

Faithful in Calling, Faithful at Home

Kelvin Cochran on Divine Assignments, Family Purpose, and Ordering Life Around God

Program Summary

In this Wednesday edition of Mark & Friends, Kelvin Cochran concludes his two-day message from the Pinnacle Forum National Conference by moving from destiny to calling, purpose, family, and an ordered life. He describes occupations and careers as divine assignments through which God works in education, government, business, media, ministry, family, and everyday service. Drawing from his own journey from paperboy and restaurant cook to firefighter, Atlanta Fire Chief, U.S. Fire Administrator, and ministry service, Kelvin argues that calling is not merely what we do for God but what God desires to do through us. He then brings the challenge closer to home: our highest identity is as sons and daughters of God, and faithfulness in family relationships must not be sacrificed for career achievement or cultural influence. The message closes with a practical framework for an ordered life - abiding, nurturing, and serving - and a call to live with eternal intentionality so that our work, relationships, disciplines, and resources leave a legacy of faith and righteousness.

Key Takeaways

Calling is what God created me to do, and my vocation can become a divine assignment through which He works. God's promises are manifested 'through us'; ordinary occupations can become places of kingdom service. My calling is not merely what I am doing for God, but what God desires to do through me. Faith sometimes requires plans larger than my comfort zone - plans that make sense only if God truly works through me. No job is spiritually insignificant when it is received as an assignment from God and done faithfully for His glory. Purpose is deeper and more permanent than a job title; Kelvin describes our highest identity as sons and daughters of God. Faithfulness in family relationships is part of Christian purpose, not a distraction from ministry or professional calling. The resources God gives me - physical, mental, spiritual, relational, and financial - can be used to bless family members as well as broader culture. Career success should never be allowed to eclipse love, honor, encouragement, care, forgiveness, and responsibility at home. An ordered life includes abiding ways that deepen intimacy with God, nurturing ways that strengthen family relationships, and serving ways that advance our calling. Spiritual growth benefits from honest assessment: celebrate what is going well, identify challenges, make corrections, and establish convictions and goals. God desires a generational impact - a legacy of faith and righteousness that extends beyond personal achievement.

Scripture References

2 Corinthians 1:20, Philippians 2:13, Ephesians 3:19-20, Romans 8:29, Ephesians 6:1-3, Genesis 50:20, Ruth 1:16-17, 2 Chronicles 27:6, Deuteronomy 17:18-20, John 15:4-5

Quote of the Day

"Calling is not what you're doing for God. Calling is what God is doing through us."

Broadcast Notes

Mark introduces Part Two of Kelvin Cochran's Pinnacle Forum conference message with 2 Corinthians 1:20 and a reminder that the conference was held in Arizona this past April. Kelvin begins by defining calling as what God created people to do and describes professions across culture as divine assignments. He illustrates the idea autobiographically: his childhood dream of firefighting was preceded by assignments as a paperboy and restaurant cook, and he learned to view each role as a place where God could work through him. His later service as firefighter, captain, assistant chief, Atlanta Fire Chief, U.S. Fire Administrator, and work with Alliance Defending Freedom fit the

same framework. Kelvin then distinguishes calling from purpose. Purpose, he says, is rooted in being conformed to the image of Jesus and living faithfully as a son or daughter of God. That purpose must be expressed in family relationships - spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, and extended family. He points to David, Joseph, Ruth, and Esther as examples of faithfulness to family and warns against allowing career to outrank family purpose. The final section turns to 'living with eternal intentionality' through an ordered life. Kelvin organizes this around abiding ways - prayer, Scripture, worship, reflection, faith, obedience, fasting; nurturing ways - loving, honoring, encouraging, correcting, forgiving, and investing in family; and serving ways - working, leading, following, learning, and growing in wisdom and skill. He models the process with his own annual cheers, challenges, corrections, and convictions before closing with a George Washington Carver quotation about leaving legitimate reasons for having passed through the world.

Practical Applications

Begin work by asking, 'God, what do You desire to do through me in this assignment?'

Treat an ordinary responsibility as a divine assignment rather than waiting for a more impressive opportunity.

