

**Prayer:**

Father, please broaden our gaze that we might see with biblical eyes the far reaches of Christ's lordship.

**Overview of the Course:**

Vocation: What Am I Called to Do and to Be?

1. **The Caller and the Called:** *What is the Context of Calling?*
  - Your life is not your own. God is the Caller; we are the called. Find your calling in His Word.
  - Love Christ by obedience to His call and thus pursue your purpose: to glorify and enjoy Him forever.
2. **The Meaning of Means:** *What is the Concept of Calling?*
  - You are part of a royal priesthood. All work for the Lord is sacred – it has meaning and worth.
  - God loves His people through His people. Loving your neighbor is the framework of faithful calling.
3. **The Scope of the Summons:** *What is the Content of Calling?*
  - Christ is Lord over every sphere of life. You are called to glorify and enjoy Him in all things.
  - The Dominion Mandate and the Great Commission are equally ultimate ends.
4. **Calling Lived Out – In Our Work**
  - The framework applied to our work – in all our labor, including our jobs, and in our rest.
  - Common pitfalls: idolatry, identity, and indifference. Truths we must not forget in our work.
5. Calling Lived Out – In Our Families
6. Calling Lived Out – In Our Church
7. Calling Lived Out – In Our Society
8. Wrong Way: How NOT to Discern God's Will
9. Proper Path: How to Discern God's Will
10. Productivity: Stewarding Our Most Limited Resource (Time)

**Goal of Lesson 3:**

The goal of this lesson is for students to understand the **content** of calling. Together we will look at our effectual calling, the various spheres over which Christ reigns and calls us onward, the work left to be done in both the Dominion Mandate as well as the Great Commission, and how we ought to pursue excellence in all of our endeavors.

*In the next lesson, we'll move on from the philosophy of calling and into the first sphere or domain of our calling – **our work**. We will explore a framework for understanding what we're called to do and be in that particular estate, and discuss some practical applications to help us incorporate biblical wisdom in our efforts to be faithful in that arena.*

**Reminder and Charge – Ephesians 4:11-16**

"Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

**Lesson 3: The Scope of the Summons – What is the Content of Calling?****The Starting Point: Our Effectual Calling**

We are going to first look at God's call upon our lives unto salvation. His call to bring us into fellowship with His Son and into a faith wherein we look to Him rightly as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

It's from this primary calling that all of our subsequent callings derive meaning. Jesus is the "why" of our calling.

**What is effectual calling?**

We think of it in two elements: an **External Call of the Gospel** which goes out to all people and an **Internal Call of the Holy Spirit** unto only the elect in Christ.

"There is the truth of the gospel, and we have seen already that it is a part of the work of the Holy Spirit to see that that truth is proclaimed to all and sundry. That is what we call the general call – a kind of universal offer of the gospel. Then we saw that though the external or general call comes to all, to those who will remain unsaved as well as to those who are saved, obviously some new distinction comes in, because some are saved by it. So the question we must now consider is: What is it that establishes the difference between the two groups?

And the way to answer that question, it seems to me, is to say that the call of the gospel, which has been given to all, is effectual only in some. Now there is a portion of Scripture which is a perfect illustration of this. The followers of Christ who were even described as 'disciples' were divided up into two groups. One group decided that they would never listen to Him again. They left Him and went home. And when He turned to the others and said, 'Will you also go away?' Peter said, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life' (John 6:67-68).

The one group disbelieved and went home, the others, who had heard exactly the same things, stayed with Him, wanted to hear more, and rejoiced in it. What makes the difference? It is that the word was effectual in the case of the saved in a way that it was not effectual in the case of the unsaved who refused it."

- Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Effectual Calling and Regeneration

**A Walk Through the Scriptures on Calling**

Listen to the frequency and the use of the words "call," "called," and "calling" as well as their relationship to Jesus in His specific references as "Lord."

**Romans 1:1-6 – Paul was called as an apostle to call others to the obedience of faith**

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, **called** to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our **Lord**, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are **called** to belong to Jesus Christ,

**1 Corinthians 1:1-9 – Called to be holy; called into fellowship with Christ**

Paul, **called** by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes,

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called** to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our **Lord** Jesus Christ, both their **Lord** and ours:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the **Lord** Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our **Lord** Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our **Lord** Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were **called** into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our **Lord**.

### **Romans 8:28-30 – The Golden Chain of Redemption; the work of the Holy Spirit**

Likewise the **Spirit** helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the **Spirit** himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the **Spirit**, because the **Spirit** intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are **called** according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also **called**, and those whom he **called** he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:1-7 – Calling to holiness (both internal and external)**

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the **Lord** Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the **Lord** Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the **Lord** is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not **called** us for impurity, but in holiness.

