

# Know Your Why: Finding and Fulfilling Your Calling in Life

By Ken Costa

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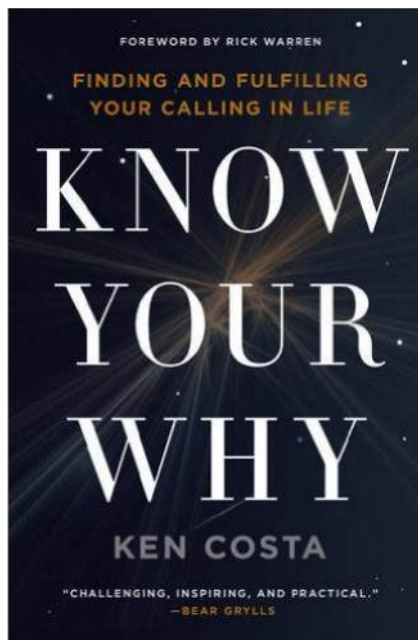
If you buy this book, be careful, it might just change the direction of your life! Don't get me wrong – I really do hope that as many people as possible will read this book. But if they do, they must be prepared to be deeply challenged as they allow God's Spirit to lead them towards their God-given callings.

The book begins by posing a question we all ask at some stage in our lives: 'Why am I here?' (p.xix). The calling of every Christian, Costa says, is to follow the 'Great Commandment of Christ' to love God with all that we are and our neighbours as ourselves; to respond to the Great Commission of Christ by making disciples; and to follow the 'great call to compassion': "act justly and love mercy and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8) in obedience to Christ. Costa knows that in the complexity of our world, with its dizzying array of choices, identifying one's calling is no easy task. Nevertheless, he is determined to help every Christian who reads the book to discover their calling.

The first three chapters therefore explore the meaning of calling or vocation. We are 'Called to Passion' (ch. 1), to recognise the unique desires and gifts that God has graciously given to each of us to use for the good of others and his glory. We are also 'Called to Engage' (ch. 2), responding to the many injustices in society not by retreating into Christian sub-cultures but rather by being empowered by God's Spirit to live as salt and light. We should therefore see our workplaces as 'a continuation of our worship and love of God, not an interruption of God's work from Sunday to Sunday' (p.28). This chapter is especially helpful to anyone struggling with 'inferiority complexes regarding their vocations' (p.27) as Costa demonstrates why every lawful form of work can be a calling from God.

As we live out our vocations we are 'Called to Flourish' (ch. 3), not just to get by or settle for 'satisfactory underperformance' but to recognise that Jesus calls us to

"abundant life" (p.56). Instead of falsely believing that our work is insignificant, we can remember that God often uses small acts of obedience to bring about large results. And rather than being constrained by other people's expectations of us, we are challenged to recognise that 'only you know the gifts that God has given to you...The question is, will you be intentional about using them?' (p.60)



Chapters 4-6 paint a realistic picture of the difficulties involved in discerning and stepping into our callings. These chapters are packed full of the practical wisdom that comes from Costa's reflections on the Bible, the pursuit of his own calling and the years he has spent advising younger Christians. He suggests 'Ten Winning Ways in the Waiting Room' (ch. 4 'Called to Wait'); 5 steps for 'choosing well' (ch. 5 'Called to Choose'); and 'five "fear flippers" – tools that will help us turn from fear to faith' (ch. 6 'Called to Courage'). Alongside this practical guidance we find motivations to see the challenges that come our way (as we wait, choose and step out in faith) as

opportunities. God uses painful seasons of waiting to grow our dependence on him and our Christlikeness. We can learn to fail well and to fight the fears that stop us from stepping into our callings.

In the final chapters we are challenged to press on in our callings and to keep the flame that fuels them alive. We need to grow by learning how to say 'no' to anything that might distract us (ch. 7 'Called to Focus'). More practical wisdom follows with 'steps to deal with distractions', including guidance on sustaining our callings by taking time each day to read the Bible, pray and listen to God's promptings. Next, we are 'Called to Persevere' (ch. 8) and to dream big, looking beyond the disappointments (the 'mountains' that seem to rise up before us) to pursue the work God is directing us to. We are reminded that 'sometimes our God takes his time in