

Burden/Calling Assessment Tool

This assessment tool is designed to help identify and clarify your specific calling so that you can focus on that calling and free yourself from other distractions. It focuses on two important criteria: burden and abilities.

Your **burden** is what moves you deeply, sometimes to tears. It is the thing that you see that *must* change (as long as I am alive, I must do something that makes a difference in this matter). Burden precedes vision; it moves me to action. My burden will sustain me through the difficult times of the implementation of that vision. Think of Nehemiah, who had a secure job in a major kingdom, and yet, was moved to action when he heard about the state of Jerusalem and its people:

They said to me, "The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire."

When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. Neh. 1:3-4

Nehemiah was ruined by those words. He woke up that morning one man and went to sleep that night a different man. It was impossible for his life to stay the same. That is what a God-given burden will do to you. What is it that burdens your heart?

Your **abilities** are the things that God has uniquely gifted you with in order to carry out your calling. These include your spiritual gifts, your unique personalities, your natural talents and skills and the area of our strengths. Think of Moses when he stood before the burning bush and heard the voice of God"

The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff." Exodus 4:2

The staff was a shepherd's identity, his protection, the tool of his trade. It was this staff, consecrated by the Lord, that was stretched out to perform the miracles that released God's covenant people from bondage and led them into the promised land. What do you have in your hand that God might use?

Below is a brief, ten question assessment that will help you focus in on your burden and calling of the Lord. It is a good idea to get away to a quiet place of prayer where you can seek the Lord and consider the answers deeply. You may not have all the answers - that is okay. What matters is that you seek, listen and write down what you do know.

1) Have you identified an underlying burden in your heart?

- 2) What would your mentor and/or friends say is your burden?

- 3) When your energy and interests rise, what subjects are being discussed?

- 4) What subject and issues would keep you up talking into the night?

- 5) When you strip everything away, what is left in terms of convictions that you are willing to bleed and die for?

- 6) What can you identify as your specific spiritual gifts and strengths?

- 7) What can you identify as specific, God-given talents or abilities?

- 8) What would your mentor and/or friends say are your gifts and abilities?

- 9) Based on the above answers, what does being faithful to your burden and abilities look like right now?

- 10) What does it look like for you to lead, right where you are, right now?

Finally,

Can you briefly state your ministry philosophy (or a portion of it)?

(An example of a ministry philosophy may look like: My identity is a loved son, and I can live and work in rest, knowing that I am loved and I will be loved and I will be loved; I do not have the wisdom in myself to face the things that will come up today, but God is willing to speak in the moment; People need Jesus - the cross of Christ is the provision for all the needs of fallen man. Jesus must be the center of my message and the Father must be the touchstone for all that I understand about God. My job is to love God love others and be faithful with what He has put on my plate; etc.)

The Kingdom of God needs leadership because since the fall of man, everything we know is constantly turning into wilderness and disorder. Leaders bring things back into order by bringing the dominion (kingdom) of God to where they are.

Every man has a vocation (“voca” - “calling”). We are to use this vocation to take dominion and bring the kingdom of God back into our spheres of influence; to bring order to our world. Seize the wilderness around you, and use the authority God has given you to turn it back into a garden.