

called to
create

A Biblical Invitation to
Create, Innovate, and Risk

jordan raynor



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For the One
who has called me
to create

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introduction

God was the first entrepreneur. He brought something out of nothing. He established order out of chaos. He created for the good of others. Before the Bible tells us that God is loving, holy, or merciful, we learn that he is creative.

We are made in the image of the First Entrepreneur; thus, when we follow his call to create businesses, nonprofits, art, music, books, and other products, we are not just doing something good for the world, we are doing something God-like. This is important because it validates the deep desire in our souls to create.

If you've ever felt like your work as a Christian entrepreneur or creative is anything less than God-like service to the world, this book is for you. If you've ever wanted your work to feel like a calling rather than a job, this book is for you. If you've ever wanted to sit down with dozens of Christian creators to better understand how they connect their faith to their work, this book is most certainly for you.

This book started out with a set of questions I've accumulated through years of seeking to more deeply integrate my Christian faith with my work as an entrepreneur and creative. Rather than answering all of these questions myself, I have spent almost two years posing them to dozens of Christian entrepreneurs through first-person interviews and research. The stories of these men and women are what make up the majority of this book.

Blake Mycoskie, the founder of TOMS Shoes, helps us understand how we can do ministry without abandoning a passion for entrepreneurship. Krystal Whitten, the creator of the *Lettering Prayer Journal*, puts a face to the deep guilt many moms face for following both the call to create and the call to motherhood. C. S. Lewis, Arthur Guinness, and Scott Harrison of Charity: Water show us how we can create products that reveal God's character and love others. The founders of In-N-Out Burger, Chick-fil-A, and Sevenly demonstrate how the gospel can influence every aspect of how we run our ventures. Nicole Baker Fulgham, founder of the nonprofit The Expectations Project, shows us how to manage the tension between trusting in God and hustling to grow our organizations. Hymnwriter and entrepreneur Horatio Spafford provides an inspiring case study for how creators should respond to inevitable adversity and failure. J. R. R. Tolkien and "the Inklings" model how Christian community can help renew our minds as we create. HTC cofounder Cher Wang demonstrates the multifaceted purpose of profit, while PayPal cofounder Peter Thiel casts a vision of heaven that gives deep meaning to our creating both today and for eternity. These are just some of the stories you will find in the following pages.¹

Who Is an Entrepreneur?

Our collective fascination with the topic of entrepreneurship has risen drastically over the last century. The number of mentions of the word *entrepreneurship* in American books has increased sharply just in the last decade.² It's a word we throw around a lot. But it can be a difficult word to define. What exactly is entrepreneurship and who is an entrepreneur?

The word *entrepreneur* first appeared in a French dictionary in 1723 to describe a person who undertakes a task with financial risk.³ Contemporary dictionaries define an entrepreneur similarly. Dictionary.com says an entrepreneur is “a person who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk.”⁴ Merriam-Webster defines an entrepreneur as “one who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise.”⁵

While these definitions are good, they leave something to be desired—namely the act of creating something new that many people associate with the work of entrepreneurs. Today when we hear the word *entrepreneur* people like Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, and Mark Zuckerberg are among the first that come to mind. While it's true that these individuals “organized and managed” their enterprises at “considerable initiative and risk,” these qualities alone didn't make them great entrepreneurs. We define these people as entrepreneurs because they created something new. They brought something out of relatively nothing. They established order out of chaos. And, through their creations, they loved and served the world.

So allow me to submit a new definition for the word *entrepreneur* to guide the rest of these pages: an entrepreneur

is anyone who takes a risk to create something new for the good of others.

With this definition, Jobs, Winfrey, Zuckerberg, and others who traditionally identify as entrepreneurs obviously fit the bill. But it's not just these most obvious candidates whom this definition qualifies as entrepreneurs. This definition includes

An entrepreneur is anyone who takes a risk to create something new for the good of others.

creators across the widest array of fame, fortune, geography, job title, company size, and industry. It includes entrepreneurial employees, nonprofit founders, mompreneurs, students looking to make something of the world, small business owners, and a growing number of self-

identified creatives: photographers, painters, musicians, authors, Etsy shop owners, designers, architects, and chefs, all of whom risk financial and social capital to create something new for the good of others.

