

- Systemic Teaching about Christian Life -

# Vocation, Calling, and Election

**Series:**

New Creation in Christ

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## General Considerations about Using This Material:

The subject presented in this material aims to provide support to knowledge and an in-depth study of the Bible and the Christian life.

Based on the understanding that in the Christian Bible is contained the consolidation of fundamental and formal records of the writings inspired by God for humanity and each person of it, the contents exposed in this material are not intended to add, ever, anything to the Bible, nor ever remove anything from it. The aim through this subject is to contribute to the exploration of what already was registered and passed on to us over thousands of years of history by the One Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

The contents presented on the next pages, of course, intend to address just a portion of the essential themes of life displayed with such great amplitude in the Bible. On the other hand, however, this subject is presented in a grouped, colligated, organized and systematized manner with the objective to serve as an aid to knowledge and understanding of the Christian life without losing sight of the main aspects of it.

*Ecclesiastes 12: 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.*

Related words put together, as told in the biblical text above, serve as goads and nails for fixing supports and help for the life of people that hear and receive them. Therefore, one objective of this material is to study and seek a broader understanding of the truths handed down to us by the Unique Pastor and God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

We would still like to suggest that the reading and studying of this material also should always be accompanied by prudence and proper investigation, believing that this is a very healthy habit to be practiced toward any material presented to a person.

The act of acceptance, rejection, or “retaining what is good,” is a personal and individual attribute given to those who receive the wisdom from God and which should be exercised or used by them toward all that comes into their hands.

*Proverbs 8: 12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion.*

*Acts 17: 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

*Proverbs 16: 1 The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.*

*2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits.*

*3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at [www.zoominchristianlife.org](http://www.zoominchristianlife.org).

Ronald Gortz and Irmelin Gortz, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ!

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*Revelation 21: 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."  
6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

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*1Timothy 2: 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,  
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at [www.zoominchristianlife.org](http://www.zoominchristianlife.org).

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## C1. Every New Creature also has a New Calling

This new subject is part of the series on the New Creation in Christ and aims to follow up on the other themes that preceded it, namely:

- ⇒ 1) The New Creature in Christ Jesus;
- ⇒ 2) Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind;
- ⇒ 3) Reaching Forward to Those Things Which Are Ahead.

A characteristic of the new creature in Christ is that the Lord has a vocation for it. That is, the Lord has a calling of life for each one who becomes a new creature in Him. An aspect that demonstrates that this subject is very relevant for the Christian, for by the new birth, one's life receives a new meaning and a new purpose.

Thus, every new creature in Christ also has a new calling or purpose in one's life in the Lord, which, consequently, is also distinct from the vocations that an individual had while one did not yet know the Lord, for before one came to be constituted as a child of God, a person acts according to the course of the thoughts of the creation or the world, not bearing fruit according to the will of God and for eternal benefits.

*Ephesians 2: 1* **And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,**  
**2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,**  
**3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**

*Romans 6: 22* **But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.**  
**23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

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In the themes mentioned above, we addressed the aspect that people who do not have Christ in their hearts and as the Lord of their lives are basically living according to the lifestyles called, in the New Testament, “Jewish” or “Greek,” “circumcision” or “uncircumcision,” and according to the concepts, traditions, cultures, and philosophies arising from these models and their variations or mixtures, which, however, are not models of life in line with the kingdom of God.

**And since life according to the new creature does not fit into any of the models of life mentioned in the previous paragraph, because the newness of life in the Lord is different from them, the purpose of this novelty of life obviously is also distinct.**

In other words, **there would be no reason for a person to seek to live differently from the two basic models of the natural human being if the new proposition of life did not also have a new proposal of objectives, purposes, or results to be received or achieved.**

Being still redundant, **since the kind of life that the Lord grants to the one who becomes a Christian is new, and it is not comparable to the models of life achieved previously to the experience of the new birth in Christ, also the aspect of the calling or the vocation of the new creature refers to a newness of life. The conditions and the purposes of a Christian are not according to the models of callings or vocations known by a person before the experience of becoming a new creature in the Lord.**

In this way, considering that the new, in the new creature in Christ, is not something new coming from the natural man and not according to what is externally and materially apparent, but according to what is manifested as new from the heavenly kingdom, it also becomes essential to understand what kind of calling or vocation the Scriptures refer to when they teach us that every new creature also comes to have a newness of life in this specific matter.

**Since the granting of life to the new creature is according to the heavenly kingdom, what becomes the vocation or calling of this new creature is also according to the heavenly kingdom, and not merely according to natural human concepts.**

In the previous themes of this series, we have already seen that the new creature is given to an individual by a new spiritual birth, according to the Spirit of God, generating a made-alive spirit in the one who is born again in Christ. And it is according to the new condition of life given in Christ to an individual that one is also granted a calling or vocation, which, in turn, has characteristics according to its spiritual kind and the heavenly will. A point that reminds us of what is presented in the text below:

*John 3: 6 **That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.***

Seeking a broader understanding of the specific characteristics of the type of calling that the Lord refers to, when the subject is the calling or vocation of the new creature in Christ, is of high, priceless, and crucial value for a Christian not to lean to the attempts to reach the calling in God according to the concepts of callings or vocations of the natural man. Bearing in mind that the natural man does not discern the things of the Spirit of the Lord, it becomes evident that this lack of understanding also includes not correctly discerning the vocation or calling given by the Lord to those who become new creatures in Him.

*1 Corinthians 2: 12 **Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.***

*13 **These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.***

*14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

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**The calling or vocation of the new creature is bestowed upon an individual by God and from that which in His heavenly kingdom is established as a calling or vocation pertinent to the new creature. And it is only by seeing these aspects from the heavenly kingdom that they can be understood adequately or according to what God has established for Christians.**

The new calling that God presents to those who have come to be constituted as a new creature is given so that there is also an effective adjustment in the purpose for which an individual acts in a natural calling and the way one acts in one's natural vocations. An aspect that applies to all Christians.

Nevertheless, the vocation according to the new creation, because it has a spiritual nature, will not necessarily also imply a call where the Lord equally instructs everyone to stop acting in the areas in which they already operate in material life. Although the Lord may also, for several specific people, call them even to change the type of activities in which they act in the present world, this does not necessarily apply to everyone who receives the condition of a new creature in God.

Through natural birth and natural living conditions, a person may have been endowed by God with a talent or ability for some specific areas in the natural world that will not "fall behind" before one's new nature in the Lord. For some people, the new calling, as a new creature, will not necessarily conflict with the natural vocation they already exercised before receiving Christ Jesus as the Lord of their lives. This is why it is so important to know the specific attributes pertinent to the type of calling applicable to those who came to be made children of God through grace and faith in the Lord.

We understand that it is crucial to insist on this point that each individual who has reached the condition of a new creature also has, from the Lord, a new type of calling. And this, because one of the most recurrent themes in the relationship between people who call themselves Christians, but who may not even be Christians indeed, serving the Other Gospel and not actually the Gospel of God, is the subject of "the calling or vocation of a Christian."

It is impressive to observe how much some groups of people appreciate the subject of vocation and how much they like to investigate, regarding their own lives and the lives of other people, whether a person "already has or does not have a calling from the Lord," but without first, in fact, resorting to the "Lord of the callings" to know, from Him, what is the type of the heavenly calling or vocation for the new creature in Christ.

**Considering that fellowship with the Lord and abiding in Him are fundamental aspects of life according to the new creature, it is impressive to observe how much a high number of people, who call themselves Christians, have sought to unveil "their callings" based on what each individual understands to be "one's calling." Many do it without considering the fact that only the Lord establishes the type of the calling of the new creature in Christ and that it is only God who presents "the callings" to those who are new creatures in Him.**

The pieces of evidence of the lack of knowledge of many about the type of the calling of the new creature are many and alarming, starting with the inappropriate question, but very recurrent among those who say they want to serve the Lord, that supposedly investigates whether “a certain Christian has or does not have a calling or vocation.” This question is evidence of a lack of knowledge on the subject because “each or every Christian” already has some calling from the Lord in one's very constitution as a Christian, even if one only received Christ in the final moments of one's life.

**Each or every Christian, even if one's life on Earth is ending, has upon him or her the call to eternal life in God, remembering that eternal life is to know and continue to know the Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit eternally.**

*1 Timothy 6: 12 **Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.***

*John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***

*John 11: 25 **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.***  
*26 **And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"***

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**And in addition to the call to eternal salvation, which in reality is offered to all human beings and can be answered by all through faith in the Lord, each or every Christian is called to be an heir of God and a co-heir with Christ Jesus. And, in turn, remaining in this last specific aspect of the calling is far more important and glorious than having a “great calling to do works on Earth,” although God can and does call His children to do good and fruitful works on Earth.**

So, what could be more glorious than being called by the Lord to become a child and heir of the One and Eternal God?

**Considering that God created the Heavens and the Earth, and that God can even undo them and make new Heavens and a new Earth, there is no calling for a Christian that can surpass the value of the calling to be eternally a child of God, an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ.**

*1 John 3: 1 **Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.***

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How, then, can a Christian wisely ask another Christian if one has a calling from God or in God for one's life?

The question to any Christian in order to investigate if one already has or if one still lacks a calling in the Lord is not appropriate to be asked in the light of the Lord's Scriptures, for each or every Christian has the calling to be in God and have God as one's inheritance forever.

The condition of life according to the new creation is so new that the merely human mentality or knowledge does not know or understand it without being shown and taught from Heaven. For this reason, the Christian is "called" to have an encounter with the transformation of one's life also through the renewing of one's understanding. The Christian is "called" to renew one's mind according to what one is taught from the heavenly kingdom so that one can then grow in a more intense practical experience of life according to the will of the Lord.

*Romans 12: 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.***

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Thus, **without a Christian answering the "calling" or the "vocation" for the renewal of one's understanding through fellowship with the Lord and with His word, what one thinks or cogitates to be God's calling for one's life can be based on one's own understanding or the understanding passed on culturally by generations, and not according to the light of Christ's presence in one's heart.**

**Every Christian is likewise called to awaken and to willingly present oneself before Christ to be enlightened and taught by the Lord about what God's will is for one's life, which is not according to the natural man but according to the spiritual man or the new creature.**

Without heeding the "calling" or "vocation" to first know God's will, the "calling" that is extended to all Christians, further attempts to realize or practice a so-called "calling" of God are liable to be a waste of life, time, and resources in a world surrounded by evil days. They will be subject to being the expression of a foolish walking and not according to the wisdom of God, the wisdom that all people are called to seek first.

*Ephesians 5: 14 **Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."***

*15 **See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,***  
*16 **redeeming the time, because the days are evil.***

*17 **Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.***

*James 1: 5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.***

*Matthew 6: 33* **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

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Furthermore, without heeding the “calling” or the “vocation” to be enlightened by Christ Jesus to know the will of God specifically for the new creature, and without discerning that the new creation in Christ is extended callings also according to its nature and species, people are liable to be easily inclined to think, mistakenly, that the concepts of the Lord’s calling to people are similar to the types of callings that were under the Law of Moses or the Order of Aaron, which, however, has already been revoked by God with the work of Christ on the cross of Calvary.

The concepts of callings under the Law of Moses, which separated and singled out some people to be priests or Levites, are no longer valid in Christ Jesus, where each Christian has only one Eternal High Priest and where each Christian is a priest of one’s life before God jointly with Christ.

The concepts or mindsets that seek to emphasize that some people are “specially called” to serve God no longer apply to callings concerning those who are new creatures in Christ. In life in Christ, all Christians, in their most diverse areas of activity, are called to a life in which, in everything, they can glorify God and aim to be the salt of the Earth and light of the world.

On the other hand, there are multitudes of people who do not even think about concepts concerning the calling or vocation of the One and Eternal God for their lives. They live daily according to the natural conditions they see in front of them. However, also for each of these people, without distinction, the Lord has a new calling of life if they, through faith, seek Christ Jesus to know and understand the will of the Lord.

*Jeremiah 29: 11* **For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

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As a new creature in Christ Jesus, a condition to which God calls all people in the world, each individual has the calling to be, in everything, guided by the Lord and to practice the will of the Lord as instructed by Him. And there is no restriction on this calling of the Lord to an individual because of one’s ancestry or genealogy, as was the case under the Law of Moses and in many circumstances in human societies, remembering once more that:

*Romans 1: 16* **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**

*Romans 10: 12* **For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.**

*Galatians 3: 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

*27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

*28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

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Depending on what they attribute to the concept of “calling” or “vocation,” there are people who seek to elevate themselves above others, and there are people who surrender to the dominance of others, as the latter are taught that they belong to categories (or castes) “not called” to be special. However, this is not the exposition of what indeed is being called by the Lord or having received a calling from God, for the Lord extends His calling to all those who believe in the offer of life that is available to them in the heavenly kingdom.

*Ephesians 6: 9 ... knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

*1 Timothy 2: 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*

*4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

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Some people in the world usually say to others that “they were born to be this or that,” but under what parameters and on what property do they say this?

How many individuals actually consult the Author of life, the only God Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, and everything in them, to know what is the also heavenly vocation of life under which the Lord wants them to live and walk in the world?

And of those who experience the new birth in Christ and who receive the made-alive spirit, how many indeed consult the Lord about the type of vocation of this new life in Him, instead of resorting to what they had previously heard on the subject of “callings” or “vocations?”

Therefore, and aiming to cooperate for a growing reflection or meditation on a subject so inherent and vital to the Christian life of every Christian, we will seek to advance in this material on various aspects mentioned in the Scriptures on the theme of calling or vocation and which are specifically aimed at understanding these points concerning the new creature in Christ Jesus.

