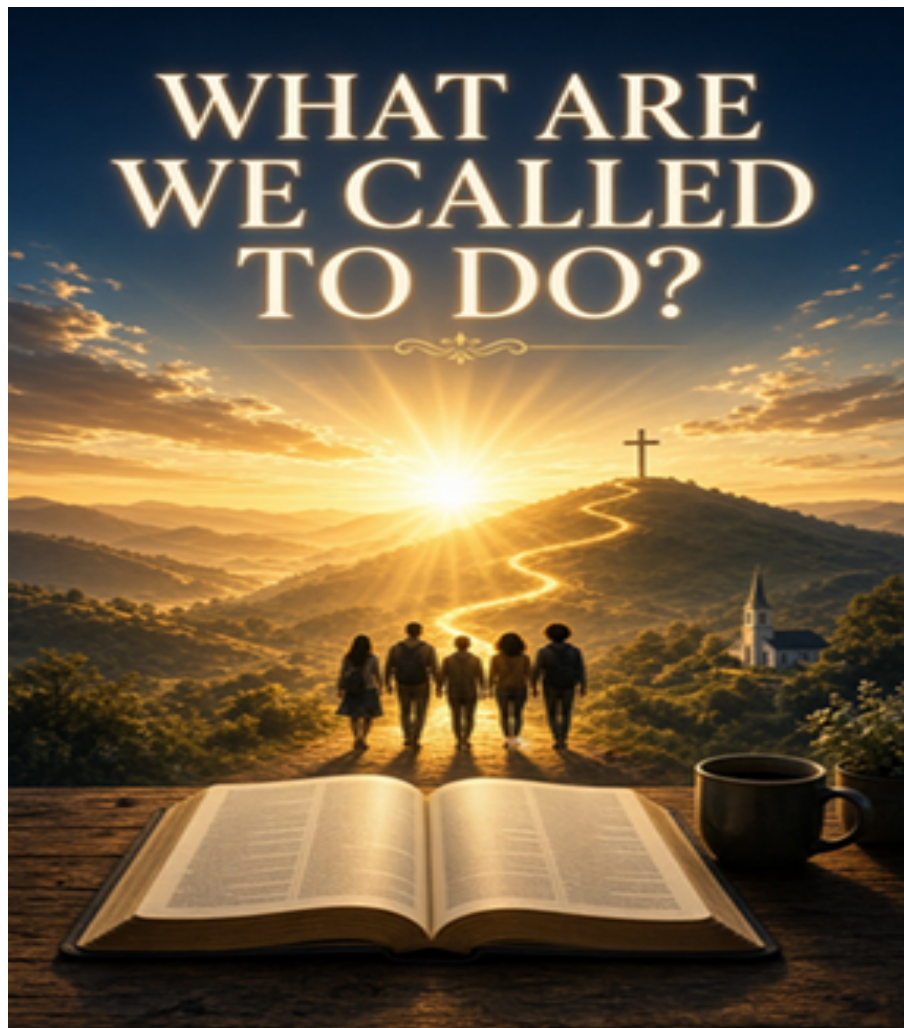




WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO DO?

A Bible Study on Our Calling as Believers, Citizens, and Members of the Local Church

Author: Dr. Cecil W Thorn, Ph.D. (Theology).

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Scripture

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.”
— Philippians 1:27 (ESV)

Introduction

The word *called* describes God’s invitation and command for His people to belong to Christ and live according to His purposes. Christians are not saved simply to remain unchanged, attend occasional services, or wait for heaven. We are called to follow Jesus and represent Him in every area of life.

God’s Word teaches that our calling has at least three important areas:

1. What has Christ called us to do as individual believers?
2. What are we called to do to preserve the Christian faith in our country?
3. What has Christ called us to do in our local church?

These three areas are connected. Spiritually mature believers build strong churches, and strong churches prepare Christians to influence their communities and country faithfully. However, if individual discipleship and the local church are neglected, political activity alone cannot preserve the Christian faith.

PART ONE: WHAT HAS CHRIST CALLED THE BELIEVER TO DO?