### **2 Timothy 1:8-9 – Confidence in Christ; a holy calling, not from (because of) our works, but for our works (faithful life)**

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our **Lord**, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and **called** us to a holy **calling**, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,

### **1 Peter 1:13-16 – Called to think, act, and feel/desire in submission to Christ's Lordship**

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who **called** you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

### **2 Peter 1:3-11 (quoting vs 10-11) – Hold fast to our calling; and test ourselves by our fruit**

[An explanation of the knowledge, self-control, and godly qualities granted to us in pursuit of our holy callings] ... Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your **calling and election**, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our **Lord and Savior** Jesus Christ.

**Ephesians 1:15-23 – Confidence in the power of God at work in those effectually called unto Christ**

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the **Lord** Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our **Lord** Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has **called** you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**Ephesians 4:1 – The charge to live it out...**

I therefore, a prisoner for the **Lord**, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the **calling** to which you have been **called**.

**Reflection Questions:**

Is it more important to become a Christian politician or a Christian preacher? What about a Christian economist or a Christian missionary? Should believers devote themselves to ecclesiastical work or some kind of work for the kingdom outside of the church?

Which is more important: the **Cultural Mandate** (Genesis) or the **Evangelistic Mandate** (the Great Commission)?

- Cultural Mandate says all things are to be subdued to the purposes of God (Gen 1:28) – fill the earth and subdue it.
- Great Commissions says we are to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28).

Which is more important:

- a. subduing the earth and bringing all under the Lordship of Christ, under the order of God, or
- b. converting the souls of sinners through preaching the Word?

Which has the priority for the Christian today? What is the proper goal or aim of Christian living today?

**Cultural vs. Redemptive Work**

In light of the revelation of scripture across the whole of both the Old and New Testaments, how are Christians supposed to prioritize the way they steward their resources and spend their lives?

We believe in both **Sola Scriptura** and **Tota Scriptura** – that scripture alone is our only ultimate authority in life as the very Word of God, and that ALL of scripture is breathed out by Him and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3)

What do you do with someone once he or she is converted? What do you do if he's a judge or politician or what have you? How do you disciple him and train him up to follow after Christ?

Not all are called to the ministry. We all want people to be saved, no doubt, but saved from what? The curse of sin. And where has that curse of sin had its devastating impact? Everywhere.

But we're not just saved from something, we're saved for something. So, what is it that we are saved for? Well, what is it that Christ ultimately accomplishes for us, and calls us into service to accomplish (by His power, mind you) on His behalf?

He is the Redeemer. He is accomplishing, as Second Adam, all that First Adam failed to do. He is calling us into His work in the redemption of all of creation as we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

### Creational Worldview Class – Lessons 1 and 2 (last August)

- Creation Lost & Regained
- Creational Normativity
- <https://carriagelanepres.com/ss-creation>

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**Dr. Greg Bahnsen** (OPC pastor, Professor at RTS and Westminster) lectured on the equal ultimacy of these two callings. Below are some highlights in how he shows their balanced priority.

He says, "There is a reciprocal relationship between those mandates and each has its own priority or importance."

#### 1. Cultural Mandate has a priority over the Evangelistic Mandate

- a. **Historically** – God was interested in subduing the earth even before there was a need for any redemption of the earth. He wanted to have His kingdom come to fruition in all walks of life even prior to the fall of man.
- b. **Definitionally** – It sets the terms for God's Redemptive/Evangelistic Mandate.

[Theology Nerd Alert] It speaks in terms of *seed* and *land*. After the fall, the Redemptive Mandate (from the **proto-evangelion**) is worked out in terms of *seed of the woman* and man is to *labor among the land*. When God gives promise to **Abraham**, it's his *seed that will bless the nations* and a *land which he will be given*. **Davidic Covenant**, his *seed will sit upon the throne*, and he will *rule over a land*. And in **Christ**, he is the *seed of the woman* and yet *all power and authority in heaven and on earth is his as His kingdom*.

- c. **Ultimately** – It is the ultimate goal of all things. Why is God redeeming us? After ridding us of our sin and guilt, we might, as it were, get back on track promoting His kingdom as it ought to have been done initially, and the new heavens and new earth are going to be a situation where the Cultural Mandate is carried out (and has been carried out). God redeems us that we might become Kingdom workers that we might subdue all areas of life to bring about the Kingdom to His glory.