Identify one goal that is limited mainly by my comfort zone and prayerfully ask what it would look like if I truly depended on God's power.

Review whether career, ministry, or outside responsibilities are crowding out faithfulness to family.

Ask which family member may need encouragement, practical help, forgiveness, time, or financial generosity from me.

Choose one abiding discipline to strengthen this month - prayer, Scripture, worship, reflection, obedience, or fasting.

Choose one nurturing practice to strengthen at home - listening, honoring, encouraging, correcting with love, or forgiving.

Choose one serving practice that will help me grow in my calling - learning, leading, following well, or developing a needed skill.

Use Kelvin's four-part review: What can I cheer? What is challenging? What correction is needed? What conviction or goal will I establish?

Measure success not only by professional progress but by whether I am becoming more like Jesus and leaving a legacy of faith.

Today's Challenge

Create a one-page 'Ordered Life' review this week with three headings: Abiding, Nurturing, and Serving. Under each heading write one Cheer, one Challenge, one Correction, and one Conviction. Then choose one concrete action in each area for the next 30 days: one step to draw nearer to God, one step to strengthen a family relationship, and one step to serve faithfully in your present calling.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that my life and work can become places where You accomplish Your purposes. Help me stop separating ordinary responsibilities from spiritual calling. Teach me to recognize each assignment as an opportunity for You to work through me. Give me courage to move beyond the limits of my own comfort and ability when You are calling me to trust Your power. Keep my career, ministry, and ambitions from outranking the people You have placed closest to me. Make me faithful in my family - loving, honoring, encouraging, helping, forgiving, and using what You have entrusted to me for their good. Order my life around abiding in You, nurturing the relationships You have given me, and serving faithfully in my calling. Show me what to celebrate, what needs correction, and what convictions I should establish for the season ahead. Conform me to the image of Jesus and let my life leave behind a legacy of faith and righteousness that points others toward You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

Kelvin Cochran is a longtime fire-service leader whose career has included serving as Fire Chief of Atlanta and as United States Fire Administrator. In his Pinnacle Forum conference message, he describes his professional journey - from childhood dreams of firefighting through ordinary early jobs and major leadership assignments - as a series of divine assignments from God. His teaching emphasizes purpose, calling, destiny, faithfulness in family relationships, disciplined Christian living, and using one's influence and vocation for God's glory.

About Today's Host

Mark Burns is General Manager of the WLUJ Family of Stations and Great News Radio Network and host of Mark & Friends. For decades, Mark has been involved in Christian radio and ministry, with a heart for helping listeners know Jesus and grow deeper in God's Word. Through Mark & Friends, he brings pastors, ministry leaders, teachers, missionaries, authors, and everyday believers around the microphone for biblical teaching, testimony, conversation, and encouragement. His desire is that each program help listeners learn, grow, and faithfully live out their relationship with Jesus.

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

Reading from 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 20, For no matter how many promises God has made, they are yes in Christ, and so through him, Amen is spoken by us to the glory of God. 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 20. O magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt His name together.

It's Wednesday, September 16, 2026. Welcome to Mark & Friends. Today we're continuing a message from the Pinnacle Forum National Conference held in Arizona this past April, where high-impact leaders who follow Christ are encouraged and equipped to influence culture for him.

Our speaker is Kelvin Cochran, whose own journey has taken him from childhood dreams of becoming a firefighter to serving as Atlanta Fire Chief and United States Fire Administrator, and you'll hear him explain why he doesn't view those merely as jobs or achievements but as divine assignments from God. Yesterday we explored our purpose, calling, and destiny. Today Kelvin turns particularly towards our calling, how God can work through our everyday occupations, and then brings the challenge much closer to home, are we being faithful to God's purpose in our own families? Learn more about Pinnacle Forum at PinnacleForum.com. And if you missed yesterday's program, listen anytime under the Mark & Friends tab at GreatNewsRadio.org or WLUJ.org. Now let's pick up right where we left off yesterday.

