

positive thinking; faith is believing God in the face of unbelievable circumstances. It is trusting that what God puts in your heart as “desire” is within His power to bring about.

10. Maintain Priorities. Regardless of what specific ministry or occupation God gives us, we all have inescapable priorities which we must not neglect. For example, our mates, children, walk with Christ, personal finances, rest, exercise, and work. We must take responsibility for our own private lives.

11. Expect Opposition. Live your life in light of the vision God has given you. Don’t let opposition deter you. God gave Nehemiah a vision to rebuild his city, but he encountered stiff opposition. Nehemiah 4:9 says, “We prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.” In other words, praise the Lord and pass the ammunition! In the end, God fulfilled the vision He put in Nehemiah’s heart, a vision that appeared dead.

12. Be Willing to Take Some Risks. After an invigorating discussion on calling, equipping, and sending, a man said with tears in his eyes, “But I’m just not feeling called.” The counsel to this man, who at the time was not serving the Lord at all, was, “Do something.” Many men never attempt anything significant because they might fail. They would rather be perfect in potentiality than imperfect in actuality.

APPLICATION

Do you know what God is calling you to do? If you are still trying to discover His calling, why not take a few moments right now or during your next quiet time and review each of these twelve suggestions carefully. Ask yourself how you can employ each suggestion to help you discover His good, pleasing, and perfect will for your life.

Business leader, author, and speaker, Patrick Morley helps men to think more deeply about their lives, to be reconciled with Christ, and to be equipped for a larger impact on the world.

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Twelve Suggestions to Help Discover Your Calling

Patrick Morley

Once that fire to serve the Lord starts to burn in our hearts, we bump up against some obvious questions:

- ◆ I want to serve the Lord, but what can I do?
- ◆ Wouldn’t I have to be a full-time minister to serve the Lord?
- ◆ What kind of personal ministry can I do?
- ◆ Is my work part of my calling?
- ◆ Why is it taking so long to get in gear?
- ◆ What is God’s will for my life?

Let’s explore the answers to these important questions.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS...

The Bible offers a comprehensive overview of our call to serve. This snapshot will give you a firm base upon which to build your own personal calling.

- ◆ God Made Us To Serve Him: “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works...” (Ephesians 2:10).
- ◆ God Has Already Determined What He Wants Us To Do: “...good works which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).
- ◆ God Wants Each Of Us To Bear Much Fruit: “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8). In fact, fruit proves we are His disciples.
- ◆ To Bear Fruit God Gives Each Of Us Different Spiritual Gifts: “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (Romans 12:6). Spiritual gifts are unique spiritual abilities given by God to help us in serving Him. (For a full discussion of this topic see my book, *The Rest Of Your Life*, “Chapter Eighteen, Developing a Personal Ministry”.)
- ◆ Some Are Called To Speak, Some To Serve, Some To Both: “If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides...” (1 Peter 4:11).

- ◆ We Each Serve God As Part Of A Larger Body: “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:4-5). All of us working together form a beautiful mosaic of loving service.
- ◆ The Ultimate Purpose Of Our Service Is To Bring Glory To God: “...so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:11).

THE NATURE OF THE CALL TO SERVICE

The Bible makes no distinction between sacred and secular. For the Christian, all of life is “spiritual.” Francis Schaeffer put it this way:

One thing you should very definitely have in mind — that is that a ministry such as teaching the Bible in a college is no higher calling intrinsically than being a businessman or doing something else.

Many people who sense the desire to serve God welling up within them assume they must now do something else. This is rarely the case. For 99% of us, God probably wants us right where we are (see 1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 24). Generally, we should keep doing what we already do, but differently – with a whole new orientation to pleasing Christ.

The call to service develops in three phases: calling, equipping, and sending. When God “calls” He rarely “sends” right away. Instead, we usually go through a season of “equipping” when we encounter delays, uncertainties, and hardships. God uses these times to work some things “into” our lives and some things “out of” our lives.

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TWELVE SUGGESTIONS TO HELP DISCOVER YOUR CALLING

Use the following suggestions to help you clarify God’s calling on your life, including both your work and personal ministry.

1. Employ the Means of Guidance. To help us discern His will, God has given seven means of guidance: *The Bible, prayer, the Holy Spirit, conscience, circumstances, counsel, and fasting*. Use these with liberality, keeping the question before you, “God, what is your calling for my life?”
2. Discover Your Spiritual Gifts. Make the effort to learn your spiritual gifts. This will help you discern your direction as much as any single thing. Your church may offer training in spiritual gifts. Ask your pastor. Also, check with your local Christian bookstore for books and other resources. A previous *For Your Life* is entitled “How to Determine Your Spiritual Gifts” which you can order from us. Knowing your gifts will

help you in your work as well as personal ministry. For example, a man with the gifts of leadership and faith may be suited to own his own business.

3. Identify Your Motivated Interests. Philippians 2:13 says, “For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.” In other words, God puts desires into our hearts to do His work. Pay attention to your desires. Pray over them and see if your motives are pure. Discovering your motivated interests can help you direct career choices as well as choose personal ministry opportunities.

Many men never attempt anything significant because they might fail.

4. Complete Your Written Life Purpose Statement. To understand God’s larger purpose for your life is to know why you are here and what your life is about. Develop a written life purpose statement of one or two sentences. Base it upon a Scripture verse if possible. (For a fuller treatment of this topic see my book, *The Man In The Mirror*, page 68.)

5. Keep a Journal. Consider keeping a journal of Scriptures that touch you, impressions you have, your concerns, and new insights you learn about yourself, God, and His calling. Look for patterns of interest or concern.

6. Keep Driving Toward the Vision. Vision is a mental picture of a desirable future. Eventually, God will give you a picture of what He wants you to do. This may be more or less clear. The key is to always keep driving toward the vision, even if you must drive slow because you are in a fog. Act in light of what you *do* know. Don’t *not* act in light of what you *don’t* know.

7. What to Do When Strategy Is Unclear. God has given me a vision: “To help bring about a spiritual awakening in America by reaching the men and leaders of our nation for Christ.” The picture is a spiritually awakened nation. Yet, the precise *strategies* for my part are not completely clear. So, I continue to seek to be faithful to what God has already shown, and vigilant for more clarity as I keep moving with what is already clear.

8. Reorganize Work Life to Allow for Personal Ministry. Jim refused a promotion because it would put him on the road four days a week. Lin quit a position because his boss wanted him to work seven days a week. He found a job selling lights bulbs with 1,325 established accounts that required a normal 40 hour week. Don’t be so bogged down in work that you never have time to serve the Lord in other ministry capacities besides your work.

9. Employ the Power of Faith. After winning the U.S. Open and Wimbledon, #1 ranked tennis pro, Pete Sampras, was asked if he thought he could win the Grand Slam (the four major international tennis tournaments) like his hero Rod Laver did in 1968. No one since Laver has won it. He answered, “No.” That pretty well sealed his fate. The negative power of disbelief cripples your vision. But the power of belief or faith is enormous. Faith is not mere