



C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE STUDY GUIDE

**The Call: Finding and Fulfilling
God's Purpose For Your Life
by Os Guinness**

Joel S. Woodruff

**Including A Six-Part Video Series
with Os Guinness**



**A C.S. Lewis Institute Study Guide to
The Call: Finding and Fulfilling God's Purpose
For Your Life by Os Guinness**

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A CSLI Press Publication



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Take up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

—Matthew 16:24–26

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INTRODUCTION

Os Guinness's *The Call* has become a modern-day “classic” about calling or vocation from a Christian perspective. First published in 1998, it continues to be a best seller as people of all ages search for purpose, meaning, and fulfillment in life. As noted in the book, each chapter was “written as a series of individual meditations, to be read one day at a time,” with accompanying reflection questions to ponder.

This Study Guide was written to be used with the updated 2018 20th-Anniversary Edition of *The Call*, which was extended with four additional chapters, for a total of thirty chapters. It was designed to help the reader reflect upon one's calling over the course of a six-week period, although readers may adapt the schedule to their needs.

It is also recommended that this guide be used by small groups in churches and campus ministries. Many of the ideas and questions broached in this study are best fleshed out through group discussions.

HOW TO USE THIS CSLI STUDY GUIDE

A. Personal Study

“The greatest gift in life is life itself. Your life is not an accident. God wanted you to be. How then are you searching for purpose in your life, your own ultimate why for everything you do?”

In these opening sentences from *The Call*, author Os Guinness gets at the core question being addressed in this study, “What is your life purpose or the ‘why’ for everything you do?” If this question is one you wrestle with, have reflected upon or are questioning, or just find intriguing, this study is for you, and it will enrich your life.

This CSLI Study Guide is designed to help you dive into this modern classic, *The Call* (20th-Anniversary Edition) through a structured approach that gives you time to reflect on the truths, insights, and questions being raised.

The study is divided into six sections that enable you to work systematically and thoughtfully through this study. You will read through the book during the first five sections, covering on average six chapters each section. The final section features Os Guinness’s personal experience with Calling and consideration of a questionnaire (set forth in the appendix) written by Os Guinness that will help you assess where you are on the journey of life. By following this structure, you will be able to get the most out of the study as you’ll have time to think deeply and pray earnestly for God’s wisdom and guidance as you seek to know His calling for your life.

The Study Guide provides help from the author himself, Dr. Os Guinness, through a series of video interviews that will guide you through some of the major themes of the book and add some additional

nuggets of wisdom as you explore your own “call” and purpose in life. By watching the relevant video before doing the readings and other assignments for each section, you will be better prepared for this journey.

Each section of the study guide includes a **Bible study** that reflects some of the key themes of the book and helps ground you in God’s truth and His principles for discovering His calling on your life.

A **Word Study** for each section will help define key concepts and give you useful vocabulary for this important pursuit.

You’ll then be encouraged to **reflectively and slowly the chapters from *The Call*** covered in the section, and take time to **ponder the Reflection Questions** at the end of each chapter of the book. You might find it helpful to **keep a journal** as you walk through this study and write down your thoughts after pondering the Reflection Questions. By doing this on a regular basis, you’ll be giving yourself time to process the material, engage thoughtfully with the questions, and prayerfully ask for the Lord’s leading as you seek answers to these important questions as they pertain to your own purpose and calling in life. If you do this study on your own, we suggest that you spend **one week on each section**.

Each section also includes a **Make It Personal Action Assignment**. By following through on these assignments, you will have a richer experience and potentially gain greater clarity in discovering your calling.

Our hope is that by the end of this study, you will have (1) explored the biblical concept of calling, (2) taken time to get to know yourself and better discern God’s call upon your life, and (3) been given some directions on how to intentionally pursue your calling. More important, we pray that you will better know personally the One who has given you the call, our Lord Jesus Christ who calls all His disciples to “follow Me.”

B. Discussing *The Call* in a Small Group

Although you can complete this study on your own, you can go even deeper by studying in community. We encourage you to go through this study guide with a small group.

When your group meets to discuss the book, you can use the Reflection Questions at the end of each chapter of the book and the Bible Study and Word Study that you have personally worked through prior to the small group sessions to facilitate discussion.

You might also share what the Lord has taught you personally through the study and ways that you are more clearly discerning the Lord's next steps in your journey in discerning your calling.

At the end of each session, take time to pray for one another as you go out into the world to love and serve the Lord.

One approach for organizing your small group study would be to divide it into seven sessions, an introductory session followed by six additional sessions, corresponding to the six sections of the study guide. While the sessions can be scheduled based on the needs of the small group, we suggest that they be scheduled on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

Suggested Format for Seven Small Group Weekly or Bi-weekly Meetings

First Session: Introductory Meeting: Hand out books (be sure to use the 2018 20th-Anniversary edition of *The Call*) and study guides or arrange for participants to obtain these items in advance of the introductory meeting.

