

Of Effectual Calling.

by John Gill

Effectual calling is a call by the Spirit and grace of God to the hearts and consciences of men, which is a call to salvation and a call to fellowship with Christ.

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 11:28, Romans 8:30, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Galatians 5:13, Ephesians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, 2 Timothy 1:9, 1 Peter 1:15, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "Effectual Calling", "Sovereign Grace"

Description

John Gill expounds on the doctrine of effectual calling, emphasizing its distinction from regeneration while highlighting their close connection. He explains that effectual calling is a divine invitation to salvation that is both external, through the ministry of the Word, and internal, by the Holy Spirit's work in the heart. Gill notes that this calling is not universal, as many hear the call yet reject it, and it is ultimately a work of God's sovereign grace. He stresses that those who are effectually called are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and transformed from a state of sin to one of holiness and righteousness. The sermon concludes with the assurance that this calling is irrevocable and leads to eternal glory for the elect.

Transcript

A Body of Doctrinal Divinity

Book 6--Chapter 12

OF EFFECTUAL CALLING

Though effectual calling may be distinguished from regeneration, taken more strictly, for the first infusion and impartation of grace in the heart; yet it is closely connected with it, and the consideration of it naturally follows upon it. It is, with great propriety, said to be "effectual" calling, to distinguish it from another calling, which is not effectual; at least, which is not attended with any salutary effect to the persons called with it; of which more hereafter. Concerning effectual calling, the following things may be observed. 1.

What it is, and the nature of it. It is not of a civil kind, of which there are various sorts; as a call to an office in state; so Saul and David were chosen and called to take upon them the government of the people of Israel: likewise a call to do some particular service, which God has appointed men to do; so Bezaleel was called and qualified to devise and do some curious work for the tabernacle, and to teach and direct others in it: so the Medes and Persians were sanctified, or set apart by the Lord, and called by him to the

destruction of Babylon; and Cyrus was raised up, and called from a far country, to let the captive Jews go free.

Indeed, every ordinary occupation, employment, and business of life, men are brought up in, and exercise, is a calling, and a calling of God; hence the apostle says, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called" (1 Cor. 7:20, 24). But the calling now to be treated of is of a religious kind; and of which also there are various sorts; as a call to an ecclesiastical office, whether extraordinary or ordinary; so Aaron and his sons were called to officiate in the priesthood; for "no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4), so the twelve disciples of Christ were called to apostleship; and Paul, "a servant of Christ", is said to be "called to be an apostle" (Rom. 1:1), and ordinary ministers of the word, are set apart and called by the Lord, and by his churches, to the work of the ministry they are put into.

There is likewise an universal call of all men, to serve and worship the one true and living God; this call is made by the light of nature, displayed in the works of creation, which demonstrate the Being of God; and by the law of nature, written on the hearts of all men; and by the works of providence, and the bounties of it, which all have a share in, and in which God leaves not himself without a witness; and by all which men are called upon, and directed to seek after God, to worship him, and glorify him as God.

And besides this, there is a more special and particular call of men, and not so general, and is either external or internal: the "external" call is by the ministry of the word; by the ministry of the prophets under the Old Testament; and of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and of Christ himself in human nature, and of his apostles under the New; and of all succeeding ministers in all ages. The "internal" call is by the Spirit and grace of God to the hearts and consciences of men; these two sometimes go together, but not always; some are externally called, and not internally called; and of those that are internally called, some are called by and through the ministry of the word, and some without it; though, for the most part, men are called by it; and because it is usually so, and this external call is a matter of moment and importance, it is necessary to be a little more large and explicit upon it.

