

# 4 C's

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, November 14, 2021

---

## OCC VID

**PRE-VIDEO** – I would like to share a brief video before we dismiss the children (**VIDEO**).

**POST-VIDEO 1** – Please bring in your packed shoeboxes next Sunday for our special OCC Service.

**POST-VIDEO 2** – Children (12-and-under) are dismissed at this time for Children's Church and Nursery.

## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here in person or watching via the livestream, you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have much to cover in a relatively short amount of time.

## SETTING THE STAGE

**NOTE 1** – This morning I would like to offer a standalone sermon born of a selection from John 10...

### John 10:10 (NIV)

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

**NOTE 2** – We know that Christ has made life abundant both available and accessible to those who will have it. In a sense, it is ours for the taking! Of course, this raises a set of critical questions for those who live as vibrant disciples of the Risen Christ...

**Q1. How do I appropriate what Christ has made available?**

**Q2. How can I walk in the fullness of life that He has for me?**

**NOTE 3** – This morning I want to put forth a four-fold response to these questions—with each response beginning with the letter C. Those who wish to thrive and live effectively before God and amongst men do well to consider the following...

LET US DELVE IN...

## #1 – CALLING

The first “C” stands for CALLING...

There are common questions that ministers are asked on a regular basis. Perhaps none are more common than, “Pastor, what is my calling?” In other words, “What has God called me to be, do and/or accomplish?” This query is born out of the heart that wants to please God and effectively serve Him in Christ, so it is a great question to ask! Thus said...

**NOTE 1** – From the outset, we do well to consider that Scripture answers such questions in a GENERAL sense. In other words, there are passages that detail and/or define the will of God at a universal level (i.e., for all believers throughout space and time). For instance...

### **Micah 6:8 (Emphasis Mine)**

8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To **act justly** and to **love mercy**

and to **walk humbly** with your God.

### **Matthew 22:36–40 (Emphasis Mine)**

36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: “**Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: **Love your neighbor as yourself.**’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

### **Matthew 28:18–20 & Mark 16:15 (Emphasis Mine)**

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore **go and make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” . . . 15 He said to them, “**Go** into all the world and **preach the gospel** to all creation.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (Emphasis Mine)**

16 **Rejoice always**, 17 **pray continually**, 18 **give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is God’s **will** for you in Christ Jesus.

**NOTE 2** – However, God also has a SPECIFIC call for each believer. Since we are unique creations, He has a distinctive purpose for each of us. We see this evidenced in Scripture: a) Moses v. David; c) Isaiah v. Jeremiah v. Daniel; d) James v. Peter; and e) Peter v. Paul. We also see this in personal life and living: Who am I to marry? Where am I to live? What work am I to perform? What church should I attend? What ministry should I participate in and/or lead?

### **Q. How are we to discern our individual calling(s)?**

**FYI** – Though this is a sermon unto itself, consider the following (i.e., briefly)...

**A1. Prayer** – It is in the place of prayer that such insight is given...

**James 1:5–7**

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

**A2. Supernatural Leading** – The Lord still speaks through dreams, vision and supernatural guidance...

**Acts 16:6–10**

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**A3. Past Experience(s)** – Your call is likely connected to past personal experiences and overcome challenges...

**2 Corinthians 1:3–4**

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

**A4. Open v. Closed Doors** – We discern His will by considering closed v. open doors of opportunity...

**Colossians 4:4**

3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

**ILL 1** – Our infertility was a closed door that led us to the open door of DCF (i.e., and the call of God).

**A5. Talents and Inclinations** – Your call is likely tied to your unique talents and passions...

**Romans 12:4–8**

4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

**ILL 2** – My account of being offered the Children’s Pastor position at First Assembly of God. NO!

**KEY** – Tragically, many miss the abundant life Christ offers because they fail to discern their unique calling.

## #2 – COMMITMENT

The second “C” stands for COMMITMENT...

**FYI** – It is one thing to discern the call of God. It is quite another to commit to it and remain faithful over time...

