



WHO ARE YOU MEANT TO BE?

A four-week teaching series for youth pastors, written by Jordan Raynor
in partnership with Momentum Marketplace



jordan raynor



Series Overview

There's a scene in Moana where the hero's grandmother pulls back some vines to reveal a mysterious cave. Moana asks, "What's in there?" To which her grandmother replies, "The answer to the question you keep asking yourself: Who are you meant to be?"

That is the question our teenagers are asking themselves, isn't it? This four-week sermon series will help you answer their question in part, by revealing to them the dual commissions God has given humankind: The First and Great Commissions.

Our prayer is that this series will help your teens find the freedom to lean into their dreams of becoming lawyers, soldiers, teachers, programmers, and filmmakers and embrace those vocations as means of glorifying God, serving others, and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Why This Series?

There are three primary reasons why youth pastors need to be teaching on this topic.

#1: Work is important to God

God himself is a worker and work was his first gift to humankind (see Genesis 1 and 2). It is the thing he created us to do (see Genesis 1:28), saved us to do (see Ephesians 2:10), and will be doing with us for all eternity (see Isaiah 65:17-23).

#2: Work outside the four walls of the church is our best shot at making disciples of Jesus Christ in this generation

According to Tim Keller's research, "80% or more of evangelism in the early church was done not by ministers or evangelists," but by Christians working as farmers, tentmakers, and mothers. And that's likely going to be true for the foreseeable future. Why? Because the fastest growing religious affiliation is no religious affiliation! Non-Christians are less likely than ever to step inside a church to learn about Jesus for the first time. So how will they hear the gospel? Through our kids going to school with them and eventually working shoulder to shoulder with them Monday through Friday.

#3: Teaching on work is one of the most effective ways to close the "license to license gap"

As a youth pastor, you're painfully aware of the "license to license gap"—the reality that the church is going to lose most kids in the years between when they get their driver's license and when they get their marriage license.

What are our kids thinking about during these lost years? Dating and work. But because most churches spend little to no time encouraging the vocational aspirations of these young people, they leave to find that affirmation elsewhere.

As pastor Skye Jethani explains, “Young people, perhaps more than previous generations, have a strong sense of their specific callings. They believe God has called them into business, the arts, government, the household, education, the media, the social sector, or health care, and they are often very committed to these venues of cultural engagement. But when their specific callings are not acknowledged by the institutional church...the young are unlikely to engage.”

Teaching on vocation isn't the solution to the license-to-license gap. But it's certainly one of them. And we are praying that this series is one of many resources you will use to help close that gap and keep your kids on fire for the Lord.

How to use this Teaching Series

Our goal is to provide you with enough content and structure to introduce your students to the foundational concepts of how to integrate their work and faith in an easy-to-use teaching series. Below are some suggestions to maximize the impact of this series, but feel free to adjust it to fit the unique needs of your youth group.

Step 1: Familiarize yourself with the teaching series.

Step 2: Customize and adapt the sermons and discussion questions to fit the context and needs of your youth group.

Step 3: Plan the series schedule including any supplies or marketplace guest speakers you'd like to utilize.

Step 4: Promote the series to your youth group including personally inviting students who may be interested in a career-based teaching series.

Step 5: Facilitate the series and create engaging experiences for your students.

Step 6: Follow-up with students and provide next steps such as recommended resources or enrolling in Momentum Marketplace mentoring program.

We pray this series will be a catalyst to engaging your students in many more discussions and opportunities to help them clarify their calling!

jordan raynor



Additional Resources:

Jordan Raynor Resources

The Creator in You

Redeeming Your Time

Master of One

Called to Create

Mere Christians Podcast

Momentum Marketplace

A two-semester mentoring experience for churches.

