

THE SONSHIP CODE

CALL, CHARACTER, AND COMMISSIONING

The Process Between Calling and Representation

Lesson 9 | The Kingdom Codes Learning Portal

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From Lesson 8 to Lesson 9

In Lesson 8, we saw how a child who belongs grows into a son who can be trusted to represent the Father. We learned that sonship is received, maturity is developed through character and strength, and representation is entrusted.

Now we bring that growth into the area of calling. Many believers know God has called them to something. Fewer understand what happens between the moment God reveals a call and the moment He releases them to carry it. This lesson explores that space.

Core Idea

God may reveal a call in a moment, but the character required to carry that call is formed over time.

Commissioning comes when identity, character, capacity, timing, and assignment come into sufficient alignment for responsible representation.

THE CALL CAN COME IN A MOMENT.

CHARACTER IS FORMED THROUGH PROCESS, OFTEN IN HIDDEN SEASONS.

COMMISSIONING IS THE RECOGNIZED RELEASE INTO RESPONSIBILITY AND ASSIGNMENT.

KEY TEXTS

Romans 11:29

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

2 Timothy 1:9

“Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”

2 Peter 1:10

“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.”

1 Samuel 16:13

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.”

Mark 3:14

"Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach."

Luke 2:52

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

Acts 13:2-3

"As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."

PART ONE: DEFINING THE TERMS

Before we can understand the process, we must understand the words.

1. DEFINING THE CALL

The call is God's invitation before it is our assignment.

The word calling is used in many ways today, so we begin with how Scripture uses it. Paul writes, "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). The King James Version says they are "without repentance." God does not change His mind about what He gives or the call He extends. Paul wrote these words about Israel, but they reveal something true of God's nature: He is faithful to what He has spoken.

The Greek word for calling is klēsis (Strong's Concordance number 2821). It simply means "a calling" or "a calling to." Greek lexicons describe it as God's invitation to man to accept the benefits of salvation. Thayer's Lexicon defines it as "the divine invitation to embrace salvation of God." The word was also used of an invitation to a feast.

This shapes everything that follows. Before the call is an assignment, it is an invitation. God calls us to Himself first, to His table and into His family, before He calls us to any task.

Calling and Vocation

There is a difference between calling and vocation. The English word vocation comes from the Latin word for "to call," and the King James Version even translates klēsis as "vocation" in Ephesians 4:1. But in everyday use, the two are not the same.

Calling is God's invitation and purpose for your life. **Vocation** is the occupation or sphere where you live that calling out.

Paul writes, "Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called" (1 Corinthians 7:20). In that passage, he was telling believers that they did not have to change their station in life to follow Christ. A business owner, a teacher, a nurse, a mechanic, and a pastor can all share the same holy calling while working in very different vocations.

YOUR VOCATION IS WHERE YOU WORK.

YOUR CALLING IS WHY YOU LIVE AND WHOM YOU REPRESENT.

Your vocation may change several times in your life. Your calling does not.

2. THE FIVE FACETS OF THE CALL

One call, seen from five directions.

The New Testament uses klēsis in several places, and together they reveal at least five facets of the call. Four belong to every believer. The fifth is personal.

His Calling - The Origin

Paul prays “that you may know what is the hope of His calling” (Ephesians 1:18). The call begins with God. We do not invent it, earn it, or initiate it. It is His calling, and because it is His, it carries hope.

Holy Calling - The Nature

God “has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace” (2 Timothy 1:9). The call is set apart for God’s purposes, and it is given by grace before time began. It was settled before time began, long before we were born or could ever perform.

Heavenly Calling - The Source

Hebrews addresses believers as “partakers of the heavenly calling” and tells them to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1). The call comes from heaven, not from culture, career ambition, or human expectation. And it points us to Jesus.

High Calling - The Direction

Paul says, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). The King James Version calls it “the high calling.” This facet speaks of direction. The call is always drawing us upward into Christlikeness. There is always more of Christ to know. Paul’s desire was “that I may know Him” (Philippians 3:10). We never outgrow the high calling; we keep pressing toward it.

