



GOSPEL *for* LIFE

The Six Seasons of Calling with Brian Sanders

Season 3, Episode 1 Transcript

[00:00:00] Intro: Welcome to the Gospel for Life podcast, we help people grow by connecting truth to life. Here's your host, Darryl Dash.

[00:00:20] Darryl Dash: Welcome back to the Gospel for Life podcast. And to kick off things this third season, I'm really excited to talk to Brian Sanders on the subject of Calling. We all wrestle with God's call on our lives. Often we think of calling as a singular static thing. Brian has written a new book, *The Six Seasons of Calling*, and he wants us to see our calling as something ongoing and dynamic. When we understand our season of life, we're able to lean into our particular stage of development and understand its lessons and look for what might come next. So I'm excited to talk to Brian because this is such an important topic for all of us.

If you don't know Brian, he's a social entrepreneur. He's helped to start hundreds of missional enterprises, including churches, nonprofits, and businesses all over the world. Most notably, Brian is the founder and former executive director of The Underground Network, which is an international fellowship of micro-church Incubators. Creating city-based ecosystems of faith, creativity, and empowered social enterprise. Brian, welcome to the podcast.

[00:01:27] Brian Sanders: Thanks, man. It sounds really good when you say it like that, it sounds impressive.

[00:01:31] Darryl Dash: It is good.

[00:01:33] Brian Sanders: It's probably overstated, but it's nice to see you now.

[00:01:37] Darryl Dash: I've been following your ministry for a while. As a church planter, I love the work you've been doing with micro-churches, so I was excited

to hear about your book and excited to talk to you today. So Brian, what got you interested in thinking about the subject of calling?

[00:01:57] Brian Sanders: That's a cool question. I'd say we have a kind of obsession in the west, it's probably a good obsession with discipleship. That's a pretty heavy buzzword. And what is that really? It's growing and maturity, I guess, in Jesus, learning to follow him, trust him, be obedient to him, to be taught all that he has commanded, and so on. But it's interesting when you think about discipleship systems, Darryl, it's possible to kind of create an algorithm for discipleship, which we love in the west. We love sequences and we love logical progressions. Is it possible in that sense to think of like, I'm going to walk you through a bunch of steps, and then you're going to become a fully formed, mature disciple? And then if all of those steps are something that I can do or I can lead you through, then essentially that's functional atheism, right? You don't really need God. That bothers me, it concerns me, but I don't really know how to fix it. Except to say that whatever your discipleship pathway, journey, system, pattern or whatever that you create or imagine, there needs to be like a hole in it, something that you think, well, only God can do that.

[00:03:22]: There has to be someplace for the living God to take part. It sounds really silly to say it that way, but I think we all would probably believe that at some level; like in this part here, only God can do it. So for us, in our understanding of discipleship and our journey of trying to figure out how we lead people to Jesus or to maturity in Christ Jesus and in the faith, that missing link, that hole for us, was calling. So everything else about mission, to go on mission, to be in a community of people trying to sort of penetrate darkness or be light in dark places. Or bear witness to the Kingdom where He is not known or however you want to frame mission. Which to me is just like the explosion of discipleship possibilities, and we grow and learn so much on the frontier mission. But I can't just tell you where to go. I guess I could just say, I have a system or I have a vision for you, or I'm going to tell you what to do, and then it just leaves God out.

[00:04:24]: So for us, it was this thing of like, you have to be called by God somewhere, and we can't tell you where that is. You have to be called by God into mission, into some group or place or context, essentially. And until you figure that out, we actually can't really do anything with you. We can't send you a mission, so you've got to figure it out. So early on for us, we had to learn how to help people do that, how to help people hear God in a personal way, and lead them towards something. Towards some group of people or someplace so that they could have clarity that, of course, everybody is meant to do mission. But where is not as clear, that's a more specific calling, not a general calling. Essentially, necessity is the mother of invention. So we just could not believe

that God sent people on mission and the priesthood of all believers and all those sorts of foundational empowerment constructs, if you didn't believe that God could actually personally call people somewhere. So we had to kind of get busy really fast figuring out how do we help people do that. And at first it wasn't easy, I mean you can't just lock people in a room and say just pray and don't come out until you've heard God. We did try that at first, but anyway, that's a long journey of trying to not just learn how to hear God call us into something in our life, but to understand what calling is and to place it at the center of what it means to be a disciple.

