

A "COMPASS" FOR FINDING YOUR VOCATIONAL CALLING

Before being called to something, we are called to Someone. Before we are called to do, we are called to be. Our primary calling is to be in a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that God has called us into fellowship with his Son. God created us and knows our strengths, weaknesses, dreams, and fears. In spite of our imperfections, God loves us perfectly and completely. He wants us close to him. He calls us to belong to him.

You are called to a personal relationship with the God who created you. The only way to find the ultimate purpose of your life is by responding to God's call to enter into a personal relationship with him. God loves you with an everlasting love and has a wonderful purpose for your life for now and all of eternity. Jesus said, "My purpose is to give life in all its fullness" (John 10:10).

You have an intrinsic design that seeks expression. Within each one of us resides a special combination of gifts: talents, interests, skills, personality traits and much more. There has never been anyone else like you in human history, and there never will be another "you" ever again. Think about that! It is a stunning thought to comprehend! All of God's creation has purpose, and you are no exception. You are called to be "you": the unique, gifted, capable person who was designed by God and created to fulfill a divinely appointed purpose with your life.

Your inherent design is the foundation of your individual vocational calling. Think of your vocational calling as work or volunteer activities that use your gifts. However, discovering your design

and finding a place to use your gifts can be challenging. The world around us changes rapidly and presents us with a staggering number of choices. How do we choose which career path to take? And, more importantly, how do we discern what God wants us to do with our life and gifts? When we are unsure of which way to go, it is helpful to have a compass for guidance.

Our Human Dilemma

A compass helps us navigate the many choices that we think are the right way to go. Remember, we are separated from God by sin. Therefore we are like an electric light bulb whose cord has been cut in half and thus is disconnected from the power source. The Bible tells us that we all have sinned and "fallen short" of God's standard (Romans 3:23). Sin means, "missing the mark," and includes both things we do and those we fail to do. Sin has its own negative consequences which include missing our calling, spiritual death, and, ultimately, eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23). We cannot respond to God's love on our own. We need his help to "repair" our brokenness, restore the power connection, and make us whole. That's where the compass comes into play in our lives.

God's Gracious Solution to Our Dilemma

God loves us so much that he provided a solution for our predicament. He sent his own sinless Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from the consequences of our sin (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus Christ died on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins. He suffered the consequences of our sin, paying with his life to ransom us from eternal death. Speaking about himself, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Through Jesus, we can be “re-connected” to God and experience the life for which we have longed. Jesus Christ is God’s provision for our sin. He provides the only way to have our relationship restored with God. Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). God offers us the gifts of his forgiveness for our sins, a personal relationship with him, the opportunity to fulfill the purpose for which we were created, and eternal life in his kingdom. These gifts can be ours because Christ paid the price for our sins. Jesus through His loving self-sacrifice is our “compass” for navigating life’s choices and decisions.

Biblical "Compass Principles" for Discovering Your Calling

A compass points to "true north," which is an objective, external reality that we depend on for direction. Similarly, eternal truths exist that provide a true north orientation for your life. Biblical "compass principles" will keep you on course as you search for your vocational calling. Keeping our eyes focused intently on Jesus as the power source of our “compass” will hold us squarely on course, even when we don’t clearly see the His will for our lives.

God calls you to keep your primary calling primary. Your primary calling is to a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. God calls you first to salvation, and then to discipleship (see verses such as 1 Corinthians 1:9, Romans 1:6, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 1:9, Galatians 5:13, Ephesians 4:1). With God's power, you can be transformed into the extraordinary individual he intends you to be. When you keep your relationship with God at the center of your life, he can equip and empower you to do the special things he designed you to do.

Are Americans Bible Believers?

The short answer, apparently, is “no.” A corollary to this, according to George Barna, is that many of the moral and spiritual problems we face can be traced to attitudes behind this answer. The longer answer is that some of us do, a mind-numbing 4 out of 100. That’s the bad news. The really bad news is that only 9% of self-described born again Christians believe the Bible. Barna calls it a “Biblical worldview.” Here is the definition that investigators asked 2,033 American adults to respond to: For the purposes of the research, a biblical worldview was defined as believing that absolute moral truths exist; that such truth is defined by the Bible; and firm belief in six specific religious views. Those views were that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life; God is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe and He stills rules it today; salvation is a gift from God and cannot be earned; Satan is real; a Christian has a responsibility to share their faith in Christ with other people; and the Bible is accurate in all of its teachings.

Those with a Biblical worldview according to this definition had strikingly different views about morality. Comparing the perspectives of those who have a biblical worldview with those who do not, finds them 31 times less likely to accept cohabitation (2% versus 62%, respectively); 18 times less likely to endorse drunkenness (2% versus 36%); 15 times less likely to condone gay sex (2% versus 31%); 12 times less likely to accept profanity 3% versus 37%); and 11 times less likely to describe adultery as morally acceptable (4% versus 44%). In addition, less than one-half of one percent of those with a biblical worldview said voluntary exposure to pornography was morally acceptable (compared to 39% of other adults), and a similarly miniscule proportion endorsed abortion (compared to 46% of adults who lack a biblical worldview).

**69% Say Liberals Too Secular,
49% Say Conservatives Too Assertive
MANY AMERICANS UNEASY WITH
MIX OF RELIGION AND POLITICS**

The relationship between religion and politics is a controversial one. While the public remains more supportive of religion's role in public life than in the 1960s, Americans are uneasy with the approaches offered by both liberals and conservatives. Fully 69% of Americans say that liberals have gone too far in keeping religion out of schools and government. But the proportion who express reservations about attempts by Christian conservatives to impose their religious values has edged up in the past year, with about half the public (49%) now expressing wariness about this.



The Democratic Party continues to face a serious "God problem," with just 26% saying the party is friendly to religion. However, the proportion of Americans who say the Republican Party is friendly to religion, while much larger, has fallen from 55% to 47% in the past year, with a particularly sharp decline coming among white evangelical Protestants (14 percentage points).

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press and the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, conducted July 6-19 among 2,003 adults, finds that most Americans (59%) continue to say that religion's influence on the country is declining, and most of those who express this view believe that this is a bad thing. The public is more divided on the question of whether religion's influence on gov-

ernment is increasing (42%) or decreasing (45%). And in contrast to views of religion's influence on the country, most of those who think that religion is increasing its influence on government leaders and institutions view this as a bad thing. The survey finds that religious conservatives, and white evangelical Christians specifically, have no equal and opposite group on the religious left. About 7% of the public say they identify with the "religious left" political movement. That is not much smaller than the 11% who identify themselves as members of the "religious right," but the religious left is considerably less cohesive in its political views than the religious right.

The survey traced the spiritual roots of the religious right and left to two broader faith communities. On the right, white evangelical Christians comprise 24% of the population and form a distinct group whose members share core religious beliefs as well as crystallized and consistently conservative political attitudes.

On the left, a larger share of the public (32%) identifies as "liberal or progressive Christians." But unlike evangelicals, progressive Christians come from different religious traditions and disagree almost as often as they agree on a number of key political and social issues.

These differences in the makeup of the religious left and right are an important reason why white evangelicals remain a more politically potent force. On issues ranging from the origins of life to Christ's second coming, evangelicals express distinctly different views from those held by the rest of the public and even other religious groups.

Source: The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Washington D.C.. The Pew Forum is a subsidiary of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Copyright 2006.
