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# Authentic Storytelling

## Session Three Handout

### PURPOSE, a Spiritual Kaleidoscope

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*“He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11-12*

MATURITY is a good goal, spiritually speaking and otherwise. But I’m not sure we can reach maturity without coming to terms with *our spiritual vocation*, with the calling of God on our life. How we respond to this call to work, to serve, to offer our gifts to others has a lot to do with our level of satisfaction in life.

When we understand the call on each life to serve God in a way that’s authentic to how we made us; and respond to it in a way that not only fulfills that purpose, but fulfills us and gives our lives meaning, it’s a powerful thing. It’s always amazing to see someone working or serving in their niche. Doing well. Feeling good about what they do and how they do it. Confident in the knowledge they’ve found their place and are uniquely suited to the task at hand. This does not have to be the exception to the rule.

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The good news is this doesn't have to be a rare occurrence. Or something that applies to someone else, in fantasy land. Because either there is a purpose and a call on our lives, or there's not. And if there is, we can know it. And if we know it, we can live it. And be successful in it.

Each of the five spiritual gifts mentioned in the book of *Ephesians, chapter 4, verse 11* has a *certain kind of work* to do in the world. Do circumstances always allow us to choose our type of work? Of course not. But does it need to be a luxury, or the purview of the few? I don't think so. I believe the work that would uniquely satisfy us on a soulful level is closer than we realize. And it's not complicated. It's simple.

**For instance, the WORK OF A TEACHER IS 'SIMPLY' TO TEACH.** To share their knowledge. To explore their area of interest with others, to work collegially. This doesn't have to be formal, paid or pensioned work. It can be for fun, or as a contribution to the community. But a teacher must teach to be satisfied. They must be working towards laying down firm foundations for those who would come after them. The subject area, the venue, the audience does not matter. What matters is the verb. A teacher must teach. They must *educate*.

It's in them. In their spiritual DNA. It's how they're made.

**THE SAME IS TRUE FOR PASTORS.** Those who carry others in their heart of hearts, also carry the heart of the pastor. They may not be employed by a local church or ministry. They may not have a title. But *it's in their spiritual DNA to care for others*. To nurture the life of the heart and spirit. To shore people up with their gift of empathy. To sit with them, and their problems. These are the animated, constant storytellers in our midst. And to be satisfied, they must

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know they've helped at least one person along the road of life today. They've journeyed together. They must share the burden. This is the heart and soul of a pastoral social connector. It's in them. It's who they are, and so it's what they must do. This is their spiritual vocation, *to care*.

We each have this inner blueprint, this simple guide to vocational satisfaction. Vocation is what we do in the world, outside our daily, home-based routines. It's the gift we have to offer others and how we offer it.

**For the EVANGELISTIC CHANGE AGENT** this means putting in their heart and soul to see the world a better place. They need to make a difference, in a measurable way. They can do this through any organization, or self-starter initiative, or good cause ministry. The Evangelist really doesn't see limits, only timelines. *They're on a mission and the needs they see are usually societal or global, and always urgent.* This means they can do good work almost anywhere at anytime. Whenever and however they're promoting or advancing their cause, through word or action, they are serving their purpose, fulfilling their call.

You don't have to motivate a Change Agent. It's in them to serve and it's more likely you need to rein them in than rally them forth.

**THE SPIRITUAL VOCATION OF AN ADVENTURE-LOVING APOSTLE** is harder to see in action, because they are not called to the big picture, but to come alongside the individual in a time of need; the leader who needs direction or encouragement; the organization floundering. The Apostle's vocation gifting and therefore calling is to lend courage to those facing obstacles. To direct them to the summit; to speak to higher motivations and desires within. And bless them.

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This act of coming alongside and blessing others by lending courage is not exactly in any formal job description. This is what makes a job or career different than a spiritual vocation.

People may or may not be paid for their spiritually faithful work, but they will be satisfied on a deep level that they are serving in a rich way. And will be rewarded, even in the act of aligning their service to others with their God-given gift. *The gift they've been gifted to give.*

As anyone knows—who is satisfied with their calling and has aligned their outer service to others with their inner calling and gifting from the Lord—there is real pleasure in feeling God's pleasure, and blessing on the work of our hands.

**THE SPIRITUAL WORK OR CALL OF A PROPHET** is easy to spot, although tough to employ in any systematic or organizational way. To live and speak the truth in love is their spiritual vocation, as they see it as the spiritual vocation of all believers. But they feel called to actively dedicate their time, energy and focus to the spiritual journey, and often the disciplines and habits of holiness. In their service of others, it's their time set apart, spent alone, contemplating God that ultimately serves to serve, *to help enlighten.*

This is an unseen and unsung work in many ways but can be profoundly rewarding; as can any of the five spiritual vocations.

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Which PURPOSE do you align with? FIND YOUR JOY IN?

- A. Educating, sharing knowledge, firming up foundations
- B. Empathizing with others, carrying their burdens
- C. Equipping teams to effect change in the world
- D. Encouraging someone to face and overcome their obstacles
- E. Enlightening others in a dark place, spiritually speaking

## MAKE IT YOUR OWN

1. IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, has it been difficult to define your spiritual vocation? Or has this come naturally, as a matter of course? Who has helped you find your way, or unintentionally blocked you in your pursuit of aligning your inner and outer life?

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2. DOES THE BULK of your day-to-day work align with, or strengthen, your spiritual vocation, today? If not, is this something you desire or would like to know more about? Who might share this leg of your journey?

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3. IS *SPIRITUAL VOCATION* a new concept for you? How comfortable are you with it? Are there other words or ways of explaining it that might resonate more deeply, more authentically with you? If yes, find those words. Make them your own. Use them.

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4. DO YOU RECOGNIZE when joy comes to you when serving your God-given purpose? Do you feel grateful in these moments, or perhaps envy others their joy? Do you know there is enough joy to go around? Do you sense God's abundance towards us? His generous, overflowing nature? May I encourage you to pause, open your hands, and receive.

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5. DOES THE IMAGE of a *kaleidoscope* of the gifts working together resonate with you? If you like to draw, explore this image visually. Expand on it. Explore.