

community must be in order (verse 7). Also, he must be able to preach and teach the doctrinal truths of the Bible, verse 2 says, “*apt to teach.*” God equips those He calls, ministerial gifts are imparted to him. The preacher must have the ability to communicate to God’s people (I Peter 5:2, Titus 1:9, Acts 13:1-2, 16:1-3, Timothy 5:17). He must be able to take the oversight in his rule and the management of God’s church (Hebrews 13:17). God’s man not only has been gifted with this special call, but he himself is a gift to God’s church (Ephesians 4:8-12). Again, desire is not enough, a man must be qualified for the position he desires to have.

### PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The third and last section of this article will focus on a very important aspect of a minister’s calling. That is, the recognition and support of his church. The recommendation of those in his own assembly, especially the older saints, means a great deal. It was the church (body of believers) that ordained and sent out Paul and Silas to preach to the regions beyond. According to I Timothy 3:10, the man of God is to prove himself worthy for ordination not only to God, but also to the congregation. He must be accountable to his local assembly and consider their approval. It is one’s family and church that knows you best. They are worthy to judge the sincerity of your calling. If the spiritually minded Christians within the assembly in which you have served

disapprove, please reconsider your call (I Corinthians 6:3-4). As one author wisely said, “No person can be his own judge of his worth for he will favor himself.” There must be accountability, for God does not honor free-lancing. This should cause anyone to walk in holiness, especially if they believe God’s call is on their life. The call to preach is born in an atmosphere of spirituality, not carnality and worldliness (Romans 12:1-2). God has never called a lazy man to the ministry either, but the call comes in the midst of Christian activity (Exodus 3:1-10, Judges 6:11-14, I kings 19:19, Acts 13:2). In Matthew 4:18-19, two of the disciples were taken from their job to preach. Some think that if they fail at everything else, then they must be called to preach God’s Word; this is blasphemy.

In closing, if God has put you into the ministry, He will let you know it and will sanctify you and equip you for the task. He will also let the sheep know you are sent from Him. If you are truly called of God to preach, He has a place for you to serve and people prepared for you to minister to. This is God's providence in our lives. Amen.



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*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."  
Acts 16:31*

# The RICHES OF GRACE

ROBERT W. REED  
APRIL 2005  
"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

## THE MINISTER'S CALLING

*"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me,  
for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."*

I Timothy

### + The Call To The Ministry +

The divine call to preach the gospel is clearly seen throughout the Scriptures. Our text plainly reveals the fact that God puts men into the ministry. This special calling to the gospel ministry is unique and personal. God speaks to the hearts of individuals and then separates them for the work He has for them to do. They are distinguished from others in that they are given a special commission and equipped for the task. The anointing of God by the Holy Ghost is upon the man of God for the cause of Christ. Their solemn call to duty becomes their life for the sake of God’s kingdom. His heartbeat is to proclaim the truth for the glory of God. Amen.

Adam Clark, in his writing to a fellow preacher said, “No man should engage in the work in which you are engaged, unless he verily feels that he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him this office. He must not presume that he is thus moved because he has been educated for the ministry; in cases of this kind, man may propose but God must dispose.”

This article will speak of three ways in which a man may know he is called into the ministry. We must not overlook the things that constitute a call which are revealed to us in the Scriptures. These are the test of a divine call to preach God's Word. The following is a quote from another author, "Every believer is called to serve the Lord full time but not every believer is called to full-time service. Every believer is called to preach the gospel, but not every believer is called to preach."

### PERSONAL CONVICTION

According to **I Timothy 3:1**, God places a heaven-sent desire in the bosom of those He calls to preach, "*This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.*" This is an intense desire, a burden, a vision, a yearning, or a passion in the heart of the God-called man (**Isaiah 13:1; 17:1, Proverbs 29:18, I Corinthians 9:27**). In a quote taken from one of his lectures to the students in pastor's college, C. H. Spurgeon said, "If any student of mine could be content to be a newspaper editor, or a grocer, or a farmer, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a senator, or a king, in the name of heaven and earth let him go his way, he is not the man in whom dwells the spirit of God in its fullness, for a man so filled with God would utterly weary of any pursuit but that for which his inmost soul pants." This sums up the desire of a man to preach. If you can do anything else and be happy, then do it, and stay out of the ministry. But if you hunger and thirst for the ministering of God's precious Word, then see to it. I have never tried to

convince any one to go into the ministry because if the call is there, they will know it and cannot be convinced otherwise. When God saves a man He lets him know it, and when God calls a man into the ministry, He also lets him know it as well. When a man is called to preach, everything else becomes secondary and the glory of these things fade into the sunset. The Apostle Paul put it this way in **I Corinthians 9:16**, "*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*" There are no options. According to **Jeremiah 20:9**, this call is as a fire burning in the heart. The passion is not a passing interest but a divine summons.

According to **I Samuel 3:10**, God speaks directly by the Holy Ghost to those whom He calls and deals personally with their heart (**John 16:13, Romans 8:26-27**). Many have mistaken emotions for calling but God will confirm to His preacher the work He has for him to do.

### PERSONAL QUALIFICATION

According to **I Timothy 3**, desire is good and necessary, but desire alone is not enough. The qualification of a true bishop, who is to guide the Lord's church, is laid down in the Scriptures. Just because someone desires to preach does not constitute a call. For example, what if a woman says she is called to preach and has a desire, would that make her a minister? The answer is no, for God only calls men into the ministry. She would be disqualified from the very beginning no matter

what she claimed. Neither could I get a license to be a pilot just because I desire to fly a plane; I must first be qualified.

In **I Timothy 3**, verses 2-7 are described the character traits of the minister. In **verse 2**, the very first statement is that the man of God is to be blameless, then a list of qualifications follow. Holiness is to be a top priority in a preacher's life. In a sense, what a man is becomes more important than what a man says. As someone has well said, "Life is to be communicated as well as words conveyed." The necessity of godliness cannot be overemphasized. The preacher is to be a yard stick whereby the congregation can measure themselves. If the saints are to follow the faith of the minister, then the minister must watch his step (**I Corinthians 11:1, Hebrews 13:7, 17**). The preacher's life and testimony is a vital way of communicating truth.

In **I Timothy 3:2**, the minister is not to be a divorced man, but "*the husband of one wife*", and his children are to be in subjection to his authority, **verses 4-5**, "*One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)*" According to **verse 6**, he is to be mature, "*not a novice.*" Before a man is ordained to the ministry, he must prove himself to be worthy (**verse 10, I Timothy 5:20**). The ministry deserves the best of men to preach God's Holy Word. His reputation in the