1. Repent and believe the gospel

“Repent and believe in the gospel.”
— Mark 1:15

The Christian life begins with repentance and faith. Repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God. Faith means trusting Jesus Christ—His death, burial, and resurrection—as our only hope of salvation.

We are saved by grace through faith, not by our works. However, genuine saving faith produces obedience and a changed life.

Read: Ephesians 2:8–10; Romans 10:9–10; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

2. Follow Christ daily

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”
— Luke 9:23

Following Jesus means surrendering our plans, desires, and priorities to His authority. Christianity is not merely agreeing with certain beliefs. It is a daily life of discipleship.

Taking up our cross means being willing to obey Christ even when obedience brings sacrifice, rejection, hardship, or persecution.

3. Love God completely

Jesus said that the greatest commandment is:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”
— Matthew 22:37

Our first loyalty belongs to God—not to ourselves, possessions, political parties, national leaders, or even our country. Everything else must remain under Christ’s authority.

Loving God includes:

- Worshiping Him
- Obeying His Word
- Seeking Him in prayer
- Trusting Him during hardship
- Rejecting anything that takes His rightful place

4. Love other people

Jesus joined love for God with a second commandment:

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
— Matthew 22:39

Christian love does not mean approving everything someone believes or does. It means seeking that person’s genuine good, speaking truth with grace, showing mercy, and treating every human being as someone created in God’s image.

Read: John 13:34–35; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7; Galatians 6:10.

5. Live a holy and transformed life

“As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.”
— 1 Peter 1:15

Christ has called us out of darkness and into a new way of living. Believers must reject sexual immorality, dishonesty, hatred, greed, uncontrolled anger, unforgiveness, drunkenness, and every other form of sin.

Holiness does not mean that Christians never fail. It means that we no longer make peace with sin. When we sin, we confess it, receive God’s forgiveness, and continue growing in obedience.

Read: Romans 12:1–2; Galatians 5:16–25; 1 John 1:9.

6. Serve others humbly

Jesus did not come to be served but to serve. He taught that greatness in His kingdom is measured by humble service.

“Whoever would be great among you must be your servant.”
— Matthew 20:26

Christians should care for the sick, grieving, lonely, poor, elderly, disabled, and forgotten. We do not serve to receive praise; we serve because Christ first loved and served us.

7. Forgive and pursue reconciliation

“As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”
— Colossians 3:13

Christ calls us to reject bitterness, revenge, and personal hatred. Forgiveness does not always remove consequences, restore trust immediately, or eliminate the need for justice. It means surrendering personal vengeance to God and refusing to be ruled by bitterness.

8. Proclaim the gospel and make disciples

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”
— Matthew 28:19

Every believer should be prepared to tell others who Jesus is, what He has done, and why they need Him. The mission is not merely to obtain professions of faith but to make disciples who learn to obey Christ.

Read: Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 3:15.

9. Remain faithful through suffering

“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
— Revelation 2:10

Christ never promised His followers freedom from hardship. He promised His presence, sufficient grace, eternal life, and final victory. We must remain faithful even when biblical truth becomes unpopular.

Personal application

Ask yourself:

- Have I personally repented and trusted Jesus Christ?
 - What area of my life have I not fully surrendered to Him?
 - Does my behavior support or contradict my Christian testimony?
 - Whom can I serve, encourage, forgive, or tell about Christ this week?
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PART TWO: WHAT HAS CHRIST CALLED US TO DO IN OUR LOCAL CHURCH?

1. Gather faithfully

“Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some.”
— Hebrews 10:25

Church attendance is not the whole Christian life, but gathering with the church is an essential part of it. Believers gather to worship, hear Scripture, pray, observe baptism and the Lord's Supper, serve, and encourage one another.

A Christian should not approach church merely as a customer asking, “What can this church give me?” We should also ask, “How can I glorify God and strengthen others?”

2. Devote ourselves to Scripture, fellowship, communion, and prayer

The early church “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” — Acts 2:42.

A healthy church should be centered on:

- Biblical teaching
- Christian fellowship
- The Lord's Supper
- United prayer
- Generous care
- Gospel witness

3. Love one another

“Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”
— John 13:34

Our love for other believers is one of the clearest public signs that we belong to Jesus. Christian love must be more than friendly conversation on Sunday morning.

