

SIX HELPFUL QUESTIONS FOR LOCATING A PERSON ON “THE MAP TO A CALLING” GRAPHIC

By William F. Ritchey

For ease of reference, we will call the cycle formed by steps 2 to 4 the “cycle of contemplation.”

① **Describe the ministry that has captured your attention.** The person’s response, and especially the depth of their description of this ministry, is a *helpful indicator of the seriousness and depth of their contemplations*. If they know very little about it, then they probably have considered it only superficially. But, if they can describe this ministry accurately and in a detailed manner, then they probably have been contemplating it for some time and with some degree of seriousness.

② **How long and how seriously have you been considering this ministry?** The answer to this question is a *helpful indicator in locating a person somewhere between step 1 and step 5*. If they’ve only been considering the ministry for a couple of months, or if they’ve only been considering it in a superficial manner, then it is likely that they are early on in the process of the “cycle of contemplation,” or perhaps only at step 1. If they have been considering this ministry for some time and with a serious contemplation, then it is likely that they are later on in the process of the “cycle of contemplation,” or perhaps at step 5. This question is also helpful, when compared to the individual’s response to the first question, to verify whether or not this person is viewing their situation objectively. For example, if they evidence (in response to the first question) a superficial and initial understanding of a ministry, and yet (in response to the second question) claim to have seriously considered this ministry for a considerable time, then they probably aren’t being objective enough in their assessment of what is happening in their life.

③ **What do you think of this ministry?** The individual’s response to this question is a *helpful indicator of the degree of attraction that they feel toward this ministry*. Do they like it? Do they love it? Can they barely tolerate it? This will help determine whether we can predict a continuing of the process of the “cycle of contemplation,” or whether we can predict an abandoning of the cycle to begin all over with another ministry. Also, with this question, we might begin to detect whether or not the person might be feeling an *obligation* to this ministry, a feeling that they might need to dedicate their *lives* to this ministry. If this is the case, then this can be a *helpful indicator that this person perhaps has been captivated for this ministry (and thus evidences a special calling)*.

④ **Describe any experience you may have in this ministry.** The answer to this question is a *helpful indicator of three things: their willingness to work in this ministry, their willingness to learn more about this ministry first-hand, and their depth of knowledge about this ministry*. If the person isn’t willing to try out this ministry, it is probably a good indicator that they are not very interested in it. If the person is working or has worked in this ministry, then they are probably willing to learn more about it through a hands-on type of setting (which will provide the additional information required to progress through the process of the “cycle of contemplation”). And if a person already has worked in this ministry for some time, then their knowledge of this ministry probably is fairly accurate and detailed (one of the necessary items for completing the initial process of the “cycle of contemplation” and being ready to go on to step 5).

⑤ **What would you like to do in this ministry?** The response to this question is a *helpful indicator of the degree of their analysis of this ministry and of their participation in it, and of the degree of commitment they are feeling toward this ministry*. If they have no idea what they might like to do in this ministry, then they are probably *very early on* in the process of the “cycle of contemplation.” If they have a vague idea of what they might like to do, then they are probably in the *earlier* stages of the process of the “cycle of contemplation.” However, if they have a fairly-detailed and accurate concept of what they would like to do in this ministry, then they probably are in the *later* stages of the process of the “cycle of contemplation.” Also, if they would like to spend the next year working in this ministry, then they evidence a more *general* commitment to this ministry. But, if they would like to dedicate their *lives* to this ministry, then they are evidencing a more *special and captivating call*.

⑥ **What do others in your church think about your projected involvement in this ministry?** The person’s answer to this question is a *helpful indicator of the degree of confirmation that this individual is receiving from the people who know him or her best*. Of course, for there to be practically any confirmation at all, the person must be communicating his or her interest in this ministry to the rest of the church. Therefore, if they are in the *earlier* stages of the process of the “cycle of contemplation,” there might not be any input from others yet. But, if they are in the *later* stages of the process of the “cycle of contemplation,” then their friends at church should have something to say regarding their feelings about this individual’s participation in this ministry. And, if this individual has reached *point 5* of the diagram (conviction), then their church should be able to confirm (or deny) whether or not the church considers that this individual is receiving a special and captivating call.