Your Calling - The Expression

Then the call becomes personal. Paul prays “that our God would count you worthy of this calling” (2 Thessalonians 1:11), and Peter urges believers to “make your call and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10). This is where God’s calling takes shape in your life, gifts, relationships, and assignment.

Notice how Peter says we make our call sure: “for if you do these things you will never stumble.” The “things” are listed just before: “add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love” (2

Peter 1:5-7). Every one of them is a character quality.

CHARACTER CONFIRMS CALLING.

HIS CALLING -> HOLY CALLING -> HEAVENLY CALLING -> HIGH CALLING -> YOUR CALLING

Most people jump straight to “your calling” and ask, “What am I supposed to do?” But Scripture places four facets before it. When your personal calling rests on those four, it stays anchored even when your assignment changes.

3. DEFINING CHARACTER

The nature of the Father engraved and proven.

Two Greek words help us understand character.

The English word character comes from the Greek word charaktēr. It described an engraving tool and the exact impression it left behind, like a seal pressed into wax or the image stamped on a coin. The New Testament uses it once, of Jesus: He is “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus is the exact imprint of the Father. While the New Testament does not use this word for moral character, it gives us a powerful picture of what character is meant to be: the likeness of the Father pressed into our lives through Christ.

The second word is dokimē, translated “character” in Romans 5:3-4: “tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Dokimē means proven or approved character, the kind that has been tested and shown to be genuine.

The first word shows us the goal: the Father’s likeness engraved in us. The second shows us the process: that likeness proven through testing over time.

CHARACTER IS THE NATURE OF THE FATHER ENGRAVED INTO A SON THROUGH CHRIST AND PROVEN THROUGH TESTING OVER TIME.

4. DEFINING COMMISSIONING

Commissioning is being entrusted and sent.

The word commission does not appear in most English Bibles, but the idea runs throughout Scripture. The English word comes from the Latin for entrusting someone with authority to act on another’s behalf. Biblically, it is the idea of being sent.

Jesus Himself is called “the Apostle,” the Sent One, in the same verse that speaks of our heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1). Before He sent His disciples, He said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:18-19). Authority came first, then the

sending. Paul asks, “And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:15). And in Acts 13, the church laid hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them out, while Scripture says they were “sent out by the Holy Spirit” (Acts 13:4).

Commissioning carries four elements:

Authority: You are entrusted with delegated authority.

Assignment: You are released into a specific responsibility.

Accountability: You answer to the One who sent you and to those He has placed around you.

Representation: You act on behalf of the One who sent you, not on your own behalf.

COMMISSIONING IS THE RECOGNIZED RELEASE OF A CALLED AND FORMED PERSON, ENTRUSTED WITH DELEGATED AUTHORITY, TO REPRESENT THE ONE WHO SENT THEM IN A SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT.

5. THE REVELATION

Calling is not the same as commissioning.

This distinction is critical. A person can be genuinely called by God and still not be ready to carry the full weight of that calling.

Calling reveals purpose, direction, potential, and divine intention. Commissioning reveals readiness, trust, placement, timing, and release.

A CALL REVEALS WHAT GOD INTENDS.

COMMISSIONING REVEALS WHAT YOU ARE READY TO CARRY.

Between the two is formation. Much of the frustration believers feel comes from expecting the call and the commissioning to arrive on the same day. Usually, they do not.

6. THE CODE

Calling reveals destiny. Character determines capacity.

The Code of Call, Character, and Commissioning can be expressed as:

CALL -> FORMATION -> CHARACTER -> CAPACITY -> COMMISSIONING -> REPRESENTATION

CALL: What has God revealed?

FORMATION: What must be developed?

CHARACTER: Who am I becoming?

CAPACITY: What can I responsibly carry?

COMMISSIONING: What has God now released me to do?

REPRESENTATION: How faithfully do I reveal the One who sent me?

This Code builds on the Sonship Code from Lesson 6, where commissioning comes after formation and maturity, and on the Four Stages from Lesson 8, where strength and capacity prepare us for mature representation.

CALLING REVEALS DESTINY.

CHARACTER DETERMINES CAPACITY.