[00:06:08] Darryl Dash: I want to back up a little bit because at first I was intrigued that you were writing a book on calling because I knew you as the microchurch guy. And it was interesting to see you begin to think about how do we discern our calling and live that calling out in the world. I think you've explained a little bit about that. So could you connect the pieces there, of how does microchurch and social entrepreneurship relate to this kind of calling that you're writing about?

[00:06:34] Brian Sanders: Yeah, so if you release the church, essentially, if you say the church can be led by any serious disciple, somebody who really loves Jesus and surrendered their life to him. And if you think of the church as something simpler, smaller. Not to say there's anything wrong with more complex versions of the church, but there are these more minimalistic versions of the church which are just as beautiful and powerful and maybe even important in our time. Something that could be led from a break room, in a park or in your living room, something like that. Then you start saying, well, then actually every serious disciple could plant a microchurch. So then the question becomes, where do you go? If we were talking, and I feel called to be a missionary, then where are you going to go? That's like the first question a missionary has to answer. To where, and to whom are you called? So that identity as a missionary and the idea of planting churches are forming the Kingdom somewhere or proclaiming the Kingdom, wanting to see it formed. It just relies on a call.

[00:07:48]: If I say I want to be an overseas missionary, and you said "Where do you want to go?" I said, "I don't really know." Well then you can't buy a plane ticket, you can't learn the language, you can't raise money for it. You're done, you're stuck, and unfortunately, I'd say probably it's not just a metaphor, probably that's where a lot of people are. They believe in mission, they believe that they ought to be a missionary person. They may even see themselves at some level as a missionary person. But until you understand where you have been sent, very specifically, how can you do it? How can you be that missionary

person? And how can you sort of fill out the shape of that identity? So for me, that's the connection.

[00:08:30] Darryl Dash: I love it. One of the things I've been concerned about, and I appreciated your book, but some of the stuff on calling that's out there, it really seems to be really just a slightly Christianized version of life planning. So walk us through that, what are some dangers we need to avoid as we think about calling and you trying to help us figure out God's calling on our life? How do we make sure we don't fall into the trap of just kind of figuring out how to live our best life now and basically create a bucket list, and it's all about me? I think your book does a really good job of calling us to service, of calling us to a higher purpose. But walk us through that, how can we avoid the danger of making our calling all about us?

[00:09:13] Brian Sanders: It's really interesting, isn't it, how there are these certain words that belong to us. They're really religious words, words like vision, for example. If you go back 50 years or 70 years or something, and somebody that had a vision was either crazy or on psychotropic drugs or something. Only weird people had visions, right? And now it's so ubiquitous, I mean the last 40 years of all leadership literature has said you ought to have a vision, so it's very mainstream. But the idea of like I've seen a vision, I'm a seer of the future or something like that, it's a very religious thing, it's like prophecy. It's miraculous, right? So in one sense, I love that word, we should reclaim that. Not just for crazy people and not just for everyday business people that are trying to open a restaurant or something, but the deeper sense of like, God shows me a glimpse of the future that I'm supposed to pursue and maybe even die for. But calling is like that too, isn't it? It's just a word that's been borrowed by any kind of mundane usage.

[00:10:33]: Someone might say well, you know, I'm a teacher, I just feel like that's my calling or something. And if it's possible to use the word without God, to say, essentially it's something I enjoy, I feel good when I do it or I think I'm good at it or something like that. But again, if you go to the root of it, to be called or to have a calling implies a caller, right? It implies a voice, a person who not only has the authority, the sovereignty to call the individual to live in a certain way or to do something, have some assignment, but has that personal connection to us. It's really profound when you think about that, to be called and to believe that I am called as a person that believes in the sovereignty of God, that believes in a personal Lord and Savior. Then it means if He calls me, that means He knows me. He was calling us by name, calling us specifically to something. It means that He has something for us to do.

