

What Is Your Calling?

On May 15, 1995 thirty-three year-old Ralph Reed, a conservative Christian activist, appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine. The large block letters next to his handsome young photo read “The Right Hand of God.”

Not a bad designation for a man who would dedicate his life to trying to ensure that this Grand Experiment called America doesn't fall into the hands of a succession of political leaders who would jettison its values and drive it into the dung-heap of failed civilizations. Can just one man help avoid that? Of course not. But enough people like Ralph could stem the tide and maintain or return us to a nation pleasing to its ultimate Founder—God.

Ralph Reed is exceptional because as a young man he understood his purpose: “Our culture bombards us with the idea that we are supposed to rise as high and as far as our talents can carry us on the career ladder. While well intentioned, this can be a misplaced objective leading to spiritual poverty and coldness about a higher calling—a calling from God.”

My own young man purpose to serve God got all muddled up and watered down with career and financial ambitions. I believe I'm on track now, but not beyond wandering off the reservation. I need men like Ralph to inspire me to remain singular, to fight and work for something bigger than my own agenda. In my case, that has been to encourage men of my generation to take a closer look at their faith-life: to become renewed and transformed in that area; to make the rest of their life the best of their life.

In 2012, Ralph spoke to a group of us at a banquet in Naples, FL. From the moment he started until his standing ovation forty-five minutes later, he had the rapt attention of everyone in the room. It was as if we were on the podium with him. Ralph is charismatic, appealing, well-spoken and persuasive, so much so that he even seemed to win over the liberal Jon Stewart on his '04 and '08 appearances on *The Daily Show*. However, those assets alone wouldn't have been enough to hold our attention. It was his message of a Calling Over a Career, a Testimony Over a Title and Significance Over Success that caught our hearts and fixed our gaze. He used Ronald Reagan, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Martin Luther King, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and others to illustrate lives spent for great causes.

Ralph's concluding challenge to us was: “Many of you have had successful careers, but what is your calling? You may have an important title, but what is your testimony? You may have achieved great worldly success, but what failure are you willing to meet, or what defeat are you willing to encounter and call it the impostor that it is. We now have the greatest of opportunities before us—to truly glorify our Lord Jesus Christ, and to show those who don't yet know Him that He is the answer, He is the truth and He is the light. That, my friends, is the challenge of our times and the calling on our lives.”

I believe many of us found ourselves asking if the man speaking to us that night might one day become a future speaker's example of a life which helped to preserve and to improve a nation and a people.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you demonstrate in your private life what you advocate publicly? Can you improve in that area?
2. Did your career calling displace your spiritual calling? Did that lead to spiritual poverty?
3. Have you had a personal failure in your life which turned out to be a success for God?
4. Ralph talks about testimony versus title. You have a title—do you have a testimony? What is that?

Click on the link for a 9 minutes of Ralph's talk

<https://vimeo.com/370717300>