

CALLING: Finding Your Purpose



There's an old quip that goes, "you can call me anything, but just don't call me late to dinner." Have you ever heard someone say that they missed their calling? Or perhaps wonder what their calling is as it relates to work? Christ knows you, has gifted you, has a plan for you, and wants to carry out your plan for his glory. A calling to something also involves feeling compelled to do something and willing to do it even if you must sacrifice to do it. No one wants to miss getting called to dinner. God not only calls us to his banqueting table, but to a number of other important things.

Primary Calling

The Bible addresses the question of calling. Throughout, it's clear that our first or primary calling is to relationship with God Himself. Human beings were created by Him and for Him, meant to be in relationship *with* Him. Hugh Whelchel notes, "This 'primary calling' includes a call to faith in Christ (Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Cor. 1:9), a call to the kingdom of God (1 Thess. 2:10-12), a call to eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 9:15), and a call to holy living (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:15)."¹ *The primary calling of a relationship to God gives us an important foundation for understanding how to flourish in our secondary callings.*

Secondary Callings

We also see secondary callings. Genesis 1:26-2:25 reveals some of them: He has called us to be in community with others, a call to work and create, and a call to family. These callings are revisited in other parts of scripture. In the New Testament we also see a call to use our spiritual gifts for the building up and maturity of the Church (Ephesians 4:11-12, Romans 12:6-8.) Because Baton Exchange mentoring has an emphasis on work (and career or occupation), we'll pause a moment to visit the call to work.

Call to Work

The Bible tells us, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work" (Exodus 20:9). The call to work, as given in the "Creation Mandate" or "Cultural Mandate" in Genesis 1:27-31, starts off by establishing that humans are "created in God's image." They were created with the ability to create, to imagine, to solve problems, etc... But not any one person possesses all of God's creative attributes- people have different interests, skill sets, aptitudes, opportunities, and so on. He distributed these things across humanity. They serve a purpose. Accounting, art, and architecture can all be a part of the call accomplishing the Creation Mandate. If you can work within the personal way that God has designed you (the design reflects the Designer's intent), it can be satisfying (Ecclesiastes 2:24) and successful (Proverbs 16:3-4) in ways that working simply for power, possessions, or position ever could. Though there certainly are times when you will need to work in areas that aren't in your giftings or interests due to responsibilities. (Practice wise financial practices and you can minimize these times.) Whether working in your strengths and interests or not, in both situations we are called to work as unto the Lord. (Colossians 3:23-24)

"God has created us and our gifts for a place of his choosing- and we will only be ourselves when we are finally there." Os Guinness

God created us good, for good. But in our brokenness, we wrestle against self-centeredness and pride, which can derail us from walking in our God-given callings. Only Christ can renew our hearts and minds, helping us press into and live out His calling to us. But once we daily submit our will to His, we will begin to discover the true person He has called us to be. This can bring true joy, no matter our work circumstances.

In his article, *Clarifying Your Calling*, Patrice Tsague, offers the following seven thoughts on calling and work:

1. Assess your gifts, skills, and abilities. They are tools to help you carry out your call.
2. Reflect on your experiences and trials and identify the patterns within them as signs toward your calling.
3. What are the reoccurring themes that God has been reiterating to you throughout your life even before you were saved? Listen attentively to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to you through Scriptures, circumstances, and other believers.
4. Do not limit your call to one vocation. Your call is expressed in everything you do, and it can be multidimensional. Your business is just one of the ways your call is expressed.
5. What is your burden? What are some of the things that pull at your heart and you are very passionate about?
6. What things come naturally to you? What do you experience the most joy doing? Ask others around you to give you their input as well.
7. In what ways can you serve others by fulfilling the Great Commission and the great commandment while manifesting the Fruit of the Spirit?

A final series of vocational questions, proposed by John Stonestreet at the Colson Center, can give you career insights, as well as what cause to get behind.

1. What evil in the world (or in my world) must be stopped or that I just cannot tolerate?
2. What is broken that needs restored?
3. What is good that must be preserved or protected?
4. What's missing that we can contribute?

In the Compass section we visit the importance of a personal vision statement and life board in charting a personal life course and calling.

Baton Exchange

Ask Your Mentor

1. Do you feel a strong sense of call to anything? If so, what? How did those callings come about?
2. Do you experience time demands between primary calling and secondary callings? If so, how do you deal with them?
3. How have you had to trust God with your callings?
4. What do you wish that you would have known about calling while in your 20s?
5. If you could do anything in the world, and money was no option, what career would you choose? Why?

Go Do

Consider journaling answers to the questions posed by Patrice Tsague and John Stonestreet. What might God be asking you to do regarding calling? What would it look like to trust in Him with that as you obey?

Go Deeper: Further Conversation & Study

Which of the secondary callings most interests or resonates with you?

Can you point to anything that helped you discern your calling? If so, what?

What does it look like for you to “work as unto the Lord?”

Sources & Resources

Book- The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For? by Rick Warren

Book- The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life by Os Guinness

Video- What Is Your Calling? by Os Guinness, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWHMSQgYtvY>

Article- Bivocational Ministry Through a Faith and Work Lens

Hugh Whelchel, <https://tifwe.org/bivocational-ministry-through-a-faith-and-work-lens/>