

CA 36 TFP4 THE CHRISTIAN CALLING

Music theme

➤ See word change

FOSTER: Sam's hero was John Wesley. John Wesley was an 18th century evangelist who brought spiritual and moral revival to England. During his lifetime Wesley delivered over 42,000 sermons and travelled thousands of miles on horseback to tell people about the love of God and His salvation through faith in Christ.

Sam's dream was to be a Pastor like John Wesley because *then* he could really serve the Lord.

But Sam was just a manager at a local hardware store. Or so he thought. Sam was known by all as the kindest, most helpful person you'd ever meet. He'd helped single mothers fix things in his free time, volunteered at the local shelter, and influenced countless boys to follow Christ through a mentoring program. No Sam wasn't a Pastor, but is it possible God called Sam to a different path?

Welcome to Champions Arise. I'm Foster Braun and I'm with Kent Darcie. As Christians, there is a calling on our life to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But do we have to serve like John Wesley, or can we "just" be a manager in a local store? We'll look at this question when we return to Champions Arise.

Music Theme in

FOSTER: Kent, today we begin looking at the fourth priority from the book *The Four Priorities* by Dr. John Tolson and Larry Kreider. Can you review the first three priorities for us?

KENT: Sure. The first priority in our lives is to have a personal, progressive, commitment **to Jesus Christ**. Our second priority is to have a personal, progressive, commitment **to ourselves**. Our third priority is to have a personal, progressive, commitment **to our relationships**. Today we begin our look at the fourth priority which is to have a personal, progressive, commitment **to the world**.

FOSTER: Kent, as we look at our commitment to the world, we're going to discuss God's calling on our lives. While few of us are called to be evangelist-pastors like John Wesley, as Christians, all of us are called to share the joy of our salvation and make Christ known to the world.

KENT: And sharing about Jesus Christ in our neighborhoods, shops, and workplaces is not just something the leaders of our church are called to do. Unfortunately, the word 'call' or 'called' often confuses people into believing "called" means going into full time Christian work. Yet, the Bible teaches that God calls us to himself so that everything we are, do, and have, is invested in His service.

1 Corinthians 10 verse 31 says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

FOSTER: So, if I understand this correctly, as Christians, we're all called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, but we can do that through the life God has designed for us.

KENT: Basically. An example would be, mothers have a very important calling to raise children to love and serve the Lord. Are they preaching to thousands? No. But how important was Jesus' mother, Mary? She was called to bear and raise the Savior of the world. Did she preach to thousands? Nope. Was her calling important? Absolutely.

FOSTER: But how do we know what our calling is?

KENT: The Bible refers to two calls in a person's life. First, everyone is called by God to follow and proclaim Him. And sharing about Christ with people can be scary for some of us, but it doesn't have to be.

I'm reminded of the story about a missionary who was sitting around a campfire one evening with some men and he told them about God's plan of salvation based on John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life.*"

The next morning, one of the men knocked on his hut to say good-bye because he was going to the next village. When the missionary asked what he was going to do there, he said, "I will tell them about the Good News of Jesus." When the missionary cautioned him that he only knew one Bible verse, the man answered, "But they don't know any!"

My friend, think about how many Bible verses you know. Our first calling is to share the truth that Jesus is the only name given under heaven by which men and women can be saved. With the power of God's Holy Spirit, we can all do that.

FOSTER: So that is our first calling. What is the second calling?

KENT: Our secondary call is what we do as we follow him. In fact, the word "vocation" means "calling". Also, Psalm 139 verse 14 says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. The word "fearfully" in that verse infers God's great respect for the gifts, talents, skills, and passions He's given us.

FOSTER: So we are called by God to use the gifts, talents, skills, and passions He gave us to His glory.

KENT: Yes. And I want to look at three things that can help us identify what God's call is on our life. The first is passion. Passion is what gets you excited. What are you interested in? What really concerns you? What do you get excited about? What topics really interest you? This is probably a clue to where your calling is.

In some cases, hints of that passion might have appeared in your childhood. Maybe you were someone who was always building things. Or you loved being outdoors. Perhaps as you got older, you saw injustice and your passion was to help make things better.

For years, my passion has been to help couples have strong marriages and to encourage men to be godly husbands and fathers. It's likely that my passion comes from experiencing my parents' divorce.

FOSTER: That's interesting that your passion came from an unpleasant thing.

KENT: It's not uncommon. The Bible says in Micah 6 verse 8, "*and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*" So as adults, when we see injustice or cruelty, it can stir up a passion in us to fix the problem. And that can be a call from God.

And here's another point I hope is helpful. I was a retail store manager for many years. I could do the job, but it wasn't my passion; however, it did provide for my family and allowed me and my wife to lead marriage groups that encouraged husbands and wives to make Christ the focus of their lives and their marriages. So passion doesn't necessarily have to focus on our occupation.

