

# THE WAY TO HUMAN FREEDOM

## Study 2

# ***THE HIGH HUMAN CALLING***

There are two words in the title of this study that tell us much about what a human being is: 'high' and 'calling'. These words are of great significance as we consider the nature of humanity.

Whenever we think of a human we must think of something that is *high*, not low. It is often said, "Oh, but we are only human"—as if being that, puts us on some kind of low level. But it will be seen in this study, that in the light of what we were created to be, nothing could be further from the truth!

Any thought of what a human being is must also include the matter of *calling*. Every man and woman has been given an incredible *vocation from God*—a high and noble purpose that we were all created to fulfil. It is, actually, impossible to be *truly human* apart from this vocation that comes to us from above.

In the study 'The God Who Is', we saw that every person has a mental picture of what He is like. The same is also true when it comes to our way of understanding humanity. We all have a view of what a human being is. And once again, the big question is whether or not we have the *right* one!

Humankind is made in the *image, or likeness*, of God. In view of what we have learned about our Creator, the fact that we are made in His likeness becomes a striking thought. If that is the way He is, and we are made to be *like Him*, a human must be something very wonderful indeed!<sup>1</sup>

In this second study, we are going to see what the Scriptures reveal about *who we are*, as those made in God's image, and *how we are to live* in His world. Such a revelation provides the sense of personal dignity and nobility that our hearts demand—showing just how magnificent a human really is.

However, as we move through what is before us here, it will become very apparent that the way we were *created* to live is not how we *actually* live, of ourselves, today. This problem will be defined, and God's amazing solution made known, in the studies that follow.

## **our nature:**

(as those made in the image & likeness of God)

Genesis 5:1–2

When God created human beings, He made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, He called them [humankind].

Later in the series, we will explore the delightful nature of the male / female relationship that our Creator has purposed. But for now, the task before us is to deal with the subject of humankind in general.

In Study 1 we saw what God's nature is—the most basic elements of His *divine* Being. Now we must see what *our* nature is—the most basic elements of our *human* being, as those made in His image.

## **- children**

God, being by nature Father, has created us to be—above all else—His children.

Luke 3:38

—*the status of the first human creature*

Adam [was] the son of God.

Malachi 2:10

Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us?

Deuteronomy 14:1

You are the children of the LORD your God.

Human family-hood is so basic to us all. It is a wonderful gift from the Father-Creator. For some of us family-life has been a deeply satisfying and enriching experience. For others it has been disappointing—even painful. And sadly there are others who, through tragic circumstances, have never known what it means to be part of a family-unit.

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<sup>1</sup> Further to the definition given in Study 1, we may now say that true *human vocation* is what we do that expresses who and what we are, as the image and likeness of God.

But whatever our experience has been, one thing remains absolutely true. The family-hood for which we were created is to be found, above all else, as children of the one true Father—those who are part of His own dearly loved, eternal family!

Ephesians 3:14

[The Father is the One] from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth [receives its identity].

1 Corinthians 8:6

There is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we [exist].

As Creator, He is the One *from* whom we have come. As Father, He is the One *for* whom we exist. His perfect Fatherhood is, above all else, what we were created to know, enjoy and respond to!

2 Corinthians 6:18

—a *'very great & precious' promise to His people!*

I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.

In Study 1 we saw what *kind* of Father God is. He has made us in His own likeness, so that He may be that kind of Father *to* us!

True human life is enjoyed, as we know more and more of His extraordinary Fatherhood, and what it means for us to be His grand and noble children.

In future studies, we will marvel at how it is that God restores His people to the untellable pleasure of being before Him, and with Him, as His sons and daughters, in His world—anticipating the glorious fulfilment of that relationship in the eternal world to come!

## - creatures

Like all living, breathing things, we are by nature creatures. And as creatures of our Creator, we are *utterly dependent* upon Him for all that we are and have and do. As seen in Study 1, the extent of our dependence is illustrated by the fact that if He doesn't give to us our next breath, we won't have it!

Genesis 2:7

The LORD God formed [the first man, Adam] from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and [he] became a living being.

Acts 17:25

[God] Himself gives all [people] life and breath and everything else.

Job 33:4

The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Job 34:14–15

If ... He withdrew His Spirit and breath, all people would perish together and would return to the dust.

Only the Creator is Self-existent. *Our* existence depends every moment upon *Him*. He is, in fact, the divine source of our *every* human need—and delights to generously supply each one. Being creaturely children of such a good Father-Creator is, indeed, a marvellous thing!

Isaiah 64:8

—*the united affirmation of those who are in tune with reality*

We are the clay, You are the Potter; we are all the work of Your hand.

Psalms 139:13–14

You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Isaiah 40:6–7

—*magnificent, but fragile*

All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall.

Yes, truly magnificent, but extremely fragile, needing all that comes from our Maker's hand to sustain us—not only physically, but in every other way.

To live in the enjoyment of what we were created to be, we must understand the absolute creaturely nature of our humanity. Most of our personal problems come from a failure to understand this basic fact of our being. Life is a struggle, when we try to live apart from our good and faithful Creator.

