

Living As Called Men Bible Study

Read Eph. 4:1. What do you think Paul meant by the expression “worthy of our calling?”
What strikes you about the following quote from Os Guinness?

Answering the call of our Creator is “the ultimate why” for living, the highest source of purpose in human existence...Calling is the truth that God calls us to Himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have is invested with a special devotion, dynamism, and direction lived out as a response to His summons and service.

Os Guinness, The Call

In many ways the opposite of living as a called man is living as a driven one. Which 2 or 3 are most characteristic of your lifestyle?

A. Picture of a Man Who is DRIVEN

1. His life is hectic and very fast-paced, yet doesn't seem to have a very clear direction
2. Often his life seems out of control. He “bounces off” whatever happens to be in front of us
3. Spends 98% of our time and energy focused on the outer world, giving our inner, private world the leftovers

Our public worlds are filled with a seeming infinity of demands upon our time, our loyalties, our money, and our energies. And because these public worlds of ours are so visible, so real, we have to struggle to ignore all their seductions and demands. They scream for our attention and action.

The result is that our private world is often cheated, neglected because it does not shout quite so loudly. It can be effectively ignored for large periods of time before it gives way to a sinkhole-like cave-in.

Gordon MacDonald, Ordering Your Private World

4. Is haunted by vague doubts about whether we are really following God's priorities for our lives
5. Is extremely busy, sometimes exhausted by the pace of life, yet inwardly not that fulfilled
6. Carried along by internal drives and outward circumstances without any internal compass to evaluate or give direction to what we do.

7. Very few of us have any sense of clear mission for our lives. At work—goals, strategy, priorities, plan. In our personal lives and homes, we react our way through life.
8. Truth be told, very few of us are leading our homes. We have no goals, no sense of direction and no game plan.

"It is my conclusion that effective male leadership in the homes of America is going the way of the dinosaur. Some people are worried about the extinction of whales, condors, snail darters, or baby seals. Those are legitimate concerns. But let me shoot straight with you. I'm a lot more worried about the extinction of men who know how to lead a family. And the effective male leader who knows how to lead his family is already on the endangered species list."

Steve Farrar, Point Man

B. The Cost of the *DRIVEN* Lifestyle.

What do you think is the greatest cost of living a *DRIVEN* lifestyle?

How do our wives suffer when we live a driven lifestyle?

How do our children suffer?

How does the church suffer?

How does Christ's reputation suffers?

C. Picture of a Man who Lived As a Called Man

Read Luke 4:18-19. Jesus is quoting Isaiah 61 which explains the mission of the coming messiah. Jesus is claiming to be that messiah. Which aspects of this mission have to do with healing and mercy ministry (sometimes called "deed" ministry)? Which ones have to do with the ministry of the Word?

Read Luke 4:38-44. Describe how Jesus spent his Sabbath. (The sick didn't come until after sundown because sundown was the end of the Sabbath.) Which aspects of his messianic mission was he accomplishing that night—the ministry of deeds or the ministry of the word?

Jesus gets up early in the morning—but there is more going on here than Jesus having his quiet time. Jesus had been healing till late in the night in the town of Capernaum. But in verse 44 which aspect of his messianic mission does he say he needs to focus on? What does this change indicate was the focus of his prayer time?

What lessons can we learn from Jesus about living according to our calling?

D. A close look at Scripture reveals 3 Dimensions to our Calling:

- There is the call to *himself*
- There is the call to *become like him*
- There is the call to *rule for him*

Look up the following verses and identify which category of calling they fit into.

1. 1 Cor. 1:9
2. Rom. 8:28-30
3. Gen. 1:26-28
4. Eph. 5:1
5. 1 Pet. 3:8-9
6. John 10:3
7. Matt. 6:33
8. 1 Thess. 5:24
9. Is. 43:1

E. Christ Can Empower Us To Live As Called Men

"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph. 4:1)

Here are the five steps we need to take:

Step 1. We must turn our backs on the *DRIVEN* life-style and resolve, with Christ's help, to order our lives according to Christ's mission for us.

Read the following quote.

"Memo to the disorganized: If my private world is in order, it will be because I am convinced that the inner world of the spiritual must govern the outer world of activity and because I recognize my proneness to operate according to schemes and patterns not made of God but fashioned by a disordered past."

Gordon McDonald, Ordering Your Private World

List 5 reasons you are convinced your inner spiritual world must govern your outer world of activity.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

Step 2. We must have a clear understanding of our 3-fold mission. We must know what we are aiming for.

How would you summarize Christ's mission for you based upon his general calling for all Christians?

What is your sense of a more specific calling based on your particular SHAPE (spiritual gifts, heart passion, abilities, personality, and experiences.)

Step 3. We must have a battle plan, with our strategy thought through, and the steps spelled out to accomplish our mission, so that we can stay focused on it.

- That is exactly what the FOCUS notebook is designed to be for you. This has been helping men shape their lives according to their mission for many years. Go to <http://www.forgingbonds.org> to find out more about this valuable tool.
- No NFL team would go out onto the field without a game plan. But Christian men have no game plan to help them stay focused on the mission their master has given them! Which is more important, Christ's mission for us or a football game?

Step 4. We need a weekly briefing with our CO to seek his guidance and plan how we will accomplish our mission during the week ahead.

Read the quote below.

"Why is it that for so many the answer to personal tension and pressure lies not in going to the bridge of life but rather in attempting to run faster, protest more vigorously, accumulate more, collect more data, and gain more expertise. We are of an age in which it seems instinctive to give attention to every cubic inch of life other than our inner world—the only place from which we can gain the strength to brave, or even beat any turbulence."

Gordon McDonald, Ordering Your Private World

- Consider the example of Jesus in Mark 1:29-39
- A great way to be sure you get this time is to schedule some time for a weekly briefing with the King Sunday afternoon or evening. I believe that is part of his intent for us in giving us one day of the week to rest, renew, and re-FOCUS.
- *"If you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord."* (Is. 58:13-14)
- The only thing dumber than an NFL team having no playbook and game plan would be to have a game plan and never look at it during the game.

- If you believe the inner world of the spiritual must govern the outward world of activity you must set aside weekly time to FOCUS

You only have one life through which to honor Christ. Are you so good at accomplishing Christ's mission for you that you can do it on the fly? Or do you need regular time each week to stay focused

Step 5. We must find a band of brothers to help us.

Read Ecc. 4:9-12. List all the reasons in this text for having a close brother.

Verse 12 points out that a man fighting alone can be overpowered. Are you fighting your spiritual battles alone, or do you have some at your side helping you fight them?

Why not agree together to be intentional about seeking to live out of a sense of Christ's calling and to hold each other accountable to get some extra time with the Lord each weekend to do this (in addition to your daily quiet time.)? Your chances of being successful dramatically increase if you and a brother both commit to this discipline.

If you would like help forging a bond of brotherhood with a few Christian friends for encouragement and accountability there are resources available at <http://www.forgingbonds.org> to help you.