FOSTER: It can. You're just saying it's not a requirement.

KENT: Right.

FOSTER: If you joined our conversation late, you're listening to Champions Arise. We're so glad you're with us today. I'm Foster Braun and I'm with Kent Darcie. Today we are discussing how to identify God's call on your life. Kent, we've seen how passion is a key part. What is the second indicator of a calling from God?

KENT: It helps to be gifted in the area we feel called to. If you can't cook, a cooking ministry with you as the cook is problematic. Now sometimes people will say, "whom God calls, God equips." And that's true. But, the majority of the time, what's happening is more in the area of empowering than *giving* us a skill.

If you have a passion for singing, but can't sing on key, it is very unlikely that God is going to suddenly give you a wonderful singing voice. However, it is possible that God's Holy Spirit may guide you to start an organization where underprivileged kids can learn to sing. And the music these children sing is all God-honoring, Christ-focused music.

FOSTER: And while you may not have the gift of singing, you may have the gifts of organization, motivation, encouragement, which could all be used.

KENT: Right. And this leads us to the third indicator of God's calling and that is role preference. We can have passion and gifts, but we also need to be in the right role (or position) to use our passion and gifts.

FOSTER: Can you clarify what you mean by that for us?

KENT: Sure. Here's an example. There was a man named Richard who was called to be an architect and he loved serving the Lord with those gifts. But the favor of the Lord was on him, so more and more people wanted his services. Eventually he had to hire

additional people and soon he was spending all of his time managing his architect business instead of *being* an architect.

FOSTER: So role preference is understanding where the Lord has really placed us.

KENT: Yes. And this requires a lot of prayer, studying the Bible, and getting input from Godly people who know you.

But I also want to share an example where the person didn't end up in a higher job, but stayed in what could be considered an unimportant job. He was a mason—a bricklayer. He was one of three masons who were building a huge wall. All three were asked how much they liked their job. The first said with regret, "I have to work here because I couldn't find another job." The second answered, "I need to work here in order to bring food to the table for my family." The third said with enthusiasm, "I have the privilege to be a part of building this beautiful cathedral." Foster, that mason understood his role in the final project and it made all the difference in his attitude towards his job.

As Christians, we need to see our role in God's bigger picture.

FOSTER: I like that story. It really puts our service to God in perspective. So we've seen that passion, giftedness and role preference are three strong indicators of what God may be calling us to.

KENT: Yes, but we also have to be careful because one of the snares that come with success is the tendency to lean on our gifts, education, and experience instead of depending on God. Regardless of the passion and skills we possess, we need God's grace and strength to do it to His glory. This is also important because when we pursue our calling, we're going to face spiritual opposition. Our victories cannot be won without God's presence and His power.

FOSTER: Is there anything else we need to know about God's calling on our lives?

KENT: We don't need to make finding our calling more difficult than it has to be. If you aren't sure what your passion or gift is, seek God for His counsel. Ask Him to make your calling clear. James 1 verse 5 says, "*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*"

Also, a lot of times, our wife, family, and close friends know us better than we know ourselves. They're familiar with our strengths and weaknesses. Ask them for their advice.

Proverbs 11:14 says, "*Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*"

FOSTER: Kent, I think it's very important to understand God's call on our lives. That way we can know where to focus our attention and energy. But we're just about out of time. Would you give us a review of what we've learned today?

KENT: Sure. As Christians we have one calling and that is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. And to love our neighbor as ourselves. And loving our neighbor includes sharing the life giving gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

Our secondary calling is the vocation or vehicle we use to share the gospel of Christ. Most of us are not preachers, but through our various roles we can be used by God to share His truth.

Three things that tend to indicate that God is calling us to do something in a specific way is having the passion for it, having the gifting for it (although God can intervene there) and making sure we are in the right role. The bottom line with our calling is to remember what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men (Col 3:23.)"

FOSTER: Kent, thank you for this fascinating discussion on identifying God's call on our lives. My friend, I hope you will pursue God and confirm His calling on your life today.

Music Theme in

Program Close

FOSTER: Thank you for listening to Champions Arise where men are equipped and strengthened to meet their God-given potential. Today we discussed our Christian Calling. This material was based on chapter 25 in the book "The Four Priorities," by Dr. John Tolson and Larry Kreider which is published by "The Gathering USA" in 2007 and used by permission. You can learn more about this book and listen to any of these programs at our website championsarise.org. I'm Foster Braun with Kent Darcie. Thank you for listening to Champions Arise. May God mold you into the man He knows you can be.

Music under then up established and out

Closing ID

CA 36 TFP4 THE CHRISTIAN CALLING