


The background features a repeating pattern of overlapping, slightly offset squares. Most are thin, light green outlines. A single, larger square in the center is filled with a solid, dark green color, creating a focal point. The overall composition is clean and modern.

CALLINGS



*I chose you, and put you in the world
to bear fruit — fruit that won't spoil.*

John 15:16

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WELCOME!

What a joy it is to be a church community together in this wonderful city where we live, work and love. As Christians, we're all tasked with living out our calling, but it can be challenging and confusing to figure out what exactly that means.

This booklet is meant to help you navigate this, whether you're discerning your calling for the first time or wanting to press deeper into your calling. We hope to answer simply and straightforwardly the questions anyone might have about calling: the *What*, *Where*, *Who*, and *How*. Once we understand what calling is and we identify where and to whom we're called, we're met with perhaps the most difficult question: How do we actually live this calling out?

The primary answer, we believe, is prayer.

Jesus spent considerable time in prayer, both in adoration and contemplation of his Father, as well as in intercession for his friends. Mark's Gospel tells us, "Rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, [Jesus] departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35). Similarly, Luke reports that "great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray" (Luke 5:15–16). If Jesus — God in human flesh — needed prayer, then we certainly do as well.

For this reason, we encourage you to prioritize prayer wherever your calling is, and we'd like to invite you to choose 7 specific people for whom you'll commit to pray for a season. As you do so, use the prayer journal at the back of this booklet however is most helpful to you.

Consider this booklet your invitation to open yourself up more deeply to wherever God is calling you. May you experience Jesus' peace in new ways as you follow his lead.

With lots of love,
The Formation Team
Lyn, Rich, Caitlin, Iain, Jessica, and Judson

WHAT IS A CALLING?

by *Os Guinness*

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.

Now it is time to unpack that truth further, beginning with four essential strands in the biblical notion of calling that we must always hold.

First, calling has a simple and straightforward meaning. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word that has been translated as “call” usually has the same everyday meaning as our English word. Human beings call to each other, to God, and to animals. Animals too can call. (The psalmist, for example, wrote that God “provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.”) Under the pressure of theology and history, the term call has traveled a long way from this simple beginning, but this straightforward sense and its obvious relational setting should never be lost. When you “call” on the phone, for example, you catch someone’s ear for a season.

Second, calling has another important meaning in the Old Testament. To call means to name, and to name means to call into being or to make. Thus the first chapter of Genesis, “God called the light ‘day’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’” This type of calling is far more than labeling, hanging a nametag on something to identify it. Such decisive, creative naming is a form of making. Thus when God called Israel, he named and thereby constituted and created Israel his people. Calling is not only a matter of being and doing what we are but also of becoming what we are not yet but are called by God to be. Thus “name-calling,” a very different thing from name-calling, is the fusion of being and becoming.

Third, calling gains further characteristic meaning in the New Testament. It is almost synonymous for salvation. In this context, calling is overwhelmingly God’s calling people to himself as followers of Christ. Just as God called Israel to him as his people, so Jesus called his disciples. The body of Jesus’ followers as a whole is the community of the “called-out ones” (the origin of *ecclesia*, the Greek word for church). This decisive calling by God is salvation. Those who are called by God are first chosen and later justified and glorified. But calling is the most prominent and accessible of these four initiatives of God. Not surprisingly it often stands for salvation itself, and the common description of disciples of Jesus is not “Christian” but “followers of the Way.”

Fourth, calling has a vital, extended meaning in the New Testament that flowers more fully in the later history of the church. God calls people to himself, but this call is no casual suggestion. He is so awe inspiring and his summons is so commanding that only one response is appropriate — a response as total and universal as the authority of the Caller. Thus in the New Testament, as Jesus calls his followers to himself, he also calls them to other things and tasks: to peace, to fellowship, to eternal life, to suffering, and to service. But deeper even than these particular things, discipleship, which implies “everyone, everywhere, and in everything,” is the natural and rightful response to the lordship of Christ. As Paul wrote the followers of Christ in the little town of Colosse, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”

In short, calling in the Bible is a central and dynamic theme that becomes a metaphor for the life of faith itself. To limit the word, as some insist, to a few texts and to a particular stage in salvation is to miss the forest for the trees. To be a disciple of Jesus is to be a “called one” and so to become “a follower of the Way.” The third and fourth strands of the meaning of calling are the basis for the vital distinction elaborated later in history — between primary and secondary calling. 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 the inner city or Outer Mongolia).