And, 1a. First, This may be considered either as a call to saints, to such who have a work of grace already begun in them; and to such it is a call, not only to the means of grace, but to partake of the blessings of grace; to come as thirsty persons, eagerly desirous of spiritual things, "to the waters", the ordinances, and drink at them; to "buy wine and milk", spiritual blessings, signified hereby, without "money, and without price", these being to be had freely: and these are also called as laboring under a sense of sin, and under a spirit of bondage, to "come" to Christ for "rest", peace, pardon, life, and salvation (Isa. 55:1; Matthew 11:28), and these in and by the ministry of the word, are called, excited, and encouraged to the exercise of evangelical graces, wrought in them, and bestowed upon them; as repentance, faith, hope, love, and every other; such were the three thousand converts under Peter's sermon, and the jailor, who were under a previous work of the Spirit of God, when they were called and encouraged to repent and believe in Christ, (Acts 2:37, 38; 16:29-31), and these are also called, and urged, and pressed, in and by the ministry of the word, to a constant attendance on ordinances, and not to forsake the assembly of the saints, and to a diligent performance of every religious duty, and to be ready to every good work in general: or this external call may be considered, as a call of sinners in a state of nature and unregeneracy; but then it is not a call to them to regenerate and convert themselves, of which there is no instance; and which is the pure work of the Spirit of God: nor to make their peace with God, which they cannot make by anything they can do; and which is only made by the blood of Christ: nor to get an interest in Christ, which is not got, but given: nor to the exercise of evangelical grace, which they have not, and therefore can never exercise: nor

to any spiritual vital acts, which they are incapable of, being natural men, and dead in trespasses and sins.

Nor is the gospel ministry an offer of Christ, and of his grace and salvation by him, which are not in the power of the ministers of it to give, nor of carnal men to receive; the gospel is not an offer, but a preaching of Christ crucified, a proclamation of the unsearchable riches of his grace, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and life, and salvation by him. Yet there is something in which the ministry of the word, and the call by it, have to do with unregenerate sinners: they may be, and should be called upon, to perform the natural duties of religion; to a natural faith, to give credit to divine revelation, to believe the external report of the gospel, which not to do, is the sin of the deists; to repent of sin committed, which even the light of nature dictates; and God, in his word, commands all men everywhere to repent: to pray to God for forgiveness, as Simon Magus was directed by the apostle: and to pray to God for daily mercies that are needed, is a natural and moral duty; as well as to give him praise, and return thanks for mercies received, which all men that have breath are under obligation to do.

They may, and should be called upon to attend the outward means of grace, and to make use of them; to read the Holy Scriptures, which have been the means of the conversion of some; to hear the word, and wait on the ministry of it, which may be blessed unto them, for the effectual calling of them. And it is a part of the ministry of the word to lay before men their fallen, miserable, lost, and undone estate by nature; to open to them the nature of sin, its pollution and guilt, and the sad consequences of it; to inform them of their incapacity to make atonement for it; and of their impotence and inability to do what is spiritually good; and of the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them in the sight of God: and they are to be made acquainted, that salvation is alone by Christ, and not other ways; and the fullness, freeness, and suitableness of this salvation, are to be preached before them; and the whole to be left to the Spirit of God, to make application of it as he shall think fit. 1b.

Secondly, this external call by the ministry is not universal, nor ever was: under the former dispensation God sent his word unto Jacob and his statutes unto Israel; as for other nations, they knew them not; God overlooked the heathens in their times of ignorance for hundreds of years together, and sent no prophet nor minister unto them, to acquaint them with his mind and will, and lead them into the knowledge of divine things. When the gospel dispensation took place, the apostles of Christ were forbid, by their first commission, to go to the Gentiles, or to any of the cities of the Samaritans; and though, upon Christ's resurrection from the dead, their commission was enlarged, and they were sent to preach to all nations of the world; yet before they could reach to the extent of their commission, multitudes must be dead, to whom the gospel call, or the sound of it, never reached.

To say nothing of the new world, or America, supposed not then to be discovered; in succeeding ages, many parts of the world have been without the preaching of the word, and are at this day; and, indeed, it is confined to a very small part of it; and where it is, though many may be externally called by it, yet few are chosen, and internally called by the Spirit and grace of God: and as this call is of many who are not chosen, so of many who are not sanctified, or that are not called with an holy calling; and so of many who are not saved; for it is to some the savour of death unto death. 1c.

