

Prayer:

Father, please give us the wisdom and the desire to serve You well in our work.

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 4:

In this lesson, we're moving on from the philosophy of calling and into the first sphere 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 [see notes below: pg. 11]

"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 4: Calling Lived Out – In Our Work

Today I want to introduce you to a 5-part framework for assessing anything we do.

It's sort of a personal ethics checklist.

You should run through all 5 questions regularly about the things you spend your time doing, thinking about, planning for, worrying over, etc.

Most of the points will require your personal self-reflection primarily (maybe even solely), but it's helpful to work through it with others as well - spouse, parent, wise friend, etc.

Today we'll apply it to work in general, and the following weeks to family, church, and state involvements, but you can use it to narrow down into your particular work (be it job, home, or other; and be it high-level -- like why this company vs. another? – or detailed-level – like how to approach this particular project).

Questions:

- Let's together come up with a definition for "work" - **What is work?**
 - Not all physical or mental exertion is work.
 - "Six days shalt thou labor and on the seventh rest."
 - I still eat and walk and talk and think on the Sabbath.
- **When and where is it done?**
- **Who participates? Who is excluded from it?**
- **Are there any notable features of it we haven't covered?**
 - Post-fall: it's toilsome, painful, and hampered.

Today we want to think about work. At the end of class, if we have time, we can discuss **Abraham Kuyper** a bit and his **sphere sovereignty** concept, but even if not, we can know what we mean by it.

- On the one hand, work can be thought of narrowly as our occupations - the tasks for which we work in order to provide an income for our family provisions.
- On the other hand, work can be thought of more broadly as our labor across all spheres.
- So, not just at your job where there is one authority structure and range of responsibilities, but at home, the church, and society at large as well.

Also, there will be some blurring of the lines as we talk about these things over the next few weeks.

- Part of family life incorporates the occupation of a parent or parents.
- It also certainly incorporates church life and activities.
- And even churches exist in communities wherein magistrates have certain authority to rule and the two spheres overlap.

Work vs. Job – *To belabor the point a little longer, because we struggle so much in our culture to see this clearly.*

- Your job (occupation; your business) is **a part of your work**, but not the sum total of it.
- When the Pilgrims got off the boats in the new world, there were no jobs, but there was plenty of work.
- Work occurs in every sphere of life, not just in our professional occupations.
- Housework, schoolwork, church work, community work, public service, etc. – all are part of our work.
- Caregivers vs income earners: *both are work*. (Any stay-at-home parents? Do you work?)
- Also, **one type of work is not more important or lofty than another**.
 - If you don't clean up the house, the stores, the streets, etc., then people literally die. (Disease)
 - If you don't feed hungry mouths, then people literally die. (Starvation, malnourishment)
 - If you don't change diapers – on babies and the bedridden, then people literally die. (Infection)
- **Division of Labor** (from the beginning)
 - Adam and Eve (mission, helper)
 - “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” (Gen. 2:15)
 - “Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”” (Gen. 2:18)
 - Adams sons, grandsons (city builder, hunter, farmer, metal worker, etc.)
 - “Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground.” (Gen. 4:2)
 - “Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he **built a city**, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. ¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹ And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; **he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock**. ²¹ His brother's name was Jubal; **he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe**. ²² Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; **he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron**.” (Gen. 4:17-22)
 - Noah: hundreds of years, then boatwright, Navigator, zookeeper, farmer/vineyard, etc.
 - Changes over time; by seasons of life
 - “When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son ²⁹ and called his name Noah, saying, **“Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.”** ³⁰ Lamech lived after he fathered Noah 595 years and had other sons and daughters. ³¹ Thus all the days of Lamech were 777 years, and he died. ³² After Noah was 500 years old, Noah fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.” (Gen. 5:28-32).

- It isn't like that. It's not that particular.
 - **But God DOES care with GREAT FERVOR in HOW we behave in our callings.**
 - Think about Lot's wife, Uzzah, Ananias and Saphira...
- So, back to the concern about our actions before the Lord...a framework for guiding us:

The Framework

SECM *M* // BTATF // **SERCH** (Standard, End, Rate/*Cost*, Channel/*Means*, Heart/*Motive*) ← A stretch: not worth it.

