

Fresh Start
Week 6: Primary Calling

You've just seen an example of how Jen is discovering her Be, Do, and Go.

That's what we've been talking about in the last few weeks. **A fresh start for God's people means that we need to take a fresh look at our calling.** Your calling is the coming together of how God has **uniquely designed you**, things that he has **designed you to do**, and the **places he wants you to do them**. We have been describing this as your **Be, Do, and Go**.

Where did we get this way of looking at calling? **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10 ESV**

You can find those three elements within this scripture. **"For we are his workmanship" ...Be**
"created in Christ Jesus for good works" ...Do Your unique design is for good works.
"which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" ...Go.

It starts with your unique design. Out of that design there are good works that God has prepared in advance that you will do. You were made for these things. Then there is a **part of society where you are to do these good things that will have an impact on others.**

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That is with the lens of the camera zoomed in on you. Now let's **broaden the view** to all of God's people, his church, as we all operate in our calling.²² **And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:22-23**

We become living water that flows into every crevice of society, filling it with the fullness of Jesus. We take his presence everywhere.

Today, I want to take a look at not what is different about each of what God is calling us to, but rather what is the same. Here's what I mean...**At our core we have the same identity, mission, and location.**

There is this part at the core of what God wants for you that is really for all of us. **It's what connects your unique Be, Do, and Go with mine.**

What is the same for all Christ followers, disciples of Jesus? This is what we call our...**Primary calling.**

In our primary calling, we have the family business passed on to us. That is spreading the fullness of God, everything, and making disciples as we go. Our unique calling is what actual role we will have within that family business.

Start with what is obvious, what is not unique to you. **Core Identity: Be a disciple of Jesus who seeks to have God's fullness maturing in me.**

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The best way to describe this is with the word allegiance. Allegiance is "loyalty or commitment of a subordinate to a superior." We are loyal and committed to Jesus. Or if you want to approach it as **love for God.**

It takes allegiance to live this verse. **Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23**

Allegiance is not dependent upon whether things are always pleasant for me. This is like **wedding vows**, for richer or poorer, in sickness and health, to love and to cherish, till death parts us.

This is what **allegiance looks like** in practical matters. This is what it means to "**be**" a disciple. **Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Hebrews 12:1-2**

Jesus' commitment to his father is our example of what allegiance or being a disciple is.

The image is a long distance race, like Jen's swim around Mackinac Island. She didn't take anything into

the water that would cause her to slow down and eventually sink. It's like running a marathon with **shoelaces untied** and a long flowing robe or dress. That's just asking to take a tumble.

The Holy Spirit reveals what is weighing me down... This is the "sideways energy". This makes moving forward harder, less efficient.

The Holy Spirit reveals the sin that will eventually cause me to fall. These things don't just make it hard, they will **eventually stop us from moving** forward and will cause **pain**.

We will have endurance if we run the race while keeping our eyes on Jesus and how good he is...

All that stuff about Jesus receiving joy and a seat of honor; we get to join him in that when we join him in the struggle.

Here's how we put it all together. **A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus and committed to Jesus' mission.**

Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" Being a disciple and maturing in the fullness of God means learning how to do this from Jesus. **More about this later...**

Another way of describing God's fullness is salt and light. Like water, they **flavor everything** and they **illuminate all darkness**.¹³ **You are the salt of the**

earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.¹⁴ **You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden.**
Matthew 5:13-14

I'm using this illustration because I think it's helpful, but also because it's fun to say. Robin put me in charge of preparing our bridge group dinner so it's ready for the oven. The cut of meat is called a Pork Butt. That's what it said on the label. Yes, I can say Pork Butt because that's what it's called. Robin then told me to unwrap the Pork Butt and place it fatty side up in the roaster. Then put the seasoning mixture heavy across the top and onto the sides. Why do this?

Making the Kingdom of God present for others.

My core identity and yours is to be someone who is learning how to have the living water of God's presence, the flavor of Jesus, seep into every part of society.

This brings us back to Jesus saying he would, "show you how to fish for people."

Core Mission: Carry Jesus' fullness to others, helping others follow Jesus.

Doing is the overflow from our being. 119

If it isn't connected with being a disciple, then it will get off the rails and follow our pursuit of something worldly, even if it is good.

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This also causes an unnatural split between what is spiritual, me being a disciple, and what I do at work, play, etc.

As a teacher, an engineer, a medical professional, it is different to view those jobs as a part of your calling and how you take the fullness of Christ. It's about viewing what you are already doing differently.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

This is called the **great commission**. To be a commission is to be **given a task to complete as well as the authority and resources to go do it**. "You are the one I want to go do this and I will give you everything you need to do it." **Do you believe that God has given you the authority and will give the resources to do this?** That really is the only pertinent question.

It's ok to say I have no idea how to do that. Here's what I did. I was a pastor who had delegated his personal responsibility to be a disciple maker for the safety of preaching and top down leadership. What I decided was to start being a disciple making pastor and father by just starting to be intentional with my time. I didn't know what I was doing. I just started viewing my time with my son's differently and with my staff people.

