



# **Called to Create: A Biblical Invitation to Create, Innovate, and Risk**

*Jordan Raynor*

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## **Called to Create: A Biblical Invitation to Create, Innovate, and Risk** Jordan Raynor

We were created by an infinitely creative God to reflect his love and character to the world. One way we do that is by continuing his creative work. In this energizing book, serial entrepreneur and bestselling author Jordan Raynor helps artists, entrepreneurs, writers, and other creatives reimagine our work as service to God and others, addressing such penetrating questions as

- Is my work as a creative really as God-honoring as that of a pastor or missionary?
- What does it look like to create not to make a name for myself but to glorify God and serve others?
- How can I use my work to fulfill Jesus's command to create disciples?
- Will what I make today matter in eternity?

To answer these questions, Raynor shares compelling stories from an eclectic group of 40+ Christian entrepreneurs, including the founders of TOMS Shoes, Charity: Water, Chick-fil-A, In-N-Out Burger, Guinness, HTC, and Sevenly, as well as nontraditional entrepreneurs such as C. S. Lewis, Johann Sebastian Bach, and J. R. R. Tolkien. Raynor's "show" rather than "tell," story-driven style makes you feel as if you are sitting at the feet of some of the godliest and most successful entrepreneurs of all time.

Perfectly poised to reach today's growing creative class, this unique work restores God's position as the first entrepreneur, helping readers see the eternal value in the work they do today.

## **Called to Create: A Biblical Invitation to Create, Innovate, and Risk Details**

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**Jordan Raynor**

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# From Reader Review Called to Create: A Biblical Invitation to Create, Innovate, and Risk for online ebook

## Jodi says

I loved this book! I never looked at God's creation of the Universe and us as him being an entrepreneur. I'm guilty of creating my business The Resume Studio as a means to make a living but never as something he put into my heart to serve Him and do his work. This book not only opened my eyes more to creation and serving God, but also for finishing my book. This book has helped me gain more clarity in what I need to do. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has had the strong sense that they need to create.

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## Alexis says

As a creator and aspiring entrepreneur who gets to work a day job supporting other creators, I was so excited to get my hands on Jordan Raynor's book Called to Create, out this month from Baker Publishing.

Raynor presents the biblical case for creators, innovators, and risk takers to fulfill their callings not just in service, but in the marketplace.

I have been blessed to be part of creative Christian community that has fostered many of the concepts Raynor discusses as I've developed as a writer and content creator. Many are not as fortunate because, frankly, the evangelical church is not always the most encouraging a creative pursuits. The misconception that to serve God, you must be in full time ministry is tossed out Raynor's front door on its ear before his introduction really gets rolling. What replaces it is the beautiful truth that God is a creator and therefore, we are also called to create.

Raynor writes in a simple and to-the-point fashion that can easily encourage and equip those for whom the discussion of creativity and innovation are not as encouraged, especially from a Christian perspective.

I thoroughly enjoyed the interviews and input from the likes of classic writers as well as successful business people and entrepreneurs. C.S. Lewis and Chick-Fil-A in the same book is always a win.

The book is broken up into four parts: calling, creating, challenges, and charge. Each unpacks a discussion about the philosophy and reality of the creative life. He addresses the need for risk-takers and innovators from the church. The book is a call to rally, renew, and flourish as artists, entrepreneurs, innovators, and world-changers. I was encouraged and empowered by Raynor's book and I am so thankful.

I would recommend Called to Create for those who don't yet have or are looking to foster a creative Christian community. I also think Raynor speaks firmly but encouragingly to the struggling innovator.

Filled with inspiration, experience, and evidence, Called to Create will have you ready to dig your hands into your next project.

