



GCI *Buzz*

Healthy Church: Calling

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Call·ing

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Noun

Definition: “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

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Primary Calling: Invitation to life and belonging in Christ. 03

Our **primary calling** as followers of Christ is by him, to him, and for him. First and foremost, we are **called** to Someone (God), not to something (such as motherhood, politics, or teaching) or to somewhere (such as our neighborhood or a different country).

Example:

Paul writes to the Church in Ephesus about their common call to belonging and life in the one Jesus: As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:1-6

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Primary Calling

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Examples:

1. A teen is stressed about deciding between working and going to college after graduation. They don't want to disappoint God. A youth leader reminds them that their **calling** is first and foremost to Jesus – not a particular activity. They are still **called** to Jesus whether in the workforce or continued education.
2. After participating in church activities for a couple of months, a neighbor begins to feel like they **belong** to the church community. At a Sunday worship service six months later, they feel an overwhelming sense of **belonging** not only to the church community – but to Jesus.

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Secondary Calling: Invitation to respond to God out of one's unique God-given personhood. 05

1. Secondary calling(s) is an overflow of primary calling.
2. Christian community provides space for discernment and confirmation of secondary calling(s).
3. Secondary calling(s) can be seasonal/temporary.

Considering who God is as sovereign, our **secondary calling** compels us to think, speak, live, and act entirely for him—with everyone, everywhere, and in everything. We can therefore properly say as a matter of **secondary calling** that we are called to homemaking or to the practice of law or to art history.

“But these and other things are always the secondary, never the primary calling. They are ‘callings’ rather than the ‘calling.’ They are our personal answer to God’s address, our response to God’s summons. Secondary callings matter, but only because the primary calling matters most.”

– Os Guinness

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Secondary Calling

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Example:

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul goes on to describe Jesus gifting his people in different ways to serve the purpose of their **(primary) calling** to life in him:

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says:

“When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people.”

(What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:7-13

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Secondary Calling

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Examples:

1. After 10 years, the youth leader discerns a new **(secondary) calling** to use their hospitality gifting. They transition to serving on the Hope Avenue welcome team.
2. A church member wants to begin participating in ministry but doesn't know where to start. Their small group spends time with them discerning what their gifts, skills, interests, and passions are. Together they discern that this member has a **(secondary) calling** to serve on the team that is preparing to plant a church next year.

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