God who can stop it?*

B. God has a specific plan, purpose, & calling for you. "How do I discern it? God has a variety of ways to communicate His will to men. Some men have given glowing testimonies of visions, dreams, & hearing audible voices; while others received their call quietly, w/no hoopla or fanfare. The method is unimportant. You're called just as much if you're called on knees as Moses was from burning bush. Ways we're called.

1. Through the Word. (Josh. 1:7-8, Is. 8:20, Col. 3:16) But take the sc. in context. Don't be like the man that decided to open the Bible & do what it said, "Judas went and hanged himself" Then seeking more direction he again randomly opened the sc. and found, "Go and do thou likewise" A third time he opened it and read, "What thou doest, do quickly" Leads me 2nd way.

2. Through the Spirit [Acts 11:12](#), Peter speaks about preaching to the Gentiles @ Cornelius house (Acts 10), *the Spirit bade me go. Acts 13:2, the HG said, separated Barnabas & Saul for the work whereunto He had called them. Vs 4, they were sent forth by the HG.*

3. Through dreams & visions. [Acts 10](#) Peter's vision of sheet. [Acts 16](#), Macedonian call.

4. Through persuasion & inclination, inner checks & restraints. [Acts 16:7-8](#), *after they were come to Mysia they assayed to go to Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.*

5. Through opening or closing doors. [Is. 22:22](#), *God can open and no man shut & shut & no man open. 1 Cor. 16:9, for a great door is opened unto me.*

C. How do I find my grace place?

1. God uses what you already have. [Moses, what is that in your hand?](#) God placed in your personality some traits He can use in ministry. Some are loud spoken & opinionated; if God didn't have us in the church you'd be stuck saying, "What do you want to do? I don't know, what do you want to do? What color do you like? It doesn't matter" Someone has to speak up and say, "make it blue!"

a. Take inventory to find the things God put in me at the beginning, they are in my makeup, my DNA, in my character, my genes, they give me my persona. It causes some to like tomatoes, but hate ketchup, like livermush, but not liver. It's the stuff that makes you you.

b. Sometimes you can determine your calling by determining the things you can't stand or love. If you can't stand to see things done half heartedly or poorly organized you may be an administrator. Don't discount the stuff God put in you, natural ability. Some can do numbers & figures more easily, Some are terrible speakers but great writers...

c. The early holiness movement was against anything fun. If it was fun you were supposed to avoid it or kill it. Not everything should be killed, some things need to be sanctified & redirected. If you were a creative thinker before you got saved you don't lose that at salvation. Our mind is renewed not removed. If you were the "life of

the party" before you got saved you don't become a grouch when you get saved. You are still the life of the party, just a different party.

d. If you're 7'1" 325 lbs & wear 23 shoe called Shaq you play basketball, if you're 5'6" & weigh 137 & called Pee Wee you program computers. You must discover it. God puts it there & we discover it. From **the parable of the talents** we know that we all have talents, **some 1, some 5, some 10**. I don't know how God decides who gets the 1, the 5, or the 10. I don't know why some start out w/more than others but I do know is no matter where He started me out I can multiply what I've got when I use what was handed down to me. **Ecc. 9:10, whatever your hand finds to do you do it w/all your might**

2. Then I **develop the natural skills**. **Prov. 22:29, Seest thou a man diligent in his business or skilled? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean ordinary men**. The world says, "if I could meet someone important I could be someone important." God says, "if you can be someone important you can meet someone important". **Prov. 18:16, a mans gift will make room for him...**
Is. 60:3, kings royalty come to the brightness of your rising.

a. To be great, get around greatness & learn from them. If you're the smartest one in your group... God doesn't put you around greatness to be intimidated by it, but so you can learn from it. God puts you around great people so when you come to your Jordan you'll know how to use Elijah's mantle to open the thing.