## - servants (worshippers, rulers, stewards)

Knowing the kind of unsearchably great King God is, it is an incredibly significant thing to live under His reign as servants—those who gladly do His will.

Isaiah 44:21

[The LORD said,] “I have made you, you are My servant.”

As God’s servants we are also called to be ‘worshippers’—those who find their delight, above all else, in Him. In the original biblical languages, the words for *service* and *worship* are often the same.

As the servants of God we are also called to be ‘rulers’—those who have been given authority over the whole of the creation, to *rule over* and *care* for it on His behalf. As His image, we have been created to represent His kingship within His creation. We are by nature ‘the royal children of God’—servants with a truly regal status!

Genesis 1:26

—*made in the likeness of the King!*

God [has made human beings in His image and likeness] so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Psalms 8:5–6

[LORD], You crowned [human beings] with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of Your hands; You put everything under their feet.

Being God’s servants we are also called to be ‘stewards’—those who have been entrusted with the management of what belongs to the One we serve. He has given us so much! And yet all that we’ve received is not for us to *possess* apart from Him. Every detail has been *entrusted* to us, with one end in view: that we be *with Him* in the accomplishment of His purposes.

Our stewardship involves the faithful fulfilment of *responsibilities*, the faithful exercise of *authority*, and the faithful use of *personal abilities* and *material resources*.

We will see in this study and beyond, that our service as rulers of the creation and stewards of what has been entrusted to us, may, be a constant and joyous action of worship!

So, as creaturely children we are dependent every moment upon our Father-Creator for existence; and in this, we have much in common with our living, breathing fellow-creatures and all other created things. But being the image of God, we are also very much different. As has been said, we have a grand stewardship entrusted to us, part of which is to represent the Creator-King’s rule over, and care for, both our physical environment and our fellow-creatures within it.

Genesis 2:15

—*exercising true authority over our environment*

[Adam was] put in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Proverbs 12:10

—*exercising true authority over our fellow-creatures*

The righteous care for the needs of their animals.

Sadly—partly in reaction to our poor record of caring for our fellow-creatures—many today deny the uniqueness of human beings and our primacy in the creation. They insist that we are, merely, part of the animal kingdom.

This may sound like a very noble and generous attempt to increase the dignity of animals. But all it does, in fact, is reduce and demean our humanity. It is never a noble and generous thing to minimize or disregard the call of God.

As was seen in Study 1, all who have been given authority will ultimately have to give an account to the One who has entrusted it to them. We are to neither *abuse* nor *refuse* the exercise of this. Our calling—we will increasingly see—is to gladly respond to our Maker, and be with Him in all that He is doing in His world.

Job 7:17–19

What are human beings that You make so much of them, that You give them so much attention, that You examine them every morning and test them every moment? Will you never look away from me, or let me alone even for an instant?

As the stewards of God, human beings are the constant objects of their Creator’s attention. He never takes His eyes off us for one second. We are created to be His image—those who serve and represent Him in His world!

Service to our King brings us into the flow of true and full human vocation. How good and natural it is to decide for such a way of life.

Joshua 24:15

As for me and my household, we will [worship and] serve the LORD.

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Having looked at each of these elements of our created nature, it is clear that we, above all other creatures, have a very unique and wonderful relationship to God. Our *human* nature corresponds exactly, at every point, to His *divine* nature. All that *we are* fits in perfectly with all that *He is*. He is, by nature, the *great* Father, Creator and King; we are, by nature, His *grand* children, creatures and servants!

As children-creatures-servants of the Father-Creator-King, we are by nature, *like Him*. But it is important to see just how we *are* like Him by nature, and how we are *not*. The following diagram illustrates this for us.

BEING	VOCATION
GOD (divine Being)	GOD humanity
humanity (human being) the rest of creation	the rest of creation

In the diagram above, the horizontal line indicates the separation between what is *divine* and what isn't. The column on the left shows that when it comes to the matter of *being*, only God Himself is above the line. We, as humanity, together with the rest of the creation, are below the line. We are not *like Him* in our *being*. Ours is *human* being, His is *divine* Being.

However, the column on the right shows that when it comes to *vocation* it is a very different matter. In this we *are* above the line. Vocationally, we are able to *participate in the divine nature*, as those who are called to be *one* with Him in His life, His way and His work!

2 Peter 1:4

[Through] His very great and precious promises ... you may participate in the divine nature.

And so, although we are *not* actually like Him by nature in terms of our *being*, we *are* like Him by nature in terms of our *vocation & calling*.

## our holy calling

Human vocation is the most awesome thing imaginable. Our Maker has said:

Leviticus 19:2

"Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy."

2 Timothy 1:9 [ESV]

[God has] called us to a holy calling.

The calling we have received is, indeed, a *holy* one. In Study 1 we saw that God's holiness is all that He is and does as God, which *separates* Him from, and makes Him to be *different* to, and *other than*, *anyone* or *anything* that is less than God.

