



DO YOU POSSESS A PROFOUND SENSE OF PERSONAL DESTINY?

TO: LEGISLATORS

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Possessing a deep sense of personal calling is very important to overall success. That sense of calling, or lack thereof, could determine your ability to persevere through difficult times—or to humble yourself in times of success. Your sense of personal and specific calling also affects how focused you will be in achieving what God has called you to accomplish.

Like you, I have met many people over the years. One thing I’ve noticed is that folks who possess a strong personal sense of calling or destiny are stronger individuals. They are not quitters; rather, they have a vigilant character quality of perseverance that drives them to greatness in both a heavenly and an earthly sense. How then does one develop this quality?

Let’s examine what Scripture says about this. What is necessary in order to possess a strong sense of indomitable destiny? America has historically had a good number of such individuals—today she is in need of many, many more.

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WEEKLY MEMBERS BIBLE STUDY
 IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF
 FIRST-VOTES-BACK (MONDAY OR TUESDAY NIGHT)
Dinner Served • Capitol Room H324 • Spouses Welcome



LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPING YOUR CONVICTION OF CALLING

I. INTRODUCTION

In the NT book of Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 7 provides a wonderful, insightful glimpse into the psyche of the Apostle Paul. He shares what drove him to greatness in both a heavenly and earthly sense: He provides the Ephesians with his perspective on what it means to be called by God to achieve a specific purpose—for him that meant taking the Gospel to the Gentile world.

He uses one word, **minister** to summarize his calling. It is *diakonos* in the Greek which means “servant.” Interestingly the institution God has called you to be a part of, Government, is described by the same word in Romans 13:4. There, *diakonos* is used to describe Government as “a minister *diakonos* of God.” Generally speaking then, for you to serve in Government is akin to Paul serving in the Church. From God’s perspective both are to be His servants, albeit with different institutional assignments and objectives.

Accordingly this week we will ponder what characterized Paul’s internal psyche relative to how he best understood his vocation and what therein compelled this divinely driven man. I will attempt to make principle applications to you in your elected-to-Government responsibilities. You should find this study stimulating, hopefully aiding much personal reflection and application. Paul states in Ephesians 3:7...

*of which I was made a minister,
according to the gift of God's grace
which was given to me
according to the working of His power*

I have added returns into the above text commensurate with the four-point exposition that follows. Take time to read the surrounding context. Here is what Scripture says about how you can develop your inner sense and understanding of God’s personal calling and develop a profound sense of personal destiny...

II. AFFIRM YOUR CALLING:
IT IS BY HIM

of which I was made a minister,

A. THE DETERMINATION OF YOUR
CALLING

The passage we are studying is located in the concluding section of positional truths related to the believer’s identity in Christ in Paul’s Epistle to the Church at Ephesus. Contextually Paul is exclaiming the fact that he saw himself as possessing a “stewardship of God’s grace,” a heavenly-assignment that was intended for the benefit of others (cf. vs. 2). In Paul’s case that specific vocational responsibility was to reveal the mystery regarding the Gospel—more specifically that the Gentiles were fellow heirs to the Gospel. Paul is telling us that he possesses a huge lifetime task, a task assigned to him by God Himself. It follows that we can therefore learn much from this account regarding God’s purpose(s) for our lives.

Here, in that regard, Paul first states that he was **made a minister** *diakonos*. The origin of this word is a reference to someone who waited on tables. Today it describes one who acts on the command of others, and who submits to a higher power. The word is a Greek synonym to the biblical word **slave** *doulas* which then emphasized the servile relationship of a servant to his master. It is important to note that in the numerous passages (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Tit. 1:1) wherein Paul uses the word *doulas* to describe himself, he is intentionally choosing a word that was used to describe an under-rower or galley slave on a Roman ship. Throughout Paul’s writings, he always underscored the fact that he not only saw himself as, but in actuality was, Christ’s slave (cf. 3:1) and that he did not make himself a **minister**; rather he was **made a minister**. By that he means he has no choice but to serve his master. This insight into Paul’s psyche has profound implications in terms of developing one’s own personal sense of destiny. Specifically this:



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**HOW DO YOU VIEW HOLDING OFFICE?
DID YOU ATTAIN IT BY YOUR OWN
POWER OR DID CHRIST APPOINT YOU?**

How you answer that last question will determine whom it is you serve while in office. This is an important attitudinal clarification. Note how this is underscored by Paul's appointment to service in Acts 9:3-6. Known as Saul prior to his conversion, he experiences the following...

