

# (Finding God's Will) 5. Vocational Calling

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of seeking God's specific vocational calling for every believer while being a full-time witness in any role.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5, Proverbs 16:9, Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 7:17, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 3:23, James 1:5

**Topics:** "Vocational Calling", "Gods Will"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of seeking God's specific vocation for each individual, highlighting the disobedience that comes from pursuing a path not intended by God. He stresses that every believer is called to be a full-time witness of Jesus, regardless of their vocation. Poonen advises young believers to prayerfully consider their intellectual aptitude and seek guidance from mature believers when choosing a career. He also underscores the need for a clear call from God before entering full-time Christian service, reminding that God's calling is dynamic and may lead believers to different spheres of work over time.

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## Transcript

One of the first major problems of guidance usually faced by young people is knowing what vocation God wants them to take up and where they should work.

God's perfect will in vocation needs to be sought not only by those contemplating full-time Christian service, but by every believer. As mentioned in Chapter one, God has planned a vocation for each of His children. It is essential then that we seek to find out what it is. If God's calling for you is to be a teacher in a school, you would be disobedient if you became a pastor. Do not be an evangelist if God wants you to be a doctor. Likewise, don't take up a secular vocation if God wants you in exclusively Christian service.

The vocation of God's choice

Nevertheless, every believer should be a full-time witness of the Lord Jesus Christ - even if he is not in full-time Christian service. A Christian doctor when asked his profession replied, "My profession is to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ and to bring souls to Him. I work as a doctor to pay the expenses." Indeed, he had the right perspective.

When vocation is considered from this view-point, we need not fear the possibility of missing God's will. It is when personal advancement and prestige influence our choice that we go astray.

How should a young believer go about the matter of finding God's will in this realm? Where the option of choosing a career is still open before him, he should consider his intellectual aptitude and seek to study for the vocation most fitting to him. He should however select a vocation only after much prayer. In the absence of any check in his spirit after prayer, he should go ahead and consider the vocation he is most suited for. He should never, in any case allow himself to be pushed into a vocation selected for him by someone else.

Those who are already undergoing a University course may perhaps be limited in their selection of a vocation. Such need not fear that they might have missed God's will. God is sovereign and overrules in our life when we are ignorant of His ways. He lays His Hand upon us and steers our course, unknown to us, long before we come to a place of surrender to Him. He holds us responsible only after He speaks to us.

#### The place of God's choice

Throughout his student days, a believer should be much in prayer that God will give him the right information about job-opportunities, and contacts with the right people and institutions, so that he will, on completion of his studies, be able to go to the place of God's choice. He should constantly bear in mind the Lord's words in Matthew 9:37 - "The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the labourers are few." In obedience to the Lord's commands in John 4:35, he should seek to get details of the Lord's work in various parts of his country and of the world. He should be ready to go wherever the Lord may have need of him - whether as a teacher, as a nurse or as an engineer, whatever his vocation may be. It is a shame that so many seek personal comfort and have no concern for the spread of the gospel and for the salvation of souls.

He must then seek the advice and prayer-fellowship of mature believers (in his own locality or elsewhere), who are interested in him and who are aware of the situation in the areas where he is seeking employment. He should also try and understand what God is saying to him through his circumstances. With all this information in hand, when the time draws near to make a decision, he should seek to ascertain what the Holy Spirit is saying within his own spirit. He should finally base his decision on this witness of the Spirit within him, trusting God even then to turn him around in case he has been mistaken.

#### Full-time Christian service

A few words need to be said here about full-time Christian service - i.e., the calling to be engaged exclusively in the ministry of the Word as a missionary, evangelist, Bible-teacher or pastor.

God calls only a small percentage of believers into such a ministry, even as He called only one tribe in twelve, in Israel, to the service of the temple. But He expects all His children to be willing, should He call them. Every believer should therefore consider this calling and seek with all his heart to know whether God wants him in it or not. A person entering full-time Christian service should be perfectly sure that God has called him into it. One who is in a secular vocation should be equally sure that God wants him there. The calling to be an evangelist or a missionary is not a more spiritual one than the calling to be an engineer or an accountant. The important thing is to be what God wants you to be.

A decision to enter full-time Christian service should be taken coolly - not in the emotionally tense atmosphere of a meeting nor under pressure from any man. Hasty decisions are usually regretted later on. God always gives us ample time to be sure of His will before we decide.

The call to an exclusively Christian ministry is not easily defined. As with all other guidance, it comes in different forms to different people. In some rare cases it may come in a vision or through an audible voice. Esther Butler, pioneer missionary in China in the early part of this century, said when God called her to this work she saw a crowded Chinese street in a vision. She later clearly recognized the faces and places on arrival in Nanking.

To others, the call has come as an inward urge based purely on sanctified logic. John G Paton went from Scotland to the South Pacific islands as a missionary because he felt the people there had less opportunity to hear the message than those in Scotland. James Gilmour went to Mongolia because, he said, he did not receive a call to stay in his home-country. Their accomplishments for God in these places clearly show they lived in God's perfect will for their lives.

"What form the call takes is unimportant, but the one who goes into an exclusively Christian ministry cannot afford to be unsure of his call. He cannot recruit himself into this ministry, neither can another recruit him. That prerogative remains forever in the Hands of God alone.

In most cases, a person called into full-time Christian service will find God confirming His call through circumstances and through Spirit-filled believers. However there can be, and have been, exceptions to this rule - for God cannot be bound to any fixed pattern. Yet some guidelines can be laid down: God calls those who are active in His work in their secular occupations. He speaks only to those who are seeking to be His witnesses in their present circumstances. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

We must also remember that the calling of God is not a static thing. God may lead you into exclusively Christian work for a time and then lead you to be His witness in a secular occupation. We must be willing to move with God as situations and circumstances change, and not remain in bondage to tradition and the opinions of men.

Whether we are in a secular job or in exclusively Christian work, our calling is equally to be a servant of God. The nature and sphere of work may differ, but we are all called to represent the Lord worthily before others and to bring them to a saving knowledge of Him. God has a specific place in His vast vineyard for you. As the hymn says, "There's a work for Jesus none but you can do". It is your responsibility to find out what that is and to make sure you fulfil it. "God ordained you to your work - see that you don't fail Him" (Col. 4:17-JBP).

#### Summary

1. God has a specific vocation for you. Your duty is to fulfil that.
2. Every believer, irrespective of his vocation is called to be a full-time witness of the Lord Jesus.
3. A young person seeking God's guidance about his vocation should seek to prepare himself for that which he is most suited, in the absence of any indication from God to the contrary.
4. When looking for a job, he should find out information concerning the needs of the Lord's work in different places. He should be much in prayer and after consulting mature believers and considering his

circumstances, he should finally be guided by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

5. No person should go into full-time Christian service without a clear call from God.

6. The calling of God is a dynamic thing. We must be willing to move with Him into any new sphere of work, as and when He calls.

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