

Four Ways of Entering One's Calling

Part 3

The Third Way – Deepening Our Calling Through Prayer and the Study of God's Word

- *The best and the most perfect example of how to enter into God's Calling for our lives is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- *The four Gospels provide us with a complete view of Christ's life and ministry.*
- *The four Gospels are not simply a repetition of the same events but actually provide four different perspectives into the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.*
- *Each of the four Gospels provides us a unique perspective and each carries with it sometimes subtle but important differences that unlock the mysteries of the Gospel.*
- *The unique attributes of the four gospel can be seen in a pattern that is seen in Revelation 4:7.*

Revelation 4:7 (ESV)

⁷the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight.

- *The Lion, the Ox, the face of a Man, and the Eagle each highlight one of the four Gospels and in the same order.*
- *Each Gospel gives us insights into how to enter one's calling.*
- *Each of the four steps is progressive and leads to the next step until we are able to fully enter into the will of God for our lives.*
- *In Matthew, Jesus is pictured as the Lion, the One who is bold and confident.*
- *The first way that we looked at to enter one's calling is seen in the first Gospel, Matthew, and the first way to enter one's calling – Entering into God's Predestine Works.*

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- *In Mark, Jesus is pictured as an Ox, the One who has set His shoulder to the plow and is pressing forward to the goal set before Him.*
- *The Second Way of Entering One's Calling is through Sanctified Initiative.*
- *A simple way to rephrase this second step would be:*
- *Don't Just Stand There Do Some Thing!!!!!!*
- *The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus Christ as the Perfect Servant*
- *Jesus is seen in the Mark as the Ox – the Goal Centered Temperament.*
- *The third way to enter one's calling is by deepening our calling through prayer and the study of God's Word.*
- *This third way is seen clearest in the gospel of Luke where Christ is depicted as the Perfect Man – the introspective temperament.*
- *In Matthew, where Jesus is presented as the King, His genealogy is through His stepfather Joseph and is traced back to David.*

- *In Mark, where Jesus is presented as the perfect servant, His birth is not even mentioned because the important thing about a servant is not his lineage but his service.*
- *In Luke, where Jesus is presented as the perfect man, His genealogy is through Mary and is traced back to Adam.*
- *Luke is the only gospel that deals with Christ's early life as a baby and a young boy and thus it gives us a glimpse into how He grew and developed.*
- *In Matthew, Christ's birth is portrayed by the theme "a king is born" while in Luke the emphasis is "a man-child is born."*
- *We see Jesus in Luke as a baby of eight days old being taken to the temple and circumcised according to the Law of Moses.*
- *The first way of entering one's calling gives us a sense of divine purpose for our lives and expectation of great things that God desires to do in and through us.*
- *The second way of entering one's calling stirs us to do something and not just remain as stargazers but put action to God's calling on our lives.*
- *The second way provides balance and direction to the first way.*
- *The third way of entering one's calling brings balance to the second way by making sure we are not so busy "doing things for God" that we fail to spend time with God and thus fail to mature and deepen our relationship with Him.*

Luke 2:34–35 (NKJV)

³⁴Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against

³⁵(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

- *"that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." - When Jesus was taken to the temple at eight days old, the prophetic word spoken over Him points to Christ exposing the hearts of men.*
- *Jesus Christ always deals with the hearts of people, believers and non-believers.*
- *Non-believers will react in many different ways to Christ – some will mock, some will try to ignore Him, some will persecute those that carry the name of Christ and some will repent and become one of His followers.*
- *Believers will react in many different ways to Christ also – some will ignore Him, some will mock those that choose to live a close life with Him, some will draw closer to Him and deepen their calling and relationship with Him.*
- *"Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel" – The fall and rise of many refers to how people choose to respond to the voice of Christ.*
- *Notice the prophetic word is "the fall and rise of many" not "the rise and fall of many". First there has to be a cleansing before there can be building up.*
- *As we draw closer to Christ our failures, secret sins, hidden attitudes are exposed so that we can be set free. The purpose is not to condemn us but to sanctify us so that our righteousness can shine brighter and brighter until it is like the noon day sun (Psalm 37:6)*

