

A Work Ethic: Vocation or Vacation? Part 1

Introduction

Credit to Brian Borgman, Grace Community Church, Minden, Nevada and his Sermon Audio series, “A Theology of Work and Vocation” .

During the last session, we established that all three persons of the Trinity are workers and have been working from the beginning and continue to work in the lives of believers and unbelievers now.

God's works are characterized by faithfulness to His promises and covenants which ultimately show off His majesty and splendor! We should become imitators of God as workers. Jn 14:12, 17:4

I. Key Terms – Vocation and Occupation

- A. A short history: A short history: Charlie Self <https://blog.acton.org/archives/91547-vocation-vs-occupation-4-callings-in-the-christian-life.html>
 - i. The term “vocation” comes from the Latin, “vocare” – to call or receive a call. For almost two millennia in Christian-influenced communities and cultures, vocation referred to a religious calling: a monastic order, missionary work or parish labor.
 - ii. The Reformation rekindled the priesthood of all believers (Exodus 19 and I Peter 2) and started honoring everyday work as a calling from God.
 - iii. In most gospel-centered communities, we are now seeing better elevation and economic empowerment of all believers, without despising the important callings of those set apart by Christ to nourish the Body and make him known locally and globally.
- B. **Vocation** relates to your “calling”. It's more than just a job or profession.
 - i. *Vocation is one's response to a call from beyond oneself to use one's strengths and gifts to make the world a better place through service, creativity, and leadership.* <https://www.dbq.edu/CampusLife/OfficeofStudentLife/VocationalServices/WhatIsVocation/>
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 7:17-24** The context is being content with whatever life circumstances God has placed you, knowing that this is the specifically designed calling of God for your life.
 - a) Verse 17: The conclusion of a section about your marriage and family status; the statement is that the Lord has assigned this to you and so you should remain.
 - b) Verse 18: God's effectual calling that saves and brings us into a relationship with Christ (Rom 8:30)
 - c) Verse 18-19: Racial and cultural identity, as well as social status are the calling of God, don't try to fight against it. (Gal 3:27-29)
 - d) Verse 20: Remain in the calling/condition in which you were called – Be content and accept the sovereign plan of God for you.
 - e) Verses 21-23: Even your job position or occupation – whether slave or laborer or manager or business owner

- C. **Occupations** involve everyday labor for the glory of God and good of others that express our vocation(s) while not itself being the full expression of our callings. Vocations are general and specific callings from God that edify the Body, enhance the world, and transcend current occupational assignments. <https://blog.acton.org/archives/91547-vocation-vs-occupation-4-callings-in-the-christian-life.html>
- i. Exceptions to staying at a current job: Temptation to sin; Employment is a bad Christian witness:
 - ii. They may change over time

II. **Our forever Vocation in Christ**

A. Christians are called to good works:

- i. John 14:12 We are now Christ's hands and feet to the world around us.
- ii. Ephesians 2:10 God saved the entire church and called us both individually and collectively for specific good works which He prepared in advance for us to do.
- iii. **Avocation** is an opportunity for our Vocation to shine through serving! An **avocation** is a hobby or any other activity taken up in addition to one's regular work; it may especially refer to something that is a person's "true" passion or interest. A **vocation** is one's principal occupation, often used in the context of a calling to a particular way of life or course of action. ♦ Oct 10, 2018 <https://www.thoughtco.com/avocation-and-vocation-1689309>

B. **Vacation** – Some cautionary remarks

- i. To vacate or step away from routine responsibilities.
- ii. I will use this as an opportunity for warning against making this your goal or “god”.
 - a) Don't spend excessive time planning, preparing and dreaming about it.
 - b) Don't let the thought of it distract you from doing your best on your current responsibilities and serving of others; no compromise.
 - c) Don't use it as a status symbol or opportunity for boasting e.g. “we're going to”
- iii. Use it for doing good:
 - a) Seeing family; Respite to regain spiritual and emotional balance; Missionary trip
 - b) Always be a good witness for Christ. Remember who you are. Acts 1:8

**Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one,
as God has called each, in this manner let him walk.**

And so I direct in all the churches.

1 Corinthians 7:17