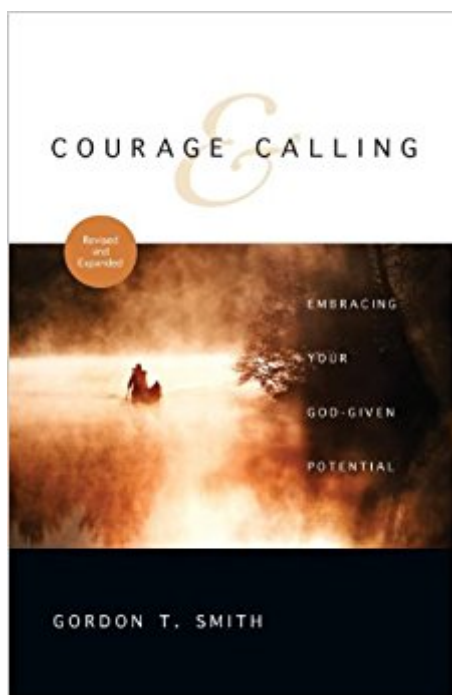


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# Courage And Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential



## Synopsis

God calls us first to himself, to know and follow him, and also to a specific life purpose, a particular reason for being. This second call or "vocation" has implications not only for our work or occupation, but also includes our giftedness, our weaknesses, our life in community and what we do day to day. In this book Gordon Smith invites you to discover your vocation by listening to God and becoming a coworker with him. What is my calling? How do I live it out in the midst of difficult relationships or moral challenges? Will my vocation change as I enter a new stage of life? With competing needs and demands, how can I craft a balanced way of living? Smith addresses these questions and many more in the pages of this book. This new edition has been revised and updated throughout with two expanded chapters and a new chapter on four specific areas of calling. Here is rich insight for all who long for the ears to hear and the courage to follow God's call.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is an encouraging read for nurses who may be weary and wondering how we can keep going. The reading is easy and the steps are light, not burdensome." (Journal of Christian Nursing, Vol. 30, No. 1)"I wish I had this book in my hands when I was in college, and I hope many Christians use this book to evaluate what God is calling them to do in their life vocation." (Larry W. Lyon, Themelios 37.1)

Gordon T. Smith (PhD, Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University) is the president of

Ambrose University and Seminary in Calgary, Alberta, where he also serves as professor of systematic and spiritual theology. He is an ordained minister with the Christian and Missionary Alliance and a teaching fellow at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia. He is the author of many books, including *Courage and Calling*, *Called to Be Saints*, *Spiritual Direction*, *Consider Your Calling*, and *The Voice of Jesus*.

Five stars for Smith's intentions, two for the result. This is the most difficult-reading book I have forced down in a long time. It is repetitive and strays off track. The first 30 or so pages have several absolute "the Bible says" type statements, all without biblical support (because there is not biblical support for them). It is almost like Smith had a three-page pamphlet of good information and tried to force and fill the pamphlet into a several hundred page book.

This book is about vocation in the widest sense conceivable. It is about the shape of our lives and how so many dimensions of our experience can shape who we are and give us freedom (or not) to live as we were designed. There is so much wisdom here about our personal and family life, our work, our friendships and our life with God. And it is so balanced with ideal purpose and reality of life. I highlighted a tremendous amount of material because there is so much that is insightful and requires further consideration. This strength is also a slight weakness in the book. There is too much here in one book. Too many lists. Too many sub points. I found it challenging to come away with a basic framework to remember and operate from. However what a wonderful resource to go back to. This material is excellent in helping a person live out of the integrity of their own calling and can be a great resource for presenting this topic to others. I would give it a 5 if it was a bit shorter.

It's okay. I can't say it's good, but it isn't horrible, either. Smith does a good job of integrating faith into the idea of finding one's "calling," but says in 260 pages what could easily be said in about 100 (as others here have noted). His constant revising of the idea of using one's unique wiring to identify calling is well-founded and provides the reader with several opportunities for reflection and exploration. He is particularly strong in his approach to prioritizing components of life that are of the highest importance, as well as recognizing that these priorities change depending on the season of life. Of the entire book, chapter 5, which explores excellence, truth, diligence, and generosity in the context of calling, is possibly the most helpful chapter, particularly in today's world. His argument that each of these facets are what give individuals meaning in their work is worth more than the rest of the book combined. However, the book struggles to remain on topic, and Smith relies too much on

his own subjective experience in places that could simply be left open. It discusses much of finding one's own calling but very little in the realm of courage. His constant reliance on his missionary experience is troubling. For one, he takes an obsolete view of missions, which is not helpful in navigating that particular issue. Though his missionary experience is quite legitimate, his experience represents the minority experience among missionaries today, which greatly skews his handling of that issue. It's not all wrong - just a very small piece of the bigger picture. My other fear is that this book almost encourages a form of self-reliance through self-actualization rather than a reliance on God. I don't believe the author intended this at all, but it was a theme that seemed to surface time and again. In short, I will be hard-pressed to recommend this to anyone, though the right situation may lend itself toward that. I likely won't read it again, with the exception of a few short portions here and there. The wordiness of the book is problematic, but he does offer some good ideas with which to wrestle.

I looked at a number of books on vocation before choosing to read this one. Based on the chapter titles and so forth, it seemed like the best fit for me. And it really was, I think. (OK, so I haven't read all the other ones to compare.) But, for instance, I took a long pause before reading chapter 8, about facing your fears, because I was SO AFRAID to face my fears! I knew it would be hard - but that's kind of exactly why it's what I needed. If you have a lot of psychological and emotional issues surrounding vocation, this book can probably help you as you explore them. It's very balanced. And I think the author is just a genuinely nice guy.

This book was used as part of the text of a Christian college course that I was taking, in conjunction with "The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church." This book presents some great ideas and concepts. However, the book has a lot of filler material that just repeats and reiterates the introduction of each section over and over again without adding much to the content of the book itself. I found that the important parts of the book were emphasized in some way within the text. Reading this book and fully understanding the concepts could likely be accomplished by anyone just reading the opening and concluding paragraph of each outlined section, and filling the gaps between by only reading text offset in bold or italics. As I said - the book has some great ideas and concepts. If you want to learn more about your calling and the talents that God has given you, this book is an OK place to start. Just be careful that you don't bore yourself or burn out trying to get through it. It does have a lot of great information and explanations of vocation vs. calling - probably one of the best contrasted definitions I have ever seen. Overall, I am giving this book a rating of 2 stars. The

reasons I am giving this rating are as follows:- This is not a book I could recommend to anyone to read.- This is not a book that I would have finished reading had it not been required reading for a college class.- This is not a book that I will likely ever read again.- This is a book that I may reference or quote from on occasion.- This is a book with some very good content, but lacks good presentation.

This is a great read. Needed it for college but enjoyed reading it. A lot of stuff to think about after reading this book.

Good book. It was well written and easy to understand. This was required reading for one of my college courses, but I avidly enjoyed reading it!

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