*Colossians 3: 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

*2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

*3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

*4 When Christ who is our life appears (or manifests Himself), then you also will appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory.*

## C2. Reviewing the Understanding of the Terms Vocation, Calling, and Election

In the previous themes of this series, we saw several considerations about the testimony in which Paul, one of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, presented several highly relevant aspects regarding his conduct in life as a Christian and the goals he used as parameters or guidance for his life, and from whose texts we recall below some verses, as follows:

*Philippians 3: 13* **Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,**  
*14* **I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call (or vocation) of God in Christ Jesus.**

Although Paul, in the above text, says that he had not yet reached the full prize of God's high calling for his life up to that point, he also declares that he continued steadily towards this goal, which, in turn, was not hidden from him, but well known.

In yet another text, Paul also declares that he did not live aimlessly or without a defined objective. On the contrary, Paul states that he had a goal under which he ran his race as a new creature in Christ.

*1 Corinthians 9: 26* **Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.**

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Nevertheless, what was the goal towards which Paul ran? And for what purpose did he objectively fight the good fight?

The goal towards which Paul was pressing forward, witnessed as an example to all Christians, was “**the prize of the upward calling (or vocation) of God in Christ Jesus!**”

And, in turn, in Paul's aim or goal of life, we find that there is then:

- ⇒ 1) **A prize to be achieved for which it is worthy for people to live;**
- ⇒ 2) **An upward vocation to which God calls people and in which is found the reward worthy of receiving the dedication of people's lives;**
- ⇒ 3) **A place where both the prize of God's upward vocation and the high calling itself are to be found. A place named after the Lord Jesus Christ.**

In the goal of life to which Paul dedicated his life, for which he ran and fought to reach it, and which he taught Christians to also establish as the central goal of their lives, there are three distinct aspects which, properly grouped, are worthy of being the reason for the life of all people in the world. However, these three aspects also need to be understood in their specific or individual characteristics to be seen appropriately in a grouped way.

In this way, to begin to see the three distinct aspects of the same central goal of life presented by God to Christians, through Paul's testimony, we chose to address first the term "*vocation*," mentioned in the text above in reference, because without the "*vocation*," neither the prize nor the place of the prize can be achieved.

Thus, and if we compare the text of Philippians exposed above with some translations in other languages and also in the language in which the text was initially written, we can see that the word *vocation* is simply equivalent to the term *calling* or *a call*, which can be seen in the considerations from annotations associated in the Online Bible with Strong's Lexicon Commentaries and presented below:

***Vocation:***

1) ***A calling, calling to.***

2) ***A call, invitation*** (from an invitation to a party to a divine invitation to embrace God's salvation).

The use of the term *vocation* can be helpful for writing and having a synonym to refer to the term *calling*, but in short, the word *vocation* used in Scripture is the same as the word *calling*.

To say that a person has an upward vocation from God or that one has an upward calling are equivalent expressions. And that being so, our objective, in the present point, becomes, then, to advance towards a broader investigation about what the term *calling* or *vocation* means.

**The expression *vocation* or *calling*, frequently used in the Scriptures and as described in the lexicon referenced above, is directly connected with a party calling some other party to something defined and specific, or to a party making a particular invitation to some other parties.**

Through His Gospel, God, for example, and as one of the parties who carry out calls to human beings, who, in turn, represent the party to whom the callings are directed, invites or calls all people to voluntarily receive in the heart, through faith, the salvation that is extended to them from the heavenly kingdom according to the grace of the Lord.

Therefore, a calling or a vocation is not an imposition of an option or destiny, but the offering of an invitation to which a person voluntarily can choose to adhere or reject. We also remember here that the Gospel of God, as a whole, is an offer or call extended by God to all human beings, but that depends on the individual and voluntary acceptance of each person so that one can enjoy the benefits offered by this same Gospel. An aspect addressed more broadly in the themes entitled Much More than a Message: An Offer of Life, The Limit of the Unlimited Gospel, and The Gospel of the Creator.

And once we start to see that a calling is also associated with the presentation of an invitation from one part to some other part, we can observe that a calling, or a vocation,

can involve different actions in its constitution or elaboration and in the moment of it being extended to those to whom the calling is intended to be proposed.

In the sense that a calling is also equated with an invitation, it may already exist and be fully formulated even before it is announced or extended to those to whom the invitation is intended.

When equated with an invitation, a calling may already be constituted before its announcement and may already contain a description of a series of characteristics that are inherent to the vocation it intends to announce, such as, for example, the main aspects for which a person is being invited or called and what are the terms of adhering to the invitation extended to an individual.

The act of calling someone to a vocation, in one way or another, more elaborated or less elaborated, is preceded by the specification and definition of the calling.

**Thus, before taking the actions of actually presenting His callings to the people of the world, God has already defined the characteristics of the callings, vocations, or invitations that He extends to human beings, whether the callings are directed to all individuals, some individuals, or an individual in particular.**

When Paul says that he was called to be an apostle of Christ, he received an invitation to be an apostle of Christ on the terms of Christ's invitation, not as Paul perhaps imagined or wanted it to be.

Furthermore, when one begins to look at what a calling is from the perspective that it can also be equated with an invitation, there is yet another aspect that can be associated with a calling, which is sometimes called in the Scriptures as *election*, emphasizing that this term is also used in its variations, such as, for example, the *elected* or *chosen* ones.

In the present world, it is widely known that if a person intends to prepare and present an invitation, it is also relevant to the process, the definition of the target audience to which the respective invitation is designed to be extended. And the definition of the target audience is also a definition of the individuals who have been "chosen" or "elected" as those to whom the invitation prepared or to be elaborated is intended to be extended.

Now, the definition of those elected for a certain calling, in turn, may need to be divided into more than one aspect of the election, for there may be the set of those elected or chosen to receive the invitation, as well as there may also be a complementary definition of acceptance and election among all those called.

For example, in the call to salvation in Christ Jesus, God regards all human beings as called or chosen to receive the invitation to eternal life according to the heavenly kingdom. However, actually receiving the offered salvation depends on those who are called to it also meeting the requirements that qualify them for the salvation to which all are called, as described in the following text:

*John 3: 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*  
*17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

***18 He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***

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Although all human beings represent those chosen to receive the call to salvation, not all accept the condition of believing in Christ Jesus to receive, in their lives, the salvation offered to them by the Lord. This aspect then generates a distinction between those who receive the Lord in their lives and those who do not receive Him, also creating a second group of chosen or elected, that is, those who indeed received the invitation extended to them.

And in general, when the Scriptures mention those who met the criteria of election or calling, or those who are called the elected or chosen, they are referring to individuals who accepted, through faith in the Lord, the call of salvation extended by God to all human beings, according to the following example:

*Matthew 22: 14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."*

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As for the election, we could say that the second group of chosen ones mentioned in the last paragraph are those who, according to the criterion of faith in God, became eligible or elected to come to be constituted as a new creature in Christ Jesus.

**As for salvation offered by the heavenly kingdom, God has chosen to call all people to salvation, with no partiality regarding any individual. However, as to whom the newness of life in Him is granted, God only chooses those who are approved according to the election that God previously established, which is to believe in Christ and receive Him as Lord in the heart.**

Thus:

- ⇒ 1) The calling or vocation of God has well-defined parameters;
- ⇒ 2) The act of calling someone has defined parameters;
- ⇒ 3) The election has well-defined criteria;
- ⇒ 4) The conditions of life after God's calling has been accepted or received also have well-defined criteria.

Therefore, in the Scriptures or the Bible, we can find several aspects that define what comes to be what commonly is called, by some people, just as a calling or vocation. In the same Scriptures, several types of callings can be found, where each type has a specific message, messengers according to their kind, the recipients of the calling, the criteria for receiving or accepting the calling, and the means of living and walking according to the vocation received. And yet, the prize or what results in answering and remaining in a specific calling.

There are people who only focus on the fact that they have been called by God, using this supposed condition of having been called even to give rise to vanity and arrogance regarding others. However, a significant part of people who claim to have a calling from

God does not even seek to find out, from God, to which kind of calling the Lord calls people, what the requirements of a calling are, and what the criteria of the election of this calling are. And so, it may occur that people come to subject themselves to a condition in which they boast of having been called without actually living and walking in what God has called them to.

Paul chose to establish in his own life the action of moving forward according to the vocation that God had extended to him. For this reason, he sought diligently to deepen his understanding of what he had been called for and not to see himself running or fighting in vain in the course of his life in the present world.

**Thus, knowing the details of God's calling or vocation for each person is an essential aspect of living according to the vocation offered from the heavenly kingdom, for it is according to what is previously contained in the Lord's calling that God calls people to answer the vocation and live in it, and not according to what people, by themselves, think to be the calling of the Lord extended to them.**

Although some people want to be very active and practical in the sense of fulfilling what they understand to be God's calling for their lives, in the Christian life there is also a need for understanding given by the Lord about what comes to be, according to the heavenly kingdom, a calling, vocation, or election.

As mentioned in the theme on The Law of Understanding, a crucial part of the process that leads a person to experience the Christian life properly is for one to reach an understanding enlightened by the Lord, which also applies to the aspects concerning God's will, calling, or vocation that from God's part is assigned to those who believe in Him and come to be constituted as a new creature in Christ Jesus.

*1 Corinthians 14: 20* **Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.**

*Romans 7: 25* **I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind (or understanding) I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.**

### C3. God's Upward Calling and its Prize

In the previous chapter, when we saw the words in which Paul declares that “***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus,***” we approached the aspect that the goal towards which he was pressing in his own life was constituted by a prize, an upward vocation, and a place in which the prize and the upward calling are found.

In the previous chapter, we also addressed the aspect that, in the Scriptures, the terms *vocation* and *calling* basically equate or are equivalent.

And if we continue to look a little further at the term vocation or calling, we can see that Paul is not referring to pursuing just any vocation, but rather to press toward the “***upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.***”

**By testifying of his so objective attitude towards life, and teaching us about the essential aspects of Christian life in the world, Paul shows us that for the new creature in Christ, there is a calling from God that stands out from others and to which he singularly addressed himself, calling it an “upward or sovereign vocation” or an “upward calling.”**

The world is full of callings or continually calls people to get involved with the diversity of its callings or to live according to them. And in the very Christian life that God calls all people to live and walk, there can also be a variety of callings.

Nevertheless, **when referring to the “*upward calling of God in Christ Jesus,*” Paul teaches us that there is a calling that is above all others, which, because of its sovereign characteristic, also received the place of the highest importance in his life.**

Many people, and even many Christians, understand that they have a calling when they see themselves called to politics, to some public service, to health services, to commerce, to work in the field or in research, to be parents, to serve some community, and so on. However, long before or above being called to some activities in different areas of the world, all people are called to the same “***upward calling of God.***” And this is the calling that Paul signals as the supreme goal of his life and as the reason for continually pressing forward to the goal.

Many parents, still very early in their children's lives, want to find out what kind of calling or vocation their children have skills or aptitudes for. However, although this may have its due importance, it is not about this type of calling that Paul testifies as the primary or sovereign calling of his life or of the lives of those who reach, by the Lord, the condition of Christians.

There are parents who want to instill in their children “the callings” they want their children to have. There are parents who encourage their children to look inside themselves and discover “their callings” in themselves. On the other hand, there are even parents who discourage their children from advancing to any “calling,” claiming that it is not worth having hope in life. However, it is not about any of these issues that Paul gives the testimony of his life and why he is so persistent in moving towards the goal of his life.

In the variety of callings that God has for His children according to the new creature, Paul had been specifically called to be an apostle or sent by the Lord Jesus Christ to announce the Gospel of God. Calling to which he sought to be very faithful. However,

when Paul refers to *the sovereign or upward calling of God in Christ Jesus*, it is not the specific call to be an apostle that he is referring to, but the vocation that every Christian should also have as the sovereign calling of one's life.

And why does Paul stress so strongly the *sovereign or upward calling of God in Christ Jesus*?

**First, Paul gives such high prominence to the *upward calling of God in Christ Jesus* because it is directed toward all people in the world, but also because of the **prize** that is associated with this sovereign calling.**

The calls that exist in the world for people to join specific groups, lifestyles, and diverse lines of thought are intense and continually found around people. However, for a calling to be qualified as good or appropriate, it is also necessary to ascertain the types of awards associated with each specific calling. And this, to know whether it is worthy of being accepted or adhered to, or if it should not be accepted but rejected.

Earlier, we saw that a certain “calling” implies saying that someone also elaborated it. And if there is someone who elaborated a calling, there are also purposes for which someone elaborated it, which, in turn, leads to the primary need to evaluate, in advance, the purposes of the callings so that a person does not reap non-beneficial rewards arising from joining callings that are not truly appropriate or for one's good.

**For Christians in the world, there are callings given to them by God for temporary aspects of their lives, but as coming from the Lord, they will never conflict with the *upward calling of God in Christ Jesus*.**

*Romans 8: 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

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**Although God may extend temporary, specific, and varied callings to Christians, these callings are made to add up in cooperation with the *sovereign calling of God in Christ Jesus*, for it is in this upward calling that also lies the Lord's sovereign reward for those who follow the supreme vocation.**

On the other hand, the callings that do not cooperate with the *upward calling of God in Christ Jesus* are also those that do not work in favor of those who adhere to them. They are callings who also oppose the prize that is associated with the sovereign heavenly calling and oppose the prize that is in God for those who believe in Him, even though they may offer prizes that temporarily please people's souls or fleshly passions.