- Introduce yourselves to one another.
- Answer any questions related to the logistics for the group. Encourage the members of the group to commit to watching the relevant video, completing the Bible and word studies, doing the readings, pondering the Reflection Questions at the end of each chapter and completing the Make It Personal Action Assignments between meetings. Discuss how participants might allocate these assignments to complete them in the time between sessions (typically one or two weeks).

- You may want to sign a covenant in which you all agree to commit to actively engaging with the study for mutual encouragement and accountability.
- Reflect upon this question and discuss: “What people or experiences have influenced your thoughts and ideas about what a person should become or be doing in life?”
- Pray for one another and agree to do your homework prior to the next meeting by completing the assignments for Section 1: “What Does It Mean to Be ‘Called’?”

Second Session: “What Does It Mean to Be ‘Called’? or What Is Calling?”

Discussion of Section 1 Assignments: including the Video Interview #1, Bible Study, Word Study, Readings from **Chapters 1–6** in *The Call* and your responses to the Reflection Questions at the end of each book chapter.

You may also share with the group your own Prayer of Total Commitment, written in response to the Make It Personal Action Assignment.

Third Session: “You’ve Got to Serve Somebody, Who Will It Be?”

Discussion of Section 2 Assignments: including the Video Interview #2, Bible Study, Word Study, Readings from **Chapters 7–12** in *The Call* and your responses to the Reflection Questions at the end of each book chapter.

You may also share how the Make It Personal Action Assignment helped you understand your gifts and the audiences we face in life.

Fourth Session: “How Character and Virtue or the Lack Thereof Impact Calling”

Discussion of Section 3 Assignments: including the Video Interview #3, Bible Study, Word Study, Readings from **Chapters 13–18** in *The Call* and your responses to the Reflection Questions at the end of each book chapter.

You may share the examples of the seven virtues that came to your mind (and why) from the Make It Personal Action Assignment.

Fifth Session: “Integrating Our Faith and Calling into All of Life”

Discussion of Section 4 Assignments: including the Video Interview #4, Bible Study, Word Study, Readings from **Chapters 19–24** in *The Call* and your responses to the Reflection Questions at the end of each book chapter.

You may share insights gained from the Make It Personal Action Assignment, including how you steward the money and possessions God has given you and some of the challenges you have in sharing your faith.

Sixth Session: “What Is ‘Success,’ and How Do We Finish Well?”

Discussion of Section 5 Assignments: including the Video Interview #5, Bible Study, Word Study, Readings from **Chapters 25–30** in *The Call* and your responses to the Reflection Questions at the end of each book chapter.

You may also share from the Make It Personal Action Assignment some examples of success that have impacted your life.

Seventh Session: Final Meeting

Discussion of Section 6 Assignments: including the Video Interview #6.

Take time to share lessons learned, highlights discovered, and new ideas you’ve gained from this study of *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling God’s Purpose For Your Life*.

Read aloud the “Entrepreneurs of Life” Statement on pp. 304–305 of the 2018 20th-Anniversary Edition of *The Call* as a means of summarizing the main points of the book. What resonates with you in this statement? How does it help you in thinking about your own understanding of calling and living out your calling?

In groups of three or four, discuss, as you feel comfortable, your responses to the **To Each Our Task questionnaire**. Talk about ideas generated, things learned about yourself, and what you would like to “take away” from the thoughts, ideas, and goals raised in the questionnaire.

Continue the Calling Discernment Journey:

Reach out to a pastor, elder, or mentor and ask how they discerned their calling in life. Ask them to help you as you seek the Lord’s discernment in your own calling.

Gather a group of friends to go through this study together as you facilitate the group meetings. In this way you can help others reflect upon this important subject and help them discern God’s calling for their lives.



Jesus Calls the First Disciples

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

—Matthew 4:18–22

1

Section 1
(Chapters 1–6):
What Does It Mean to Be “Called”?
or What Is Calling?

This section will cover:

- What prompted Dr. Guinness to research and write on calling
- Why people throughout all ages and places have longed for purpose
- Why one must seek for truth and purpose
- How and why human identity is at the core of the issue
- Common misunderstandings of the idea of calling
- Biblical definition of calling
- The difference between our primary and secondary callings
- Our need for a holistic understanding of calling

Watch Interview #1: What Does It Mean to Be “Called”? or What Is Calling? (17 minutes)



Bible Study

Read the following Bible passages and respond to the questions:

Psalms 147:8–9

What is this passage saying about God’s position and role in the world?

Genesis 1:1–5

What is the primary implication of this passage about God and the created world?

