

Session 4 The Call

I. Vocational Guidance.

A. A bit of etymology (the derivation and historical development of words).

In pop culture the word “**vocation**” refers to one’s job, occupation or profession. It particularly refers to work for which one has been specifically trained. Sometimes it is used for work deemed of secondary importance. For example a “vocational school” normally trains people to be mechanics or welders, not brain surgeons or college professors. Such an understanding, however, masks the rich history of this word, especially among Christians.

1. The word comes from the Latin *vocatio* (a **calling**, a summons, an invitation). The Latin *vox* means voice. A vocation is by definition a calling... which of course begs the question: **Who** is the one doing the calling? There can be no calling (vocation) without a Caller. There is no story without an Author. Without God, all we’re left with is work.
2. Historically, the word “vocation” has four broad periods of meaning:
 - a. The Early Church. Early Christians were “called” to be disciples of Jesus. This was their calling, their vocation. The church was the *ecclesia* (the called-out ones).
 - b. The Middle Ages. As Europe was “Christianized” the word “vocation” began to be used for those who were “called” to be priests, monks or nuns. To “have a vocation” came to be synonymous with joining the priesthood or a monastic order.
 - c. The Reformation. With Luther’s doctrine of the priesthood of all believers the idea of vocation had a much broader application. Priests and monks are not the only ones’ who have a vocation (calling). So do farmers, cobblers and bankers. I Corinthians 7:20 became a key verse: *Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.*
 - d. Post-Christian culture. As our world has become increasingly secularized, the idea of vocation has become increasingly identified with my job, my career. Today few think of the term in its original meaning as a calling.

B. Our Double Calling.

1. The **primary** calling.

God’s Voice goes out to all calling them to salvation. In this sense every Christian is called. There are no exceptions. To say one has no calling is equivalent to saying one is spiritually lost. Some of the ways this call may come to us are seen in Bible verses such as these:

- *Come unto me....* (Matthew 11:28)
- *Follow me....* (Mark 1:17)
- *If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in....* (Revelation 3:20)
- *I know you by name....* (Exodus 33:12)

2. The **secondary** calling.

Beyond the general call that goes out to all, God has a secondary call that is specific to each of his children. This relates to that unique role and function a person is called to fulfill in advancing the work and purpose of God in the world.

- *For we are his workmanship (poiema), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)*
- *I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. (John 17:4)*

II. Callings in the Bible.

A. Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4). Called to believe the promise and be a father to his family.

*Now the LORD said to Abram, “**Go** from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.”² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*

1. The call came unsolicited. God was **the initiator**.
2. The call was first and foremost a call to leave something. There is **a cost** involved.
3. The call involved **faith**. Abraham obeyed even when he didn’t know where the journey would lead.
4. The call was not really about what God wanted to do in Abraham’s life but about what God wanted to do **through** Abraham’s life. It’s not about me.
5. The call will have implications for **others** around us (family, friends, etc.).
6. God calls people at all ages of life. Abraham was **75 years old** when the call came.

B. Moses (Exodus 3:1-12). Called to redeem God’s people and lead them to the Promised Land.

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.³ And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”⁵ Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”⁶ And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings,⁸ and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.⁹ And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.¹⁰ Come, **I will send you** to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”¹² He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

1. God spoke this time only when he was sure that he had Moses’ **attention**. When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!”
2. God knows Moses’ name and uses it twice! The call is very **personal**.
3. Before God revealed to Moses his assignment, He revealed **Himself!**
4. The call is not really about Moses; it’s about others whom God wants to reach **through** Moses.
5. When Moses becomes aware of his calling, he is paralyzed with **fear**, uncertainty, and insecurity. Every instinct is to run! *Who am I?*
6. The only guarantee God gives to Moses is His presence. **I will be with you.**

C. Gideon (Judges 6:11-22). Called to the military to deliver God’s people.

¹¹ Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.¹² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.”¹³ And Gideon said to him, “Please, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.”¹⁴ And the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and **save Israel** from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?”¹⁵ And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”¹⁶ And the LORD said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.”¹⁷ And he said to him, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, then show me a sign that it is you who speak with me.”¹⁸ Please do not depart from here until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you.” And he said, “I will stay till you return.”¹⁹ So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to him under the terebinth and presented them.²⁰ And the angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.” And he did so.²¹ Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the

rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. ²² Then Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD....

