

The Call to Serve God & Others in All Areas of Life

“God’s Provision for the Called”

Introduction

- The biblical doctrine of vocation, while extremely practical for us to consider, can also seem daunting. We rightly recognize that God’s calling on our life is total because we belong, body and soul, both in life and death, to Jesus Christ who has redeemed us. We do well to remind ourselves, therefore, that the doctrine of vocation is ultimately about God’s work both through us and in us.

“Vocation has to do with God’s providence, how He governs and cares for His creation by working through human beings... And [it] is where Christians struggle with trials and temptations, becoming a means of sanctification.”

— Gene Edward Veith, “The Doctrine of Vocation”

Key Point: The God who calls us to serve Him and others has made _____ for us in Christ in order that we might be found faithful in all that He has entrusted to us.

From God’s Work to Ours: The Biblical Basis for the Doctrine of Vocation

1. The _____

Gen. 1:27-28a—²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion...”

2. The _____ of Christ.

Mark 10:45—“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

3. The _____ of the Believer.

1 Pet. 2:4-5—⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- ⇒ We have been *washed* and *cleansed* for service (1 Cor. 6:11)
- ⇒ We have been *clothed* for service (Col. 3:9-10)
- ⇒ We have been *anointed* for service (Titus 3:5-6)
- ⇒ We have been *sprinkled* with Jesus’ blood for service (1 Pet. 2:2)

4. The Household _____ of the NT.

Col. 3:18-24—¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²² Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

The Spheres of Our Calling

(1) The *Family*

(2) The *Church*

(3) Wider *Society*

Key Point: Recognizing that we have been both called and equipped by God for service changes our understanding of our identity:

(1) We are _____!

(2) We are _____!

Carrying Out Our Vocations in a Fallen World

A Case Study: *The Apostle Paul*

Having met the resurrected Christ and been commissioned by Him for service, the Apostle Paul recognized that his life was no longer his own and that he was now the Lord's bondservant (Titus 1:1) and a steward (1 Cor. 4:1) of all that had been entrusted to him.

- **Carrying out his calling meant that he faced times of great _____ and _____.**
 - ⇒ In relation to the governing authorities (Acts 16:19-24)
 - ⇒ In relation to his co-workers (Acts 15:39)
 - ⇒ In relation to those to whom he had ministered (Galatians, 1 Corinthians)
 - ⇒ In relation to his closest friends (2 Tim. 2:9-18)

How was Paul able to serve faithfully in light of the difficulties associated with his calling?

Phil. 3:13-16—¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Observations

1. Paul understood that the call of God on our lives means that our lives are to have a particular _____.
“press on”— διώκω (diōkō)—to move rapidly and decisively toward an objective, hasten, run after.

2. Paul understood that pressing on towards what is ahead means _____ true to what is already ours.
“hold true”— στοιχέω (stoicheō)—to be in line with a person. or thing considered as standard for one's conduct, hold to, agree with, follow, conform.
 - ⇒ Our lives (our gifts, talents, abilities, successes, etc.) are no longer our own.
Phil. 4:7-8—⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
 - ⇒ Our identity is found in Christ and His righteousness.
Phil. 4:9—and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith
 - ⇒ We share in both the power of Jesus resurrection life and the reality of His suffering until we go to glory.
Phil. 4:10-11—¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Key Point: Serving faithfully as bondservants and stewards means knowing how intimately our identity is bound up with the _____ and _____ of Jesus Christ.

Concluding Thought

- **The biblical doctrine of vocation enables us to recognize the importance of _____ serving God and others in every aspect of our lives.**

1 Cor. 4:2— *Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.*

“For those who answer the call, everything under God has its own importance, though the final respect is not ours to bestow. If it is ever to be ours, it will come from the “well done” of the Caller. But before the eventual “well done,” our task today is to do well— by loving people, things, and work for their sake and His.”
—Os Guinness, *The Call*