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" Then the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

Later in the book of Acts we see the specific answer to whether Paul attained his position in life via his own power. (In this passage Paul is personally recounting his conversion, and what Jesus said to him during his conversion [26:16]):

But arise and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.

We may not have the fearsome privilege of Jesus personally appearing to us and calling us into His service, but the principle of Paul's lifelong response to his call is transferable to everyone. This passage sheds much light on why in Colossians 1:25 Paul states,

I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you...

Paul was made a servant/minister; he did not become one by his own design. The same is true for you. Do you see yourself in this light? Whereas affirming in your heart Christ's appointment will lead to an attitude of humility, affirming in your heart a self-appointment will lead to an attitude of arrogance.

**B. THE CRITERIA OF YOUR
CALLING**

The principles in the institution of the Church that connote a legitimate call to lead are listed in 1Timothy 3:1-7. In summary, it is one who **aspires**, who is **verified**, and who is **above reproach** in terms of his moral character that is legitimately called to lead in the Church. Somewhat differently, in God's appointment of governmental leaders there are no parallel listings of *specific* biblical qualifications. But in a general sense, those who are qualified to lead in Government should also be those who **aspire**, are **verified** and are **above reproach**. The genius of the American system of government, specifically the election process, tends to achieve these God-given criteria. (Even today selfish individuals seeking office are, more often than not, eventually rejected by the voters).

Since there exists no specific character criteria in the NT for holding public office, some years ago I did a study in the Old Testament relative to character qualities that *disqualified* someone from leading in Israel's theocratic form of governance. Those qualities were **idolatry** (2 Chronicles 21:12b-13a; 14-15), **greed** (Habakkuk 2:12) and **pride** (Daniel 3:8-10; 4:30-31). If God's character qualities for governmental leadership are the same today as they were in ancient history (Heb. 13:8), then these referenced passages serve to help us understand why (in part) today God eventually, if not immediately, puts down one and raises up another (Psa. 75:7). Those who have lost office, if they are honest, can testify as to how God worked through the system to remove them from office due to their biblically ignoble character.

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Jeremiah was quite familiar with individuals aspiring to office with selfish motives when he said, “I did not send these prophets, but they [themselves did]. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied...I did not send them or command them” (23:21ff; 32). It is common in every walk of life to find people engaged in self-callings versus God-callings.

Resolve in your mind that you are in office only because God placed you in office (assuming that is true). The first most fundamental building block in developing a personal sense of destiny is to affirm your calling: that it is by Him.

**III. FIGURE OUT YOUR CALLING:
IT IS FROM HIM***according to the gift of God’s grace*

The surrounding context of this week’s passage indicates that Paul knew specifically what he was supposed to accomplish. It follows that if one views their appointment as *by Him* that they will be sensitive to receiving their appointment *from Him*. Paul viewed his lifelong assignment as a **gift of God’s grace** to fulfill. As stated previously Paul had the luxury of receiving Jesus’ specific verbal instructions relative to his life’s purpose. Note Acts 9:15 wherein Jesus sends His surrogate messenger, Ananias, to speak directly with Saul about this:

But the Lord said to him [Ananias], Go, for he [Saul] is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.

Paul’s primary commission per the above passage and the immediate preceding passage of Ephesians 3:6 was to take the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Those who possess a legitimate call by God to serve in Government will want to discover what God has called them to do; they will possess a willingness and desire to figure out what it is they are appointed to do, viewing such as a **gift of God’s grace**. The following lengthy quote from a

leading commentator more fully explains the essence of this necessary quality:

Then or now, the man who is genuinely called by God is in constant danger of losing his effectiveness by coming to think of himself as more than a servant. When he loses his sense of servanthood, at that same time he loses his spiritual power and usefulness. When he exalts himself and begins to work in his own human power and according to his own plans, he competes with God and forfeits his spiritual power. To lose dependence is to lose everything, because everything that is of any value in our lives, including power for effective service, comes only from the Lord. Among the greatest dangers to the ministry, and to all faithful Christian living, are things that in the world’s eyes are of supreme value--personal ambition, prestige, recognition, honor, reputation, and success. . . For those not willing to pay that price [of forsaking], their seeking the position is illegitimate.

Serving for His glory, be it in the Church or the State need be one’s quest above self. One’s strategic purpose for serving in office is a **gift of God’s grace**. This is an inextricable attitude for effective service while in office.

The second building block in developing a personal sense of destiny is to figure out what He’s called you to accomplish in office. This is achieved through prayer, counsel and assessing your personal giftedness, passions and relationships.