As someone who fits the traditional definitions of both an “entrepreneur” and “creative,” to me there's always been a clear connection between entrepreneurship and creativity. From my perspective, the act of creating a new business is not dissimilar to composing a song. Both require bringing something out of nothing, establishing order out of chaos, and creating something good for others. I think Steve Jobs understood this connection deeply. Arguably the most visionary and successful entrepreneur of the twentieth century, Jobs loved music. Eventually this manifested itself in the launch of the iPod, but long before that, Jobs was connecting music with his work as a tech entrepreneur. In 1988, Jobs was set to launch his highly anticipated NeXT Computer. Famous for obsessing over every detail of every product launch, it's

notable that Jobs chose the Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco as the venue to launch his newest machine. In Aaron Sorkin's biopic film on Jobs, he portrays a heated conversation between Jobs and his Apple cofounder, Steve Wozniak. Standing among rows of music stands in the orchestra pit of Symphony Hall, Wozniak says to Jobs, "You can't write code. You're not an engineer. You're not a designer. So how come ten times in a day, I read Steve Jobs is a genius? *What* do you do?" Jobs replies, "I play the orchestra."⁶ To explain his work as an entrepreneur, Jobs used a musical metaphor. Whether you identify as an entrepreneur or a creative, this book is for you. To Jobs and to me, the labels are essentially one and the same.

My Story

I haven't always thought of myself as an entrepreneur, but looking back over the course of my short life (I'm thirty as I write this), that label is probably the best way to describe my lifelong desire to create. I started my first "business" when I was nine years old, selling baseball cards out of my bedroom. It was a terrible business, as my customer acquisition strategy was totally reliant on the hospitality of my parents. In the eighth grade, my entrepreneurial spirit took a different shape as I watched the 2000 election, mesmerized by the romanticism that characterizes the startup-like launch, rise, and fall of presidential campaigns. That election started me down a political career path. At the age of seventeen, I took my first "real job" managing a campaign in my hometown of Tampa, Florida. After winning that election, I thought I was addicted to politics; but after more political jobs in college and an incredible

experience working at the White House, I realized it wasn't politics and campaigns I loved. It was creating something out of nothing and winning. It was entrepreneurship.

As I was graduating from Florida State University in the spring of 2008, I had two job offers on the table: one to work for John McCain's presidential campaign and one to lead a growing political tech startup. The choice was an easy one. I took the entrepreneurial path and I never looked back. After leading somebody else's business for a year and a half, I decided it was time to launch my own—a digital marketing agency that serviced political campaigns, causes, and corporations. In 2011, my company was acquired by a “mega interactive agency” out of Washington, DC. After staying at the acquiring company for a little more than a year, I was ready to start up again. In 2012, my cofounders and I launched Citizeninvestor, which today is the largest provider of crowd-funding software for municipalities in the United States.

It was during the building of Citizeninvestor that I began seriously questioning my calling and whether or not I was serving the Lord through what I saw at the time as “secular” work. I grew up in the church and attended a Christian school where it seemed like every pastor and chapel speaker implied that if I *really* loved the Lord, if I was *really* sold out for Christ, I would go into “full-time ministry” or live in a mud hut three thousand miles away from home. At the same time, I grew up watching my father and grandfather live out their faith through their work as entrepreneurs. I was conflicted, to say the least. In the summer of 2014, I began to transition out of the day-to-day operations of Citizeninvestor, and as you will read more about later in this book, I wasn't sure where God was calling me for the next chapter in my career.

