

THE JOB OF UN-CURSING THE WORLD

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VOCATION IS MUCH MORE THAN WHAT I DO FOR A LIVING. IT IS THE FULL TIME CALLING OF GOD TO LIVE MY LIFE AS THOUGH IT WERE HIS LIFE. I HAVE A WHOLE RAFT OF VOCATIONS ALREADY BEFORE I EVER HAVE A JOB AND SO THE BUSINESS OF CHOOSING A VOCATION IS ONLY ONE OF MY VOCATIONS.

PROCEDURE

The method of presentation is a modified "What's My Line" routine requiring a moderator, four "liners" and the audience as a panel. The moderator is responsible for introducing the topic, informing the audience of the way the "game" is played, and introducing the four "liners" as they appear. The program material which follows is a thorough guide for the moderator and "liners", but requires that each study the suggestions and be prepared to carry out his presentation in his own words.

It is the "liners' " job to have people learn about their **vocation**, i.e., about the **caller**, the **callee** and the **calling** involved in the four Biblical characters whom they represent. It might add a note of suspense if the "liners" would try to hide their identity, at least in their speaking. (For an added note of interest to the League it might be well to have the "liners" costume like the people they are representing, though for the first of the four this might be difficult.) The identity of these callees is not important to the purpose of the presentation, so if it cannot be concealed not too much is lost. The four are Adam, Abraham, Jesus and Peter.

Each of the "liners" studies a piece of Biblical literature relating to a "calling" incident in the life of the man he is portraying, and from this each develops a short autobiographical story that he will tell to the audience. The simplest procedure would be to say something about the three parts: the **caller**, the **callee**, the **calling** and the changes that took place in any one of these three parts during the course of the episode related. The following suggestions for the "liners" will give help for their portrayals.

THE LINERS

ADAM

Study Genesis 2 and 3. Obviously God is the caller. He calls man (Adam) into existence. The **calling** consists of being the "image of God." Most likely this word "image" means

mirror. Man is to be a God-reflector. But when God calls man to account for his "reflecting" job the mirror is broken. The "liner" should use imagination and fantasy in living himself into Adam's situation. For instance, he might say: "He called me to be a God-reflector. I wasn't sure what that meant at first, but before long it dawned on me. I should be reflecting the creator Himself to the rest of creation, especially human creation. When people meet me they should be reminded of God. Shortly after that a tragic incident happened, and before long God called on me again. Actually all He was doing was calling me to account, checking on how I was doing in my **calling**, in my God-reflecting business. And because I knew I was doing such a lousy job, I hid. As silly as it sounds, I tried to hide from the one who called me into life in the first place. Well, you can imagine what followed . . .

"Emphasis must be placed on the "cursed" world (Gen. 3:17) because the next three "liners" are all part of the calling to un-curse the world.

ABRAHAM

Read Genesis 12 to 17. Two aspects of Abraham's **calling** are important here. One is that God called him to "forsake all and follow Him" (12:1). Important is the word **bless**, the opposite of curse, found in 12:2, 3. Not only is this a mere reversal of God's verdict upon a single man, but upon all the families of the earth. And this takes place through Abraham and through his descendants. Mark this well: **through people the world gets uncursed!** God calls people into action to uncurse the world. All of this does not happen in the lifetime and calling of Abraham, but it is the beginning of a second kind of calling—not just the calling of the creator asking, "How are you doing as a God-reflector in My creation "but the calling to let God take hold of you again and re-shape your life (in Abraham's case literally reshape it into a brand new pattern and thereby become a called agent for the eventual reshaping of other people's lives). Abraham had only the haziest notion of what was all involved. But no matter. It doesn't count how much you know of what the Caller has in mind, what counts is that you trust him. Remember St. Paul's evaluation of Abraham in Romans 4—Abraham believed God and **that** was accounted as his righteousness. That is undoing the curse, un-cursing the world.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Read Matthew 3:13—4:22, Jesus' baptism, temptation and His **calling** of his disciples, especially Peter who is the next and last speaker.

Points to be made here are the **call** to Sonship in the voice from the cloud at baptism. Here we see Jesus getting **called** to a particular kind of sonship, not the son of razzle-dazzle glory, but the Son of suffering and temptation. The point should be made that this **calling** subjects Jesus to the Temptation that immediately follows and that it is the Sonship that the tempter attacks ("If you are the Son of God . . ."). The tempter suggests a razzle-dazzle kind of sonship, but Jesus' sonship **calls for** something else. See Matthew 16:21; 17:22f; 20:17f, 26:1f.

PETER

Note the **calling** of Peter as related in Luke 5. Here Peter is first being called to account, "How are you doings" It results in his confession of failure. "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." Jesus stays and puts up with him as a sinful man (which, of course, is Jesus' calling).

After giving a picture of himself as Peter, then the "liner" retaining the role of Peter, should switch gears and start speaking to the audience about their calling (*The moderator might try to interrupt saying: "Say, that's my job." To which Peter responds, "I'm an apostle. What are you?"*) Peter's address to the audience should be on the basis of his own letter, **I Peter**, which is the key text which this "liner" should study for his role. This is an important role, for Peter must make the point of connecting the work of Christ to the **callings** of the Christians in the audience. He might purposely switch to the plural, **callings**, and make a point of the switch.

The key passages of I Peter are 1:15; 2:9,21, 3:9. They work in nice progression. The Holy God has called us back to be holy people, to be like Him, to be God-reflectors 24 hours a day. He did this by **calling us** (Peter speaking this part should always address the audience as "you.") from darkness to light in the suffering of the Shepherd (2.21-25) So that "you" might be God's own people (just like Adam, all over again), God-reflectors to others. In 3:19 he says it: we are called to stop the normal "cursing game" that goes on. ("Curse" doesn't just mean saying bad words, but driving people away from God, as God drove Adam and Eve away from Paradise). We are called to bless, to bring the life and love and goodness of God back to the accursed lives of the people around us. Every place, then, that I have a connection of any kind with people is a place where I have a vocation, where God calls me to un-curse that piece of creation by the power of the death and resurrection of Christ.

MODERATOR: (*breaks in here or when Peter stops to catch a breath*) Are you finished?

PETER: "No, but I wrote two whole letters in the New Testament and you can read more about it there. So I'll stop for now."

DISCUSSION

Questions for discussion might now be asked from the audience, addressed to specific "liners" or to the issues they have opened.

If little or nothing is forthcoming from the audience, some of the following might get it going.

1. Where does God call us in any way similar to the way any of the "liners" were called?

2. What are the varieties of **callings** we have even before we have a job?
3. How can or do we perform the one central calling of **uncursing the creation** in these callings?
4. When are we called upon to choose our lifetime work; how do I fulfill my one central calling right in this career-decision struggle? (Perhaps Abraham fits in here: trust God and don't get all "shook up" about your career-deciding problems. Remember, you don't have to see the total picture of your life if it is entrusted to God; He'll see to it.)
5. Are there some jobs and careers in our day that continue to curse the world instead of bless it?
6. How do specific careers actually un-curse the creation?