



Calling

Joyce Koo Dalrymple

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I. Ephesians 2:10

- a. “For we are God’s ***masterpiece***. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good thing he planned for us long ago.” (NLT)
- b. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God ***prepared beforehand***, that we should ***walk in them***.” (ESV)
- c. “He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to ***join him in the work he does***, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.” (MSG)

II. What is a Calling or Vocation?

- a. “Every member of the Church is called to holiness. This means we are called to love: to love God and to love each other. The particular way that you live out that call to holiness is your vocation.” — Vocation Centre
- b. “When God says in Jesus, ‘Follow Me,’ everything you are, everything you have, and everything you do becomes your response to His summons to become the person He’s called you to be.” — Os Guinness
 - i. Following a **Person**, not a plan.
 - ii. It includes your job but is more **expansive** than your job.
 - iii. It is about **becoming** the person He’s called you to be.

III. What does it mean to follow a Person and not a plan?

- a. Our primary call is
- b. My secondary or individual call is
- c. What is significant about Jesus saying, “Follow me” instead of “Believe in me?”
- d. When you’re following a Person, there is an important relational dynamic.
 - i. Story of Peter (John 21:1-17)
 - ii. Jesus is pursuing us and meets us where we are at.
 - iii. We will fail and make mistakes, but grace is guaranteed.
 - iv. Don’t let shame create distance between you and Jesus.
- e. “God wants you to stay close to His heart and to let Him guide you. You will know what you are called to do when you have to know it.” — Henri Nouwen
- f. How does following a Person change how you might pursue your calling?

IV. What does it mean to have an expansive view of calling?

- a. There is a cost to following Jesus.
 - i. Dietrich Bonhoeffer: cheap v. costly grace
 - ii. Jesus calls Peter to follow Him after explaining the cost (John 21:18-19).
 - iii. “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).
- b. Your most meaningful work may be outside your job title: parenting (Lois + Eunice), tentmaker (Paul), marketplace + house church leader (Lydia)
- c. “Do little things as if they were great because of the majesty of Jesus Christ who does them in us, and who lives our life. Do the greatest things as if they are little and easy because of his omnipotence.” — Blaise Pascal
- d. “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).
- e. What are some things outside of your paid job that God might be calling you to do?
- f. Ask God to reveal whether there is anything you need to surrender in order to follow Him with your whole heart and life. Write a short prayer response.

V. Our response to God’s call is to become the person He has called you to be.

- a. “What if finding our vocation isn't usually a *moment*, but a **process**? And not a process of *finding*, but one of **formation**? And what if your vocation is not a one-time calling that lasts for your whole life? What if it is something that God sharpens and reforms and focuses and adapts to the different stages and seasons of your life? What if vocation from God's perspective is not a *riddle* he wants you to unravel, but a **conversation** he wants to have with you throughout your life as a way to deepen his relationship with you and clarify your vision of him?” — Fuller Center for Spiritual Formation
- b. “But now, O Lord, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand” (Isaiah 64:8).
- c. In the end, we will likely find that God’s primary purpose in our career paths was not so much the fruit of our labors but the fruit of *his* labors in conforming us to the image of his Son. — Robin King, *Lessons Along a Career Path*

VI. Some people will have a clear call to a particular task.

- a. Ex: God called Abram and Sarah to undertake a journey. He called Noah to build the ark. He called Moses and Aaron to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promise Land. (Exodus 3:4, 28:1). God chose Bezalel and Oholiab as chief craftsmen for the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-6). He called Samuel (1 Samuel 3:10), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-5), Amos (Amos 7:15) and others to be prophets. Esther was called “for such a time as this” to save the Jews from genocide.
- b. Just because you’re called to something doesn’t mean it will be easy.

- c. Consider how you can be a Mordecai to Esther or a Barnabas to Paul. Who is someone you can sponsor, encourage, and mentor?

VII. How do we discern our calling? Where do you start?

- a. Christian Vocation is responding faithfully to God's call in the places and communities where God has placed us.
- b. "Our vocation is found in the process of seeking the kingdom, letting it shape how we actually live and doing so in ever-changing contexts." — Mark Labberton
- c. "Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am." — Parker Palmer
 - i. Spiritual practices that can help us listen.
- d. "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." — Frederick Buechner
 - i. There are so many needs in the world. What needs stand out to you that will make the world more like what God intends?
 - ii. What needs are you in a particularly good place to meet? Consider your life stage and demands upon your life.
 - iii. What particular skills, natural giftings, and experience do you have to meet that need?
 - iv. "Deep gladness"—what sparks joy in you?

VIII. How do you currently understand your personal call? What do you know for sure, and what remains unclear? Ask God to speak to your heart and your imagination. What is God inviting you to do that is uniquely for you to do in His mission in the world?

IX. In what ways has your background, culture, or life experiences shaped your sense of call and vocation? What stories from your life or others have shaped your call?

X. Tale of Three Mothers and a Sister who said Yes to God's Call (Exodus 1:15 – 2:10).

- a.** Midwives (Shiphrah and Puah) – Following God's call begins with fear of God. (1:17, 21)
- b.** Moses' mother – Living out your call to love, nurture, and protect. (2:1-3)
- c.** Moses' sister – Paying attention to the opportunities God gives to speak up. (2:4-10)
- d.** Pharaoh's daughter – Committing to using your power to help those in need.

XI. Q & A

XII. Additional Resources

- a.** Theology of Work Project: www.theologyofwork.org
- b.** Fuller De Pree Center: www.depree.org
- c.** Center for Faith and Innovation: www.wheaton.edu/academics/academic-centers/wheaton-center-for-faith-and-innovation
- d.** Center for Faith and Work: www.faithandwork.com
- e.** Refuge for Strength: www.refugeforstrength.com
Spiritual formation and listening circles for women