

Who Is Called?

Word In Life Bible Study • Theology of Work

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A Task Set by God

Yet even though work is an important, God-given part of life, by itself it falls far short of describing the entire significance and identity of an individual. There are many other aspects to being a person—personal growth and development, family, citizenship, friendships, and faith, to name a few. So to define oneself almost entirely by one's occupation is inadequate. It tends to place more value on the self than on God; more on activity than on character; and more on success than on relationships. In short, it tends to equate employment with human worth.

The Reformation leader Martin Luther had a phrase that helps to correct this insufficient view of personhood. He said that a person's entire life was a "task set by God." In whatever we do—work or play, eating or sleeping, worshiping or relaxing—we have a responsibility to honor God, for He is Lord of all of life.

The Bible and Calling From the Bible's point of view, "calling" describes all of the responsibility of all believers to serve God with all of their lives:

. Every believer is called to belong to God. Paul indicated to the Christians at Rome that both he and they had the same calling (Rom. 1:1, 6). Likewise, he wrote to the believers in Ephesus that just as there is one Spirit and one body (that is, the church), "you were called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4).

. Every believer is called a child of God. In His love, God brings us into His family (1 John 3:1), through faith in Christ Jesus.

. Every believer is called to accept the work of Christ on our behalf. Though we are sinners deserving of judgment, Christ's death on the cross has "justified" us, made us able to stand before a holy God and receive His salvation and grace (Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:9). For this we have every reason to live lives of gratitude (1 Thess. 2:13).

. Every believer is called to become like Christ. Living the life God calls us to involves change in which we take on the character of Christ. That means resisting the temptation to turn away from Him, even though others may encourage us to do so (Gal. 1:6-9). It involves fleeing evil and pursuing good, fighting to maintain our faithfulness (1 Tim. 6:11-12). Just as Christ is holy, so we are to develop holiness in everything we do (1 Pet. 1:15; 3:9). As we pursue Christlikeness, we can do so with the certainty that the Lord is helping us, equipping us for every good work (Phil. 2:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:3-10).

. Every believer is called to serve God and other people. Christ has called us to Himself to live out our faith in a manner that is worthy of Him (Eph. 4:1-4). We have the privilege of declaring God's work through everything we do and say (1 Pet. 2:9-10, 21).

. Every believer is called to become a citizen of the new heaven and new earth. The Christian life leads ultimately to the end of being "glorified," raised up to stand with Christ in eternal glory, pure and holy at last (1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 3:10-11). In that day, we will celebrate the final coming together of Christ and all His faithful ones (Rev. 19:9-10). Our obedience to the Lord right now confirms this ultimate calling (Matt. 5:19).

What About You?

If you are a believer in Christ, you have the same, significant calling as any other believer in Christ, no matter what your workday occupation may be. Calling is not just a matter of what job one has. It means living as a child of God. Is that the calling that you are pursuing?

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