[00:11:46]: So when we think about calling, we do think about purpose. Like what's my purpose in this world? This is good. It is a deep longing that we have to believe that our lives aren't futile, but that we're significant in some way. That there's something in the world that only we could do, only I could do, and that there's only really one person that can tell us what that is. That can see the whole playing field and can see the whole board and knows every human being that's ever been made, and every hair on their head. It's actually breathtaking. And then to think He knows me, He knows my name. Then wants to speak to me and say son, daughter, this is the assignment that I have for you, this is the thing that I've asked you to do. So it's intimacy wrapped up in there, like knowing God, hearing God, being connected to God, and then also purpose, which is connected. And this thing that only you can do, that I've asked you to do, it's really profound. Obviously, I'm not against people using in the sense of like I'm fulfilling my calling by being a teacher or something like that, but it's weak. That's not the fullness of what it means, and for us as believers in Jesus, we have to take that word back.

[00:13:07] Darryl Dash: Yeah, I love that Brian, I'm really intrigued. I'm old enough that I have to do the math every time I give my age now. I'm 54 right now, and I've really noticed just a changing. I don't think my calling has changed, but really this season gives a different flavor to my calling. And I really appreciate the book, how you talk about the different seasons and how that affects what our calling looks like and the shape that it takes. So one of the things I was intrigued by is you even talk about a sense of calling for children. Could you unpack that a little bit? How does that work? How does a child live out their calling?

[00:13:47] Brian Sanders: Right. Yeah, so if you think of it as like we're known by God, so He's personal, He knows us, and then sees where we are in our life. He's not saying you want to be doing this, but you're not really equipped to do it yet, so He's patient. When we think of words like sanctification, maturation, that Greek word to "telios" that gets rendered perfect. To be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect or complete or mature in Christ, that same word that gets rendered in those three different ways. It's like what does that look like to keep growing essentially? Well, it means that God is patient with us.

[00:14:32]: The maturity that you have at 54, He wasn't looking for that when you were 14. And so what that does is if you kind of reverse that, then you think, okay, what does He expect from a five-year-old or a seven-year-old? And you might say well that's silly, He can't possibly expect anything. On the contrary, that means that every breath we take from the time we're born, we're seen by God, our life is important, it has value, and it can bring grace into the world. And so trying to understand what God wants or what is God's calling on a seven-

year-old isn't folly, that's just a professionalization of calling. To think of it as like it's a job or something like that. Of course, a seven-year-old won't have a job, but a seven-year-old has something that they can't fulfill. So the argument I made in the book essentially is that all children from birth to twelve, essentially their calling is to be a child. So it's the only season in which the thing that you are is exactly the thing that you're meant to be, that you're supposed to be, and you're not supposed to try to be more than that. And if someone takes away that from you, the play and the wonder and the adventure of childhood, that's a regression, that's a hindrance to your calling to who you're meant to be.

[00:15:53] And of course, that changes us to be mature. More is expected of us the older we get because God is walking with us through the changes of our lives, and we know what this is like. I mean, our own children and our own experiences being a child, we know that they are powerful, that God can use them. As much as he can use anyone, he can use a child. Maybe not in the exact same ways because they do lack a certain sophistication or maturity or whatever. But the same thing is true for a 20-year-old and a 70-year-old. The 70-year-old has a certain kind of capacity which they've built over the course of their lives if they've walked with God that a 20-year-old doesn't have. That doesn't mean that the 20-year-old doesn't have an equal value to the 70-year-old, just like the 70-year-old has value. So it's kind of seeing ourselves as we grow and seeing God meeting us in each of those points of our lives and saying, this is what I want from you, this is what I know you can be. So of course, that applies to our kids.

[00:16:56] Darryl Dash: I was really encouraged reading your book and thinking about the different seasons of life. I know someone who used to be a young leader, he's not anymore, he's sort of in the same phase that I'm at. And I remember when he was in the earlier seasons and it's been interesting to watch him because now he has that sense of gravitas that you write about in the later stages. And he's pushing other leaders forward, it's not about him anymore, it's about elevating others. I was just thinking that made your book come alive in a way, to see it embodied in the life of another leader, to see them living that out, so I love that. So talk to me about that, why is it important that we understand our season? And that we understand our particular challenges in that season and what we should be focusing on.