Our secondary calling, considering who God is as sovereign, is that everyone, everywhere, and in everything should think, speak, live, and act entirely for him. We can therefore properly say as a matter of secondary calling that we are called to homemaking or to law or to the practice of 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 calling matters, but only because the primary calling matters most.

This vital distinction between primary and secondary calling carries with it two challenges — first, to hold the two together and, second, to ensure that they are kept in the right order. In other words, if we understand calling, we must make sure that first things remain first and the primary calling always comes before the secondary calling. But we must also make sure that the primary calling leads without fail to the secondary calling.

WHERE ARE WE CALLED?

Missional callings are the ways that Christians join God in the work he is already doing to redeem humanity and renew all creation for his worship. God invites his people to join him in holistic mission by making disciples and renewing culture. Because Christianity is not merely a private endeavor but a public faith that brings grace into the culture, every Christian is called to do the work of the gospel right where they are, with actual people and through daily practices. Redeemer East Side has defined callings in three spheres: neighborhood, work and relationships. In these places we practice PEACE (Pause, Eat, Ask, Commune, Examine) and join the God who is already at work in them.



NEIGHBORHOOD

We are sent into the neighborhoods in which we are rooted, to love people where they are, serve the community and seek justice for all who are nearby and those in need.

WORK

We are sent into our workplaces to pursue justice, serve others, and bring cultural renewal.

RELATIONSHIPS

We are sent into every relationship — family and friends — for evangelism, reconciliation, and love.

NEIGHBORHOOD

Everyone relates to their neighbors differently. Some play games and have cookouts on the sidewalk. Others avoid their neighbors and treat their home as simply a place to rest their head. Some see it as a place to develop land or make money off of others. God is clear that being an apathetic or cruel neighbor is not an option. When Jesus said to “love your neighbor as yourself” he did not mean it as a choice. If you’re wondering how to love your neighbor, or who your neighbor is, Jesus already answered that for us all. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ says that loving our neighbor takes intentionality and cost, and that our neighbors are not just those we enjoy. Sometimes they are those who are supposed to be our enemies. Issues of injustice, poverty, hunger, racism, greed, idolatry, consumerism and more must all be combated by those who follow Christ, because they affect our neighbors. This precious calling is not one that needs to be turned into a national movement, nor should it be approached flippantly. We can approach it with humility and hope. Through prayer, God’s word, and community, we can love our neighbors as ourselves, because God has loved us first.



LOVING THE ONE NEXT TO YOU

Jesus' commandment to "Love your neighbor as yourself" seems fairly self-explanatory at face value, but deeper reflection reveals the true weight of these famous words. The biblical translator Sarah Ruden notes that neighbor here literally means *the one next to you*. Taking this command seriously would therefore radically transform every subway commute, restaurant visit, and elevator ride. It's no wonder that such a staggering command was met with an immediate clarifying question: "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). In response, Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referenced this parable in the speech he delivered in support of the striking sanitation workers in Memphis, TN on April 3, 1968 — the day before he was assassinated. He called his listeners to love their neighbors and to "develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness." In his speech King described his personal experience of the Jericho road and told us how to become dangerously unselfish.