It includes:

- Helping those in need
- Encouraging the discouraged
- Visiting the sick
- Comforting the grieving
- Welcoming newcomers
- Bearing one another's burdens
- Correcting one another gently
- Forgiving offenses
- Praying for one another

Read: John 13:35; Galatians 6:2; James 2:14–17.

4. Use our spiritual gifts

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another.”
— 1 Peter 4:10

Every believer has a place in the body of Christ. Some teach, some lead, some give, some encourage, some show mercy, and some serve in ways that may never receive public recognition.

Spiritual gifts are not given for personal status. They are given to build up the Church and glorify Christ.

Read: Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ephesians 4:11–16.

5. Make mature disciples

The local church must do more than attract visitors and count attendance. It must teach people to know Christ, understand Scripture, resist false teaching, develop Christian character, and disciple others.

Mature believers should mentor younger believers. Older men and women should model godly living for the next generation.

Read: Matthew 28:19–20; Titus 2:1–8; 2 Timothy 2:2.

6. Pray together

The early church prayed during persecution, important decisions, missionary work, imprisonment, and times of need.

A praying church acknowledges that programs, money, talent, and organization cannot replace the power and guidance of God.

Read: Acts 4:23–31; Acts 12:5; Acts 13:2–3.

7. Give generously and responsibly

“Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion.”

— 2 Corinthians 9:7

Christians should support the work of the church willingly and generously. Giving should come from gratitude and faith—not pressure, manipulation, or a desire for recognition.

Church leaders must handle these resources honestly, transparently, and responsibly.

8. Care for those in need

“Let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

— Galatians 6:10

A faithful church cares about both spiritual and practical needs. It should serve the poor, elderly, widowed, sick, grieving, lonely, and struggling.

Read: Acts 6:1–7; James 1:27; 1 John 3:16–18.

9. Protect unity without compromising truth

“Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
— Ephesians 4:3

Christian unity does not mean ignoring sin, hiding abuse, tolerating false doctrine, or refusing to address serious problems. Biblical unity grows from shared truth, humility, forgiveness, and commitment to Christ.

Believers must reject gossip, personal power struggles, bitterness, favoritism, and unnecessary division.

10. Practice biblical reconciliation and accountability

Jesus gave instructions for addressing personal sin in Matthew 18:15–17. We should begin by speaking privately and directly with the person rather than spreading the problem to others.

The purpose of biblical correction is repentance and restoration—not humiliation or revenge.

Church discipline must always be governed by Scripture, administered fairly, and motivated by truth and love.

11. Respect faithful leaders while holding them accountable

Hebrews 13:17 teaches believers to respect leaders who watch over their souls. Pastors and elders carry serious responsibilities before God.

However, church leaders are not above Scripture. Christians must never conceal abuse, criminal conduct, financial dishonesty, or serious spiritual misconduct to protect a leader or institution.

Faithful leadership is humble, accountable, transparent, and centered on Christ.

Read: 1 Peter 5:1–4; 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Acts 17:11.

12. Carry the gospel into the community

A church must not become inward-looking. It exists to glorify God, build up believers, and take the message of Christ into the world.

Church members should:

- Share the gospel personally
- Invite others to hear God's Word
- Serve community needs
- Support missionaries
- Help establish new churches
- Demonstrate Christ's compassion
- Defend biblical truth graciously

Local-church application

Ask yourself:

- Am I faithfully gathering with my church?
 - Am I merely attending, or am I actively serving?
 - What spiritual gifts has God given me?
 - Is there someone in the church whom I should encourage or help?
 - Have I contributed to unity or unnecessary division?
 - Is there an offense that I need to address biblically?
 - Am I helping make disciples?
 - Am I supporting the church through prayer, service, and generous giving?
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PART THREE: WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO DO TO PRESERVE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN OUR COUNTRY?

1. Understand who preserves Christ's Church

Jesus declared:

“I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
— Matthew 16:18

The future of Christianity does not ultimately depend upon a president, political party, court, legislature, or earthly nation. Christ builds and preserves His Church.

