**Introduction:** Fred’s call into full-time ministry

**Five diagnostic questions:**

1. Have you ever considered going into full-time ministry work?

2. What motivated you to consider it?

3. What hindered you from moving in that direction?

4. Do full-time Christian workers have a “special place” in God’s heart?

5. Final Question: Was God more pleased with Jesus at age 28 as a carpenter—or more pleased with Him as a preacher at age 31? Why / Why not?

**Some important definitions:**

**Job:** What I do to earn a living

**Career:** What I build to create a life

**Vocation:** What God calls me to do to fulfill His highest purposes in me and through me for His glory and my joy.

**What is your “Calling”?**
A biblical perspective of “Calling”

*Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called…*

Ephesians 4:1 (NASB)

1. **God calls us to a PERSON**
   - Jesus said, “Come to unto Me…”
   - Ephesians 1:18
   - 1 Corinthians 1:9
   - Matthew 11:28 (KJV)

2. **God calls us to a PURPOSE**
   - Jesus said, “Be ye perfect…”
   - Ephesians 4:13
   - Romans 8:28-30
   - Matthew 5:48 (KJV)

3. **God calls us to A PEOPLE**
   - Jesus said, “Upon this rock I will build My church…”
   - Matthew 16:18 (NIV)
   - “Follow Me and I will make you…”
   - Matthew 4:19 (NIV)

4. **God calls us into a PROCESS**
   - Jesus said, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness…”
   - 1 Thessalonians 4:7
   - Ephesians 4:17-6:20
   - Matthew 6:33 (KJV)
   - Called to walk in the **light**.
   - Ephesians 4:17-32
   - Called to walk in **love**.
   - Ephesians 5:1-14
   - Called to walk in **wisdom**.
   - Ephesians 5:15-6:20
     - With God
     - Ephesians 5:15-21
     - With our mate
     - Ephesians 5:22-33
     - With our children
     - Ephesians 6:1-4
     - In our work
     - Ephesians 6:5-9

5. **God calls us to DIFFERENT PLACES**
Implications of your “Calling” on your work:

1. Work is not about finding a **JOB** to pay the bills.

2. Work is not even about building a **CAREER** for a successful life.

3. Work is a “vocation” (a calling) that places you where you do what God created/ designed you to do in order to fulfill His highest purposes in you and through you for His glory and your joy.

4. Work flows out of a relationship with Christ (inward) to external activity we do (outward) that impacts our culture and community (onward) to the glory of God (upward).

“Work is not a curse—it is, in fact, where the war is fought… the burning question for most Christians should be: How can my life count for the glory of God in my secular vocation?”

*Don’t Waste Your Life*, John Piper (pg 135)

“… how different things would be if each Christian—each ordinary lay person felt himself called by God to his daily work. Felt herself called to her daily work. As much called as any clergy, religious professional, or missionary. How different would the church be? How different would the world be?”

*Why is Our Work a High Calling?*, Howard E. Butt, Jr.
(from Quarterly Connections, pg 1)
Discussion/ Application Questions:

1. What new insights did you get about work? About a calling?

2. How did you answer the five diagnostic questions when you first heard them? How would you answer them now?

3. What aspects of “God’s calling” apply to all believers, and which are individual and specific in nature?

4. How are you currently responding to God’s call on your life…?
   - to Himself?
   - to His purpose?
   - to His people?
   - to His process?
   - to His place for you?

5. What questions did this message raise in your mind and heart? Share them and listen to what God is saying to others as well.

Additional Resources:

*The Call* by Os Guinness - book
*Holy Ambition* by Chip Ingram - book, CD series
*Good to Great in God’s Eyes* by Chip Ingram - book, CD series
Introduction: Questions to ponder

- How can we live above the daily grind?

- Why are the great majority of people dissatisfied with their jobs?

- How can the place where we spend the majority of our waking hours be transformed from drudgery to delight?