Five Ways Faith Shapes Work blogpost by Faith & Works Movement

Every Good Endeavor by Tim Keller

The Faith & Work Podcast by The Denver Institute for Faith & Works

Theology of Work Bible Commentary

Work Matters by Tom Nelson

Kingdom Calling by Amy Sherman

Culture Making by Andy Crouch

Just Do Something by Kevin DeYoung

jordan raynor



About Jordan Raynor

Jordan Raynor is a leading voice of the faith and work movement. Through his bestselling books (*The Creator in You*, *Redeeming Your Time*, *Master of One*, and *Called to Create*), the *Mere Christians* podcast, and his weekly devotionals, Jordan has helped millions of Christians in every country on earth connect the gospel to their work.

In addition to his writing, Jordan serves as the Executive Chairman of **Threshold 360**, a venture-backed tech startup which Jordan previously ran as CEO following a string of successful ventures of his own.

Jordan has twice been selected as a Google Fellow and served in The White House under President George W. Bush. A sixth-generation Floridian, Jordan lives in Tampa with his wife and their three young daughters. The Raynors are proud members of The Church at Odessa.



About Momentum Marketplace

Momentum Marketplace is a captivating and enlightening mentorship program that connects ambitious students with spiritually wise marketplace leaders in their local church. Through this condensed two-semester journey, you will explore God's perspective on work, foster meaningful relationships, and gain clarity on your calling.

Born out of a vision to see students excited and empowered to take biblical concepts and a strong church community into their careers and adult life, Momentum Marketplace equips churches to raise up the next generation of leaders for the marketplace and the local church.

Learn more or schedule a time to talk with one of our team members at MomentumMarketplace.org



jordan raynor



Week #1: A God Who Works

Main Point: We worship a God who joyfully and enthusiastically works.

Suggested Outline

Introduction

- Consider playing the clip from Moana mentioned in the Series Overview to set up the question you'll answer in this series (*timestamp: 21:43 - 22:03*)
- Before we can answer the question, "Who are you meant to be?" we must first answer the question of who God is
- Because the Bible says we are made in his image (see **Genesis 1:26-27**)
- Ask your teens to name some of God's characteristics
- While all of those are attributes of God, think about this: Before God tells us he is any of those things, He tells us that he is a God who works

The first thing God wants us to know about him in Scripture is that he is a God who works

- It's the very first verb in Scripture found in Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning, God created." In the beginning, God was productive. In the beginning, God worked.
- Now you may be thinking: Come on, God didn't work, per se. Well, his Word says he does! **Genesis 2:2** says that "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work."
- And while Genesis 1 shows us God working with his words, Genesis 2 shows him working with his hands to dig a garden, plant an orchard, and sculpt human bodies (see **Genesis 2:7-21**).
- And in **Revelation 21:1-2**, when Jesus comes back in his glorious return, he doesn't restore the garden. He builds a new city.
- Transition: And it's not just God the Father that we see joyfully working in Scripture, but the entire Trinity and throughout the whole Bible.

The first person in Scripture that is said to be "filled with the Spirit of God" is not a preacher but a creative

- See **Exodus 31:1-5**
- Transition: And when "the Word became flesh" and came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ...

Jesus spent the vast majority of his adult life not as a preacher, but a craftsman

- See **Mark 6:3**
- Scholars believe that Jesus likely spent his days negotiating bids, securing supplies, completing projects, and contributing to family living expenses.
- In other words, Jesus of Nazareth spent most of his life working a regular j-o-b.
- As Jordan Raynor writes in *The Sacredness of Secular Work*: "Knowing Jesus's ultimate purpose in life, this truth should stop us in our tracks. God could have chosen for Jesus to grow up in anybody's home. He could have placed Jesus in a priestly household where he would have devoted his days to prayer. He could have chosen for him to grow up in the home of a Pharisee where he would have spent hours upon end studying the Scriptures. But instead, God intentionally placed Jesus in the home of a tradesman named Joseph, where he would spend the majority of his time making things with his hands."
- And Jesus appears to have done that work enthusiastically (see **John 4:34** and **John 5:17**)