Because He is holy, we—made in His likeness—are also called to be holy. This means that we are to be all that God has created us to be, and to do all that He has created us to do—as His image—and to be *separate* from, and *different* to, and *other than*, anything that would make us to be less than *that*.

As those who are *above the line* in the right hand column of the diagram, we *do* have a 'holy calling'. That is, we have a calling that is entirely different to, separate from and other than the rest of the creation.

We are called to be holy children of the Holy Father, holy creatures of the Holy Creator, and holy servants of the Holy King!

## the way of life, righteousness, freedom & rest

To fulfil the high and holy vocation we have been given is to be in the action of all we were created to be. In this, we have more than mere physical existence, and know much more than just personal survival. We are participants in the very life of God!

Luke 10:28

—*God's promise to those who keep the two great commandments that summarize our calling*  
"Do this and you will live".

In Study 1 we saw that God's righteousness is His *right action* according to the way, or law, of His own nature as Father, Creator and King. To fulfil our holy calling, *we* also are to do what is *right* according to the way of *our* own nature as His children, creatures and servants.

We saw also that as the Righteous One, God enjoys total personal freedom and rest. Righteousness, freedom and rest always go together—and all three are what the Father desires His children to enjoy. To fulfil our high human calling is to live truly, freely and serenely in the way of God Himself!

James 2:12

Speak and act as those ... [who fulfil] the law that gives freedom.

As the series progresses, how we may be brought into all of this will become increasingly clear. We will see what the One who loves us has done to liberate our spirit—and our will—so we may share in the blessedness of His own life and vocational action!

our holy calling is:

### **1) TO KNOW GOD**

The *primary purpose* of God in creating us to be *like* Him, was, that we might *know* Him. That is, that we enjoy a personal and intimate relationship with Him. To pursue such a relationship with our Maker is *the primary expression of true human vocation*—and the most significant thing we can do. Nothing else is more worthy of our energies!

To *know* someone is not just to understand certain *facts* about them. True—relational—knowledge, only comes when others open themselves up to us over a period of time, and we to them. In this, we can come to know the way they think, feel and respond in the various circumstances of life. Then, we can even *anticipate* how they will think, feel or respond in a particular situation.

In the same way, coming to know God involves more than receiving certain pieces of information about Him. It must always involve close, personal communication and interaction over a period of time.

In our first study, 'The God Who Is', we learned a number of awesome things about the One who made us. But no matter how carefully these are examined, they alone will not bring the knowledge of God for which we were created, and to which we are called. What is required is the response that will be outlined in this study.

The word 'outlined' is appropriate, because Study 2—although a rich and complete statement of true human vocation—is only giving the basic framework of our response to the call of God. This will be filled out in many wonderful, life-giving ways throughout the second part of the series.

Jeremiah 9:23–24

This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let those who boast boast about this: that they understand and know Me."

Mental and practical development, personal strength, influence and success, and financial acquisition, are vocational priorities that are very naturally pursued. But these cannot be compared to the supreme expression of human vocation: *the knowledge of God*.

Genesis 5:24

Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

The most significant thing that could be said of anyone's life is not that they attained a certain amount of 'wisdom', 'success' or 'wealth', but that they *walked with God*. Life is so short! Soon we will be gone. To pursue the primary expression of true human vocation—fellowship with the Father—is the most urgent and indispensable need we have.

## knowing God & the gift of forgiveness

To know God is our greatest human need. But at the heart of this experience there must be a *clear conscience*.

Hebrews 8:11–12

They will all know Me from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

Knowledge of God and the forgiveness of sins are two inseparable experiences. Much will be said throughout these studies on the matter of forgiveness. We will see that in His unsearchably great grace, God has acted decisively in the midst of our human history—in a beautiful and awesome way, though His Son. And what to achieve? Our liberation! To bring us freedom from the deadly guilt, and crippling shame, of failure to fulfil our 'high human calling'. And why? Above all, that we may *know Him!*

We can only continue to move on into the subject of knowing God, on the basis of this great gift He has made available to us. It will be seen further on in the series how this truly is a *gift*—not able to be earned, but only freely received through faith. Only God's lavishly given grace to us in forgiveness, provides, the fountain out of which a relationship with Him may flow. It alone cleanses and calms the conscience, frees the spirit, and purifies the heart to want one thing above all else—fellowship with Him!

It will be seen that forgiveness brings us freedom *from* the torment of guilt, condemnation and shame, so that we may be free *for* the fulfilment of our high calling.

out of a clear, untroubled conscience, a free spirit, & a pure, undivided heart, having:

***\* an inner spring of great delight in Him***

We have said that to know God is the primary expression of true human vocation. Now, it must be said that joy, or delight, in God is *the most basic characteristic of true human experience*. There can be no enjoyment of a true humanity with out it. To have such joy—in response to revelation of the Father's perfections—is the *key* to a true relationship with Him.

All this has to do with WORSHIP—something that every person is engaged in all the time. Whatever we look to—or give ultimate worth to—for emotional satisfaction, or personal and circumstantial security, is the object of our worship (or 'worth-ship').

