



our neighbour for our own selfish reason. Mothers are called to love and serve their children, not to abort them. Doctors are called to heal their patients, not to kill them. Leaders are called to love and serve their people, not to exploit, extort or tyrannise them.

IGNORING OUR DUTIES

Unfortunately, there is a tremendous tendency to seek out the extraordinary spectacles at the expense of performing our daily duties. We look for miracles, mountain top experiences and spectacular events. Meanwhile the spiritual significance of everyday life can easily be overlooked. **“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”** Galatians 6:9

OUR DAILY ALTAR

When we understand the Protestant work ethic and the doctrine of vocation, then we see that the kitchen table, the office desk, the computer screen, the shop counter, the printer and the garden can be altars on which we exercise our royal priesthood, offering up a living sacrifice to our God. Punctuality and going the second mile brings blessings. Mary was first to see the Risen Lord. Thomas missed the Lord’s appearance by not being in the **Upper Room**.

SCHOOL OF DISCIPLESHIP

Martin Luther taught that marriage is the best school of discipleship. Dr. Luther said that he learned more about Christian discipleship in one year of marriage than from 10 years in the monastery. He taught that dairymaids can milk cows to the Glory of God. Our vocation is where our sanctification happens, and where effective evangelism can take place. When we have a strong sense of our vocation as a calling and responsibility before God then it will change the quality of everything we do.

“Whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not to men.” Colossians 3:23

“Be sure to finish the task given to you in the Lord’s service.” Colossians 4:17

WHAT OUR NATION NEEDS

This is what our country needs: a Christian work ethic and Christians determined to fulfill their vocation wholeheartedly – as a means of worshipping God, loving our neighbour, caring for God’s Creation and protecting all God’s creatures. Then we will not be using people and loving things, but we will be using things in order to express our love for God. Instead of being self-centred we will be Christ-centered. We will realise that nothing less than our very best is good enough for our Creator God and eternal Redeemer.



WORK ETHIC

To whom much is given, **much is required**.
 To whom much more is given, **much more is required**.
 Freely you have received, **freely freely give**.
 Those who have been given a trust must **prove trustworthy**.
Faithfulness is required of the Faithful.

A PERSONAL CHALLENGE

- Is your conscience captive to the Word of God?
- Are you part of the problem or part of the solution?
- What are you doing to resist the New World Order?
- What are you doing to fulfill the Great Commission?
- What are you doing to make a positive difference?
- What are you doing to change your world?

“But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love...”

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.”

2 Peter 1:5-7,10



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**VOCATION
 PROVIDES
 PURPOSE &
 DIRECTION**

VOCATION

One of the vital solutions to the corruption, entitlement and exploitation all too prevalent today, can be found in the Reformation doctrine of vocation. Vocation is the Theology of the Christian life. It provides the blueprint for how Christians are to live in the world and to influence our culture. Vocation provides a vital key to effective parenting, strong, healthy marriages and a vibrant economy. Vocation is not the passivity of vacation. Vocation involves activity, focus and energy in a God given purpose and direction. *“But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk, and so I ordain in all the churches.”* 1 Corinthians 7:17 God has distributed gifts and talents, duties and responsibilities to each of us.

INTERDEPENDENCE

Dr. Martin Luther taught that God created us to be dependent on others. We depend on farmers, mechanics, suppliers, parents, teachers and so many others. And just as God is working through the vocation of others to bless you, He is also working through you to bless others. Your vocation is far more than the work that you do. Every Christian has multiple vocations. Luther described these as four estates, or spheres of life, that God has established: the family / or household; the church, the state and the common order of agriculture, business or service.

“GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD”

God distributes His gifts by means of ordinary people exercising their talents and responsibilities, which themselves are gifts of God. God gives us our daily bread through the vocations of the farmer, the miller and the baker. God looms behind everyone who provides us with the goods and services that we need. God made the farmers, the seeds, the soil and the sun. God makes the rain to fall.

BLESSING OUR NEIGHBOURS

God heals us by means of healthy food, pure water, exercise, doctors, nurses and other medical professionals. He makes our lives easier by means of inventors, scientists and engineers. God inspires beauty by means of artists, authors and musicians. He provides us clothing, shelter and other things we need by means of factory workers, construction contractors, bricklayers, plumbers and electricians.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Your family relationships are also your calling. God established marriage. Being a husband, or a wife, is a vocation. Being a parent, a father or a mother, is a vocation. So too is being a son or daughter. You are a brother, or sister, a nephew, or uncle, a grandmother, or grandfather. Each person holds multiple vocations, even within one family. A woman may be the wife of her husband, the mother of her children, the daughter of her mother and the sister of her brother and sister.