Conclusion

- If you want to understand who you are meant to be, you must first understand who God is.
- And as we've just seen, one of the central elements of God's character is that he is a God who joyfully and enthusiastically works.
- And so, to be made in the image of God is to be made for good, joyful, God-glorifying work.
- But just in case we miss that, we will see it explicitly next week in The First Commission God gives to humankind.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the idea that God is a God who works change your perspective on Him? How does it make you feel about His character?
2. In what ways do you see God's work reflected in the creation story in Genesis? How does it impact your view of the world and your place in it?
3. Why do you think God chose to create the world and work with His hands, even though He could have simply spoken everything into existence? What does this reveal about His nature?
4. How does Jesus' experience as a craftsman shape your understanding of the value and purpose of everyday work? How does it inspire you to approach your own work or future career?
5. Discuss the concept of finding joy and enthusiasm in our work. How does this relate to our identity as beings made in the image of God? How can we reflect God's character in our own work?
6. Reflect on your own understanding of work and its purpose in your life. How can you align your work, whether it's in school, a job, or other activities, with God's desire for good, joyful, and God-glorifying work?

Additional Teaching Resources

Chapter 1 of [Called to Create](#)

Week #2: Your First Commission

Main Point: God created and saved you to work with him and for him.

Suggested Outline

Introduction

- We're in a series exploring the question every human being asks around your age: Who are you meant to be?
- Last week, we got some clues about who we are meant to be by looking at who God is—specifically, his character as a worker all throughout Scripture.
- Today, we will see more specifically what he has created us for.

God created you to be with him

- First and foremost, Genesis 1:26-27 shows us that God created us to be in a perfect loving relationship with him
- That is your primary identity—image bearer of God—child of God
- And because we are children of God, we are called to join the “family business.”
- Last week, we saw that before God tells us he is holy, loving, or omnipotent, he tells us that he is a God who creates. A God who works.
- And so, it should come as no surprise that we, his “image bearers” are called to work in his image.

God created you to work with him

- We see this explicitly in God's first words to humankind in **Genesis 1:28**
- This is the First Commission to humankind. The genesis of your purpose. This is where you learn “who you are meant to be.”
- Because of the immense importance of this text, we need to make sure we understand what it means. So, let's break it down into its three components:
 - “Be fruitful and increase in number.”
 - This one is pretty straightforward. God wants us to have lots of babies and spread out across the earth (in the context of marriage between one man and one woman).
 - “Fill the earth.”
 - Theologians agree this means more than filling the earth with babies. This is God's call to take this largely blank canvas he handed us on the “sixth day,” and fill it with art, sports, businesses, books, food, cities, and other good things.
 - “Subdue”
 - Wayne Grudem, explains that this word means “to make the earth more useful for human beings' benefit and enjoyment” which is exactly what most of the adults you know do every day in their jobs.
- And notice that because this work was given to Adam and Eve before sin entered the world, we can know that work was designed to be perfect worship.

God never cancels the First Commission

- When sin enters the world, work becomes painful and difficult (see **Genesis 3:17-19**)
- But **Genesis 1-3** makes it clear that work is not the curse. It is cursed as a result of Adam and Eve's sin.
- And it is so good that God never once retracts the First Commission from humankind. In fact, he continues to reiterate it after the Fall (see **Genesis 9:1** and **Exodus 20:9**)

- This is seen most clearly in something we explored last week—the fact that Jesus spent about 80% of his adult life working a regular ‘ole job.
- Author Dave Hataj says, “Jesus spent a couple of decades hammering, sawing, and figuring out solutions to building problems, while the world was going to hell in a handbasket.”
- That is the ultimate proof that the First Commission still matters deeply to God...