We are commanded to 'rejoice in the Lord always'. That is, we are to be like *Him*—always enjoying and delighting in His divine perfections. He alone is worthy to be the primary object of our joy!

Anyone, whose conscience is free from shame and accusation, is able to delight in all that God makes known of Himself. When our conscience is clear, our *heart* is pure and undivided and, so, *full* in its desire for fellowship with God. It is then, that all the enormous energy of our human soul may be directed joyously towards Him—in full-hearted worship! This is not only the most basic expression of *true human experience*, it, is also the primary expression of *true human righteousness*. In such worship, we know the personal fullness for which we were created.

The joyous worship that God's children, creatures and servants know *always* has the same source. It comes out of their delight in the amazing things their good, merciful and gracious Father-Creator-King has done for them. WHEN WE SEE HOW HE HAS ACTED MIGHTILY AND WONDERFULLY ON OUR BEHALF, THE JOY BEGINS TO FLOW!!!

Isaiah 65:13–14

My servants will rejoice ... My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts.

1 Samuel 2:1

My heart rejoices in the LORD.

Isaiah 61:10

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God.

Psalms 92:4

You make me glad by Your deeds, LORD; I sing for joy at what Your hands have done.

The Father loves to make known to us what He has done, so that we may share with Him in His own happiness!

1 Peter 1:6, 8

[In the midst of our many trials, we may ... go on being] filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

Psalm 43:4

I will go ... to God, my joy and my delight.

Psalm 84:10

Better is one day in Your [presence] than a thousand elsewhere.

There is so much to enjoy in the creation. But so much more to enjoy in the Creator Himself!

Psalm 27:4

[My greatest desire is] to gaze on the beauty of the LORD.

He is the Supreme Object of joyous contemplation! One Bible-teacher of a previous generation rightly declared, "God is ravishingly beautiful!" Another more recently has said, "Whenever I think of the holiness of God, I become rhapsodic!" The Blessed One loves to delight our spiritual senses with the wonders of His glory as our Father, Creator and King.

Psalm 36:8–9

[LORD,] You give [people] drink from Your river of delights. For [flowing from] You there is the fountain of life.

Psalm 73:25–26

Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Job 35:10

[He] gives songs in the night.

Matthew 22:37

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul [and with all your strength] and with all your mind.

Psalm 37:4

Take delight in the LORD.

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

The primary source of true and satisfying human happiness is the enjoyment of God. To know this *every day* is our first responsibility and most pressing need.

Now we are to look at the four elements of an intimate and life-giving relationship with the One who made us—each one flowing out of an 'inner spring of great delight in Him'.

firstly, having an inner spring of great delight in the Father, & so, relating continually to Him in a joyous spirit of:

**- reverent awe**  
(knowing He is GOD!)

When—by God's grace—out of a clear conscience and a free spirit, we are able to delight in the revelation of all that He is and does, there is a deeply joyous and reverent awe before Him. We know that He is GOD!

To have reverent awe in the presence of our Maker—that is, 'the fear of the LORD'—is a very wonderful thing. Fullness of joy and true fear of the Holy One go hand in hand.

Isaiah 11:3

—*the sheer joy of knowing that He is God!*

[The LORD'S servant] will delight in the fear of the LORD.

Psalm 2:11

—*enjoying reverence for the King of kings!*

[Worship and] serve the LORD with fear and celebrate His rule with [joy and] trembling.

Matthew 6:9

—*the primary expression of a prayerful spirit*

[This] is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name."

To 'hallow' the Fathers' name is to joyously and reverently *set Him apart* in our affections, as the One who is worthy of supreme honour—acknowledging the awesome nature of all that He is, has done, is doing and has promised to do, as God.

Ephesians 3:14

I [fall on my knees] before the Father.

Isaiah 6:3

—*the awe-struck heavenly worship to be enjoyed on earth*

[The heavenly beings] were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty.”

2 Samuel 7:28

Sovereign LORD, you are God!

Habakkuk 3:2

I stand in awe of Your deeds, LORD.

Revelation 4:11

—*an awesome Creator!*

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being.

Psalms 33:8–9

Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere Him. For He spoke, and [the creation] came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.

Psalms 100:3

Know that the LORD is God. It is He who made us.

Habakkuk 2:20

Let all the earth be silent before Him.

Zephaniah 1:7

Be silent before the Sovereign LORD.

Jeremiah 10:7

Who should not revere You, King of the nations? This is Your due. Among all the wise counsellors of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like You.

Psalms 96:9

Worship the LORD in the [beauty and] splendour of His holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth.

Every human inhabitant of this world is called to find their awe-filled delight, in the unsearchably great perfections of their Maker and King!

Psalms 130:3–4

—*the grand & glad result of liberating grace*

If You, LORD, kept a record of our sins, Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, [worship and] serve You.

In future studies it will be seen how the grace of God in forgiveness does, indeed, bring awestruck worship in God’s holy presence. There is no greater joy to be known in human experience!

