

A few animals wanted to start a school to teach each other how to run, climb, swim, and fly. They decided every animal needed these skills and so they provided a course in each discipline – and that’s when the problems began.

The **duck** was better than his teacher at swimming, but only made a passing grade in flying, was a poor runner and couldn’t climb at all. So they made him drop swimming to put in extra practice in running/climbing. This caused his web feet to be badly worn negatively affecting his ability to swim. But everyone else felt less threatened by his ability. The **rabbit** started at the top of his class in running, but b/c of so much make-up work in swimming/climbing, he fell behind and dropped out of school. The **squirrel** had great ability in climbing, but was frustrated in flying class b/c the teacher insisted he start from the ground up instead of the treetop down. Having developed a cramp from over-extension, he got a **C** in climbing/running. The **eagle** was the problem student. In climbing class, he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there. And b/c he refused to participate in running and swimming, he was expelled.

Just as God has designed the animals w/ specific skills, so has he wired and gifted us w/ certain unique gifts/abilities.

When we expect everybody to fit in the same mold, all we're going to get is frustration, discouragement, mediocrity, and failure. Why? B/c a duck is made to be a duck and not something else. **And you were made to be you.**

For 3 weeks we've been in a series of lessons entitled *Kaleo* – discussing how to know/experience God's will in our lives. Kaleo is the Greek word meaning – **to this you were called.**

A person's Divine call is their **customized** life direction and purpose as **ordained** by God. It's the way they're to bring God the greatest glory and achieve the maximum expansion of His kingdom. A person's Divine calling is intended always to bring about God's glory and fulfill His kingdom agenda. Therefore, to follow one's calling is to live in a way that God's kingdom is put on display for all to see. *T. Evans*

Like Tony, I believe God has a unique customized calling on our lives and that **it is His will to reveal His will to anyone who's willing to do His will.** Yet, we can't ever forget God's will is **ALWAYS** more about God than it is about me.

Sadly, too many of us are living w/out a sense of God's purpose b/c we've learned to live independently of His will by defining our existence by our *occupational advances*, *personal achievements*, and *life acquirements*. So we've settled for a life of human ability and have **missed out on our kingdom calling.** **But it is never too late to start.**

In week 1 we discussed the scope of God's will – that God's will occurs on 3 levels simultaneously – His *providential*, *prescriptive*, and *personal* will.

The **Providential Will** of God includes the things God has created and set into motion under His sovereign rule and influence beyond man's understanding, insight, and prevue.

The **Prescriptive Will** of God is His general will as outlined in Scripture that reveals right/wrong, good/evil, etc.

The big thing to remember is no person has any influence over God's providential or prescriptive will – but only a choice of whether to respond to it and abide by it – or not. *You can ignore it, but you can't change it.*

99% of God's will for our lives has been revealed in His Prescriptive Word. If He never spoke another word, we'd have enough to go on to live a God-honoring life.

The **Personal Will** of God is His specific plan/call to you. It is the 1% not revealed in His Word and the burning question w/in our souls. It is the purpose for our earthly existence.

Until a person is willing to follow God's prescriptive will they will never discover His personal will.

Then last week we looked at (5) key questions we need to ask if something is God's will.

- Will it glorify me or God?
- Will it help me be more like the Word or the world?
- Does Godly counsel support my findings?
- Do you sense the approval (peace) of the H.S.?
- Does it align w/ my gifts, talents, and abilities?

God has given each of us unique abilities, qualities, and experiences that shape who we are and impacts His will for our lives. And while we are each unique, God wants to use our uniqueness to accomplish His will in our lives.

Your abilities/qualities are a **map** to God's will for your life. Your uniqueness points you in an obvious direction.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb... all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. Psalm 139:13

May He equip you w/ all you need for doing His will. May He produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that's pleasing to Him. Hebrews 13:21

These verses explain if God has called you to do something, then He will always give you the ability/resources/direction to know it and do it.

So when you're at a fork in the road and trying to understand God's plan, one of the more practical ways for determining what to do begins w/ looking at how God has wired/designed you. Your Divine customization points you in the right direction. Your abilities, talents, gifts, education, and experience will most often match your calling.