**In the world, there are callings that may initially look similar in terms of what a person is called to do, but, at the same time, be entirely different in the results or rewards to which they lead the individuals who receive them and practice them in their lives. That is why, ultimately, the prize is a crucial aspect that actually qualifies a calling, as exemplified below:**

*1 Corinthians 9: 24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.*

***25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.***

***26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.***

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**For a person to be able to claim that one minimally understands a calling, one should be aware of the origin of the calling that is being extended to him or her, but one should also be equally aware of the type of outcome to which this calling leads.**

For instance, when a person hears an expression like “you have the right to be happy,” one is hearing an expression with evident characteristics of a vocation or a calling. And the purpose of a sentence like the one exemplified in this paragraph is to propose a life direction, a goal, and a life expectancy to the person to whom “the call to happiness” is being addressed. However, the prize or the result of a person answering this type of calling can be very negative if one does not previously understand that true joy comes from the kingdom of God or if one supposes that one “has the right to happiness” at any cost or at the cost of unrighteousness towards the Lord and one's fellow men.

**Therefore, a calling or a vocation, before being accepted and adhered to, should go through firm criteria for assessing its credibility (1) in terms of origin and (2) in terms of the rewards it promises to offer, as well as (3) in terms of the credibility of actually being able to deliver the prize that is promised to be delivered at the end of a person's journey in that calling.**

**Furthermore, knowing that there is a sovereign calling regarding the other callings is also vital so that a person does not start reversing the various callings that may be proposed to him or her, including several of those that may be presented to him or her by the Lord Himself.**

**A temporal calling, a professional vocation, a ministerial calling, and even a paternal or maternal calling, will never be granted by God to a person for it to overtake *the sovereign calling of God in Christ Jesus*, to compete with this upward vocation, or for a person neglecting what should always be central in one's life.**

**As much as there may be countless benefits in being helpful to God in the most diverse callings that He extends to people, an individual can only enjoy these benefits if one reaches the prize that is *in the upward calling of God in the Lord Jesus Christ*.**

So, what is the use of a person wanting to intensely respond to a calling to do works for God and forgetting the main thing, which is to remain in God and to keep loving the Lord who calls the individual to eternal life by grace, through faith, and not by human works or efforts in the flesh?

Recalling that Christ Himself is the “first love” of the Christian, and that God is love, as explained more widely in the theme about Works, Labors, and Services, we also present below the following texts to be remembered:

*Revelation 2: 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*  
**5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.**

*1 John 4: 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*

*Galatians 5: 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

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When people follow or practice the temporal callings that they have received from God, or that they think they have received from the Lord, as their final goals, or when they put so much effort into these callings that they are not active in following the upward vocation, they run the risk of overvaluing what is not the supreme calling and even run the risk of starting to make the callings and the passing elections the idols that they begin to serve, idolize, or worship.

A person, for example, may become so focused on having received an invitation to a party, or be preoccupied with preparing to be accepted at the party, that by the time one gets to the party itself, one does not enjoy its benefits. In doing so, this person received the calling, prepared to be accepted (elected), but did not enjoy the prize, as one got tired, worn out, or became overly involved with the calling and election instead of keeping a close eye also or primarily on the aspect of the purpose of the calling and the prize associated with it.

When a person claims to be answering or following a calling from God, but does so in such a way that one moves away from fellowship with the Lord, one is no longer acting according to what God has called to do. Instead, one is heeding one's personal yearnings or the appeals of others. If someone neglects the ***upward calling of God in Christ Jesus***, claiming to be performing some specific calling of God, it is no longer a calling of God that one is following, but that which resists God and which is called, by the Lord Jesus, as iniquity.

*Matthew 7: 20 "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*  
**21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.**  
**22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'**  
**23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"**

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Therefore, Paul saw beyond his apostolic calling and election. Paul saw the ***upward vocation of God in Christ Jesus*** because he also kept an eye on the ***prize*** he saw associated with the sovereign calling. The prize for which God calls all people and which He grants to all those who choose Christ Jesus as Lord of their lives and who remain in this condition.

After understanding that he had already been called to the ***upward vocation of God in Christ Jesus***, which the Lord would like all people to know and receive equally, Paul not only wanted to remain in the condition of being called, but also wanted to live and to walk in such a way that the ***prize*** of this calling was always assured him. A reason why he always remained steadfast in the Lord.

*Philippians 3: 12* ***Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.***

*13* ***Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,***

*14* ***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

*2 Timothy 4: 8* ***Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.***

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In this way, if, on the one hand, Paul followed faithfully the Lord to serve Him in the calling he had received to be an apostle of Christ, on the other hand, he did not take his eyes off his heart or his understanding of the ***sovereign vocation of God in Christ Jesus*** because of the ***prize*** set before him in Him who died for him on the cross of Calvary to provide him with the heavenly and eternal righteousness, and not just a crown of temporal rewards or according to the righteousness of men. Paul knew that his salvation was not in the fact that he was an apostle of Christ, but in his abiding firm in the ***upward vocation of God in Christ Jesus***, a vocation equally available to all human beings.

The Lord Jesus Christ, also in other words, declared what is most relevant in the life of every human being, as follows:

*Luke 9: 25* ***For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?***

*Revelation 3: 11* ***"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."***

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So, what, then, is the **upward calling of God in Christ Jesus** and the **prize** associated with it for all people who receive it?

Let us see below one more text that, along with many others, exemplifies or teaches us about what is the **upward calling of God in Christ Jesus**:

*2 Thessalonians 2: 13* **But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,**  
*14* **to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

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The sovereign call of God is the call to eternal life settled or fully established in Christ Jesus. And the prize of the sovereign calling for an individual is that one sees this upward calling established eternally in one's life.

The upward calling of God is the eternal knowledge of God and Christ Jesus through continual fellowship with the Lord. And the prize of this sovereign calling is to experience this fellowship and see it established for eternity.

The award of the sovereign vocation of God is the effective establishment of the upward calling of God in the life of the one who receives this heavenly calling in one's heart and remains in it until the full achievement of the prize associated with this vocation.

*1 Peter 1: 3* **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**  
*4* **to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**  
*5* **who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

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Every individual who receives Jesus Christ as Lord, by receiving Him in the heart, already experiences salvation, already begins eternal life as a new creature, and has already entered the upward vocation of God in Christ Jesus, finding oneself already reconciled with the Lord and having fellowship with God available. However, while a Christian still lives on Earth, one needs to persevere in this upward calling or salvation until one obtains its eternal consolidation, which is the final prize of the sovereign calling of God in Christ.

A person who has received Christ Jesus as Lord in one's heart already has salvation. However, being still in the present world, this person needs to remain and persevere in the heavenly salvation or the upward vocation granted by God, for if one moves away

from the sovereign vocation in the Lord, this person is still subject to risks that may compromise one's personal salvation for eternal life.

*Matthew 24: 13* **But he who endures to the end shall be saved.**

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**In the so-called “last time,” expressed by Peter in the text quoted just above, there is mention of salvation that seals the salvation already received during a person's life on Earth through faith in Christ Jesus. And this establishment of salvation forever, and without the risks that are on Earth, is the *prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.***

Paul had already achieved salvation in Christ. Paul already had a call to be an apostle of the Lord. However, this was not the upward calling he was referring to and which he had set as the goal for which he continued to persevere in the Lord. Although he had already received his life's salvation by accepting Christ as Lord, Paul was focused, to the end, on remaining in this salvation until the day it was settled and established perfectly, entirely, or irreversibly in his life.

Paul was not content with having experienced salvation and deliverance for his temporary life on Earth and being called to work for the Lord Jesus Christ in this present world. Paul wanted the prize of the upward calling of God, which was to enjoy the presence of Christ and fellowship with the Lord in his own life on Earth, but also and mainly for all eternity.

Although he had already received the Lord's salvation and life while he was still in the present world, Paul expressed himself very sincerely and clearly when he said that he had not yet reached the complete fulfillment of this great salvation while he still dwelt in an imperfect body. Paul knew that he needed to persevere in the grace of the Lord and in His sovereign calling until the end, until the glorious day of being perfectly and inseparably forever in the Lord, until the day when he, too, would be able in the Lord to receive even a glorified body in likeness to the body of our risen Lord Jesus Christ.

*Philippians 3: 20* **For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**  
*21* **who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**

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Using another approach, John also reiterates the prize that is reserved in the Lord for all those who persevere in the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus, as follows:

*1 John 3: 2* **Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**

In the epistle regarding the last text presented above, John writes to Christians, remembering that every genuine Christian is already a son of God, is already born again, and already has God's salvation, even though one still lives in the present world. On the other hand, John also shows that while this child of God lives in the natural body, one is not yet fully what one will become in the Lord. He shows that ***the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus*** is yet to be manifested in many other respects because of which Paul remained faithful to the Lord until the end.

***The upward calling of God in Christ Jesus is not a vocation to receive salvation merely to have a better life on Earth. The sovereign calling of God in Christ Jesus is for a person to have eternal life while in the present world, but also to be eternally in the presence of God. The upward calling of the Lord is for an individual to be for all eternity in one's true homeland which is in Heaven.***

As we mentioned earlier, the **prize** of the upward calling of God is this **sovereign calling of God fully accomplished.**

The **eternal prize** for the Christian is that which is given already in the life in Christ while one is in the world, but which, however, becomes established perfectly and eternally for a person after one's life on Earth. The **eternal prize** is to have Christ Jesus as the foundation of life in the present world, as well as for eternal life.

*1 John 5: 10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.*

*11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

*12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

*13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

*1 Corinthians 3: 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

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The call to be an apostle of Christ was highly important to Paul. However, it was his biggest target that made him keep his eyes fixed on God. It was ***the prize of the upward vocation of God in Christ Jesus*** that was always before his eyes, which the Lord also extends to all people who persevere in this heavenly calling.

After knowing Christ personally and receiving Him as Lord, Paul never let the calling to carry out the so-called works of God overcome his goal of the prize of ***the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus***, an aspect that he witnessed through a variety of texts such as the following:

- 2 Corinthians 5: 1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*
- 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,*
- 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.*
- 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.*
- 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.*
- 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.*
- 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.*
- 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*
- 9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*
- 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

Therefore, what would it profit Paul to preach God's calling to the world, gain everyone, and lose his own soul?

*Matthew 16: 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

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How many are not the workers who call themselves servants of God and who begin to preach the Gospel of God, but do not remain focused on the ***prize of the sovereign vocation of God in Christ Jesus***, moving away from the very Gospel they claim to announce?

Thus, **something extraordinary to be noted in Paul's life is that he had understood with conviction that his salvation did not come through works, labors, and services that he did for God, but through faith in the righteousness of Christ towards his life.**

Paul, also called Saul, was a Pharisee before he knew Christ as his Lord. And as such, he was one of the most zealous of his day in fulfilling the commandments of the Law of Moses, thinking that he could be saved by the works of this law. However, when Paul saw that this was no argument for salvation, he left all former things behind (forgetting those things which are behind) to never look for that fruitless path again.

Paul saw the calling to do or cooperate with God's work as an indescribable privilege and grace, but he never reasoned and believed that his salvation would come through his calling to be an apostle.

Paul's main focus was on the Lord and the ***prize of the upward calling of God in Christ***, which was to be saved by grace and see that salvation being sealed eternally after the end of his life on Earth.

Near his natural death or the end of his time in the present world, Paul declares:

*2 Timothy 4: 6 **For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.***

*7 **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.***

***8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.***

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What a glorious day Paul describes in this last text. Paul could look back on his life and see that he “had kept the first faith,” the “faith of salvation by grace,” the “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” as the only One able to grant him the prize of eternal salvation.

In his last words before his natural death, Paul did not make an extensive list of the works "he" had done, the demons he had cast out, and the preaching statistics he had accomplished. On the contrary, Paul ends the account of his past on Earth by saying that he did not move away from the focus on faith for salvation by the grace and righteousness of the Lord.

And now, that day, which for Paul was still a little further away at other times in one's life, had arrived or was right in front of him. The day of receiving the prize, the day of receiving the crown of righteousness from God forever and ever, was at the door, and Paul entered it forever.

When we also look at the example of that criminal who was nailed to a cross next to the Lord Jesus Christ, we see that he achieved the same crown and the same **prize of the upward vocation of God in Christ Jesus** without ever having done a single work for God. A point that once more shows us that salvation is not by works, but by the mercy and grace of God that someone voluntarily decides to receive through faith in the Lord and the sovereign calling offered by God to all human beings.

The criminal on the cross beside the cross of Christ, according to the upward calling of God, was also a "winner" concerning receiving the sovereign and eternal prize.

*Luke 23: 39 **Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."***  
*40 **But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"***  
*41 **"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."***  
*42 **Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."***  
*43 **And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."***

*Revelation 2: 7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."*

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God's sovereign calling is, therefore, offered to all through the Lord's righteousness, mercy, and grace. And the work that God requires for the prize of the upward calling in Christ Jesus to be received is to remain in the work of believing in Christ as the Lord sent from the Heavenly Father to impart, by grace, salvation and the novelty of eternal life to everyone who believes in Him.

*John 6: 27 "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."  
28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"  
29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*

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Whoever accepts the invitation (the calling) exposed by the Gospel of God, and remains in the condition of believing in the heavenly grace and in the practice of confessing Christ Jesus as the Lord, will always be among those chosen for the "*prize of the upward calling of God.*" The one who does so will always be among those who run as if to reach the incorruptible prize promised to them by the Eternal Lord.

