

ANSWERING THE CALL



1. Using the Ikigai Model

Reflect for 10 minutes each on:

- what you're good at
- what you love
- what the world needs
- what you can get paid for

Reflect for a day on how those four overlap.

2. While these categories are very instructive for reflection on career, vocation/calling rises above. Do you believe God has ever told you something about the call he has on your life.
3. How have you pursued the call of God, seeking him about what he has for you and responding in faith to his instruction? How have you prepared to fulfill it?
4. Name the wise people who know you well and who you've asked to provide input on the call on your life. If you haven't ever asked, who might they be?
5. The first three gestures to responding to God's call are:
 - a submitted heart, saying yes to God
 - serving others
 - being a part of a community that is close enough to affirm or correct your sense of call

Spend a day reflecting on these. Do you have all three of these in place? What does that look like? What would it be like to strengthen one if it seems like the weaker of the three?

6. Os Guinness says that calling/vocation is subject to two kinds of distortion which he called the catholic distortion and the protestant distortion.

The catholic distortion is to consider part of life secular, and the other part of life as sacred. The person who does this goes to church/does religious activities for a part of their life, and then lives the rest of their life without much consideration of God or his call.

The protestant distortion equates vocation with occupation, as though what we do for a living is the ultimate measurement of our life, God gets pushed to the side and often so do other matters such as family, self care and spiritual formation. Sadly, some will work until they drop for lesser rewards like acclaim, power or money.

Which of these distortions has the most pull on you?

7. One way of thinking of the call of Jesus is summed up in John 15, when on the last night of his life, Jesus told his disciples that he had called them friends and called them to be so aligned with him that love and obedience were both part of the same experience.

Spend some time reflecting on your friendship with Jesus. Are you deeply aware of his love for you? Does obedience seem like a strained obligation, or does it feel like a joyful partnership in important work with Jesus?

8. Reflect on any specifics you know about your call.
9. Sometimes the things that people have said to us over the years — their degradation of our worth, their mockery, their lack of faith in God — impacts our ability to believe that God is calling us to something purposeful. Reflect for some time on the voices that have exerted a negative influence on your life.

Likewise, there are also people who see the very best in us, who bless us on a regular basis, who thank us for teaming with them or just being who we are. They correct when appropriate with hard, but loving, words. They are pursuing their own call. Reflect for some time on the people in your life like this. What do they think your calling is?

10. Have you had any mystical experiences, prophetic words given to you, Bible verses that seem to be highlighted by the Spirit for you, God-given dreams? Have you had any ministry experiences marked by God's favor and power?

Think about this for some time.

11. Bobby Clinton, in the book *The Making of a Leader*, lays out a timeline that is different than our “hurry up and know” timeline. Some of us will really only know the call on our life as we reflect back on it in our last years. Clinton says that our 20s are made for building character, for becoming the kind of people, who are characterized by integrity and love. Our 30s are meant for trying certain endeavors and finding some to be fitting and some to be less fitting. Clinton says that only in our 40s, do most start to come into expertise as they contribute meaningfully to the world. In our later years we have the chance to mentor others and to pass along what we've learned.

Any general statements like these may feel well-matched or mismatched to our own experiences. How do you relate to this timeline? What is this season of your life about? What if God said to you, “It's not too late to make an impact?” How would that change your life and your understanding of vocation/calling?

12. Philippians 2:13 says, “... it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” How have you seen God working in and through you? Perhaps it would be good to memorize this verse and pray daily that his Spirit would be active, empowering you to answer the call on your life.