



## Lesson 8: The Call of God

God's salvation began in eternity by foreknowing and predestinating people to know God. One of the words used in the New Testament to denote people being graciously and effectually persuaded to come to Jesus Christ is the word "call" or "called."

Outline:

1. God is Gracious to All: Common Grace
2. God is Effective in Grace to Save: Efficacious Grace or Effectual Calling

### **Common Grace: God is Gracious to All**

Definition of common grace: This is the unmerited favor of God toward all men displayed in His general care for them.

Some of the gracious blessings of God upon all mankind:

Good gifts from God: James 1:17

Though mankind is in rebellion against God they are not forgotten by God. God in grace continues to show restraint in divine judgment and continues to bestow divine blessings.

The goodness of God: Psalm 145:9 "The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works."

Sunshine and rain: Matt. 5:45

Food from the earth: Acts 14:17

The provision of a Savior: "...we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).

The restraint of sin: 2 Thess. 2:6-7; Rom. 13:1-4

Only God can restrain "the man of sin" in Thessalonians. God also uses government to restrain sin and is a divine blessing in restraining evil.

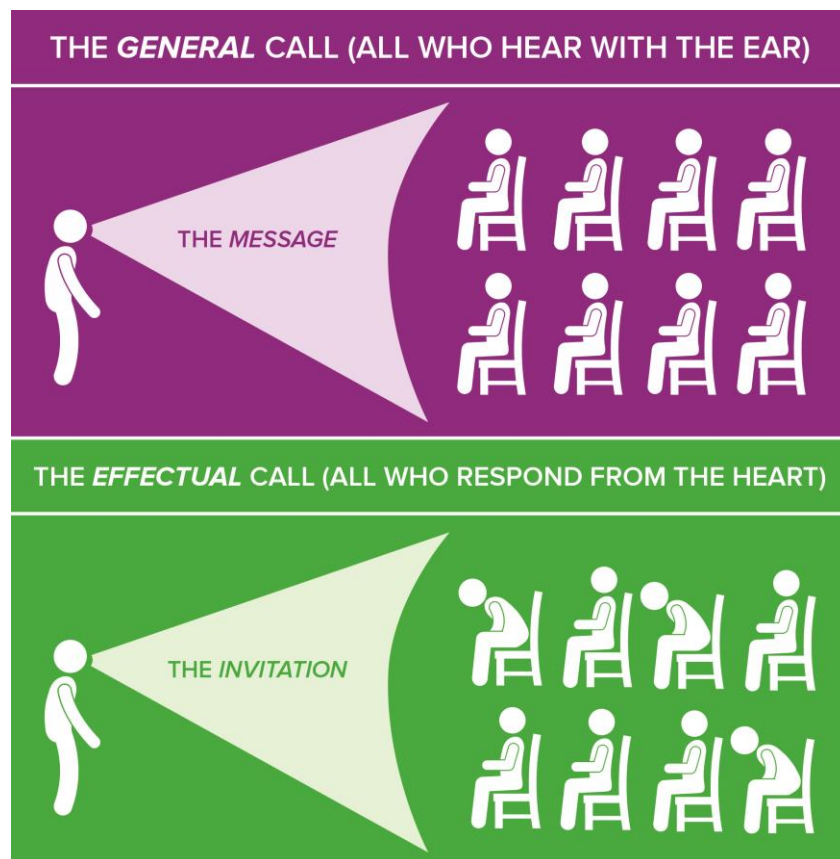
The convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit: John 16:8-11

“‘Conviction’ has the idea of authoritative examination, of unquestionable proof, of decisive judgment, or punitive power. What the final issue may be, he who ‘convicts’ another places the truth of the case in dispute in a clear light before him so that it must be seen and acknowledged as truth. He, who then rejects the conclusion which the exposition involves, rejects it with his eyes open and at his peril. Truth seen as truth carries with it condemnation to all who refuse to welcome it.”

(B. F. Westcott, Gospel According to St. John, cited by Ryrie, Holy Spirit, p. 58).

Summary: God’s grace is rejected by the majority of mankind. Grace is that aspect of God whereby He can be good to someone without any merit in them. No one deserves the kindness and grace of God.

We want to look at those verses that show how *effective* God is at bringing the sinner to Himself. This is called *efficacious grace* because it describes the *calling* and *grace* of God towards the sinner that persuades them to come to Christ.



## **Effectual Calling or Grace**

Efficacious grace is the work of the Holy Spirit which effectively moves men to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. This is the “calling” of Romans 8:29. . . “whom he foreknew, He predestinated, and whom He predestinated He called. . .”. This calling is carrying out the divine plan and purpose of God and cannot fail to bring the sinner to Christ.

By “calling” is meant *to bring to faith*.

Westminster Confession (Chapter 10, 1647) says,

“All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.”

This definition includes aspects of being *born* of God or *regeneration* which we will look at in our next study.

### **Scriptures on Calling:**

“But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;” 2 Thess. 2:13-14.

Romans 1:6; 8:28, 30; 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:24, 26; 7:18; Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 4:1, 4.

These verses are used to show that one was *effectually* called and believed, and not merely heard a message but did not believe (Matthew 22:14 “many called, but few chosen”).