Hebrews 5:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

⁸though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

- *These verses give us some wonderful insights into the Jesus Christ's life as a man and His relationship with His Father.*
- *“when He had offered up prayers and supplications” – Jesus' devotion to prayer and fellowship with His Father is illustrated here.*
- *“with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death” – The dependency of Jesus upon His Father is seen here.*
- *Jesus is to be our example of how we should live because Christ wants to live through us.*

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

²⁰I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- *To deny that Christ can live through us the same way He lived on this earth is to deny the very life and power of Christ in our reborn-spirits.*
- *There is only one way that the reality of Christ's life can be manifest through us and that is by deepening our calling through prayer and the study of God's Word.*
- *When we are saying we can never experience Christ living through us the same way He lived on this earth really means, “I am not willing to spend the time and energy needed to get to know Him in such an intimate and deep way.”*
- *“was heard because of His godly fear” – Jesus' prayer life was powerful because He had cultivated such a deep relationship with the Father in prayer that this translated into God conscious faith.*
- *God conscious faith will protect us from many temptations when we know God is always with us and that He is aware of not only our words and actions but also our very thoughts.*

⁸though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. – *This gives us insight that Jesus, as the Son of Man, had to grow and mature in His soul as well as in His body just as we do.*

- *As Jesus grew from being a child to becoming that mature man he grew in obedience.*
- *Growing in obedience does not imply disobedience but rather maturing from the perfect obedience of a young child to the perfect obedience of a young man to the perfect obedience of a fully mature man.*
- *This process of growing in obedience entails with it a degree of suffering, as the natural desires have to sometimes be denied so that the will of the Father can be fulfilled.*
- *Fasting and prayer is an example where we discipline our body to put our Father's will above our own natural desires.*
- *The Gospel of Luke gives us insights into how Jesus, as a young boy grew and matured and deepened His calling.*

Luke 2:40–52 (NKJV)

⁴⁰And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

- *Jesus Christ, even from a young child, had to grow and mature and become strong in spirit and this resulted in Him being filled with wisdom and God's grace was upon Him.*

⁴¹His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

⁴²And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

- *Here we have a unique snap shot of Jesus' life as a twelve year old.*

⁴³When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it;

⁴⁴but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

⁴⁵So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

⁴⁶Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

⁴⁷And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

- *Jesus is seen sitting in the midst of the teachers of the Law and submitting to the calling and anointing that was upon them.*
- *“both listening to them and asking them questions” – Jesus, as a twelve year old boy, was still learning and He was learning the same way we are to learn and one of those ways is to submit to those that God has anointed to minister His Word.*
- *“And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers” – Clearly it can be seen that Jesus had already spent much time in the Word of God as can be seen by His insightful questions and comments.*
- *What was Christ learning about? I think one of the things He was learning was about the Christ and how the Christ was going to be the Saviour and the Deliverer.*

⁴⁸So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.”

⁴⁹And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?”

- *“Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?” – Another thing we can learn about Jesus is that by the time He was twelve years old He clearly understood He was the Son of God and that He was the pre-existing One and that God was His Father.*

⁵⁰But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

⁵¹Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” – This passage ends with the idea that Jesus continued to study, pray, and mature until He was fully prepared for His calling.*
- *When Christ was thirty years old and fully matured, before His earthly ministry began, He spent 40 days in the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

- *This proved the completeness of the work that had taken place in Christ's soul.*

Luke 4:14–21 (NKJV)

¹⁴Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

¹⁵And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

¹⁶So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

¹⁷And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

¹⁹To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

²⁰Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

²¹And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

- *“And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day”- Jesus lived a life that not only included a private devotional life with His Father but one that included fellowship and public worship.*
- *“And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written” – Jesus did not just randomly open up the scroll and read it, but He knew the place He had to read and He searched it out until He found it and after He read it, He public announced the beginning of His ministry and the purpose of His ministry.*

Luke 5:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

- *Through out the Gospels we see Jesus as one who often withdrew in prayer no matter how busy He was. He even sometimes laboured all day and prayed all night.*

Luke 6:12–13 (NKJV)

¹²Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

¹³And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

- *There was no decision or step He took that He did not bathe in prayer.*

John 7:14–17 (NKJV)

¹⁴Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.