Thirdly, the external call is frequently rejected, and for the most part, and by the greater numbers of those that hear it; "I have called, and ye have refused: I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people"; and to these it must be useless, as to any salutary effects; many that are called and invited to attend the gospel ministry refuse to come; such were they that were bidden and called to the marriage feast; but they made light of it, and some went to their farms, and others to their merchandise; such were

the Scribes and Pharisees, who would neither go into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor suffer others that were entering to go in but shut it up against them; that is, would neither attend the ministry of Christ and his apostles themselves, nor suffer others, but discouraged them from it, by their reproaches, threats, and persecutions, as our Lord complains (Matthew 23:13,37).

Others that attend the ministry of the word, do it in a careless and negligent manner, not minding what they hear, but like leaking vessels, let it slip, or run out; or stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely; many that hear have an aversion to what they hear; the gospel is an hard saying to them, foolishness to some, and a stumblingblock to others; some mock and scoff at it, as the Athenians did; and others, as the Jews, contradict and blaspheme it, putting it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life; and therefore it is no wonder it becomes of no saving effect to either of these sort of persons: and, indeed, it is always insufficient and ineffectual of itself unto real conversion, without the powerful and efficacious grace of God; when God goes forth with his ministers, working with them, then work is done, but not otherwise; when the hand of the Lord is upon them, or his power attends their ministry, many believe and turn to the Lord; but unless his arm is revealed, the report of the gospel will not be believed, nor the call of it be attended to.

Yet, 1d. Fourthly, the external ministry of the word, or the outward call by it, is not in vain; it has its usefulness, and various ends are answered by it. All things are for the elect's sake, and particularly the ministration of the gospel, which to them is the savour of life unto life; as it is the will of God that his chosen people, and others, should promiscuously dwell together, so he sends his gospel to them in general, and by it takes out a people for his name; calls them by his grace effectually, out of the world, and separates them from the men of it, to be a peculiar people to himself; and the rest are thereby left inexcusable; for if the light of nature leaves men so, much more the light of the gospel; the condemnation of men is aggravated by it; inasmuch, as though they are surrounded with light, they love darkness rather than light.

Moreover, by the external ministry of the word, many, though not effectually called, become more civilized and more moral in their conversation; are reformed, as to their outward manners; and through a speculative knowledge of the gospel, escape the grossest pollutions of the world: and others are brought by it to a temporary faith, to believe for awhile, to embrace the gospel notionally, to submit to the ordinances of it, make a profession of religion, by which means they become serviceable to support the interest of it.

So that it comports with the wisdom of God that there should be such an outward call of many who are not internally called: nor is he to be charged for it with dissimulation and insincerity; since by it he declares what is his good, perfect, and acceptable will, and what would be grateful and well pleasing to him was it complied with and done. Should it be said, that that is called for and required which man has not power to perform; be it so, which yet may be questioned, it should be observed, that though man by sin has lost his power to comply with the will of God by an obedience to it; God has not lost his power, right, and authority to command.

Wherefore, when the ministry of the word is slighted, and the gospel call rejected, it is most righteously resented by the Lord; see Proverbs 1:24-28 and such are justly punished with everlasting destruction by him (1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9). The "internal" call is next to be considered, which is sometimes immediately, and without the ministry of the word; as seems to be the case of the disciples of Christ, of the apostle Paul, and of Zacchaeus, and others: and sometimes mediately by the word; for faith comes by

hearing, and bearing by the word; so the three thousand under Peter's sermon, and those in the family of Cornelius, on whom the Holy Spirit fell while the apostle was preaching; and this is the ordinary way in which God calls men by his grace; and which call is, 1d1.

Out of great and gross darkness, into marvelous and surprising light (1 Pet. 2:9). God's elect, while in a state of nature, are in a state of darkness and ignorance; they are in the dark about God, his perfections, purposes, counsels, and methods of grace; about themselves, the state and condition they are in; about sin, the nature of it, and its sad consequences; about the Person of Christ, his offices, and the way of salvation by him; about the Spirit, his work and operations on the souls of men; and about the scriptures, and the doctrines of the gospel contained in them: but in effectual calling the eyes of their understandings are opened and enlightened, and they are made light in the Lord.