Here's Kelvin Cochran on today, the Wednesday edition of Mark & Friends. Whatever he wants to do, he does. So he will do to me whatever he has planned.

He controls my destiny. That's number one, temperate for destiny. I want to share with you now the life applications for temperate for calling.

To be forged for influence, we must be faithful to God's calling. Calling is what God created us to do. God called us before the foundation of the world because he knew that for his kingdom to be manifested on earth, that callings would comprise all institutions that really influence a culture, education, government, business, arts and entertainment, media, the church, and the family.

And so he chose a select group of sons and daughters as teachers, law enforcement officers, soldiers, entrepreneurs, contractors, plumbers, electricians, lawyers, doctors, actors, news anchors, social media influencers, and pastors. He chose us to be the deliverers of promises, products, and services, and civility to establish justice, to ensure domestic tranquility, to provide for the common defense, to promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. God has predestined all his sons and daughters to a calling in the seven mountains of culture so that the promises that he made can be manifested through us.

I've got a scripture to back me up on it. 2 Corinthians 1, verse 20 says, all the promises of God are in him are yes, and in him, amen. Check this part out.

Unto the glory of God through us, through us. And we have to recognize that God is working through us to create thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Because our callings, our careers, and our vocations are all divine assignments, it means that God gave them to us.

And because a career is a divine assignment from God, we are supposed to pinnacle form partners, sons and daughters of God in our professions are supposed to be able to do things that others in our professions are not called to do. As sons and daughters of God, there should be a distinction between those who are the called and those in our professions who are not called. And the reason why there should be a distinction is because according to Philipians 2:13, it is God at work in us.

Did y'all get that part of the phrase? When we're at work, it is God at work in us to will and to do according to his good pleasure. And there should be a distinction in us between those who are not called and those of us who are the called, because according to the scripture, we are filled with all the fullness of God. And because as children of God, we do what we do unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we may ask or think according to the power that works in us.

And so to be successful in our calling, we must be faithful to God, recognizing that our vocation is a divine assignment from him. Calling is what we were created to do for him and for his glory. Calling is not what you're doing for God.

Calling is what God is doing through us. Our cultural impact plans should include, if we believe that, our cultural impact plans should include initiatives that are so big. The only way for us to pull them off is that we know that God is working through us.

His divine supernatural power is working through us. Some of us have initiatives in our cultural impact plans based upon what you see you can do, not what you see God can do. And if that's you, if your cultural impact plan is comprised with initiatives that protect your comfort zone, then you need to completely revise it.

And you need to seek the face of God and ask him what it is that if he was in your position, what would he do? What would your cultural impact plan look like if he were the CEO? What would your cultural impact plan look like if he was the general contractor? What would your cultural impact plan look like if he was the superintendent? What would your cultural impact plan look like if he were the city council member? And revise your cultural impact plan according to what he can do through you, not what you can do. My calling as a firefighter came when I was a little boy, and it was on the front porch of a shotgun house. But every job I had from that dream, between that dream and me becoming a firefighter, all of it was a divine assignment from God.

I was a paperboy. God knew that Shreveport needed a paperboy for the Hollywood neighborhood that we had lived in, and so he chose me to do what he would do if he was a paperboy. My next job was Arthur Treacher's Fish and Chips.

God knew that Arthur Treacher's Fish and Chips needed a godly man in there cooking those fish and chips. He would have done it, but because he's a spirit, he put it in my body to do it, and so I was cooking fish and chips on God's behalf. After that, I was a cook at El Chico's Mexican restaurant.

It was a divine assignment from God. He knew that they needed a cook in there cooking those chips and flipping those tortillas and cooking those sopapillas, and so he put me in there to do what he would do if he was the one doing the cooking. And so when I became a firefighter, I saw the track record of God working through me through all those previous divine assignments, and I knew he was going to be the same with me as a firefighter, as a captain, as an assistant chief, as the fire chief of Atlanta, as the U.S. Fire Administrator back to Atlanta, and now on the team of Alliance Defending Freedom.

It is God at work in me to will and to do according to his good pleasure. So God's plan is our destiny, and God's assignment is our calling. And the last thing is, we are tempered to fulfill our purpose.