Nehemiah 1:11

Your servants ... delight in revering Your name.

Hebrews 12:28–29

[Let us] worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Isaiah 66:2

—*those who know that God is God & they are not!*

These are the ones I esteem: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and tremble at My word.

Humility before God does not necessarily include a low view of oneself. What it does require is a true and high view of God, and a true and high view of what we were created to be.

Of course, where there is moral and vocational failure in the light of our high calling, humility will rightly include ‘contrition’. That is, a deep sorrow over personal sinfulness.

We will see in a later study that Jesus was the divine Son of God among us, and that He also enjoyed a sinless humanity—having no need for personal contrition. Yet, He was the greatest example of true humility. He knew exactly who He was and who He wasn’t. As Son, He had joyous and reverent regard for His Father’s word above all else.

The call of God directs us into the happiness we were created for. There is, actually, nothing more personally exhilarating, than having a joyous spirit of reverent awe before the One who made us!

secondly, having an inner spring of great delight in the Father, & so, relating continually to Him in a joyous spirit of:

### **- child-like trust**

(lifting up our soul to Him)

When, out of a calm conscience and a free spirit, we are able to delight in the full range of God's perfections—His dynamic eternal-Being, righteousness, faithfulness, moral purity, love, purposes, personal presence, power and blessedness—we find ourselves *trusting* in Him. There could be no more natural and obvious thing to do! In the midst of all life's circumstances and situations, we may continually and joyously lift up our soul to the Father.

Psalms 40:3

[They] will fear the LORD and put their trust in Him.

Psalms 9:10

[LORD,] Those who know Your name [—who You are and what You do—] will trust in You, for You ... have never forsaken those who seek You.

Psalms 25:1–2

[To You, LORD, I lift up my soul. In You, my God, I put my trust].

Psalms 119:162 [NKJV]

I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure.

To treasure God's life-giving word, is absolutely essential for a true experience of free and full humanity. In one of our later studies we will see in some detail, the indispensable nature of the word of God for those who are created to be His image.

Psalms 119:140

Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and Your servant loves them.

In the Scriptures, we have a record of God's tested and proven promises. To those who know Him these are 'very great and precious'—having been proved by them to be reliable, again and again. The fact is, that if today God did not keep a promise He has made, it would be the first time in all of history!

Luke 1:38

May it be to me according to Your word.

Psalms 130:5

In His word I put my hope.

Psalms 62:1

Truly my soul finds rest in God.

Psalms 33:21

In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name.

All the complexities of life dissolve into nothing, when we enjoy the creaturely humility that comes from the fear of the Lord, and simple, child-like trust in Him. Content in the assurance of His perfections, we have the deep peace and inner rest, that belongs to His children.

As we continue on in the series, one thing that will be increasingly clear is the *enormous significance* of being able to trust God.

thirdly, having an inner spring of great delight in the Father, & so, relating continually to Him in a joyous spirit of:

### **- grateful affection**

(thanking Him for every expression of His love)

When, out of a still conscience, and a free spirit, we are able to delight in the Father's unfailing love and faithfulness towards us, we *love* Him. What else could we do! Such warm-hearted affection towards God naturally finds its expression in gratitude and thanksgiving.

Psalms 118:28 [NASB]

You are my God, and I give thanks to You.

Psalms 107:8

Give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for human beings.

Psalms 28:7

My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I [give Him thanks].

Job 10:12

[I say to God,] "You gave me life."

Psalms 63:3

—*the most highly valued thing*

[LORD], Your love is better than life.

Life without the knowledge of God's love is not really life at all, only mere existence. When the Father's ceaseless actions of love—in goodness, mercy and grace—are enjoyed, the gift of life takes on new and grand dimensions!

Psalms 31:7

—*a constant cause for joy*

I will be glad and rejoice in Your [unfailing] love.

Psalms 13:6

I will sing to the LORD, for He has been good to me.

Psalms 16:2

I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from You I have no good thing."

Psalms 31:19

How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who fear You.

Psalms 136:1

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good. His [unfailing] love endures forever!

Psalms 116:1

I love the LORD, for He heard my voice; He heard my cry for mercy.

True and authentic human living involves the constant, joyous offering up of thanksgiving to our Maker. Throughout the studies before us, we will be exposed more and more to the wonders of His love—and be given more and more cause for a continual spirit of grateful affection towards Him!

fourthly, having an inner spring of great delight in the Father, & so, relating continually to Him in a joyous spirit of:

## **- wholehearted obedience**

(loving His way & delighting to do His will)

When our conscience is undisturbed and our spirit is free—and we are able to delight in the wisdom and will of God—our natural response is to obey Him with a whole heart.

The Creator's commands are so good. Obedience to them brings us to share in the great things He has planned. To not obey is, in fact, an act of self-denial!

No one can ever know true human freedom—the ability to be all we were created to be—apart from glad and wholehearted obedience to God; an obedience which flows out of reverent awe, child-like trust and grateful affection.

Psalms 40:8

—*the Father's will, a thing of great delight!*

I [delight] to do Your will, my God; Your law is within my heart.

