



**ARIANNA
MOLLOY**

**HEALTHY
CALLING**

**FROM TOXIC
BURNOUT TO
SUSTAINABLE
WORK**



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THE TOXIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BURNOUT AND CALLING

What kinds of stories draw your attention?

For me, I love underdog stories. There's something visceral about the way a person identifies a longing, pursues it, and runs into multiple and sometimes massive, seemingly insurmountable obstacles. I think to myself, *There's no way this is going to work out*. It's almost too painful to watch but too compelling to look away. Then, usually with the help of others, somehow, the underdog perseveres and reaches their goal. And in the process, they are changed forever.

Living out a calling while avoiding burnout, surviving burnout, or recovering from burnout is the best kind of underdog story.

There is a classic film I love—the true-life story of Eric Liddell, an Olympic gold medalist and subsequent missionary to China. In the movie *Chariots of Fire*, the opening scene follows very white-legged men, charging across a gray beach, in stark white cotton running clothes, while what is now a classic '80s music soundtrack marks the momentum of their run.¹ The camera pans across the faces of each runner. Some faces are marked with varying levels of determination, others have a kind of absent-minded going-through-the-motions look. One guy even carries an expression of fun, like he's at his favorite party. But another young man

tilts his head up to the sky with an intimacy typically kept for someone before a deep embrace. This is Eric Liddell.

Liddell is a future missionary and an athlete. Interestingly he has the support from his family to be a missionary but not an Olympic runner. His sister, feeling frustrated, expresses that she doesn't understand why he wants to do both.

At one point, he tries to explain, saying, "God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. When I run, I feel his pleasure." In the course of the film Liddell experiences several instances of being misunderstood, ridiculed by his peers, judged unfairly. We see him wrestle with his own boundaries of integrity for what a healthy calling looks like in action. Ultimately, he leans into what he knows to be true and good and right. He runs with his face lifted up to his Caller, and he wins. And even before the big Olympic gold-medal achievement, he finds deep joy in pursuing what he was created to do.

I watch this movie about every three years. One viewing in particular (when I was in graduate school and working part time as a consultant) left a significant impact. At the time, I was feeling really weary and ragged. On the comfort of my small sofa, with my favorite worn blanket, and a bowl of peanut butter and chocolate ice cream in hand, I was struck once again with the layers of hardship Liddell experienced in pursuit of his calling. It wasn't just that, though.

I was also struck by the incredible fulfillment and deep satisfaction Liddell clearly felt in the midst of this challenging pursuit. Personally, I was thinking, *Wow, whatever I dedicate my life to, I want to feel that way about it.* Professionally, I was thinking, *This is fascinating!*

Satisfaction in work is a compelling idea and a longing most of us can identify with to some degree. Feelings of profound satisfaction in a focused activity is what experts term as *flow*. TED

talks, research articles, and social media posts circle around this idea of deep satisfaction known as flow.² Certainly, calling includes flow; it involves a deep, intrinsic fulfillment. However, they are not the same. We can experience flow alone, but calling is always connected to others. There's an inherent relational bond with our Caller and with the community impacted by our work calling. In some sense, you could say flow is part of calling but calling is so much more than flow.

And that's where we'll start! This first chapter is like the Disney ride *Soarin'*. We take a bird's-eye-view tour of some important concepts related to calling, and briefly feel the breeze and smell the scents of certain key ideas. Then in the following chapters, we get off the tour and camp out a bit, lingering in spaces that could truly alter our understanding of a healthy calling. But our first step involves looking at a larger umbrella concept: the role and significance of meaningful work.

THE VALUE OF MEANINGFUL WORK

How do we define *work*? In general, work encapsulates anything we spend a significant portion of our physical, mental, and/or emotional effort doing on a regular basis.³ In contemporary Western society, the average person changes jobs approximately ten times between the ages of eighteen and forty-two.⁴ Work makes up more than a third of our adult lives. For good or for bad, much of our community is now found in our professional lives.

The blurred boundaries between professional and personal life are growing even fuzzier. There's a wider acceptance of hybrid and virtual work cultures, and technological advances encourage overwork and reachability at all times of the day. The result? Our time spent working covers a larger landscape of our lives than we realize.