And to be forged for influence, we must be faithful to our purpose in family relationships. So I mentioned that divine assignments change from one position to another position to another position, but purpose does not change. Purpose is what God created you to be.

Romans 8, 29 clearly states, to be conformed to the image of his son, that he, Jesus, might be the firstborn of many brothers and sisters. So look at it this way, that the son of God became the son of man so that sons and daughters of men can become sons and daughters of God. It's our purpose.

The highest identity for us is that we are sons and daughters of God. And the reason why God made sons and daughters, males and females, is because he gave them a commission to procreate, to multiply, because God wanted a lot of children. And I was thinking the other day, God has no grandchildren.

And then I thought, man, he doesn't know what he's missing. But for sons of God and daughters of God to be faithful in our purpose, it includes, for sons, to be a son of God in our family, it means I'm a son of God who is a faithful husband. I'm a son of God who is a faithful daddy to Tiffany, Kelton, and Camille.

I'm a son of God who is a faithful grandfather to my granddaughter, Tylan. I'm a son of God who is a son to my mother, Jane. I'm a son of God who is a brother to Randy, Raymond, Danny, George, Sheila, Sonia, Kathy, and Valerie.

I'm a son of God who is a faithful uncle to a host of nieces and nephews. And I'm a son of God who is a faithful nephew to my uncles and auntie. Son of God is our highest order, but if we're going to represent God as image bearers, we have to be faithful in our family relationships.

And for the sisters who are daughters of God, to be a faithful daughter of God, you have to be a faithful wife to your husband. To be a faithful daughter of God, you have to be a faithful mama to your children. To be a faithful daughter of God, you have to be a faithful nana to your grandchildren.

And to be a faithful daughter of God, you have to be a faithful daughter to your mama and daddy, faithful sister to your brothers and sisters, faithful auntie to your nieces and nephews, a faithful niece to your uncles and aunties, and a

faithful granddaughter to your grandmother and your grandfather. That is the application of purpose in family relationships. Does that make sense? And so the cultural impact question is this.

Are you being all that God has called you to be in your family relationships? Are you using your physical, mental, spiritual, relational, and financial resources to be a blessing in your family? Most of us, if not all of us, will get an A-plus when it comes to our spouses and our children and our grandchildren. But your purpose as a son or a daughter of God does not stop with your spouse, your children, and your grandchildren. There are those of us in this room, is your aging parents a part of your cultural impact plan? Do you have brothers and sisters that God has not blessed as much as he has blessed you that should be a part of your cultural impact plan? Have your brothers and sisters had issues go on in their life and their children have needs that uncle and auntie have been resourced by God to be a blessing to their nieces and to their nephews? Are you using all that God has given you to be a blessing? Many of us in our families, who are not the oldest in our families, but have been more diligent in seeking the promises of God, God has put us in a position to be a resource to our family members.

And we've got biblical examples of that taking place. I love how David took care of his mama and his daddy and his brothers when Saul began to chase him. The first thing in his mind, I got to find a place for my mom and daddy, and I got to bring my brothers along with me to take care of my brother.

Joseph, as harsh as his brothers treated him, Joseph says, listen, y'all meant it for evil, but God did it for good because he wanted me to take care of my family. The reason why Ruth was blessed because of her faithfulness to Naomi. The reason why Esther was blessed was because of her faithfulness to Mordecai.

There's a direct correlation between being faithful in our family relationships and having a cultural impact that transformed culture. Can y'all see that in the scripture? So to whom much is given, much is required in our family relationships. And can I pause here? Stop complaining about your family members always coming to you, because God has equipped you to be the go-to person in your family.

Just like he did Joseph, just like he did David, for that very reason. So faithfulness to a family purpose is a prerequisite to receiving and flourishing in our calling. Whenever we allow our... Oh, man, I got nine minutes left.

We got celebratory stories in our group about men. Fred comes to mind with his nephew. Pastor Jenkins comes to mind with his nieces.

