

FULFILLING THE CALL



*Gal 5:13 For you, brethren, have been called to only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.***

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INTRODUCTION

Every born again believer has a call on their life to serve in the Kingdom of God. They may not be called to serve in one of the five-fold ministry offices full time; but they are called to be productive in the Body of Christ. Much of the church is attending services to receive something rather than attending meetings with the heart to give and serve. “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). As you read this paper, I encourage you to evaluate your service to the Kingdom and endeavor to help others fulfill their call that they may receive the prize.

The character of Christ demonstrates what it takes to fulfill the call. Ministers are required to have a servant’s heart to truly succeed. It may look like they are fulfilling the call due to the size of their congregation or assets, but God looks at the heart.

I. Love that Serves

Most of the world has an ungodly idea of Love and what it truly means to love someone. Love is not about you but it is a choice that prefers others. God is love and all true love comes from the Creator. Love is a choice that acts. As Christians, we are to choose to serve others in love regardless of our feelings, emotions, and wrongs done to us. Chief expressions of love are giving and forgiving. God and His Word should be our standard. He loved the world so exceedingly that He sent Jesus to die for us for the propitiation of our sins.

Marriages often struggle due to a lack of love operating between the couple. It is common to hear people making statements that they “fell out of love.” You do not fall in or out of God.

Love is a choice to serve God and a choice to love unconditionally. Husbands and wives must be in unity and serve one another in order to succeed in marriage and fulfill their call. They must make a choice and not waiver recognizing they are on the same team with the same goal united and ordained by God. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh 24:15).

II. SELFISHNESS HINDERS THE FULFILLING OF THE CALL

Most people don't serve due to selfish reasons. Our flesh screams "serve me" but we were not saved to be served to just sit in church services, but as Christians we were saved to serve others. You can serve by sowing your time, money, and assets with a heart of love. "Only [do not let your] freedom be an incentive to your flesh and an opportunity or excuse [for selfishness], but through love you should serve one another" (Galatians 5:13 AMP)

What people don't realize is that the selfish life is an empty life. An unselfish life is a satisfying life full of eternal benefits. Joshua and Caleb understood this and fulfilled the call. It is a tremendous honor for the creator of heaven and earth to call you His servant. "But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it" (Numbers 14:24). Caleb had a spirit of faith that supported his desire to finish his race. Fulfilling the call is completing your God ordained mission.

Serving others may appear to cost you initially but the truth is that you are sowing for your future and the upside pays throughout eternity. Service will require investments of your money, time and labor. "The ministers life of obedience is one of a servant." (Richards 61.)

A few years ago, a friend of mine was walking through an office. They came to a large corner office and he told the person giving the tour that he was going to put his name on the door. The tour guide asked him jokingly if he wanted a job. My friend responded "I don't want a job, I just want a position." This was all in jest but it brings home the point that many Christians are

looking for a position but don't have the heart to work or serve. This will be a hindrance to achieving the standard and stature God has planned for them unless it is overcome. The good news is that we are destined to overcome as Christians. "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you]" (John 16:33 AMP).

If we are truly servants of Christ, we don't have the authority to write our own directives and orders. We are soldiers in the Kingdom of God. Soldiers are required to salute and execute.

Service requires you to submit to God's leading regardless of your feelings, finances or schedule. True service will require you to humble yourself and do things that will cause your flesh to scream. If your family is first, God is not first. There is only one first place in your life. "If you need me to explain then you need to question why you want to be in ministry!" (Nichols 27).

Strife: An Indicator of Selfishness

Some Christians are very selfish. They will push to get the front row seat at church, cut in front of a little lady to obtain the best parking spot or demand to be seen and heard creating an atmosphere of strife. Jesus spoke on this in Matthew 20 regarding a mother's request for her sons. "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:26). The issue is a lack of love that leads to strife which hurts and separates Christians. Brother Keith Moore expresses strife as the manifest presence of Satan. Strife will devastate relationships. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" (Galatians 5:14-15).

Strife will eat your lunch and tear you and your family apart and even shorten lifespans. "Our latest research shows that those reporting multiple adversities could shorten their lifespan by 7 to 15 years" (Kieclot-Glaser).

Many people tell others to serve, but they won't carry their work load for the Kingdom. Carnal people strive for titles such as Manager, President, and Supervisor and to be promoted for selfish reasons. Many selfish issues would be eliminated if leaders would follow the Word of God and after passing tests, then raise them up. They should be proven before promotion. Common problems in churches and businesses are due to promotion as a result of an education, resume or a good sales pitch with no proof of doing anything for you. God does not promote due to education, tenure or ability, but looks at a child's heart and obedience.

III. LACK OF TRAINING

I have met people who are not achieving to the level they should due to a lack of training. This is no excuse but it can be a hindrance. Lack of training can be due to many reasons but two key reasons are a lack of leadership and rebellion to submit and learn. Many church attender's are saved but do not serve due to rebellion. They have not submitted to the authorities God established as a structure over them and are not qualified to serve in certain positions until they prove to submit.

