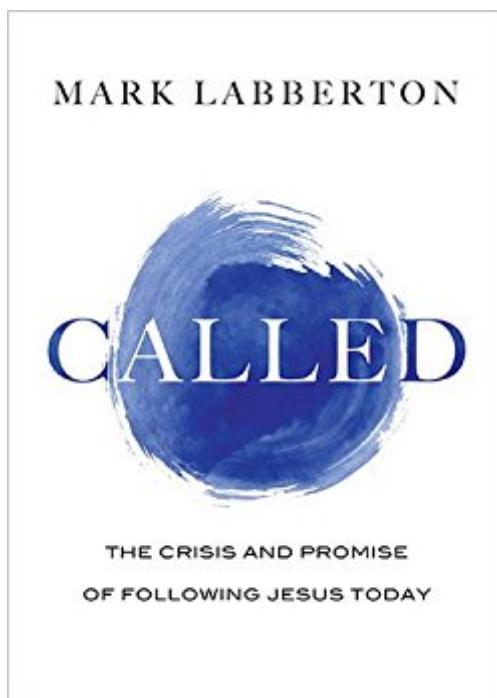


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# Called: The Crisis And Promise Of Following Jesus Today



## **Synopsis**

The most urgent call upon God's people is to live as followers of Jesus. The most indicting critique against the church is as simple: its failure to do so. As the leader of an evangelical theological seminary that trains men and women as leaders for the church and society, Mark Labberton writes: "People ask many questions about how their lives relate to the world. What are our lives in this world about? What are we to make of being human? Why are we here? Is there a reason we are alive, and, if so, how would we know what that is? These questions are brought on at times by beauty and joy, but also by the daunting facts of our own lives or of the world around us. We look around in doubt, in pain, in suffering. These are human questions asked throughout history by those inside and outside the church." We long to renew our hope for a world broken and hurting. And it is we, God's people living in the power of the Holy Spirit, who are called to become this hope and flourish while in exile. Here is the crisis: we are made and redeemed for this calling, but it slides through our fingers. Here is the promise: living and practicing who and why we are is our Christian vocation whenever and wherever we may be. Will you answer the call?

## **Book Information**

Hardcover: 176 pages

Publisher: IVP Books (October 5, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0830836837

ISBN-13: 978-0830836833

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.7 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 36 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #49,098 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Growth #78 in Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living > Business & Professional Growth #123 in Christian Books & Bibles > Ministry & Evangelism > Discipleship

## **Customer Reviews**

"Reading Dr. Mark Labberton's book *Called* is like taking a glass of cold water after a long, tedious and dreary journey on foot under the tropical African heat. Simply put: it is refreshing. It is re-assuring. It is practical. But it is also troubling . . . because the observations Mark makes are sadly true. There is a crisis of following Jesus today. Most of what we profess, our lives and

attitudes and what we have become as Christians and churches, contradict our primary calling. Called is therefore a call to repentance. As I read each of the chapters, I cannot but cry out to Jesus: 'Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy; Lord have mercy.'" (David Zac Niringiye, retired assistant bishop of the diocese of Kampala, Church of Uganda)"Mark Labberton uses fresh language and powerful word pictures to give readers easy access to deep truth. What a gift! Called is fine food for both the head and the heart. He extends a compelling invitation to live out the large life of Jesus in a world that is at once both beautiful and broken. He emphasizes the fact that you can't live this life alone. It can only be lived in the close company of others who have heard the call of Jesus to simply 'Follow me.'" (Denny Rydberg, president, Young Life)"Too often we settle for a 'calling' that is really just sanctified individualism, paddling in the shallows of the self. This book pursues the deeper questions of flourishing, sacrifice, community and transformation that are the heart of the Christian life." (Andy Crouch, executive editor, Christianity Today, author of Playing God)"Much of the most critical wisdom I have gleaned in my own life has come from the mentorship of Mark Labberton. Called brings together so many of the 'aha!' moments that so many have experienced from Mark's leadership, and offers these truly urgent insights in the form of a gift to anyone who opens this book. . . . This book needs to be read far and wide amongst followers of Jesus all over the world, because it clarifies in profound depths what we very most need to remember as we wake to each new day God gives. There is one call, and but One who calls, and the invitation to be answered is 'Follow Me.'" (Bethany Hoang, IJM Institute for Biblical Justice, author of Deepening the Soul for Justice)"Mark Labberton is a source of wisdom and deep friendship to me personally and to the whole of IJM as we join God's invitation to seek justice in the world. In this latest book, Mark offers the gift of great clarity in the midst of urgency. Jesus beckons, 'Follow me' and he shows us the path—love. Love God, love your neighbor. Mark's teaching helps us understand this simple, powerful call to follow, to love. This is what we must most urgently know and do and live. This is the call that will transform the world as we answer." (Gary Haugen, International Justice Mission, author of Good News About Injustice)"When I read Mark Labberton's writing I can almost hear Jesus say, 'Well, there it is. That's what I was literally dying to tell you.' This book is a call to free the church from its distractions in order to return to the most profound and basic question—what does it mean to follow Jesus?" (M. Craig Barnes, president, Princeton Seminary)"The New Community as heralded by Jesus seems completely alien to the present culture in which it resides . . . forgiving, loving, reconciling, serving and transparency, as virtues increasingly stand out in a world of barriers, posturing and communal disparity. A trusted cultural navigator and biblical guide, Mark Labberton identifies key principles and practices for the

