

WorshipLife Session 6: Complete Your Calling

Colossians 4:17

As we are reminded in Jeremiah (1:4-5), God has created each of us for a unique and specific “divine” purpose in this world. When we give our lives to Christ, we have the primary agenda of aligning ourselves with God’s plan and calling. Part of this “realignment” requires that we understand that being the “church” or “people of God” doesn’t begin and end with regular visits to a church building. Being the church means that in each moment of our existence we operate with the sole purpose of fulfilling the unique calling of God upon our lives every day, in every way possible and with every person that we are led to serve. In essence, we must realize that ministry is not just something that we do. As Christians, it is the very center of who we are. This bible study is designed to encourage each of us as Christians to “Complete Our Calling.”

The Word Made Plain... “Don’t Miscarry Your Ministry” (read Colossians 4:17)

In our text written by Paul to the church congregation in Colossae, Paul encourages the church concerning several areas of ministry concern. He wanted them to know that their salvation was complete in Christ alone, their commitment to Christianity should change their conduct and not just their eternal destination, and the greatest picture of Christian love is seen in the way they treat one another. As he closes the letter, he gives instructions and greetings concerning several different brothers in the ministry work. He concludes the list by mentioning a brother named, Archippus. He encourages them to tell Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the LORD, that you may fulfill it.” In a day and time in which Barna research suggests that 68% of non-evangelical Christians (84% of Evangelical Christians) say that they want to be involved in ministry work, but the churches see only about 20% of the people doing 100% of the work, Archippus seems to be a very familiar picture of Christian service. Paul addresses this concern in the early church understanding that Archippus would not be the first or last person to risk miscarrying the ministry that God had placed inside of him. Thus, Paul warns the congregation (then and now) to speak to the Archippuses of our pews and the Archippus that rests within us.

Paul outlines three areas of encouragement that we can use in our own faith journeys to ensure that we are maximizing the ministry that God has given us. Paul reminds them and us:

“...take heed to the ministry that you have received in the LORD.” We must be aware and attentive to the fact that we have been given a unique, personal way to serve Christ. From the time you were in the womb, you were given a divine purpose (Isaiah 49:1). Your life was set aside to do something that only you were made to do. Your DNA and fingerprints are just reminders of the personal nature of your existence and the ministry that was made to come from it. As you give your life to Christ, God empowers you through the Holy Spirit to perform the ministry (Colossians 1:29). Through the mentorship and guidance of God’s word and mature believers, you learn how to develop and sharpen yourself so that you increase the effectiveness with which you operate in the ministry (Acts 18:24-26). However, it all begins when you realize that there **IS** a ministry that God has placed inside of you. This word “ministry” simply means “an act of service.” Like a waiter in a restaurant, you have been set aside to do God’s work in this world by meeting the needs of others. There is a specific way that you are made to serve God by serving the world around you and you are called to accept this as a reality.

“...that you may fulfill it.” We are called to carry out our full calling in Christ. Paul tells the church to remind Archippus to “fulfill” his calling. This word “fulfill” means to “carry through to completion or to fully obey God’s calling.” How would you feel if you heard the story of a

woman that was carrying quadruplets in her womb and she decides to only have the first child and let the others remain in her womb and be still born? Most likely, your heart would be flooded with sorrow when thinking of how those unborn children will never have the opportunity to be allowed to come into this world and impact this world the way that they were designed to. This is often how God feels when we refuse to give birth to the full ministry work that God places within us. Many Christians often only birth those things that we are comfortable nurturing and easy to support. In the same way that those intended to be reached by unborn children will miss what those children will bring to the world, the same is true with ministry callings unfulfilled. Every ministry that we have within and refuse to birth into the world robs someone of vital, life-changing ministry. As Richard Whately stated, "A man is called selfish not for pursuing his own good, but for neglecting his neighbor's." We must ensure that we are intentional about giving birth to and completing the ENTIRE calling that God places within us.

"And say to Archippus..." As a community of faith, we are called to encourage those around us to fulfill their callings. Paul encourages the church to understand that we are accountable for encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ to not sit on the sidelines nor shortchange their gifts and potential in Christ. Every day, we encounter people that are full of unique callings and ministries, but for numerous reasons have limited themselves to only operate in selective capacities. What many of them need is a tailwind of encouragement and support to believe in their God-given potential and have the courage to bring those ministry callings to fruition. We are called to refuse to allow them to miscarry their ministries, but push them to maximize their full ministry potential. Like Timothy, they should be encouraged to stir up the gift that is within them (2 Timothy 1:6) and trust that if they operate with faith in Christ, God will make sure that the ministry is successful (1 Thessalonians 5:24)

Reflection on the Word (discussion)...

- Have you accepted the reality that your Christian walk comes with a unique ministry calling for your life? If so, how does your life reflect it?
- Are their ministry callings that you have(writing a book, doing community work, etc.), but are afraid to carry out? Why?
- Have you ever encouraged someone to operate in a calling that they were afraid to carry out? How did you do it?

Strategic Plan for Upgrading Your Worship Life

-Considering your personality, passion, talents, and experiences, list areas of service that God has called and may be calling you to serve.

-List any areas of ministry that you have yet to fulfill.

-Identify two that you can accomplish this year

-Name two people that you know you can depend on to hold you accountable to make it happen.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, I am grateful that you made me with such unique and special qualities. I am even more amazed that you have given me a custom-designed ministry that fits those qualities. Grant me the courage and grace to birth every calling that you have given me with full confidence that you can perform it through me. I ask that you would guide me to complete the ministry calling that is upon me. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.