The Jericho road is a dangerous road. I remember when Mrs. King and I were first in Jerusalem. We rented a car and drove from Jerusalem down to Jericho. And as soon as we got on that road, I said to my wife, "I can see why Jesus used this as the setting for his parable." It's a winding, meandering road. It's really conducive for ambushing. You start out in Jerusalem, which is about...1200 feet above sea level. And by the time you get down to Jericho, fifteen or twenty minutes later, you're about 2200 feet below sea level. That's a dangerous road. In the days of Jesus it came to be known as the "Bloody Pass." And you know, it's possible that the priest and the Levite looked over that man on the ground and wondered if the robbers were still around. Or it's possible that they felt that the man on the ground was merely faking. And he was acting like he had been robbed and hurt, in order to seize them over there, lure them there for quick and easy seizure. And so, the first question that the priest [and] the Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But then the Good Samaritan came by. And he reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

This is the question for each of us: "If I do not stop to help my neighbor in need, what will happen to them?" May we all have the courage and compassion to love our neighbors and to care for our neighborhoods.

WORK

Work is exhilarating and monotonous, at different times a source of joy or of dread. The Bible introduces God as a creative worker and the giver of meaningful work, though this good gift of work was not spared from the fall. What was made to be beautiful and seed-bearing has been distorted into painful, thorn-producing labor (Genesis 3:17–19). Most of us feel this tension in our day to day work. And yet, far from being a “necessary evil,” work invites us into collaboration with the Creator. Wherever we are circumstantially, we can join in God’s overarching work in the world — the renewal of all things. The gospel doesn’t necessarily make work easier, but it integrates our work with the larger renewing purposes of God. God’s purposes lay the foundation for another city, one built not on pride and human accomplishment but rather on faithful participation and anticipation that looks “forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10). Thus, Christians live and work in the world as citizens of God’s coming city. This changes their work, so that they are no longer driven by self-promotion but instead work “with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord” (Colossians 3:22–24). Counterculturally, Christians pursue justice rather than selfish ambition, lead others by serving them, and prioritize resting from their labors. In these ways they point to the work of God’s grace and his coming kingdom.



MEANING IN THE MUNDANITY

We're living in The Great Resignation, as millions of Americans have quit their jobs in the midst of discouragement and dissatisfaction. In the grind of our daily work we can so easily lose sight of the opportunities God has laid in front of us, but through Christ it's possible to be agents of renewal no matter how thinly stretched we may be. Caroline Jones recounts a story about the beauty that comes from faithful work, even on mundane tasks:

I watched a man making a pavement in Melbourne in a busy city street: the concrete was poured and he had his little trowel and there was traffic roaring around, there were cranes and machines going, and this man was on his hands and knees lovingly making a beautiful little corner on the kerb. That's a sort of love...That man's job is important and he's a bit of a hero for doing it like that...Love involves that as much as it involves what happens between people. It's about one's relationship between oneself and the world and its people and its creatures and its plants, its ideas.

John Coltrane, the great American composer and saxophonist, understood this well. He viewed his work as an act of love which pointed to the Source of love: God. Coltrane's liner notes from his 1965 masterpiece *A Love Supreme* beautifully articulate his theology of work:

At this time I would like to tell you that NO MATTER WHAT ... IT IS WITH GOD. HE IS GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL. HIS WAY IS IN LOVE, THROUGH WHICH WE ALL ARE. IT IS TRULY — A LOVE SUPREME.

This album is a humble offering to Him. An attempt to say "THANK YOU GOD" through our work, even as we do in our hearts and with our tongues. May He help and strengthen all men in every good endeavor.

Indeed, even when we struggle to find satisfaction in our work, may God strengthen all of us in every good endeavor, and may we each learn to say *THANK YOU GOD* through our very work.

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are central to human existence. They are also central to the Christian life. From the very beginning we are told: “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). We see that God created us in such a way that from the start, we’ve needed the companionship of others in order to be fulfilled. Without healthy, life-giving relationships we cannot flourish as God intended. Unfortunately, as soon as human beings disobeyed God and sin entered the picture, relationships quickly went awry. Alienation began to characterize our existence. Betrayal, rivalry, jealousy, envy and a host of other behaviors soured human relationships. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends could all turn against each other — and often did. Although we turned from God and others, God was not content to leave us in that state. The redemption that God accomplished through Jesus restored human relationship with God but also with one another. Christians are called to enter every relationship as Jesus did, for love and reconciliation.