Christ-follower to not simply exist but to flourish. Road tested. If all one did was incorporate the end of chapter practices into their daily routine, the impact dividend would be earth transforming." (Steve Haas, vice president chief catalyst, World Vision US)"Called is a book that will call to you with a vision for a life well lived in God's presence in the world that God loves." (Ruth Haley Barton, founder of the Transforming Center and author of *Sacred Rhythms*)"Following Jesus is both the greatest opportunity and highest challenge ever afforded the human race. Mark Labberton sheds vivid light on life's ultimate path." (John Ortberg, senior pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church and author of *Soul Keeping*)"Christian leadership should arise from a calling to God's kingdom rather than manipulated as a means to build a personal empire. Called challenges us to renew our calling to follow Jesus as servant leaders for God's kingdom. This important text offers us an opportunity to learn at the feet of a seasoned leader who offers insightful stories and practical application to spur us toward life as salt and light in the world." (Soong-Chan Rah, North Park Theological Seminary, author of *The Next Evangelicalism*)"This book is a warm, visionary invitation to rediscover the joy of following Jesus. It resists simplistic dichotomies, unfolding a biblical vision that embraces both prayer and action, both the mundane and the extraordinary, both suffering and rejoicing, both global and local concerns, both individual and communal engagement. The book will serve as a compelling, generative resource for both individuals and congregations." (John D. Witvliet, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Calvin College)"I read everything Mark Labberton writes and his newest sings the songs of the kingdom. You will want to read *Called*." (Lance Ford, Forge America, author of *Revangelical*)

Mark Labberton is president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He previously served as Lloyd John Ogilvie chair for preaching and director of the Lloyd John Ogilvie Institute for Preaching. Labberton came to Fuller after sixteen years as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California. He has served as chair of John Stott Ministries (now Langham Partnership) and co-chair of the John Stott Ministries Global Initiative Fund. Today he continues to contribute to the mission of the global church as a senior fellow of International Justice Mission. He is the author of *The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor* and *The Dangerous Act of Worship*.

ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å“Follow meÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å•ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  ¦ It is a simple yet profound call from the lips of the Son of God to His followers. 22 times we read this command from Jesus in the gospels. President of Fuller Theological Seminary and author, Mark Laberrton, returns to this command as the basis for calling Christians to return to a way of life in the path of

Jesus. “The heart of God’s call is this: that we receive and live the love of God for us and for the world (p. 14). In general, reading this book is like a lot of books I’ve read that call Christians back to the simplicity of following Jesus, loving God, and loving people. While a good message, and perhaps a needed one, it is not a revolutionary one. Nevertheless, there was one theme, that was a new and a helpful insight for me developed specifically in chapter four: Relocating “Where are we called? Laberrton argues that for most American evangelical Christians, we have embraced a promised land mentality rather than an exile mentality. A promised land mentality is about living in the land full of milk and honey, and thus taking on a mindset of entitlement to God’s blessings which spurs on our cultural idolatry of materialism and consumerism. Instead, we should embrace a exile mentality “Where we are not yet in our true home, and where we fight for the good of the city in which we live even while we long for our true home with God. This mindset does not seek safety, comfort, and security, but rather it seeks the good of all people and especially the poor and oppressed around us. This is probably not a book I would have selected on my own to read, but because of a recommendation of a friend I was intrigued by it. Laberrton, who is a bit more theologically liberal than I am, writes a bit outside of my normal stream of reading. Though I didn’t agree with all of his statements and conclusions, I’m glad to have read this book. Along this stream of books about truly following Jesus in the 21st century, my hearty recommendation would be for David Platt’s book “Follow Me: A Call to Die. A Call to Live.

I’m finding the description of the church today both apt and encouraging, but more to the point, as an old geezer, still more or less mobile, and with a wife of like mind, we are asking God what he still has in mind for us. Scary, but since we left our overseas ministry area eleven years ago, we’ve been focusing on what we call “intentional grandparenting.” We’ve moved four times, each time without a clear job situation, but sensed we were going where the Lord wanted us to go. In each situation he has taken care of us and provided unexpected opportunities for service. A standard question in one of my small groups is, “OK, Lord what would you have \*me\* do?” I see Mark’s book addressing this issue in a multitude of ways, so much so, that I’ve ordered copies for all the guys in my group, because we’re all considering what our options are at this stage of life. All the rest of them are functionally retired, but not satisfied with sitting on the porch watching the sun go down. Retirement may be required by different organizations, but as an overall concept, we don’t see it described or required in the Bible.

Terrific Book! I enjoyed how this book discusses our primary calling to be Followers of Jesus while prayerfully considering our own unique gifts, talents, locations, and passions. It also helps to make sense of the context of the role we are living in today and how our Christianity is called to interact with our modern day world in a way that allows God's Kingdom to break through. I just finished reading this book with a small adult group at our church and really liked how the chapters were broken up and the questions/suggestions allowed us to implement what we read into our everyday lives. Overall I would highly recommend this book and think it is another outstanding resource from Mark Labberton.

I found this book very challenging to my own life and journey. Mark Labberton's analysis of the state of the church and God's people generally from a biblical standpoint is so telling, especially within the USA context. First things first, in which God in Jesus is given primary place, is his dominant answer. I intend to read it again soon, and let his thoughts and recommendations sink into my life further and bring the outcomes God has been looking for in me all my life.

Excellent book. Makes a great gift too!

Most books about calling focus on the individual i.e. What is God's calling on my individual life? This book more accurately reflects the story found in Scripture: that we are individuals within a community who are called to love God and love our neighbors. This book would make a great present for high school graduates.

Great thoughts and I agree with his approach to the subject. Perhaps it's just his writing style but it kind of jumps from thought to thought and is a bit choppy. I personally still enjoyed but the flow could have been improved. I'd still recommend it though.

This is very spirit filled guide to impress upon the Christian the need for total commitment pursue. A walk that puts into action the teaching of scripture We need to make a commitment in our walk

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