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## Elizabeth Johnson says

We are all creative in some manner. We all create processes, routines, or methods for our jobs (whether paid or unpaid). We all must figure out how to best juggle various roles and responsibilities, without failing miserably in any of them. We all must effectively adapt prior-learned skills and academic knowledge to our current situations. In doing so, we reflect our Maker — the very first creative being. He was the One who established order out of chaos to make something new for the good of others. This book gives some interesting food for thought on the idea of God as the First Entrepreneur, identifying the ways that role was reflected through each member of the Trinity (a unique but biblically-based perspective!), and connecting that to His invitation to us to continue creating in this world: “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.”

The crux of the matter is that everyone is called to create, or be creative, for the purpose of glorifying God, loving others, and making disciples. We cannot separate creativity from those things. And in order to accomplish them, we must find the place where our skill and ability intersect with the need of others. Raynor says: “In order to best glorify our Creator and love others, Christians should do the work we are best at, work that God has equipped us to do exceptionally well . . . If we choose work we can’t do well, that’s a poor reflection on God, whose character we are called to image to the world.”

This doctrine of creativity is developed throughout the rest of the book by focusing on four key elements.

- Calling: considering God as the First Entrepreneur, the theology of work, and embracing our call to create.
- Creating: understanding how the fact of our “Caller” changes the why, what, and how of our creating.
- Challenges: balancing hard work and trust, handling disappointment and failure, and renewing our minds.
- Charge: fulfilling the Great Commission through our unique calling, stewarding profit wisely, and creating for eternity’s sake.

Raynor cites examples and shares wisdom from over forty different Christian entrepreneurs — from the founders of Chick-fil-A and In-N-Out Burger, to content creators such as Lewis, Tolkien, and Bach. He shares personal examples too, since he is (what he calls) a serial entrepreneur. He’s learned some of these lessons the hard way, and wants us to benefit from his mistakes.

*Called to Create* is not a dry examination of theory or a trifling record of stories: it is a biblically-based, richly-developed, practically-applied look at how and why every Christian is called to be creative. It is one of the best books I’ve read on the topic of creativity, partly because it’s one of the few written from a worldview firmly rooted in the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. I would highly recommend to anyone considering the purpose of vocation, the motivations for work, the reasons for pursuing various occupations, or how to create with eternity always in view.

*Disclaimer: I received this book for free as part of the Baker Books Bloggers program, in exchange for sharing an honest review. All opinions expressed herein are completely my own.*

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## Sarah says

Have you ever read a book where you thought, Man this person is smarter than I am? That is exactly what I think of when I talk to people about "Called to Create." This book doesn't make you feel intimidated, but rather it brings you on journey of a Biblical perspective of what it means to cultivate a Biblical foundation of creating and being an innovator in the business world. I love the idea that entrepreneur is anyone who takes risk to create something new for the good of others. We can all classify ourselves as entrepreneurs when we look at the definition this way. Whether you're making a new recipe for the first time or creating a document to share at work, you're doing it for the betterment of others. I love this!

I also enjoyed the idea of creating and businesses being about furthering the Kingdom of God! I love that this book was about being Kingdom minded, which is so important and lacking in the business world today. This book is a mix of creating and business all in one. I highly recommend it! The principals and foundation it lays is outstanding. It is a great book for being a Christian, and creative entrepreneur! You will love this book. I give it 4.5/ 5 stars. A favorable review was not required.

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### **Julie says**

I first heard of this book through the author's Instagram page, @calledtcreate, and was intrigued by the premise--the fact that "all work is meaningful and can be used by God to accomplish his will"--including creative work, like writing, making art and music, and creating businesses. Through contemporary and historic examples, Raynor clearly and practically shows why creative work is important to God, what God sees as the purpose of creativity, and how our creativity can be instrumental in sharing the gospel.

If you are a creative or you are someone who's always wanted to be, you should pre-order this book. It's thoughtful, inspiring, and full of passion for the act of making something new and for the people who take the risks and create. I look forward to re-reading this book and applying its truths!