aa. We generally don't want to be stretched or pushed to better ourselves. We hang out in same circles, never get exposed to people that are different. We need a little cross pollination or we will never bud. You can't go to the family reunion to find a wife, but we do it in church, we are so inbred, keep in the same line of thinking & are afraid to think outside the box. Pentecostals read after... Baptists... Have you ever thought that people are different for a reason? It's by design.

bb. Someone may be say, "he's out of his mind", no I'm out of yours. I'm not saying I believe all I read or hear, eat fish & spit out bones. I'm hungry to learn so I push my thinking & expand my mind, because there are no closed doors just closed minds and a mind is a terrible thing to waste.

b. Expand your knowledge. I will never underestimate the importance of the anointing, but the anointing doesn't excuse laziness, **study to show yourself approved**. Build your library, study other views. God uses thinkers. Peter (uneducated) 2 books. Paul (educated) 13-14 books. "I can't go to seminary" Go to the library. Paul told Timothy in **2 Tim. 4:13** he needed 3 things, **cloak (coat) parchments, & books**. Physical man covered, parchments (writing), & books cause if I pour out I need to pour back in, I feed so I must be fed."

aa. **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge**. You must find ways to get knowledge. Leaders are readers. **I am a debtor to wise & unwise**. I have learned from fools before. **Iron sharpens iron**. Iron & aluminum are both metals, but an axe & coke can't have fellowship, 1 beats the other down. You need people as strong as you are to say, "you are getting off center."

bb. David wrote about the saddest place any person could be in, **Ps. 142:4, I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul**. No man cared if I lived or died, succeeded, or failed, stood or fell. They loved the fact I could whip their giants, but no one cares for me. It's a sad day when they want my preaching & want me to make them shout but they don't care if I live or die. We need people to pour into our lives.

c. You can be great. I wanna be great. Don't you wanna be humble? Yea. "You can't be both?" who says? I know **God hates a proud look & pride goes before destruction... if you exalt yourself... abased... exalted**. But God isn't against greatness. **Mk 10:35, James & John, sons of Zebedee come unto Him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. What would ye that I should do for you? Grant unto us that**

we may sit, one on thy right hand & the other on thy left hand in thy glory. Not just be in the Kingdom, but be great in the Kingdom. Jesus never rebuked them for wanting to be great, but the way they were going about it was wrong. You wanna be great, that's OK w/me, I have no problem w/you wanting to be great so let me show you how **Vs 43-44, whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister & servant of all.**

aa. John the Baptist was a servant, a forerunner **preparing the way of the Lord**. He knew **one greater was coming whose shoes...** **None born of a woman was greater than him**. John used his greatness to point Jesus out, **behold the Lamb that takes away...of the world.**

bb. God has placed w/in us seeds of greatness. You don't have to be great at everything, but be great at something. You are a reflection of a great God & our great God is often poorly represented. We should reflect that we serve a great by operating in the spirit of excellence & be great for Him. **1 Cor. 4:2, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.** God has made an investment in me & I want Him to get a return on that investment!

3. If I'm going to be great then I must be more intentional in an attempt discover my own uniqueness. Our problem is we want to blend in, fit in & be part of the club & click. Why be a dime a dozen when God created me 1 of a kind? The more you have of a product the cheaper they are. SAMS sells cheap because they buy in bulk, but when things are rare, or 1 of a kind they are priceless.

a. You are not a clone or copy, you are unique & different & you stand out. We celebrate uniformity, all gotta look alike, sing same songs, expect everyone to do church they way we do it & if they don't we attack them because they are different. When you stand out you are remembered, when you blend in you are forgotten. I don't want to be forgotten. I want to be remembered so I must find out what God has given me that sets me apart. Time to celebrate your uniqueness because there is no one like you. After He made you He broke the mold so use what He gave you & shine for Him.

b. Learn to celebrate your individuality, exceptionality, & exclusivity. Never complain to God, "Why didn't you use me like you use him?" They just might be saying the same thing about you. He called you because you had ingredient others didn't have. I don't feel pressure to preach or pastor like others because when God wanted them He called them, when He wanted me He called me.

c. My personality, my attitude, & skills all fit into the purpose wherein I've been chosen. Everything about you is relative to your task. He made you the way you are so stop saying, "If I had more talent." If you would have needed more He would have given more. You have what you need, just do it!!