[00:17:42] Brian Sanders: Well obviously we're looking for patterns, right? This doesn't come from the Bible, it's a theory, and it's a taxonomy. It's an attempt to look at some of the ways that we are similar. And in our time or in the age in which we live, there are, in my opinion, discernible patterns. And I think a couple of maybe crises happen to us through the changes of our lives. One is we probably think something's wrong with us. If suddenly I'm coasting along and

I'm sort of walking with God, I know who I am, I'm sort of bearing fruit in the world and making an impact. And then suddenly one day I wake up and I just feel wrong, I feel like this isn't working anymore or something isn't quite right. And often it's because something has changed in our lives. The kids have left the house or we were fired or we were promoted or we lost our home or we lost a loved one or God forbid, we lost a child. These things happen to us, right? And so fundamentally who we were and what was going on in our life has changed. It's that old business book, I forget who wrote it, called *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*. Everything that was working for a while now isn't working because something has changed.

[00:19:19]: I've changed, the world has changed, my situation has changed, but I'm still kind of trying to operate from this previous identity. The first gift is to just realize nothing is wrong with you, and that we all go through these turning points. We all have to change, we have to evolve, and that God is right there with us. He's not saying come on, get back on track. It's like there's a whole new track being laid down and you need to switch over to it somehow. And then, of course, part of the argument I made in the book is that those identity crises, which I'm arguing happens six times, give or take, in the course of your life. And look, maybe it's more than that, maybe it's less than that, but it's not zero. It's not like you're 21, you hear God call you and say this, my son, is your calling for life, and you never, ever waiver from that. That's just not how the world works, it's not how life works, and it's not how God works.

[00:20:22]: And it's also not every month where you're sort of waking up going, who am I and what am I supposed to be doing? So it's something in between all the time and only once or never. I'm making the argument here that it's maybe these six big turning points in our lives to recognize we all go through that probably. And that it's actually a grace, the struggle and the crisis of it. So I like the metaphor of God creating the world in six days and each day creates something new, and it's kind of a culmination. Each part of the ecosystem is built upon the other, and it's a growth. You keep the last piece of the ecosystem and you build a new thing onto it. So if we think of ourselves, our development or kind of psychosocial development over the course of our lives as culminating, as this building up to something. But then we know that it was evening, it was morning the third day, and that there's this darkness in between the days, that nothing happens or we don't know what's happening or it's uncertainty or it's lostness or unknowing. And actually, that's a part of creation. Nothing is said about it because nothing happened, presumably, but there is some space in between the days of creation that's dormancy or unknowing.

[00:21:52]: So even when we hit those moments in our lives, which we all do or probably have, well there's nothing to fear. And I make the argument that what

you do in those moments if you're healthy, is you turn right to God, you turn back to God. In your sense of uncertainty, you turn to the only one you know can give you certainty. And you say, Lord, who am I again? What does this mean now? Who am I now that I don't have that job? Who am I now that the kids have left? Who am I now that I'm divorced or whatever has happened? And you really don't know, so you turn to the only person you think can give you an answer. And then what that does is that drives us back to that sort of youthful intimacy where we're open again and say God, tell me who I am and then renew me in my purpose or give me a new purpose or something. So that's actually really wonderful and profound, but it can only come because we're desperate, because we feel lost to return to him.

[00:22:51]: So it's ironic that you could be 54. I'm 49 now, so I probably just went through this recently, and we have a lot in common with the 24-year-old who's at the beginning of their career going "Who am I? What am I supposed to do in the world? What mark am I supposed to leave in the world?" We could sort of pass them in the street or sit by them on a train, and go, I know exactly what you feel. And that feels strange because you think if there's something wrong with me, I should have figured this out when I was 24. No, you did figure it out when you were 24, but then it hits you again when you were 36, and it hits you again when you're 48, and it's going to hit you again when you're 60. And actually, that's maybe the way it should be.