¹⁵And the Jews marveled, saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”

¹⁶Jesus answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

¹⁷If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.

- *“How does this Man know letters, having never studied?” – Jesus did not just spontaneously receive revelation about God's Word but He actually studied and spent His earthly life deepening His calling through prayer and the study of*

God's Word.

- *Jesus didn't just wait around for thirty years until "all of sudden" His calling would be manifest, but He understood it would require preparation and diligence in seeking His Father for it to be fulfilled.*
- *Christ is our perfect example of balance. While He deepened His calling for those many years before His earthly ministry began, He did it at the same time that He supported Himself working as a carpenter.*
- *"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine" – If anyone desires to understand Christ's teachings, all we have to do is do His will – deepen our calling through prayer and study.*

Luke 4:31–32 (NKJV)

³¹Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths.

³²And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.

- *The Greek word for "astonished" means, "to expel by a blow, to strike with panic, to be struck with amazement."*
- *Christ's ministry was not a passing interest for the people but it actually shook them to the very core of their being.*
- *Some believed and were saved, others didn't want to face their sin and fled and others desired to kill him but no one could just casually ignore Him.*
- *Christ's life and ministry exuded both power and authority like no one's before.*
- *The people compared the teachings of the Pharisees to those of Jesus and there was no comparison.*
- *The power of God is seen in both the Nine Gifts of the Spirit and the Nine Fruit of the Spirit.*

Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV)

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- *If we are truly saved and know Christ then we should be filled with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*
- *If our words and our lives don't line up then our calling cannot come forth because we are powerless.*

1 Timothy 4:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

- *The Greek word for "neglect" means, "to not think about and thus not respond appropriately to, to disregard, to pay no attention, to be careless."*
- *Timothy possessed sanctified initiative and was already heavily involved in ministry, but Paul was encouraging him to press on even more into God's calling for his life.*

¹⁵Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

- *The Greek word for "meditate" is μελετάω (meletaō) and it means, "to keep thinking about, to ponder, let ones mind dwell on, to care for, practice, study, to*

- continue to perform certain activities with care and concern.”*
- *Meditation combines both a study of God’s Word and prayer so that we can seek insights from the Holy Spirit.*
 - *“give yourself entirely to them” – the key elements to deepen our calling through mediation is time and a willingness to whole heartedly dive into our relationship with God .*
 - *“that your progress may be evident to all” – As we deepen our calling through prayer and the study of God’s Word, the changes in our lives for the better and our advancement will be clearly seen and easily known by all those around us.*

¹⁶Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

- *“Take heed to yourself” – When we are spending time deepening our calling we become more attentive to the condition of our own heart and are able to discern when our attitude or focus is off.*
- *For us to deepen our calling requires both a life of prayer and a life devoted to the Word of God.*
- *If we are only in prayer we will blow up – we need God’s Word to ground us so that we can correctly interpret our experiences with God.*
- *If we are only in the Word we will dry up – we need to experience the reality of God for His Word to come alive.*
- *If we are in both we will grow up.*

Points to pray:

- *If someone is here who has never received Christ now is the opportunity to put your faith in Jesus and start a new life with a new future.*
- *If some are here who have neglected deepening their calling, we can give thanks that He is a gracious, merciful and patient and He has give us another opportunity learn to deepen our calling.*
- *If some are here who are learning to enjoy spending time in prayer and His Word we can give thanks and ask Him to help us to grow in a deeper commitment.*