1. Again, God is the initiator. Gideon is simply minding his own business when the call comes.
2. Like Moses, Gideon protests his weakness and **inadequacy**. Please send someone else! *I am the least in my father's house.*
3. The only **guarantee** God gives is the same one He gave to Moses: *I will be with you.*
4. Gideon is something of a skeptic. He needs lots of convincing that this call is for real. *Show me **a sign** that it is you who speak to me.* Amazingly, God gives him a sign.

D. David (I Samuel 16:1-13). Called into politics. Called to be king.

*The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.".... ⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him." ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks **on the heart.**" ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." ¹⁰ And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹ Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." ¹² And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.*

1. David never even speaks. He is almost completely passive. All he did was humbly bow and **receive** what was offered.
2. God's **standards** for calling someone to greatness are very different than man's standards! God is primarily interested in what's on the inside (the heart), not the outside (looks, achievements, education, gifts, birth order, etc.).
3. If a man is called, not only may he think of himself as unfit (Moses, Gideon, etc.) but his **family and friends** may also think this is a really bad idea too!
4. A calling is often exclusive. If one man is called to a particular assignment it means that another man is **not called**. To volunteer for a role one is not called to would be insane.
5. With the calling, David received the anointing. As the old saying goes: God does not call the qualified. Rather he **qualifies the called**.

E. Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-9). Called to be a prophet/spokesman for God.

*In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” ⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “**Whom shall I send**, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I! **Send me**.” ⁹ And he said, “Go, and say to this people....”*

1. The call came to Isaiah during **worship**, as he was seeking the Lord and gazing on his glory.
2. In worship he got close enough to the Triune God to overhear God talking to himself! *Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* As he listened to the very heartbeat of God, he **volunteered** for service. *Here am I! Send me.*

F. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-10). Called to be a prophet/spokesman for God.

*⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ “Before I **formed** you in the womb I **knew** you, and before you were born I **consecrated** you; I **appointed** you a prophet to the nations.” ⁶ Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” ⁷ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD.” ⁹ Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”*

1. Note how **different** Jeremiah’s call is from that of Isaiah. Both are called to be prophets. But the calls came in very different forms.
2. Jeremiah learns that his calling came while he was yet **unborn!**
3. As with others who were called, Jeremiah protested his **lack of qualifications**. This time, it was his youth and inability to speak in public.
4. With the calling comes the promise of **equipping**: *the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth... and said... “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.”*

- G. Peter and the twelve (Mark 1:16-20). The call to follow Jesus and encourage others to do the same.

¹⁶ *Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.* ¹⁷ *And Jesus said to them, “**Follow me**, and I will make you become fishers of men.”* ¹⁸ *And immediately they left their nets and followed him.* ¹⁹ *And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.* ²⁰ *And immediately **he called** them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.*

1. The call to become a disciple is synonymous with a call to become **fishers of men**. *Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.*
2. When the call came.... the response was **immediate**.
3. Obeying the call is **costly**. They left the security of their business and their family.

- H. Paul (Acts 26:12-20). Called to be an apostle.

¹² *“In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.* ¹³ *At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me.* ¹⁴ *And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’* ¹⁵ *And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’* ¹⁶ *But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you **for this purpose**, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you,* ¹⁷ *delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles - to whom I am sending you* ¹⁸ *to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’* ¹⁹ *“Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,* ²⁰ *but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance....*

1. The purpose of Paul’s conversion was not so much about **getting Paul into heaven** as it was about sending Paul to the nations! The call to salvation and the call to missionary service are indistinguishable from one another.
2. Paul obeyed his calling. He did what he was told. To disobey his call into ministry would have been equivalent to **denying his Lord**. *I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.*

TABLE TALK

1. Think about your profession/career. Do you consider it a vocation (a calling)? Or is it just a job? Discuss.
2. What has happened in our culture that “vocations” have now become jobs and careers?
3. Think again about the Bible characters we have looked at. With which calling is it most easy for you to identify? (Abraham, Moses, Gideon, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul). Why?
4. As you think about these callings in the Bible, write down some of the elements that are essential and absolutely must be present if a person is genuinely called... and write down those elements that are optional.