When we talk about meaningful work, it's important to understand that *meaningful work* is a subjective term.⁵ What one person

finds especially meaningful, another may find arduous or at the very least boring. For example, my mother loves gardening. Not only does she have a green thumb, but her nurturing spirit flourishes when she gardens. In contrast, plants hide from me. I feel truly delighted by their aesthetic, but they don't "talk" to me. I don't know when they are thirsty or if they need more sun. I find gardening laborious and the opposite of meaningful.

Meaningful work is meaningful to the person who does it, but we can experience a tension between what we value and what society deems valuable. The subjectivity of meaningful work is both personal and collective. Some types of work are viewed by our culture as more valuable than others. This is particularly true if the work is high-paying, prestigious, or requires significant office time, as opposed to unpaid positions, "unskilled labor," or pursuits that are seen by others as frivolous or uninteresting.⁶ But what others give value to does not inherently make that work valuable.

Let's stop here for a moment. If you've been feeling devalued for the work you're currently doing, which may not seem like important work to others, now is the time to stop apologizing or making yourself small on their account. Mentally and emotionally own what you are doing. If it's meaningful to you, that matters.

Despite how it may seem, a sense of meaningful work is not reserved for certain types of jobs. I've interviewed participants across a wide variety of workplaces, such as CEOs, artists, hair stylists, athletes, stay-at-home parents, lawyers, medical professionals, educators, construction workers, and accountants. Although certainly different types of occupations more easily lend themselves to meaningful work, the data shows it's less about the work and *more about the person* doing the work.⁷ The truth is, within each sphere of work there are people who find deep meaning in it. Their stories are powerful.

In my doctorate program, I started pursuing this idea of meaningful work and work as a calling more fully. Immersed in interviews with people from various work roles, I began making note of their stories, and I found consistent themes among those who felt a sense of meaningfulness and calling, regardless of their field. Check this out:

- A hospital performance consultant described their work as “that kind of fire in your belly.”
- A dog trainer described what they do as “the type of work that feeds your soul. You wake up in the morning and you’re looking forward to doing it and you go to bed at night and you’re proud that you did it.”
- An acupuncturist specializing in fertility needs stated emphatically, “I don’t play the lottery, but if I did, and I won \$10 million, I’d be doing this. I love what I do. I feel incredibly, unbelievably blessed.”

When work is meaningful, it can be an indication that we’ve been called to it. So let’s dig into the subject of calling.

WHAT’S MISSING IN THE CALLING CONVERSATION?

Calling can certainly be a loaded word. Perhaps others have used the term *calling* well, to explain what compels them. Or, it’s been used poorly, selfishly, as an excuse not to show up for others, or even as a form of manipulation to get those who feel called to work more for less (less pay, less recognition, less health, less help, etc.).

If you’ve had the idea of calling used in your life in a way that has caused trauma, guilt, shame, or feeling left out, I want to pause and say to you: I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry this concept has been used inappropriately against you. That’s not okay. A healthy calling should bring healing, not harm. If you’re willing, just for

right now, try to separate the word *calling* from the person or persons who used it wrongly.

Let's peel back some of these layers.

While the topic of calling is not new—and amazing scholars and writers have provided key insights into calling—one thing still seems to be missing from the conversation: Calling is inherently about communication. Calling is not a static thing. It is not something that happens once, in a contained way.

Calling is about communication between the called, the Caller, and community. I'm not saying this just because communication is my area of study. To have a calling necessarily implies that someone or some thing is calling us. As Christians, we know the Caller is God.⁸ We also know that our great call, coming from the greatest command, is to love God and to love others (Matthew 22:37-40). As followers of Christ, our primary calling to love God is reflected in how we love others. In this way, calling is not just about the Caller and the called, it is also about the community we impact, and by whom we are impacted.

Calling is a dynamic relationship between the Caller, the called, and the community. And like any relationship, our calling is ever-developing. Until we recognize calling is about *relationship*, about actual interaction, we miss the entire point of the calling experience.

Like any relationship, which involves ongoing communication, understanding calling as a *communicative process* is key. At its very core, work calling indicates an ongoing visceral interaction between a Caller and the one being called.

New York Times best-selling author, pastor, teacher, writer, and podcast host John Mark Comer reminds us that to be human means we change, grow, and develop. And this, he says, “is by God’s design.”⁹ If part of the human experience is continual growth, straddling an invisible line between being (who we are now) and

becoming (who we will be), then our relationship with the Caller is also meant to be dynamic. This means that what you're going through right now has the potential to inform your calling.