Start with time and being intentional and add to that a desire to grow into this part of your primary calling.

Listen to the quote from Todd Wilson, a man who has taken the lead in helping God's people find their calling. "What would be different if we wholeheartedly embraced measuring our **primary legacy** in this temporal life not by our personal accomplishment but rather by the impact of people we invested heavily in discipling each year?" 122

Demystify what a discipling relationship is. Bob's relationship with the old guys at Cultivate is a discipling relationship. **It's not a class, a program, or something that happens in the church building at a particular time.** It's sharing your life and since you are one in whom Christ dwells, you share that too.

We will give you tools to help you do this more effectively and in a way **where you continue to gain confidence.**

Finally, we have a...**Core Position: Where I am.**

This is where we are able to see that we are a part of that living water, the fullness of Jesus going everywhere. **Where I am when I work, play, relax, eat...is my core position.**

This is based upon God being in charge. He placed you where you are, it isn't random. You are a part of the water that is **spreading by gravity** everywhere. **You are**

settled into where you spend your days. It's not a grass is greener idea.

I remember hearing an inmate in a **jail near Chicago** talking about being sent down state to a state prison. He said, if that is where God sends me, then I will do what I am doing here, there. That was being a part of the prison ministry and telling his story of God being alive in the middle of his mistakes and sin.

That convict had to see the value of where he was or he was not going to be able to view any change properly.

21"The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together! Matthew 25:21

There are great things that God has for people to do, but they **haven't been faithful with what is right in front of them. Remember, if you are one in whom Christ dwells, your mere presence matters; it is the fullness of Jesus.** It's like the priest who passes up the man injured by the road because he is on way to something really important in Jerusalem.

You have to view yourself differently, that's the trick. You can't give into the three things that will sidetrack you, **pride, fear, or regret.** No, **you don't get to do your own thing if you go in this direction of understanding your calling. That's the pride, a diversion. And yes, it is scary to trust, but look who**

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you are trusting, the one who died for you. He is the one who created and designed for such a time and place as here and now. And finally, you have to not be **diverted by regret. That will keep you from viewing yourself this way.**

Here's someone who was able to see herself as God was calling her to be, even though she had lots of reason not to. This is a young woman named **Esther.** She was young and beautiful and chosen by the king to be his queen. She was Jewish, the king was not. There was a conspiracy within the kingdom to do away with the Jewish people. **The king was getting tricked into signing** something that would make this happen.

These are the words of her uncle when she is trying to decide to ask the king to stop this from happening. It was risky because the king could have her killed and go find another pretty young girl to be at his beck and call. **If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"** Esther 4:14

This is where she was. She was in the position of queen. She wasn't thinking about being queen during **10th grade algebra class.** That kind of thing just didn't happen. But that's where she ended up.

Where you are matters, because God has allowed it. Your presence is powerful right where you are. **Where you are is where there are hurting**

people. Where you

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are is where there are **people who have decided that what they are doing isn't working**. Where you are is where there are **lonely people** who don't know how to make friends. Where you are is where there are **marginalized people**.

"What if 'go' is really about engaging our calling? As we've discussed, the mission of the church is to carry the fullness of Jesus into every corner of society. That mission finds its context wherever we physically locate ourselves in the world. You might say our calling has an element of 'plug and play.' We plug in wherever we are and make disciples." More, pg. 134

To engage is to participate in or to cause something to be involved. An illustration for "engaging"...

This is like when the **engine is running in your car sitting in your driveway**. To engage would be to put it into gear. Now the power being produced gets the car involved in forward motion, or heading down the road. **After all, that is what a car is meant to do**. It has to be engaged so that it can become involved in the activity a car was designed to do and that is to move people to where they need or want to go. Without engaging it is simply a **very noisy expensive lawn ornament** or a comfortable place to sit and listen to the radio, text or talk on your phone.

Let's look at Ephesians 2:10 again. **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.** Ephesians 2:10 ESV

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This is about strategically engaging where I am right now so that when I walk into these good works God has prepared, I'll be ready to plug in. I will recognize it as an opportunity.

Here's how it looks. **More, diagram**

Steps to a Fresh Start:

1. Rehabilitate how you see yourself

Here's one way to begin to do that. It's a prayer I wrote. I'm going to challenge us to use this to ask God to help us engage in what he has for us at our core.

Thank you God for making me a unique masterpiece. **Help me** to see myself as you see me, not as I in my brokenness have labeled myself. **Show me** more and more how I have been designed for loving others like you would and for helping those who are being drawn to you learn to follow you. **Give me** the ability to see when I am walking into something that you have designed me to do. **Give me** the courage to trust you in those moments. May your kingdom, the restoration of your authority over all things, come here, as it already exists in heaven. I commit to go into my day understanding that I am a part of your presence, your fullness being spread throughout our society. **I give** your Holy Spirit the freedom to transform me into in any way necessary to be this kind of person. Thank you that I am able to be a part of something so big and eternal.