COMMISSIONING RELEASES RESPONSIBILITY.

PART TWO: THE CALL

God reveals purpose.

7. ANSWERING THE CALL

A call is an invitation to align with divine intention.

A call can come through an encounter with Jesus, Scripture, Holy Spirit, a deep sense of responsibility that will not leave, a God-given desire, prophetic confirmation, circumstances, open doors, a dream or vision, or a conviction that keeps returning.

But a call is not merely an emotional moment. It must eventually produce obedience. Samuel did not only hear his name; he answered, “Speak, for Your servant hears” (1 Samuel 3:10). A call that is never answered remains unfulfilled potential.

Discerning a Genuine Call

Not every strong feeling is a call, and not every call feels strong at first. How can we recognize what God is saying? Scripture gives us several healthy tests that work best together:

Agreement with Scripture. God will never call you to something that contradicts His Word or the character of Christ.

The witness of Holy Spirit. There is often an inner settledness and peace that remains even when the assignment feels larger than you.

A lasting conviction. A genuine call usually does not fade with your mood. It keeps returning in prayer and in quiet moments.

Confirmation through mature believers. Those who know you and walk with God can help confirm what you are sensing. Acts 13 shows the call being recognized by leaders who were ministering to the Lord and fasting.

Fruit over time. As you take small steps of obedience, a genuine call tends to produce good fruit in your life and in the lives of others.

No single test stands alone. A dream or desire detached from Scripture, wise counsel, or relationship with Jesus Christ can lead us astray. But when several of the tests above agree, we can move forward with humility and confidence.

A mentor once told me, “If you can do anything other than ministry, do it.” It took me years to understand what he meant. If you can easily walk away from pulpit ministry, it may not be God’s direction for your life. But if you cannot leave it behind, or you keep returning to it after trying, then perhaps it is.

Jeremiah felt this. He said, “I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.” But then he admitted, “His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not” (Jeremiah 20:9).

The same principle applies to any calling, whether in ministry, business, education, or another sphere. Some things you never know until you step out and try. Scripture tells us, “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

A GENUINE CALL IS CONFIRMED BY THE WORD, THE SPIRIT, WISE COUNSEL, AND FRUIT.

Calling Often Comes Before Capacity

Scripture shows this pattern again and again. David was anointed years before he was enthroned. Joseph dreamed of ruling long before he governed Egypt. Moses, Samuel, Paul, and the disciples were all called before they were fully equipped.

GOD OFTEN REVEALS THE DESTINATION BEFORE HE DEVELOPS THE CAPACITY TO CARRY IT.

The call gives direction. Formation prepares the person for the journey.

8. DAVID - ANOINTED BEFORE ENTHRONED

The oil came before the throne.

Samuel anointed David while Saul was still king. David received anointing, identity, and prophetic direction, and “the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 16:13). Yet after the anointing, David went back to the sheep.

Then came a long season of formation. David served Saul. He fought battles, led men, faced rejection, survived betrayal, and lived as a fugitive. He learned worship in the fields and warfare in the valley. He learned leadership by leading a group of men who were “in distress… in debt… and… discontented” (1 Samuel 22:2).

Twice David had the opportunity to kill Saul and take the throne. Both times he refused: “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD’s anointed” (1 Samuel 24:6). David would not seize by his own hand what God had promised to give.

The psalmist summarizes what those years produced: “He also chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds… to shepherd Jacob His people… So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands” (Psalm 78:70-72).

Notice the two things God formed: integrity of heart and skillfulness of hands. Character and capacity. The sheepfold was not a delay to David’s calling. It was the training ground for it.

THE OIL CAME BEFORE THE THRONE.

THE CALL WAS REAL, BUT THE THRONE REQUIRED FORMATION.

9. SAMUEL - CALL BEFORE ESTABLISHMENT

A genuine call still requires development.

Samuel heard God’s voice as a boy and answered, “Speak, for Your servant hears.” But he did not become a national prophet that night. Scripture says, “So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD” (1 Samuel 3:19-20).