Nevertheless, Christians are responsible for remaining faithful, teaching the truth, protecting religious liberty, and passing the faith to the next generation.

2. Contend faithfully for biblical truth

“Contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”
— Jude 3

To contend for the faith means defending biblical truth against distortion and false teaching. Christians must know Scripture well enough to recognize error.

We should defend the faith with courage, wisdom, gentleness, and respect—not with dishonesty, cruelty, or unnecessary hostility.

Read: 1 Peter 3:15–16; 2 Timothy 4:1–5.

3. Teach the next generation

“You shall teach them diligently to your children.”

— Deuteronomy 6:7

Christianity cannot be preserved merely by remembering how the country once was. Each generation must hear the gospel, learn Scripture, understand Christian doctrine, and personally follow Christ.

Parents have the primary responsibility to teach their children. Churches must help families by providing sound teaching, discipleship, godly examples, and opportunities for service.

Read: Psalm 78:4–7; Proverbs 22:6; 2 Timothy 1:5.

4. Live as salt and light

“You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world.”

— Matthew 5:13–14

Christians influence their country most powerfully when their public testimony is supported by private integrity.

We must demonstrate:

- Honesty instead of deception
- Purity instead of immorality
- Courage instead of fear
- Compassion instead of indifference
- Justice instead of favoritism
- Reconciliation instead of hatred
- Faithfulness instead of compromise

When Christians demand righteousness from society while excusing sin within their own lives and churches, their witness is weakened.

5. Pray for the country and its leaders

Paul instructed believers to pray for kings and all who hold positions of authority.

Read: 1 Timothy 2:1–4.

We should pray:

- That leaders will govern justly
- That corruption will be exposed
- That religious liberty will be protected
- That churches will remain faithful
- That the gospel will spread
- That people will repent and turn to Christ
- That peace and justice will prevail

We are called to pray for leaders whether we voted for them or not.

6. Participate responsibly in civic life

Christians may vote, contact officials, attend public meetings, serve in government, support worthy candidates, advocate for just laws, and peacefully oppose wrongdoing.

However, political activity must never replace prayer, evangelism, discipleship, or Christian conduct. Political victories cannot regenerate the human heart. Only the gospel can transform sinners from within.

Our political conduct must also remain consistent with our Christian testimony. We must not excuse dishonesty, cruelty, corruption, or injustice simply because they appear to advance our preferred political outcome.

7. Defend religious liberty

Christians should peacefully and lawfully defend the freedom to:

- Worship God
- Preach the gospel
- Teach biblical doctrine
- Assemble as churches
- Raise children according to Christian convictions
- Speak publicly about matters of faith and morality
- Live according to conscience

Religious liberty should be defended as a genuine principle, not merely as a privilege for people who agree with us.

8. Obey government without placing it above God

Romans 13:1–7 teaches that civil authority has been established by God to restrain wrongdoing and promote order. Christians should obey lawful authority, pay taxes, show respect, and pursue peace.

However, government is not God. When authorities command Christians to do what God forbids—or forbid what God commands—our highest loyalty remains with Christ.

“We must obey God rather than men.”

— Acts 5:29

Biblical resistance should be:

- Grounded clearly in Scripture
- Peaceful and truthful
- Lawful whenever possible
- Free from personal hatred
- Willing to accept consequences
- Focused on faithfulness rather than revenge

Read: Daniel 3:16–18; Daniel 6:10; Acts 4:18–20.

9. Remember that America is not the Kingdom of God

Christians may love their country and seek its welfare, but no earthly nation is identical to God's eternal kingdom.

Our ultimate citizenship is in heaven.

Read: Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13–16.

Patriotism becomes idolatry when loyalty to country, party, or leader replaces loyalty to Christ. Christians must judge every political position and public leader by biblical principles—not reshape Scripture to defend a political allegiance.

10. Seek spiritual revival

The deepest crisis in a country is not merely political; it is spiritual. Laws can restrain certain behaviors, but they cannot create a new heart.