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### **Bob says**

*Summary: A view of creative, entrepreneurial work as a good calling from God, and the challenges and opportunities of pursuing entrepreneurial work for the glory of God.*

We celebrate them when they are successful--the Steve Jobs, Elon Musks, and Oprah Winfrey's of the world. They are risk-taking entrepreneurs whose creativity brings new products to the market, or whose artistic work is of a character of excellence and success that it gains wide notice. The author of this work extends the idea of entrepreneur "to anyone who takes a risk to create something new for the good of others." These include tech entrepreneurs, but also small business owners, artists and writers, nonprofit founders, chefs, and many others. The author, himself an entrepreneur, explores whether the pursuit of such work is honoring to God, or somehow "second class" to more "noble" forms of Christian service. Clearly, he believes the former to be true.

The book addresses four "C's" of Christian entrepreneurship: Calling, Creating, Challenges, and Charge. He integrates biblical principles with the stories of forty men and women entrepreneurs in a variety of fields from J.R.R. Tolkien to the founders of TOMS shoes and In-and Out Burgers. What I appreciated was the combination of rich theological insight (rather than cliché) and substantive examples.

In the section on "Calling" he begins with God as the first entrepreneur as maker of all things and the source of all creativity. I appreciate that he considers the incarnate Lord as a carpenter who for twenty years revealed God's creative and entrepreneurial spirit. From this he outlines a theology of work as intrinsically good, and finally discusses how we discern calling as we understand what we are passionate, gifted for, and have the greatest opportunity to love others by doing.

"Creating" begins by looking at why we create--is it to make a name for ourselves as did the tower builders of Babel, or like *Bach soli Deo gloria* (for the glory of God alone). Then there is the question of what we create, and here the two factors are products that show something of what God is like and products that love others. It could be children's stories like those written by Lewis, or the beer brewed by the Guinness family, less alcoholic than gin, and safe to drink. Finally, the question is how we create, and the key here is excellence in product and putting people before profit, which the author found exemplified in his study and interviews with Chick-fil-A personnel.

"Challenges" begins with the relentless pressure entrepreneurs face to hustle and the issues of trust and rest, including sabbath, that are essential for staying focused on their callings. A reality of entrepreneurship is failure, yet often it is hushed up rather than transparently acknowledged and learned from, where it becomes a source of hope and boldness. Finally, he addresses the continual need for mental renewal that he believes comes through communing with God, partners, and others (for example, the Inklings).

The last part was perhaps the most unexpected for me. "Charge" begins with the call of entrepreneurs to make disciples through first loving people and then teaching the word. Perhaps the most moving story was that of Alex Clark, a Chick-fil-A manager who hires Jenny, before discovering she is a felon on probation, but sticks with her and develops her professionally to the point where she manages a store, but also comes to faith, and embraces a calling to do what Alex did with others. He talks about the use of profits-- given away, reinvested to grow the business, and invested to help others called to create. He concludes with a chapter that focuses around a shared speaking engagement between Peter Thiel (co-founder of PayPal) and N. T. Wright that explores the idea of the new heaven and earth, and thinking about our work passing into the eternity of the New Creation.

In my work, I've had the chance to interact with entrepreneurs in business, in the world of ideas, and in the arts. Often, I've discovered that they have felt that the church looks a bit askance at them, or only views them for what they give to the church in time or money. This book is an encouragement to these people that their work matters to God and the pleasure they take in entrepreneurship may just be the favor of God upon their lives. This is also a book pastors desperately need to read, as it may stretch their imagination about the ways God might call the people who sit under their teaching Sunday by Sunday. Do we see Peter and Andrew simply as the first disciples, or as hard-working self-employed entrepreneurs? Is Lydia just Paul's host, or an enterprising businesswoman in purple goods? Do we affirm just the hours people put into the ostensible ministries of the church, or recognize the ways they reflect and bring honor to their Creator in their work every day?

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Disclosure of Material Connection: I received a complimentary review copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. The opinions I have expressed are my own.

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## **Lori Sutton says**

### **Great book for Christian Entrepreneurs**

This book was so good. It was motivating, uplifting, and knowledgeable. It was also nice that it was a book for Christian entrepreneurs.

