

Entrusted 4

Stewarding Your Gifts and Calling

Biblical stewardship is faithfully managing everything God has entrusted to us so that His purpose, not merely our potential, is fulfilled. Over the past three weeks in our Entrusted series, we have discovered that stewardship is much bigger than money. We have seen that God owns everything, that we are called to steward our time wisely, and that true stewardship flows from recognising that nothing we have ultimately belongs to us. Today we move to a deeply personal aspect of stewardship: our gifts and our calling. If our possessions are entrusted to us, then so are our abilities, opportunities, influence, and the unique assignment God has placed on our lives. One day we will give an account not only for what we owned, but for what we did with what God deposited within us. **Your calling and gifts are God's investment in you; your stewardship of these gifts and calling is your return on His investment.** This message is about discovering, developing, protecting, and faithfully deploying what God has entrusted to you. Because the greatest tragedy is not dying with unused potential—it is living without ever stepping fully into God's purpose for your life. **Your gift explains what you can do. Your calling explains why you must do it.**

A gift is given in a moment; stewardship is proven over a lifetime.

God's calling is not a reward for our worthiness; it is an expression of His grace. He calls us according to His purpose, and then He gives us the grace to fulfil that calling. A gift is what God has given to you and a calling is what you are giving to the world. With your calling you are now the gift. My life must be lived for a purpose. There are people with a gift but no sense of calling. The two must come together.

Calling:

1. General calling – to be born again
2. Christian Calling – to be like Christ
3. Vocational calling – to work for Christ.

1. All calls demand a response. Yes or No. Or I don't know. Callings are time specific and time sensitive as they answer a need in God's mind. **Untended gifts become buried gifts.** This is one case where No and I don't know are the same. If you say No, God may wait for you or pick someone else. If you delay the response to the call you may not reach your efficient time. If you are born out of season it can be difficult. Calling has to do with times and seasons. You have to say yes quickly (cf 20 year old in grade 1). It requires a responsibility – it changes your life etc). Every calling has an element of risk. Elisha had to leave his business. The disciples had to do so too.

May you not just be a passenger in life. Rather may history record that you were here and stepped into your calling. May your life not be ordinary.

2 Tim 1:9 He has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

Your gift was given for others and it's your stewardship that determines how much they benefit from it.

Using your gifts and walking in your calling always involves multiplication.

- God rarely asks whether you had enough; He asks what you did with what you had.
- Faithful stewardship always turns deposits into dividends for the Kingdom.
- "What you faithfully steward today determines what God entrusts to you tomorrow."

2. Your calling is completely based on God's will and His goodness.

- God will always give you the grace you need to fulfil His calling.
- Our flesh wants us to think we did something special to entice God to call us.
- This mindset makes you feel like you are uncalled every time you mess up.
- God has a purpose and He calls you according to that purpose.
- Try to figure out God's purpose in this hour. What's on His agenda?

2 Tim 1:10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

- Every calling is necessitated by a need. Without sickness there is no need for a doctor. You are necessary.
- "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." — Frederick Buechner
- Teachers are needed because there are some people whom God considers to be ignorant.

3. You must understand your gift-mix.

2 Tim 1:11 And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

- Paul was called to be a herald (Gk. Kerusso – proclaiming publicly with conviction), Apostle (a sent one) and teacher (Gk. Didasko – one who causes another to learn. Dissemination of information. Instructor)
- Do you know the blend and combination of gifts you carry?
- He was specifically appointed for the gospel. So you can have a gift but not use it for what you were appointed to use it for.
- Your gift and passion must be aligned.

4. You must understand the factors affecting the current effectiveness of your gift mix

- **Gift – Supernatural endowment**
- **Growth phase**
- **Talent** – what we can do naturally. You can do it without much effort, It's to do with how your brain is wired. The way you think. It's your disposition eg story telling, (we think a child is lying but he has a fertile imagination), making things with your hands, speak convincingly and persuade (no one teaches you) – the body of a car
- **Passion – what you really love doing (fire in the belly).** Without passion, talent will be dormant. The engine of a car. Without passion you can have a talent but not go anywhere. What makes you move against the difficulties in your life? It's your passion. Your passion moves your talent. Fire in your belly. When you have talent but no passion then it leads to dis-satisfaction. There are others who have no talent but passion. E.g. no musical talent but you have passion for it. E.g. guys with good soccer gear or biking gear but no talent. All the gear but no idea. Why is this? Maybe they were born in an environment where everyone is doing it. E.g. born in a family like that. **Your passion is also to do with those you have**

grown to care about (people, concepts or situations); your target. Be very careful when you have passions that are not linked to your call. They can move you away from your calling. They can also affect your relationships as people around you feel that you are consumed with something that is purposeless. Be careful when your passion is without purpose. Passion for something can also develop based on value systems, environment, needs being met etc. How does it work? You can have a singing talent but your passion is to see people delivered. The passion fuels you. Some people have passion to see business growth in young local entrepreneurs and their gift is teaching but instead of teaching them they try to become a weaver, who fund raises and connects. Try to use your gift in your area of passion.