Matthew 4:21–22

How does Matthew describe Jesus’s first interaction with James and John? What foundational principle do we see at work as it pertains to “calling”?

John 10:2–4

What are the dynamics between the shepherd and his sheep?
How does this apply in Jesus’s relationship with His disciples?
How is the idea of calling played out in this analogy?

Word Study on *ekklesia*—“Called out ones” = Assembly or church from *ek*, “out of,” and *klesis*, “a calling” (*kaleo*, “to call”)

The word *ecclesiology* or “the study of the called-out ones/church” comes from this Greek word. The implication is that God calls people out of the world and into His purposes to be a part of a new family or body of people, the church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2).

If you are an authentic follower of Jesus, you are automatically a part of “the called-out ones,” the church. The implication is that we come to understand more fully our calling as we participate in the local church and fellowship with our spiritual brothers and sisters, our fellow called-out ones.

For further study on *ecclesia*, follow the link below to the Blue Letter Bible, an online study Bible and *Strong’s Concordance*, a classic tool that is helpful in doing further word study. It will list the roots of the Greek word, help you pronounce the Greek word, show you how the word is used in various contexts and show you how many times the word is used in the Bible. Seeing how the word is used and translated can help you gain a deeper understanding of the word and the biblical author’s intent and help you deepen your study.

Blue Letter Bible article: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1577/kjv/tr/0-1/>

Strong’s Concordance Number: G1577 Greek: *ekklesia*

Read Introduction, “Two Words That Changed the World,” and Chapters 1–6 from *The Call*. Read each chapter slowly and thoughtfully.

Take a few minutes to **ponder the reflection questions** at the end of each book chapter. Consider journaling your responses.

Make It Personal Action Assignment:

- Write a personal prayer of total commitment to Jesus Christ.



The Great Servant

But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

—Matthew 20:25–28

2

Section 2
(Chapters 7–12):
You’ve Got to Serve Somebody,
Who Will It Be?

This section will cover:

- All gifts come from God
- How gifts are to be used and stewarded
- The nuances of “calling” and “vocation”
- The greatest challenges faced by Christians and the church today
- What it means to listen to God and obey
- Let God be God
- The audience of One
- Serving God through excellence
- Imitating and tutoring: keys to living out one’s calling

Watch Interview #2: You’ve Got to Serve Somebody, Who Will It Be? (20 minutes)



Bible Study

Read the following Bible passages and respond to the questions:

Exodus 3:1–15

Describe the interaction between God and Moses. What can we learn about God, and what can we learn from Moses in this encounter at the burning bush?

Romans 12:1–8

What does it mean to present your body as a “living sacrifice” to God?

What is the purpose of the gifts God gives to believers?

What gifts do you believe God has given you?

1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1

What does it mean to do everything to the glory of God?

In what ways should we consider others in the use of our gifts?

Word Study on *charis*—“Grace or gift”

“A gift of grace, a gift involving grace” (*charis*) on the part of God as the Giver, when He gives free gifts of eternal life and forgiveness of sin to sinners (Romans 5:15–16; 6:23; 11:29); or when He gives believers spiritual gifts by the power of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the church (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 12:4, 9, 28, 30–31; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6; 1 Peter 4:10).

The biblical truth that every follower of Jesus, or called-out one, has been given a *charis* or gift of grace implies that every believer has something important to offer in service to the church, the world, and to others. Taking the time to discern your particular gifts and then finding ways to put them into service is an important aspect of living out our calling not only in word, but also in deed.

For further study on *charis*, follow the link below to the Blue Letter Bible, an online study Bible and *Strong’s Concordance*, a classic tool that is helpful in doing further word study.

Blue Letter Bible: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5486/kjv/tr/0-1/>

Strong’s Concordance Number: G5486 Greek: *charisma*

Read Chapters 7–12 from *The Call*. Read each chapter slowly and thoughtfully.

Take a few minutes to **ponder the reflection questions** at the end of each chapter. Consider journaling your responses.

Make It Personal Action Assignment:

Make a list of your God-given gifts. If you need help, consider using a giftedness inventory such as *Clifton Strengths* and a Spiritual Gifts Inventory.

Make a list of the people or groups throughout your life for which you’ve felt like you needed to perform and demonstrate your worth and competence. Then put an “X” through those names and put GOD over the list as a symbol of “the audience of One.”



The Fruit of the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

—Galatians 5:22–24

3

Section 3
(Chapters 13–18):
How Character and Virtue or the Lack
Thereof Impact Calling

This section will cover:

- The moral responsibility of calling
- Why ethics matter in fulfilling our calling
- Why community matters
- Calling is both personal and corporate
- How to live out our calling within the church
- How Christ, Christian, and Christianity go together
- Owning up to our sins
- The journey of calling
- The dark side of calling—conceit/pride
- The danger of envy

Watch Interview #3: How Character and Virtue or the Lack Thereof Impact Calling (18 minutes)



Bible Study

Read the following Bible passages and respond to the questions:

1 Samuel 1:1–20

What can we learn from Hannah's character as she pursues God and brings before Him her request for a child?