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## **Kori says**

For Christian artists who have been told their creation isn't valuable enough, not religious enough, not evangelical enough, or has no eternal significance....this book is for you. And it will change the way you think about your work.

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## **Mary Lou says**

Jordan Raynor's new book joins the growing list of contemporary books which debunk the "Christian" notion that work is secular and only full-time Christian ministry is sacred. Raynor's angle in *Called to Create* is that the Bible first introduces God as Creator, the original entrepreneur in the universe, and has made humans in His creative image (*Called to Create, A Biblical Invitation to Create, Innovate, and Risk* by Jordan Raynor, Baker Books, p. 25, 34).

True to its subtitle, the book provides "a Biblical invitation to create, innovate, and risk." The book focuses specifically on the work of entrepreneurs whose start up companies are born out of creativity and innovation. *Called to Create* is a book about businesses written by a successful business entrepreneur from a Christian perspective.

In that Christian context, Raynor challenges the secular for-profit model of success and maintains that a Christian model of business is one that relies on God and illustrates the character of God in its products, promotion, and business practices. He says "If our work is to reflect the First Entrepreneur, we must strive for excellence for everything we do" (p. 104). This includes "prioritizing people over profit" (p. 107). From that framework, Raynor also challenges those whose motivations are "to make a name for ourselves, to make our mark in the world" (p. 73), such as Walt Disney himself. He lauds, instead, the composer J.S. Bach who created for the glory of God alone, and countless other lesser-knowns who as entrepreneurs have taken a risk to create something new for the good of others (p. 25). He agrees with Andy Crouch:

"I wonder what we Christians are known for in the world outside our churches. Are we known as critics? Consumers? Copiers? Condemners of culture? I am afraid so...Why aren't we known as creators—people who dare to think and to do something that has never been thought or done before? Something that makes the world more welcoming and thrilling and beautiful?" (p. 37).

Raynor's hope is that Christian entrepreneurs would reveal that character of God that is beautiful and creative and for welcoming for the common good in all their work. Five Stars. ML Codman Wilson, Ph.D  
10/5/2017

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## **victoria says**

This book was very inspiring, challenging and compelling to read with also giving you more confidence and power up of your ability changing life to be the greatest one of God had been creating us by to be continue on his work and the as a entrepreneur to fulfill Jesus' command to create disciples and embrace God's call to create in your life and to the other. I highly recommend to everyone must to read this book. "I received complimentary a copy of this book from Baker Book Bloggers for this review".

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## **Patti Meyerdirk says**

This book has changed my perspective about the eternal value of all the things I create, such as in my scrapbooking, baking, writing, and other things throughout the day. I highly recommend this book to all entrepreneurs, creatives, and all those in full time ministry. He begins with "God was the first entrepreneur. Jordan discusses how we learn that He was creative before we learn that He is loving and merciful. A solid biblical foundation is laid throughout the book, along with over 40 stories of entrepreneurs and creatives. The last chapter ends with eternity and the value that our creativity will carry into our heavenly work. Inspiring.

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## **Emilie Hendryx says**

Are you called to create?

In this stunning, and possibly ground-breaking, book by Jordan Raynor, we find that there is such a thing as being "Called to Create".

I've been a creative person from the start. Growing up in a home where my father is an artists and musician and my mother is a quilter and a musician, I was never far from art supplies, music, a camera (disposable or otherwise), and the encouragement to create. My family nurtured my creativity. That is not always the case with some.

As we face in the "real world", the stress of choosing a career based on what you can be paid and what jobs are available is a big deterrent to creativity. It can be hard to say we want to "follow our creative dreams" when becoming a doctor seems so much more helpful. Or perhaps its the thought that starting up an Etsy shop doesn't seem as "holy" as becoming a missionary. For those of us who do break the mold and become entrepreneurs, we may find ourselves wondering if we can possibly serve God and our creative passions at the same time.