On the one hand, it was clear to me that God had given me a passion for entrepreneurship, the giftings to be good at the craft, and clear opportunities to exercise those gifts to love others. On the other hand, I wondered whether it would be a more God-honoring, eternally significant use of my time to put those passions and skills to work in a more overtly evangelical context such as planting a church. Through much prayer, study of God’s Word, and communion with other believers, I decided to continue down the path the Lord had already set me on and follow the call to create. In 2014, I launched a new company to help other entrepreneurs launch and grow their businesses. I named the company Vocreo, combining the Latin words *vocātiō* and *creo* to mean “called to create.” In 2016, I took an indefinite leave of absence from the firm to take on the role of CEO at one of Vocreo’s fastest growing portfolio companies: a venture-backed technology startup called Threshold 360.

What to Expect from This Book

This book is the result of nearly two years of research and dozens of conversations with other Christian entrepreneurs as I sought to answer some of my (and hopefully your) questions about what it means to be called to create, such as:

- How does God’s creative and entrepreneurial character empower me to emulate Him?
- Is my work as a Baker entrepreneur and creative really as God-honoring as that of a pastor or “full-time missionary”?
- What are the right questions to ask when discerning where God has called me to work?

- What does it look like to create not in order to make a name for myself but to glorify the One who has called me to create and love others?
- How does recognizing my work as a calling from God change my motivations for creating, what I create, and how I create it?
- What are the challenges unique to or especially acute for those who are called to create, and what's the proper way to deal with them?
- What is the purpose of profit?
- How can I use my work as an entrepreneur to fulfill Jesus's command to create disciples?
- While my work may matter today, will my creations live on into eternity?

With this book, I have taken a “show” rather than “tell” approach to answering these questions, bringing in colorful stories from more than forty men and women who have followed God's call to create. This is not a how-to book. This is a compilation of compelling stories that paint a picture of what it means to be called to create.

The book is organized into four parts. Part 1 deals with the issue of “calling,” a loaded and often confusing term in the church today. In this part, we will take a deeper look at God's creative character, explore what the Bible has to say about the inherent goodness of work, and set forth a series of practical questions to help us discern our calling.

In part 2, we will examine how following the call to create impacts our motivations for creating, the products we choose to create, and what it looks like to holistically integrate the gospel into our ventures, beginning with striving for

excellence in everything we do and prioritizing people over profit. As we'll see, our work can only be a calling if someone calls us to it and we work for their sake and not our own.

Part 3 deals with the challenges that are unique to or especially acute for the Christian entrepreneur, including managing the tension between trusting in God and hustling to make things happen in our ventures, responding to adversity and failure, and how we as Christians need to continually renew our minds through regular communion with God, our partners, and other believers.

Our work can only be a calling if someone calls us to it and we work for their sake and not our own.

In part 4, we will issue a charge for those who are called to create, asking questions about what it looks like to create disciples through our endeavors, how we should view profit, and how what we create today can last on into eternity, as we lay our creations down at the feet of the First Entrepreneur as he builds his final masterpiece, the new heaven and new earth.

As you read through this book, you will undoubtedly want to take some time to think through the principles of each chapter and how they apply to your own endeavors. To facilitate this, I have developed a free *Called to Create* study journal with thought-provoking questions to accompany each chapter and plenty of space for you to take notes. To download this free study journal, visit calledtcreate.org/journal.

Now, are you ready to hear the stories of dozens of Christian entrepreneurs and creatives? Are you ready to embrace God's call to create in your life? Are you ready to think deeper about what it means to reimagine your creating as service to the One who has called you to create? Let's begin.