Psalms 119:14

I rejoice in following Your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Psalms 119:32

I run in the path of Your commands, for You have set my heart free.

Psalms 119:35

Direct me in the path of Your commands, for there I find delight.

Psalms 119:129

Your statutes are wonderful; therefore I obey them.

Psalms 119:167

I obey Your statutes, for I love them greatly.

Psalms 119:143

—*the joy of being in the way of God when things are rough*

Trouble and distress have come upon me, but Your commands give me delight.

Jeremiah 10:23

LORD, I know that people's lives are not their own; it is not for them to direct their steps.

It is our Creator who is to determine what we should or should not do. We have neither the *right* nor, in actual fact, the *ability* to discern this apart from Him.

1 John 2:3, 5

We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands ... If anyone obeys His word, love for God is truly [brought to its goal] in them.

1 John 5:3

This is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome.

As was briefly mentioned in Study 1, the law of God is not about oppressive legal demands. It is the way of life—and to operate according to it is the way of personal freedom and fullness.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the [wholeness] of every human being.

And so, we have the first expression of true human vocation. It is to know God, as we joyously and continually relate to Him, in the midst of every situation and circumstance of our lives.

## **2) TO GLORIFY GOD**

This second aspect of our grand and holy calling, declares that true humanity is such that it brings God glory, honour and praise. That is, it promotes among His creatures a fullness of joy and delight in Him!

Isaiah 43:6–7

Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by My name, whom I created for My glory.

Isaiah 60:21

They are ... the work of My hands, for the display of My splendour.

we are called to glorify God, through a continual:

### ***\* reflection of His glory—as His representatives***

So far it has been shown that we have, by nature, a *vocational likeness* to God. As children of the Great Father, creatures of the Great Creator and servants of the Great King, our nature *corresponds* to Him at every point. This enables us to fulfil the first part of our human calling: to *relate* to Him in a personal and intimate way.

Now we are going to see that our vocational likeness to God has another aspect to it. It also gives the capacity to actually *be* like Him in the way *we live!*

As His image we may truly *represent* Him in His world. What a high and noble calling this is—to be a *visible* representation of the *invisible* God! That is the wonder of the second part of our calling.

God's *glory* is all that He is and does as God. Made in His likeness, we are able to *reflect* His divine glory through our humanity. The capacity to reflect God's glory, of course, doesn't make us to be God—just truly human!

For example, when we stand in front of a mirror we see our likeness, or image, or reflection. We understand that what is there before our eyes is, *not us*, but our likeness. In the same way, as human creatures—who are *not God*—we are able to reflect His glory through our humanity.

So then, delighting—with the *whole of our being*—in all that God is and does, we may be *human* reflections of the *divine* glory, and so, *glorify* Him. How amazing!

Genesis 1:27

God created human beings in His own image.

2 Corinthians 3:18

We, who ... contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory.

Now we will look at the four elements of God's glory we have been created to reflect.

we are called to glorify God firstly, through a continual reflection of:

## **- His moral purity**

(in our inner being: a spring of jealous desire for God's glory & praise—hating, grieved by & dreading sin)

As we delight in the perfections of God's holiness, and walk with Him—in a joyous spirit of reverent awe, child-like trust, grateful affection and wholehearted obedience—we have the capacity to reflect the glory of His *moral purity*. That is, we are able to be like the Holy One Himself—entirely separate from all that is evil, impure, morally dark or unlovely. This is how we were created to be. No wonder the conscience suffers so dreadfully when it is *not* what we are.

### **jealous desire for the supreme & universal honour of His name**

Out of an inner spring of great delight in the Father, there is, at once, a spring of jealous desire for His glory and praise.

To live in adoration of our Maker's perfections, is to fervently desire that every part of His creation give Him the honour and worship that is due to Him.

Psalm 67:3

May the peoples praise You, O God; may all the peoples praise You.

Psalm 145:21

Let every creature praise His holy name for ever and ever.

Delight in all that God is and does, always, produces within us a holy jealousy for His name—a fiery passion for Him to be worshipped, adored and praised, and for His word to be honoured.

### **hunger & thirst for righteousness**

Already, we have seen that joy in God produces a response to Him of wholehearted obedience, in which there is love for His way and delight in doing His will. This naturally, then, results in a personal *hunger and thirst* for what is according to His way. Such holy passion in our deepest parts brings the blessedness we were made for!

Matthew 5:6

Blessèd are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Matthew 6:9–10

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

### **hating what is against His will & way**

The more we delight in the way of our Maker, the more inwardly disturbed we are by anything that is contrary to it.

Proverbs 8:13

To fear the LORD is to hate evil.

A joyous spirit of reverent awe before the Father and hatred for evil, always go together. Biblically, to hate is to *choose against*.

Psalm 119:104

I gain understanding from Your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.

### **saying 'No' to every kind of impurity**

Where the conscience is clear and untroubled, our will is free to *decisively* choose against what is personally defiling, and grievous to the Holy One.