So much unseen work goes into the formation and development of a calling, like the underwater part of an iceberg. I remember going on an Alaskan cruise and witnessing the almost unearthly beauty of icebergs. In the frosty, early mornings they seemed to have a faint glow in the water. It was literally breathtaking. What's shocking is we see only the tip. What we don't see, what's below, is the majority.

The formation and development of calling is like an iceberg. A considerable amount of the process is below the surface. This matters because the work we do, the work that feels like a calling, may not always be seen by others. It may not always be measurable. The emotional and spiritual labor that we experience may not be fully valued or understood. Others may ask more of us (or we may demand more of ourselves), not realizing just how much we are already giving.

If a missing emphasis on the topic of calling is the relational core, another gap is the privileging of a moment over a journey. While some of us know very early on what our calling is, some don't. And that's completely normal. In fact, it's very common. That's why thinking about work calling as a journey, rather than merely a fixed moment in time, is more accurate.

There's this mythic idea of calling, that it will fall upon you in bright golden rays from heaven, with a loud voice calling out your name. We certainly might have crystal clear epiphany moments, but they aren't isolated. They are connected to a larger story, to other pieces of the puzzle. We need to pay attention to the little things.

Stephen, a financial advisor, described his process of identifying his work calling as both a journey and an epiphany. Originally going to school to become a licensed minister, on his days off he'd

constantly gravitate toward reading financial books. At one point in the interview, he said, “And then it dawned on me, they [the books he was reading] were all on the stock market and, I heard God say, not in an audible voice, but in my spirit, ‘Why are you denying who you are?’”

We need to pay attention to what we are drawn toward, and look for ways this might be integrated into our calling. It’s good to listen and look for those moments of feeling called. The trick is that in the actual moment, we don’t often see the larger implications. It isn’t until we look back, until we see our story unfolded, that the patterns emerge.

Placing a value on the communication within a calling means the outcome isn’t the only concern. There’s great value in the process, formation, development, and relationship of calling, in *how* we seek to live out our calling in the everyday. In fact, the apostle Paul gives this charge: “Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that” (Galatians 6:4 MSG). When we recognize that calling is not a one-time thing but rather an ongoing process, it means that what we’re doing now has the potential to be part of that process. Even if we’re in a place of burnout right now, this can help inform our calling if we let it.

THE SWEET SPOT OF WORK AS A CALLING

When we address work as a specific type of calling, it’s helpful to unpack a few more aspects of what calling means. As Christians, we have a general calling: to love God and love others. Author and social critic Os Guinness talks about it this way: “Calling is the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, everything we have is invested with a special devotion and dynamism lived out as a *response* to his summons and service.”¹⁰ He suggests that calling is a kind of

responsibility or stewardship that we enact by cultivating particular qualities God has planted in us.

Each of us can live out our calling in ways that bring a deep sense of purpose and meaning. Scholars often distinguish these as *general* and *specific* callings.

While our general calling is to love God and love others, our specific callings are areas in our lives that feel like “sweet spots.” Here, our particular skills and passions are used in ways that feel true to the core of who we are, like we are honoring who God made us to be, for the sake of who God is.

What I am intrigued by, and what my research focuses on, is the way we experience work as a *specific* calling. As we talk about work, this includes both paid and unpaid endeavors that we dedicate a large portion of our physical, mental, and/or emotional effort toward doing on a regular basis.

Work could include being a college student, stay-at-home parent, grandparent, or caregiver; intern, artist, performer, athlete, or pastor; seasonal worker or contract worker, contributor to a new startup company, self-employed, president of a company, and so on. Remember, if you are dedicating a significant portion of your physical, mental, and/or emotional effort toward something on a regular basis, for our purposes in this conversation, that is work.

In general, *work* is typically categorized in three areas: job, career, and calling.¹¹ A *job* is typically paid work, primarily motivated by a paycheck. The reward is making it to the weekend (e.g., not having to do the job). It does not necessarily involve degree-specific skill sets or passions. It may or may not utilize previous training (college degree, or other work experiences). A job may allow you to pursue other non-paid work that is meaningful, which has a different kind of incentive. The key here is a job does not require or inspire much motivation apart from doing the tasks you’ve been given because you have to.