The Answer: We must totally rethink our view and attitudes about work.

“Work is to be seen not as a necessary drudgery to be undergone for the purpose of making money, but as a way of life in which the nature of man should find his proper exercise and delight and so fulfill itself to the glory of God. It should, in fact, be thought of as a creative activity undertaken for the love of work itself; and man made in God’s image should make things as God makes them, for the sake of doing well, a thing worth well doing.”

Dorothy Sayers
Creed or Chaos (p 89), Sophia Institute Press 1949
A theology of work:

1. God is a worker.  
   Genesis 2:2-3

2. God created people to be His co-workers.  
   Genesis 2:15

3. Work after the Fall.  
   Genesis 3:17-19
   - Cursed/ Frustrated
   - Two Extreme Positions

4. Work under the Lordship of Christ.  
   Colossians 3:17
   - Work is a **CALLING** not a job.  
     Ephesians 4:1; 6:5-9
   - All work is **WORSHIP / SACRED**.  
     Colossians 3:23-24
     - Our work is to flow from God’s unique design and purpose for our lives.  
     Ephesians 2:10
     - The world says, “You are what you do. Work is your identity!”
     - God says, “Do what you are. Work is a stewardship!”
Implications of a biblical view of work:

1. Our work is to be done with excellence. 
   - Colossians 3

2. Our work is an extension of our worship and obedience. 
   - Ephesians 6:5-8

3. Our work is our primary ministry opportunity to display God’s work in us, reveal His character, model His compassion and concern for our fellow workers, and share His offer of salvation.

4. Work is by nature intrinsically good and has dignity in and of itself. (Christ worked as a carpenter.) 
   - Ephesians 4:28, Mark 6:3

5. Work is God’s primary means to financially provide for His children, His church, and for those in need. 
   - Matthew 6, 1 Timothy 5:8, Galatians 6:6, Ephesians 4:28

6. Work is not the means to significance, but rather the means to service, and fulfilling our calling. 
   - Ephesians 6:5-8

7. Work has lasting and eternal significance as we will work in the Millennium and receive eternal rewards for how we work. 
   - Isaiah 65:21-25, Ephesians 6:5-9
Discussion/ Application Questions:

1. How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with your job? Why?

2. What new insights did you gain about work?

3. Why is the work of a lay person committed to Christ just as important as a pastor’s in the church?

4. What attitude and/or changes need to happen in you for your work to be an extension of worship, ministry, and loving others?

Additional Resources:

- *Don’t Waste Your Life* by John Piper - book
- *Good to Great in God’s Eyes* by Chip Ingram - book, CD series
Introduction: “What’s in a job anyway?”

Five paradigms:

- Paradigm # 1 - Work is evil ________

- Paradigm # 2 - Work is everything ________

- Paradigm # 3 - Work is an obligation ________

- Paradigm # 4 - Work is strategic ________

- Paradigm # 5 - Work is a calling ________
How can you work for God wherever you work?

Four principles:

1. Christians are to obey and honor their supervisors as an act of worship to Christ. Ephesians 6:5
   How?
   - With fear and trembling
   - With sincerity - singleness of heart
   - As work done for Christ
   
   Key Word = WORSHIP

2. Christians are to make pleasing God their goal, not impressing people at work. Ephesians 6:6-7
   How?
   - As slaves to Christ
   - Doing God’s will
   - With good will

   Key Word = EXCELLENCE
3. Christians can endure and excel even in difficult work situations because of the certainty of God’s reward. Ephesians 6:8

How?
- “Knowing” with certainty
- Trusting God’s promise of reciprocity

Key Word = MOTIVATION

4. Christian bosses and employers must treat employees with concern, respect, and fairness as they will be held accountable by God. Ephesians 6:9

How?
- Stop threatening and intimidating
- Treat them as Christ would
- You share a common “Master”

Key Word = RELATIONSHIP
Discussion/ Application Questions:

1. What “view of work” most characterizes your thinking?

2. With which of the 4 principles did you most resonate? Why?

3. What kind of impact did Christian slaves have on the world in the 1st century through their work?

4. How could your work become your primary ministry?

5. What would it look like for your work to become your primary platform for “doing God’s work?”

6. What changes in attitude, behavior, schedule, or priorities would have to happen for your work to be your primary ministry?

