**Faith and Work group**

**November 29, 2016**

**“Self-Leadership”**

**4 areas to cover this week:**

* Calling/Purpose
* Gifts/Abilities
* Seasons
* Sabbath

**Calling/Purpose**

Why does God give our lives a significant purpose? Why does God call leaders? Why in the world would he ever want to use me? Why does he give me gifts and abilities?

I think the calling of Moses shows us where our purpose actually originates.

**Exodus 2:23-3:12 During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. 24God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 25So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.**

**3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb,the mountain of God. 2There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.”**

**4When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!”**

**And Moses said, “Here I am.”**

**5“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” 6Then he said, “I am the God of your father,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=exodus+2%3A23-3%3A12&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-1586a" \o "See footnote a)] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.**

**7The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.”**

**11But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”**

**12And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=exodus+2%3A23-3%3A12&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-1592b" \o "See footnote b)] will worship God on this mountain.”**

**Our divine purpose is always connected to God’s purpose for a certain thing at a specific time.**

* We only have a purpose because God has a purpose. Our purpose originates in the heart of God.
* (v.24-25) God heard, remembered, looked, and was concerned. Moses is only a given a part because God wanted to do something about the condition of his people in this part of the world at this time.

**God chooses leaders when He wants something done in the world.**

* “I’ve seen their misery and I am concerned about their suffering. So I’ve come down to rescue them.

God says in verse 10, “So, now go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt.”

So a logical question we have to ask: Why has God sent me to this city, my church, this industry, my company, at this time in my life? It must be because there’s something he wants done.

**Gifts/Abilities**

One helpful ways to discover your gifts is simply to take a spiritual gifts assessment. If you haven’t done this or haven’t done this in a while, here’s a link to one: <http://www.wherenewlifebegins.org/hp_wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SHAPE-Assessment.pdf>

There are other assessments, but I’d recommend sticking with the spiritual gifts assessment for our purposes.

I also want you to list some of your personal strengths (could be based on strengths finder test or just observation over time):

1.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I want you to spend some time thinking about things you do at work that fall into the following categories: what you’re bad at, what you’re good at, what you’re excellent at, and what are your unique abilities.

1. **Things You're Bad At**This is something that you do poorly—you might even be incompetent at it—but you have to do it to make it through your day.
2. **Things You're Good At**This is an area where you have sufficient skill, but no one would pay you to do it.
3. **Things You're Excellent At**
You excel in this area and are highly competent, and if you had to, could do it professionally.
4. **Your Unique Ability**
This is what God knit you in your mother's womb to do. Not only do you excel at this, but you feel most alive when doing it.

**John 4:34 “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”**

-Jesus was nourished/fulfilled when he was doing what God called him to do.

What could you spend 20% of your time on that produces 80% of your results?

Quotes from *Spiritual Leadership* by J. Oswald Sanders chapter 12 “The Leader and Time”

“Each of us has the time to do the whole will of God for our lives.”

“Often the pressure a spiritual leader feels comes from assuming tasks that God has not assigned; for such tasks the leader cannot expect God to supply the extra strength required.”

“Every call for help is not necessarily a call from God, for it is impossible to respond to every need. If the leader sincerely plans his day in prayer, then executes the plan with all energy and eagerness, that is enough. A leader is responsible only for what lies within the range of control. The rest he should trust to our loving and competent heavenly Father.”

**Seasons**

(this entire section comes from my mentor Steve Stroope, pastor of Lake Pointe Church in the Dallas area)

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**Dream Season:** You’re beginning an endeavor. The first part of it is so delightful. Planning stage.

**Do Season:** With the right team, doing the wrong thing. It’s a productive time. All about execution.

**Drag:** When things get out of alignment, aren’t working quite right. You know you’re in this season – work no longer has meaning. But a lot of the seeds you planted in do season are being harvested. And those around you don’t know you’re going through a rough time, but you know it.

\*Choices you have at this point:

* Make a hard right turn and come back to the “do” season. Instead of finding out what’s out of alignment, you just work harder. Or you just leave your company and go to a new one. You aren’t going there because you’re dreaming new dreams. And you go from job to job without thinking about why.
* Suggestion is to go into the “dark season”.

