

John Stott: The Contemporary Christian

On Vocation

“The whole of our life belongs to God and is part of his calling, both before conversion and outside religion. We must not imagine that God first became interested in us when we were converted, or that now he is interested only in the religious bits of our lives.”

“God’s sovereignty extends over both halves of our life. He did not begin to work in and for us at our conversion, but at our birth, even before our birth in our genetic inheritance, as later in our temperament, personality, education and skills. And what God made us and gave us before we became Christians, he redeems, sanctifies, and transforms afterwards. There is a vital continuity between our pre- and post-conversion life. For although we are a new person in Christ, we are still the same person we were by creation, whom Christ has made new.”

On Ministry

“It seems to me fully compatible with our Christian doctrines of creation and redemption that we should talk to ourselves somewhat as follows: ‘I am a unique person. (That is not conceit. It is a fact... My uniqueness is due to my genetic endowment, my inherited personality and talents, inclinations and interests, my new birth and spiritual gifts. By the grace of God, I am who I am. How then can I, as the unique person God has made me, be stretched in the service of Christ and of people, so that nothing he has given me is wasted, and everything he has given me is used?’

To ponder: What are your genetic inheritance, temperament, personality, education, and skills? Think about the “vital continuity” between your pre- and post-conversion life? Into what cultural spheres does that take you? How can you live as a “redeemed redeemer” in that sphere, using all that God created and redeemed you to be?