Proverbs 16:1–19

What can we learn about making plans?

What role does the seeking of godly wisdom play in one's calling?

Philippians 2:1–11

What character trait of Jesus Christ is highlighted in this passage?

How can we emulate the character of Jesus in living out our own calling?

Word Study on *tapeinophrosune*— “Humility” or “Lowliness of mind”

“Lowliness of mind” (*tapeinos*, “under” and *phren*, “the mind”); in Acts 20:19, “humility of mind”; in Ephesians 4:2, “lowliness”; in Philippians 2:3, “lowliness of mind”; in Colossians 2:18, 23, of a false “humility”; in Colossians 3:12, “humility”; 1 Peter 5:5, “humility.”

The apostle Paul describes humility as one of Jesus’ core character traits in Philippians 2. The opposite of humility is pride, which might describe someone who is “high and mighty” and thinks of themselves more highly than they ought. Followers of Jesus who understand their calling will be in submission to the Master and will be able to use their gifts in humility to the glory of God following the example of Jesus who willingly loved and served others in submission to the will of His heavenly Father.

For further study on *tapeinophrosune*, follow the link below to the Blue Letter Bible, an online study Bible and *Strong’s Concordance*, a classic tool helpful for deeper word study.

Blue Letter Bible: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5012/kjv/tr/0-1/>

Strong’s Concordance Number: G5012 Greek: *tapeinophrosune*

Read Chapters 13–18 from *The Call*. Read each chapter slowly and thoughtfully. Take a few minutes to **ponder the reflection questions** at the end of each chapter. Consider journaling your responses.

Make It Personal Action Assignment:

Using the Seven Capital Virtues, recall and describe one example of someone living out these virtues through their calling: (Chastity, Temperance, Charity, Diligence, Kindness, Patience, Humility). Then reflect on ways you can model over the next week biblical character and virtue in living out your calling.



Do All for the Glory of God

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God.

— 1 Corinthians 10:31

4

Section 4
(Chapters 19–24):
Integrating Our Faith and
Calling into All of Life

This section will cover:

- How calling impacts our view of money and markets
- How calling impacts our work ethic and combats sloth or laziness
- The dangers of secularization to calling
- The reality of the supernatural
- The danger of privatized faith
- How calling integrates faith into all of life
- Pitfalls to avoid in public life
- The dangers of pluralization
- How to focus your calling through the priorities and perspectives of Jesus

Watch Interview #4: Integrating Our Faith and Calling into All of Life? (20 minutes)



Bible Study

Read the following Bible passages and respond to the questions:

1 Timothy 6:9–11

In this passage, about what temptation does Paul warn his readers?

How can you avoid the “love of money” in your decision-making, vocation and other parts of your life?

Romans 1:18–32

What is the result when people don’t show gratitude to God for what they have been given? What are the consequences of living an unrighteous life?

Philippians 4:4–13

What action steps and attitudes lead to discovering peace with God and peace in this life?

1 John 2:16

What vices from “the world” lead us away from our Father’s call on our life?

Word Study on *kosmos*—“the world”

Kosmos can refer to (1) The planet Earth, e.g., Matthew 13:35; John 21:25; Acts 17:24; Romans 1:20 (probably here the universe: it had this meaning among the Greeks, owing to the order observable in it); 1 Timothy 6:7; Hebrews 4:3; 9:26; (2) the earth in contrast to heaven: 1 John 3:17; (3) the “present condition of human affairs,” in alienation from and opposition to God, e.g., John 7:7; 8:23; 14:30; 1 Corinthians 2:12; Galatians 4:3; 6:14; Colossians 2:8; James 1:27; 1 John 4:5 (three times); 5:19; (4) the “sum of temporal possessions,” in Matthew 16:26; 1 Corinthians 7:31 (1st part).

Jesus often spoke of the *kosmos* or “the world” as that which was in opposition to God and His will on this earth. He prayed in John 17:13–15 that His followers who currently live in this world would be protected from it. Thus the called-out ones or followers of Jesus must be aware that they are living in “enemy-occupied territory” and will at times face temptations of greed, lust, or pride and confront opposition to the truth as they attempt to live out their calling in this world. Jesus’ words of warning that we live in a sin-filled, dark world aren’t meant to bring about fear, but rather to point us to Him. His strength and courage will help us overcome temptation and evil as we seek to live out our calling knowing that Jesus is greater than anyone or anything that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

For further study on *kosmos*, follow the link below to the Blue Letter Bible, an online study Bible and *Strong’s Concordance*, a classic tool helpful for deeper word study.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g2889/kjv/tr/0-1/>

Strong’s Concordance Number: G2889

Greek: *kosmos*

Read Chapters 19–24 from *The Call*. Read each chapter slowly and thoughtfully. Take time to **ponder the reflection questions** at the end of each chapter for a few minutes. Consider journaling your responses.