When the apostle Paul was called by grace, a light surrounded him, as an emblem of that internal light which was sprung in him; and after that there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, as a token of the removal of his former darkness and ignorance: as God, in the first creation, commanded light to shine out of darkness; so in the new creation, and at effectual calling, he irradiates the minds of his called ones with a divine light, in which they see light; see what sin is, what an evil thing it is, and the exceeding sinfulness of it; see themselves lost and undone by it, and just ready to perish; see their incapacity to save themselves, and the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; see the glory, fulness, and grace of Christ, the completeness and suitableness of him as a Saviour; and see the truths and promises of the gospel, the great doctrines of it, in another light than they did before; so as to understand them, receive the love of them, believe them with the heart, and distinguish them from those that differ, and rejoice at them, as bringing good news and glad tidings of good things. 1d2.

The internal call, is a call of men out of bondage, out of worse than Egyptian bondage, into liberty, even the glorious liberty of the children of God; "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty" (Gal. 5:13), while in a state of nature, they are, as they were by nature, home born slaves, slaves to their sinful lusts and pleasures, and are brought into bondage by them, and held under the power of them, as in a prison; but in the effectual calling, the fetters and shackles of sin are broken off, and the prison doors opened, and they are bid to go forth and show themselves; they become free from the tyranny of sin, and sin has no more dominion over them: in their state before calling, they are under the power and influence of Satan, the strong man armed who keeps possession of them, by whom they are kept in bondage, and led captive by him at his will; but when effectually called, they are taken out of his hands, and are turned from the power of Satan unto God, and are delivered from the power of darkness, and are translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, where they are Christ's free men.

While they are seeking righteousness and life by the works of the law, they are brought into bondage, for that genders to bondage, and brings on a spirit of bondage upon those that are under it; but in effectual calling they are delivered from it, by the Spirit of God, as a free spirit; and are called to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made them free, and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage; they are called and allowed to make use of a liberty of access to God, through Christ, by one Spirit, and to enjoy all the privileges of the gospel, and the immunities of a gospel church state, being fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. 1d3.

The internal call, is a call of persons from fellowship with the men of the world, to fellowship with Christ; "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of Christ Jesus our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9), it is like that of the call of Christ to his church (Song of Sol. 4:8). "Come with me from Lebanon", &c. a call to

forsake the vanities, pleasures, and profits of the world, and the company of the men of it, and go along with him, and enjoy communion with him: as Abraham was called out of his country, from his kindred, and his father's house; so saints are called to forsake their own people, and their father's house; to relinquish the society of their former companions, and to have no fellowship with ungodly men: not that they are to have no civil correspondence, commerce, and society with the men of the world; for then, as the apostle says, they must needs go out of it; but not to join with them in superstitious worship, in acts of idolatry, in a false religion, and in the observance of the commandments of men; nor in any sinful, profane, and immoral practices; and as much as may be, should shun and avoid all unnecessary company, and conversation with them; for evil communications corrupt good manners; and it is a grief to the people of God, to be obliged to dwell among them, and with them, as it was to Lot, to Isaac and Rebekah, to David, Isaiah, and others: the people of God, in the effectual calling, are called to better company, to communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit; to fellowship with one another; to converse with saints, the excellent in the earth, in whom is all their delight. 1d4.

Such as are effectually called by the Spirit and grace of God, are called to peace; "God hath called us to peace" (1 Cor. 7:15), to internal peace, to peace of mind and conscience; which men, in a state of nature, are strangers to; for there is no peace to the wicked: but God calls his people to it, and blesses them with it; with a peace which passes all understanding; with peace in the midst of the tribulations of the world; with a peace which the world can neither give nor take away; and which arises from the blood and righteousness of Christ, and is part of that kingdom of God which is within them, into which they are brought at effectual calling.