APPRECIATING THE MESSINESS

The New Testament is filled with “one-another” statements which reinforce the connection between our faith in Jesus and the way we treat those around us. Here are just a few:

- Love one another (John 13:34, This command occurs at least 16 times)
- Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
- Honor one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10)
- Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)
- Build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
- Admonish one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16)
- Greet one another (Romans 16:16)
- Care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)
- Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)
- Be patient with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)

This list presents a beautiful depiction of community, but when we venture out into our relationships, we soon discover they are often also messy and challenging. Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp are aware of this reality, but they see it as a reason to press on, and not to give up. In their book *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*, they write:

Have you ever wondered why God doesn't just make your relationships better overnight? We often think that if God really cared for us, he would make our relationships easier. We would prefer that God would just change the relationship, but he won't be content until the relationship changes us too. This is how God created relationships to function. What happens in the messiness of relationships is that our hearts are revealed, our weaknesses are exposed, and we start coming to the end of ourselves. Only when this happens do we reach out for the help God alone can provide. This work will only be complete in heaven, but there is much we can enjoy now. The New Testament offers hope that our relationships can be characterized by things like humility, gentleness, patience, edifying honesty, peace, forgiveness, compassion, and love.

As you pray for God to work in the lives of those around you, don't be discouraged if things get messier. It is often in the mess where the Messiah is most at work.

Excerpts from Relationships: a Mess worth Making by Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp

WHO ARE WE CALLED TO?*

Prayerfully list out the many people in your life, even those you barely know. Wherever you feel called, trust that God can work through you in unexpected ways.

NEIGHBORHOOD

Consider those around you — your neighbors who are homeless or in the apartment next door, your favorite barista or halal cart vendor, your doorman or landlord, workers at nearby schools or non-profits.

WORK

Consider those at your place of work — your colleagues, customers, clients, or office's custodians, and all those who are impacted by your work.

RELATIONSHIPS

Consider those with whom you have a relationship — friends, roommates, spouses or significant others, family members, ministers, mentors or mentees.

**Okay fine, anyone who's allergic to dangling prepositions, you caught us. We know this technically should be "to whom are we called?" but it just didn't fit stylistically with the other headers. ∩(∩)∩*

HOW DO WE LIVE OUT OUR CALLING?

Frederick Buechner says, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Describe where you feel God specifically calling you — the location, features, challenges and beauty. Why are you drawn to it?



INVITATION TO PRAYER

Prayer is the most significant thing that we can dedicate our time to in pursuit of bringing shalom to the places and people that God has put in our lives. Time spent alone with God interceding on behalf of others builds within us compassion and humility. It helps us realize that it is only God who can drive hearts to himself.

This exercise is designed to help you focus your prayer for a season on 7 people in the place God has called you. Look on the previous page, where you've identified those in your neighborhood, work and relationships. Ask God to make clear 7 among that list who you'll commit to pray for. Circle these 7, and write them on the notecard on page 17. Trust that God will work through you. Use the following pages to write prayers, hopes or observations about those you're praying for.

TIPS FOR PRAYER

If you find that you do not know what to pray, first, remember that God knows our needs and the needs of those we love. In addition, you could:

- Insert their name as you pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13 "May your kingdom come and your will be done in _____'s life)
- Choose a Psalm and pray it over that person
- Simply write their name and the time of day that you prayed for them
- Draw a picture in hope for that person
- Jot down things that you know are going on in that person's life
- Claim a promise of God that has been true in your life, for that person



GOAL: To identify people for whom you will pray regularly (ideally daily) and intentionally point toward Christ.

SUGGESTED SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Frequency of contact / proximity
- Depth / importance of relationship
- Need (seeking, hurting)
- Your unique ability to meet those needs

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Can be non-Christians or professing Christians (through the blue portion of the spectrum), but we encourage you to consider including at least three professed non-Christians.
- Different people have varying capacity for intentional relationships. This tool can flex to reflect your time and resource constraints. The minimum commitment to a person on this list is simply regular prayer.