Notice the movement: call, learning to hear, growth, faithfulness, recognition, and establishment. Samuel’s prophetic call was real before his prophetic maturity was complete. His establishment came as others recognized over time what God had been building in him.

A GENUINE CALL STILL REQUIRES DEVELOPMENT.

PART THREE: CHARACTER

God forms the person.

10. GIFTING IS NOT THE SAME AS CHARACTER

A gift can open a door that character is not ready to sustain.

A person can be gifted and immature at the same time. Gifts can operate through talent, grace, calling, and anointing. Character is developed through formation.

This explains why a gifted person may still be insecure, a powerful communicator may still lack integrity, a prophetic person may still need emotional maturity, and a successful leader may still need correction.

GIFT REVEALS CAPACITY IN AN AREA.

CHARACTER REVEALS THE MATURITY OF THE PERSON.

The Danger of Premature Commissioning

When assignment exceeds formation, problems emerge. A person may have gift without character, influence without humility, authority without wisdom, or anointing without accountability. The gift may be real, but the question is whether the person has developed the maturity to carry it responsibly.

That is why Paul instructed Timothy, “Do not lay hands on anyone hastily” (1 Timothy 5:22), and said that leaders should “first be tested; then let them serve” (1 Timothy 3:10). Releasing someone too early does not honor their call. It endangers it.

Anointing Is Not Approval of Everything

God may work through a person without endorsing every area of their life. As we saw in Section 1, “the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). God does not take back His gifts the moment someone stumbles, which means a gift can keep operating even when character is failing.

Fruit in ministry does not automatically mean that every decision is healthy, every motive is pure, or every relationship is right. This protects us from confusing effectiveness with maturity. Mature discernment looks at both fruit and character.

Character Before Platform

Platform is visibility. Character is capacity. A platform can expose someone before they are ready, but character develops the inner strength required to survive visibility.

Can I remain humble when praised, faithful when ignored, and glad when someone else succeeds?

CHARACTER MUST BECOME STRONG ENOUGH TO CARRY WHAT CALLING ATTRACTS.

Gifts may attract attention, but mature representation reveals the Father. As we saw in Lessons 6 and 8, creation is not waiting for more impressive gifts. It is waiting for "the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19).

11. CHARACTER IS WHO YOU ARE UNDER PRESSURE

Testing reveals what formation has produced.

Character is not reputation, image, or public presentation. Character is revealed when nobody is watching, when you are overlooked, criticized, delayed, or misunderstood, when you are given power, when you are denied power, and when you have an opportunity to compromise.

A test does not always create character. It often reveals it. Pressure exposes fear or faith, pride or humility, control or trust, selfish ambition or love. This means difficulty can become diagnostic.

WHAT IS THIS PRESSURE REVEALING ABOUT WHAT IS GOVERNING ME?

Testing gives us information. Formation gives us the opportunity to change. A good question to ask in difficult times is, "Holy Spirit, what do You want to be for me in this moment?" As you wait and listen, He will often reveal Himself as exactly what you need: your Helper, Teacher, Comforter, or Strength (John 14:26).

CHARACTER IS WHO YOU BECOME WHEN PRESSURE EXPOSES WHAT IS INSIDE YOU.

MATURITY IS REVEALED IN RESPONSE.

12. FORMATION HAPPENS BETWEEN PROMISE AND FULFILLMENT

Delay is not always denial. Sometimes delay is development.

Many biblical lives contain a middle: promise, then process, then fulfillment. The middle can feel confusing. God spoke, but nothing seems to be happening. The calling is real, but the door is not open. The promise is clear, but the timing is delayed.

Habakkuk was told, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time… though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come" (Habakkuk 2:3). The vision had an appointed time, and the waiting was part of the plan.

Some people believe, “If God called me, the path should be easy.” Scripture shows otherwise. Calling often introduces waiting, testing, correction, training, hidden seasons, small assignments, and uncomfortable relationships. Calling does not exempt us from formation. It creates the need for it. The greater the responsibility, the greater the need for maturity.

Delay or Disqualification?