"Beat 'em" | **BEATM** (By..., ...End, At..., Through..., ...Motive)

1. By what standard?

- Scripture (passages about work)
 - i. Homework: get a concordance or go to BibleGateway.com and look up "work" and "labor"
- It's good, God works, Christ's food and drink is to do God's will
 - i. "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work." (John 4:34)
- 6 days labor, 1 day rest
 - i. ⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ **Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,** ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. **On it you shall not do any work,** you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ **For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.** Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)
- With all diligence, not lazy (not a sluggard)
 - i. "In all labor there is profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty." (Prov. 14:23)
 - ii. "The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the soul of the diligent is made fat." (Prov. 13:4)
 - iii. "You should diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you." (Deut. 6:17)
- As unto the Lord (fed and clothed Christ when to the least of these)

- i. 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. (Col. 3:23-24)
- ii. The Final Judgement passage (Matt. 25:31-40) – vs 40...
 - 1. And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'
- WLC 5th Comm. / Eph 6 (slaves, masters)
 - i. **WLC: Fifth Commandment** (Qs 123-133)
 - 1. See below and <https://westminsterstandards.org>
 - ii. **Bondservants and Masters** (Ephesians 6:5-9)
 - 1. ⁵ Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. ⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.
- live a quiet life, do your work...
 - i. A Life Pleasing to God passage (1 Thess. 4:1-12) – vs 11-12...
 - 1. "...aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one." (1 Thess. 4:11:12)

2. To what end?

- to glorify God
- to seek the Kingdom
- to live and work righteously (like Christ, the Great Worker)
- do excellent work ("land the plane")
- to serve others
- to love your neighbor
 - i. who is my neighbor in my work?
 - ii. boss, employee, coworkers, clients/customers, shareholders, suppliers, their families...

3. At what cost? (Have you counted the cost? Jesus says we should: Luke 14)

- no greater love than to lay down your life
- take up your cross (die to self)
- costs worldly desires (given up)
- costs physical comforts (sleep, recreation ... toil is hard)
- costs mental energy (focus, showing up even when not feeling it)
- costs time (away from family, friends, and fun)
- delayed gratification (can't just eat the ripe fruit of the garden, have to first grow, harvest, and prepare food; hunt, kill, and cook meat)

4. Through what means? (You going to lie to get your way?)

- your time, talent, and treasures
- God provides all of these ultimately
- we must steward what He provides
- honesty and integrity (don't lie on your resume, don't cut corners)
- diligence and industry (hard work, ingenuity, care)
- control the clock and calendar (discipline your time)
- hurry is a form of violence performed on time - Stuart McAlister
- grow your talents (study, learn, practice, devote yourself to your work)
- spend your treasures wisely (take risk, invest, get a return)

5. From what motive? (JOY: Jesus, Others, You)

- love of God (honor)
- love of neighbor (serve)
- love of family (provide)
- ambition? Godly vs ungodly: holy zeal vs selfish vain glory and envy
- Jesus grew in wisdom, knowledge, stature
 - i. Desire to acquire good things for good ends is holy ambition
 - ii. CAUTION: Don't kid yourself here

1. "I want this \$1m home for others, to be hospitable, to host a Bible study"

2. You can do that for 1/3rd the cost and put the rest to far better use

- Idolatry? Workaholism. Tower of Babel (make a name for themselves)
- if the thing you love most is not Jesus Christ, then you'll only pray to Him when that thing is in trouble
- your identity is in Christ, not your career (and not your sin ... side B / Revoice)
- humility and fear of the Lord bring wealth, honor, and life
- arrogance and entitlement
- laziness (sluggard, he who does not work does not eat)
- ignorance ("if you don't make stuff, there is no stuff" - Elon Musk)

Summary Thought:

- If you can't see clearly how Christ can be glorified in what you're doing, then you're not doing it right. You're not doing it faithfully.
- In everything that you do, do it for the glory of God.
- Your chief end, your prime purpose in life, is to glorify God...in all that you do...whether you eat or drink or whatever you do.
- So, spend time and effort, in prayer and with bible in hand, and intentionally think about what you spend your time doing and how and why you go about doing it.
- If and as you find things in there which don't match up to the standard of Christ, then lay them before His throne and ask Him to replace them with what is good, honorable, and lovely in His sight.

