



Introduction to the Doctrine of Vocation

**CPC Adult Sunday School
Week 4 - Common Grace and Vocation in Exile**

February 16, 2025

God Works Through Human Beings

“God healed me. I wasn’t feeling well, so I went to the doctor. The nurse ran some tests, and the lab technicians identified the problem; so the doctor wrote me a prescription, I got it filled at the pharmacist, and in no time I was a lot better. But it was still God who healed me. He did it through medical vocations...

God fed me, not with manna but with what the teenager at the fast-food joint gave me. ***God clothed and sheltered me,*** with the help of my employer. ***God protected me,*** though I wish the highway patrolman hadn’t pulled me over. ***God gave me pleasure,*** thanks to the talents He gave that musician playing on my new CD.

All of this is to think in terms of vocation.”

Gene Edward Veith Jr.

How does this work in a fallen world?



The Creator-Creature Distinction

WCF 2.1-2.2

⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:8-11

²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for 'In him we live and move and have our being'...

Acts 17:24-28

God is uncreated (fountain of all being) - Mankind is created

God is infinite in being and perfection - Mankind is finite

God is self-sufficient - Mankind is dependent

God is incomprehensible (Dt. 29:29)



God's Eternal Decree and Providence

God's Eternal Decree - WCF 3.1-3.2:

God has unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass from all eternity.

In such a way that violence is not offered to the will of creatures.

Not based on foreseeing the future.

Providence - WCF 5: God upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all things.

All things come to pass immutably & infallibly by God's decree (the First Cause) - yet ordered to fall out according to secondary causes (means).

Includes the first fall and all sins - not by bare permission

In such a way that God is not the author of sin.

In such a way that the liberty or contingency of second causes is established (as opposed to taken away).

In such a way that God is not the author nor approver of sin.

Generally reaches all creatures; specially takes care of his church.



Common Grace and God's Management of Evil

Common Grace = non-saving grace given providentially to all people.

2 Peter 3:1-13; Genesis 6:5-8 → The Day of the Lord and God's patience.

Genesis 8:20-9:17 → God's covenant with Noah.

God restrains evil and sustains creation until the New Heavens and New Earth.

Matthew 5:43-48 → God loves His enemies by providing for their basic needs.

Romans 12:17-13:7 (also see Isaiah 45:1-7) → God governs through secular authorities for the common good and the good of His people.

God does all of this by means of vocations.



Implications of Common Grace for Vocations

22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

God hides Himself in our vocations
and in our neighbors.



Acts 7:22

We can rejoice and be thankful for the work of unbelievers as God produces good through them.

Genesis 50:15-21; Acts 2:22-23 —We can be confident that God works through the evil intentions of people for His purposes and the good of his people.

We are called to appropriately partner in common grace activities with unbelievers as we ourselves follow God's call until the New Heavens and New Earth are ushered in.

The Christian Life as Exile

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God... ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Hebrews 11:8-10, 13



Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who are elect exiles...² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:1-5

Vocations in Exile

³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

John 18:36

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Example of Abraham - Genesis 14; Genesis 21:22-34

⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Jeremiah 29:7

But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ¹¹ and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, ¹² so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

1 Thessalonians 4:10b-12

1 Timothy 2:1-6

Digging Deeper

1. In what areas of your life do you find it most difficult to trust God? Why do you think this is the case?
2. How do the gospel and common grace help you to trust God in all circumstances?
3. How have you seen God at work in your vocations?
4. How has God used the work of unbelievers to bless you?
5. What is most challenging for you when working alongside unbelievers? How can you make use of the means of grace to address this?