**Dark:** Quiet and lonely place. Asking God to show you what’s out of alignment. You might discover you are in the wrong kind of work and need to change vocation. You do it based on what you discover, not on what you’re trying to escape from.

It’s okay to be in the “drag season”. The pain tells us that something is wrong. We need to take the time to get this fixed. Don’t feel guilty – find out the source.

Use the “dark season” to examine whether you need to stay in the spot. And if so, is there anything that needs to change with your role?

What season are you in?

**Sabbath**

We tend to just stay in the “do” stage. We quit dreaming. We quit going into the dark. And if we stay in this mindset, we will pay a price later. God created us to live out a proper work/rest rhythm – it’s called the Sabbath. And a regular Sabbath can decrease our time in both the “Drag” season and the “Dark” season.

“One measure for whether or not you’re rested enough – besides falling asleep in board meetings – is to ask yourself this: *How much do I care about the things I care about?* When we lose concern for people, both the lost and the found, for the bride of Christ, for friendship, for truth and beauty and goodness; when we cease to laugh when our children laugh (and instead yell at them to quiet down) or weep when our spouses weep (and instead wish they didn’t get so emotional); when we hear news of trouble among our neighbors and our first thought is that we hope it isn’t going to involve us – *when we stop caring about the things we care about* – that’s a signal we’re too busy. We have let ourselves be consumed by the things that feed the ego but starve the soul.” – *The Rest of God* by Mark Buchanan

“Busyness kills the heart. *Busyness makes us stop caring about the things we care about.* And not only that. Busyness also robs us of knowing God the way we might.” – *The Rest of God* by Mark Buchanan

“A common characteristic of driven people is that, at some point, they forget the purpose. They lose the point. The very reason they began something – embarked on a journey, undertook a project, waged a war, entered a profession, married a girl – erodes under the weight of their striving. Their original inspiration may be noble. But driven too hard, it gets supplanted by greed for more, or dread of setback, or force of habit.” – *The Rest of God* by Mark Buchanan

Take note of how God gives the command for observing the Sabbath in Deuteronomy 5.

**Deuteronomy 5:12-15 “Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. 13Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do. 15Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.**

What did God free them from in Egypt? Slavery – yes. But what did every day look like for 400 years? Work. Endless work. Constant production. And Pharaoh wasn’t satisfied with what they were producing. So he made them work even harder. And they had quotas that they had to meet in terms of how many bricks each day. In this system, there was absolutely no rest. Just the concept of more and more work.

“The lie the taskmasters want you to swallow is that you cannot rest until your work’s all done, and done better than you’re currently doing it. But the truth is, the work’s never done, and never done quite right. It’s always more than you can finish and less than you had hoped for. So what? Get this straight: The rest of God – the rest God gladly gives so that we might discover that part of God we’re missing – is not a reward for finishing. It’s not a bonus for work well done. It’s sheer gift. It is a stop-work order in the midst of work that’s never complete, never polished. Sabbath is not the break we’re allotted at the tail end of completing all our tasks and chores, the fulfillment of all our obligations. It’s the rest we take smack-dab in the middle of them, without apology, without guilt, and for no better reason than God told us we could.” *The Rest of God* by Mark Buchanan

Remember you were a slave. And you didn’t work your way out of slavery. God did the heavy lifting – this is how you came to be free. And keeping the Sabbath will help you remember that you aren’t a slave anymore to endless productivity. And you’ll be reminded that I’m still the one doing the heavy lifting in your life.

“Anyone who overworks is really a slave. Anyone who cannot rest from work is a slave – to a need for success, to a materialistic culture, to exploitative employers, to parental expectations, or to all of the above. These slave masters will abuse you if you are not disciplined in the practice of Sabbath rest. Sabbath is a declaration of freedom.” – Tim Keller, “Wisdom and Sabbath Rest”

“If God works all things together for good for those who love him and are called to his purposes, you can relax. If he doesn’t, start worrying. If God can take any mess, any mishap, any wastage, any wreckage, any anything, and choreograph beauty and meaning from it, then you can take a day off. If he can’t, get busy. Either God’s always at work, watching the city, building the house, or you need to try harder. Either God is good and is in control, or it all depends on you.” -Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God*