[00:23:30] Darryl Dash: What would you say to somebody who struggles with the regret that maybe they've blown one of the stages of their life and they're really struggling with man, I wish I could get a do-over on that one?

[00:23:40] Brian Sanders: That really plagued me as I wrote this. I just had this feeling of like okay, this is so developmental and so progressive, that somebody's going to read this and just say, I didn't do that. Threw those ten years away through addiction or I was lost, or I just lost that whole day, that whole decade or something. And honestly, I don't really know the answer except to say that I know that when you go through that renewal of the evening and the morning, that it is brand new, it's fresh, and then actually it is a kind of new beginning. It's a new start for all of us. So whether the last day was wildly successful and wonderful and fruitful and God was with us in every step, you still run out of that and you still sort of hit a wall and you say, now what? So if that last decade or twelve years was terrible, and a complete waste, well that fresh start is all the more wonderful. But sometimes it can be just as difficult to have won, to have succeeded, to have thought, well I really want to set out to do something. And this is a little bit of my experience and you sort of did it. And now you're wondering now what and what does that mean and what do I do now? I thought that would be the work of my life, and now who am I without

that? Whether it was good or bad, the last season of your life, the last day of your life, you get to start over. You're meant to start over. So I guess maybe the idea is that we have to let that stuff go.

[00:25:29] Darryl Dash: I really love the vision. Near the end of the book, you talk about the last season of life and you present some pretty compelling pictures of how that can actually be your most fruitful time. And that was a thing that really encouraged me just to even have that as a possibility, that even if we've blown it, that could be our future. God could even use our setbacks and develop a character that just is beautiful and impactful near the end. One of the things I also love about your book and it's coming out in the interview is you really have a vision to help people unleash their leadership and realize it's not just for the elite. And in the book you talk about it being a confluence of two qualities-love and character. I really love that idea. A lot of people would say they're not leaders, but you turn to them and say look, you got character and you know how to love people. So explain that a little bit, how does that actually lead to them exhibiting leadership?

[00:26:31]: Brian Sanders: Yeah, what have we done to leadership? Why have we turned it into something which is so elite? It's that kind of great man myth, these stories of triumph, of the rags to riches or whatever. It's really unhelpful. I don't know where I heard this, I think it's Andy Crouch who talks about Princess Diana and Mother Teresa dying on the same day. And Andy Crouch was saying, basically, it's interesting how people related to Diana, they sort of felt close to her, felt like she was like them or something, but not Theresa. In fact, we would say like well I'm no Mother Teresa, I mean people say that, right? Well you're no Mother Teresa or I'm no Mother Teresa, but they felt like this was the people's Princess and so on. And his point was like, that's strange because nobody can be the Princess of Wales, nobody. I mean, it's a role that only one person can ever have, and she's the least like an average person that anyone could be. And yet his point was anyone could be a saint, anyone could be Mother Teresa, anyone could lay down their life for the poor.

[00:27:53]: Theresa on that train to Calcutta praying that prayer, "Lord, send me the ones that no one wants." Any of us could do that, but that would require character and love. That's it, that's really it. The sort of virtue in you, the formation of Christ in you enough, the thriving and flourishing of the spirit of God in you enough that you would want that. That would be a desire to love the poor, help the needy, care for those that don't know or haven't heard the gospel or whatever. And then the love to pursue it, to lay down your life, to suffer for the sake of that thing, those are within reach. So interestingly enough, there probably are people out there that wouldn't see themselves as leaders but would say, well yeah, of course I have a heart for people. And of course I love

my neighborhood or my lost family or the people in this little community that I'm a part of or something, and I just think man, that is enough. So now what do we need to do to release the idea of leadership back into those people's psyche to say leadership is something simpler? Maybe simple isn't the right word, but accessible, even elegant, and even beautiful.