- **Experiences (Positive and Negative)** – When talent and passion meet reality. Experience helps you to perfect yourself. I was released to coach leaders early in my career. When you are given opportunities to be faithful with the small, God can give you much. Sometimes God will use the negative things that have happened in your life, for His good.
- **Training and mentorship** – This is what you have learned to do. Formal and informal. Most times (80% of the time) it's not in the direction of your passion. What you trained in is not a waste of time. Over time you will find a way to engineer your engineering into your music (if you studied engineering but are passionate about music). Your engineering might help you in understanding sound or music production later on. What are you by talent and what you by training? A lot of people have found a way to use what they studied in their purpose. Some people are not endowed with a great gift but have the exposure, training and mentorship. This helps them to maximize their gift. **Mentorship and hard work can make an average person look talented. Poor discipline, isolation and laziness can make a talented person look average.** I wish I had had the coaching that is available today in athletics. E.g. Samuel going to a long jump clinic during the school holidays. I just remember jumping as far as I could. Who would be better Martina Navratilova or Serena?
- **Individual Style**
Two people can have the same gift but different individual styles. Embracing your individuality will help you to maximize your gift. Are you singing according to your voice range or are you trying to be a soprano because that is what is admired. If you are a soft alto, embrace that.

5. You must know the trials and challenges that come with your gift mix.

1 Tim 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

What are the tests common to specific gift-mixes?

E.g. Prophets – rejection; Givers often go through faith tests. In the process they get to know Jehovah Jireh. There will be battles. Look at David, he had to deal with a Goliath and then with Saul. You will have Saul's coming after you say "I am available Lord."

When you don't know the challenges that come with your calling, you may end up disillusioned. Sports people who understand the risk and the challenges say, "Well that's sport!" They understand the occupational hazards. E.g. **Highest in-race speed:** Juan Pablo Montoya recorded **372.6 km/h (231.5 mph)** driving for McLaren-Mercedes at the Italian Grand Prix at Monza in 2005. Accidents do happen in that sport. You will face persecution. You will have to

fight off rejection. You may experience betrayal as others bail out. Its fine to be excited about having the gift of leadership but it can also be a lonely place. It's great to say I am a coach or pastor but I also have to deal with people's issues. The good, the bad and the ugly multiplied out. Some people ask me whether it affects me or not, when I continuously hear people's issues.

6. Your natural talent and gift can be a door opener for your calling.

Some singers are called to bring hope and deliverance. People invite them to sing but then the impact is that they bring deliverance and hope. Many people confuse the gift and the calling. **When you don't know your calling you can easily end up misusing your gifts.** Such is the case with many Pop Stars today.

7. You must know the giver of the gifts and calling.

- **What do you do to remain intimate with Christ?**
- **What does abiding in Christ look like in your life?**
- **When you know Him, there are things you entrust to Him and He will guard those things.** Entrusting is two way. God entrusts us with a calling and gifts. We entrust certain things to Him.

8. You are called to guard what has been deposited in you.

1 Tim 1: 13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

- **Do you know what has been deposited in you?**
 - **Faith, teaching and mysteries, gifts**
- **Do you see it as a good deposit?**
- **Do you know the real weight of what you carry?**
- **The revelation you have about what you carry will determine the extent to which you guard it.**
- **Do you know how to guard what is in you?** E.g. Watch what you say about it. Don't be friends with fear. Don't be ashamed of the gospel. Don't compare and envy others. Right motives. Do this with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- **Do you know what you are guarding it from? – the enemy's strategy to kill your destiny.**

What you fail to guard, you eventually lose.

The enemy cannot create your calling, but he will try to corrupt your stewardship of it.

Your calling is too valuable to leave unguarded. There is too much at stake.

9. We are called to be desperate to find what we need in order to fulfil our calling.

1 Tim 1:15 You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. 17 On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. 18 May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

- Why was Onesiphorus so desperate to find Paul?
- Onesiphorus knew the link between his calling and his alliance with Paul.
- **Deserting someone linked to your calling or deserting a God given post is often a sign that one does not understand one's calling.**
- You can desert people emotionally. You are there physically but have still left them in your heart.
- There are spiritual posts you can desert. Many people desert the post of watchman. Others desert their leadership posts because of the responsibility it entails.

In conclusion: **The measure of your life is not what you received, but what you multiplied.**
 We have been called to live beyond good intentions. **God does not ask you to account for someone else's calling, only your stewardship of your own."**