God saved you to work with and for him

- ...but just in case we miss it in the example of Christ, the Apostle Paul makes clear that work is one of the very purposes of our salvation.
- In **Ephesians 2:8-10** Paul says that while we have not been saved by our “good works” we have been saved “to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
- And what did we just see are the “good works which God prepared in advance for us to do”? The First Commission to fill the earth and subdue it for the glory of God and the good of others.
- Because we live in a fallen world, work can easily become an idol, or “god”, of its own. We don’t work to earn God’s love or approval, we work in gratitude of the love and approval He has already given us in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

- Do you see how freeing this is?
- If you want to be a doctor, filmmaker, mechanic, teacher, professional athlete, or musician—those desires aren’t evil. They were placed in your heart by the God who created you to work with and for him “to make the earth more useful for human beings’ benefit and enjoyment.”
- Lean into those passions and desires, because they are a means of living out The First Commission God created and saved you to do.
- And as we’ll see next week, those jobs are the ideal places to live out The Second Commission God has called you to in this life.

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding that God created you to be in a relationship with Him shape your perspective on your identity and purpose?
2. In the First Commission, God calls humanity to be fruitful, fill the earth, and subdue it. What do these commands mean to you personally? How do you see them reflected in your daily life or future aspirations?
3. In what ways have you seen the effects of sin on work in the world? How does knowing that work is not inherently a curse change your perspective on the challenges and difficulties you may face in your own work?
4. Reflect on the example of Jesus, who spent the majority of His adult life working a regular job. How does this influence your understanding of the value and dignity of everyday work? How does it impact your view of different types of jobs or careers?
5. How does the idea that work is one of the purposes of our salvation in **Ephesians 2:8-10** shape your understanding of the relationship between faith and work? How does it inspire you to approach your work with a sense of purpose and mission?
6. Discuss the connection between your passions, desires, and the work God has called you to do. How can you align your interests and talents with the First Commission to make a meaningful impact on the world and bring glory to God?

Additional Teaching Resources

[The Creator in You](#)
Chapter 2 of [Called to Create](#)

Week #3: Your Second Commission

Main Point: Every Christian is called to a dual vocation—the Great and First Commissions.

Suggested Outline

Introduction

- We're in a series exploring the question every human being asks at some point in their lives: Who are you meant to be? And what the heck am I supposed to do while I'm here on Earth?
- Last week, we saw that God first created us to be with him and work for him via The First Commission in **Genesis 1:28**—the call to “fill the earth” and “subdue” it or “make it more useful for other human beings’ benefit and enjoyment”
- But The First Commission isn't the only one we're called to
- Jesus made clear that we are also called to The Great Commission (see **Matthew 28:18-20**)

The Great Commission is for every Christian—not just religious professionals

- You've probably heard this passage a hundred times. And maybe some of you have felt guilty that you aren't “going” to “all nations” to make disciples of Jesus Christ.
- That guilt is rooted in a misinterpretation of this famous passage that I hope you will be freed from today.
- Here's the thing: Most Bible experts agree that the word “go” in “Go and make disciples of all nations” is a pretty poor translation of the original Greek.
- As Dr. Kennon Vaughan explains, “The word ‘Go’ literally means ‘having gone.’ ‘Go’ is not a command. [Jesus] is not commanding them to go, as much as he is saying, ‘Having gone . . . turn men into disciples!’ . . . The going is assumed. . . Jesus didn't go more than two hundred miles away from his own hometown, and yet he is saying go make disciples of all nations. . . It wasn't about how far he went. It was about what he did while he was going. The same is true for you.”
- Assuming that you've already “gone” . . . make disciples. That translation changes everything, doesn't it? The Great Commission isn't something we do only on a mission trip. It is something every Christian is called to do “as they are going” about the “good works which God prepared in advance” for them to do (**Ephesians 2:10**). And as we saw last week, those “good works” are The First Commission!
- But we don't need to feel pressure to do this on our own “for God” – we do it “with God,” Philippians 2:13 explains “for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose.” Remember, God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called.

The Great Commission does not negate The First Commission

- Some Christians believe that The Great Commission has replaced The First Commission, but we see zero evidence of this in God's Word
- If Jesus intended for The Great Commission to be the only commission of the Christian life, then why did he spend most of his time making tables?
- He could have canceled The First Commission, but he never did, with his actions or his words.
- And here's the thing . . .

