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My Place in the Story

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My Place in the Story

God's invitation into His work (sometimes referred to as His "call") operates on three levels: that which applies to all Christians, that which applies uniquely to each of us, and that which applies to the moment in front of us—like our daily tasks and responsibilities.[1]

"Jesus said to him, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." - Matthew 22:37-39

With these words, Jesus gives all Christians their overall mission. We are to love God and love others. All that we do in life can flow from applying these statements to specific situations. [Read "[God's Call for Everyone](#)"]

But how does loving God and loving others make choosing a college major, career, or spouse any easier? It seems that mathematicians and social workers, business people and artists could all find ways to apply Jesus's commandments to love God and love others in authentic ways within their disciplines. The second level of God's call for believers is his call to vocation.

"When we fulfill our specific vocation, we are living out the full implication of what it means to follow Jesus. Therefore, while we all have a general call to love God and neighbor, we each follow our Lord differently, for though he calls us all to follow him, once we accept his call we are each honored with a unique call that is integrally a part of what it means to follow him. The second experience of call is derived from the first." [2]

This is another way of saying what we read in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 about the way that God creates and utilizes individuals in his kingdom.

"Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are different ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different results, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all."

So how do we begin to know and live out our unique callings in the kingdom? [[Read “God’s Call for Me: Vocation”](#)]

God calls us in a third way, too. He invites us into the work of the day—the responsibilities or tasks He puts before us. This is different than the work that God has for all his followers, because these tasks are given to us each individually—caring for pets, commuting to work, shopping for food, going to a party, coloring with our kids—but they are to be done in a way consistent with the way God calls all his followers to live. [[Read “God’s Call for Me: Tasks and Responsibilities”](#)]

It is easy, however, in a discussion of God’s will and call to focus exclusively on what we should do. But it is equally important, and actually precedes the doing, to focus on who we are called to be.

Ephesians 2:10 says “For we are his creative work, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we can do them.” In this passage we can skip past the “For we are his creative work” portion. But until we understand intellectually, emotionally, and behaviorally that we are the creation God delights in, we will continually contrive to make the doing portion of that verse be about the tasks that most convince us of our own indispensability and most reassure us of our own worth.

Footnotes:

1. Gordon T. Smith, *Courage and Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 10.
2. *Ibid.*