They are likewise called to peace among themselves, and with all men as much as possible; "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body" (Col. 3:15). 1d5. They are called out of a state of unholiness and sinfulness, into a state of holiness and righteousness; for being created anew in righteousness and true holiness, and created in Christ Jesus to good works, they are called to the exercise of them; to live holily, soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world; "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7), and "hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3), to glorious acts of virtue and goodness, becoming the nature of their call, and of him that has called them; "As he which hath called you is holy" &c. (1 Pet. 1:15). 1d6.

The internal call, is a call of persons "into the grace of Christ" (Gal. 1:6), into the gospel of the grace of Christ, as appears by what follows, to receive it, embrace it, profess it, and stand fast in it; and into the fulness of grace in Christ, to receive out of it, to be strong in it, to exercise faith on it: and to the blessings of grace in his hands, and which are given forth by him; to lay hold upon them, take them to themselves, and claim their interest in them; all being theirs, they being Christ's, his chosen, redeemed, and called ones; and by whom they have access into the state of grace in which they stand. 1d7.

It is a call of them to a grate of happiness and bliss in another world; "Who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess 2:12), to a glory, which is a kingdom; to possess a kingdom of grace now, which cannot be removed; and to inherit the kingdom of glory hereafter, which is an everlasting one; to a glory which is given to Christ; "To the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14; John 17:22; Col. 3:4), and to eternal glory by Christ Jesus (1 Pet. 5:10), and to "lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:12), and to an eternal inheritance; and "they which are called, receive the promise of it", and shall certainly enjoy it; having a meetness for it, through the grace of God, and a right unto it, through the righteousness of Christ (1 Pet. 1:3, 4; Heb. 9:15), and they are all "called in one hope of their calling" (Eph. 4:4) to partake of the same inheritance with the saints in light; and to enjoy the same blessed hope laid up

for them in heaven; and for which hope of righteousness they wait by faith, through the holy Spirit. 2.

The author and causes of effectual calling, efficient, impulsive, instrumental, and final. 2a. The efficient cause is God; "Walk worthy of God, who hath called you; God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 2:12; 4:7; 2 Tim. 1:8, 9). Sometimes it is ascribed to God personally, to the three divine Persons in the Godhead, to Father, Son, and Spirit; to the Father, when he is said to call by his grace, and reveal his Son; and to call unto the fellowship of his Son; and to call men by Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:15, 16; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Pet. 5:10), in which places, God that calls, is distinguished from his Son Jesus Christ.

Sometimes calling is ascribed to the Son; so Wisdom, the eternal Logos, Word, and Son of God, is represented as calling both externally and internally (Prov. 1:20 &c.; Prov. 8:1-4), and saints are said to be the called of Jesus Christ, whom he has a property in, as called ones, being efficiently called by him. And sometimes it is ascribed to the Holy Spirit; "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling"; that is, by the one Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God; and to him are owing that illumination, and that freedom from bondage, and that fellowship with Christ, which make a principal part of what men in the effectual calling are called into; and it is he that leads to peace and holiness, and into the grace of Christ, and encourages to hope and wait for glory: so that effectual calling is a divine work, and not human. 2b.

The impulsive, or moving cause of effectual calling, are not the works of men, but the sovereign will, pleasure, purpose, and grace of God; as in 2 Timothy 1:9. 2b1. The works of men are not the moving or impulsive cause of their being called of God; for those must be either such as are done before calling, or after it: not before calling; for works done then are not properly good works; they are not subjectively good; the doers of them are not good men; and a man must be a good man, before he can perform good works; and though some works done by bad men, may have the show and appearance of good, and be materially, or as to the matter of them, good actions; yet are not such circumstantially: the requisites and circumstances of a good work, being wanting in them; as riot being done according to the will of God, and in obedience to it; nor in faith, and so sin; nor proceeding from a principle of love to God, nor directed to his glory: and such works can never be moving causes of men being called.