Psalm 101:2–3

—*the moral purity of God Himself in our homes*

I will conduct the affairs of my house with a blameless heart. I will not look with approval on anything that is vile.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, [coming to the goal of] holiness out of reverence for God.

When our delight is in the Holy Father, we may, actually, purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit. That is, we may reflect the purity of God Himself in all that we desire, think, say and do!

In Study 1 we saw, in 1 John 1:5, that “God is light,” and that “in Him there is no darkness at all.” As God’s image, this utter purity of being is part of our vocational heritage. The Father’s purpose was that it be said of human beings: “They are light, in them there is no darkness at all”!

## **the pain of living in a world where wickedness so often prevails**

To joyously know and respond to God, as God, is to share in His holy grief and indignation when faced with whatever disregards and opposes Him.

Psalm 119:136

Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for Your law is not obeyed.

Those whose joy is in God can sometimes find themselves weeping with deep sorrow, because His name and word are dishonoured.

2 Corinthians 11:29b

Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

To walk with God, and see others deceived and led astray from His way, brings participation with Him in His burning anger against such wickedness. It will be seen further on in the series, that a participation in the divine anger is never focused upon our own righteousness, but His. It is for our Creator’s name and honour that we are jealous.

Psalm 119:53

Indignation grips me because of the wicked, who have forsaken Your law.

2 Peter 2:7–8

—*the inner response of one who lived in the midst of wickedness*

[He] was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard).

we are called to glorify God, secondly, through a continual reflection of:

### **- the truth of His word**

**(in our thinking: a true view of God, humanity & the creation—seeing all things, at all times, in this light)**

It was God’s creational purpose that—every moment of every day—our minds should reflect the truth of who *He* is as Father, Creator and King; that they should reflect the truth of who *we* are as His children, creatures and servants (worshippers, rulers, stewards); and that they should reflect the truth of what the *creation* is as the setting for our relationship with Him—its origin, nature, purpose and goal; so that we have:

- # a true view of God (a right theology)
- # a true view of humankind (a right anthropology)
- # a true view of the creation (a right cosmology)

Research has shown that we talk to ourselves at the rate of at least 1,300 words per minute. God has intended that every thought produced by these mental exercises, should be a representation of His own divine truth!

When the Father’s moral purity is reflected in our inner being, the truth of His word is naturally reflected in the way we think. It is a principle of life that OUR THINKING IS SHAPED BY WHAT OUR PASSIONS DEMAND.

Proverbs 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Psalm 111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding. To Him belongs eternal praise.

All who walk with the Father—in a joyous spirit of reverent awe, child-like trust, grateful affection and wholehearted obedience—have His wisdom in abundant measure. They know who He really is, and

how they are to relate to Him. They know who *they* are, and who those around them are, and how they are to relate to *them*. And they know what the creation is, and how to relate to that. Such wisdom is so *good* and *life giving* that all who receive it, desire to praise the Giver forever!

1 John 2:20

—*a reality for all of His people*

You have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.

As God's children live in His world, they have the enormous blessing of knowing the truth. That is, 'things as they really are'. They may not know how and why certain things happen, but they *do* know the One who is sovereignly at work in it all. They know from His word what He has done, is doing and has promised to do. And—having received the high human calling—they know exactly what *they* must do in every situation of life, in order to enjoy the blessedness of being His image.

Psalms 119:24

Your statutes are my delight; they are my counsellors.

Again, to have the truth of God in our thinking is so good—having His sure and certain way always before us! Unfortunately, often, human counsellors are sought to solve problems that come from a *choice* to live *against* the Creator's way—that is, to *hate* Him. In Study 4 we will see the ultimate futility of the solutions that such counsellors often present.

Psalms 119:99

I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on Your statutes.

Responding to God's commands brings more wisdom than what can be received from 'wise' instructors who live against them.

Proverbs 3:13

Blessèd are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding.

Proverbs 8:30–31

—*wisdom's joyous understanding of God, the creation & humanity at the beginning*

I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in humankind.

Philippians 4:8

—*the constant focus of the faithful thinker*

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, what ever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

we are called to glorify God thirdly, through a continual reflection of:

## - His love

(in our relationships: 'holy affection', 'yearning desire'  
for others to be blessed, & 'ceaseless self-giving')

Our Maker has called us to reflect in our relationships His own *divine love*—a holy love, that is different to, other than, and separate from any other. We are to participate in His own 'holy affection', 'yearning desire' and 'ceaseless Self-giving'—out of which He constantly acts towards all people, to bless and serve them according to His purpose.

Mark 12:30–31

—*the 2 great commandments*

[The most important commandment is this:] "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these.

Galatians 5:14

—*the one summary commandment for all human relationships: the 'way of God'*

The entire law [of God] is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbour as yourself."

Romans 13:8

Whoever loves others has fulfilled [God's] law.

To love our neighbour is to want for another person exactly what we desire for ourselves, and to selflessly *act* towards them to that end.

