

MINISTRY MADE EASY

CHAPTER 01

What Ministry Is

Ministry vs. Calling

Chapter 01 – What Ministry Is

I would like to look at a subject that is very important in the life of every believer. And so I have entitled this series, Ministry Made Easy.

What exactly is ministry? I am sure this word produces a different picture in the mind of each person. Ministry can be understood by comparing the natural world and your natural life with your spiritual life.

Your Spiritual Career

In your natural life you would look for a career, or the main thing that you will do with your life. Ministry is the equivalent thing in your spiritual life. If you like, it is your spiritual career.

You need to know how to fulfill your spiritual career. But unfortunately many people make it too complicated. Most actually never find their ministry or carry it out. They just do not know how to go about it.

In our natural life it is very easy to understand. You know what is involved.

You find out what you want to be when you grow up. You build up in your mind, desires of the kind of career you want to follow.

When you finish school, you go to college to learn and develop the knowledge that you need. You qualify to eventually take the position and fulfill the career that you desired to follow.

Because ministry is so similar, we tend to take the same approach in preparing ourselves for ministry as we do in pursuing our careers. And although they may look very similar, they are unfortunately not the same thing. So you cannot approach them both in the same way.

As we go through the first part of this teaching, I would like to show you how to identify and understand the difference between a career and a ministry, and how you should be carrying out your ministry.

The term 'ministry' is not quite what everybody thinks it is. If you think of ministry as a spiritual career, usually the last thing that you have in your mind is what the word ministry actually means in the original language of the Bible.

Becoming a Servant

A minister is not someone in an exalted position of authority that is highly qualified and exercises domination over people.

A minister in Bible terms is quite simply a servant. This is quite the opposite picture. Ministry effectively means 'service'.

Perhaps in a career this is also true. You rise up in life but your purpose is to serve humanity and to make your mark in this world; to do something perhaps that will change the lives of others.

But we don't usually have this idea in mind with a career, do we? When it comes to a career we often think,

"I want to rise up and make more money than anyone else. I want to become famous and well known, and I want to come to a position of authority where I can control other people."

Those three temptations have been there from the beginning. They were there in the Garden when Satan came to tempt Eve. And Satan tried to bring the same temptations to Jesus.

The temptations are a desire for fortune, fame and control. These are very dangerous when we mix them with ministry.

What needs to be added to this is another two important things that we need in life. These also color our approach to ministry and get mixed up with our motives for doing ministry.

Acceptance

The first one is acceptance, which is simply having other people take you just as you are. They do not reject you, but

accept you just the way you are. They are ready to be associated with you and receive you into their group.

You are then no longer the odd one out and you are treated the same as everyone else. This is the essence of acceptance, but it also goes much deeper than that.

Most of us have grown up facing rejection in life. You may have been rejected for many different reasons, including where you come from, your racial group, your looks, your height or weight, or even your gender.

There are many things that could have caused others to reject you, and these leave you feeling unaccepted.

But acceptance begins even deeper than that. It starts way back in your relationship with the first parent you get to know - your mother.

A mother is actively involved in fulfilling the need in a child to be accepted. If there is anyone in the world who accepts a child, no matter how ugly or naughty it is, it is the mother.

The mother is always there to love and care for the child. So the mother gives the very first acceptance for a child.

Each of us goes through different experiences. Some of us were not fully accepted by our mothers. Some mothers were too busy working or doing other things. Perhaps there were also other children around.

No matter what the situation was, you may have felt that your mother did not give you the acceptance and you went out into the world alone. You may also have had other siblings and family members that did not accept you and you did not fit in with them.

There are so many things in life that can produce it. It's a big void inside us, and so we continue to feel that people will not accept us.

As this becomes mixed up with your career, it creates a driving force inside you that will always be controlled by other people. That is because everything you do will be designed to get other people to accept you.

You are then caught in circumstances that stop you from being fully efficient, because you are always worried about what people will think. You have to keep adjusting your behavior for other people.

If you take this now into the realm of ministry, the same principles apply. Ministry is something that you are doing for the Lord. It means taking your place in the spiritual life according to what God sees in you.

The Scriptures teach that when we accept Jesus as our Savior and are born again, we become members of the Body of Christ.

If you consider yourself as a part in a body, you would be fitting in with a lot of other parts. So hands, feet, ears, eyes and nose all recognize one another and need one another.

They all fit in with each other. So if you are not feeling accepted and cannot fit in with the rest of the body, you cannot easily accept the place you were put in. You might think,

"I am just a big ugly nose."

You don't want to be the nose because it is ugly, and people don't like big ugly noses. So your ministry is now affected by your view of yourself and that deep need for acceptance.