#### 2. Evangelistic Mandate has a priority over the Cultural Mandate

- a. **As the Means is Prior to the End** – the Cultural Mandate will never be fulfilled until the evangelistic mandate is. You've got to get people saved so that they can receive and work out their kingdom callings.
- b. **As the Specific Focus of Life in this Fallen Age** – since we have fallen, the evangelistic mandate is now front and center. We need to see people redeemed. People need to be saved. Christ is calling men to Himself and all nations to repent. The specific focus of our lives is Redemption today.

- c. **As it Has an Urgency that the Other Does Not** – an urgency whereby Paul was willing to forfeit his ordinary cultural pursuits for the salvation of men. He said he would be all things to all people that by some means some might be saved. He was willing to give up his pay, his benefits in society, his own leisure, all of his cultural pursuits if need be that some men might be saved.

***They are both equally ultimate.***

- Cultural work vs. church work is not a proper lens.
- Different individual Christians are called to different pursuits related to each of the mandates.
- They serve each other. Each has its own special kind of priority.

***Christians ought not be heartless nor blind.***

- They're heartless when they lack compassion for the lost and are indifferent to the GC.
- But they're blind when they don't see that the goal of redemption is bringing all of culture under the sway of Jesus Christ.
- That is to say it is obscurantist to say salvation only pertains to my soul and not the whole world.

***"Joy to the World" by Isaac Watts***

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
 Let earth receive her King;  
 ...  
 No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
 Nor thorns infest the ground;  
 He comes to make His blessings flow  
***Far as the curse is found...***

Cornelius Van Til said, "The sweep of redemption is as broad as the sweep of sin."

**How Far Does Christ's Lordship Reach?**

**John Frame** summarized the bible this way: "the message of the *Old Testament* is that Yahweh is LORD and the message of the *New Testament* is that Jesus is LORD."

The very first confession of the early church was: "**Jesus is LORD!**"

This is so central to the doctrine of salvation and membership within the body of Christ that Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome in **Romans 10:9**:

"If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

But just how pervasive is Christ's Lordship? Where all does His authority reach?

"And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the Lord."" (**Zechariah 14:20**)

**Abraham Kuyper: Sphere Sovereignty and the Lordship of Christ**

**George Grant** (PCA Pastor of Parish Presbyterian Church just outside of Nashville, TN and author of some 50+ books on Christian doctrine, thought, and history) says of Kuyper: ([audio](#))

- Hitler feared him even though he'd been dead 20 years before he came to power.
- Kuyper believed this about vocation: "If you see something, you're likely called to it."

**Robert Godfrey** (Teaching Fellow and Chairman of Ligonier Ministries; and church history professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia) says of Kuyper: ([audio](#))

- He is the most influential reformed thinker in the modern era since John Calvin.

**McKendree Langley** (PCA Elder and Lecturer at Westminster Seminary) wrote a book about Kuyper entitled "The Practice of Political Spirituality: Episodes from the Public Career of Abraham Kuyper, 1879-1918."

- He also had a summary article featured in the OPC's magazine (New Horizons) back in the late 1990s before he died which gives some helpful insight into the man who we ought to learn more about.

***"Abraham Kuyper: A Christian Worldview"***

[Selections from the article] - [https://www.opc.org/nh.html?article\\_id=333](https://www.opc.org/nh.html?article_id=333)

**Summary Thoughts:**

We have a PERSONAL God, but not a PRIVATE God.

When the world says "personal" religion, they mean "private." "Keep your mouth shut!" they say.

We DO have a personal God. He is one God, Trinitarian, existent in 3 persons. And we know Him personally. He knows our name. It was written down in His book. Christ died for me, personally. He paid for my own personal sins.

But He is NOT a private God. You cannot hush Him. As Lewis said of Aslan, "He's not a tame lion."

Paul tells us in Romans 1 that God is so public in His revelation, so NOT private in His actions, that He made Himself evident to ALL of mankind ... from the very beginning OF mankind ... through the very creation of the world.

And, He's done this, not in some nebulous or confusing way, and not in some quiet or hidden way, but in such a clearly evident-to-all type of way that all men are without excuse for not recognizing both THAT He exists and HOW He exists ... they are to recognize Him in such a way as to thank Him for creating them. They are to recognize His Godness and worship Him.

And those who fail to do so are not excused due to the lack of clarity, but rather are condemned in their denial of Him through the necessary suppression of His truth in their failure to rightly worship Him.

God is personal, but He is NOT private. And as those made in His image, tasked with bearing that image before the entire world, we ought not be private in our worship and adoration and service of Him through our lives.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matt 5:14-16)