



Session 2

Lesson 3: The Cost of Calling & Identity



Scripture Text

- Matthew 28:19-20 -- Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."



Key Terms

- "Because Youth Ministry is a Calling"
- Calling
- Purpose
- Cost
- Identity
- Perceived & Proper Expectations
- Sources of Identity: personality; program; preparation; pain; pride



Lecture Objectives

- Identify some of the greatest challenges to maintaining a clear sense of calling and identity
- List and describe key sources of false calling and identity



To Think About Before You Go On

- What have been some experiences that have been the greatest challenge to your own confidence in ministry and service?

"What discourages me the most is the lack of training and support kids have when they go home. Families are too busy to know one another."

"I am most discouraged by my own perceived inadequacies."

"The most encouraging thing I see is kids ordering their lives with God's glory in mind."

Diary of a Mad Housewife

(A Case Study in Poor Personal and: Ministry Management)

My husband is a full-time youth director. He is extremely dedicated and spends between 50 and 70 hours a week with young people. I think the reason he is so successful with kids is that he is always available to them, always ready to help when they need him.

That may be why the attendance has more than doubled in the past year. He really knows how to talk their language. This past year he would be out two and three nights a week talking with kids till midnight. He's always taking them to camps and ski trips and overnight camp-outs. If he isn't with kids, he's thinking about them and preparing for his next encounter with them.

And if he has any time left after that, he is speaking or attending a conference where he can share with others what God is doing through him. When it comes to youth work my husband has always been 100 percent. I guess that's why I left him.

There isn't much left after 100 percent. Frankly, I just could not compete with "God". I say that because my husband always had a way of reminding me that this was God's work, and he must minister where and when God called him. Young people today desperately need help and God had called him to help them. When a young person needed him, he had to respond or he would be letting God and the young person down.

When I *did* ask my husband to spend some time with the kids or me, it was always tentative and if I became pushy about I was "nagging", "trying to get him out of God's work," "behaving selfishly," or I was revealing a "spiritual problem".

Honestly, I have never wanted anything but God's will for my husband, but I never could get him to consider that maybe his family was a part of that will.

It didn't matter how many "discussions" we had about his schedule, he would always end with, "OK, I'll get out of the ministry, if that's what you want." Of course, I didn't want that, so we would continue as always until another "discussion".

You can ask for only so long. There is a limit to how long you can be ignored and put off. You threaten to leave without meaning it until you keep the threat. You consider all the unpleasant consequences till they don't seem unpleasant anymore. You decide that nothing could be more unpleasant than being alone, feeling worthless.

You finally make up your mind that you are a person with real worth as an individual. You assert your ego and join womanhood again. That's what I did. I wanted to be more than housekeeper, diaper changer, and sex partner.

I wanted to be free from the deep bitterness and guilt that slowly ate at my spiritual and psychological sanity. Deep inside there was something making me not only dislike my husband, but everything he did or touched.

His "I love you" became meaningless to me because he didn't act like it. His gifts were evidence to me of his guilt because he didn't spend more time with me. His sexual advances were met with a frigidity that frustrated both of us and deepened the gap between us.

All I wanted was to feel as though he really wanted to be with me. But, no matter how hard I tried, I always felt like I was keeping him from something. He had a way of making me feel guilty because I had forced him to spend his valuable time with the kids and me. Just once I wish he could have canceled something for us instead of canceling us.

You don't have to believe this, but I really loved him and his ministry once. I never wanted him to work an eight-to-five job. Nor did I expect him to be home every night. I tried to believe every promise he made me, honestly hoping things would change, but they never did.

All of a sudden I woke up one day and realized that I had become a terribly bitter person. I not only resented my husband and his work, but I was beginning to despise myself, my husband and his ministry. In desperation to save myself, our children and, I guess, even my husband and his ministry, I left him.

I don't think he really believed I'd leave him. I guess I never really believed I'd leave him either. But I did!

("Diary of a Mad Housewife," by Mike Yaconelli. The Wittenburg Door, June, 1971, p. 8.)



Join the discussion:

- Visit iCourse (<http://www.portal.covenantseminary.edu>) and let us know what you think: As a youth worker, how would you counsel this spouse of your co-worker? How would you counsel your co-worker?

The Identity of the Youth Pastor

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

-- Psalm 127:1

The pressure to perform in ministry often leads the youth to lose sight of the One who is in control. We often confess that we believe in a sovereign God, but then act as if the results are up to us. What causes youth ministers to lose perspective? They lose their identity.

Causes of My Identity Crisis

Perceived & Proper Expectations:

Expectations:	Perceived...	Proper...
Parents:		
Students:		
Pastor:		
Session:		
Family:		
Friends:		
God:		



Join the discussion:

- Visit iCourse (<http://www.portal.covenantseminary.edu>) and let us know what you think: What are some expectations that you have had of youth ministers or ministries? How do you think your expectations have impacted those ministers/ministries for the good or the bad?

People Pleasing

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. Galatians 1:10

Personality

- Strengths: I become too Dependent on my own ability.
- Weakness: I focus too much on my inability.

Program Focus

When we allow the success or failure of a program to determine our effectiveness, we are in danger of losing our identity. How can we improperly use programs to evaluate?

- Numbers
- Students' enthusiasm
- Leaders' enthusiasm and involvement
- Parents' support
- Emotional connection and energy

Your identity in this area can be evaluated by how you respond *internally* when a student, parent, or leader criticizes your program.

Preparation

- Too busy doing God's work to spend time with God.
- Everything is always about your next message
- Too much, too often
- Poor discipline and self-control

Pain (Paralysis)

- Personal Pain
- People's Pain

Pride

- Arrogance
- Insecurity



Interactive question

Shaping Your Life...

5 Favorite Books:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

5 Most Influential People:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

10 Most Life-Changing Events:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



- Go back and rethink the 'To think about before you go on' questions on the first page of this lecture.