### **A Theological Debate:** Prevenient Grace vs. Effectual Calling

The scriptures teach that man left to himself could never remedy his plight. Sin has so debilitated the nature of man that he naturally has no desire for God. Mankind is under the sway of a false god called “the devil,” John 8:44.

Some teach that God has given all mankind the same “grace” to come to God and that their salvation rests on “their ability to come.” This “inner light” or “enlightened will” chooses to accept or reject the gospel.

“Efficacious grace or calling” stresses what God does for those He chose in eternity past results in their eternal salvation. God’s salvation is not just “provision for the sinner” but has been “planned” and “purposed”. Christ must not die in vain. His cross work must be applied to those chosen before time; Ephesians 1:4-5, 11.

### **Examples of How God Calls His Own in Salvation**

#### **John 6:29-44**

- 29 – “This is the work of God that you believe in him whom he has sent.”
- 36 – “But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.”
- 37 – “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”
- 44 – “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”

#### **John 8:12-47**

- 24 – “I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”
- 25 – “Who are you?”
- 27 – “They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.”
- 32 – “And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
- 34 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.”
- 42 – “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here.”
- 43 – “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.”
- 46 – “If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?”
- 47 – “The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

#### **John 10:11-27**

- 14 – “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.”
- 16 – “And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.”
- 26 – “but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.”
- 27 – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

**Acts 13:48** – “And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”

**Acts 16:14** – “The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.”

**1 Corinthians 1:18** – “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

**1 Corinthians 1:22-24** – “For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

**1 Corinthians 1:26** – “For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.”

**1 Corinthians 2:6-13** – “we understand God because of the work of His Spirit while the wise men of the earth are in the dark – we have the mind of Christ (16).”

### **What God Has Called Us to:**

1. To be a people of His very own: 1 Peter 2:9
2. To liberty and freedom in Christ: Gal. 5:13
3. To fellowship and/or partnership with Jesus Christ: 1 Cor. 1:9
4. To peace : 1 Cor. 7:15
5. To holiness from uncleanness: 1 Thess. 4:7; 1 Peter 1:15
6. To the grace of Christ: Gal. 1:6
7. To a state of bliss and happiness in another world: 1 Thess. 2:12; John 17:22; Col. 3:4; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Peter 5:10

### **Summary Thoughts**

God’s people are commissioned to preach the gospel to all mankind; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:14-16. People are to hear the gospel and be exposed to witnesses for Jesus Christ.

Results vary on who will believe our message and who will not. The thing to be sure of is that God will not be frustrated. He will save all that are called by Him of those whom He foreknew and predestined to be His own; Romans 8:29-30.

God uses means to bring His chosen to saving faith in this life. Let us pray, witness, beseech, care, weep, and be ambassadors of Jesus Christ to a needy world.

Why not start with your world of friends, family, and acquaintances? They will never be saved without hearing the gospel. Are we sharing the gospel or “stuffing” it and keeping it to ourselves?

Today is the day of salvation. The night will come when no man can work. Do you see the harvest of humanity dying without Christ? They need a Savior and they need us Christians to not keep it to ourselves.

God’s gospel is the power of God unto salvation: Romans 1:16.





## Break Out Session – Lesson 8

### Group Discussion Background

In each of our break out sessions we will probe three aspects of the truths presented during each class through a series of discussion questions as described below.

**WHAT:** What is the key informational content?

**SO WHAT:** What is the implication of this information? Or said another way, why is the truth of this information important?

**WHAT NOW:** How will you apply this truth or what will you do now that you know this truth?

Our goal for these classes is not simply to increase our knowledge, but for lives to be transformed by truth. (Romans 12:2)

### Discussion Questions: (25 minutes)

*Ask the group the following questions and allow the group to thoroughly explore and discuss each one.*

1. Is God truly kind and good to all men, both to sinners and the righteous? Name at least four ways God's kindness is shown to mankind. What theological term is used to describe this aspect of God's blessings on all mankind?
2. God's grace is shown in a different way to his own. What is meant by effectual calling or grace? According to Romans 8:29-30, who is doing the calling? How certain is this call?
3. What are the 3 elements essential to the Gospel Call? How do the invitations of Jesus from Matthew 11:28-30 and John 1:11-12 fit in to God's gospel call? Is the call simply stating facts?
4. As you share the gospel to those around you, have you ever thought that Jesus is still speaking these words of invitation to people today? What impact does this have in light of Romans 1:16 and Romans 10:14?
5. God wants to use people like us to share the gospel with our world. Could you easily turn in the Bible to find four or five appropriate verses that would explain the gospel call clearly? Why or why not?

### Time to Care – Share – Bear (15 minutes)

*During this time, the group is encouraged to share in each other's lives and demonstrate care for one another by bearing one another up through prayer.*

### Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Answer any remaining questions and clarify the homework for the following week.







## Lesson 8 Homework

1. Read Grudem, Salvation, pgs. 73-81.
2. What does “regeneration” mean?
3. According to Titus 3:1-7 what do human works have to do with regeneration?
4. Read John 3 and list below what “conditions” must be met before one knows that they belong to Jesus Christ.
5. Read 1 John (just 5 chapters---take no more than 15 minutes to read), and write down the “effects” of being born again. Some refer to these “effects” as the “proofs” of being born again.

Scripture Reference

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