

Arbor Foundations
24 – Vocation
Mar 31, 2019 – John Raquet

Key Ideas / Biblical Basis

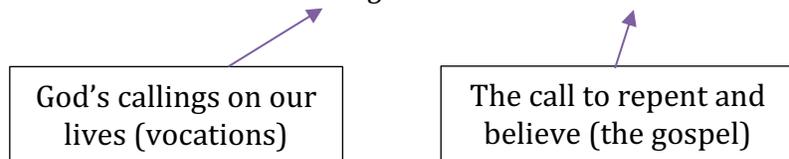
Vocation = Calling (Latin: vocatio—a call, a summons)

There are two types of callings:

1. The call to repent and believe (the gospel)
2. God’s callings on our lives (vocations)

Example of both appearing in the same verse:

1 Corinthians 7:20: *Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.*



Question: How does God provide food for us to eat?

- Answer 1: Occasionally, He does this supernaturally (Exodus 16:11-15, 1 Kings 17:14-16, Matthew 14:13-21)
- Answer 2: Normally, he accomplishes this through the efforts of other people.

A similar thing is true for:

- Clothing
- Shelter
- Medical care
- Ability to read His word
- Training in how we should live
- Physical security
- Knowledge of Himself

How does Scripture describe God’s provision?

- In general:
 - o Acts 17:24-25: *The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.*
 - o Colossians 1:16-17: *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

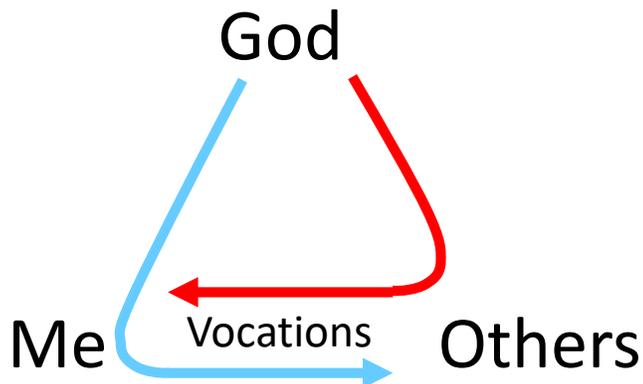
- Heb 1:3: *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*
- Matthew 6:25-33 (don't be anxious about clothing or what we'll eat—our Heavenly father knows we need these things. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness)
- Luke 12:6-7: *Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.*
- Food: 2 Corinthians 9:10: *He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.*
- Authorities: Romans 13:1-6
 - Note that God does NOT need active cooperation to “call” people to certain vocations. Someone does not need to be a Christian in order to have a vocation (calling) from God
 - Calling (vocation) is generally not supernatural

Note: This view of God working through people to provide for other people's needs brings together the “sacred” and “secular”.

Summary thus far:

- We are often blessed and provided for by the efforts of other people
- God is creator and is actively and intimately involved in all of His creation (including people, believers and unbelievers alike)
- When we are blessed by the efforts of other people, we can say by definition that God has called them to those tasks--it is their vocation (calling)

Entities Involved in Vocation



Who are we serving by fulfilling our vocations?

- Direct beneficiaries: other people
- Ultimately, though, we are serving God

- Colossians 3:22-24: *Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

What should our attitude be when others serve us through their vocations?

- Thankfulness toward the people serving us
- Ultimately, though, our thankfulness traces back to God, for he is the ultimate source of the blessing

What is the role of love in all of this?

- “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”
 - Leviticus 19:18
 - Matthew 19:19
 - Matthew 22:39
 - Mark 12:31
 - Mark 12:33
 - Luke 10:27
 - Romans 13:9
 - Galatians 5:14
 - James 2:8
- Remember Jesus’ definition of “neighbor”—pretty much everyone
- ***The purpose of vocation is to love and serve others***

What are examples of vocations?

1. Vocations related to work (not just paid jobs, but all forms of work)
 - a. Work is ordained by God, but sin has corrupted work on many levels
 - b. Our work has intrinsic value, because it is the vehicle God uses to care for people/creation
 - c. Our work can also serve as a platform for evangelism and can impact our culture for good
 - d. We should respect everyone we encounter in the work environment
 - e. God shows no partiality (in God's eyes, one type of work is not essentially more valuable than another)
2. Vocations related to being in a family
 - a. Within a family, our calling is often well-defined by our relationships: spouse, mother, father, child, sibling, etc.
3. Vocations related to being a citizen of our country
4. Vocations related to the church
 - a. Your universal callings (applies to everyone). Examples from Romans 12:
 - i. Be affectionate/devoted to one another in brotherly love (v. 10)
 - ii. Give preference to one another in honor (v. 10)
 - iii. Contribute to the needs of the saints (v. 13)

- iv. Practice hospitality (v. 13)
- v. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep (v. 15)
- vi. Be of the same mind toward one another (v. 16)
- b. Your providential callings—God’s callings that are somewhat unique to you due to his providential action in your life (not necessarily related to gifting/abilities). Examples:
 - i. You are in a unique position to notice someone "wandering from the truth" (James 5:19-20)
 - ii. Someone sins against you and is not repentant (Matthew 18:15-17)
 - iii. Someone is suffering in a way you have suffered (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)
 - iv. Having more maturity/wisdom than others in a particular area or situation (Proverbs 16:31, Leviticus 19:32, Hebrews 5:11-14)
 - v. Proximity
- c. Your spiritual gifting given to you by God for the purpose of building up the body

So What?

- This is an area which lacks crisp understanding
- It is tremendously encouraging and enlightening to see what we do each day through Biblical eyes
- These concepts are one of the extremely significant outflowings of the reformation
- A solid understanding of vocation is essential for thinking through mercy ministry (as individuals and as a church)
- What changes when we see God’s involvement in the world around us through the concept of vocation?
 - o We develop hearts of gratitude and thankfulness for others and ultimately for God.
 - o We recognize His blessings more readily
- Also, what changes when we see our vocation(s) as part of God’s activity and plan?
 - o We are more motivated—there is a much bigger purpose for what we’re doing

For Further Study

Gene Edward Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*

William Placher, *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*

Paul Helm, *The Callings: The Gospel in the World*