The preservation of Christian influence requires:

- Repentance among believers
- Revival in local churches
- Faithful preaching
- Strong Christian families
- Compassionate service
- Courageous public witness
- Persistent prayer
- Widespread evangelism

National application

Ask yourself:

- Do I pray for my country and its leaders?
 - Is my political conduct consistent with the character of Christ?
 - Am I more passionate about winning arguments or winning people to Christ?
 - Am I teaching the Christian faith to someone younger?
 - Would I remain faithful if Christianity lost social and political influence?
 - Have I placed excessive trust in political power?
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HOW THE THREE CALLINGS WORK TOGETHER

These three areas cannot be separated:

Faithful believers

Christ calls individual believers to repent, follow Him, grow in holiness, serve others, and proclaim the gospel.

Faithful churches

Those believers gather in local churches to worship, learn, pray, serve, practice accountability, and make disciples.

Faithful public witness

Healthy churches then send prepared believers into their homes, workplaces, communities, and public institutions as salt and light.

The proper order is important:

Changed people build faithful churches, and faithful churches prepare believers to influence their country for righteousness and the gospel.

Political power without spiritual faithfulness will not preserve Christianity. Church activity without personal obedience produces hypocrisy. Personal faith without fellowship and service neglects Christ's design for His Church.

We need all three: faithful believers, faithful churches, and faithful Christian witness in society.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to follow Christ rather than merely identify as a Christian?
 2. What is the difference between salvation by grace and good works that result from salvation?
 3. Which command of Christ do Christians most often neglect?
 4. How can Christians defend biblical truth while still showing love and respect?
 5. What is the difference between Christian influence and political control?
 6. When must Christians obey government, and when must they obey God rather than men?
 7. How can parents and churches better teach the faith to the next generation?
 8. Why cannot political victories alone preserve Christianity?
 9. What responsibilities does every believer have within the local church?
 10. How should Christians handle disagreement and personal conflict in the church?
 11. What spiritual gift or ability can you use to strengthen your congregation?
 12. What can our church do to carry the gospel more effectively into our community?
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PERSONAL COMMITMENT

With God's help, I commit myself to:

- Follow Jesus Christ faithfully.
 - Study and obey God's Word.
 - Love God and love other people.
 - Live a holy and honest life.
 - Pray for my church, community, and country.
 - Use my gifts to serve my local church.
 - Teach the faith to the next generation.
 - Defend biblical truth with courage and love.
 - Participate responsibly in civic life.
 - Obey God above every human authority.
 - Proclaim the gospel and help make disciples.
 - Remain faithful to Christ regardless of the cost.
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CONCLUSION: FAITHFULNESS BEGINS WITH US

It is easy to speak about what the country, government, church, pastor, or other Christians should do. But Christ first calls each of us to examine our own heart and obey Him personally.

If we desire to preserve the Christian faith in our country, we must begin by living it faithfully in our homes and churches. Our children must see that our faith is genuine. Our neighbors must see the love and character of Christ. Our churches must remain grounded in Scripture. Our public conduct must agree with our Christian confession.

Christ has called us to know Him, follow Him, serve His Church, proclaim His gospel, seek the good of our neighbors, stand for truth, and remain faithful until He returns.

“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.”
— James 1:22

Closing prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for calling us out of darkness and into the light of Your Son. Forgive us for the times we have been careless, fearful, divided, or disobedient. Help us follow Jesus faithfully, love others sincerely, and live holy lives.

Strengthen our families and local churches. Give our pastors wisdom and courage. Help us teach Your truth to the next generation, care for those in need, defend religious liberty, and proclaim the gospel with grace and boldness.

Give wisdom to our leaders and bring repentance and spiritual awakening to our country. Keep us from placing our ultimate trust in political power. Teach us to obey lawful authority while always remaining faithful to You above all.

Use our lives and churches as salt and light. May everything we do bring honor to Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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“Strengthening Faith. Restoring Hope. Living in Christ.”



Dr. CECIL W THORN, Ph.D. (Theology)

Is a teacher and servant of Christ with a passion for guiding believers into deeper intimacy with God through Scripture, prayer, and Spirit-led living. His ministry is devoted to equipping the Church to walk in truth, freedom, and faithfulness to Christ's call.