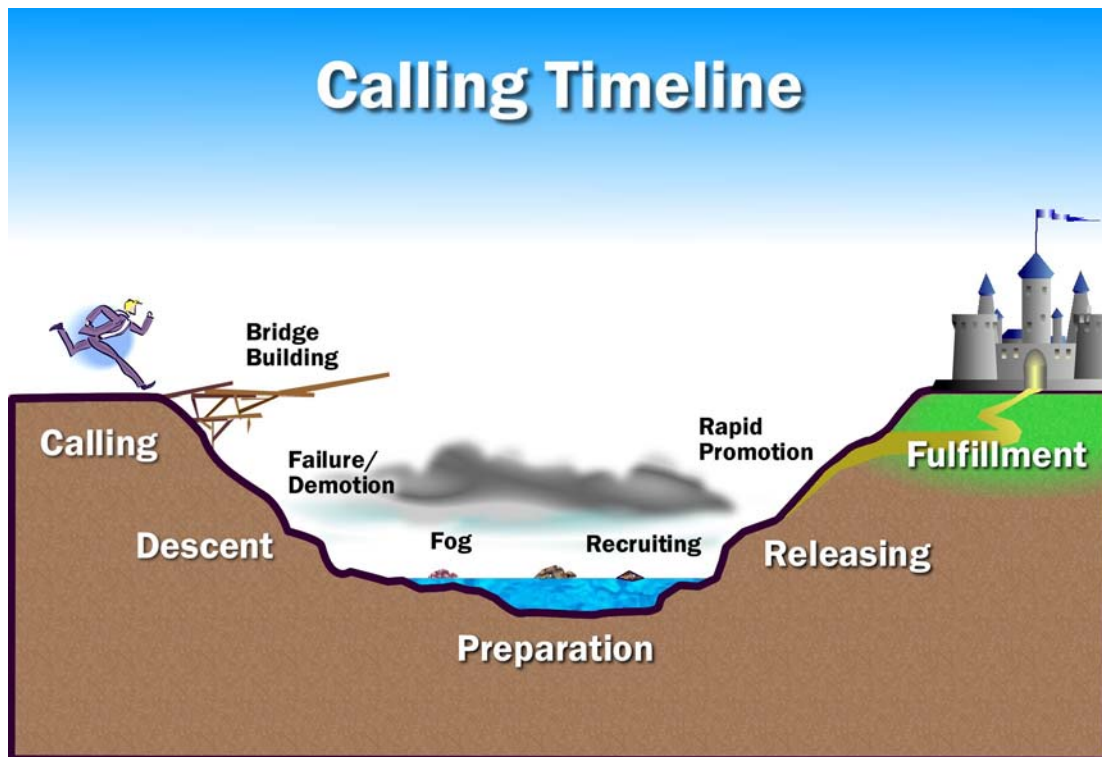


What is Calling?

Calling is: An external commission **from** God **for** others.



The Five Stages

1. Calling

2. Descent

3. Preparation

4. Releasing

5. Fulfillment

Calling Stage Symptoms

Here are key characteristics of different calling stages that I look for when coaching:

1. **Bridge Building**

Early stages are characterized by pursuing the call out of natural skills and gifting without the required character. The next symptom (failure/demotion) is often a result of this premature attempt to build a bridge of 2x4's over the Grand Canyon. Paul was a gifted preacher from the start, but his early preaching tended to create more heat than light.

2. **Failure/Demotion**

Failure is an important part of developing the character to support a calling. Significant failure (like Moses running from Egypt) or demotion (Joseph moving from head of Potipher's house to prison) can indicate a move into the preparation stage, or a move to a different type of preparation. The outcome God desires is for us to move into a posture of dependence and recognize our need for the coming preparation season. Leaders who move out into their area of call (like Saul) without a major failure are dangerous!

3. **The Fog**

During the Underground Preparation stage, the call often becomes dim and seems distant, even to those who are being prepared in their area of calling. A major channel is to not lose hope (like David going over to the Philistines) or compromise and settle for less (Abraham having Ishmael). Often the feelings that God has passed you by are most intense near the end of this stage.

4. **Recruiting**

Often a sign that the end of the preparation stage is approaching is when other leaders begin to recruit you for positions similar to what you are called to. Others are seeing the readiness in you, and God is beginning to open the networking doors (networking is a key task in the preparation and releasing stages). Often God will send someone to call you into your calling (as Barnabas did with Saul). But there are often false callings and opportunities to compromise in this season as well. Will you hang on to the hope of your calling, or settle for less because you have waited so long?

5. **Rapid Promotion**

Moving into the Releasing stage is often indicated by rapid and unusual promotion. The leader moves onto a larger stage, assumes larger responsibilities or takes on a new role in the area of call. The path to the call suddenly becomes clear again after being hidden in the fog for many years.

6. **Age**

While callings come at different ages, and there isn't a direct correlation between age and stage, there are some norms. Preparation usually takes at least a decade, and most leaders don't fully enter their call until their forties at the earliest.

Joseph's Timeline