Make It Personal Action Assignment:

- Examine your use of money over the past month by looking at your credit card, checking account, and bills. How does your stewardship of money reflect your Christian ideals and commitment?
- Are there places where you feel uncomfortable talking about your faith in Jesus Christ? If so, examine why you feel that way. What keeps you from sharing your faith with others?



I Have Finished the Race, I Have Kept the Faith

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight,

I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

—2 Timothy 4:6–8

5

Section 5
Chapters 25–30):
What Is “Success,” and
How Do We Finish Well?

This section will cover:

- How God's perspective and vision shapes calling
- The splendor of the ordinary when living out one's calling
- Calling and the cost of discipleship and renouncing of self
- Understanding of calling leads to thanksgiving and gratitude
- Calling and grace
- Identifying with Jesus
- Relationship between success and calling
- Calling and relying on God, renouncing poor methods, being timely
- Calling and finishing well

Watch Interview #5: What Is "Success," and How Do We Finish Well? (15–20 minutes)



Bible Study

Read the following Bible passages and respond to the questions:

Luke 9:23–26

What does Jesus say we must do if we want to follow Him?
Describe in more detail what Jesus is asking of His followers.

Colossians 3:1–3

Summarize this passage in one sentence. How does this passage impact how you live out your calling?

Matthew 5:11–13

How are we to respond to persecution and difficulties in life?
How do we represent our faith in Jesus in the midst of a tarnished world?

Word Study on “*Manthano*”

“a learner” (from *manthano*, “to learn,” from a root *math*—, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor), in contrast to *didaskalos*, “a teacher”; therefore, it denotes “one who follows one’s teaching,” as the disciples

of John, Matthew 9:14; of the Pharisees, Matthew 22:16; of Moses, John 9:28; it is used of the disciples of Jesus in a wide sense, of Jews who became His adherents, John 6:66; Luke 6:17; some being secretly so, John 19:38; especially of the twelve apostles, e.g., Matthew 10:1; Luke 22:11; of all who manifest that they are His disciples by abiding in His Word, John 8:31; cp. John 13:35; 15:8; and in the Acts, of those who believed upon Him and confessed Him, e.g., Acts 6:1–2, 7; 14:20, 22, 28; 15:10; 19:1.

A disciple was not only a pupil, but also an adherent; disciples are referred to as imitators of their teacher; John 8:31; 15:8.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you are a Christian and you are also a disciple of Jesus. All Christians are disciples whom Jesus has called to learn from Him, imitate Him, love Him, obey Him, serve Him and be wholeheartedly committed to Him. Disciples of Jesus have responded to the call of Jesus to follow Him, take up their cross daily, love God and neighbor (Matthew 22:37–40) and actively seek to make more disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:18–20). Our ultimate calling is to be an obedient, loving disciple of Jesus Christ.

For further study on *mathetes*, follow the link to the Blue Letter Bible, an online study Bible and *Strong's Concordance*, a classic tool helpful for deeper word study.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3101/kjv/tr/0-1/>

Strong's Concordance Number: G3101 Greek: *mathetes*

Read Chapters 25–30 from *The Call*. Read each chapter slowly and thoughtfully. Take a few minutes to **ponder the reflection questions** at the end of each chapter. Consider journaling your responses.

Make It Personal Action Assignment:

- Think about other Christians who have finished well—ones you've known personally or perhaps saints of the past. Make a list of them and reflect upon what it was that helped these saints finish well.
- Reflect on what “success” looks like in your own life and what “finishing well” would be like for you. Ask the Lord to give you His vision for your life and seek His leading for next steps.



He Will Make Straight Your Paths

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

—Proverbs 3:5–6

6

Section 6

**Os Guinness's Personal Experience
with Calling and Considering the
“To Each Our Task” Questionnaire**

This section will cover:

- Os Guinness's personal experience with "calling"
- Reviewing lessons from the study that resonated with and impacted you
- Reflection on your own journey of "calling" and considering the "To Each Our Task" questionnaire
- Call to continue the journey of answering the call of God on your life

Watch Interview #6: My Experience with Calling (15 minutes)

Listen as Dr. Guinness shares from his own personal story of discovering his calling (e.g., influence of the Schaeffers, books, others) and the saints who have impacted his life and helped him live out his calling for Jesus Christ.