And all other works and callings are secondary to the *sovereign calling of God in Christ Jesus and its prize.*

*Romans 10: 9 ... that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.  
10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.  
11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."  
12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.  
13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*

*John 1: 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:  
13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

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The calling of God to the prize of the upward vocation in Christ Jesus was the central or main calling of Paul's life. It was not the call to be an apostle, although Paul never despised this second calling either. For Paul, the sovereign calling in Christ (the central one) was so relevant that he judged that the Lord who had called him to the upward calling was also worthy of receiving the total dedication of his life in everything he did.

Thus, there are no other callings, visions, missions, and ambitions worth pursuing in the world to the detriment of, or the loss of, “***the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.***”

**There is an immeasurable and irreplaceable sovereign or upward hope in the calling of God in Christ Jesus for all those who believe in Him, which is to be eternally in the presence of God.**

*Ephesians 4: 4* ***There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling;***

***5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;***

***6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.***

*1 Peter 5: 4* ... ***and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.***

## C4. Diversity of Callings, but Only One Purpose

In the two previous chapters, regarding the words in which Paul declares that “***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus,***” we approached the aspect that the goal towards which he was advancing in his own life was constituted (1) by a prize, (2) by an upward calling, and (3) by a place in which the prize and the upward calling are.

And considering yet that in the two previous chapters we dealt in more detail with the prize and the upward vocation, it remains for us to address a little more about the place where the sovereign calling and its prize are found.

**Once a certain objective or target can only be reached if an individual can also reach the place where one's objective can be accomplished, we could then, in a sense, say that the most crucial aspect for this individual is to reach the place where one's objective can be achieved or, at least, that reaching this place is the prerequisite for achieving all other aspects of the upward calling and the prize associated with it.**

For example, a person just knowing that there is a solution for some eminent need in one's life, but without being able to indeed reach at the desired solution, still keeps this person dissociated from the actual solution.

But what, then, is the place where a person can live and walk according to the upward calling of God in such a way that one also reaches the prize of this sovereign vocation?

**The place to which God calls people to the upward calling, as well as to its prize, is called by the Lord, in the Scriptures, as “*in Christ Jesus.*”**

**The special vocation to which God calls us, and which is called an upward calling because of the sovereign prize associated with it, is a calling that can only or exclusively be found, lived, or experienced in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

In this way, it will be useless for an individual to seek to know a series of information and details of the upward calling of God, and of the prize that is associated with it, if this individual does not reach the condition in which one comes to be “***in Christ Jesus.***” An aspect that also demonstrates that this condition is the primary one to be achieved by any human being who aims to receive salvation and eternal life that express the prize of the sovereign vocation of God.

For anyone in the world, the most relevant or fundamental place to be reached to obtain not only the natural life, but also the newness of life according to the upward calling of God and His heavenly kingdom, is to come to be “***in Christ Jesus.***” An aspect that the Lord Himself declared as a prerequisite for an individual to do other actions according to the will of God and that also guided the entire ministry of an apostle of Christ to which Paul had been called, as exemplified below:

*John 15: 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

*5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."*

*Colossians 1: 27* ***To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

***28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect “in Christ Jesus.”***

***29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.***

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When a person learns that it is “***in Christ***” that the upward calling of God and the prize corresponding to it are, and comes to experience the condition of actually “***being in Christ***” and “***Christ in him or her***,” as the branch is in the vine, but the vine is also in the branch by the life that it comes to share with the branch, this person also becomes strengthened by the One in which one comes to be. And this, to be able to live and walk in the upward calling to which one adhered and to be able to reach the prize associated with this vocation, according to the effectiveness of the Lord who comes to operate in one's life.

**Although the upward calling of God, and the prize corresponding to it, are offered to people for them to adopt these aspects as also the sovereign aim of their lives, it is by the action of coming to be and abiding ***in Christ Jesus*** that the purpose of the sovereign calling and its prize may come to be attained.**

**When God calls people to His sovereign vocation and its prize ***in Christ Jesus***, God calls people to have a first main purpose in their lives, which is to come to find themselves ***in Christ Jesus*** to achieve, through this first purpose, the purpose of the upward calling and its prize.**

So, because of what has been exposed in these last paragraphs, we have tried to highlight so much some topics such as The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, The Core Principle of Life for a Christian, and the series Walking in Newness of Life, which, in reality, is equivalent to walking ***in Christ Jesus***.

**And if we seek to delve a little further into the fundamental position that ***being in Christ Jesus*** represents for an individual before God as to His upward calling and its prize, we may notice from the Scriptures that this position is indeed equally fundamental to any other calling from God to a Christian.**

**If a person's position of being ***in Christ Jesus*** is a prerequisite and eternal foundation for the upward calling and prize of God in Christ Jesus, this position of being in the Lord, equally or much more, is also a prerequisite or foundation for the other calls that God extends to those who have come to be constituted His children according to the condition of new creatures in Him.**

Among the diverse, marvelous, and precious callings that God has prepared beforehand for human beings to accept and follow, besides the upward calling and its reward, there is a purpose of God that applies to all callings or that is a prerequisite of

all others so that all of them may be of benefit to the lives of the people who follow them, which is the condition of a person ***being in Christ Jesus***.

Without having the ***being in Christ Jesus*** as the first and central purpose of life or without actually achieving this purpose, the other callings that God has beforehand prepared for people to live and walk in them cannot indeed come to be followed or performed appropriately. The callings of God were designed to be followed or carried out only in the place called as ***being in Christ Jesus*** and for the fact that it is ***in Christ Jesus*** that the fullness of God is for a person to act according to the working of the Lord's mighty power.

*Colossians 2: 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,*

*7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

*8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

*9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

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**In the Christian life, there is a diversity of callings for distinct people, as well as there is one equal calling for all people, which is the upward calling and its prize. However, all callings of God, and which have already been previously conceived by God, are designed to be received to cooperate so that the purpose that God has in each of His callings is fulfilled, which, in turn, is that people live and walk in Him by living and walking *in Christ Jesus*.**

Thus, understanding that the supreme purpose of God is that all people come to be ***in Christ Jesus*** to, through Him, find themselves living and walking in the Creator God of their lives is also very significant for people to come to understand what the following text presents:

*Romans 8: 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

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Some people claim that all things in their lives will ultimately work together for their good, referring to the above text. However, what is exposed above does not declare that all things always cooperate for good or that they cooperate for the good of all.

In the text of Romans 8, verse 28, it is exposed that what is said in it refers exclusively to those who love God and who present themselves to the Lord to respond or heed to the calling according to the purpose of the Eternal Lord.

Not all people live aiming to achieve the purpose of God's calling. Instead, multitudes of people live for their own purposes, which makes this one of the reasons why there is so much disagreement and conflict in life. A theme addressed more

broadly in the subject of The Gospel of Peace, and regarding which we recall the following text:

- James 4: 1 Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*  
*2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.*  
*3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*  
*4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*
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As for loving God mentioned in Romans 8, verse 28, we can further remember that the love of God is also expressed by following the instruction that the Lord gives to those who love Him, as described below:

- 1 John 5: 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*  
*4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.*  
*5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*
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And advancing a little further on the matter presented in these last paragraphs, and considering that the commandments of God for a Christian are not to follow the Law of Moses, but the Law of Christ, the Law of Liberty in the Lord, the Law of Grace in Christ Jesus, would not following the supreme purpose of God, and cooperating with that purpose, be the principal or central thing to be achieved by every Christian?

Therefore, if a person does not live directed to God's supreme purpose or will, one does not have the Lord's promise that all things work together for one's good. On the contrary, many things may be cooperating with the path of the destruction of one's life.

- 1 Peter 4: 1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,*  
*2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.*  
*3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.*  
*4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.*  
*5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*
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**All of God's invitations for people to participate in His work on Earth have a non-negotiable characteristic in common: cooperation for the same or central purpose established by the Lord.**

If a person claims to have a calling from God, but it is not in line with God's purpose, this calling is not from God, or it is not from God in the way the person seeks to follow or fulfill that calling, even if the person claims to be doing "in the name of God" what one does.

What a calling cooperates with, or the way in which a person follows or performs a vocation, also defines the origin of the calling or an individual's actions towards it.

**In a life according to God's will, there can be a variety of practical callings for Christians while they are still in the present world. However, all of God's callings to them have the same purpose to guide them.**

What, then, is God's purpose for the upward calling and its reward, as well as in all the diversity of God's callings?

Let us look carefully at the text below:

*Ephesians 1: 3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,***  
*4 **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,***  
*5 **having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,***  
*6 **to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.***  
*7 **In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace***  
*8 **which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,***  
*9 **having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,***  
*10 **that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him.***  
*11 **In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,***  
*12 **that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.***  
*13 **In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,***  
*14 **who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.***

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**What, then, is God's eternal purpose, or what is God's sovereign will, according to the good pleasure or benevolence, goodness, and grace that is in the Lord?**

**God's eternal purpose is to bring all things together *in Christ Jesus*, both in Heaven and on Earth. And this, so that *in Christ Jesus*, everything may also be given to us by God as an inheritance or having in mind the fact that God called us, in Christ Jesus, to be His eternal children and heirs.**

If the reader of this material has already seen other themes of the Systemic Teaching about Christian Life, one will be able to observe that all of them are redundant in always pointing to fellowship with Christ and the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the lives of those who receive Him in the heart by grace, through faith, because this is the eternal purpose established from eternity by God, according to His grace and goodness.

**All people are called to God's salvation. And, in turn, all the saved are called to live their lives in the purpose of God, which is to converge or gather together all things in Christ Jesus, because it is *in Christ Jesus* that God chose to reveal to all His grace, righteousness, love, and fullness.**

If a particular person receives a calling to a specific activity, this is only coming from God if it is granted to cooperate so that all things in one's life also come to converge in Christ. If a person is called to a vocation or to a way of performing a calling that does not cooperate with this purpose, this vocation or the way of fulfilling it does not come from a calling from God.

If a calling that is placed before a person aims that one depends on Christ and cooperates for more aspects to be converged to the Lordship of Christ, it has characteristics of coming from God. However, if the exposed calling takes a person away from Christ, the calling is not from God.

There are people who say that God accepts the diversity of works to justify their activities and different postures from others. The question, however, is not whether or not God accepts the diversity of callings, for God grants people various gifts and vocations. The matter is not primarily the variety, but the purpose to which the diversity of callings is being channeled.

*Matthew 12: 30* **"He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad."**

Many people claim that God has a variety of callings and gifts, but they often forget to say that for God, there is only one purpose in the diversity of gifts and callings that He extends to people. Moreover, even in weaknesses or in the face of opposition, a person is called to have the convergence of everything to Christ as one's central focus.

*2 Corinthians 12: 10* ***Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities (or weaknesses), in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.***

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**There is a supreme and *eternal purpose* for life *in Christ Jesus*, which is to cooperate with the supreme and eternal purpose of God to converge or gather together all things *in Christ Jesus*, who is the place where a Christian finds the upward calling of God and the prize associated with this vocation.**

*Ephesians 3: 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,*  
*9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;*  
*10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,*  
*11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*  
*12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*  
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Thus, for a Christian to be appropriately aligned with the Lord's purpose in common for every calling of God is more important than the variety of gifts, vocations, and obtaining a calling in some specific area.

**After having received salvation and abiding in it, which is God's upward calling and prize for all people, a Christian is given a supreme purpose, which is to cooperate with God's eternal purpose. The Christian receives a general call to be a fellow worker with God's eternal purpose, which, in turn, is to converge all things in Christ.**

All Christians are called to the vocation of fellow workers with God's supreme purpose. From parents who teach their children to walk in the eternal way, which is the relationship with Christ, to the very child who learns to do one's tasks depending on the Lord and as an expression of praise to God.

A worker, in one's profession or one's place of work, may make sure that one's functions are guided by the Lord and can pray that that place also serves for the good of people and the praise of God.

A student may dedicate oneself to the opportunity given so that in everything one does, one may obtain knowledge of the things of God, but also that one may have skills in natural things to work in everything for the glory of God.

On the other hand, the same worker and the same student may seek information and knowledge without wanting to become dependent on God, and thus they do not converge their lives and actions to or in Christ.

**God's eternal purpose is for all to be converged in Christ, to the praise of the glory of Christ and God.** (A topic discussed more widely in the theme of The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ).

*1 Corinthians 10: 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*  
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**God does not call people for them to perform a calling that separates themselves and others from Christ, but for them to turn their hearts to Christ, as well as everything they come to practice in the world.**

Unfortunately, not all individuals adhere to this eternal purpose of God and seek to draw people after themselves and not to be *in Christ Jesus*. These do not have a calling from God to do so, as much as they claim to be servants of Christ or are called by God to serve Him, for their intentions are evil and perverse. They are “teachers” who do not seek the convergence of everything *in Christ Jesus*, but in themselves, as the following example presents:

*Acts 20: 29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.  
30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.  
31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears."*

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**For Christians, it is essential to understand that any calling they truly receive from God is preceded or has as a prerequisite the calling to be fellow workers in all things with God's eternal purpose to gather together all things *in Christ Jesus*.**

Understanding God's eternal purpose for Christ Jesus is a surety for a Christian to be able to evaluate the callings that are proposed for one's life or those that others say they have for a Christian but that are not aimed at cooperation with God's eternal purpose.

As for the calling to eternal salvation, everyone is called, all people are predestined to salvation, and everyone can be elected for salvation. However, regarding the election, not everyone wants God's purpose for their lives to be converged *in Christ Jesus*, converged to the Lord, His grace, righteousness, and light. And it is because they reject what God offers them *in Christ Jesus* that many do not become heirs of God.