When something has not happened yet, people often assume, “I missed God,” “I’m disqualified,” or “The call was not real.” Sometimes honest discernment is needed. But not every delay means disqualification. Ask:

- Is God still forming something in me?
- Is there unfinished obedience?
- Is my motive being purified?
- Is the timing or the environment not yet ready?

NOT YET DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN NO.

SOMETIMES IT MEANS KEEP GROWING.

How to Wait Well

Waiting is not the same as doing nothing. The waiting season is often the most active season of formation. Here are a few ways to wait well:

Keep worshiping. Worship keeps the heart focused on God rather than the timeline. Remember, He calls us to Himself first.

Keep serving. Serving others protects us from turning a calling into self-promotion.

Keep learning. Develop the skills your calling will require.

Stay accountable. Invite trusted voices to speak honestly into your life. Waiting alone often leads to discouragement or presumption.

Steward what is in your hand. God asked Moses, “What is that in your hand?” (Exodus 4:2). Begin with what you already have.

WAITING WELL IS NOT PASSIVE. IT IS FAITHFUL PREPARATION.

Everyday Example: Carlos and the Business He Was Called to Build

Carlos believed God had called him to build a business that would provide jobs in his community and fund Kingdom work. He felt it in prayer, his wife confirmed it, and a trusted pastor spoke the same thing over him.

So Carlos quit his job and launched within three months. Within a year, the business had failed. He had a real call, but he had not yet learned to manage cash flow, lead employees, or receive counsel. He had even ignored advice from an older businessman who warned him to slow down.

For a while, Carlos wondered if he had heard God at all. Then he went back to that older businessman and asked to learn. For four years, he worked as a manager in someone else's company. He learned budgeting, hiring, conflict resolution, and how to keep his word when it cost him money.

When Carlos launched again, he was a different man. The call had never changed. Carlos had. Years later, he told a younger entrepreneur, "The first business failed because I was trying to carry a call with capacity I didn't have yet. God didn't cancel the call. He trained me for it."

GOD IS NOT MERELY PREPARING THE ASSIGNMENT FOR YOU.

HE IS PREPARING YOU FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.

13. JESUS - IDENTITY, FORMATION, THEN PUBLIC MINISTRY

Even the perfect Son walked through process.

At twelve years old, Jesus already knew who He was: "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). Yet the next verse says He "went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them" (Luke 2:51). For about eighteen more years, He lived in submission, worked as a carpenter, and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).

Then at the Jordan River, His identity was publicly affirmed: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). Then, "being filled with the Holy Spirit," He was "led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1), where His alignment was tested. Only after that did His public ministry begin.

As we saw in Lesson 7, the wilderness tested whether Jesus would use what He had received for Himself or remain aligned with the Father. The wilderness is not always punishment. It can be where motives are exposed and obedience becomes settled.

Testing does not give God information He lacks. Testing reveals what has been formed in us, exposes areas that still need growth, and makes our readiness visible to us and often to others.

IDENTITY -> FORMATION -> TESTING -> COMMISSIONING -> REPRESENTATION

CHARACTER IS FORMED WHEN POWER IS SUBMITTED TO PURPOSE.

14. CHARACTER IS FORMED THROUGH OBEDIENCE

Character is accumulated response.

Character is not formed through information alone. It develops through repeated obedience. Truth is heard, believed, practiced, and finally embodied. Every act of obedience strengthens alignment. Every repeated compromise strengthens another pattern.

REVELATION -> OBEDIENCE -> REPETITION -> CHARACTER -> TRUST

Small Assignments Matter

Jesus said, “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10). Small responsibilities reveal readiness. How someone handles time, money, words, commitments, correction, and private habits often reveals how they will handle greater responsibility.

God asks, “For who has despised the day of small things?” (Zechariah 4:10). Do not despise the assignment that feels too small. It may be training capacity for something larger. David’s sheep, Joseph’s household duties, and Jesus’ carpentry shop were not detours. They were preparation.

GREAT COMMISSIONING IS OFTEN PREPARED THROUGH SMALL FAITHFULNESS.

Everyday Example: Denise and the Nursery

Denise sensed a clear call to teach women. When she shared this with her pastor, he thanked her and asked if she would help in the church nursery for a season, since they were short on volunteers.