Complete the "To Each Our Task" questionnaire in the Appendix of this Study Guide. (Use QR code for further video instructions)

You may find that some of the questions do not apply to your particular situation or season of life. If so, think about the issues underlying the question and how they may apply in an indirect way or might apply in the future. Write down a note or two and then proceed to the next questions.



Make It Personal Action Assignment:

- Take time to share with some friends or family members lessons learned, highlights discovered, and new ideas you have gained from this study of *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling God's Purpose For Your Life*.
- Read the "Entrepreneurs of Life" Statement on pp. 304–305 of the 2018 edition of *The Call* as means of summarizing the main points of the book. What resonates with you in this statement? How does it help you in thinking about your own understanding of calling and living out your calling?

- Review your responses to the “To Each Our Task” questionnaire. What ideas were generated? What did you learn about yourself? What would you like to “take away” from the thoughts, ideas, and goals raised in the questionnaire?
- Reach out to a pastor, elder, or mentor and ask them how they discerned their calling in life. Ask them to help you as you seek discern the Lord’s leading regarding your own calling.
- Consider gathering friends to complete this study as you facilitate the group meetings. In this way, you can help others reflect upon this important subject and help them discern God’s calling for their lives.



The Great Commission

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

—Matthew 28:18–20



Appendix

To Each Our Task A Questionnaire to Help Assess Where You Are on the Journey of Life and How Best You Can Make a Difference in the World

By Os Guinness

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Questions for Reflection and Appraisal

This questionnaire is designed to help you think through three things:

- 1) The stage you have reached on your journey in life.
- 2) The spiritual and strategic implications for the way you want to live the rest of your life, so that you can have a lifelong sense of calling and know what it means to finish well.
- 3) The opportunities and responsibilities that you have with your particular gifts, resources, and opportunities to seek to make a difference in the world today.

The questions are set out for individual reflection or for discussion between husbands and wives, or even for discussion with a special friend.

It goes without saying that, as with any personal reflection, the value you will get out of it will be in direct proportion to the effort put into it. The questions are only promptings; the answers that each person gives are the pay-off.

We suggest that you choose a quiet and undisturbed place, with no distractions such as the telephone, and that you set aside a serious amount of time for reflection—at least two or three hours, if not a half or whole day—and that you begin with prayer and the reading of a passage from the Bible that speaks of the fleeting brevity of life, such as Psalm 37 or Proverbs 10:27–28, or a passage that speaks of the privilege of knowing and serving Christ as the supreme passion of life, such as Philippians 4 or Ephesians 1.

There are ten series of questions here, and we recommend your spending a few moments of review at the end of each series to see if there are practical steps you should take to ensure that your reflection leads to action.

The underlying assumption of this questionnaire is that we each have a calling in life, but it is not the responsibility of any of us to suggest what anyone else should do. At the end of the day, that is God's business, not ours. But we can help each other think through the questions that point each of us in the direction of our own gifts and calling.

Please note that the questions here are designed for individuals or couples to answer privately and confidentially.

Your Stage on the Journey of Life

A model that many have found helpful in thinking about the stages human beings pass through in life is the “Levinson’s Seasons of Life.”

Levinson’s Seasons of Life Theory

People move from periods of stability to periods of transition as they re-examine their lives and change from season to season. In general, they go through the following four seasons:

Pre-Adulthood: Conception–17 Years
(Transition Years: 17–22 Years)

Early Adulthood Era: 17–45 Years
(Transition Years: 40–46 Years)

Middle Adulthood Era: 46–65 Years
(Transition Years: 60–65 Years)

Late Adulthood Era: 66 Years– ?

- 1 How would you describe the season of life in which you are now?
- 2 What do you see as the principal challenges and opportunities of this stage of life?
- 3 What is your greatest hope for this period of your life?
- 4 What do you feel is most holding you back from putting your heart and soul into this stage of life?
- 5 Where do you feel most excited and where most apprehensive?
- 6 As you look back to your childhood, what part of your life has been most surprising and unexpected to you?
- 7 Looking over your life, what have been the major chapters so far? If you were to outline your own biography in your mind’s eye, what would be the major incidents and defining moments that have marked your life, for better or worse?

- 8 Who are, or who have been, the most influential people in your life?
- 9 How would you summarize the legacy of your parents in your life?
- 10 Who are the teachers and mentors from whom you have learned most?
- 11 Who are your heroes, from the past or today, whom you most admire and desire to emulate?
- 12 What special books have become old friends and sources of inspiration and wisdom to you?
- 13 Who, if anyone, has left scars and wounds on your life?
- 14 What has been the major legacy of each of these influences, and how far would you say you have transcended their influence, whether for good or ill?
- 15 On balance, what do you consider:
 - Your foremost satisfactions in life up to this point?
 - Your most significant failures, if any?
 - Your regrets that still touch your heart today, if any?
 - Your yet-to-be completed projects or dreams?