It is by embracing The First Commission that your generation will be most successful at

The Great Commission

- According to Dr. Michael Green, 80% or more of evangelism in the first few hundred years of Christianity was done not by ministers or evangelists but by mere Christians working as farmers, tentmakers, and parents.

- This is why the Apostle Paul said he chose to work as a tentmaker rather than a donor-supported missionary (see I **Corinthians 9:14-23**)
- Since the beginning, Christianity has spread most rapidly through mere Christians embracing The Great Commission as they go about The First Commission. And that's likely going to be true for the foreseeable future.
- Why? Because the fastest growing religious affiliation is no religious affiliation! Non-Christians are less likely than ever to step inside a church to learn about Jesus for the first time. So where will they hear the good news? Through you all working shoulder to shoulder with them Monday through Friday!

Conclusion

- If God is calling you to be a donor-supported missionary, go! Obey that call on your life!
- But if he's not calling you to do that, embrace the work he has called you to do. Lean into The First Commission and faithfully engage in The Great Commission as you are going.
- I hope this session has been incredibly freeing for you!
- I hope that this series has helped you see how nearly any job can honor and serve God.
- But all of these truths raise an important question: If almost any job can honor and serve God, how do I choose which work to focus on in my career?
- It is to that question we will turn to next week!

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding that The Great Commission is not limited to professional pastors and ministers change your perspective on your role in sharing the Gospel? How does it relieve any pressure or guilt you may have felt?
2. Reflect on the translation of "go" in The Great Commission as "having gone." How does this shift in understanding impact how you might make disciples and live out your faith in your everyday life?
3. Discuss the relationship between The Great Commission and The First Commission. How do these two commissions work together in fulfilling God's purpose for our lives?
4. In what ways can embracing The First Commission (our everyday work) help us be more effective in living out The Great Commission (making disciples)? How can our work become a platform for sharing the Gospel?
5. Consider the statistic that a significant portion of evangelism in the early Christian church was done by everyday Christians in their ordinary occupations. How does this inspire you to view your work as a means of fulfilling The Great Commission?
6. How can you practically integrate The Great Commission into your daily life, whether it's in school, work, or other activities? How can you intentionally share the love of Christ and make disciples as you go about your regular responsibilities?

Additional Teaching Resources

Page 15 of [The Word Before Work](#)

[5 Ways to Prepare to Share the Gospel with Co-Workers](#)

Week #4: A Counter-Cultural Approach to Calling

Main Point: Christians should think about calling differently and more freely than the world.

Suggested Outline

Introduction

- Over the past few weeks, we've seen who you are meant to be generally—an image bearer of God fully engaged in the First and Great Commissions he has called you to.
- Now the question becomes, who are you meant to be specifically?
- As we've seen, nearly any job can honor and serve God. I hope you find that freeing! But I'm sure some of you find that truth paralyzing. Because if nearly everything is an option, how in the world do you choose?
- The world will tell you to choose jobs that:
 - Make you the most money
 - Bring you the most happiness
 - Allow you to put in the minimum amount of work needed to earn a paycheck
- But God's Word totally debunks this thinking.
- As we've seen, work is a gift from God, not a chore (see **Genesis 1:28**)
- And if work is going to be service to God, it can't be about us, but about others, because we are called to model our lives after Christ who came to serve not to be served (see **Mark 10:45**)
- So over the next few minutes, I want to lay out a simple, biblical, and freeing path to choosing how you will specifically live out the First and Great Commissions.
- 3 people you should be asking this question to—in this order. First...