Nor can good works after calling be such; for they are fruits and effects of the effectual calling; and therefore cannot be ranked among the causes of it. Men, in and by effectual calling, are sanctified, and become meet for their master's use, and ready to every good work. 2b2. The sovereign will, pleasure, and purpose of God, are what move and determine him to call, by his grace, any of the sons of men: not their wills; for "it is not of him that willeth", but of his own good will and pleasure; they that are called, are "called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28), he has, in his eternal purpose, fixed upon the particular persons whom he will call, and the time when he will call them; for there is a time for every purpose, and so for this, called the time of life and of love; and the place where they shall be called; in this and that place; as at Corinth, Philippi, &c. the means and occasion of their calling, with the several circumstances thereof, are all according to a divine purpose; and show that the whole is owing to the sovereign will and pleasure of God, who does all things after the counsel of his own will. 2b3.

The free grace of God, in a sovereign, distinguishing way and manner, may truly be said to be the grand, impulsive, moving cause of the effectual calling; to this the apostle ascribed his own; "And called me by his grace": that is, of his pure grace, and according to it. God, as the God of all grace, calls men to grace and glory by Christ; and an abundance of grace is displayed in calling; yea, the first open display of grace, and

discovery of love, to a sinner himself, is then made; then is he drawn with loving kindness, as a frail and evidence of everlasting love; and therefore the time of calling, is called a time of love (Jer. 31:3; Ezek. 16:8), and it being of some particular persons, and not of all, shows it to be the effect of distinguishing grace, and of sovereign good will; and, indeed, nothing out of God could move him to such an act as this; and as his grace is his own, he may call by it, and to it, and bestow it on whom he pleases. 2c.

The instrumental cause, or rather means of the effectual calling, is the ministry of the word. Sometimes, indeed, it is brought about by some remarkable providence, and without the word; but generally it is by it; "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God". Christ stands in the gospel ministry, at the door of men's hearts, and knocks and calls; and having the key of the house of David, he opens the heart by his power and grace, and lets himself in; and in this way, and by this means, the Spirit, and his graces, are received; men are called both to grace and glory by the gospel (Gal. 1:6; 2 Thess. 2:14). 2d.

The final causes, or rather the ends of the effectual calling, which are subordinate and ultimate: the subordinate end, is the salvation of God's elect, that they may possess the blessings of grace, and eternal glory; to both which they are called. And the ultimate end is the glory of the grace of God; for this end God forms his people in regeneration and the effectual calling; namely, to show forth his praise: and this end is answered, in part, in this life, they ascribing all they have, and expect to have, solely to the free grace of God; and it will be consummately answered in the world to come, when all their work will be praise; attributing the whole of their salvation to the sovereign will and pleasure, grace and goodness, of God. 3.

The subjects of the effectual calling, or who they are whom God calls by his grace. 3a. They are such whom God has chosen to grace and glory; "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8:30). Election and calling are of equal extent; the objects are the same, neither more nor fewer; they that were chosen from eternity, are called in time; and they that are called in time, were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; the "vessels of mercy, afore prepared unto glory", are explained and described by such "whom God hath called; not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (Rom. 9:23, 24). 3b.

They are such who are in Christ, and secured in him; for they are "called according to grace given them, in Christ Jesus before the world began"; and as grace was given them in him so early, they themselves, in some sense, must then have a being in him; which they have, through being chosen in him, and thereby coming into his hands, they are secured and preserved in him, in consequence of which they are called by grace; thus stands the order of things, as put by the apostle Jude 1:1.

"To them that are sanctified by God the Father"; that is, set apart by him in eternal election; and preserved in Christ Jesus, being put into his hands by that act of grace; and called, in virtue of the foregoing acts of grace. 3c. They are such who are redeemed by Christ; calling, follows redemption, and is the certain consequent of it; "I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isa. 43:1). Election, redemption, and calling, are of the same persons; those whom God has chosen in Christ, are redeemed by Christ; and who are chosen and redeemed, are, sooner or later, called; and the reason of their being called, is because they are redeemed; "I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them" (Zech. 10:8). 3d.