Action: *What changes do you need to implement?*

The Faith by Which You Live

- 1 How would you identify yourself in terms of your core faith and view of life?
- 2 How did you reach this point? Was your faith inherited from your parents and your upbringing or was it the fruit of your own individual search? Was it a decision that climaxed a crisis or was it the result of a long process?
- 3 Would you say you have grown, and are still growing, in:

Understanding your faith?

Knowing God?

Praying?

In knowing how to share your faith winsomely?
- 4 What, for you, are the core moral standards that grow directly from your faith?
- 5 Is there a direct link between your faith and these moral standards? Or would you say the outcome depends on your choices and preferences in changing circumstances?
- 6 How would describe the presence of fellow-believers in your life?

Are you a regular part of a worshipping community that shares your faith, or do you find it difficult to identify with those who are fellow-believers? How so?

Are you a member of a smaller group that provides fellowship and accountability, or do you make do with public worship alone?
- 7 Would you describe your faith as a private part of your life that

you are reluctant to “wear on your sleeve” or as decisive for the whole of your life—your business as well as your home, your public service as well as your career?

- 8 Has your faith developed as you have, maturing with you over the years, or has it stayed much the same? Describe the answer.
- 9 If you are honest, is your faith something purely formal or something as emotionally and intellectually deep and growing as you are?
- 10 Who are the people and what are the resources that have been the main inspiration in your growth of faith so far?
- 11 Who are the people and what are the resources through which your faith is regularly challenged to deepen and grow now?
- 12 Do you make a practice of taking “time out” to review your journey and reorient your life in light of your faith? What does this mean to you?

Action: What changes do you need to implement?

Your Giftedness

- 1 What do you consider the core of your God-given talents?
- 2 Would these gifts be recognized as your gifts by others close to you, such as your family, friends, and colleagues?
- 3 When were the first moments in your childhood or in later years that you first realized the satisfaction of expressing your own unique gifts and being yourself?

- 4 In which sphere of life would you most like to see these gifts flourishing?
- Your home?
- Your church?
- The private world?
- The public world?
- A combination of all of these?
- 5 Do you feel your gifts are recognized and fully employed by others—or neglected and even wasted?
- At home?
- At work?
- In your community?
- In your faith community?
- 6 How is your core giftedness brought into play in your work, or do you have to find a place elsewhere to employ it?
- 7 If you feel you have talents that have not so far come into full play in your life, which one would you most like to emphasize at this stage of your life? How much would this mean to you and what

Your Character and Personality

- 1 What five words would you use to describe your character as you think of yourself (e.g., reliable, loyal, honest, or whatever)?
- 2 Which of these virtues might your friends and colleagues not have on their list describing you? Why the gap, and what does it mean?
- 3 Which virtues do you most admire in others but regret are not obvious strengths of yours?
- 4 Which less-than-admirable character traits do you possess and would like to change? Are you serious about such change?
- 5 Do you have any areas that you know to be weaknesses in your character but have never been able to change? What place have they assumed now in your life?
- 6 What five words would you use to describe your personality as you see yourself (e.g., serious, outgoing, gregarious, intense, ambitious, or whatever)?
- 7 What are the pluses and minuses of these traits for your life and witness as a follower of Christ? Which would you most like to see changed?
- 8 How are you tackling the changes in your character and personality that you know need to be affected?
- 9 Are these changes just a personal aspiration or have you enlisted others to help you and hold you accountable? How are you measuring real change?

***Action:** What steps do you need to implement?*

Your Relationships

- 1 How would you describe the depth, intimacy, and richness of your closest relationships?

With your family?

Friends?

Neighbors?

And colleagues?

- 2 Thinking back over your own heroes and mentors in life, have you made a point of thanking them and expressing what they have meant to you?
- 3 Are there younger people for whom you can now play a role as mentor/hero?
- 4 What regular, practical form do close friends play in your life?

In terms of fellowship?

Encouragement?

And accountability?

- 5 Are there people with whom you have no relationship when you know you ought to have one, or with whom you have a poor relationship when you know it should be better? Who are they?
- 6 Is the problem on your side or theirs? What would it take to improve things and start a new day?

- 7 Is there any single thing you could do this week to improve a relationship, such as:
Asking someone's forgiveness?
Reaching out to show care to someone?
Making a practical gift to help someone in trouble?
- 8 If you could do so, what one relationship would you like to see restored or improved before you die?
Are you prepared to do what it takes from your side?

Action: What steps do you need to implement?

Your Work

- 1 Describe the heart of what you do at work and how this fits in with your sense of core giftedness described above. Do your gifts and your work overlap enough to create a strong sense of “personal mission” and “life task” or are your core gifts significantly unused in your work?
- 2 Where are the main places where you have thought through how your faith specifically makes a difference in your work?