A second way to think about work is as a *career*. A career does involve skill sets and passion. It is primarily motivated by upward mobility and explicit rewards (e.g., a promotion, a bigger office, the ability to take a vacation). A career might start off as an intern or baseline position, but there's clear future and growth opportunities. The focus is on how this work allows for professional advancement. There is also a sense of enjoyment at the work being done, but it's motivated by accomplishment.

A *calling* is different. A calling in work is more than just a paycheck, and more than performance and job advancement. It involves four key components: First, an overarching sense of *meaningfulness* in our work—it is work that goes beyond the functional. Second, work calling includes some kind of *caller*. As Christians, we know that the Caller is the Lord (e.g., “My sheep listen to my voice,” John 10:27). Third, work calling involves the integration of the individual's *passion and skillset*. One CEO I interviewed said, “Passion is not enough. Passion alone produces a great fan. Passion and skill set produces a great worker.”¹² The integration of these two attributes—passion and skillset—addresses the need to be proactive about seeking training and development in the area of calling. For example, a person called to medicine doesn't just walk into the operating room on day one; they need sharpened skills, intentional training, and sufficient experience. Lastly, a work calling involves positively *contributing to society*. In this way, calling is not simply for ourselves; it connects us to others, to community in some manner. Researchers call this *prosocial behavior*.

Now, these categories (job, career, calling) are not distinct types. Sometimes, a person can experience all three aspects in the same work, depending on the season of life. Others may choose a job (something that pays the bills) and also pursue additional work that feels like a calling (which could be an additional paycheck or unpaid work). We might feel like 80 percent of our work

is directly connected to a sense of calling, and 20 percent is just a job. It might also feel like the opposite, where 80 percent feels like a job and 20 percent feels like a calling.

Work calling is not simply about paid work. Right now, your work calling could involve being a student, starting your own company, working as an intern, working seasonally or on commission. Your work calling may be as a full-time parent or caregiver. Work calling includes whatever you perceive as a priority focus, dedicate a majority of your time doing, and feel called to. And what you're learning right now, at this particular moment, could very well be an intentional opportunity to sharpen your skills and clarify your passions.

More than just a process and a journey, it is important to recognize that experiencing work as a calling is a privilege. Not everyone gets the same opportunities to pursue their work calling. In an interview with Nancy, a Gallup consultant, she said, "There's plenty of people that just need a job. It's a privilege to be able to live in the realm of calling." Why doesn't everyone experience this privilege in the same way? This is a big, important question with complex answers, and it deserves more space than we have here. But certainly issues like race, gender, socioeconomic status, and environment play a part.¹³

The reality is that not everyone gets the same opportunities, or has the support to pursue their calling so easily. Different cultures place different values and interpretations on work calling. Recent research examines how first generation and second-generation immigrants experience work calling from a unique perspective, tied to the familial responsibilities of surviving and thriving in a new country. There are also multiple callings, like feeling called to a particular kind of paid work and also called to be a parent or a spouse. Multiple callings add depth and beauty to life, but also greater complexity, more complicated responsibility, and sacrifice.

Why does it matter that calling is a process, that it involves continual development, and that not everyone has the same ability or opportunity to experience calling in work? Too often we confuse a calling with a particular title (psychologist, pastor, parent, mentor, student) when we should see it as a combination of skill sets and passions that can be applied to a number of different occupations. In this way, our specific calling is always tied to, and should rest under, our general calling.

In my work with college students, I see them constantly struggling to find “the” occupation—specific work that will give them a sense of security, identity, and legitimacy. I see them carry the worries of their families, the constraints of various societal struggles, and an overwhelming uncertainty that can feel unending. In some sense, there’s nothing wrong with wanting clarity of purpose. What can be dangerous is when we place all our identity and worth in this one job; work roles will come and go. Our calling is not confined to one type of occupation.

A little while ago, I was at a weekend BBQ, talking with my friend Evelyn, a fortysomething mother of two, who survived a very scary and long season of cancer. Prior to her diagnosis, she was a therapist. However, after the trauma of her cancer experience (which included several surgeries, chemo, radiation, and major life changes), she realized she couldn’t sit in a room all day, listening to the burdens of others. It just wasn’t good for her well-being.

As Evelyn was setting up the food, she shyly shared that she’d gotten into real estate. I responded with, “Oh, that’s wonderful! And with your counseling background, you’ll be so good at that.”

