

Chapter Four

Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

Called of God

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God . . . (Romans 1:1).

Paul was a man “called” of God for a specific task. He reminds all Christians that they are called to minister the truth and evangelize the lost. “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,” (Ephesians 4:1).

This concept of calling to service or ministry is a universal truth taught throughout Scripture. Abram was called of God. “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy Father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee” (Genesis 12:1). Moses was called of God. “Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:10).

And, Paul was called of God. “But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee” (Acts 26:16). Every Christian has a calling or “vocation” in the body of Christ.

As individual Christians within a local church fulfill their vocational calling in the “work of the ministry” a synergy is created. A synergy is defined as the working together of two or more things, people, or organizations, especially when the result is greater than the sum of their individual effects or capabilities. However, the central factor defining a Biblical synergy is when individual Christians are divinely empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. When all the members of a local church habitually live in this state of empowerment, a synergism is created and spiritual revival takes place. We have two major Scripture texts teaching the synergism of the “body of Christ” (local church).

“¹² For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁶ And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ¹⁷ If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? ¹⁸ But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. ¹⁹ And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? ²⁰ But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²² Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: ²³ And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. ²⁴ For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: ²⁵ That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶ And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. ²⁸ And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. ²⁹ *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles? ³⁰ Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? ³¹ But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way” (I Corinthians 12:12-31).

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. ³ For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: ⁵ So we, *being* in any, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. ⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; ⁷ Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; ⁸ Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Romans 12:1-8).

Some callings, like Abram, Moses and Paul, were special callings for specific purposes. Other specific callings, like those of a Pastor/teacher or Evangelist (Ephesians 4:11) are defined by a specific function. These callings do not come because a person wants them or because he has some special ability. They do not come because they might be a good profession or because someone enjoys working with people. These people hold their positions for one reason, they have been called of God and they know they have been called.

Gideon was such a man. “And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee” (Judges 6:14). Isaiah was such a man. “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

Paul was called of God to be an Apostle as defined by Romans 1:1. He was “a servant” with a specific ministry. He was “separated unto the gospel of God.” The only higher authority over him in the whole world was God, yet he was called and commissioned to be a servant. He considered being an ambassador for Christ the highest honor in this world. He demanded obedience to the Word of God and he commanded (by apostolic authority) that believers follow the leadership of the pastor God calls to shepherd them.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17).

These men of God were remarkable men. Not because of their abilities, but because of what God did with them in spite of their weaknesses in order that God could be magnified through the weaknesses of men. God wants to magnify Himself through the life of every Christian.

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: ²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; ²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: ²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence. ³⁰ But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: ³¹ That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:26-31).

Although every Christian is not called to be a Pastor\Teacher or an Evangelist, every Christian is called to be a servant of God with two primary purposes.

1. To minister

“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:27-28).

Here is where everyone’s Christianity either succeeds or fails. Individual Christians must accept their calling of God in Jesus Christ and then do it.

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves. And he said, Be that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10: 36-37).

The whole idea behind becoming a servant meant giving yourself to meet another person’s needs without expecting anything in return. That is a complete sociological abstract. Yet it was how God intended His children to function in His society.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

2. The second primary purpose of every servant of God is to bring forth fruit.

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give if you” (John 15:1 6).

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Romans. 7:4).

Our individual calling of God should be taken very seriously (whatever that calling might be).

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fail” (II Peter 1:10).

“¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings: ¹⁵ That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; ¹⁶ Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (Philippians 2:12-16).

The eternal destinies of hundreds of souls depend upon our faithfulness to our calling in Christ.

“¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things” (Romans 10:13-15)!

All believers serve as priests before God and have a priestly ministry under Jesus Christ. Our calling (like Paul’s) separates us from living for the things of this world and separates unto preaching the good news of God’s salvation in Christ.

“¹⁸ And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (II Corinthians 5:18-19).

“²⁴ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. ²⁶ For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul” (Matthew 16:24-26)?

“⁴ To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, ⁵ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. ⁶ Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. ⁷ Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, ⁸ And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. ⁹ But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: ¹⁰ Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. ¹¹ Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; ¹² Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. ¹³ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; ¹⁴ Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. ¹⁵ For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: ¹⁶ As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God” (I Peter 2:4-16).

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1. Discuss the calling of God from the following definition of the Greek *kletos* (klay-tos') from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Greek Words of the verb form (*kaleo*): [Used] "of nomenclature or vocation, to call by name, to name; in the Passive Voice, to be called by a name, to bear a name. Thus it suggests either vocation or destination; the context determines which." Discuss the vocational calling of every Christian from that context. _____

2. Read Ephesians 4:11-12 and list the present day specific callings of specific men and the purpose of their callings. _____

3. Was there ever any one God called for which He did not have a job for them to do? _____

4. List the two major Scripture texts detailing the vocational calling of every Christian and the synergism principle of the *body* metaphor and the significance of synergism to Biblical partnership in the work of the ministry. (Synergism: The simultaneous action of separate agencies which, together, have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects.) _____

5. Read I Corinthians 1:26-31. What kind of people does God delight in using to accomplish great things and why does He choose those types of people? _____

6. Discuss the two primary purposes that define what a servant is to be doing. Give Scripture references.

A. _____

B. _____

7. Read II Peter 1:10 and Philippians 2:12-16 and discuss the effort that needs to be put into Christian service and why the effort and ministry should be taken very seriously. _____

8. Discuss what Paul means when he says he was "separated unto the gospel of God." Separated from what and to what? Separated for what purpose? _____