I mean, we just got stories that we share about how God is using us to be a blessing in our family relationships. So when we allow our career, though, to take priority over our purpose and family, the impact of our service and our calling begins to diminish. There are so many scriptures that make the connection between faithfulness in family and success in life.

Ephesians 6, 1-3 says, Children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and your mother. Why? So that it will go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God has given you.

So what is the scripture teaching us? Whenever we dishonor our family relationships, we dishonor God. And when we are unfaithful in family relationships, we are unfaithful to God. And the promise of success, that it may be well with you, is removed from our calling, and we are at risk of not fulfilling our destiny because long life is a condition of being faithful in family relationships.

God cannot trust us with a divine assignment if we are not faithful in our family relationships. Faithfulness in family relationships is a prerequisite to calling and a prerequisite to ongoing success in our careers. Family culture teaches stewardship, obedience, respect for authority, and respect for peers.

Faithfulness in family instills community, citizenship, accountability, humility, honor, and patriotism. And there are many in the Bible who demonstrated that. And if we don't get family right, we will not thrive in our calling.

Samson is a good example of that. Because he was disobedient to his parents, he could not leave those Philistine women alone. And he did not fulfill his long life that he was promised because he was disobedient to his mama and his daddy.

Another good example of that is Absalom. Absalom was disobedient to his daddy, and he ended up having a coup that ousted his daddy, but it was just temporary. He was so determined to humiliate his daddy, he actually slept with some of his wives.

And his life didn't go the length that it was supposed to because he did not honor his mama and his daddy. If you have discovered your calling, it is more than likely because you have been faithful in your family relationships. But if you're still searching for your calling, it is more than likely because of unreconciled, broken, neglected, and unfaithful relationships within your family.

And if you're in your calling, but you're not reaching your peak, it's more than likely because you have unreconciled, broken, unfaithful relationships within your family. And if we are not focusing on family in our forums, those things can go unchecked for years to come, and you still struggle to know, why can I be more successful in my calling? As a member of God's family, it's important for us to know that if we change our purpose, we will miss our calling. If we miss our calling, we won't fulfill our destiny.

And if you don't fulfill your destiny, you will not leave a legacy of faith and righteousness for the next generation of your family. Cultural impacts should be generational. And God wants to use our families to lift up a standard for other families and family members who don't know Christ so that we model what it looks like to be forged for influence and to be tempered for purpose.

The first place to start transforming culture is not expanding your business. The first place to transform culture is reconciling broken family relationships. I got 5 minutes for my last part, and that is the part of our objectives that says, living with eternal intentionality.

How do you live with eternal intentionality? 2 Chronicles 27, 6 gives us an indication of how to do it. King Jotham, king of Judah, says about him, so Jotham became mighty, our context that would be successful, because he ordered his ways, ordered his ways before the Lord his God. Jotham was successful because he was one of those kings who followed that command in the Book of Deuteronomy, that when you get a king, he has to take a copy of these books, write a personal copy for his own use, and read it every day, and then it listed a series of blessings.

Jotham was one of the guys who did it. His life demonstrates that. So a disciple's life is a life of disciplines revealed in many ways that define a lifestyle.

The ways of an ordered life associated with the purposes of God include a lifestyle of abiding ways, nurturing ways, and serving ways. Abiding ways are the disciplines that increase our intimacy with the triune God that bring forth fruit and that illuminate the path towards our destiny. We cannot see the details along the way every day of our destiny if we don't spend time abiding in God.

Our nurturing ways are the disciplines essential to fostering wholesome family relationships within the scope of our purpose, and serving ways are the disciplines that enhance or advance our contribution to the kingdom of God within our calling. So abiding ways, the abiding ways are daily quiet time, worship, prayer, Scripture reading, reflecting on Scripture, believing in God, and hearing the word of God, and acting by faith, and obeying the word of God, and seasons of fasting. Nurturing ways with our family includes loving and honoring, encouraging, respecting, instructing, equipping, engaging, correcting, inspiring, and forgiving in family relationships.

