

**Embracing Our Calling, Culture, and Commission**  
by R. Scott Pace and David Wheeler

**OUR CALLING**

When I (the author) began serving in ministry, a church member invited me to join him for a business trip. As an accountant who was going to perform an audit, he thought he could use some help. Since I had graduated from college with a degree in accounting and had worked in the field before surrendering to the ministry, he asked me if I'd like to come. As a young youth pastor, newly married, and still in seminary, any extra income was a blessing. So, I agreed.

My friend was financially successful. He had a loving family, a beautiful home, a comfortable life, and he loved the Lord. One night as we took a break for supper, he admitted that as a younger man he had felt called to ministry. Based on his current life situation, I assumed he had concluded that his ministry would be in the field of accounting. After all, God's calling is not limited to vocational ministry; he uses all types of careers for his kingdom purposes. But as he explained that evening, he had taken a step back from ministry to work as an accountant and had never returned to his true calling. When I probed further, he confessed that it would be "impossible" for him at this stage to abandon his career, alter his lifestyle, and pursue vocational ministry. It was too late, he said. He had resigned himself to living with the knowledge that he had abandoned his calling.

The sad reality is that many believers fall into this same category. Some decisions to walk away are intentional, as believers count the cost and are unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices to follow God's will for their lives.

1. How many of us settled for what was most accepted, easiest, available, or what others thought you should do, when it came to our careers?
2. In your opinion, what are the cost and sacrifice for you personally when you are willing to obey Jesus' calling for your life?
3. What are the cost and sacrifices, again for your personally, when you are not willing to obey Jesus' calling on your life?

## LESSON THREE

4. Is there a difference between simply ignoring Jesus' calling for you or not actively searching for your calling?

READ: Galatians 1:11-24, Acts 9:1-19, Jeremiah 1:1-5, Ephesians 1:11, Psalm 139:13,16 Act 9:19-25

1. Who did Paul receive His call from?
2. How do we know that Paul was called by Jesus?
3. How did Paul "check out" his calling to be sure He was correct?
4. What was Paul sacrificing?
5. What did Paul gain?
6. What did we gain by Paul's commitment to his calling?
7. Does God have a plan for our lives?
8. Does your calling need to be affirmed? If so by who?