

## Developing a Ministry Philosophy PART FOUR – Your Calling

*By Gregory Wiens*

Over recent weeks, I've been sharing about the components that I found to be foundational to the writing of my personal ministry philosophy. It's taken me years to understand the significance of each. Here's a quick refresher of what we've covered so far:

1. Assumptions of Ministry - Can you explain why you do what you do? Don't guess at anything! Commit to something on paper – or computer screen.
2. Gifts – You have been wonderfully and fearfully made. Take time to understand your gifting. Have you been intentional about understanding your “A-game?”
3. Leadership Style - There is not a “one-leader-fits-all” type out there. For what purpose are you in leadership and how will your style advance His master plan.

The final piece is your calling. A great deal of confusion arises over a person's calling. Some things can only be learned as you do them. Defining and clarifying your call is one of these. That is why I often talk about “Knowing Yourself” not “Know Yourself.” Knowing implies an ongoing process, one without end. This side of eternity, you will never know yourself completely (1 Corinthians 3:12b). You will obviously go through some stages in life where you learn more about yourself than in other phases. However, the process of learning and refining should never end...it is called being a lifelong learner.

I love Paul at the end of his life, while in prison in the last letter he writes, he tells Timothy to bring his books (2 Timothy 4.13). Why? Because in spite of his imminent death, he still wanted to learn and grow. That is what I call a life long learner!

As you evaluate your calling, I encourage you to consider these two aspects of a calling: the push and the pull.

### THE PUSH

God's call is exactly that: God's call. It involves an internal sense – a *push* – where God works inside your heart and soul to push you toward His desire for your life. I believe this aspect of a call always begins deep inside, while immersing one's self in the Word. It is Spirit calling to spirit.

The call is pushed by a deep awareness of how God has uniquely equipped you to labor in His Kingdom. The push is just as clear as you become aware of what he has *not* gifted you to do. As you continue to explore the areas you can grow in, God's call will become clearer. Some times, His call involves preparing you for future ministry that you are completely unaware of today.

As I work with pastors in the midst of transition, so often there is a sense of deep discontent in their lives, something is amiss and they can't explain it. It may be a loss of passion or vision or they just can't explain their disengagement...this is often the early signs of the push.

Most of the time, the pastor will tell me there is no reason for it because “everything is going great.” It may be God working inside of you, beginning to push you out of your present place of comfort.

## THE PULL

As God is working to push you from the inside, He also works in the Body to confirm the call -- to pull you into open opportunities for you to fulfill His desire for your life. A Call is always both a push and a pull.

Too often I hear young ministers tell me of the great push in their life and yet they are frustrated because there is no pull -- no opportunity to pursue their push. I encourage these pastors to go and seek input from others that know them well, asking for feedback regarding their push. Usually, if there is no pull, there is more work to be done on the push. That is, there may be disciplines or skills needed or possibly just learning to tough it through a dry season.

A pull is when a door is opened that matches the push you are feeling internally. But any door isn't an automatic pull. It must be carefully considered through prayer and counsel. I have seen too many pastors “jump” at the first opportunity only to regret it later. God has a wonderful way of teaching us through life and ministry, even when we try to avoid his lessons by jumping from one opportunity to another. He hasn't been called the “hound of heaven” through the ages for nothing.

Not all dreams become a “call.” And for that reason, it is important to fully examine one's push and pull. It can be hard work, but considering what's at stake (for the Kingdom of God), the time and effort is necessary. Yes – discipline is needed to seek God's input in our lives. I've struggled myself, but I've also tasted the sweetness of hearing his voice and sensing his hand.

If this four-week series has been helpful, I'd appreciate hearing from you. We want to address topics and experiences that are meaningful to you.