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**REDISCOVERING PURPOSE AND CALLING**  
By Rick Boxx

Every year the first Monday in September is designated Labor Day to celebrate the social and economic achievements of American workers. Unfortunately, research is showing appreciating and understanding the value of work is on a steady decline. A Gallup study, for example, indicated employee engagement declined in 2022 to 32 percent. This means more than two-thirds of workers do not feel strong commitment to their work.

One of the key areas of decline was employees' lack of connection to the mission or purpose of their organization. Work with no purpose feels meaningless. Everyone has within them the desire to feel like their life and work matters.

We were designed by God to serve a divine purpose – even when we do not understand His plans. Proverbs 16:4 states, “The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.” God has a purpose for your work even if your employer has not clearly defined it for you. Job engagement and satisfaction increases when we have a clear sense of our purpose and calling.

**The real purpose of business.** In 1989, ministry leader Larry Burkett wrote book called Business by the Book. When I taught Burkett's workshop, the very first lesson began with a principle that was simple, yet profound. This principle was, “The purpose of your business is to glorify God.”

Most business owners would say they are in business you to make money. Economist Milton Friedman was famous for saying the only purpose of business is making money. For followers of Jesus, however, making money is a byproduct of your purpose, not the focal point. “So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

**Understanding our calling.** God's purpose for each of us is to glorify Him, but for that to happen God developed a plan and a calling for each of us. Unfortunately, some believe only pastors and missionaries have a spiritual calling. The story of Bezalel debunks that idea quickly. When God wanted his tabernacle built and furnished, He did not ask a priest or a Levite – religious leaders. He asked Bezalel, a craftsman.

Moses proclaimed, “See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship” (Exodus 35:30-31). Like Bezalel, God has a specific vocational calling He is equipping you to carry out for His glory.

**Calling often comes in stages.** We all have a purpose to glorify God and He has a calling for each of us personally. You may be struggling, however, to determine your calling. It is important to realize that most of the time, calling comes in stages. To prepare Moses to lead the Israelites,

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He allowed him to tend sheep in the desert for 40 years. Similarly, you may currently be in the preparation phase of God's calling, or you may be already producing fruit from your calling.

The apostle Paul wrote, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). God has prepared a path for you. Ask for input from those around you and pray for clarity about your path. For you, every day can be Labor Day.

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### Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. If someone asked your employees or coworkers why your business exists, what would they say? Is making money a sufficient purpose for operating a business? Why or why not?
2. What do you think it means to strive to glorify God through one's business? Can you think of any examples where you have observed that in action?
3. Many people believe the notion of having a "calling" is restricted to people who have jobs in religious or spiritual settings, such as pastors, priests and missionaries. What is your understanding of what it means to have a calling?
4. One's calling, we just read, sometimes comes over time – in stages. Do you agree with that? In considering your own calling, what "stage" would you say you are in? Do you understand what your calling is, or do you think God is still in the process of revealing it to you?

### Challenge For This Week

Perhaps this discussion of the purpose of a business and one's vocational calling is not new for you. Or maybe it is something you have never considered before. Take some time this week to ask yourself, "What is the purpose of the business or organization that I am in? Does it transcend simply making a profit?"

Also, consider your own calling – what is it that God has uniquely designed and equipped you to do? Do you think you are fulfilling that calling, or in the process of realizing what your calling is? Meet with someone and share your mutual thoughts about these ideas about purpose and calling.

#### NOTE:

For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:  
Ecclesiastes 3:9-13; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Colossians 3:17, 23-24; 2 Timothy 3:17

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