According to the words recorded in various parts of the Scriptures, the Lord is longsuffering and does not want any individual to perish. On the contrary, He wants everyone to come to the repentance to which they are “called” by Him. However, not everyone wants God's salvation because they also do not want their lives to be converged to the Lordship of Christ Jesus or the eternal purpose according to God's benevolence towards all human beings.

In this way, it is not God who makes a distinction between people to call them to His eternal purpose, but it is people who put themselves in different positions when they accept or reject what God offers them or when they accept or reject the eternal purpose to which the Lord calls all human beings.

*1 Timothy 2: 3 **For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,**  
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

**5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the  
Man Christ Jesus,  
6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**

*Matthew 9: 13* **"But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."**

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We recall here once again that God's calling to salvation and His eternal purpose is general to all. However, as this calling has the characteristic of being an offer, its acceptance is also personal and voluntary. And not all want their life to be *in Christ Jesus*, making them respond and seek to multiply callings that are opposed to the will of the Lord.

*Romans 10: 9* ... **that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**

**10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

**11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."**

**12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.**

**13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."**

*2 Peter 3: 9* **The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**

*Romans 10: 16* **But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"**

*John 3: 19* **And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

**20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

**21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.**

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When a Christian practices living and walking *in the Lord*, that is, in the place designated by God for a person to reach the upward vocation and the prize of God in Christ Jesus, this Christian may come to act in several

different calls of the Lord cooperating in everything for the eternal purpose of the Heavenly Father.

When a Christian lives and walks *in Christ*, and inclines oneself to the purpose that one's life is converged to the Lord, one comes to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and His name, or even, Christ is glorified in the life of the one who believes in Him and through the one who abides in Him.

*1 Corinthians 15: 57* ***But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

*2 Corinthians 1: 20* ***For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.***

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Furthermore, when the Christian lives and walks in the place assigned by God to live the Christian life, as well as for the purpose of converging all glory to Christ, Christ also exalts the Christian who is in Him and who trusts in Him.

*Colossians 3: 1* ***If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.***

*2* ***Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.***

*3* ***For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***

*4* ***When Christ who is our life appears (or will manifest Himself), then you also will appear (be manifested) with Him in glory.***

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The calling of God is granted by the Lord by His eternal grace. The election of people to be called is also by the will of God and by His grace. However, for a person to advance in the grace of the Lord, it is necessary that one walks, through the same heavenly grace, in the dignity and purpose that are proper to the calling to which God has also called an individual and which one also represents after having adhered to it.

And finally, in this chapter, we remember that for those who receive the grace of Christ for salvation, in order to be able to be in Him and for the purpose of God to be fulfilled in their lives and through them, the Lord, also through His grace, is mighty to make those who love Him worthy of His eternal purpose, as well as to lead them along the way in which all things cooperate for those who are called according to the eternal purpose of the Heavenly Father *in Christ Jesus*.

*2 Thessalonians 1: 11* ***Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,***

*<sup>12</sup> that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## C5. Several Facets of One Same Calling and the Diversity of Callings

The theme of vocation, calling, and election, in some situations, may seem complex. However, this complexity can often be associated with a lack of dedication to a broader and global understanding of some basic aspects related to it.

Some people tend to address only a specific or unique aspect of a theme and give some detail a weight of exclusivity as if a single point were the global aspect of the subject, doing so, however, to the detriment of the perception and understanding of the bigger picture involved in the respective matter.

Thus, in some groups of Christians or who claim to be Christians, there is often exaggerated weight given to the aspect of a “specific calling” that a person should discover and perform, causing many people to ask each other questions such as: “What is your calling?”; “What did God call a brother or sister for?”; “Has the brother or sister already discovered one's calling?”; and so on.

And in these scenarios that only focus on the specific, many individuals get so absorbed with the idea of having a distinctive and personal calling that they forget to live out the main aspects of God's general calling for their lives, the general vocation that God extends to all people who came to reach the condition of new creatures in Christ Jesus, through the grace of God and faith in the Lord.

In previous chapters, we have already mentioned the emphasis that Paul gives to the “prize” and the “upward calling of God in Christ Jesus,” showing the essential condition that these aspects should have in the life of every Christian.

In the previous chapters, we also addressed the emphasis that the Heavenly Father Himself shows us about the eternal purpose that exists in all the callings that come from Him, which is to converge all things in Christ and that every Christian comes to cooperate so that in everything one acts being in the Lord and the Lord in the Christian.

**And if a Christian only observed the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus and the life according to the eternal purpose of the Lord for people according to His goodness in Christ Jesus, this Christian would already have an enormity of aspects to be known and experienced, and concerning which, one could have the highest hopes.**

**Considering that the upward calling of God and the eternal purpose that God purposed in Christ Jesus are the basis of all other callings of Christians and that they are the aspects that give support, credibility, and purpose to the diversity of other specific callings, it is first in living and walking in the sovereign calling and eternal purpose of God that a Christian should place one's attention.**

Some people may come to aspire to a specific calling from God so much, because they also think that it is because of this calling that God will bless them in their lives, that they may fail to realize that it is because of God's upward calling and eternal purpose in Christ Jesus that they can be blessed in the Lord.

God teaches us that the gifts we need for life are in Christ Jesus and are given or conferred to us along with Him, for in Christ is the novelty of life and not in a specific calling. Although a specific calling may be an instrument that will contribute to the manifestation of the newness of life received from God and may cooperate for

remaining in this life, life itself is not in a particular calling to be performed by a person.

It is in the global, general, upward, or sovereign calling to eternal life and in aligning oneself with the purpose of converging the personal life to the Lordship of Christ that provision is found for all aspects of life according to the will of the Lord, and, once again, not in a specific vocation or calling, according to some more texts below:

*Romans 8: 32 **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?***

*John 17: 3 **"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."***

*2 Peter 1: 3 ... **as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ...***

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*In Christ* is the provision of life, the provision to be called to a specific vocation, and the provision to live and walk in it. It is in the upward calling to eternal life *in Christ*, as well as in God's eternal purpose *to be and abide in Christ*, that the provision for life and specific callings is found, and not in the particular callings themselves as if grace could result of human works.

Under the Law of Moses, the performance of the works of this law preceded the receiving of God's salvation. However, in the life in Christ Jesus, which is according to the grace of the Lord and not the works of human efforts, heavenly grace precedes works. It is the grace of the Lord that gives wisdom, understanding, strength, and provision for doing works according to the Law of Christ and not according to the Law of Moses.

*2 Corinthians 9: 8 **And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.***

*9 **As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."***

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Thus, when a person understands that it is by the grace of God that one is sustained, including being called to specific works, and not that the fulfillment of specific callings guarantees grace, this person may also more readily understand that the sovereign calling and the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus should have one's principal or first attention, for it is from abiding in the sovereign and supreme aspects that the other aspects of one's life in conformity with the will of God derive.

The possibility that a person can participate in other specific callings of God, in addition to the sovereign calling to eternal life and to keep oneself attentive to the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus, as being the fruit of God's grace and goodness, is also a topic addressed more widely in the theme Works, Labors, and Services, and from which we recall the following text:

*Ephesians 2: 8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,**  
9 **not of works, lest anyone should boast.**  
10 **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.***

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On the other hand, the lack of knowledge of the sovereign calling and the eternal purpose of God, as well as the excessive appreciation of specific callings, have been some of the main aspects that cooperate to distance people from what is fundamental and most necessary for their lives.

By not holding on to the aspect that in the same and unique general, global, upward, or sovereign calling of God there is already an enormity of facets included in it, even for each of the particular callings that God extends to His children, many people have surrendered to the most diverse and bizarre attempts to find or validate some kind of specific calling in their lives.

For lack of knowledge of the sovereign calling or even resistance to the eternal purpose of God in converging all things to the Lordship of Christ Jesus, people themselves or in reciprocity to each other entitle, name, and consecrate themselves to the most diverse callings, thinking that by the callings they claim to have reached they will be blessed by the Lord, even if they live and walk in opposition to the Lordship of Christ in their lives.

The diversity of specific callings that does not come from abiding and continuing in the sovereign or upward calling of God and the eternal purpose of the Heavenly Father in Christ Jesus does not come from the heavenly kingdom or the Eternal Lord, referring, instead, to fleshly and corrupted attempts related to what is called Another Gospel or A Different Gospel, and not according to the Gospel of the Creator.

Under the allegation of being serving the Eternal Lord but dissociated from the upward calling and the eternal purpose of God in converging all things to the Lordship of Christ Jesus, many people even present themselves as apostles or special anointed ones of Christ, seeking to separate the people in clergy and laity, as if by these distinctions they were of greater worth than others before God. However, this type of proposition ends up falling back into models that try to establish mediators between God and people, whose practice had any validity revoked by the Heavenly Father when He revealed His Beloved Son to the world as the only Mediator between God and all human beings, as exemplified by the following texts:

*2 Corinthians 11: 13 **For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.**  
14 **And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.***

**15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.**

*Matthew 24: 23* **"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.**

**24 For false christs (or anointed) and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.**

**25 See, I have told you beforehand.**

**26 Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it."**

*1 Timothy 2: 5* **For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,**

**6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.**

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**If the prize of the upward vocation of God for people is salvation and fellowship with Christ Jesus, and the eternal purpose of God is to converge everyone in Christ Jesus, why would God again establish men, women, temples, or houses so that through these aspects people would have to come to Him or so that they again would need to come to Him through an indirect way?**

In manifesting His eternal purpose to the world, which is to attract all by His everlasting love to be willingly in Christ Jesus, God would not establish something that was contrary to His supreme purpose. God would not remove an imperfect and weak model, as was the model of the priesthood in conformity with the Law of Moses because it was based on men as mediators, to establish an equally imperfect model again.

By not understanding the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus or by resisting it in order not to find themselves in the light of the Lord and under the Lordship of Christ, people adopt mentalities of callings similar to those revoked by the Lord many centuries ago.

**Through Christ Jesus, God introduced and began to offer the New Covenant of life, which also implies entirely new criteria for callings or vocations.**

*Hebrews 9: 15* **And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.**

*Hebrews 7: 18* **For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.**

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**It is only through the superior hope, through the sovereign calling, or in conformity with the eternal purpose of God to converge all things in Christ Jesus that a person can truly reach the prize of the upward calling, which is to have Christ in the heart so that one can also remain in Him to enjoy the newness of life granted by the Eternal Heavenly Father.**

*Colossians 1: 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

*28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*

*John 14: 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

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**The upward calling to be in Christ Jesus is what allows a person to live the reconciliation with the Heavenly Father, and not some specific calling that someone receives, for if it were a particular calling, some people could reach God and others could not. An aspect that, in turn, would be contrary to the fact that God is no respecter of persons, but offers everyone the same salvation and the condition of faith in Christ Jesus and His righteousness, in which there is no need for human mediators.**

One point that we are trying to emphasize in this chapter refers to the fact that if people are not aware of the multiple facets that are inherent or part of the unique upward calling of God in Christ Jesus, they are very liable to making inappropriate considerations about the specific callings that God has to extend to His most diverse children who still live on Earth.

In the unique upward calling of God and in the Lord's eternal purpose for people to come to believe and receive Christ Jesus as Lord in their hearts, regardless of some other specific calling, there is also already the condition that, for instance, allows a person:

- ⇒ 1) To be a child of God;
- ⇒ 2) To be a child of light;
- ⇒ 3) To be the salt of the Earth;
- ⇒ 4) To be the light of the world, or to be like a light in a world full of corruption;
- ⇒ 5) To be the living letter written to people, not with ink, but by the hand of the Holy Spirit. To be a living witness of God's doings in one's own life;
- ⇒ 6) To be the fragrance of Christ in the world;
- ⇒ 7) To be an instrument of God's righteousness and not an instrument of sin;
- ⇒ 8) To be a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice in the hand of God for the accomplishment of a diversity of aspects of the will of God;
- ⇒ 9) To be a minister, a servant, of Christ in all actions in life in the present world;

- ⇒ 10) To be a faithful steward to God of the Lord's mysteries, and who knows that the central aspect or mystery to be announced is always the one that presents that the newness of life of God and the riches of His glory are in Christ Jesus;
- ⇒ 11) To be able to pray before God in favor of all human beings;
- ⇒ 12) Having the name enrolled in the heavens or the book of eternal life;
- ⇒ 13) To be sealed by the Holy Spirit and by the presence of the Spirit of the Lord in the heart;
- ⇒ 14) To be an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ Jesus.
- ⇒ And even much more.

Repeating, then, once again: What is the upward invitation or general calling of God to all Christians?

**The general calling or invitation of God for every Christian, or for all Christians, is for them to draw closer to fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.**

*1 Corinthians 1: 9 **God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

*2 Corinthians 5: 20 **Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.***

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**Fellowship with Christ cannot be transferred nor mediated by another person. Therefore, this calling is general or for everyone, as it is available to every Christian, but it is also specific and personal since each Christian should practice it individually with the Lord.**

It is not at all reasonable or sober for an individual to have the expectation of oneself being fed through the act by which another person supposedly feeds oneself instead of the former. Each person is nourished by what each one consumes and not by what others feed themselves.

Therefore:

*John 15: 4 **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me."***

*John 6: 57 **"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."***

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**The Lord Jesus Christ declares that whoever does not remain, first, in the upward calling of God, and which is according to the eternal purpose of the Heavenly Father, will not be able to reach the condition of bearing fruit resulting from the sovereign vocation, nor from the other specific callings of God since they are all given by the Lord to bear fruit from the upward calling of fellowship with Christ Jesus.**

Just as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, so also no one can bear fruit according to God's will for one's life unless one first abides in the sovereign calling to be and remain in the fellowship with Christ Jesus, to which all are called by God.