[00:29:23]: I think to be a success can be a confusing idea in the life of the heart and of faith. But to live in such a way that is beautiful or kind, that we understand. And maybe if we brought leadership back into that realm of aesthetics. Like do people feel loved by you, or do you have compassion or empathy? Are you trying to live a life that you think is beautiful, or attractive to others and represents Jesus? Now that's leadership. So let's move away from some of this other framing of leadership, which frankly has just gotten us into a lot of trouble, hasn't it? Maybe there's a place for that, and I'm not trying to belittle people that are called to public ministry and big moves and affecting lots and lots of people. But we also have to recognize that's probably an anomaly, an outlier that shouldn't define leadership.

[00:30:29] Darryl Dash: Yeah, that's really good. How would you hope that pastors and other leaders use this book to develop their people?

[00:30:40] Brian Sanders: Yes, I guess if I'm right, that we're going to go through six crises of identity in our lives then those of us that are shepherding or coaching or otherwise just in the development of leaders, when our people go through those moments of crises, will we know what to do or will we know what to say? Or will we even just be able to recognize ah, this is perfectly healthy, don't panic. Whether or not my taxonomy is right, and you say don't worry, these are your key developments at this moment. Just knowing that this is going to happen, this is meant to happen, press into God. Man, that is good advice from people that are leading other people and who are going to be hitting these crises all the time. In fact, if you have a big group, let's say 100 people that you're trying to lead, there's just always going to be somebody that's probably hitting one of these identity crisis moments. So having a framework of common experience which I try to offer and some insights about the threats. So I make an argument that each day there are certain kinds of threats that come to us, that we're a little bit vulnerable or exposed to certain sins, but also opportunities that accompany each of those days. And maybe this book can give some language or tools essentially for leaders as they lead people.

[00:32:14]: All taxonomies are imperfect, but they do offer some clarity in a process and maybe a way of saying, let's look at the whole of your life and recognize that where you are right now is just one part of it. And there's this

whole beautiful place you've come and this whole future that lies ahead of you. I think that can be very comforting and also liberating for people.

[00:32:36] Darryl Dash: I really wish you had written this book years ago, it's so helpful, But it's helpful now, and one of the reasons I want to interview you is I can relate. I'm going through the season where I'm far from done, but it's different from when I was a 20-year-old leader or a 30-year-old leader. And just understanding the season I'm in and the challenges that I'm facing. I think your book is really helpful to kind of put words to stuff that I was feeling and be aware of some of the challenges and opportunities that we face at all these different stages. So I really appreciate your book. I hope it gets a wide reading and I hope it's used by God.

[00:33:15] Brian Sanders: Did you see the little Andrew Oswald's happiness curve thing?

[00:33:19] Darryl Dash: I did.

[00:33:20] Brian Sanders: So basically, you and I are coming into an age now where we're starting to be happier. So for those listening, essentially what Andrew Oswald worldwide research has discovered is that we're happiest when we're young and then when we're old, and it's a sort of U curve down. And Ironically, at the very height of our creative potential, the height of our career, the height of our impact in the world, our 40s is where we're the least happy. Maybe it's the pressure of that or all the things that sort of build-up. And then as we get older, we start to drop some of that stuff, some of those things we were striving for, which maybe we begin to realize that's not as important as we thought it was. So the cool thing is that you and I are getting to an age now, at least if he's right, we're going to start feeling a sense of liberation from some of that striving. If you look at the little U curve, I think it's funny, we have more in common with, like, a 21-year-old. A 55-year-old has more in common with a 21-year-old in terms of just enjoying your life a little bit. I think that's cool. And maybe we can make friends with some 21-year-olds and start hanging out with them.

[00:34:40] Darryl Dash: I'm a church planter with a whole bunch of people in their 20s and 30s. I love it, it's so good. Scotty Smith, I don't know if you know him, but he talks about, I think it was his 70s, he said were his best decade. And so I'm claiming that man, I can't wait. I just had my first grandson, so I can already attest that's way better than having kids. It's so good. I mean, kids are great too, but not as good as grand-kids.

Two last questions for you, more personal questions. What are you learning these days?

