

# Finding Your Purpose (EM237)

Australian College of Theology name: *Finding Your Vocation*

## Unit Description

One of our big questions is “What does God want me to do with my life?” Be helped to frame, discern and follow God’s purpose for your life, as a spiritual act of worship (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:17; Proverbs 11:10). Biblically study God’s purposes, including his desire for human flourishing and *shalom*.

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## Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, you will:

### A. **Know and understand:**

1. Vocation and calling, situating their own “work” in a missional frame
2. Vocational themes from biblical, theological, and historical perspectives
3. The key elements of, and a spirituality to support, their calling
4. The various dimensions of vocation and strategies for restraining sin and promoting shalom through their work

### B. **Be able to:**

1. Describe their vocation from a biblical, theological and historical perspective
2. Discern their callings and align them with God’s work in the world
3. Reflect on and modify how to live their vocation for greater witness

### C. **Be in a position to:**

1. Practice spiritual disciplines to sustain their vocation
2. Connect their work, family, community and church life as a seamless whole

## Content

### A. **FRAMING VOCATION: Forming a Theology for Missional Work**

#### Day 1

1. Introduction to Finding our Vocation
  - Vocation, calling, work dimensions, and our kingdom mission
  - Creation and redemption commandments
  - Work as serving *shalom* and salvation

## 2. A Narrative Theology of Vocation I

- Constructing a biblical perspective of vocation from key passages concerning *Creation* (Gn 1-2, Ps 8, Prv 8, Isa 45, Jn 1, Rom 1 & 8), *the Fall* (Gn 3-11, Ex 1, 2 & 5, Ecc 2-3, Isa 59, Jer 10, Rom 1-5), and *Israel* (Gn 12, Ex 3-4, 6-14, 19-20, 2 Sm 7:1-16, 2 Chr 34, Pss 67, 90, 105-106, Jer 31, Ez 36)

## 3. A Narrative Theology of Vocation II

- Constructing a theology of vocation from key passages concerning *Jesus* (Lk 1-4, 10, Jn 3-5 & 20, Col 1:15-23), *Church* (Acts 2-4 & 6, 1 Cor 15, Eph 4-6, Phil 2, Col 3, 1 Thes 2), and the *New Creation* (Pss 96-98, Isa 60-66, Rom 8, Rv 21-22).

### **Day 2**

## 4. An Historical Theology of Vocation

- Church history perspectives on working for the kingdom, including both Catholic and Protestant distortions of vocation
- Particular emphasis on Luther and Calvin, impact of monasticism, Puritan thought, Protestant work ethic
- Rise of Faith at Work and Business as Mission movements
- Deconstructing Sacred–Secular dualism
- Church gathered and Church scattered

## 5. Macroeconomic Context for Contemporary Vocation

- Analysing contemporary forces shaping our vocation, including capitalism and consumerism, globalization and the global financial crisis, impact of technology, environmental degradation, and changing work patterns.

## **B. DISCERNING VOCATION: Discovering and Sustaining Your Call**

### **Day 3**

## 6. Finding Your Call

- The nexus between God's priorities, one's passions and gifts, and the world's needs
- Orienting vocation: guided by love, shaped by *shalom*, tested by discernment

## 7. Forming Spirituality for *Shalom*

- Discerning one's shadow missions that compromise vocation
- Cultivating vocational virtues: servanthood, responsibility, courage and humility
- Daily spiritual practices to sustain rhythms of work and rest

## 8. Using your Vocation

- Exploring the four pathways for vocational stewardship outlined by Amy Sherman in her book *Kingdom Calling*: (1) Bloom: promoting the kingdom and through your daily work; (2) Donate: volunteering vocational talent outside your day job; (3) Invent: launching a social enterprise; (4) Invest: participating in the church's targeted initiatives.
- Case Study: Participating in God's *redemptive work*, turning your church outward to serve the common good

## **C. STEWARDING VOCATION: Seeking Shalom on Your Frontline**

### **Day 4**

## 9. Elements of Vocation I: The *Nature* of Your Vocation

- Offering a foretaste of God's Kingdom through the day-to-day tasks you do
- Explore issues of empowerment, equity, enjoyment and efficiency
- Strategy: Model Godly character and service
- Case Study: Participating in God's *compassionate work*

10. Elements of Vocation II: The *Context* of Your Vocation

- Offering a foretaste of God's Kingdom through the work environment and relationships between people
- Explore social capital and issues of leadership and followership
- Strategy: Minister grace and love
- Case Study: Participating in God's *justice work*

**Day 5**

11. Elements of Vocation III: The *Income* from Your Vocation

- Offering a foretaste of God's Kingdom through the flow of work finances
- Explore economic profitability and issues of ethics, integrity and investment
- Strategy: Multiply resources for Kingdom impact
- Case Study: Participating in God's *providential work*

12. Elements of Vocation IV: The *Product* of Your Vocation

- Offering a foretaste of God's Kingdom through the central goods and services of work
- Explore environmental sustainability and issues of culture keeping and culture making
- Strategy: Make good work and culture
- Case Study: Participating in God's *creative work*

13. Celebrating *Shalom*

- Case Study: Participating in God's *revelatory work*
- Explore spiritual capital and issues of witness and fellowship through your vocation
- Strategy: Messenger of truth/justice and the gospel
- All of life dedicated to God's glory
- Entering the rest of the Lord