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting," (Ephesians 4:11).

Verse twelve of Ephesians chapter four establishes who is to do the work of the ministry. The church members are supposed to be trained to serve the body. Leaders are called to train, equip, educate, build up, mature and raise up the saints for the work of the ministry. It is necessary

to train and develop your sheep to live a lifestyle of integrity and excellence through demonstration of your lifestyle. “Demand excellence. “Good enough” is never good enough. Don’t ever have a “that’s good-enough mentality” about your ministry” (Savelle 295).

Many Christians are losing battles because they are not in their place being trained. They should have been in training for years and when a problem arises they want a crash course while fighting the battle on the front line. Train those under you in accordance with the infallible Word of God. This will instill true integrity. “God’s Word has absolute integrity” (Copeland 9).

Selfish Babies

Babies are selfish. They make no apologies for waking you up at midnight crying. They are oblivious if you are inconvenienced. This is to be understood behavior for a baby, but if you are fifty and grew up in the church, you need to get out of the diapers. Leaders are to help babies grow up in truth, training them with a heart of love. *“But, speaking the truth in love may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ” (Galatians 5:15).*

A mature Christian is aware of what their brother needs and a desire for the Lord to use them to help others in need. Mature Christians control their emotions and don’t make decisions based on emotions and feelings but in accordance to the Word of God and leading of the Holy Spirit. Those who abide in the Word will help develop the Kingdom. “From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Galatians 5:16). This scripture answers a lot of questions on how to grow the church in power, unity and numbers.

IV. PRIDE: A KEY TO FAILING TO FULFILL THE CALL

It has been my experience that most Christians know that the Word says pride comes before a fall, but they fail to recognize pride in their own life. Simon Peter in John 13 initially refused

for Jesus to wash his feet. Peter said no way is the Master washing my feet. Washing feet was considered a lowly occupation. Slaves were utilized for this dirty job. It was not a high profile job since they had no sidewalks or concrete roads. There were a lot of donkeys on dirt roads and they did not have plastic bags like some dog parks. After Simon Peter recognized the pride and how that would keep him from receiving from the Master, Simon Peter quickly repented and asked for his hands and head to be washed.

We are not greater than our Lord. “Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them” (John 13:16). God calls a Sunday school teacher wiping a child’s nose service and worship that is a sweet aroma to Him.

It is very common for people to get offended when it comes to service due to pride. They expect to be admired and receive special recognition. This is not the heart of a servant. A true servant expects nothing, and is thankful for everything. Pride expects and pressures others to get what the flesh desires.

The Errand Boy

Service, worship and ministry are often interchangeable in the Word of God. The word service literally means to wait on or attend to with the idea of a waiter or waitress serving a meal or someone who runs errands, and is useful. An errand boy in the Kingdom is a tremendous honor. An example of this is found in Romans. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1, 2).

Patience is required when training and equipping people for the work of the ministry. It requires mind renewal. A few years ago, an outlaw biker friend of mine got saved. One morning when I was speaking with him, he said he was on his way to “thump a guy.” I said, “Brother, you’re a Christian now.” He went on to inform me that during his morning prayer time that God said it was okay to thump this individual because it’s just business but if he was angry with the man, it would be wrong. He needed mind renewal.

Anger Demonstrates Pride

Remember the story in Matthew 20 about a mother asking for sons to be seated next to Jesus in heaven. The Disciples got upset over this request. Why would they get angry over this question? Anger is a sign of pride and offense. What business is it of theirs if Jesus set them next to Him on the throne? They felt, as disciples, that this was a place for them to set, yet they had no right to act this way. They let their emotions hinder the call by entering into strife which is the manifest presence of Satan.

Most arguments could be avoided if one party would choose humility and lay down their pride. Much of the work that should be done by the saints is either not being done or done haphazardly due to pride.

Pride that affects ministry is nothing new. Jesus dealt with this between Martha and Mary. "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41-42). Mary put Jesus first while Martha was in pride because she was concerned about her cooking. I believe she wanted her cooking to be seen and noticed by Jesus. Her calling that day was not to cook but to listen. Jesus may have done a miracle that day like the loaves and fishes. Ask leaders where to serve, how they want to be served then serve them the way they requested with the right heart and you will go far.

CONCLUSION

Fulfilling the call will require service to others. It is not about being served. You will endure hardship during the race. It is work if you do it right, but you will live a life of gratification and worship to God if you choose to fulfill the call. There is a time to sit and not serve just as Martha discovered.

It is of the highest calling to be set apart for the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To fulfill this calling comes the requirement of living with a Christ-like character and service. “We must strive to maintain that servant’s heart of compassion and refuse to allow the things of this world to harden our hearts and cause the ministry to become only an occupation” (Richards 205).

As you evaluate your character, take into consideration where and how you are serving. Are you truly serving or do you just have a title on a business card? If there is strife and pride in your life, stir up the love of God in you and choose the life and character of our Master, Jesus Christ.

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