PART 1
calling

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1

the first entrepreneur

Have you ever heard a sermon so compelling that you drove sixteen hours to thank the pastor in person for how their words changed your life? Kristin Joy Taylor has. In 2008, Jerry King, a pastor from Mansfield, Ohio, was guest preaching at Taylor's home church in Tampa, Florida. From the pulpit he shared:

God presents himself in the Bible first of all as the Creator God. He could have begun this story in lots of different ways, but the place he chose to say “Human beings, this is who I am, I want you to know *this* about me first,” is here: I am the Creator God. And so the very first chapters of Genesis begin with these unfolding stories of God in action creating out of nothing, bringing into being, stage by stage, day by day, everything that is. If you are one who has a greater amount of creativity in you, you have a place at the table of God's people and of humanity. You're valid. Step up. Bring what you've got. Don't you dare hold back. Not cringing back, not with arrogant pride, with sane humility bring your stuff. Other people need it.¹

Those words brought a leap to Kristin Joy Taylor's spirit and tears to her eyes. An entrepreneur, painter, and photographer, Taylor had always been creative, but until hearing that sermon, she had never understood that when she created, she was emulating her Creator. "All my life, I always knew I was creative, but there was no validity for my creative work being a calling from God. Creativity was kind of always on the fringes," she said. "That sermon gave me a huge validation in my spirit that creativity is not a fringe thing but is central and of infinite worth, because we are made in the image of God."

Days after the sermon, Taylor was sharing how impactful these truths were with a friend who was equally moved by Pastor King's words. The two women decided that, just as King had validated them, they needed to validate him and his ministry. So they asked their congregation to write letters to King, sharing the impact his words had on their lives. With the letters in hand, they hopped into Taylor's Honda Civic and drove sixteen hours from Tampa, Florida, to Mansfield, Ohio, to deliver the thank-you letters in person.

Why did this sermon stir up such a radical response from these two women? I think it's because that in the church we often hear that God is loving, holy, omnipotent, sovereign, just, merciful, and faithful. But we rarely, if ever, hear that God is entrepreneurial. Yet, as King pointed out, that is the first characteristic revealed about God in the Bible!

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Gen. 1:1–3). If you're like me, you have

read this passage so many times that it can be easy to miss the magnitude of what's happening here. In the beginning, "the earth was formless and empty" (v. 2). It wasn't until God took action that this formless void began to be filled. God brought something out of nothing. He brought order out of chaos. God was the first entrepreneur.

God brought something out of nothing. He brought order out of chaos. God was the first entrepreneur.

The First Entrepreneur

As we established in the introduction, an entrepreneur is anyone who takes a risk to create something new for the good of others. With this definition, the Creator of the universe certainly qualifies as the first entrepreneur. In Genesis, God is clearly creating something new. In six days, he created the heavens, the earth, light, evening, morning, sky, land, sea, vegetation, sun, moon, stars, animals, and human beings. All of this was thoroughly original, as the earth was "formless and empty" prior to God speaking these things into existence. C. S. Lewis gives us a picture of this in *The Magician's Nephew*, giving readers a front-row seat to Aslan (the God-like lion) singing the land of Narnia into existence. As the characters step into what is about to become Narnia, one of them remarks that, "This is an empty world. This is Nothing." Lewis continues:

And really it was uncommonly like Nothing. There were no stars. It was so dark that they couldn't see one another at all and it made no difference whether you kept your eyes shut or open. Then . . . the blackness overhead, all at once, was

blazing with stars. They didn't come out gently one by one, as they do on a summer evening. One moment there had been nothing but darkness; next moment a thousand, thousand points of light leaped out—single stars, constellations, and planets, brighter and bigger than any in our world.²

Not only did God create something new but, equally important for our definition of entrepreneurship, he created something for the good of others. Have you ever wondered why God created the world and humankind? He certainly didn't need to. So, in one sense, God appears to have created for the pure joy of doing it. As you read through Genesis 1, you can't help but imagine God having a ball bringing everything into being, flinging the stars into the sky and turning the oceans loose. God created because he wanted to. But *why* did he want to? The great theologian Jonathan Edwards once said, "What God aimed at in the creation of the world, as the end which he had ultimately in view, was that communication of himself which he intended through all eternity."³ If God is the source of all goodness, then revealing himself and his character to us is one of the most loving things he could do. So God appears to have created for the good of others by revealing his character, but Genesis hints at a second way in which the First Entrepreneur loved others through his creating. In Genesis 1:26 we find the word "our" for the first time in Scripture, indicating that the God of the Bible is a triune God, comprised of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Before God brought the world into being, the Trinity had been enjoying perfect community, submitting to each other, loving each other, and serving each other for all eternity. Jesus's prayer

prior to his crucifixion gives us beautiful insight into the Trinity's relationship:

[Jesus] looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. (John 17:1–5)

The Trinity shows us the others-orientation of the God-head. God is selfless, constantly submitting to each of the other members of the Trinity. So it stands to reason that one of the primary reasons why God created was to share the perfect love the Trinity has been experiencing for all eternity with us. His creating was a way of serving us, by making us in his image so we could experience a glimpse of the joy he has been experiencing for all of time.

Finally, while God clearly created something new for the good of others, did omnipotent God really take a risk when he created? As pastor Timothy Keller⁴ shared with a group of Christian entrepreneurs:

You can see the risks and the costs from the very beginning. God made the world filled with human beings made in His image, human beings with freewill. So God made the world knowing what it was going to cost Him. Knowing what we were going to do. Knowing that [His] Son was going to have to come into the world and experience what he experienced.⁵

One of the most defining characteristics of entrepreneurship is risk. When we fashion creation in a fresh new way to bring about something new, there is a tremendous amount of uncertainty. We are not omniscient and thus do not know whether our creations will fail or succeed. But God *is* omniscient. He *is* all-knowing. When God created humankind, he knew precisely the risks he was taking and yet still created out of a desire to share his love with us.

There's one other difference between God's creating and ours that's worth noting before we move on. In Genesis 1:1, when it tells us for the first time that God "created," the Hebrew word used in the original manuscripts is *bara*, meaning "to create," connoting the idea of creating something out of nothing. When God begins to take action in the creation account, "the earth was formless and empty," giving God nothing to create with. While the song "Beautiful Things" is correct in saying that God "makes beautiful things out of the dust," God is also the only One who makes beautiful things out of absolutely nothing.⁶ This is different from the way human beings create, rearranging raw materials and resources (money, time, physical goods, etc.) to bring about something new. But as Andy Crouch, executive editor of *Christianity Today* and author of *Culture Making*,⁷ points out:

The difference is not as great as you might think. For every act of creation involves bringing something into being that was not there before—every creation is *ex nihilo*, from nothing, even when it takes the world as its starting point. Something is added in every act of making. This is clearest in the realm of art, where the raw materials of pigment and canvas become more than you ever could have predicted. Even a five-year-old's finger painting is more than the sum of paper and paint.

But creation, the marvelous making of more than was there before, also happens when a chef makes an omelet, when a carpenter makes a chair, when a toddler makes a snow angel.⁸

The creation account clearly reveals God as infinitely creative and entrepreneurial. But God doesn't just reveal these characteristics to us in Genesis. Throughout Scripture, God shows us his entrepreneurial character through each of the members of the Trinity: Father, Spirit, and Son.

The Spirit

In the book of the Bible immediately following Genesis, where we read the account of the First Entrepreneur's creation of the world, we meet a man named Bezalel, who is in need of being filled by the Spirit of God in order to build the Tabernacle, a dwelling place for God on earth. The writer of Exodus shares:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts." (Exod. 31:1–5)

Bezalel was an entrepreneur and artist who was being commissioned by God himself. But before Bezalel could begin the work of rearranging the raw materials of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood to create something new, God had to fill him with his Spirit. Why? Because God is the First Entrepreneur and the source of all creativity and ingenuity.

In order for Bezalel to create the Tabernacle of the Lord, he needed more of God's likeness.

God is the source of all creativity and ingenuity.

To fully appreciate what is going on in this account in Exodus, we must note that the Tabernacle was a physical representation of “the universe the way it ought to be” with God at the center of it. The design of the interior of the Tabernacle pointed worshipers to the Holy of Holies, an interior room in which the Israelites believed God physically existed. The Tabernacle was essentially its own world, with everything pointing toward God. So when God called Bezalel to create the Tabernacle, he was inviting him to mimic God's creation of earth, thus bringing glory to God by emulating his creative Spirit.