**When the Lord Jesus teaches us that a Christian needs to abide in Him to be fruitful according to God's will, He is teaching us that even a specific calling has no life in itself. On the contrary, it is the being and abiding in what is associated with the sovereign calling of fellowship with Christ that provides life to particular callings.**

Therefore, before a person focuses on specific callings that may exist for him or her in God, it is essential to focus on God by whom one is called and perfected for the practice of good works.

*Hebrews 7: 25* ***Therefore He (Jesus) is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.***

*Hebrews 13: 20* ***Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,***  
*21* ***make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.***

*2 Corinthians 3: 5* ***Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, ...***

*Philippians 2: 13* ***...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.***

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**The works of God to be done by a Christian are manifested to this Christian as a result of one's association and fellowship with Christ, which, in turn, is God's upward calling and eternal purpose for each of His children.**

Before people offer themselves to God for the most diverse callings and needs that there are to be met in the world, the Heavenly Father wants people to answer the calling of personal and individual fellowship with Him, with His Beloved Son, and with the Holy Spirit.

God's eternal purpose that His children voluntarily converge to the Lordship of Christ is so that everyone who was bought by the blood of Christ shed on the cross of Calvary may also be willing to be perfected by God and guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit.

When will Christians, then, finally understand that the Lord's calling to them is to be children of God first so that Heavenly Father Himself may instruct and perfect them in Christ Jesus?

When will Christians stop seeking to improve themselves through other people, in their own schools, seminars, or other means instead of finally putting themselves directly before Christ to have genuine, deep, or meaningful fellowship with the Lord?

Furthermore, how can an individual hear God's leading in specific callings from the heavenly kingdom if one does not open one's heart to fellowship with Christ, the King and Lord established by the Heavenly Father to guide and instruct one's life?

*Revelation 3: 19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*

*20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."*

*1 John 1: 3 ... that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

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The door at which the Lord knocks is the door of every person's heart. And the house that He said He would enter to have fellowship is the life of each one of the people who open the door to Him.

Even if a Christian does not yet know the specific calling of what God wants to be done in some moments of one's life, every Christian has recorded in the Scriptures the calling or vocation to be in Christ Jesus at all times of one's life.

A person's fellowship with Christ is offered to all who receive Him as Lord, whether they are free or in prisons, naturally speaking. Fellowship with the Lord is personal, spiritual, made from the heart of an individual, and can be done wherever a person is, because the Spirit of the Lord is free to be with the children of God wherever they are.

*1 Corinthians 3: 16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

*Romans 8: 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

*15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*

*16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.*

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Being able to walk with light in specific callings is a consequence of first walking in the light of the Father and His Eternal and Beloved Son Jesus Christ. And without answering the calling of personal fellowship with Christ, the possibility of acting in the diversity of other callings to do the good works that God beforehand prepared becomes highly restricted.

On the other hand, when people remain in Christ Jesus, the Lord promises that He will cause them to become very fruitful in the Lord, a condition that He can manifest with great diversity according to the “manifold wisdom of God.”

*John 15: 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."*

*John 15: 16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."*

*Jeremiah 17: 7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD.  
8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.*

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When a Christian holds on the upward calling and the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus, the area, the profession, or the place that the Lord particularly calls the Christian to be and to act is a complementary aspect to one's living and walking in Christ, for the specific callings are only the means of manifesting the fruits which are generated in the Christian from the vine of God, which the Heavenly Father names as the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the sovereign or upward vocation and the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus is the primary source of provision for all aspects or facets that a Christian needs to understand, receive, and carry out some specific calling or activity to which one has been called by the Lord. And this, whether the specific calling is related to personal, family, or professional aspects, or whether it is regarding one's relationships with other Christians or even with the most varied aspects of life.

*Colossians 2: 1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,  
2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to*

- the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,**
- 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**
- 4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.**
- 5 For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.**
- 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,**
- 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.**
- 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**
- 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;**
- 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**
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It is in continuing in the upward calling and the eternal purpose of God for fellowship and life in Christ Jesus that a person can find eternal life and, according to it, also be instructed and strengthened in specific aspects of how to cooperate with the Eternal Lord, knowing, yet, that, in the Lord, there is an immeasurable diversity of gifts, services (or ministries), and achievements to be experienced by those who remain in Him.

**1 Corinthians 8: 6 ... yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.**

**1 Corinthians 12: 4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.**

**5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.**

**6 And there are diversities of activities (operations or works), but it is the same God who works all in all.**

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The Lord knows how to call, instruct, enable, and provide everything for the natural and eternal life of each person, as well as everything that is pertinent to any specific calling that also comes from the heavenly kingdom to those who remain in Christ Jesus and who have Christ as their Eternal source of the newness of life from the Heavenly Father.

So, concluding this chapter, and considering once again the essential condition that the theme of fellowship with Christ has for the whole life of every Christian, we would just like to remind here that this subject is even more widely discussed in other more specific themes, for the focus in the present material is more directed to highlighting the callings and vocations that a person has from God towards one's life.

A more specific focus on the practice of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ is also found in the themes The Letter or Life, Knowing About God or Knowing God, The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, as well as in the series The Life of the Christian in the World and Walking in Newness of Life.

## C6. The Absurd Concept of a Part-Time Calling or a Full-Time Calling

In several Christian groups, or groups that call themselves Christians despite not always being in fact, a recurring question arises, namely: Should a Christian live “one’s calling” or “one’s vocation” full-time or part-time?

**Now, if the upward calling (or vocation) of God for a Christian is eternal salvation, a life as saved in Christ, eternal life by having Christ in the heart, and the newness of life by fellowship with Christ, how could the calling of God for Christians to be part-time?**

**If a Christian’s calling is to live for God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus and, at the same time, it is also a calling to live and walk as a child of God, as a new creature, as one who has reached the light and who in everything is called to serve Christ, to be an instrument of righteousness, and so on, how could the Christian think of adopting a posture of partially answering the sovereign vocation of God for one’s life?**

Could anyone be half saved? Could anyone achieve half of eternal life? Could God’s call be to half fellowship with Christ? Could a Christian aim to live for God’s purpose in some moments of one’s life and willfully choose to live contrary to God’s purpose in others, and still expect to be living according to the Lord’s will in the general aspect?

Could a Christian aim to be half led by the Holy Spirit and, in the other half, want to depend on one’s flesh?

Could a Christian want to “gather with Christ” and deliberately want to “scatter” at the same time, hoping to thereby be serving Christ? Could the Christian choose the moments when one will be in favor of Christ and the moments one will be against Christ?

Could God’s calling aim for people to be partial children of God and, at the same time, partial children of the world or the power of darkness?

Could the Christian be called by the Lord to choose to be dedicated to the light at some times and want to be a servant of darkness at others? Could the Christian be called by the Lord to choose in what activities one will be an instrument of righteousness and in which he or she will be an instrument of unrighteousness?

**Considering that in all things a Christian is called to live and walk in a way that cooperates with God’s eternal purpose of gathering together all in Christ Jesus, according to God’s grace, there is no room for the thought that God’s upward calling for Christians can be part-time, as if they are called to be Christians in some ways or things and not in others.**

Occasionally, a Christian may incur sin in daily life, momentarily deviate from God’s upward calling, and deviate from living and walking as a new creature in Christ and as a child of God. However, in situations like these, the Christian is called to repent and return to what is appropriate for one’s life. An aspect that shows that the calling or vocation of God for human beings is not a proposal that could be fractioned, as if God supposedly agreed with a person choosing to live partially with God in some moments and dissociated from the will of the Lord in others.

When a person genuinely receives the new birth in Christ, one is constituted a new creature in the Lord. And so, it is not convenient for this individual to try to divide “the calling to be a child of God,” aiming by this only being partially a child of light to be able to dedicate oneself to not being a child of God at other times.

The situation may occur where a Christian is not yet aware of all the implications of one's calling to be a child of light in full or does not even know what life according to the new creature is like. However, a Christian should never think that one is called to be a child of God in some moments and not in others. Or even worse, to think that one is called by God to be “holy” (separated in the Lord) in some activities and not in others.

To think that a person is called to serve God partially is to lack understanding of the main aspects of God's calling for the new creature, or still, it is the thought of those who have not yet experienced the new birth in the Lord indeed.

- 1 John 5: 3 **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.***
- 4 **For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.***
- 5 **Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?***
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As an observation, in the themes addressed in the Systemic Teaching about Christian Life, on several occasions when reference is made to the Scriptures in which the word “commandments of God” is mentioned, we have tried to emphasize that these are not the commandments of the Law of Moses.

The commandments of the Law of Moses were fulfilled by Christ and then revoked by the Lord due to their weakness and uselessness, as we have already mentioned in previous chapters and whose theme is also widely discussed on the subject of The Gospel of the Glory of God and of the Glory of Christ, concerning which we recall that:

*Romans 10: 4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

Therefore, **we understand that it is propitious to repeatedly emphasize the end of the Law of Moses for those who are in Christ, for it is from the mentality associated with the Law of Moses, and similar to it, that the mistaken concepts of “part-time servants” or “full-time servants” derive.**

The priests and Levites were servants of the services so-called spiritually special or regarded by some as “full-time services.” The people, in turn, attended meetings led by “full-time servants” and then dedicated themselves to their ordinary or daily activities, considered by some of them as not so spiritual or mistakenly seen by many as the so-called “secular services.”

And although God, through Christ Jesus, has already declared the law of the Old Covenant revoked, the kind of mentality or thinking about callings that was widespread under the Law of Moses insists on wanting to return from generation to generation, even trying to impose itself on the understanding about the calling (or vocation) of

Christians, aiming at corrupting it into the mold of what has already been revoked before the Lord.

By the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, by His burial, and by His resurrection from the dead, God has revoked all validity before Him of the priesthood according to the order of Aaron, the services of the Levites, all the obligatory requirements of the law, as well as of their sacrifices, tithes, and offerings, for He made the whole Law of Moses obsolete before Him.

And once the functions that were the reason for the calls, offerings, and tithes of the law of Moses were revoked, both the callings and the offerings, tithes, and rituals that were performed around the old law no longer have validity before God.

**Thus, it needs to be known that a Christian, as a new creature in Christ, has another kind of calling than the type of vocation under the Old Covenant and that, therefore, it is inappropriate to think of a Christian's calling in terms of the outdated covenant or consecration and the time of dedication to it as it was in the covenant revoked by the Lord.**

**Every Christian is equally called to be a child of God Most High. And as a child of the Heavenly Father, every Christian is called to be a representative of God's heavenly family in the present world on an ongoing or full-time basis.**

A Christian is not called to live differently from the dissolute life of the world because one is under the prohibitions and rules of the Law of Moses, for one indeed is not. On the contrary, a Christian is called to live and walk differently because of God's eternal purpose and because one has available a new condition in the Lord. A Christian is called to live and walk in everything under the understanding that in Christ Jesus is the only worthy and beneficial way of life.

*Romans 7: 25 **I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.***

*Romans 3: 19 **Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.***

*Romans 6: 14 **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.***

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**A Christian has or should have “doing everything” as for the Lord Jesus Christ as a central goal of one's life, for by the grace of God, through faith in the Lord, one has become a child of the Father of Lights and brother of Jesus Christ. And as such, one has a calling to always and in all actions conduct oneself as a child of the Eternal God.**

- Ephesians 5: 1* ***Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.***  
 2 ***And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.***  
 3 ***But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;***  
 4 ***neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.***  
 5 ***For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.***

*1 Corinthians 10: 31* ***Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.***

*Colossians 3: 17* ***And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.***

*Colossians 3: 23* ***And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,***  
 24 ***knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.***

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We ask, then, again: Why should a Christian aim to do everything, full-time and not part-time, for the glory of God?

**A Christian is called to live and walk in the world fully according to the will of God because one is part of God's family, has been made a child of light in the Lord, and should not aim to stop being what one became in Christ Jesus.**

A Christian may be called to dedicate part of one's life to a specific work, labor, or service that God invites or calls one to do. However, a Christian is not called to dedicate oneself entirely to a specific work, labor, or service, even though one may have been called by God for a particular task, for the upward calling to fellowship with Christ cannot be replaced by any other works, labors, or services.

**And if a Christian exchanges the “upward calling to be guided in everything by the Spirit of the Lord” for the “calling to do works or answer specific callings,” one may even reach the extreme point of seeing one's lampstand removed from one's place, as seen earlier.**

We also remember here yet that the lampstand represents the symbol of the means by which God manifests His light in the heart of a person, that is, the presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the one who came to be constituted in Christ as a new creature. An aspect that warns us that a person without God's lampstand in one's heart is a person who lacks God's direction, even though one may still be intensely dedicated to activities in the present world that seem to be God's calling for him or her, as mentioned in the following text:

*Revelation 2: 2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;  
 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.  
 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.  
 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent."*

Therefore:

*1 Thessalonians 5: 19 **Do not quench the Spirit.***

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**A Christian's "first love" should always be one, namely: the love for God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. And this love, every Christian is called to practice full-time.**

Thus, to say that dedication to a specific type of ministry must be full-time simply contradicts the upward calling to which all Christians are called. And this concept does not even make any sense in the condition of a new creature, for no one can fully dedicate oneself to a type of calling to a specific ministry or work since every human being is surrounded by a series of other activities that are part of the ordinary life.

A calling for specific works should never take the place of the calling to live and walk in everything as a child of God and to have fellowship with Christ to be instructed by Him in the most diverse areas of life. A calling to any particular work should never be seen as a reason for a Christian to leave one's essence of being a Christian, a child of God, a child of light, and an instrument of the Lord's righteousness in the most diverse aspects of one's life.