She paused, looking rather shocked. “I’d never thought of that. I actually felt ashamed I couldn’t handle being a therapist anymore. And for a while now I’ve wanted to pursue real estate but was embarrassed by what others might think. And I felt guilty that I wouldn’t be applying my degree.”

I reaffirmed that I thought her background in psychology would give her an incredible advantage in her new profession. She'd still be using her skill set and the passions that ignite her, just in a different way.

The next morning, I received a text from her: "I wanted to thank you for your words of encouragement yesterday. I appreciate you saying that we can apply our skills (God-given) to many different jobs and it isn't the job that defines our skills. That's so empowering and releases so much shame and unnecessary pressure!"

Like any relationship, calling can shift and change in seasons of our life. The Caller doesn't change, but the way we enact with our calling might. Here's what that means: your calling process is your own. Don't let anyone belittle your boundaries or your dreams. Yes, you might need to grow, but others don't know your process, you do. Find wise counsel from those you value and know well, whose lives you want to learn from.

We know meaningful work makes a big difference in satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being. We know the definition of calling has four layers (meaningfulness, connection with a caller, a combination of skill sets plus passion, and positive community impact). The next step is to understand the specific bright (good) sides of calling and the dark (dangerous) versions of calling.

THE DARK SIDE OF CALLING

Over the past two decades, the concept of work as a calling has been gaining traction in the scholarly world, specifically in vocational psychology and organizational communication. What researchers have determined is that those who feel called in their work experience several positive outcomes. The findings include being more highly motivated in the work they do, having greater overall life satisfaction and well-being, possessing an ability to

withstand organizational change, and being a great contributor to the overall work climate for everyone.¹⁴ This is what is called the bright side. We unpack these beautiful attributes in chapter three.

But we need to address the dark side to calling—the hard, often ignored, in the shadows side. Those who feel called are more likely to work overtime, or agree to take on extra responsibilities, without extra pay or acknowledgment. And while there might be some kind of romantic notion about serving, here is where the caution light should start blinking. The seduction of service makes it hard to know where to draw the line between what we *can* do, and what we *should* do. It feels good to be needed, to be wanted, to have a sense of purpose. However, this sense of being compelled and needed, if left unchecked, can lead to workaholism, job idolization, and ultimately burnout.¹⁵

In the introduction, we talked about *burnout* as a kind of physical, psychological, emotional, mental, and spiritual exhaustion typically brought about by prolonged stress. I was recently talking to a dear friend about my research on burnout. He said, “Okay, I know the data about burnout, but how can you tell if someone is really in burnout? What are some things they’d say? What do they sound like?” It’s a good question, as those of us who experience calling burnout are often prone to talk in similar ways or express similar feelings.

Here’s the short answer: burnout often sounds like cynicism, dark humor, or toxic positivity (*toxic positivity* is often characterized by palliative responding without thinking, being too quick in our positive responses). Now, just because someone communicates with these features, it doesn’t mean they are burned out. But burnout often uses the fake fuel of cynicism.

Let’s distinguish between cynicism and critical thinking. *Critical thinking* is good, productive, valuable, and biblical. *Cynicism* is destructive, unhelpful, and the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit.

Cynicism isn't really dialogue, it's monologue. We think we're being smart, but we're really just letting our wounds lead us. Those employing cynicism may use deflection to point at others or dark humor to point at themselves in a way that normalizes the unhealthy behavior as quirky or "that's just me." It does not allow for real self-examination.

Cynicism is easy; vulnerability is hard. Toxic positivity is easy; critical thinking is hard. Ultimately, these unhealthy practices prevent us from changing course and instead can lead deeper into burnout.

BURNOUT AS A MANAGEABLE PROBLEM, NOT A FIXABLE ONE

If those who feel called are also most likely to experience burnout, and if burnout leads to paralyzing mind, body, and soul exhaustion, how can we fix the problem? Well, I've got some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that burnout is *not* a fixable problem. But wait, let's not despair! Burnout is not a fixable problem, but it is a manageable problem. This distinction is key.

As a professor, I talk about the idea of *fixable* and *manageable* problems with my students. A fixable problem is when a light bulb burns out. What do we do? We typically stop what we're doing and replace it. Problem solved. A manageable problem is one that, no matter how hard we try, won't totally go away. It requires adjusting and managing for the long term.