Ask God

- This is where our search must start (see **Proverbs 16:3** and **James 1:5**)
- Because he already knows the plans he has for you (see **1 John 3:20** and **Jeremiah 29:11**)
- Once you've asked the Lord for vocational wisdom in prayer, the next person you need to ask are other believers

Ask Others

- Specifically, you need to be asking others which work they think you can do most exceptionally well. Why? Because it is through the ministry of excellence that we glorify God and love our neighbor as ourselves (see **1 Peter 2:9** and **Galatians 5:14**)
- Think about it this way: When you go to Chick-fil-A, how do you like to be served? Do you enjoy it when the staff ignores you standing at the counter waiting for a refill? Do you like it when the waffle fries are soggy? Of course not! You want to be served with excellence. And so, you should care deeply about serving others with excellence in your work.
- And the best way to know which work you have the potential to do best is to ask those you have served or may serve in the future: Your parents, pastor, teachers, friends, etc.
- This is how the Apostle Paul discerned his unique calling (see **Acts 13:1-3**), giving us a wise and biblical model to follow.
- Once you've asked God and asked others what they think about the specific vocational path you should take, it is finally time to ask yourself.

Ask Yourself

- Because here's the thing: God and others will likely point to many different ways you could live out the First and Great Commissions with excellence.
- So where does that leave you? It leaves you with the freedom to choose.
- So many Christians treat calling the way Hollywood treats romantic love—like there's one magical career that God has called you to do and it's your job to spend years driving yourself crazy trying to find Mr. Right.
- There is zero evidence for this in Scripture.
- As long as your heart is His and your career options aren't clearly out of line with His Word, you can't make a wrong decision! Because **Proverbs 19:21** says that "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."
- Commenting on this verse, pastor Tim Keller said, "In a sense, for a Christian, there is no 'plan B.'"
- Let's make this real practical. Let's say the Lord and your Christian community has called out computer programming, medicine, and teaching as three careers they could see you doing with excellence. Which do you choose?
- In a sense, it doesn't matter, because no matter what you choose, "no purpose of [God's] can be thwarted" (see **Job 42:2**). God in his incomparable goodness and grace has given you great freedom to choose how you will live out the First and Great Commissions. So choose the path that makes you feel most alive. Because as St. Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive!" And fully alive people attract the lost like honey attracts bees.
- Just start! Try it and explore. See if it feels like a fit and if you are interested in learning more. Remember that it's okay to experiment and try a few options to learn more about yourself and different career opportunities.

Conclusion

- We started this series by asking one of the biggest questions you will ever ask yourself: Who are you meant to be?
- I hope by now, you feel confident in your answer to that question. You are meant to be a child of a God who works, co-laboring with him and for him to carry out the First and Great Commissions in your own unique way.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the world's perspective on choosing a career differ from the biblical perspective presented in the teaching? How does this shift in thinking challenge or free you in your decision-making process?
2. Discuss the importance of seeking God's guidance when considering your vocational path. How can prayer and reliance on God's wisdom shape your understanding of calling?
3. Why is it valuable to seek input and wisdom from other believers when discerning your vocational path? How can the insights of others help you identify areas where you can serve with excellence?
4. Reflect on the idea of serving others with excellence in your work. Why is this significant in honoring God and fulfilling the First and Great Commissions? Share examples of how you have experienced or witnessed excellence in serving others.
5. How does this teaching challenge the notion of there being only one "magical" career that God has called you to? How does this understanding of freedom in choice align with **Proverbs 19:21** and **Job 42:2**?
6. Share your thoughts on the statement, "No matter what you choose, 'no purpose of [God's] can be thwarted.'" How does this truth provide comfort and confidence as you make decisions about your vocational path? How does it encourage you to pursue what makes you feel most alive?

Additional Teaching Resources

[Master of One: Find and Focus on the Work You Were Created to Do](#)

[Just Do Something](#) by Kevin DeYoung

[SHAPE Assessment](#) or whatever spiritual gift assessment your church uses

Thank you for using this teaching series with your students! Please check out our other resources or reach out to us for more information.

jordan raynor

JordanRaynor.com



MOMENTUM
MARKETPLACE

MomentumMarketplace.org