**God calls those who are in Christ Jesus to have an integral life in the new creature condition that was given to them. And this, being repetitive, involves all aspects of their lives and not just a specific service to which a person supposedly would have to dedicate oneself uninterruptedly to be considered as someone who serves Christ integrally.**

If, for example, a mother takes care of her children according to God's will and does her other activities according to God's guidance through fellowship with Him, she is living "full time" the Lord's upward calling for her life. And this, applies equally to the father who walks under the Lord's instruction in the care of his children and the most diverse areas of his life.

God calls all people to be saved in Christ by grace through faith in the Lord. However, once someone receives salvation, one also receives the name according to the Lord of one's life, Christ Jesus. That is, *in Christ*, an individual is called a Christian. And under this name, all Christians are equally called to live and walk all-time or full-time.

**As Christians, the children of God are called to be always *in Christ* by fellowship with the Lord. And this, to be strengthened in Him in everything and every moment of their new life as Christians, whether they are alone, with their families, or involved in any other work or activity.**

*In Christ*, the Christian has one's eyes opened to see who one is in God so that one also longs to be, in everything, what one has become in the Lord. After the Christian knows who one is in the Lord, one also knows that one can act by heavenly grace as a new creature in all that one does. In one's new condition, the Lord can freely assign a Christian to the tasks in which He wants this Christian to act, and He may even instruct him or her to remain in the same profession in which one was already working before knowing Christ for there, now, being an instrument for the glory of God.

In one's new condition *in Christ*, an individual has a new heart and has Christ abiding in him or her to provide support so that one may, in all things, live to the glory of one's Lord.

*Ezekiel 36: 26* ***"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."***

*Jeremiah 32: 39* ***"then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them.***

*40* ***And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me."***

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**Every Christian is called to be set apart for the Lord to, in everything, live and walk in the light of the Lord, regardless of which professional area the Lord calls a Christian to work.**

A person who is genuinely a Christian, even if one does not yet know if there is a specific calling of God for him or her, is more useful to the Lord in promoting light and righteousness than anyone else who claims to have "a great special calling," but who is a sower of unrighteousness or actions contrary to the kingdom of God.

When writing his letters to Christians in some cities, Paul does not distinguish between special classes of Christians, but writes principles of life to be lived by all Christians, as exemplified below:

*1 Corinthians 1: 2* ***To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: ...***

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All people are called to salvation in Christ Jesus, and all who receive it are called the saints of God. The Scriptures do not attribute the characteristic of being saints only to a

few persons, as is the intention of those who supposedly attribute holiness to others because of their works and not because of the grace and righteousness that God bestows on all those who believe in Christ Jesus.

Let us note again that “all the beloved of God” are called to live and walk as saints, as those separated or chosen of the Lord to find themselves in Him in all they do and at all times.

In the Law of Moses, there was a vocation in which only some were called to live apart to serve the Lord in a differentiated way and to seek more intensely to draw closer to the presence of God. However, *in Christ Jesus*, this was never foreseen to be so, for all the loved ones are called to be of the Lord entirely, regardless of their professions and the places where they live, under the risk that if they are not the Lord's, they will not be able to enjoy the life granted by the Lord's Spirit either.

*Romans 8: 9 **But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.***

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For a person to be considered holy, one needs to be set apart for a special purpose. However, every person who has reached the condition of a new creature in Christ is already a person specially separated by the same and only blood of Christ Jesus shed on the cross of Calvary for the salvation of all human beings.

*2 Corinthians 5: 14 **For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;***  
*15 **and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.***

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Every Christian, or everyone born in Christ Jesus as a new creature, has the calling to live and walk wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if the Lord calls a person to remain in the position of a work one already had before coming to Christ, it is also in this position of work that one is called to walk in the Lord and for His glory, as we already mentioned above.

**Therefore, if a person is living and walking according to the will of God or as the Lord leads this Christian through His Holy Spirit, one is full-time living in the call of God to live and walk in Christ, regardless of areas, works, labors, and services that the Lord instructs to perform.**

It is impossible to enumerate all the functions and professions of people in the world and for which they may be called by God to act, for we could remember some and not others. However, whether in the role of son, daughter, husband, wife, father, mother, brother, sister, worker in the field or the city, if an individual is a Christian, one is called to live as a child of God wherever the Lord leads this person to be, having a promise that also the reward of one's inheritance shall come from the Lord.

In this way, what determines whether a Christian is adopting a posture of living integrally or not in Christ Jesus is not primarily a work, labor, or service in which one

acts, but, rather, whether in what one acts is what the Lord called one to be, even if for other people one's performance may seem not very expressive or not special.

- 1 Corinthians 1: 26* ***For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.***
- 27* ***But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;***
- 28* ***and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,***
- 29* ***that no flesh should glory in His presence.***
- 30* ***But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,***
- 31* ***that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."***
- 

There are people who claim that an individual is only fulfilling a calling or a vocation from the Lord if one is specifically a preacher of the Gospel or if one is involved in a "special" ministry of serving fellow believers. These, however, forget or despise the fact that all Christians are called to be the salt of the Earth and the light of the world, and that all Christians are called to serve one another mutually. (A subject covered more widely also in the themes The Christian in the World in General; Works, Labors, and Services; Every Good Gift and Every Perfect Gift).

Even if there are children who refrain more from living and walking in conformity with the condition of children to which they are called in God, on the part of God and His upward vocation in Christ Jesus, all children are equally called to know and live in full-time this position to which they are called in God.

**If many earthly parents already consider their sons or daughters to be their full-time sons or daughters, being sons or daughters a characteristic of who they will always be for them, much more does the Heavenly Father call His children to be His sons and daughters and live as such also at all times.**

*Romans 8: 16* ***The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,***

*19* ***For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.***

*20* ***For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;***

*21* ***because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.***

*Jeremiah 3: 19* ***"But I said: 'How can I put you among the children And give you a pleasant land, A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?'***

*And I said: 'You shall call Me, "My Father," And not turn away from Me.'*

## C7. Refraining from Human Competitiveness toward Callings

It may seem strange, but many people use their so-called “callings received from God” to compare themselves to others and to try to elevate themselves above other people, following one of the accentuated characteristics of many people in the world and who do not walk under God's personal direction.

Nevertheless, competitiveness makes no sense among Christians, God's children, or those who are constituted as the Heavenly Father's family.

If God calls Christians to cooperate in different ways and through different gifts with the other children of God in their paths of life in the Lord, it makes no sense for people to start using stages and pulpits to dispute whether their lectures, oratories, or ministries are better than other people who yearn to serve the Lord.

If an individual announces God's message as the Lord instructs one to do, one is being faithful to the Lord and, therefore, doing the will of God. Thus, it makes no sense to compare, in competitive terms, whether what one is doing is superior or better than what others are also doing according to God's will, unless one's announcements are not “messages from God” indeed, but messages focused on the people's attention to praise the pride of the one who announces the message or exercises some ministry.

For many people, the calling they claim to have received from God is for them like another item of their vanity and not an invitation from God to serve Him in humility and to do good according to the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus.

A Christian is of the same heavenly family as another Christian. All genuine Christians are brethren, regardless of what tribe, people, nation, or natural language they descend from. And since the vocation that every Christian receives from God is to glorify Christ in everything and to glory in the Lord in all things, and not in human abilities and deeds according to the flesh, why, then, would Christians dispute between themselves who is the best among them? Or yet, who are those who attain more prominence and eminence than others?

**A Christian is not called to compete with another Christian because of a calling from God, as well as for any other reason.**

Competitiveness between fellow believers in Christ is a way of corrupting the hearts of those who surrender to it. Competitiveness can be a reason for discord, contention, and damage to the relationships of those who claim to want to serve the Lord. And even worse, there are people who do not even compete for the calling they think they have received from God but compete because of the callings of others to which they adhere to and defend.

**Competitiveness around personal callings, or other people's callings, is called in the Scriptures as walking or behaving according to men and not according to God,** as we have been taught since the first years in which the Christian life began to be present on Earth. An aspect exemplified in the following text:

*1 Corinthians 3: 3 ...**for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?***

***4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos,"  
are you not carnal?***

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**Every Christian is called to be faithful to God and the invitations (callings) that the Lord made to him or her. And it is up to the Lord to determine the most appropriate and useful functions and actions for each one to be called to practice, showing us the Scriptures that, in everything, sovereignty over all always belongs to the Father of all.**

***1 Corinthians 3: 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers (servants) through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?***

***6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.***

***7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.***

***1 Corinthians 4: 1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.***

***2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.***

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But why, then, do people continue to insist so much on competition also for the exaltation of what they call “their callings” or “their vocations?”

Many people compete so much for what they call “their callings” to be exalted before others because they do not know or resist knowing God and the riches of the Lord towards His saints, because they are greedy or jealous, and because they want what they value to be “the best callings” to profit more from them. Or yet, because they have a mentality of callings according to the order of Aaron or Moses.

In their eagerness to exalt the callings they claim to have, people, in their competitive postures, even create or corrupt callings to justify their activities in order to maintain the flow of their avaricious gains or the support of objectives arising from their passions and pride. They are individuals who think that their “***godliness is a source or means of gain*** for earthly riches” for them, whose theme is widely addressed on the subjects of Another Gospel or A Different Gospel and The Christian and the Riches.

Moved by fleshly ambitions, even though they claim to be serving God, there are many people who adopt intense and fierce postures for the exaltation of what they call “their callings,” because they want to raise followers who are subject to them in order to have more people from whom they can extract their profits through the feigned godliness and humility they present to them.

Those who compete with others to exalt their callings, and to the detriment of others, are pious and devoted to themselves or the love of money, as well as to titles or high offices under the feigned humility that they serve God, making the callings they claim to have, flags for which they fight and which they defend with the vilest and most terrible dissolutions, lies, deceptions, and dissimulations.

Those who compete with others to exalt their callings to the detriment of other people not only try to trade the word of God and exploit people, but also try to corrupt the mentality of what is indeed a calling from God and the eternal purpose of the Lord, for in the claim of the callings which they advocate to possess, they do not offer freedom for people to be free indeed in Christ. Instead, they aim to keep people subject to a mentality by which they present themselves as being superior to those they try to subject to them so that these do not stop following them.

Let us see again below the text we quoted earlier:

*Acts 20: 29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.  
30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.  
31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears."*

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At this point, we do not intend to dwell on the actions of those who compete to exalt the callings that they claim to have received from the Lord, but did not actually receive them or who do not act in the way for which they were called by the Lord, because, as we mentioned above, this theme is already addressed in other subjects of the Systemic Teaching about Christian Life.

Nevertheless, **something that we understand to be highly relevant to remember here is that no one, no person, and no institution on Earth received from the Lord the calling or any vocation to make spiritual disciples of themselves and followers of themselves.** So, a Christian vocation to call people to a condition of discipleship is true if it is a call for a person to become a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not of men, women, or the institutions created and governed by human beings.

**Yet on the aspect of competitiveness, we understand that it is also worth emphasizing again that the calling of God in Christ Jesus for His children is not a vocation comparable to the callings made under the Law of Moses or the so-called Old Covenant.**

For the people subject to the Law of Moses, there were functions that could only be officiated by certain groups of people, and yet, among the special groups, there were those who could perform some functions more special than others. And the setting apart of persons specially appointed for the services in the tabernacles and temples, as well as the designation of what service each one would do in this order of Aaron, have always been grounds for competitiveness and envy.

The people under the Law of Moses were structured into distinct classes of people, where they were separated as a people in general and, on the other hand, the descendants of Levites, among whom, there was still the separation of those who were priests from those who were "simply" Levites. Furthermore, even among the priests, there were special priests who performed special services. And finally, there was the fellow designated as the people's high priest.

All these divisions and separations of the Old Covenant created a mentality of “special groups” for “special services,” also creating a mentality and practices of constant disputes for positions and higher offices among the priests and Levites.

The competitive mindset was and is inevitable in any type of system similar to the Old Covenant. Generation after generation, century after century, the system surrounding the Law of Moses has made those who served it subject to envy and has corrupted the hearts of multitudes who have submitted to it, just as it continues to do in all models that resemble it.

*Matthew 23: 1 **Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,  
2 saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.***

*...  
5 **But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their  
phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.  
6 They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,  
7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi,  
Rabbi.'"***

*In Christ, however, all dispute for offices, positions, or callings of God is impertinent, for, in the Lord, all Christians are equally called to be beloved children of God. And as such, they are all called to be saints at all times, in all places, and to see the other children of God as equally brothers and sisters who equally have one and only Heavenly Father and one and only Teacher, Lord, and Guide of their lives.*

*Matthew 23: 8 **"But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your  
Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.  
9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He  
who is in heaven.  
10 And do not be called teachers (guides or leaders); for One is your  
Teacher, the Christ.  
11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.  
12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles  
himself will be exalted."***

In Aaron's order, there were a limited number of callings for some special service to be performed before God (or a limited number of positions to be filled). And the vocations considered to be the principal ones were funneled as in a hierarchical pyramid of functions and power, making the whole system based on human hierarchies and permeated with the most intense competitiveness.

Nevertheless, ***in Christ, all this is very different because, as children of God, Christians are all heirs of the unsearchable riches of Christ and are heirs of the inexhaustible callings of God, there being no need for any role of mediation of some human beings towards God for the sake of other people.***

*In Christ and the relationship between the children of God, there is no need for competitiveness, for the Lord calls everyone to direct fellowship with Him through His*

grace offered to all, and not according to a set of codes and rules of ministries that people wanted to experience through the priestly order of Aaron.