Question 123

Which is the fifth commandment?

The fifth commandment is, Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. ([Exod. 20:12](#))

Question 124

Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment?

By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, ([Prov. 23:22,25](#), [Eph. 6:1-2](#)) but all superiors in age ([1 Tim. 5:1-2](#)) and gifts; ([Gen. 4:20-22](#), [Gen. 45:8](#)) and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, ([2 Kings 5:13](#)) church, ([2 Kings 2:12](#), [2 Kings 13:14](#), [Gal. 4:19](#)) or commonwealth. ([Isa. 49:23](#))

Question 125

Why are superiors styled Father and Mother?

Superiors are styled Father and Mother, both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; ([Eph. 6:4](#), [2 Cor. 12:14](#), [1 Thess. 2:7-8,11](#), [Numb. 11:11-12](#)) and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents. ([1 Cor. 4:14-16](#), [2 Kings 5:13](#))

Question 126

What is the general scope of the fifth commandment?

The general scope of the fifth commandment is, the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors, or equals. ([Eph. 5:21](#), [1 Pet. 2:17](#), [Rom. 12:10](#))

Question 127

What is the honour that inferiors owe to their superiors?

The honour which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, ([Mal. 1:6](#), [Lev. 19:3](#)) word, ([Prov. 31:28](#), [1 Pet. 3:6](#)) and behaviour; ([Lev. 19:32](#), [1 Kings 2:19](#)) prayer and thanksgiving for them; ([1 Tim. 2:1-2](#)) imitation of their virtues and graces; ([Heb. 13:7](#), [Phil. 3:17](#)) willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; ([Eph. 6:1-2,6-7](#), [1 Pet. 2:13-14](#), [Rom. 13:1-5](#), [Heb. 13:17](#), [Prov. 4:3-4](#), [Prov. 23:22](#), [Exod. 18:19,24](#)) due submission to their corrections; ([Heb. 12:9](#), [1 Pet. 2:18-20](#)) fidelity to, ([Tit. 2:9-10](#)) defence, ([1 Sam. 26:15-16](#), [2 Sam. 18:3](#), [Esther 6:2](#)) and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; ([Matt. 22:21](#), [Rom. 13:6-7](#), [1 Tim. 5:17-18](#), [Gal. 6:6](#), [Gen. 45:11](#), [Gen. 47:12](#)) bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, ([1 Pet. 2:18](#), [Prov. 23:22](#), [Gen. 9:23](#)) that so they may be an honour to them and to their government. ([Ps. 127:3-5](#), [Prov. 31:23](#))

Question 128

What are the sins of inferiors against their superiors?

The sins of inferiors against their superiors are, all neglect of the duties required toward them; ([Matt. 15:4-6](#)) envying at, ([Numb. 11:28-29](#)) contempt of, ([1 Sam. 8:7](#), [Isa. 3:5](#)) and rebellion ([2 Sam. 15:1-12](#)) against, their persons ([Exod. 21:15](#)) and places, ([1 Sam. 10:27](#)) in their lawful counsels, ([1 Sam. 2:25](#)) commands, and corrections; ([Deut. 21:18-21](#)) cursing, mocking ([Prov. 30:11,17](#)) and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame and dishonour to them and their government. ([Prov. 19:26](#))

Question 129

What is required of superiors towards their inferiors?

It is required of superiors, according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand, to love, ([Col. 3:19](#), [Tit. 2:4](#)) pray for, ([1 Sam. 12:23](#), [Job 1:5](#)) and bless their inferiors; ([1 Kings 8:55-56](#), [Heb. 7:7](#), [Gen.](#)

[49:28](#)) to instruct, ([Deut. 6:6-7](#)) counsel, and admonish them; ([Eph. 6:4](#)) countenancing, ([1 Pet. 3:7](#)) commending, ([1 Pet. 2:14](#), [Rom. 13:3](#)) and rewarding such as do well; ([Esth. 6:3](#)) and discountenancing, ([Rom. 13:3-4](#)) reproving, and chastising such as do ill; ([Prov. 29:15](#), [1 Pet. 2:14](#)) protecting, ([Job 29:13-16](#), [Isa. 1:10,17](#)) and providing for them all things necessary for soul ([Eph. 6:4](#)) and body: ([1 Tim. 5:8](#)) and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, ([1 Tim. 4:12](#), [Tit. 2:3-5](#)) honour to themselves, ([1 Kings 3:28](#)) and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them. ([Tit. 2:15](#))

Question 130

What are the sins of superiors?