Denise was disappointed. She said yes, but for the first few weeks she served with a frustrated heart. Then Holy Spirit began dealing with her: “Can you be faithful where no one sees you?” She began praying over every child, arriving early, and training new volunteers with excellence.

A year later, her pastor asked her to lead a women’s Bible study. He told her, “I watched how you led in the nursery. You led people well when nobody was clapping. That’s why I trust you with this.”

THE ASSIGNMENT NO ONE SEES OFTEN QUALIFIES YOU FOR THE ONE EVERYONE SEES.

15. HOLY SPIRIT FORMS THE VESSEL

The gifts reveal what He can do through us. The fruit reveals what He is forming within us.

Holy Spirit does more than empower ministry. He forms the person. He convicts, teaches, guides, reveals truth, strengthens, corrects, and transforms. Spiritual power without spiritual formation is incomplete.

HOLY SPIRIT FORMS THE VESSEL HE INTENDS TO FILL AND WORK THROUGH.

Think of a dove with two wings. One wing pictures the gifts of the Spirit. The other pictures the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). A dove cannot fly with one wing. Power without character becomes dangerous. Character without Spirit-empowered expression can become powerless religion. Mature representation requires both.

THE GIFTS REVEAL WHAT HOLY SPIRIT CAN DO THROUGH US.

THE FRUIT REVEALS WHAT HOLY SPIRIT IS FORMING WITHIN US.

The Seven Spirits and Formation

Isaiah 11:2 describes the Spirit who rested on Jesus: “The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.”

A mature representative needs more than power. They need wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, and knowledge, all held together by the fear of the LORD, which keeps us in reverent awe, humility, and obedience. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). We will explore these dimensions more fully later in our Sonship Code study.

KINGDOM REPRESENTATION REQUIRES BOTH POWER AND FORMATION.

PART FOUR: COMMISSIONING

God releases responsibility.

16. MOSES AND PAUL - CALLED BEFORE SENT

Purpose without character can become presumption.

Moses: Destiny Before Readiness

Moses sensed that he had a part in Israel's deliverance. Stephen says, "he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand" (Acts 7:25). But his first attempt ended in murder and exile. He had burden without formation. Then Moses spent forty years in Midian as a shepherd (Acts 7:30). Scripture later calls him "very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). God did not merely give Moses an assignment. He formed the man who would carry it.

Paul: Called, Formed, Then Sent

Paul's calling was dramatic and immediate. On the Damascus road, God declared that Paul was "a chosen vessel of Mine" (Acts 9:15). But Paul was not immediately launched. He went to Arabia, returned to Damascus, and only "after three years" went up to Jerusalem (Galatians 1:17-18). Later, Barnabas found him in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch, where "for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people" (Acts 11:26).

Only then did Holy Spirit say, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2). Notice the phrase "I have called them." God had already called Paul years before. Now the church recognized it and released him.

GOD HAD ALREADY CALLED. NOW THE CHURCH COMMISSIONED.

CALLING PRECEDED COMMISSIONING.

17. COMMISSIONING IS RECOGNIZED RELEASE

Calling can be personal. Commissioning often becomes relational.

Commissioning is more than self-appointment. In Scripture, commissioning may involve divine timing, spiritual confirmation, recognized maturity, community discernment, prayer, fasting, the laying on of hands, and a specific assignment. In Acts 13, all of these came together.

Healthy commissioning recognizes that Kingdom assignment is rarely meant to operate in isolation. Immature heirs, as Galatians 4 shows, are placed under “guardians and stewards” for a season. In the same way, God uses teachers, mentors, spiritual leaders, and community to help confirm what He has spoken. The person who cannot be corrected is not ready for greater authority.

Commissioning Does Not Mean Perfection

A person does not have to be flawless to be commissioned. Peter was commissioned despite visible weakness. Paul kept growing throughout his ministry. Leaders still need correction.

Commissioning means sufficient formation for a specific responsibility, not complete perfection. Without this distinction, we either commission people too early or never commission anyone at all.

READINESS DOES NOT MEAN FINISHED.