These things, and more, are all addressed in Jordan's fantastic book Called to Create. As a creative, I felt welcomed into this book from the very beginning. I thought - he's talking to me! - when he mentioned Etsy shop owners, writers, and photographers, but he uses such a wide variety of stories from all walks of life and different areas of creativity that any creative will feel at home among these pages.

I could go on and on about the things I liked in this book, but I'll leave it at saying that, if you are entrepreneurial and creative, you need to read this book. You need to be reminded that your talents are God-given and that He can do amazing and complex things with them. That you don't have to be a pastor or a



missionary to serve Him fully. You also need to be reminded that everything we have is just that--a gift bestowed for use on a grand scale.

I highly recommend this to all creatives (writers, photographers, shop owners, calligraphers, business creatives, bakers, designers, stay-at-home moms who want to use their creative talents, and so many others!). You'll be refreshed, energized, encouraged and, if you're like me, ready to take on the next big project one creative effort at a time.

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I received this book for free but was under no obligation to post a review. I do so under my own motivation and the opinions I have expressed in this review are honest and entirely my own.

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### **Caleb says**

This book really got me thinking about creating for God's glory and the good of others. About using profit to pour back into loving people and advancing God's Kingdom. All the stories of how different people applied these truths in their life, ideas, and businesses were inspiring.

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### **Joan says**

This book is not quite what I anticipated, based on the title. I thought the book would deal with being creative in general. Raynor, however, has focused this book on only one aspect of being creative, being an entrepreneur.

I was surprised at Raynor beginning his book by saying God was the first entrepreneur. That just did not ring right with me. Raynor later gave this definition: "an entrepreneur is anyone who takes a risk to create something new for the good of others." (Loc 130/2958) The risk could be financial or social so his definition is a much broader one than I would make. I do have an issue with calling God an entrepreneur, however. In general understanding, an entrepreneur is one who organizes and operates a business, that is, provides goods or services to people. Describing God as one who operates a business just does not ring true to me. Also, Raynor says such an operation must include risk. God is omniscient, knowing the future, so there was no risk involved in His creating. He knew precisely what was going to happen.

That criticism aside, I really appreciate this book. The Christian community has too often distinguished the "secular" work of owning a business from the "spiritual" work of full time ministry. Raynor sets the record straight, defending the traditional Reformed view that all life is spiritual, including non-ministry vocations. He writes about calling, motives, products, challenges to Christian entrepreneurs, making disciples, and more.

Raynor is an accomplished entrepreneur. He uses his own life as an example but also includes stories of many others. They are great illustrations of entrepreneurs doing their work to the glory of God and with excellence.

I do recommend this book to Christians who are interested in business. You'll find great examples of people doing much good for others. You'll see how entrepreneurs further the glory of God through both behavior

and products. There is a link to a free journal you can download to work through your own thoughts as you read the book.

Food for thought: What will you choose to create for the glory of God and the good of others?

I received a complimentary galley of this book from the publisher. My comments are an independent and honest review.

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## **Sarah says**

I'm not super into non-fiction. I'll read it and enjoy it, but it's not often that a non-fiction book grabs me and interests me like this one did. It was incredible!

As someone working towards being a professional photographer and attempting to start a baseball program, there were all kinds of helpful insights and encouragement. I really like the real-life stories; a lot of pretty amazing people out there.

Growing up in the Lutheran church\*, the idea of vocation is not a new concept. And yet, it's so easy to forget and think that the "big players" for the kingdom are the missionaries, pastors, and those in some kind of full-time ministry. Raynor hammers home the point that EVERY. SINGLE. PERSON is a missionary, called to do their work for the glory of God. It's such a simple idea, summed up well in Colossians 3:23, but we still forget.

Called to Create will remind you of principles and values you already hold, give you new insights, and make you think about old things in a new way.

If you are a creative or wanting to get into a venture that is creative or just know some creatives and want to maybe understand and help them a little more, READ THIS BOOK!!!!

\*maybe other denominations talk about this too, but it's a big thing in the Lutheran church.

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