Elements that are indispensable
and must be present if it is to be
a genuine call of God.

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Elements that are optional...
sometimes present and sometimes not.

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III. Callings in History.

A. William Wilberforce (1759-1833).

When Wilberforce was converted to Christ at age 25, he at first wanted to leave his political career and go into “the ministry.” But pastor John Newton (converted slave trader and author of *Amazing Grace*) convinced him to stay in politics. This is where his calling was. Wilberforce came to understand that his vocation to serve God in parliament was a sacred trust. His labors were a tremendous blessing to England and the world. He led the movement to **abolish slavery** and his efforts at moral reform helped to save England from what France experienced in the chaos of her revolution.

B. George Washington Carver (c. 1861-1943).

A renowned African American scientist and inventor, Carver felt his calling was to serve God and others in his laboratory. He developed hundreds of uses for **peanuts** and **sweet potatoes** thus making farming in the rural south profitable again after the demise of cotton (which was tied to slavery). Whereas most scientists believed that science and faith were incompatible, Carver considered them to be inseparable.

When I was young, I said to God, 'God, tell me the mystery of the universe.' But God answered, 'That knowledge is reserved for me alone.' So I said, 'God, tell me the mystery of the peanut.' Then God said, 'Well, George, that's more nearly your size.' And he told me.

C . Eric Liddle (1902 -1945).

Often called the “Flying Scotsman” and perhaps the most popular athlete Scotland ever produced, Liddle won the men’s 400 meters at the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris. He then served as a missionary in China from 1925 until his death. During the war he was interned by the Japanese in a camp where he ultimately died. His last words were, “It’s complete surrender” referring to how he has given his entire life to God.

*I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when **I run** I feel His pleasure* (from the movie Chariots of Fire, 1981).

D. George Foreman (born 1949).

Two-time former World Heavyweight Boxing Champion, Olympic gold medalist, entrepreneur and ordained Baptist minister Foreman said, *Preaching is my calling. Boxing for me is only **moonlighting** in the same way Paul made tents.*

IV. Callings in Literature.

A. *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien.

When Frodo learns from Gandalf that he is the ring-bearer and the destiny of Middle Earth is hanging in the balance based on how he responds to his calling, he shouts out in anguish:

*“... I am not made for perilous quests. I wish I had never seen the Ring! Why did it come to me? **Why was I chosen?**” “Such questions cannot be answered,” said Gandalf. “You may be sure that it was not for any merit that others do not possess: not for power or wisdom, at any rate. But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have.” “But I have so little of any of these things!....” “And now,” said the wizard, turning back to Frodo, “the decision lies with you. But I will always help you.” He laid his hand on Frodo’s shoulder. “I will help you bear this burden, as long as it is yours to bear. But we must do something, soon. The Enemy is moving.” (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, p. 60)*

B. *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo.

After serving 19 years of hard labor for stealing a loaf of bread, Jean Valjean is released. But when he steals some silver from the priest’s home who gave him lodging for the night, the police arrest him again. When Valjean is brought back to the priest and accused of the crime, the priest replies that the silver was a gift! In the presence of the shocked policemen and an unbelieving Valjean, the priest proceeds to give him a silver candle stick as well! Looking him in the eye, the priest says:

*Jean Valjean, my brother: you **belong no longer to evil**, but to good. It is your soul that I am buying for you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and from the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God!* (pp. 26f.)

V. Biblical calling can be summarized in a three-fold reality.

A. Called to belong. *Who am I?*

At its most fundamental level, we are called to belong to God. This is the core of identity. *Who am I?* At the burning bush when Moses met God he discovered his truest **identity**. Our vocation must flow from a deep sense of security about who we are. We are His. During difficult days when Dietrich Bonhoeffer was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, he struggled with his purpose and the meaning of life. He wrote a poem entitled “Who Am I?” that captures the reality of this foundational belief that undergirds all authentic callings.