**Q1a. To what degree are you committed to the GENERALLY-revealed will of God?**

**Q1b. To what degree have you given yourself to the universal principles of Scripture?**

For instance...

### **Micah 6:8 (Emphasis Mine)**

8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To **act justly** and to **love mercy**

and to **walk humbly** with your God.

### **Matthew 22:36–40 (Emphasis Mine)**

36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” 37 Jesus replied: “**Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘**Love your neighbor as yourself.**’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

### **Matthew 28:18–20 & Mark 16:15 (Emphasis Mine)**

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore **go and make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” . . . 15 He said to them, “**Go** into all the world and **preach the gospel** to all creation.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (Emphasis Mine)**

16 **Rejoice always**, 17 **pray continually**, 18 **give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is God’s **will** for you in Christ Jesus.

**NOTE 1** – Those who cannot bring themselves to obey the Lord in the “broad strokes” of the faith should not expect Him to provide more specific detail. Do not be the type of person who cries out, “Lord, show me your will!” if you possess no passion for justice, mercy, humility, the spread of the gospel, worship, prayer or thanksgiving!

**Q2a. To what degree are you committed to the SPECIFICALLY-revealed will of God?**

**Q2b. To what degree have you given yourself to His particular mission and purpose?**

**KEY** – There are a great many who are not living in the fullness of Christ because they are running from His call.

**ILL – Jonah...**

**Jonah 1:1–17**

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

7 Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?” 9 He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” 10 This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

11 The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” 12 “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.” 13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 14 Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.” 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him. 17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

**Q. Does any of this sound like Jonah was living his BEST LIFE in the Lord?**

**NOTE 2** – The Word says much re: commitment and perseverance in His call—with corresponding warning(s)...

**James 1:12**

12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

**Galatians 6:9**

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

**2 Timothy 2:12**

12 if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.

**Luke 9:62**

62 Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

### #3 – CHARACTER

The third “C” stands for CHARACTER

We must not downplay the import of character. I can think of many Christian and secular leaders whose downfall was tethered to character failings. When I say Richard Nixon, what enters your mind? Very few things bring forth reproach and ruination—sapping life to the full—like dereliction of character. We could speak at length about figures like...

**ILL 1** – Samson. Samson was a mighty judge of supernatural birth and divine empowerment whose character could not sustain the work of God in and/or through him. The story of his life was riddled with deficiency, and it cost him dearly in the end.

**ILL 2** – Saul. Saul was the first king of Israel who was “head and shoulders” above his contemporaries. However, he allowed envy and disobedience into his life, costing him both the kingdom and his very life. His life is a case study in what not to do!

**ILL 3** – David. Though David was a man after God’s own heart, his incident with Bathsheba (e.g., adultery, murder, etc.) would cost him, his family, and the people of God greatly. Though God demonstrated mercy, David had to “sleep in the bed he had made.”

**ILL 4** – Judas. Judas began so well. He was a member the apostolic band of Christ—a band of Twelve used mightily in both preaching and ministry. However, greed and manipulation would cost him, and in the end, he would betray His Master and woefully take His own life.

**NOTE 1** – Do not justify or seek to excuse apparent character flaws...

**QUOTE** – A man who prided himself on his morality and expected to be saved by it was constantly saying, “I’m doing pretty well on the whole. I sometimes get mad and swear, but then I *am* perfectly honest. I watch some questionable movies and have a minor lust problem, but I give a good deal to the poor, and I’ve never been drunk in my life.

He hired a neighbor to build a fence around his pasture. When the neighbor came in from his work, the man said, “Well, Jim, is the fence built, and is it tight and strong?”

“I cannot say it is *all* tight and strong,” replied Jim. “But it’s a good average fence. If some parts are a little weak, other parts are extra strong. There may be a little gap here and there, but I made up for it by doubling the rails on each side. I daresay the cattle will find it a good fence on the whole.”

“What?” cried the man, not seeing the point. “Do you mean to tell me that you built my fence with weak places and gaps in it? You might as well have built no fence at all! IF there is even one opening or weak place, the cattle will be sure to find it and go through. Don’t you know that a fence must be perfect or it is worthless?”