The Carpenter

Nearly fifteen hundred years after Bezalel used his God-given skills of craftsmanship to create a dwelling place for God, God himself came to earth as a human and spent 85 percent of his working life leveraging a skillset very similar to Bezalel's to run a small business.

The Bible gives us very little detail of Jesus's life between the ages of twelve and thirty, when he began his public ministry. One of the only things Scripture notes about this significant period of time is that he was known in his community for his work as a carpenter (Mark 6:3). This is remarkable! The only thing the Bible tells us about what Jesus was doing for half of his life was working. But Jesus wasn't doing just any work; he was doing the work of a creator and entrepreneur,

revealing to us this important characteristic of his Father, and indeed, the Trinity.

While many Christians know that Jesus was a carpenter, our modern understanding of this vocation might not align with the work Jesus actually did. As biblical scholar Dr. Ken Campbell points out, the Greek term *tektōn* that most English Bibles translate as “carpenter” in Mark 6:3 would more accurately be translated as “builder,” someone who “worked with stone, wood, and sometimes metal” to create something new for the good of others. Jesus, alongside his earthly father, Joseph, owned a family-operated small business, “negotiating bids, securing supplies, completing projects, and contributing to family living expenses.” In first-century Jewish culture, it was artisans and craftspeople like Jesus who “had the ancient equivalent of small, independent businesses” and would be called entrepreneurs by us today.¹⁰

From the beginning of time, God knew that Jesus would be sent to earth to be raised by Mary and Joseph, a creator and entrepreneur. Given the trajectory of Jesus’s life and his ultimate purpose for coming to earth, this fact should give us great pause. Dr. Klaus Issler, a professor of theology at Biola University, ponders this, saying:

It might have been important for the Messiah—like the prophet Samuel and John the Baptist—to grow up in a priestly household. He could have devoted days to prayer and the study of Scripture as well as had daily access to the temple precincts. Or, perhaps the Messiah could have been raised within a Pharisee’s household as was true for the Apostle Paul.¹¹

But God didn’t choose to place Jesus in a priestly or Pharisaical household. Jesus was placed in the home of small

business owners, where for twenty years he would reveal God's character (*his* character) as an entrepreneur, creating new things for the good of others.

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus speaks of his desire to glorify God the Father. *Glorify* is one of those church words that is thrown around so much its meaning is often muddled. As pastor John Piper says, to glorify God simply means to “reflect his greatness” or reveal his characteristics to others.¹² Thus, one of the primary reasons God chose to humble himself and come to earth as a human being was so that Jesus could reveal God's character through human speech and mannerisms that we could more easily understand. In just three years of public ministry, Jesus revealed countless characteristics about his Father. To the woman at the well, Jesus showed us that God is omniscient. To the five thousand, Jesus showed us that God is our provider.

The fact that Jesus spent twenty years as a carpenter revealing God's creative and entrepreneurial spirit should stop us in our tracks.

To Lazarus, Jesus showed us that God is the giver of life. And on the cross, Jesus showed us that “God so loved the world” that he would sacrifice his only Son in order to spend eternity with us. If Jesus was able to reveal so much of God's character in such a relatively short period of time, the fact that Jesus spent twenty years revealing God's creative and entrepreneurial spirit should stop us in our tracks.

Even Jesus's death and resurrection reveal the creative character of God. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 we are told that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (NASB). It is

at the cross that we see God's final entrepreneurial endeavor on this side of eternity. The investment God made at the beginning of time to create a world for us came with ultimate risk. On the cross, that risk was fully realized, but the dividends were obviously worth the cost. Through our trust in Jesus's sacrifice as the sole atonement for our sins, God has made us a new creation, righteous in his eyes, able to spend eternity with him.