**IV. FULFILL YOUR CALLING:
IT IS UNDER HIM***which was given to me***C. SUBJUGATION TO GOD**

The broader context of Paul’s above statement in this stanza of Ephesians 3:7 carries the connotation

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of his need to fulfill the assignment that Jesus had **given to [him]**. To amplify this point notice what Jesus states to His disciples in John 15:16...

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit and that your fruit would remain.

The inference is that the called-out one will fulfill his or her ministry, his or her destiny. Note 2Timothy4:4 in this regard,

But you be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Developing one's sense of calling and destiny is further cemented via possession of a spirit of ongoing subjugation to God. Paul's sense of destiny was ingrained in his mind because by God's imparting grace he realized his appointment was not only *by Him* and *from Him* but in addition it was *under Him*.

Elected officials are best understood as **servants** of a higher authority, to whom they are subject. All that I have in terms of my position and purpose **was given to me**, inferring requisite responsibilities; in response to what **was given to me** I have tremendous stewardship obligations! If my earthly father gives me a shiny new car, I am obligated to take good care of it. A vivid illustration of this is Paul stating in regards to himself, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (1Cor. 9:16).

The Government servant who is a follower of Christ must have this same mindset if he or she is going to be presently and eternally effective. The legislator who claims to be a follower of Christ should have an especially acute sense of their appointment by God to achieve specific objectives that God is holding him or her accountable to achieve. It therefore follows that all decisions in life, including their votes should be in subjugation to God's Word. Paul expressed this idea in Galatians 1:10...

For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still striving to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

B. SUBJUGATION TO MAN

For the believing legislator to determine their vote relative to his or her district's consensus is to potentially lack ultimate integrity to his or hers highest authority. If God is sovereign, then there is no way around the fact that He appointed you to serve Him in public office (via the election process). If you ask yourself, "Who gave me this position, and who is my highest authority?" you will know how to vote.

FOR ONE TO REPRESENT THE BIBLICAL POSITION ON AN ISSUE IS ALWAYS TO BEST REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF ONE'S DISTRICT EVEN IF THE BIBLICAL POSITION REPRESENTS A MINORITY VIEWPOINT

Is your job security more important than your faithfulness to the One who appointed you to office? Such thinking is not only theologically oxymoronic but patently insubordinate. In both senses of the meaning, such thought processes will lead to your eventual "dis-appointment."

One's sense of destiny is directly proportional to their God-given ability to grasp that they serve in office because of Him, for Him and under Him. There is yet one more building block to forming a strong sense of personal destiny...

V. FUEL YOUR CALLING: IT IS WITH HIM

according to the working of His power.

Many are the believers who are listed in Hebrews chapter 11 who illustrate God's tremendous power working through them.



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Beloved, my prayer is that you will perceive yourself to be among them! In Colossians Paul states, “I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me” (1:29). In Acts 1:8, every believer is promised His power at the point of their salvation. Luke states therein, “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” Later in Ephesians (3:16) Paul states...

That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.

This promise is replete throughout the New Testament and the NT era. It is an amazing truth that should characterize God’s minister in Government. States one leading commentator:

Spiritual power is a mark of every Christian who submits to God’s Word and Spirit. It is not reserved for some special class of Christian, but for all those who discipline their minds and spirits to study the Word, understand it, and live by it. Although the outer, physical person may become weaker with age, the inner, spiritual person should grow stronger through the Holy Spirit, who will energize, revitalize, and empower the obedient, committed Christian.

VI. SUMMARY

Government leaders who are energized by the Holy Spirit are rare. Those who have built their conviction Because of Him, as From Him, Under Him and With Him are too few! Our country needs more public servants with an indomitable sense of destiny! Will you be such a one? Here then are the ingredients that will result in you being a public servant who is unstoppable!

**THOSE WHO GET THIS ARE THOSE
WHO ARE ON A MISSION IN THE
CAPITOL!
YOU KNOW WHO THEY ARE**

In Paul’s doxology near the end of his epistle to the Romans (11:36), he best summarizes what he has said here with different words and adds yet one more element:

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever amen.

How fitting! This tight summary depicts the believer’s proper psyche regarding their calling—these are the fundamental ingrained ingredients of every believer who is in possession of something God wants all of His called-out ones to possess: A profound, invincible sense of destiny! May God’s Word inform your thinking and aid your growth in this vital area! And as this passage from Romans adds, may all that results abound to His glory! Amen.