4. There will be desire. **God will give you the desires of your heart**. He will put a desire w/in you. Your heart will burn for a particular area of ministry. If it's in you it will come out somewhere. A singer sings in the car @ stoplight, round the house, doing dishes. A teacher will teach, in some format, @ McDonalds drawing on napkins. A preacher will preach. If you hang around me I will preach to you, you will get a sermon whether you want it or not. I can't help it, it just kicks in. Before I know what's happening I'm quoting sc. & using illustrations because it's in me.

5. You'll be fanatic & serious about it, it won't be thrown together & done in a hap hazard fashion. A real singer can't stand to hear another singer get up & say, "I didn't get a chance to practice, so I'll practice on you." If a person is truly called there will be a drive behind what they do. They won't do just enough to get by. They will take pride in it & pour their heart and soul into what they do, **whether in word or deed, they will do it to the glory of God!**

6. You will endure to do it. **1 Cor. 7:20, Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called**. No matter how hard it is or how little cooperation you get, if you're called you'll abide in that calling. If you're called, there will be staying power. If I have to preach to 10 I'll preach. If half of them are asleep I'll still preach. If they don't say "Amen" I'll still preach. No offering... Had chances to get out. Reasons to walk away. Been hurt, but I'm still here, heart been broken... criticized... I'm like Paul, **Eph. 4:1, I am a prisoner of the Lord**. In **Philippians He calls**

himself a servant. The word he uses (doulos) means "a slave, the property of his master, one having no individual status". We are not our own, but bought w/a price. What I do, I do because the love of God constrains me (2 Cor. 5:14). If you can quit, then quit. If you quit, you weren't called any way. Woe unto me if I preach not...

7. God uses our life experiences. I worked at Cablevision... Director of the year.

a. Moses was brought up in pharaohs house & that served as a backdrop to break down pharaohs resistance & hard heartedness.

b. There's a guy that kept sheep, his father sent him to take cheese to his brothers that were in the army. He brought the cheese & killed the giant. You know him as David. The point is if you don't carry the cheese you don't kill the giant. He showed up & heard Goliaths challenge & then asked what would he get for killing him, because you never go to war unless there are spoils (learn that as leaders). They said, "kings daughter & no taxes". "I'm in" and w/a sling & stone he killed the Philistine champion. That wasn't the 1st time he'd used that sling. He developed his skill on the backside of the wilderness, in isolation. God develops us in isolation. I came in here & preached to empty pews, storefronts, tent.

c. There is no wasted motion w/God. He doesn't just use the positive, He uses the negative & uncomfortable & distasteful. The catastrophic & traumatic can be platforms for ministry. Coming up in a broken home or being victimized by abuse, abandonment, neglect, or molestation can foster hope in those that are there now.

aa. The pains, pressure, tests, & trials we've experienced helped shape us into who we are. Paul, Phil. 1:12, the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel. What things? 2 Cor. 11:23 starts a list.

bb. If I were to ask you to tell the story of Joseph you'd say... "sold into slavery", but he never viewed himself as being sold. Gen. 45:5, Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. He said, "I wasn't sold, I was sent". You meant it for evil, but God...good.

cc. You are being proven, refined, & defined. I know it hurts, long & drawn out, but it's serving as a catalyst to greater things. 2 Cor. 4:17, It's a light affliction which is but for a moment that works for us a far more exceeding eternal weight in glory. All things are working together... The sufferings of this present time... This test will give you a testimony.

dd. Ps. 145:4, 1 generation shall praise His works to another. There is a generation coming behind us that needs to know how we made it through. We need to be able to tell them, greater is He... & His grace was sufficient.