Additional Resources:

*Unlock Your Legacy* by Paul J. Meyer - book

*Five Lies that Ruin Relationship* by Chip Ingram - CD series/DVD small group kit

*Holy Ambition* by Chip Ingram - book/ CD series

*Good to Great in God’s Eyes* by Chip Ingram - book/CD series
Introduction: Discover your calling

“It takes great courage for men and women to discover their calling. After all, it may not be what you are doing now, and to face your calling squarely may cause some significant disruption in your life.”

*Prioritize* by Joe Calhoun and Bruce Jeffrey

“If we human beings are never happier than when we are expressing the deepest gifts that are truly us.”

*The Call* by Os Guinness

“The vast majority of individuals spend most of their lives focused on activities where they are either incompetent or merely competent. Only rarely do their excellent abilities come into play, and almost never do they experience uniqueness.”

*Business Consultant* by Dan Sullivan

Two Diagnostic Questions to Ponder:

1. What would you really like to do if you could do anything in the world?

2. What are a few things that “you’re good at” and “you really enjoy doing?”

Two Facts to Remember:

1. You are fearfully, wonderfully, and uniquely made by God. Psalm 139

2. Your unique design (abilities, gifts, and desires) was fashioned by God to equip you to fulfill your unique purpose and calling in life. Ephesians 2:10
5 truths about calling:

1. It’s yours alone
2. It calls on your unique gifts
3. Your calling calls on your unique desires
4. Your calling gives you strength and keeps you humble
5. Discovering your calling can be the result of a moment or the unfolding of years

How to discover your calling in life:

1. Examine Your S.H.A.P.E.

   - **Spiritual Gifts**—What are yours? Primary or Motivational Gift?
     Romans 12
     1 Corinthians 12, 14
     Ephesians 4

   - **Heart**—What are you passionate about? What are your deepest desires?
     What do you dream about?
     Psalm 37:4

   - **Abilities**—What are you good at? What are your strengths, natural gifts, talents?
     Romans 12:3
Personality—How are you wired as you relate to people? Are you an introvert? Extrovert? What recharges your emotional battery?

Experience—What have you done? How has God been preparing your life as you look in the “rearview mirror” for what He has called you to do?

2. Get honest, wise counsel about who you are, your gifts, and abilities, where you fit, and how to move forward.

_In the multitude of counsel there is safety…_ Proverbs 22:17-18

3. Be willing to move out of your comfort zone to fulfill your divine purpose on earth.

_Hebrews 11:6_

4. Make a personal commitment to discover God’s calling on your life so you can honor your Creator and Designer and impact your world and beyond.

_Ephesians 2:10_

_I, ___________ ____________ , commit to discover God’s calling for my life so that I might fulfill His highest purposes in me and through me for His glory and my joy._
Discussion/ Application Questions:

1. On a scale or 1 (low) – 10 (high), how satisfied and fulfilled are you in your present occupation?

2. On a scale of 1 (low) – 10 (high), how much do you consider your job as an actual “calling” from God versus merely a means of income?

3. List 5 friends who would give you honest feedback concerning your strengths, gifts, passions, and abilities.

4. What would you really like to do if money and opportunity were not a problem?

5. What have you done in the past that highly motivated you and served and helped others as you did it?

Additional Resources:

*The Call* by Os Guinness - book
*Your Divine Design: How to Discover Your Spiritual Gift* by Chip Ingram - CD/DVD series
*Priorities* by Calhoun and Jeffrey - book
*Half-time and Gameplan* by Bob Buford - book