



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

I'm not the product of a degree program, from a notable university. Instead, my adult life has been shaped by a series of wizened mentors who have provided input and encouragement that has left indelible imprints on who I am, and what I've done.

Rather than a specific channel, designed to set class-sized cohorts into common outcomes, my sages have offered open-ended counsel that allowed the navigational direction to come from the sense of unique, personal calling that God wires into all leaders.

Today, I provide to Christian leaders what those Christian leaders provided to me: assistance in finding the clues of Calling among the apparently-random components of life. What happens, through that process? Simple answer: great stories, and no two stories are the same...

On my desk this morning: a letter from a **Master's Program** graduate whose journey from **TMP** took him and his wife from business consulting to ministry leadership... in a Muslim country

(name and location withheld, for security purposes; they're a little "undercover").



On my e-mail desktop is another note - from a current **Master's** participant - whose journey from **TMP** is likely to take him from his professional practice to a different kind of ministry leadership... in an even more dangerous setting. He's running for Congress...

Phil Liberatore is not an "undercover" kind of guy. His professional designation is CPA, but his unique niche is implied in his brand: "IRS Problem Solvers." People who listen to Christian radio in Southern California know Phil's name from their longtime advertising promise: they help people who are at the end-of-their-rope in their conflicts with the IRS.

During his first two years in **TMP**, Phil sensed God calling him to shift his direction. A run for the

seat in California's 42nd Congressional district emerged as his next season pursuit. Phil knows his business, inside and out... but the process of electoral politics is a new experience for him. He prepared to run on message, until...

I received Phil's terse e-mail while on a family break last week: "Call me. I need your help." I did... and took a break from sun-and-sand to become a consultant to the consultant-turned-candidate.

The incumbent - Phil's same-party opponent, in next month's primary - had signs plastered across the district: "***Don't Elect Tax-Fraud Phil Liberatore.***" Tax fraud is a felony; felons cannot run for office. Undoubtedly, some of Phil's professional clients over the years had committed tax fraud; representing them did not make Phil complicit in their earlier actions. Is it right to implicate an attorney who represents people guilty of a crime in the client's earlier misbehavior? Phil's opponent - the incumbent - was running fast-and-loose, out to defame his challenger with malice and misrepresentation.

I'm no political pro, but I shared with him insight about what to do when you're being slandered: "*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against*

you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12) "*That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Yesterday, Phil pulled a fast one: he convened his supporters at his office... to pray. I guess that's what you do when you believe that you're doing what God has called you to do...

Where does *your* Calling direct *you*? Here's a sure thing: if it's really your assignment from God, it will be opposed by God's enemies... and the battles will get brutal. *Plan to pray, a lot. It's allowed...*

Bob Shank

Bob Shank is Founder and Chief Mentoring Officer of The Master's Program (TMP).

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