IT MEANS READY FOR THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRESENT ASSIGNMENT.

Different assignments also require different levels of capacity. This is why God often develops capacity before He expands responsibility.

18. FAILURE DOES NOT NECESSARILY CANCEL CALLING

Failure can become formation when repentance produces change.

Peter denied Jesus publicly. David sinned seriously. Moses killed an Egyptian. John Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey, and the two men later separated over whether to take him again.

Yet Scripture repeatedly shows correction, repentance, restoration, and renewed usefulness. Jesus restored Peter by the Sea of Galilee. And years after Mark's failure, Paul wrote, "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry" (2 Timothy 4:11). The young man who once left the work became someone Paul asked for by name.

Failure is serious, and some failures carry lasting consequences. But failure does not always equal final disqualification. The question becomes: What happens next?

FAILURE CAN BECOME A PLACE OF FORMATION IF REPENTANCE PRODUCES CHANGE.

Grace does not ignore failure. Grace transforms the person through it.

19. CALLING, CHARACTER, AND SONSHIP

I am a son before I am a servant.

Calling must remain rooted in sonship. Otherwise, assignment becomes identity. Then if a ministry changes, a title disappears, or an opportunity closes, identity collapses with it.

Mature sons understand:

I AM A SON BEFORE I AM A SERVANT.

I AM A SON BEFORE I AM A LEADER.

I AM A SON BEFORE I AM A TEACHER.

I AM A SON BEFORE I AM A BUSINESS OWNER.

Function may change. Identity remains anchored.

Character Is Identity Becoming Visible

Identity says, "I belong to the Father." Character asks, "Does my life increasingly reflect Him?" If He is faithful, merciful, truthful, and patient, am I becoming the same?

CHARACTER IS THE NATURE OF THE FATHER BECOMING VISIBLE IN THE SON.

The Call Is Not About Personal Greatness

Calling becomes distorted when we interpret it through ego. We begin asking how large our platform is, how many people know us, and how influential we will become. Jesus answered that question directly: “Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant… just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26, 28).

CALLING IS NOT AN INVITATION TO BECOME IMPORTANT.

IT IS AN INVITATION TO BECOME FAITHFUL.

Commissioning Is Representation

As we defined it in Section 4, commissioning is not simply, “You may now do something.” It is, “You are being entrusted to represent Someone.” Ambassadors do not speak for themselves. They represent the one who sent them. Jesus said, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21), and Paul writes that “we are ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

THE GREATER THE REPRESENTATION, THE GREATER THE RESPONSIBILITY.

20. FIVE MARKS OF READINESS

Calling is not enough. Readiness matters.

Commissioning readiness can often be recognized through five marks:

1. **Secure Identity.** I do not need the assignment to prove my worth.
2. **Formed Character.** My private life increasingly agrees with my public calling.
3. **Developed Capacity.** I have shown responsibility in smaller assignments.
4. **Relational Health.** I can receive correction, work with others, and remain accountable.
5. **Divine Timing.** There is confirmation, opportunity, and appropriate release.

The Commissioning Question

Instead of asking only, “When will God use me?” ask, “What is God forming in me?” Instead of, “When will the door open?” ask, “What capacity does this assignment require?” Instead of, “Why am I still waiting?” ask, “What can I steward faithfully now?”

This moves us from frustration to formation.

21. THE FRAMEWORK AT A GLANCE

A practical map, not a rigid formula.

The framework can be simplified to three words:

CALL -> CHARACTER -> COMMISSIONING

But between these stages are important processes:

CALL -> IDENTITY -> FORMATION -> TESTING -> CHARACTER -> CAPACITY -> CONFIRMATION -> COMMISSIONING -> REPRESENTATION

This is a practical map, not a rigid formula, and it fits the Kingdom Codes pathway:

REVELATION -> APPLICATION -> TRANSFORMATION -> MATURITY -> REPRESENTATION

CALLING REVEALS WHAT GOD INTENDS.

FORMATION DEVELOPS WHAT THE CALL REQUIRES.

TESTING REVEALS WHAT FORMATION HAS PRODUCED.