“I used to think so,” Jim said. “But I hear you talk so much about averaging out matters with the Lord, it seemed to me we might try it with the cattle. If an average fence will not do for them, I am afraid an average character will not do on the Day of Judgment.”

**NOTE 2.** Does this mean that we will be perfect? No! It does mean that Christians are relentless in dealing with sin and living after the Lord. Where there are gaps and breaches, we quickly repent and seek the aid of God in bringing about necessary change! Thus said...

**NOTE 3** – Those who seek to grow in Christian character do well to consider the following passage...

**Galatians 5:16–17, 19–23**

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

## #4 – CHEMISTRY

The final “C” stands for CHEMISTRY

Those who seek to live life to the full in Christ do well to consider matters of interpersonal chemistry...

**Q. What do I mean by chemistry?**

**A.** The ability to play well with others!

**NOTE 1** – It amazes me how some are so apparently called, committed and holy, yet so terrible when working with others. Though Christians should be the best at getting along with each other, navigating conflict, etc., how often do we traffic in disunity, discord, and strife! Few things hinder life and life to the full like poor relational chemistry.

**NOTE 2** – I think of the great figures of Scripture who could have gone it alone yet chose not to. We could speak of Christ, who being God in the flesh still chose to have peers for the journey in the Twelve. We could speak of Paul, a force in his own right, who could have flown solo! Yet when we read of Paul, we also read of Barnabas, Silas, John Mark, Timothy, Titus, Luke, Epaphroditus, etc. Consider the following selection...

**Romans 16:1–23**

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

5 Greet also the church that meets at their house.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

6 Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

9 Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

10 Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test.

Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

11 Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.

Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them.

15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord's people who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the churches of Christ send greetings.

17 I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. 18 For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. 19 Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21 Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

22 I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings.

**Q1. To what degree do you possess and value vital relationships?**

**Q2. To what degree do you play well with others v. drama and poor connection(s)?**

**Q3. To what degree is your life characterized by chemistry and camaraderie with the Body of Christ?**

**KEY** – Speak not of your intimacy with the Head (Christ) when you are severed from His Body (His Church)?



## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Christ has made life and life to the full available to us (cf. John 10:10b). We can learn to appropriate and walk in that newness of life by effectively navigating matters of our Calling, Commitment, Character and Chemistry. However, keep in mind that we battle an adversary who does not want us to possess life abundant. Rather...

### John 10:10a (Emphasis Mine)

10 The thief comes only to **steal** and **kill** and **destroy** . . .

**KEY** – Thus, do not be surprised when Satan seeks to hinder you in these four arenas...

- 1) He Seeks to Confuse, Dissuade and Diminish You in Your Calling
- 2) He Seeks To Weary, Hinder and Mitigate Your Sense of Commitment
- 3) He Seeks to Introduce Compromise in Your Character and Reputation
- 4) He Seeks to Sow Discord, Strife and Fracture in Your Relationship(s)

### James 4:6b–7

6 . . . “God opposes the proud  
but shows favor to the humble.”

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

## CONCLUSION

**NOTE 1** – Those who wish to give online may do so at [www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org). Those who wish to give in person can utilize the offering boxes located throughout the church facility. Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting the work of Christ.

**NOTE 2** – Ministry Schedule...

Prayer – Sunday at 8:45am  
Sunday School – Sunday at 9:15am  
CYC – Tuesday from 3–4pm and 4–5pm  
Weekly Study – Thursday at 6:30–7:30pm

Women’s Ministry – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 6:30pm  
Men’s Breakfast – 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday at 9am  
Potluck – Final Sunday of the Month

**NOTE 3** – Special Events Pt. 1...

We will host a church Clean-Up Day this Saturday, November 20, starting at 9am. All are welcome to join in!

**NOTE 4** – Special Events Pt. 2...

OCC is nearly upon us. We will host our OCC Service next Sunday, November 21. Feel free to bring in your packed-boxes then. Shoeboxes are available downstairs, along with information on how to pack said boxes. Those with Q’s can see Ruth Dahlstrom.