Recognition

The second thing that stands in the way is similar to acceptance but not the same. It is recognition.

Acceptance means that people look at who we are, and they either accept or reject us because of who we are.

Recognition goes a step further, because it looks instead at what we have done and accomplished, and it holds us up high. Someone looks up to you with pride and says,

"I wish I could be like you. I think you are great."

When they do that it meets a need inside. We all have a need for others to look to us and recognize what we have done.

Maybe you have gone to a lot of effort to do things in life and nobody notices you. Often the main person involved in either creating or meeting this need in a child is the father, rather than the mother.

A father should notice his children, make a fuss of them and recognize what the child is doing. A child may draw little pictures and bring them to dad, expecting him to say,

"Wow, this is an awesome picture."

This is a little thing, but parents often fail in this. Fathers are too busy with other things. They have work to do and other things that are important.

The child grows up feeling that he or she was not recognized. Perhaps the rest of the family also does not recognize what the child does.

Perhaps you were given all the dirty work to do and your brothers and sisters got away without having to do that. Nobody appreciated or recognized the hard work that you did.

We all grow up in life with some of these experiences. So there is now a driving force in you that will not allow you to fulfill a normal career.

You have to be above average. It is not enough to be simply good at what you do. You have to be better than everyone else.

You have to draw attention to yourself and have people noticing you. You want them to rave about you and tell you that you are really great.

There is a continual need for affirmation and being recognized. Sadly though, both acceptance and recognition are like deep voids inside that are never satisfied.

Even if you do find people that will accept or recognize you, that deep inner need is never fully satisfied. It is a thirst that you cannot quench.

This affects people in their careers. But it affects you even more in your 'spiritual career' - your work for the Lord. That's

because ministry is serving others, not trying to meet your own needs.

If you have a need to be accepted and recognized then this will color your ministry and make you less effective. You will be wondering all the time what people think of you and your ministry.

Are they accepting the kind of ministry you are giving? Do they recognize how well you preach? Do they recognize how hard you work for the Lord?

When these things color your ministry, it will become less effective, and it will fail.

Achievement

So what is the correct desire you can have in place of those needs? It is called achievement.

A desire for achievement is not based on what someone else does. It does not involve you competing with someone else or trying to be better than them. It is not trying to impress someone so that they will accept or recognize you.

Achievement involves fighting against yourself and setting your own goals in life. You decide what you want to be or attain. You have a picture in your mind of what you can see yourself becoming.

There is instead a driving force in you, to reach the goal that you set for yourself. And there is nothing wrong with having that motivation while you are doing the work of the ministry.

You may set a goal in your heart of winning thousands of souls for the Lord. That is wonderful, and when you set this goal in your heart you can go out and do great things for the Lord.

Perhaps you have a burning desire to be used by God and to change peoples' lives. You may want to move in the miraculous and reach out to touch and heal the sick.

There is nothing wrong with this kind of motivation, because you are not doing it to draw attention to yourself. You are doing it because you cry out to see people's lives changed.

You see broken lives and you want to help them. You have a desire within to achieve great things for the Lord. These are some of the motivations we have, and often we have the wrong ones.

But here is what makes all of this foolish and deceptive. You do not realize that if you reach out to others, taking your eyes off yourself and pouring into them, they will accept you with open arms.

They will recognize you and tell you what a wonderful job you have done. Even if you did not aim for these two things, you would still get them automatically. But we get so wrapped up in our own needs that we lose the very thing that we desire.

If you can take your eyes off yourself and pour out to the needs you see in others, then God will provide back to you those deep needs you have.

CHAPTER 02

Ministry or Calling

Chapter 02 - Ministry or Calling

I would like to now consider another word that we use when it comes to ministry. It is a word that is often misunderstood, so I want to explain it and make it clear to you.

Hopefully when I am done you will understand this subject better. Then you can come to a place of being effective in your ministry.

The word I want to discuss is calling. I want to show you that there is a difference between a ministry and a calling.

We tend to look at people who have accomplished great things in life and we consider what they did as their calling. They were destined to do that, and we often see a calling as a kind of destiny.

A calling is that unique thing you were destined to do in this world and in your life. And ministry is not necessarily a calling.

Your ministry could be based on your personal desires. You have deep desires in you of things that you want to accomplish.

Many of these desires are based on your own past experiences. You may desire to help poor people or those who have suffered rejection, simply because you had similar experiences in life.

You have these deep desires in you to do things, but you want to do them in the name of the Lord, using His Word and the abilities that He has given you. You want to be a servant to others and help them by ministering to them.

But it does not take a specific calling for you to carry out such a ministry. Everyone can do things like this.

Everybody can do a ministry, but it does not mean that ministry is your calling. It is not your unique destiny in life; the one thing that you have been set apart to accomplish in this world.

