



## Making An Impact

By Dr. Gregory Wiens

We all want to change the world, in some way. Most of us believe our call has in some way directed us to make an impact in the relationships and sphere of influence in which we find ourselves. As I study leaders who have made significant differences in our world, I find they come in different shapes and sizes. They are of different personalities, means, passions, visions, genders, ethnicities, and principles they espouse. Their impact is different based upon a lot of external factors, which they can't control, but there seem to also be three internal states, which critically influence their impact.

Why do some leaders have the gifts, education and natural opportunities to make a significant impact, but they simply never actually move beyond talking about good ideas to actually expanding the Kingdom? If one actually makes a difference in the Kingdom, it is usually because they are being: 1) who God called and created them to be, 2) abandoned to the vision to which they have been called and 3) relentless in that call.

The first internal state I have noticed in leaders of impact (regardless of the size of their ministry) is that they understand who God created them to be and are comfortable in their call. Often we spend the first half of our lives figuring out how we are wired and then the last half of lives fulfilling that calling. At least in healthy leaders, that is the way it should be. However, too often some NEVER become comfortable with who God has called them to be. They are always trying to be Hybels, Stanley, Warren, Ferguson, Bell, Surratt, Driscoll or whoever the lead pastor of the next mega church is.

The sooner we become comfortable with who we are, the sooner we will be able to follow the call that God has on our lives. An amazing thing happens as you watch this convergence take place; the leader begins to experience contentment AND impact like they never envisioned. But it all begins with the leader coming to terms with themselves.

The second internal state is that they are totally abandoned to this call. Not only are they comfortable with their call and who they were created to be; but also they are pursuing it with reckless abandon. This calling has captured their life. They realize that God has called them to do what no other person on the earth can do, so they must fulfill it; at all costs. Why else would Henri Nouwen leave a position of status to serve the impaired for the rest of his life? Or why would a pastor of a large growing healthy church leave to start a ministry from scratch with little funding and no following? Or why would someone set out to seek to build disciples in Lenard, Kansas in a church of 35 people?

As leaders develop a passion for their call that defies explanation I see them walk by faith and not trust in their own skills or wisdom. When their lives are consumed with the call, it is no longer a career; it is truly a calling. Often their career becomes consumed within this calling. As pastors, you see these leaders no longer worry about “what if everyone doesn't get on board?” or “what if I fail?”. They have heard from their Father and they are willing to follow “whatever”.

The final state that I see in people who are part of significant movement in the Kingdom is that they are relentless in fulfilling that call. They don't have passion for just a year, or even five years, but for the rest of their lives. Obstacles do not deter them. Every impact worth giving our lives for will require our lives. What are you willing to give the rest of your life for? If it were easy, everyone would be making significant differences. Though the potential is there for all of us, too few have the perseverance needed to see changes actually become a reality. I watch these leaders continue their passion long after they have “retired”. This is because their relentlessness keeps them laboring until their last breath, not their last paycheck. They never give up!

I have found the best way to be relentless in the pursuit of my calling is to have others around me who understand how I am created, called and impassioned and they support and encourage me (as I do for them). It takes a team to do anything significant. Think about it, what great things in the Kingdom have been accomplished alone? Except when Jesus was alone with the Father in quiet communion, he always had other leaders with him in ministry. Paul is listed with at least 47 leaders in the New Testament. He always had someone with him. I am convinced this isn't only so others could do the work he didn't want to do, but rather as we see in the last chapter of the last letter he wrote, (2 Timothy 4) they were there to encourage him to finish the race God has laid out before him.

I am convinced and I believe history supports the fact that we cannot determine the breadth of our impact or the size of our impact. That is in God's hands and is often beyond our ability to control. However, we can determine the depth of our impact or how deep an impact we make by these three internal states: simply embracing and capitalizing on who God called and created you to be, being so committed to God's vision for your life that you are willing to sacrifice whatever God wants to see it become a reality, and last not giving up until your last breath has expired.

I hope to see each of you this Thursday at our Annual Ministries Meeting as I unpack some of the things that are helpful for you to know about yourself in order to figure out what your team should look like.