COMMISSIONING RELEASES WHAT MATURITY CAN RESPONSIBLY CARRY.

22. CHRIST AT THE CENTER

Jesus is the Son we are being formed to represent.

Jesus is not simply an example of calling. He is the pattern of mature representation. His life reveals identity without insecurity, authority without domination, power without ego, compassion without weakness, truth without manipulation, service without self-exaltation, and commissioning without independence from the Father.

Our goal is not merely to fulfill our calling. It is to walk with Christ and represent Him faithfully while fulfilling it. Jesus called the disciples to Himself before anything else. Mark records, “Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14). Notice the order: with Him first, then sent out. We are called like the original twelve, to the person of Jesus before any assignment.

GOD WILL NEVER GIVE YOU AN ASSIGNMENT DESIGNED TO MAKE HIM UNNECESSARY.

The assignment is never meant to replace dependence on Christ. Mature commissioning does not produce independence from God. It produces deeper partnership with Him.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Many people are frustrated because they have a word, a dream, a conviction, a vision, or a call, but they do not yet have the full assignment. The temptation is to force the next stage.

But the Kingdom often works through process. God may be doing something more important than opening a door. He may be forming the person who can remain standing once the door opens.

DO NOT FORCE COMMISSIONING.

EMBRACE FORMATION.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Think about the area where you sense God's calling and reflect on these questions:

1. What do I believe God has called me toward, and is my identity secure without it?
2. What character does this assignment require that is still being formed in me?
3. What small responsibility is in front of me now, and how faithfully am I stewarding it?
4. Who has the relationship and wisdom to help confirm and guide this call?

Do not wait for the future to become faithful.

Practice representation now.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Have I confused calling with commissioning?
2. What has my waiting season revealed about me?
3. Am I more interested in platform or representation?
4. What Kingdom Code can I apply here to break through?

ONE QUESTION

Am I willing to let my character catch up with my calling?

ONE ACTION STEP

Write down the call you believe God has placed on your life. Under it, write one character quality and one skill that call will require. This week, take one practical step to grow in each one, and share what you wrote with a trusted mentor or leader.

DECLARATION

I am a son before I am a servant, and my identity does not depend on my assignment.

I am called to be with Him before I am sent by Him.

God has called me, and He is faithful to form me for what He has called me to carry.

I will not force the timing or despise small beginnings.

I embrace formation, and I receive correction as part of my preparation.

My gifts will be carried by character, and my strength will remain submitted to the Father.

When I am commissioned, I will represent the One who sent me.

Jesus Christ is my center, Scripture is my foundation, and Holy Spirit is my guide.

I am moving from revelation to representation.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Calling tells us that God has purpose. Character prepares us to carry it. Commissioning releases us to represent Him within it.

The next lesson moves deeper into the central purpose of mature sonship and answers the question:

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED BECOMES VISIBLE THROUGH A MATURE SON?

[NEXT LESSON: FROM REVELATION TO REPRESENTATION]

RELATED CODES

IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Secure identity before assignment becomes central.

[EXPLORE]

THE FOUR STAGES OF SONSHIP

Understand growth from identity into mature representation.

[EXPLORE]

THE CODE OF ALIGNMENT

Bring calling, character, and behavior into agreement.

[EXPLORE]

KINGDOM SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

Build the structures required to carry responsibility.

[EXPLORE]

THE CODE OF SHALOM

Learn to remain governed by peace under pressure.

[EXPLORE]

TAKE HOME POINT

THE CALL CAN COME IN A MOMENT.

CHARACTER IS FORMED THROUGH PROCESS.

COMMISSIONING COMES WITH READINESS AND TIMING.

Calling reveals purpose.

Formation develops the person.

Testing reveals character.

Faithfulness develops trust.

Commissioning releases assignment.

Representation reveals the Father.

The greater goal is not simply, "I fulfilled my calling."

It is, "I represented Christ faithfully while carrying it."

Do not despise the process. Do not force the timing.

Become capable of carrying what God has called you to represent.

Discover the Kingdom Code you need.

Apply it. Move forward.

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