A calling is always different. You can be born with influences that came from your parents. And as you go through life, your experiences begin to build desires into you.

You could have many orientations like this that you are now using in ministry. You may even have had them before you became a Christian.

But a calling is something that is specifically given to you by the Lord. It can never come before you are born again.

Only after you are placed into the Body of Christ and are officially a member of God's family, does He have a specific plan and purpose for your life. It is only now that you have a calling.

Certainly the Lord knew what you were going to do long before you were born. He knew what your calling would be. But you do not actually receive that calling until you are born again.

Now that you are a believer, you know that you are called because the Bible tells us that all believers are called.

What are you called to? Firstly, you are called to salvation, then you are called to become like Jesus. We all share these callings, but you also have something unique.

However, your calling does not always stay in one place. It does not remain static but may be progressively increased over time.

You could start out with a specific calling from God based on the only things you are capable of right now. But as you grow by increasing in knowledge, wisdom and experience, God can trust you with bigger things. So your calling could grow much bigger and increase over time.

Paying the Price

How does this take place? Well the bad news is that there is always a price to pay.

Here is where it becomes very similar to your career. You cannot decide one day to be a doctor and set up your

practice. You cannot become a professional of any kind without qualifying by proving yourself and passing the tests.

You must come to a place where you have been approved to carry out that activity. So in the same way, a calling requires you to pay a price before you can rise up from the lower levels.

But it is not based on your natural abilities. That is why it cannot appear until you are born again. No matter what natural abilities you have or how good you are, these have nothing to do with God's call on your life.

What does God require from someone that He calls? The Scripture is a bit confusing on this, because it says that God has chosen the weak and foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

You may think that you are too weak for God to have big plans for you and a big calling on your life. Yet it may surprise you to know that your weakness is probably what qualifies you for a calling more than anything else.

You may not be very intelligent. You may rather be foolish and naïve, and feel insecure next to more intelligent people doing great things. You might think that the Lord could use them more easily than you.

But the Lord says to you,

"You are the one I am looking for. I don't need you to have any abilities at all, because I have the abilities that you need and I will give the ability to do your calling."

There are only two qualities that you need to qualify for the call of God. They are humility and love, but especially humility.

You should not want to lift yourself up, but you should have a tender heart of love to reach out to others and be used by the Lord. That is all you need.

You may have been thinking,

"I would really love to do great things for God, but I can't be a great preacher. I can't stand up to preach and teach or write great things.

I don't have any musical talent or anything. How can God use me, because I have nothing to give Him?"

But you will be amazed what God can do with nothing, if you just give it to Him in submission and humility. God can take that and add His part to it to produce that calling in your life.

So learn to understand the difference between ministry and calling. This is important because you may have had a desire burning in you for some time. But is that a ministry or a calling?

You don't really know do you? So how do you go about finding out what your calling is? It is easy to see a desire for ministry, but often that desire is not based on God's call but rather on what you desire to do.

CHAPTER 03

Finding Your Calling

Chapter 03 - Finding Your Calling

Here then is how you go about finding your calling. Firstly, your calling is not based on your natural desires.

We each have different temperamental strengths, as we have seen in our teaching on temperaments. Some temperaments have greater strengths than others. But your temperamental strengths do not decide your calling.

So do not think that because you are temperamentally capable of communicating with others and persuading them, that God will use you to do that kind of thing. People often get confused and they think,

"I am really good at that."

For example a person who is good at listening should surely be a counselor. We assume that a person who has wisdom and is a good listener is obviously called to be a counselor. But these are natural abilities and strengths.

Don't ever confuse them with the call of God. You may also have had some tough times in life. You could have lived a life filled with poverty, sickness and disease or even rejection.

Do not assume that God will call you to minister to other people who have also been through that. If half of your family have died, that does not mean God has called you to minister to bereaved people.

Do not assume that what you experienced in life was God's way of preparing you for your calling. You could certainly do those as a ministry, but that is not your calling.

You do not need an anointing to carry out those ministries. You could use the anointing to help with them, but you do not need the anointing to do them.

Unbelievers often have the same desires burning in them. Many charitable organizations do wonderful things, but they are not called of God. They are in a World System that does not honor God at all.

So your calling then is not a burning desire within you that is based on your temperamental strengths, your experiences in life, or dreams and visions that you have had. Your calling is unique and you did not have it before you were born again.

It Is Unique

Now here is the part that makes it stand out the clearest. Most other people do not have the same desire as you.

If there is one quality that shows your calling, it is when you suddenly want to do something that others do not want to do. You do not know where that came from, and it doesn't even closely relate to your experiences in life.