Several years ago when I was working on my doctorate – I was lead to consider the call of God upon a believers life to know, experience, and accomplish God's will for them. I quickly discovered that God's will for you was uniquely tied to God's design of your life. One text in particular grabbed my attention – Ephesians 2:8-10.

*For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's **handiwork**, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.* Ephesians 2:8-10

This familiar passage reminds us that both our salvation and our missional purpose is founded in God's GRACE – you could say that we're saved by GRACE to serve by GRACE.

While working on my dissertation, I flew from Nashville to DFW thru Houston. At this time I was reviewing some other tools used to help people discover God's design – yet I couldn't find peace w/ any of them – and this text hit me.

As I was sitting in the airport in Houston – Ephesians 2:10 and becoming God’s workmanship – became real.

workmanship (*poiema*) often translated *poem* – it refers to a work of art or masterpiece created by a master artisan.

Paul used *poiema* to explain what happens at salvation when you become God’s child – it emphatically means that on the day you’re saved, God puts forth His most powerful and creative effort to make you new (2 Cor. 5:21). Then, once He makes you into a new creation, you become His masterpiece – skillfully, artfully, and purposefully created in Christ Jesus for serving His will.

A drunk man was converted at a downtown mission. Prior to his conversion, Joe had the reputation of being a self-indulgent, dirty drunk for whom there was no hope. But after He found Christ, everything changed. He went from self-indulgent to self-sacrificing – willing to do whatever task was needed to help others – and nothing was too lowly for Joe to take on. If the bathrooms needed cleaning, if someone had to be fed, if a person had become sick, Joe willingly took care of it. One night the director was delivering his weekly evangelistic message when a man came to the front weeping, begging for God to help him. As he knelt, the man kept shouting, “God, make me like Joe! Make me like Joe!” The director said, “Don’t you mean make me like Jesus?” The man replied, “Is he anything like Joe?”

Joe became a man saved by grace who was serving by grace.

GRACE is an acrostic for our unique, customized design.

G Gifts – Spiritual Gifts

R Relational Style – Personality

A Abilities – refers to talents, skills, education, experience

C Christian Maturity – Spiritual Development

E Enthusiasm – Passions

The 1st (2) qualities help us to understand not so much where a person serves – but **HOW** they will serve.

Both our *spiritual Gifting* and *Relational Style* provide the lens by which we see life and ministry. Our Relational Style (personality) is received at physical birth and shaped by culture/surroundings – while our spiritual Gifting is received at spiritual birth and shaped by our spiritual surroundings.

W/out going too in depth – I believe most **Spiritual Gifting** tools are completely mistaught and misapplied.

- (1) A spiritual gift is intended to edify the body not the person. And yet we tend to make the gifts about us.
- (2) Every *functional* gift is the responsibility of every believer – we're all called to have mercy, give, etc. So for the gifts we don't have, we learn them from those who do have them – sharpening one another.

- (3) A spiritual gift serves as the spiritual personality/lens by which we tend to see ministry. So if you have mercy and I have the give of giving – we'll see the same situation differently b/c of the lens we see it. If we work together, we can minister more effectively.
- (4) Many items taught as gifts are not gifts. The only passages obviously including spiritual gifting are found in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12. The passage in Ephesians is about individuals who are a gift to the church. **Which means some things taught as gifts are not gifts at all.**

Relational Style refers to the natural personality lens one tends to see life thru.

Abilities include those talents, preferences, skills that one has based upon wiring, education, and experience. It things you are good at – that you can use for God's glory.

Christian Maturity refers to where one is in their spiritual journey and intimacy w/ God. This is significant in considering at what level one should be serving.

Enthusiasm refers to one's passions or heart. What kinds of things and people drive and motivate you?

Point – how God has wired you and what He has allowed to take place in your life define you and can guide you.

We all have been called to serve? Where God has called us to worship is a great place to being serving both in and thru. He key thing to remember is our focus and purpose – to magnify and exemplify the name and person of Jesus.

This is a story of (4) people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was a big job to be done and Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could've done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about this, b/c it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.