And then serving ways are the ways of working, leading, following, learning, engaging, promoting, and growing in knowledge, skills, abilities, and wisdom from one divine assignment to the next. Those are the lifestyles of abiding and nurturing and serving. But we have to, to put the life application in place, we have to assess them on an ongoing basis, on an individual basis and within the context of our forum.

And so we have to look at the cheers, celebrating things that are going well in those areas, the challenges, what's not going well in those areas, the corrections, how are we going to fix it, and then the convictions, what goals am I going to set for this year so that at the end of the year I can bring forth fruit in that area? And so I wanted to show you what mine looks like. We do this, we've done this in our group. The foundation of an ordered life is purpose, calling, and destiny.

But there are six other ways that we evaluate, physical ways, mental ways, spiritual ways, relational ways, geographical ways, and financial ways. But in the context of the purposes being temperate, if I'm going to be temperate for purpose, I've got to order my ways in abiding with God. So last year in 2025, I ordered my ways, these were the cheers in abiding in God, my challenges, which that's probably on all of our lists is our carnal nature.

How am I going to address my challenge by abiding in repentance and by sustained conviction of grace? What are my goals for 2026 to get closer to God? Study my journals for the past four years, read the one year Bible and fast two times in 2026. That's how I order my abiding ways. In the next slide is my nurturing ways.

What are the cheers in my nurturing ways? We celebrated my mom's 90th birthday. My son got a new job and bought a new house. Carolyn and I celebrated our 43rd wedding anniversary.

What are the challenges in nurturing my family? Caring for aging parents, nurturing Carolyn, and time with TKCT. That's Tiffany, Kelton, Camille, and Tyler. What are my corrections? Be more attentive to Carolyn, spend more time with TKCT, increase mom check-ins.

And what are my convictions? Vacation with Carolyn, weekend dad trips with TKCT, and call mom weekly. That's my nurturing ways. And in my serving ways, what are my cheers? Fourth anniversary at Alliance Defending Freedom,

spiritual care for team members and clients at ADF, ministry at First Baptist Church of Glen Arden.

What are my challenges? Providing care for the Dallas office, sustaining the energy to do what God is calling me to do, and the distance from my church. It's 45 minutes to get to church, so I can only go on Sundays predominantly, and I'm limited on weekday activities. So how am I going to fix it? Outreach to Dallas, personal spiritual care, and increased virtual participation at church.

What are my convictions? Schedule 3 Dallas trips, schedule 1 spiritual retreat for myself, and complete the Ordered Life Book. Every child of God has been predestined, with a plan from God, revealed through disciplines of abiding, nurturing, and serving. All Pinnacle Forum partners have a role in establishing the kingdom on earth.

I love this last quote. I got this from John Lochner. He sent this to me about 6 years ago.

I don't know if he even remembers. It's a fitting close. No individual has any right to come into this world and go out of it without leaving behind him some distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through it.

Dr. George Washington Carver. We have been tempered for purpose. God bless you, partners.

Listening friend, what a challenge. God has placed you where you are for a reason. Your calling isn't merely what you're doing for God.

As Kelvin reminded us today, it's recognizing what God desires to do through you. That means your workplace, your profession, your opportunities, even some assignments that may seem rather ordinary can become places where you faithfully represent him. But perhaps the most challenging reminder is that influencing our culture begins much closer to home.

Before we dream about changing the world, let's faithfully love, honor, encourage, serve, forgive, and care for the family and people God has already placed around us. And let's order our lives around those three areas Kelvin described. Abiding, nurturing, and serving, drawing closer to God, strengthening our relationships, and faithfully using what he's entrusted to us for his kingdom.

You've been listening to a two-day message by Kelvin Cochran from the Pinnacle Forum National Conference held in Arizona this past April. Learn more at PinnacleForum.com and continue growing under the Mark & Friends tab at GreatNewsRadio.org or WLUJ.org where you'll find today's program, transcripts, scriptures, key takeaways, practical applications, today's challenge, a special prayer, and additional resources to help you grow deeper in your walk with Jesus. Thanks for listening.

Thanks for being a part of our radio listening family. This is Mark Burns with the ministry of Great News Media. God bless you and have a great day and night.