Those that are called, are, for the most part, either the meanest, or the vilest, among men; the meanest, as to their outward circumstances; "Not many mighty, not many noble are called"; and the meanest, as to their internal capacities; "Not many wise men after the flesh"; the things of the gospel, and of the grace of God, are "hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes" (1 Cor. 1:26; Jas. 2:5; Matthew 11:25),

and oftentimes some of the worst and vilest of sinners are called by grace; publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God, when scribes and pharisees did not; attended the ministry of the word, and were called by it, when they were not; and Christ came, as he himself says, "not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance", (Matthew 21:31, 32; 9:13; 1 Cor 6:11). 4.

The properties of effectual calling; which may lead more clearly and fully into the nature of it; though they may be, in general, collected from what has been observed. 4a. It is a fruit of the love of God; because he has loved them with an everlasting love, therefore "with loving kindness he draws" them to himself, and to his Son, in the effectual calling (Jer. 31:3), and as it is only of as many as the Lord our God thinks fit to call, it appears to be an act of special and distinguishing grace; it is of special and particular persons, by special grace, and to the special blessings of it. 4b.

It is an act of efficacious and irresistible grace. The external call may be, and often is, resisted and rejected; but when God calls internally by his Spirit and grace, it is always effectual, and can never be resisted, so as to be ineffectual; for when God works, none can let or hinder; men, dead in trespasses and sins, rise out of their graves of sin, and live, at his all commanding voice; even as Lazarus came forth out of his grave at the call of Christ; nor could that call be resisted; and even the same power that was exerted in raising Christ himself from the dead, is displayed in the effectual calling of a sinner (Eph. 1:18-20). 4c.

This call is an "holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9), the author of it is the holy God; holy in his nature, and in all his ways and works, and in this; "As he that has called you is holy" (1 Pet. 1:15), and the means by which they are called are holy; whether by reading the scriptures, which has been sometimes the case, they are styled "the holy scriptures"; or whether the first awakenings to a serious concern about divine things, are by the law; that commandment is holy, just, and good; or whether by the pure gospel of Christ; that is a "doctrine according to godliness", and teaches to live an holy life and conversation: and as in the effectual calling, it appears that principles of grace and holiness are wrought in men; so by it they are called to the exercise of holiness and virtue, and of the performance of every good work; they are called into a state of holiness here, and to enjoy an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance hereafter (Rom. 1:7; 1 Thess. 4:7; 2 Pet. 1:3). 4d.

It is an high calling (Phil. 3:14), he that calls is the high and lofty One, who dwells in the high and holy place; and in and by calling grace, he raises men from the dunghill, and sets them among princes, that they may inherit the throne of glory; however poor they may be with respect to the things of this world, yet by effectual calling they become rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, and of an inheritance reserved for them in the highest heavens, to which they will be admitted.

Wherefore, 4e. This call is styled an "heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), it is a call out of this earthly country, to seek a better country, even an heavenly one; and those that are called, have their citizenship in heaven, and are free denizens of it; and shall enjoy the hope, the hoped for blessedness laid up for them there. For, 4f. This is one of the gifts of God's special grace, and that "calling" of his, which is without "repentance" (Rom. 11:29), it is unchangeable, irreversible, and irrevocable; such shall be preserved safe to the kingdom and glory of God, to which they are called, and shall most certainly enjoy it; for "faithful is he that has called them, who also will do it" (1 Thess. 5:23, 24), wherefore such are most happy persons; for they may be comfortably assured of their election; for "whom he did predestinate, them he also called": election and calling are put together; the one as the fruit, effect, and evidence, of the other (2 Pet. 1:10), and election is to be known by the internal call of the Spirit, through the ministry of the word; (1 Thess. 1:4, 5), and they may also be comfortably assured of their justification; for "whom he called, them he also

justified"; and such may conclude themselves safe from all charges, from all condemnation, and from wrath to come: and they may most certainly expect eternal glory; for whom God calls and justifies, "them he also glorifies": between calling grace and eternal happiness, there is a sure and an inseparable connection.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-gill/of-effectual-calling/>

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