

BREAKOUT: Wisdom for Calling

“Without God, what am I but a guide to my own destruction?
- Augustine

- Proverbs 14:12 “There’s a way that seems right to a man, but it’s end is the way of death.”
- The Good News is that God is guiding us!
 - Psalm 37: 23 & 24
“The steps of a good man (righteous man) are ordered by The Lord, and he delights in his way. Though he fall, he will not be utterly cast down; for The Lord uphold him with His hand.” (NKJV)
- Remember, we are not left to figure out the call of God in our lives alone. We have an invisible hand that guides us, and guides all of history, to God’s most holy and glorious end.

“The Lord is directing all things. His invisible hand of providence steers the course of history, and can be confident that He is in charge even when He seems far away. Let this thought give us courage and hope in this foreign world.”
- R.C. Sproul – The Invisible Hand of Providence (Ligonier.org)

Let’s Define Calling

Different kinds of calling

- *The Call of the Gospel (Matthew 11:28)*
- *The Effective Calling (Romans 8:30)*

“Effective calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which He summons people to Himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith.”
- Wayne Grudem – Systematic Theology pg. 693

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- *Calling to Discipleship*

“God calls people to Himself, but this is no casual suggestion. He is so awe inspiring and His summons so commanding that only one response is appropriate – a response as total and universal as the authority of the Caller. This in the New Testament, as Jesus calls His followers to Himself, He calls them to other things or tasks: to peace, to fellowship, to eternal life, to suffering and to service. But deeper even than these particular things, discipleship, which implies ‘everyone, everywhere, and in everything’ is the natural and rightful response to the lordship of Christ. As Paul wrote the followers of Christ in the little town of Colosse, ‘Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for man.’”

- Os Guinness – The Call – pg. 30

- *Calling to Specific Service (Acts 13:2)*

- This is where we need the most wisdom!

How do I know what God is calling me to specifically?

Four Categories of Calling

(Adapted from *Discerning Your Call to Ministry* by Jason Allen):

1. Called
2. Called to minister
3. Called to ministry
4. Called to the ministry

Called

“It was understood to be more noble, meritorious and therefore favored by God and men. In a very real sense, laypersons were considered second class citizens. Secular work was “earthly”, something you settled for if you are not set apart for ministry. Martin Luther and the other reformers reasserted the biblical concept of vocation, which holds that God calls and gifts every person for an occupation. Calling is not limited to the ministry; it reaches into every arena of life. Every Christian should pursue their occupation as a vocation – a calling by God – and should seek to fulfill it in a way that brings Him glory.”

- Jason Allen – Discerning Your Call to Ministry (pgs. 18-19)

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“Our primary calling as followers of Christ is by Him, to Him and for Him. First and foremost we are called to someone (God), not to something (politics or teaching) or to somewhere (such as outer Mongolia). Our secondary calling, considering who God is as sovereign, is that everyone, everywhere, and in everything should think, speak, live and act entirely for Him. We can therefore properly say as a matter of secondary calling that we are called to engineering, or the practice of law or art history.” - Os Guinness – The Call (pg.31)

The primary calling will not change. The secondary callings can and often do change.

Called to Minister

Every Christian is called to minister, to serve the body of Christ; the local church. This is not for a select few while everyone else is a spectator. We are called to use our gifts for the edification of the church. (1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12:5-8, Ephesians 4:15-16)

Called to Ministry

“By this I mean that your vocation has a direct ministerial component to it. You do not have to meet 1 Timothy 3 qualifications or be ordained, but you have consciously chosen to walk through a door of ministerial service – for example, as a children’s ministry coordinator, teacher of a Christian school, or Christian camp counselor.” – Jason Allen (pg. 20)

Called to the Ministry

The calling to be ordained as a pastor/elder as defined in the New Testament. These are shepherds, overseers and teachers. Caring for, building up, and protecting the flock. (Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9)

“As numerous passages in the New Testament indicate the words ‘elder’ (presbuteros), ‘overseer’ (episkopos), and ‘pastor’ (poim-en) all refer to the same office.” (John McArthur, Biblical Eldership - Grace Community Church” – John McArthur, Biblical Eldership - Grace Community Church

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Specific Calls May Look Different (Luke 7:31-35)**Specific Calls can change throughout your Christian walk (Luke 5:1-10, John 21:4-19)**

- You may have had a vocation and God is calling you to a ministry.
- You may have had one ministry and God is calling you to another.
- You may have had a secular job and God is calling you to full time ministry or bi-vocational ministry.

Discerning the Specific Call

- Prayer/Fasting (Acts 13:2)

- Internal sense/Passion (Jeremiah 20:9)

“We spend most of our time rendering people fine to go back to their sin! I want to heal souls. If a man has a diseased body and his soul is all right, he is all right until the end: but a man with a healthy body and a distressed soul is all right for sixty years or so and then he has to face eternity in hell.’ He concludes, ‘I can do nothing else, I must preach.’” – Jason Allen (pg. 26)

- Gifting (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Romans 12:6-8)

“It makes sense that God will call us according to how he has gifted us. God has given us gifts for the benefit of others. “In the Biblical understanding of giftedness, gifts are never really ours for ourselves. We have nothing that was not given us. Our gifts are ultimately God’s, and we are only ‘stewards;’ responsible for the prudent management of property that is not our own. This is why our gifts are always ‘ours for others,’ whether in the community of Christ or the broader society outside, especially the neighbor in need.” – Os Guinness – The Call (pg. 46)

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- Opportunity (Isaiah 6:8)
- Spiritual Gifts/Prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Acts 13:2)
- Confirmation/Church Leaders/Scripture/Wife/Other sources (Acts 14:23)
- Willingness to count the cost (Luke 14:25-33)

EXPLORING THE CALL TO ELDERSHIP:

Adapted from *Discerning Your Call to Ministry* by Jason Allen

1. Do you desire the ministry?
2. Does your character meet God's expectations?
3. Is your household in order?
4. Has God gifted you to preach and teach His word?
5. Does your church affirm your calling?
6. Do you love the people of God?
7. Are you passionate about the gospel and the great commission?
8. Are you engaged in fruitful ministry?
9. Are you ready to defend the faith?
10. Are you willing to surrender?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- *The Call – Os Guinness*
- *Discerning Your Call to Ministry – Jason Allen*
- *The Call to Ministry – Albert Mohler*