[00:35:20] Brian Sanders: Oh wow. So many things, so many things. The world is maybe more wondrous than it ever was. I'm probably learning how little I know, let's start with that revelation. It's funny how when we are 28, we think we know so much. But without going into too much detail about my own burden or the suffering that I carry, my body for Christ Jesus, we all do. And the older we get, the more sort of sadness and personal loss and pain probably we have to carry around with us. Which is why it's really interesting and ironic that older people report higher levels of happiness. And probably maybe it's what I'm starting to learn, which is there is a way to carry the sort of sadness of something really profound. But also then to still experience joy, wonder and the presence of God and the goodness of God while that thing never goes away. You know what I mean, like if something is so sad or so difficult, it can just be a cloud that encompasses your whole life, and yet you can't live like that. And if you have no control over that thing, which is usually where we find ourselves in these later moments in life, they're just things you just cannot control. You can't wash it away and you can't make it go away, you just carry it with you.

[00:37:02] It's a burden, and it's a wound that doesn't heal. And yet also there is this way to still experience joy, happiness, love, wonder, and the grace, presence and pleasure of God in your life. And I'm just starting to understand that or learn that my happiness is not tied up in making this thing go away. Taking away this pain or this suffering, this burden that I carry. I just carry it and it's with me all the time. It's in the background, but that shouldn't stop me. In fact, maybe even all the more, you have this sense of savoring the goodness of God and the grace of God and people and gestures and little things that are actually quite wonderful. That's probably a big one, dude.

[00:37:59] Darryl Dash: This is kind of related, but we were talking before we hit the record button about what a difficult season this has been. I think everybody I know is struggling to a certain extent. So what's encouraging you these days?

[00:38:12] Brian Sanders: Professionally, I'm kind of pivoting into this collaboration space. I feel like maybe the three meta-skills of the 21st century are self-knowledge, like self-awareness, that's a big one. Learning, like, can you learn? Not what do you know, but can you learn, and what can you learn? And then the third is, I think, a skill of collaboration. So professionally, I'm really stepping into that space right now, trying to create city-wide collaborations around key social causes. And pulling together all the agencies, government, non-government, churches, everybody to kind of fight these big intractable social causes, and philanthropists, all that. And that feels very fresh, very cutting edge. Collaboration is not really something Westerners are good at, particularly. We can build empires, we can build brands, we can build silos, but we are inept

at collaboration. But it feels like an up frontier, feels like a really beautiful cutting edge moment in time where there's an openness. It feels like we should be learning how to collaborate, we should be able to do that, so that's a big source of wonder for me. Not to say it isn't hard and there aren't major challenges, but it also feels like there's a lot of grace in that right now.

[00:39:36]: For those that are listening, that are trying to collaborate, trying to leave your ego and your logo at the door. And trying to chase some kind of cause together or thing together, I'd say there's real hope on that frontier.

[00:39:53] Darryl Dash: Good. Well, I love your ministry. I wanted for a long time to meet you and get to know you a little bit, really grateful for this book. Could you tell us where people can find out more about you and how to get the book as well?

[00:40:07] Brian Sanders: Yeah, just Amazon, *The 6 Season of Calling*, and then I suppose if you put my name in you'd probably see other things I've written. So yeah, Amazon is a lovely place to find things I've written. I don't know what else to say about that, I'm not really a public person anymore, particularly. But I do love the church and the people of God and I'm as engaged emotionally as I've ever been. I'm just probably lightly reclusive, I guess, which is what they are making you do there in Canada, aren't they? They're just locking you down, so I'm just doing that, inadvertently locking myself down.

[00:40:53]: Darryl Dash: Hey, come to Canada, we'll trade places. I'll take Florida for a while, you can have Canada.

[00:40:57] Brian Sanders: Yeah, Florida is the opposite, isn't it?

[00:41:01] Darryl Dash: Good. Well Brian, thank you so much. And I think the book is out in January and that's about when this podcast will come out. So I really appreciate your ministry, really appreciate the book, and great to talk to you today.

[00:41:12] Brian Sanders: Thanks Darryl.

[00:41:14] [Outro] Darryl Dash: Hey, thanks for listening to the Gospel for Life podcast. If you're interested in growing and helping others grow, please check out our monthly newsletter, go to gospelforlife.com/newsletter. And please don't forget to leave a review of this podcast on your favorite podcast platform.