Here's an example: I am blessed to have been raised by two different, but equally loving, parents. My dad is an incredibly considerate person who loves routine and structure. In his mind, being on time is being five minutes early. My mom, on the other hand, despite being one of the most thoughtful people I know, will admittedly tell you that she was not born with a sense of time. My parents have a truly admirable marriage, and their relationship

with each other has taught me more about God's love than almost anything else. However, as a kid, a certain kind of tension would start to surface about getting to church on time on most Sundays. I can still feel the stress rising just thinking about it. My dad was ready to go five minutes early, waiting by our front door, keys in hand. My mom was often still fixing her coffee or taking out curlers in her hair—sincerely trying, but not ready.

Eventually, they realized the routine Sunday morning goal of getting to church on time just wasn't working. So they sat down at the kitchen table and figured out a solution. If everyone was ready to go at a certain time, we'd drive together. If my mom needed more time, she'd drive separately. This was a manageable problem because they both realized being on time will always be a top priority for my dad and being on time may be a continual challenge for my mom.

Fixable problems and manageable problems require different focus and different energy. Why? If we can fix it, we focus all of our attention on it because there is an end. If it is manageable, we have to know how much time to spend on it and plan for a long-term awareness.

For those of us who identify with a calling, burnout is not a fixable problem; it is a manageable problem.

This distinction does not need to be discouraging. When we know how to approach burnout, we can locate productive strategies to manage it. In chapter two, we linger in the terrain of burnout a bit longer, so we can understand the terrain and you can know the way out.

It takes courage and vulnerability to learn the rhythms of a healthy calling and the process of keeping burnout at bay. So as you're wading your way through this process, don't wait to get to the other side. Right now, carve out some time to sit down, be

still, and listen. If you can, try doing this right now. It's not always obvious, but the Caller is always communicating with us!

I want to speak to one thing directly right now, before we conclude this chapter. A key aspect of burnout, particularly burnout from a calling, is a deep and silencing sense of shame—shame of what other people will think, shame about what your old self thinks, shame about what you missed or lost or failed at doing. If you are feeling shame about being burned out, my friend, you do not need to carry this burden.

Shame is a liar. It is likely lying to you right now. Yet Jesus is described in the Gospel of John as “the light [that] shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it” (John 1:5 NLT). Read that again. Notice that it doesn't say the light is separate *from* the dark; it says the light actually shines *in* the dark. Shame tries to turn the lights off and create total darkness, to get you to believe that darkness is normal, that burnout is normal.

Jesus is the light who shines in the darkness. His light doesn't have to wait for the darkness to leave, it overrides it. His light shines in the darkness. Burnout is not the end. Burnout is not your life story.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Think about your own work, the work you're doing right now. How do you tend to approach it?
 - What's your mindset about work these days?
 - What's your heart attitude? I recently realized I was telling my young son, “I *have to* go to work.” Once I heard myself say this, I changed it to, “I *get to* go to work.” The shift in these words is like a compass, moving the needle. Where's your compass pointing these days?

2. When you think of the word *calling*, what comes to mind? Is the term *calling* a word that inspires you, or triggers you?
 - Why do you think that is?
 - Where does this come from?
3. Do you tend to apply the idea of calling to a certain part of your life, or life as a whole?
 - Why do you think that is?
4. Just as burnout is not a category (not easily compartmentalized) but a continuum (more of a range or spectrum), healthy calling is also best thought of as a continuum. Knowing this, the question to consider is no longer: Is your calling healthy or not? Instead, think through how you might answer questions like the following:
 - What practices are you engaging in right now that are helping your calling?
 - What practices are you engaging in that are not helping you?
 - What change can you make this week?

ORIENTING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you are good. Everything else orients around that truth. When everything else feels confusing, I rest in the knowledge that your goodness is not dependent on my current circumstances. Thank you for the opportunities you've given me. Help me to see the ones I'm missing. Help me to distinguish between opportunity and distraction. Thank you for the passions you've placed in my heart. Please take away the fear that lingers as I look ahead. I need your wisdom and your favor in knowing how to deal with what's in front of me. Help me know when to say yes, and when to say no. Please wipe away the shame of burnout, and show me the way out. Create in me a fresh heart. Amen.

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