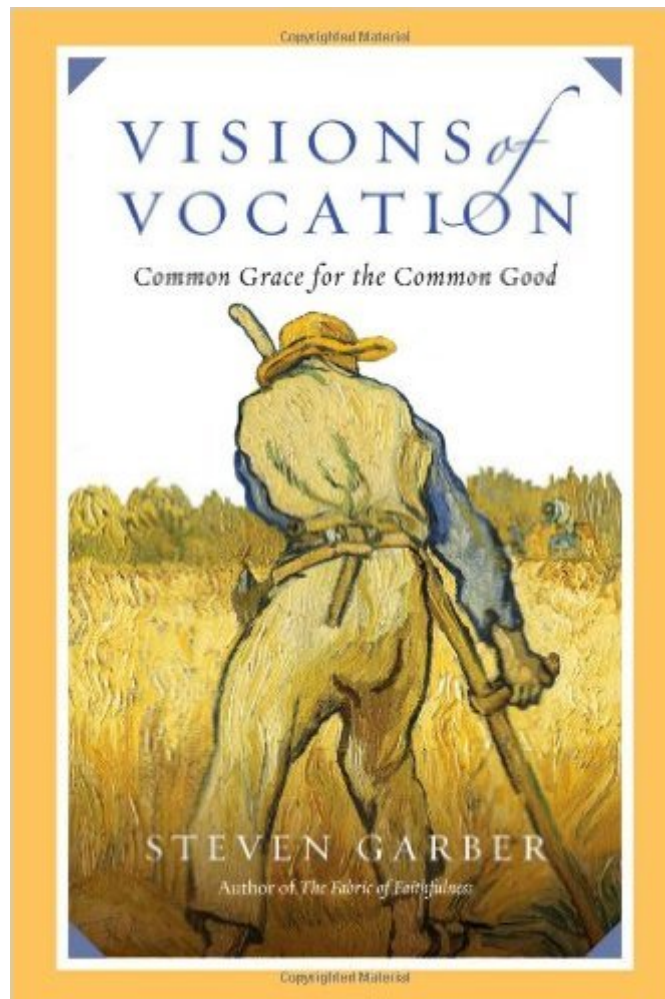


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# Visions Of Vocation: Common Grace For The Common Good



## Synopsis

Foreword Review's 17th Annual INDIEFAB Book of the Year Finalist (Religion) 12th Annual Outreach Resource of the Year (Culture) 2015 Christianity Today Award of Merit (Christian Living) 2014 Leadership Journal Best Books for Church Leaders (The Leader's Outer Life) 2014 Book of the Year from Byron Berger, Hearts and Minds Bookstore

Is it possible to know the world and still love the world? Of all the questions we ask about our calling, this is the most difficult. From marriages to international relations, the more we know, the harder it is to love. We become cynics or stoics, protecting our hearts from the implications of what we know. But what if the vision of vocation can be recovered—allowing us to step into the wounds of the world and for love's sake take up our responsibility for the way the world turns out? For decades Steve Garber has come alongside a wide range of people as they seek to make sense of the world and their lives. With him we meet leaders from the Tiananmen Square protest who want a good reason to still care about China. We also meet with many ordinary people in ordinary places who long for their lives to matter: Jonathan who learned he would rather build houses than study history Todd and Maria who adopted creative schedules so they could parent better and practice medicine D.J. who helped Congress move into the Internet Age Robin who spends her life on behalf of urban justice Hans who makes hamburgers the way they are meant to be made Susan who built a home business of hand-printing stationary using a letterpress Santiago who works with majority-world nations in need of capital George who has given years to teaching students to learn things that matter most Claudius and Deirdre whose openhearted home has always been a place for people Dan who loves Wyoming, the place, its people and its cows

Vocation is when we come to know the world in all its joy and pain and still love it. Vocation is following our calling to seek the welfare of the world we live in. And in helping the world to flourish, strangely, mysteriously, we find that we flourish too. Garber offers a book for everyone everywhere—for students, for parents, for those in the arts, in the academy, in public service, in the trades and in commerce—for all who want to discover the virtue of vocation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Before I even begin this review I just want to say that - I know its early in the year, but this book is so well written, so theologically powerful, and packs such a powerful devotional punch that it is definitely a frontrunner for my book of the year award....What the heck am I supposed to be doing with my life? Working with college students I hear that question all the time. It seems like it is a perpetual mystery among college age/post-college age adults. To be honest it seems to be a perpetual mystery for myself as well. In recent years we have seen a sort of resurgence among books, sermons, and blogs about Christian visions of vocations. What is a vocation? Is a career the same thing as a vocation? What does faith have to do with work? How do our vocations contribute to the missio dei? Tim Keller and the people over at The Center for Faith and Work have done a lot to help Christians answer those questions. Another person who has been contributing answers to these sorts of questions for many years now has been Steven Garber. He heads up the Washington Institute - "an institute which exists to help people pursue a vision of vocation that is fully engaged with the realities of life in the 21st century." This book, *Visions of Vocation: Common Grace for the Common God*, is birthed out of Garber's many years of reflection upon the topics of vocation and social engagement. Summary Vocation is an ethereal concept - invoking images of a divine calling or a sort of mystical experience where one is called into one's destiny, a destiny that has been set out for you since before the foundations of the earth. But are we complicating the concept of vocation by making them, for lack of a better word, so epic? Garber seems to think so.

Steven Garber was the featured speaker at my Covenant Seminary graduation in May, 2014. Not long afterwards, my wife and I read and discussed this book. It is best read slowly, as he weaves in stories of the band Jars of Clay, Jena Lee Nardella, Wendell Berry, U2, John Le Carre, J.I. Packer, and many others, books and films in this wonderful book. Reading it had the feel of having a conversation with him in a coffee shop or living room. Garber is the principal of the Washington Institute for Faith, Vocation & Culture, which is focused on reframing the way people understand life,

especially the meaning of vocation and the common good. They see that vocation is integral, not incidental, to the mission Dei. He writes that this book invites the reader to "come and see" that this vision of vocation is being lived out by men and women who are committed to a faith that shapes vocation that shapes culture. He writes that there is not a more difficult task that human beings face than to know the world and still love it. A recurring question that he asks throughout the book is: "Knowing what I know, what will I do?" He indicates that in thousands of important and different ways, each story is formed by asking and answering that question. Among the other penetrating questions he asks in the book are: "How does one learn to see with the eyes of the heart, to see oneself as responsible for the way the world is and isn't?" "Can we know the world and still love it?" I enjoyed his profiles of people who chose to love with honesty and integrity. He writes that those people "see themselves as implicated in the way the world is and ought to be."

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