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God's Call for Me: Vocation

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God's Call for Me: Vocation

“Get a good job, become financially secure, have a nice family, buy what you want, enjoy a few of the finer things in life, avoid the troubles of the world, retire with ease.”[1]

Is this a Christian vision of life? Is anything wrong with pursuing comfort, financial security, or personal fulfillment?

It's not so much what that vision of life contains, as what it's missing.

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, but through love serve one another.” - Galatians 5:13

We do not exist only to serve our own interests. Nor do we exist to serve others on our own terms. So what that initial statement is missing is the linkage between what we do with our lives and for whose sake we do them. Christian vocation is “a purpose for being in the world which is related to the purposes of God.”[2]

It is here that we see how our unique ways of answering God's call to love him and love others leads us toward a vocation—how we live out the call to love in every sphere of our lives. Vocation is unique to the individual but fits into the big picture of God's work. It is an individual purpose for the sake of others. Vocation, however, is different than a job or career. Jobs may or may not be an expression of one's vocation. It is wonderful when there is congruence between the two, but for many people that might not be possible.

So let's assume we really understand that (following the reasoning of Ephesians 2:10):

1. We are God's handiwork, people who have no need to strive for riches or acclaim to assure ourselves of our worth.
2. We are his handiwork created to do good works that are not just for our own benefit but for the benefit of others.
3. We each live out the call to love in unique ways so our vocation—our purpose—is unique to each of us.

But how in the world do we make progress in actually deciding on a direction to pursue, let alone the myriad decisions that face us each day?

1. We trust that God provides just as much in the ordinary as the extraordinary.

A booming voice from heaven would make decision-making a lot easier, but not everyone is called in such supernatural ways. If we proclaim God as sovereign over all of creation, then we should also proclaim that what we casually label as “natural,”—talents, interests, passions, opportunities, and experiences—are God’s direct work in our lives just as much as a voice from heaven would be. In fact, when we pray for guidance, God often allows us to see how one choice is actually the direction he has been leading us in all along. It is, of course, also within God’s sovereignty to completely change our direction and to do so dramatically!

2. We trust that God has given significance to our decisions.

God created humans to make decisions. Following the creation of Adam, “the Lord God formed out of the ground every living animal of the field and every bird of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them, and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name” (Genesis 2:19). We reflect His image when we are creative and make decisions. So while we are attentive and responsive to His leading, we are also not to be paralyzed waiting for extraordinary guidance.

3. We trust that God speaks through His Word and in times of prayer.

Reading scripture is one way to get to know His will. We will understand better who God is and what He cares about through reading His word. This is essential for gaining the wisdom to see how the various options before us fit or don’t fit into His will. As we make ourselves available to God in prayer, He will help us submit to His will and bring to mind what He wants us to be focusing on for that day.

4. We trust that God has given us unique gifts, passions, opportunities, and communities.[3]

We must identify our God-created giftedness and passions. This humble self-knowledge is essential, as God’s call on our lives is usually consistent with how he has made us.[4]

God also presents us with specific opportunities to exercise our giftings. These opportunities are often either bigger or smaller than our perceived capacities!

Finally, He places us in particular communities of believers. He expects us to live interdependently, so those who benefit from our vocational living also invest in our vocational development with their wisdom and affirmation.

In all four points, trust is central. And that is what separates Christian vocation from the clichéd American dream. To live vocationally is to live in a radical dependence on God. We trust that his purposes in the world are worth living (and dying) for. We trust that He has provided already and will continue to provide for us into eternity. We trust that He has freed us to serve each other in love.

[Read [“God’s Call for Me: Tasks and Responsibilities”](#)]

Footnotes:

1. David P. Setran and Chris A. Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 114.
2. *Ibid.*, 117.
3. *Ibid.*, 130.
4. Gordon T. Smith, *Courage and Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 53-55.