You suddenly have a desire to get involved in something that you are unqualified to do. You are incapable of doing it, and you have never had experience with this before.

If that doesn't make sense then it is good. You are well on your way to identifying the call of God, because it is absolutely unique.

Ministry on the other hand is not unique at all. It comes from a burning desire. You may have thought that if you could find your burning core desire you could find what God has put in you.

If that is what burns in you, then surely it was the Lord who put it there? I used to teach this myself, but a burning inner desire does not denote a calling.

Does that mean you cannot fulfill that desire? Would it be wrong to do this as a ministry?

Not at all! In fact if you were to do it with faith, hope and love, God would even anoint you with His power and give you Divine ability to make you a blessing.

He will use you mightily in that ministry and you will prove the Scriptural principle that whatever you sow you will reap. As you give out you will get back and see results.

You may say, "I have found my ministry," but you have not yet found your calling.

So what do you do? Do you stand and wait for your calling before you do anything?

That is a common mistake we make. It could take you a long time to find your calling, because the unfolding of that calling is a progressive thing.

You should start where you are, with all the desires that burn in you, and begin to fulfill those as a ministry. Then as you continue to do ministry you will find yourself progressively coming to a place where your calling becomes clearer.

Where to Start

Where do you start? There is a simple Scripture that says,

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.

What is available to you right now that you can do for the Lord? Look around and see people with needs that you can help with and get involved in right now. Start doing whatever is there.

You may say to me,

“But what if that is not my calling?”

Does it matter? The Lord will still bless it, and you will have a tremendous sense of achievement and satisfaction by having poured out, helped and ministered to other people.

And who knows whether God will use that to lead you progressively into finally uncovering your calling.

I often use the picture of a moving ship. Many people are like a ship, sitting in harbor and asking the Lord which way to go.

They think that if God turns their rudder they will get moving. But even if He did turn the rudder you would not notice it. You would continue waiting.

The only way to steer a ship is to get it moving. Go in any direction. It does not matter. Find something to do and get doing it.

The Lord will step in and start to change your rudder. Suddenly you will find yourself veering off into a whole new direction.

You may wonder what is happening. You started doing one thing and ended up doing something else. Then suddenly a new opportunity opened up for you to do something totally unrelated to what you were doing.

You could try many things before you start coming to that place where you know that this is where you should be.

Chewing Rubber

I have often shared the story of the boy who chewed rubber, and I will share it again here.

I read a story once of a little boy who kept chewing on rubber. He chewed on pencil erasers and any kind of rubber he could find. His parents thought something was wrong and had him tested medically.

After doing some tests they discovered that his body was lacking in sulphur, and it seems that rubber has a lot of sulphur in it. So each time he chewed on rubber he was supplying what his body needed.

Now he did not know anything about sulphur. And nobody taught him to eat rubber, because rubber is not food. But before he tasted rubber he chewed on everything he could get his hands on.

If you have had a baby you will know that a baby puts everything into its mouth. He kept chewing on things until one day he chewed on rubber, and something inside of him said,

“That tastes good. Let’s try it again.”

He kept doing it again and again and chewed up all the rubber he could find.

Sometimes finding your calling also works this way. Get chewing on everything you can find.

Do what burns in you and what does not burn in you. Do what other people are doing and whatever you can find as an opportunity to do something as a ministry for the Lord.

Keep doing it, and one day you will find that suddenly something drops into place and you think to yourself,

"I seem to be moving in a very unique direction here that most other people are not moving in. I feel really good about it though. I feel comfortable doing it and I am getting results."

That could be the first sign that you are finding your calling.

Putting It Together

Realize that your calling is a supernatural thing that God will give you, and He will progressively unfold it to you. Then you can go beyond that and receive specific revelation.

God may decide to use someone to give you a prophetic word. He may give you a dream or a vision or a personal revelation to confirm to you exactly what that calling is.

Then when you find that calling, you can set sail, pull out all the stops and head in that direction. You can do this until God chooses to increase it or change it. Remember that the calling is progressive and can be increased.

The important thing then is to firstly recognize the differences between ministry and calling. Look deep inside and discover all the desires that burn in you.

Get moving with those until you find yourself becoming more focused and you get inner or outer revelation. Then you will eventually come to the place where you will find your Ministry Calling.

Only when these two come together are you ready to do real ministry. We will look in the next chapters at ways in which we can fulfill different kinds of ministry, and the tools that God gives us to do this.

We will consider some of the higher level ministries and how God promotes people up to different levels of calling.

By the time we are done. you should be able to find out exactly what your calling is and know what you should be doing.

You will know what main ministry you should be doing, and you will be able to come to a place where God can increase you and use you more and more. Then you can fulfill that spiritual career that you desire.