To reflect the love of God in our relationships is not merely to want others to be 'happy'. Happiness is often seen as 'having everything going how I'd like it to, without too much discomfort or disappointment'. God, in His love, desires much more than that for His dearly loved creatures, and so should we.

His desire for all is that they be *happy in the truth*—that is, *blessed!* True happiness can never be known apart from the fulfilment of our high human calling.

All this flows on naturally from what has gone before. When there is great delight in the Father, resulting, at once, in a spring of moral purity within us; and when, the truth of His word is then reflected in our thinking; there is also—with these—a deeply affectionate, yearning desire for the blessing and blessedness of others.

1 John 4:19

—*delight in the Father's love is the deep spring of all true human loving*  
We love because He first loved us.

A joyously intimate knowledge of God's love causes *us* to naturally participate in His love towards others.

Romans 5:5

God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

In a further study we will see how, by God's great grace, He does actually flood our hearts with the knowledge of His love for us!

Romans 12:9

—*God's love for others through us is always expressed in the context of moral purity*  
Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Philippians 1:9–10

—*God's love for others through us is always expressed in the context of the truth*  
And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best.

We love others truly, when our own deep need for love has been fully met in God—and when we then, share in the burning passion of His moral purity and the unchanging truth of His word.

1 John 4:16b

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

You yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

Ephesians 5:1–2

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love.

1 John 3:18

Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and truth.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another.

Romans 12:15a

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

2 Corinthians 11:29

Who is weak and I do not feel weak?

Luke 6:27–28, 35–36

—*loving just like God does!*

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you ... and you will be children of the Most High [—sharing in His own nature—], because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as Your Father is merciful.

Let it be said again, that as we continue through the series, the total provision God has made for us to participate in His love—regardless of our past or present circumstances—will be increasingly made clear!

we are called to glorify God fourthly, through a continual reflection of:  
**- His purpose[s]**  
(in the investment of our lives: that which lasts forever)

God has wonderfully planned that we should have a major part with Him, in His action of working out in history, what He has purposed from eternity.

When it comes to this grand aspect of our calling, there is, really, nothing to say apart from what has already been said. To reflect His purposes is simply to participate in the actions of His love. All of His purposes are *love purposes*—and so, to be in the action of reflecting His love is to, in fact, be reflecting His purposes.

Many people speak of difficulty in discerning God's will for their lives. But it is, in reality, a very easy thing to know. We must simply love the Lord our God with all that we are, and—at all times—be actively participating in His love for those He has placed around us. Doing that, we will be right in the centre of God's will at any given time, and every day will be an investment of our lives in His eternal purposes!<sup>2</sup>

Very often, it is thought that the will of God is to be found in some great action 'out there'. But, actually, it is usually to be known and worked out 'right here', in the faithful serving of those who are before us day by day.

The Father will, very naturally, lead us into any future 'out there' situations, as we continue wholeheartedly and faithfully in the 'right here' ones in the present. To be fully given to the loving of our neighbour 'where we are', is to be participating fully in the eternal purposes of God.

### **the eternal significance of being with Him in His 'love purposes'**

It is a marvellous thing to know that all we do as a reflection of God's love, will, follow us into eternity. EVERY DEED DONE IN DIVINE LOVE IS ETERNAL!

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my [dearly loved] brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 3:13

[People's] work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

As was said in Study 1, all of history is leading towards a great *climax*. It is then, that the real nature of our deeds will be seen.

On that awesome Day to come, only what has been a participation in the love of God will survive His fiery judgment. Every desire, thought, word and deed that has flowed from the Father's love, will endure for eternity—and form part of the rich reward and privilege that His children and servants will enjoy in His eternal home, forever!

Revelation 14:13

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessèd are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "They will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them."

To be engaged in the fulfilment of the high human calling, is to travel a path that has enormous significance for both time and eternity!<sup>3</sup>

Proverbs 4:18

*—in the way of God, the best is always yet to come!*

The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

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<sup>2</sup> We will speak much more about knowing God's guidance each day in a later study.

<sup>3</sup> As already indicated, in the second part of the series—Studies 9–24—the broad, rich and eternally significant dimensions of our calling will be increasingly explored.

## CONCLUSION

The two sections of this study have revealed that our high calling involves both *relational intimacy* and *vocational partnership* with God. These two inseparable elements will appear again and again, as we continue to pursue the great themes of the grace of God, and the freedom and fullness He brings.

Made in the likeness of our *great* Father, Creator and King, as His *grand* children, creatures and servants, we have been called to *know* Him—as we walk with Him in a joyous spirit of reverent awe, child-like trust, grateful affection and wholehearted obedience—and to *glorify* Him through our humanity—as we reflect His moral purity in our inner being, the truth of His word in our thinking, His love in our relationships, and so, His purposes in the investment of our lives.

A human being, living truly as the likeness of God, is one who shares with Him in His joy, and is a glorious reflection of divine desire, thinking, relationships and purpose. To see a person in the action of fulfilling the high human calling is, in fact, to see exactly what God is like. What a magnificent creature a human is—and what an amazing calling we have received!

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[revised 25-7-11]