*Who am I? They often tell me
I would step from my cell's confinement
calmly, cheerfully, firmly,
like a squire from his country-house.
Who am I? They often tell me
I would talk to my warders
freely and friendly and clearly,
as though it were mine to command.
Who am I? They also tell me
I would bear the days of misfortune
equably, smilingly, proudly,
like one accustomed to win.*

*Am I then really all that which other men tell of?
Or am I only what I know of myself,
restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,
struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing my throat,
hungry for colors, for flowers, for the voices of birds,
thirsty for words of kindness, for neighborliness,
trembling with anger at despoticisms and petty humiliation,
caught up in expectation of great events,
powerlessly grieving for friends at an infinite distance,
weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,
faint, and ready to lay farewell to it all?*

*Who am I? This or the other?
Am I one person today and tomorrow another?
Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others,
and before myself a contemptibly woebegone weakling?
Or is something within me still like a beaten army,
Fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?*

*Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.
Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am Thine!*

B. Called **to be**. *Be who you are.*

Once our belonging is established, we begin to discover God's call to *be* something precedes his call to *do* something.

- *Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall **be holy**, for I the LORD your God am holy. (Leviticus 19:2)*
- *And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³ "Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ "Blessed are the **meek**, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ "Blessed are the **merciful**, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ "Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God. ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:2-10. The BE-attitudes).*
- *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should **be holy** and blameless before him.. (Ephesians 1:3-4)*

C. Called **to do**. You do what you are. In contrast to "You are what you do."

As we have seen both in the Bible and beyond, God's calling also has a specific application in our lives. We have a role and function that is uniquely ours to perform. As we discover our identity and become who we are called to become... then as we do what we are called to do we begin to discover:

1. **Joy** and fulfillment in the work.
2. Enabling **power** and grace from God's Spirit.
3. Our work is **a blessing to others** and an expression of love to our neighbors.
4. Our work brings **glory to God**.

VI. How do I find my particular call?

In an effort to help those who may not yet know their calling in life, the following questions are offered as an aid to self-reflection and prayer to God.

A. Am I in **relationship** with the One who calls? There is no calling without a Caller!

According to our Lord, the need is never the call. The need is the opportunity; the call is the call of God. The call of God is like the call of the sea, or of the mountains.... No one hears those calls who has not the nature of the sea or of the mountains in him; and no one hears the call of God who has not the nature of the Almighty in him. If we have received the nature of God then we begin slowly to discern what God wants us to do. Never have the idea that your discernment of the need is the call. The need is the opportunity which will prove whether you are worthy of the call. (Chambers, p. 1315.)

B. Am I **asking** that God would make my calling known? *You do not have, because you do not ask.* (James 4:2)

C. Are my **priorities** in order?

1. Belonging before being.
2. Being before doing.
3. Relationship before function.
4. Journey before destination.

D. Am I doing what I **already know** is the will of God?

1. Make disciples. *Go therefore and make disciples of all peoples...* (Matt. 28:19-20)
2. Holiness of heart and life. *For this is the will of God, your sanctification....* (I Thess. 4:3)
3. Giving thanks. *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* (I Thess. 5:18)
4. Doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Colossians 3:17)
5. Etc.

E. Am I more concerned about doing “great things” than doing small things in a **great way**? There is a sense in which a calling is discovered not so much in *what* we do. But *how* we do what we do!

I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.
(Helen Keller)

F. Do I know my **spiritual gifts**?

1. Study the Bible (I Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16; Romans 12:4-8; I Peter 4:10-11).
2. Take a course.
3. Ask your closest friends.

G. Am I stepping out **in faith**?

1. Just do it!
2. Develop, study, improve.
3. Seek confirmation.

H. Count **the cost**.

²⁶ *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first*

*and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has **cannot** be my disciple. (Luke 14:26-33)*

TABLE TALK

1. The study mentioned Wilberforce, Carver and others as illustrations of persons who had a calling upon their lives. Have you known someone who was clearly called of God? Describe them focusing on those qualities that made their life so impactful.
2. After this study, if someone comes up to you and asks, “How can I find my purpose (calling, vocation) in life?”, what will you tell them?
3. Are you called? Define your calling in the three areas mentioned above:
 - a. Called to belong. *Who am I?*
 - b. Called to be. *Be what you are.*
 - c. Called to do. *Do what you are.*

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