CULTURAL MANDATE

We also have vocations in our community. Each one of us were born into a particular time and place in society. The cultural context, community and country in which we find ourselves is also part of the vocation God has assigned to us.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

In stressing the spiritual significance of all areas of life, Dr. Martin Luther challenged the entire Roman Catholic practice of reserving the terms of vocation and calling for religious orders. If you, as a catholic, were really serious about God, you were expected to become a priest, a monk or a nun. To enter into these spiritual offices you were required to make a vow of celibacy – thereby rejecting marriage and parenthood. You were also expected to take a vow of poverty – thereby rejecting full participation in the economic life of the workplace. Your vow of obedience would substitute the authority of the Roman Catholic system instead of that of God’s Law in society.

PROTESTANT SPIRITUALITY

However, the Reformers insisted that the Christian life requires not withdrawal from the world, but engagement in the world. We are called to live out our Christian Faith, not only in *“church work”*, but in our work ethic. In practice this meant that the Reformers moved spiritual disciplines out of the monastery into everyday life. The ideal of celibacy was replaced with faithfulness in marriage. The monastic goal of poverty was replaced with the Biblical work ethic, principles of hard work, ingenuity and thrift. Obedience to the religious order was replaced with obedience to God’s Law. Even more importantly, prayer, worship and service was moved into the family and the workplace, society and the environment.

FORGOTTEN & FORSAKEN

Unfortunately, many so called Protestants today have forgotten this vital Protestant doctrine of vocation. Today numerous ostensibly Protestant Christians have slipped into the assumption that serving God is only a matter of *“church work”*. Some Christians have become so preoccupied with *“spiritual work”* that they have allowed their marriages to fall apart and they have failed to invest quality time in disciplining their children.

LOVING GOD & OUR NEIGHBOUR

The church is the place where Christians are to meet each week, to feed on God’s Word, receive Biblical direction, seek the mercy and forgiveness of Christ and to grow in knowledge and Faith. Then we are to go into our vocations, to our families, work places and communities to apply the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life and to bear much fruit. The true purpose of every vocation should be to love God and love our neighbour and to care for God’s Creation. Jesus taught that *“Whatever you did unto one of the*

least of these My brethren, you did it unto Me.” Feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, visiting the sick and those imprisoned for the Faith are just some of the ways that we show our love for Christ.

SERVING OUR NEIGHBOUR

Every vocation has its neighbours and creatures for us to serve. In a church fellowship, or congregation, we are called to love and serve one another. In marriage, husbands are to love and serve their wives *“As Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her”* (Ephesians 5:25). Wives are to submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ. Both the wife and the husband are called to sacrifice themselves for each other. We have pets to care for and love, and wild and domestic animals in our environment to protect and care for. In the work place, we have duties and supervisors, managers and leaders to respect and follow their instructions and directions.

A PRIESTLY SACRIFICE

Vocation has to do with the priesthood of all believers. A priest performs a sacrifice. We no longer need sacrifices for our sins. Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He has offered Himself up as our sacrifice – once for all. However, in the light of Christ’s sacrifice, we are called to *“present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”*

Romans 12:1

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Members of any congregation are called to love and serve one another. In marriage, husbands are to love and serve their wives and wives are to love and serve their husbands. Parents love and serve their children. Children are to love and serve their parents, their brothers and sisters. Rulers are to love and serve their subjects, citizens and communities. Workers are to love and serve their employer and their customers. Loving and serving involves an act of self-denial for the sake of somebody else. Vocation focuses on self-sacrifice. We are to love and serve God’s Creation by means of our vocation.

GODLY AUTHORITY

Certain vocations exercise authority, but authority must not be abused. With greater privilege comes greater responsibility. Jesus taught that the rulers of the Gentiles laud it over them and called themselves benefactors. *“But it shall not be so amongst you. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant...”*

Mark 10:42-45

SINS AGAINST VOCATION

However, instead of serving others we all too often demand to be served. Instead of loving our neighbour, we all too often use