Standards and styles of work itself?

Company relationships?

Dealings with the customers?

Treatment of the environment?
- 3 What are the deepest satisfactions and what are the deepest frustrations you experience in your daily work?
- 4 Where does your Christian faith best apply to your type of work?

- 5 Where are the greatest challenges to your faith in your work?
- 6 Do you find it natural and easy to bring your faith into the work situation, or is it awkward? If the latter, is it because of your work setting or because you are uncomfortable or unskilled at it?
- 7 What gifts that are truly “you” are not brought into play in your job?
- 8 If you believe that key parts of your gifts are not brought into play, could you still see yourself doing this work for the rest of your life?
- 9 How much is your sense of identity, status, and satisfaction derived from your position and salary? What would be the effect of losing all this tomorrow?
- 10 What do you see as your sense of calling that links your working life and your life outside work, including retirement, however far in the future?
- 11 Do you have close family members and friends who know the challenges of your work world so well that they can support you and hold you accountable there?

Action: What steps do you need to implement?

Your Wider Community

- 1 What part does the wider community play in your thinking?

Your community?

Your church?

Voluntary service?

Public life?

- 2 Trace the story revealed to you by the ways you spend your time and money. Does this confirm or contradict what you say above?
- 3 Do you feel a sense of connection and involvement with your faith community and your neighborhood? Why or why not?
- 4 Describe the part played by your faith community in giving you a sense of the times in which we live and helping you to participate in wider community affairs.

Action: *What steps do you need to implement?*

Your Wider Influence

- 1 How would you describe the nature of your authority and influence? Is it principally because of:

Your character?

Your experience in life or work?

Your network of friendships and contacts?

Your position at work?

Your place in the community?

Your ability to communicate?

Your financial resources?

- 2 How far are your daily and weekly prayers systematic and sustained for people and issues around the world?
- 3 All modesty aside, how wide does your influence reach:

In your community?

At work?

In the nation?

And in the world?

- 4 How would you assess your greatest contribution to initiatives outside the world of work?

As a visionary?

As a leader?

As a key player?

As an organizer?

As a spokesperson?

As a key financial resource?

As a team member?

- 5 How would you estimate your “power to convene”—to invite people to a meeting or a meal to discuss a project and know they will come and take it seriously?
- 6 How would you describe the way you allocate your resources in endeavoring to make a wider difference in the community, the nation, or the world?

Your time?

Your talents?

Your treasure?

- 7 Do you have as strategic and entrepreneurial an approach to your voluntary or non-profit activities as you would bring to your day-to-day business life?
- 8 Beyond any church and fellowship group that supports you, name any fellow-leaders who can be strategic partners in your thinking how to make a difference in society—just as you can be in theirs.

Action: What steps do you need to implement?

Your Possible Life Task

William Wilberforce spoke of how God had set before him “two great objects” as a calling for his entire life, “the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners.” A modern example of a great object would be Millard Fuller’s Habitat for Humanity.

There are five common components of such a “great object” or life task:

- Personal giftedness
 - Personal resources or access to resources
 - Cultural opportunities for influence
 - A network with whom to make common cause
 - An evident cause or need to address
- 1 Think over your own life situation in light of these five factors. Do you have any similar “great object” before you—a sense of God’s calling you to a life task, born of the convergence of these things in your life? Your sense of life task may be far less audacious than Wilberforce’s, but how would you describe it?
 - 2 How far along are you in pursuing this “great object”? And if it is still at the vision stage, what would it take to launch such an initiative in a way that is as business-like as your normal professional ventures?

- 3 From your perspective, what do you see as the three greatest challenges in the world around you where your gifts and the world's needs meet naturally?

In your community?

In your work?

In your nation?

In the wider world?

- 4 If you could invest your life in doing one major thing to make a difference in addressing these problems, what would it be?
- 5 If you were to map the leadership spheres in the world you hope to influence, which people or positions would you need to influence to make a difference?
- 6 What would it take to begin to make such a task a reality?
- 7 Who are the close friends with whom you can share this vision and ask them to join you or encourage, support, and hold you accountable?
- 8 What is the “clutter” in your life, the good and even worthy things that are preventing you from undertaking such a “great object”?

Action: *What steps do you need to implement?*

Concluding Questions

- 1 As far as you are able to judge, and knowing that we live finally before only one audience, “the audience of One,” what would you say you have accomplished with your life so far?
- 2 Think back over your dreams, ambitions, and hopes when you were young. How does your present position in life measure up to these?
- 3 What main imbalances in your life you would like to address now?
- 4 What, under God, is your contribution to the world that will give you the greatest satisfaction when you finish life?

Action: *What steps do you need to implement?*



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NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



“I am [in your world],” said Aslan. “But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there.”

—C.S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*