Co-creators

For my daughter's first Christmas, my wife and I bought her a miniature baby grand piano.¹³ On Christmas morning, we wrapped it in a big red bow and set it between the Christmas tree and my full-size baby grand. When we sat my daughter down at her piano for the first time, she banged the keys as hard as she could, setting off a cacophony of sound while flashing the biggest smile a toothless four-month-old can muster. Her joy instantly became our joy. This joy had two dimensions. First, as with any of the thousand "firsts" a child experiences in their first year of life, I was overjoyed to see my daughter experience Christmas and play her own piano for the first time. But because of my personal love for music and the significant role the piano has played in my life, there was a second dimension to my joy. While watching my daughter tinker with the keys of her piano, I saw myself in her. She was unknowingly reflecting a small part of my character and personality for the first time. The joy I felt in that moment must be just a fraction of the joy God experiences when he sees his character reflected in his children.

As we've seen, throughout time God has revealed himself as a creator and entrepreneur. And as we pick back up in Genesis, we find God calling us to be co-creators with him so that we might bring him joy by reflecting his character.

What God created in six days is astonishing. But what's equally remarkable is what he did *not* create. He created animals but he didn't give them names. He created land but he didn't create irrigation systems. He created stars but he didn't create an iPhone app that would allow us to hold a pocket-sized computer up to the sky to see them all by name. After working for six days, God left the earth largely undeveloped and uncultivated. He created a canvas and then invited us to join him in filling it. Let's pick up in Genesis 1 with God's final creation on the sixth day: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:27 NASB). The dominant characteristic God has revealed about himself up until this point in Scripture is that he is a Creator. So when human beings are created "in His own image" the logical implication is that they will be characterized by the creativity of their Creator. As Piper says:

When the first chapter of the Bible says, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27), what is the point? The point of an image is to image. Images are erected to display the original. Point to the original. Glorify the original. God made humans in his image so that the world would be filled with reflectors of God. Images of God. Seven billion statues of God. So that nobody would miss the point of creation. Nobody (unless they were stone blind) could miss the point of humanity, namely, God. Knowing, loving, showing God.¹⁴

But just in case we miss God’s intention that we emulate his creative character, he uses his first words to humankind to issue a job description, an explicit call to create:

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day (vv. 28–31).

Before the First Entrepreneur takes a day of rest, he puts a succession plan in place by creating man and woman in his image and calling them to create. At first glance, the command in this passage may appear to simply be a call to reproduce, but as Keller points out, the call is much more than that:

First, we are called to “fill the earth”—to increase in number. While God usually says of plants and animals “let them” multiply (Gen. 11, 20a, 20b, 22, and 24), human beings are not only given a command to do so actively (v. 28a) but then receive a detailed job description (vv. 28b–29). In other words, only humans are given multiplication as a task to fulfill with intention. But why would this be a job—isn’t it just a natural process? Not exactly. Human beings “filling the earth” means something far [more] than plants and animals filling

the earth. It means civilization, not just procreation. We get the sense that God does not want merely more individuals of the human species; he also wants the world to be filled with a human society.¹⁵

God created us to be co-creators with him, to do “the things that God has done in creation—bringing order out of chaos” to create new things for the good of others. God is calling us to be entrepreneurial.¹⁶ Fuller Seminary president Richard Mouw put it this way:

God created us to be co-creators with him. God is calling us to be entrepreneurial.

God is an entrepreneur. He leveraged His resources at great cost to Himself. He made space in the universe for us. So, if you see a human need not being met, you see a talent that can meet that need, if you invest your resources so that the talent can meet that need, and you create new value in the world, new goods to be shared, better quality of life, or human community flourishing, then what you’ve done is not just godly, but God-like.¹⁷

As we’ve seen, God went to great lengths to demonstrate his creative and entrepreneurial character through his Word. But while Scripture clearly treats emulating this character as “godly” and “God-like,” the church often explicitly and implicitly views the work of creators as “secular” and less spiritual than the work of the pastor or “full-time missionary.” Why? That’s the question we turn to next.