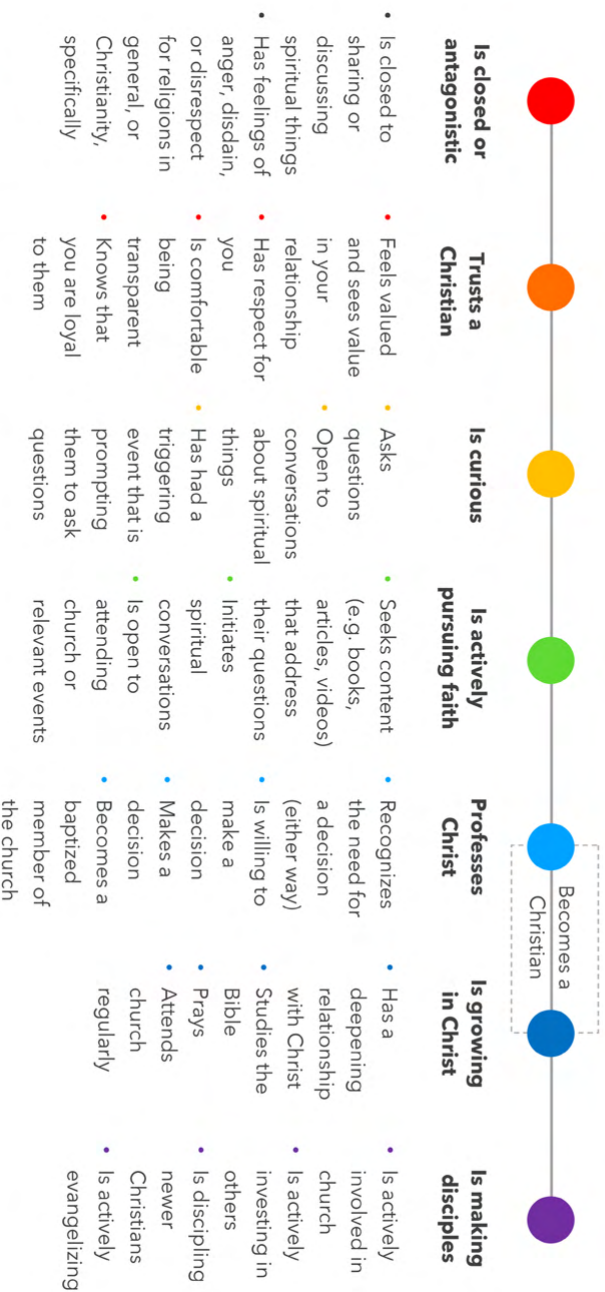
NAME YOUR 7 HERE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____



DISCIPLESHIP SPECTRUM

GOAL: To reflect on where your "7" are in their spiritual journey.



● Don't know where they are on the spectrum

NOTES

To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.
— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

NOTES

Matthew 7:7

Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

*To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning
of an uprising against the disorder of the world.*
— Karl Barth

NOTES

I call upon you my God, my mercy, who made me and did not forget me, although I forgot you...before I called upon you, you went ahead and helped me. — St. Augustine

We never know how God will answer our prayers, but we can expect that He will get us involved in His plan for the answer. If we are true intercessors, we must be ready to take part in God's work on behalf of the people for whom we pray. — Corrie Ten Boom

SIGNS OF RENEWAL

As you pray for others, make note of hopeful developments

A large grid of small, light gray dots arranged in a regular pattern, intended for taking notes. The grid covers most of the page area below the title and subtitle.

The mission is huge and our skills are small. The two are united in prayer. In prayer I experience the mission anew wrapped in assurances of divine power and joy. — Dietrich Bonhoeffer

There are parts of our calling, works of the Holy Spirit, and defeats of the darkness that will come no other way than through furious, fervent, faith-filled, unceasing prayer. — Beth Moore

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

What has God done in you and in others?

A large grid of small dots, arranged in approximately 20 columns and 30 rows, covering the majority of the page. This grid is intended for the user to write their answers to the question above.





Made with Love
In New York City
by Judson Bergman and Katie Hodge
©2022 Redeemer East Side