The sins of superiors are, besides the neglect of the duties required of them, ([Ezek. 34:2-4](#)) and inordinate seeking of themselves, ([Phil. 2:21](#)) their own glory, ([John 5:44](#), [John 7:18](#)) ease, profit, or pleasure; ([Isa. 56:10-11](#), [Deut. 17:17](#)) commanding things unlawful, ([Dan. 3:4-6](#), [Acts 4:17-18](#)) or not in the power of inferiors to perform; ([Exod. 5:10-18](#), [Matt. 23:2,4](#)) counseling, ([Matt. 14:8](#), [Mark 6:24](#)) encouraging, ([2 Sam. 13:28](#)) or favouring them in that which is evil; ([1 Sam. 3:13](#)) dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good; ([John 7:46-49](#), [Col. 3:21](#), [Exod. 5:17](#)) correcting them unduly; ([1 Pet. 2:18-20](#), [Heb. 12:10](#), [Deut. 25:3](#)) careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger; ([Gen. 38:11,26](#), [Acts 18:17](#)) provoking them to wrath; ([Eph. 6:4](#)) or any way dishonouring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behaviour. ([Gen. 9:21](#), [1 Kings 12:13-16](#), [1 Kings 1:6](#), [1 Sam. 2:29-31](#))

Question 131

What are the duties of equals?

The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other, ([1 Pet. 2:17](#)) in giving honour to go one before another; ([Rom. 12:10](#)) and to rejoice in each other's gifts and advancement, as their own. ([Rom. 12:15-16](#), [Phil. 2:3-4](#))

Question 132

What are the sins of equals?

The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, ([Rom. 13:8](#)) the undervaluing of the worth, ([2 Tim. 3:3](#)) envying the gifts, ([Acts 7:9](#), [Gal. 5:26](#)) grieving at the advancement or prosperity one of another; ([Numb. 12:2](#), [Esth. 6:12-13](#)) and usurping pre-eminence one over another. ([3 John 9](#), [Luke 22:24](#))

Question 133

What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment, the more to enforce it?

The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, in these words, That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, ([Exod. 20:12](#)) is an express promise of long life and prosperity, as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good, to all such as keep this commandment. ([Deut. 5:16](#), [1 Kings 8:25](#), [Eph. 6:2-3](#))

Reminder and Charge from 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."

There is really nothing overly special about me – or Tim, Adam, Sam, or any of the other elders and officers.

That's not false humility, that's just well-reasoned truth. One day, we'll die and will be remembered by only a few and only for a short time.

So, take this charge to you for what it is: a sincere desire to see *you* grow in Christ ... just as I desire to grow in Him myself.

I hope that you don't come to a class like this for the entertainment of it or for some punctuated time of mental excitement only to walk away from it without a second thought.

That's not what this is for.

While I personally don't have anything of value *in and of myself* to offer you here. I'm made of dust, just like you.

But Jesus Christ is *utterly* special and He is of *ultimate* value. And He puts great significance and worth and interest into His beloved bride, the church. He loves you all (and me) so much that He lived, bled, and died for us.

And in His love for you and me, He has raised up teachers to deliver to specifically to you a very special and important word from Him. It is a vital word that is necessary for your good and His glory to be manifest in your lives and in this world.

To the degree that your pastors are faithful to Him and His word, what we share with you today, and in every class and service, is vital for you. It's for your benefit, to equip you to do His good work and to build up the body of Christ.

Now, no one goes into the armory to grab their sword or shield or some other weapon only to go home and leave it sitting in the corner unused.

Rather, you take it and practice with it. You spend time getting to know it and using it. You become an expert in it. You work with it often so that you're proficient and able to use it in the inevitable situations where it's needed.

So, take the teaching of these Sunday School classes and the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments in worship as tools that Christ has given you – they're gifts for your good, to equip you, that you might grow in your understanding of Him and His desires for you and so that you can use them fruitfully in your daily lives.