*In Christ*, there is no need for competitiveness, as each Christian is even called to consider His fellow believers in Christ as superior to oneself and equally called to personal and direct fellowship with the Eternal Lord.

*Philippians 2: 3* ***Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.***

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*In Christ*, there is no need for competitiveness, for it is Christ who bestows the reward of the inheritance on everyone who serves Him. And Christ does it based on His grace and the individual and direct faithfulness of each Christian to Him, and not based on the superiority of a fellow believer in relation to another or based on a fellow believer denigrating and disqualifying the other.

*Ephesians 1: 16* ***I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:***

***17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,***

***18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ...***

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*In Christ*, there is no need for competitiveness, as there are plenty of callings. And all the callings appointed by God are special, spiritual, and of perfect quality, as they all have the same source that originated them.

*1 Corinthians 12: 6* ***And there are diversities of activities (works or doings), but it is the same God who works all in all.***

*1 Corinthians 12: 5* ***There are differences of ministries (or services), but the same Lord.***

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Except for moving away from the understanding that it is the Lord who calls each of His children according to righteousness or for losing sight of the fact that in God, there are endless callings and provisions to carry them out, why would a Christian envy some aspect of God's calling to another Christian if in the Lord one too can know what is appropriate for one's own life?

Finally, we would like to mention that also concerning the relationships with the world in general, it is necessary to pay attention to competitiveness.

A Christian, for example, is not necessarily called by God to be the best in the department in which one works, in the school one attends, or in some natural activity.

It may often occur that Christians do not even have the best natural skills among the people with whom they work, study, or interact, as we saw in the text of 1 Corinthians 1, mentioned in the previous chapter.

**What God asks of His children who are in the present world is that they remember that they also are servants and stewards of God for whatever the Lord calls them to do and that they are faithful regarding what God directs them to do, whether it generates or do not generate special natural prominence in the places where they are operating.**

In a given department of work, there may even be people who are more prepared for the job than a Christian. There may be people in the same workplace who consume their lives dedicated to work to the point of even reaching the edge of destroying their family lives to be the best at their professional tasks, which, in turn, a Christian is not called to do. A Christian is called to walk in everything according to heavenly righteousness before God. And in many cases, this may even cost the Christian the lack of human recognition in one's workplace when compared to others who have a job as their highest priority.

**The Christian is not called to compete with others, but to remain faithful in what the Lord instructs and trusts him or her to do. The Christian's aim should be to do one's activities as God directs one to do and according to the strength granted by the Lord to do them. The Christian's goal is to act in line with God's righteousness, honesty, without negligence, and above all, with the fear of God and not of men, letting the Lord grant the recognition and reward that will be most appropriate.**

*Colossians 3: 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,  
24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.  
25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.*

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The focus on competitiveness may easily make a Christian mirror oneself in other people's goals and not in the calling that God has for one's life and, thus, becoming involved in the bondage of life and goals to which others may already be subjects.

**Competitiveness is a measure of horizontal comparison and may easily lead Christians to distance themselves from faithfulness to the Heavenly Father.**

**God's conquering concepts and principles are very different from the world's conquering principles. And this is something a Christian should also always keep in mind.**

*Psalms 37: 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

*Matthew 5: 5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

*2 Timothy 1: 7 **For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (or moderation).***

----

The competition between fellow believers in God and for the Lord's callings, which some proclaim to be healthy, can actually express a way of questioning God or resisting the Lord about the designation of callings that He Himself grants for His children.

Therefore, **God expects from His stewards that they act in the callings given to them from the heavenly kingdom, that they are faithful to the Lord who called them, and that they are faithful in what they are called by God to be stewards. And yet, that they abstain from all inappropriate competitions in which people, the world, or the darkness want to involve them.**

Recalling once more a text quoted earlier, we highlight again what the Lord said to Peter when he asked him about the specific calling that the Lord had for John, as follows:

*John 21: 20 **Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"***  
*21 **Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?"***  
*22 **Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."***

## **C8. Fleeing from Self-Exaltation or People's Exaltation because of the Calling of God**

**God's vocation to specific works, in addition to the already glorious sovereign calling in Christ Jesus, is the result of God's grace to a Christian, by which one, in addition to receiving salvation, may still be a fellow worker with God. And this is a central reason for joy for the Christian concerning some calling granted by the Lord.**

Nevertheless, when the Lord and fellowship with the Lord are no longer in the first place in the lives of some Christians, a large part of these will also tend to exalt their callings inappropriately, thus opposing God, for the Lord does not call people for specific works so that they exalt themselves above others or to be unduly exalted by other people.

**And, in turn, the inappropriate exaltation of callings or vocations is extremely dangerous, for when a person begins to exalt oneself through the calling one claims to have, one may incur the creation of idolatry to one's own calling. And this, may even lead people to idolize the one who thinks having a more special calling in one's life than others.**

Several people who enjoy exalting “their callings” also enjoy talking about them in the third person, as if these callings had life in themselves. And so, they begin to speak more and more about the virtues of “their callings,” with the intention of attracting people's attention to them, instead of effectively serving people with the so-called calling to serve that they claim to have received to perform.

Many times, the attempts of exaltation that a person makes of oneself, or of what one calls “one's calling or vocation,” can serve as an alert of the desire one has to elevate oneself above others, for in the present world, there are many who seek the expedient or the path of exalting “the calling they claim they received from the Lord” to keep veiled the desire to dominate and exploit others.

The inversion of exaltation between the one who gave the calling, the worker who received the calling to carry out a work, the calling itself, or the work to be done is a way that accentuates the propensity for a work, a calling, or a worker to come to be idolized or venerated. A reason why it is so fundamental for a Christian not to take this way of action.

A Christian has from God “a call to flee the pursuit of the glory of men,” for the glory that human beings attribute to one another only offers an earthly, temporal, and never eternal payment or reward. However, due to this temporary glory, many people come to despise Christ, the One who is God's only true provision for eternal salvation, as exemplified in the texts below:

*John 5: 39* ***"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.***

***40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.***

***41 I do not receive honor from men.***

***42 But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.***

***43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.***

44 *How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?"*

John 12: 36 *"While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."* These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

37 *But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,*

38 *that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"*

39 *Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:*

40 *"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."*

41 *These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.*

42 *Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;*

43 *for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

44 *Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.*

45 *And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.*

46 *I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness."*

1 Corinthians 10: 12 *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

13 *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

14 *Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*

15 *I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.*

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A Christian should be highly cautious when seeking one's self-projection and self-exaltation, for these aspects, concerning the callings that God extends to His children, belong to the Lord to do, as exposed in another series of texts below:

Matthew 23: 12 *"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

1 Peter 5: 6 *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,*

7 *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

*James 4: 10 **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.***

*2 Corinthians 10: 18 **For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.***

*Psalms 3: 3 **But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.***

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As we mentioned in the previous chapter, **the focus of the Christian is faithfulness to the Lord concerning any callings one has received from God, and not one's self-promotion or exaltation.**

**God is the one who knows when lesser or greater evidence to some worker or calling is most appropriate and beneficial. And the Lord does not "call" His children to do so according to their own understanding. Only the Lord knows when His children are perfected and prepared for each stage of what they were called to accomplish and when they are prepared to appropriately attribute glory to the Creator and Lord of their lives.**

On the other hand, a calling that every Christian is called to follow is the **calling to humility before God and dependence on the Lord, for, in this way, one will also learn the meekness and humility that is in the Lord of Lords, King of Kings, who, although is Lord of all and King over everything and everyone, has a meek and humble heart. And when it was necessary for Him to be exalted, Christ always waited for the Heavenly Father to do it.**

*Matthew 11: 29 **"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."***

*Philippians 2: 5 **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,**  
**6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,**  
**7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.**  
**8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**  
**9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,**  
**10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,**  
**11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

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We recall here, yet, that every calling that a Christian receives, in addition to the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus, is granted by the Heavenly Father also for cooperation with the eternal purpose of converging all things in Christ for the glory of the One Eternal God. Thus, the posture of self-exaltation of Christians or among Christians based on some calling received is just not pertinent, as this attitude is contrary to the supreme purpose of God in Christ Jesus.

**The proper exaltation that a Christian should always aim for is the exaltation of the Lord who has given him or her natural life, redemption through Christ's work on the cross of Calvary, the newness of life in Christ Jesus, and an upward calling with a sovereign reward or prize for all eternity, for it is when the Lord is exalted in the life of a Christian that a Christian is also exalted in the One who grants the novelty of life.**

*2 Thessalonians 1: 11 **Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power,**  
12 **that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

*Colossians 3: 4 **When Christ who is our life appears (or manifests Himself), then you also will appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory.***

## C9. Adjusting the Focus concerning the Expression “The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable”

*Romans 11: 29* ***For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.***

Throughout this book, we have seen that the upward calling or the vocation of God in Christ Jesus, as well as the specific callings of God for His children, are in God even before the Lord calls people to the respective callings.

Initially, the calling of God in Christ Jesus is not the very act of actually calling people, but it encompasses the entire conception and content embedded in the calling before it is extended to people in the world.

As already mentioned, when a person is going to send a formal invitation to another person, one first prepares the invitation and its text to extend the invitation to the individual to be invited after that. And in general, it is in the content of the invitation that the basic information about why and for which a person is being invited is contained.

Subsequently, when an invitation has already been issued, although an invitee may decide not to accept or attend the invitation, the invitee, in many cases, does not have the autonomy to change the terms of the invitation by oneself since the definition and establishment of the content of the terms, generally speaking, belong to the one who made the invitation.

Similarly, the characteristics mentioned in the paragraphs above also apply to the callings made and offered by God. A reason why, therefore, there is no possibility for human beings to change the callings of God by themselves, however much they try to do so.

If we return to the example of a formal invitation made between people, we know that those who extended the invitation to others may change and reformulate it, in many cases, if they perceive that there are obstacles to the possibility of the guests attending to what has been exposed to them or if they understand that they want to make the invitation more convenient for their invitees.

Nevertheless, when we see a text like the one exposed at the beginning of this chapter, which informs us that ***the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable***, we are taught by the Lord that in what concerns the callings that God extends to people, there is no sign of the Lord that His callings will be altered in terms of several central elements that have already been established in them.

**So, when the Scriptures teach us that the calling of God in Christ Jesus is irrevocable, they teach us that whatever constitutes God's calling to life in Christ or all the terms of that same calling are equally irrevocable.**

**In other words, no person can alter the conditions of God's callings nor cause God to change them, for they were already constituted according to the eternal purpose that God has made in Christ Jesus.**

Furthermore, to firmly manifest the immutability of the terms offered by God to human beings for salvation and eternal life in Christ Jesus, God, as the One who cannot lie and in whom there is no shadow of turning, still interposed with an everlasting oath

so that people may believe with confidence that He will never change the terms for what He is calling them.

*Hebrews 6: 17 **Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,***

***18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.***

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**If a person trusts in God's promise that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, receives Him as Lord, and abides in Him will be saved and become part of God's eternal family, one can rest assured in the Lord that God will never change the terms of this promise.**

God, who presented human beings with a high calling in Christ Jesus for salvation and eternal life, is not going to suddenly or overnight change the rules of salvation and adopt, for example, the requirement of a return to the fulfillment of the items of the Law of Moses or the observance of works of this same law.

Similarly, God, who presented human beings with an upward calling in Christ Jesus for salvation and eternal life, will not change salvation by grace to salvation that can be purchased with money, offerings, tithes, or the sacrifices made by people or where supposedly only the wealthiest givers would be saved.

**The calling of God, that is, the set of aspects that make up the vocation to which God calls people through His grace, righteousness, and mercy to salvation and eternal life, is irrevocable in all its aspects. And no human being or any other individual of the material or spiritual world will be able to change what God pre-established and announced as irrevocable.**

**The Lord declares that everyone who trusts in the calling of God, and receives it as it is offered from the heavenly kingdom in Christ Jesus, can be sure or confident that God will keep that calling with the same characteristics intact forever and ever.**

And similar to how it is with the offer of God's unchanging callings to human beings, so it is with the offer and the bestowal of God's gifts to those who believe in Him.

God chose to save the world through the gift of His mercy and grace.

The Lord also chose to announce this salvation through the preaching of the free offer of His Gospel to all people. And this, that whoever believes in Him may receive eternal life promised in His sovereign calling or vocation, as is repeatedly expounded in the Scriptures and exemplified once more below:

*1 Corinthians 1: 21 **For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.***

*Romans 1: 16* **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**

**17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."**

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God's salvation is a gift. It is a gift from God offered to all people and confirmed in those who receive it by faith in Christ Jesus. And the Gospel of God's Salvation is the expression of what this gift is like and how this gift can be received and experienced daily and forever in Christ Jesus.

Salvation is a gift, the invitation to salvation is a gift, and the Gospel that announces and grants salvation is a gift. And since they are gifts from God, all these aspects will never change, for they are irrevocable.

Receiving the condition of becoming a child of God, as a new creature, is a gift. The call to be a child of light is a gift, as is the new birth.

Therefore, all these gifts and the terms of the calling for one to receive and be confirmed in these gifts will always remain unchanged because they are irrevocable.

Why, then, is the irrevocable condition of the gifts and the calling of God so crucial to be understood?

**The understanding that the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable is security for the faith of the one who understands that they are irrevocable, for proposals repeatedly arise in the world that want to tarnish or degrade the gifts of the Lord, the calling of God, some terms of the calling of God, or some ways in which God bestows His heavenly gifts.**

Whether out of greed or ignorance, in every age, generation, and every place, preachers or messengers have arisen who want to add additional rules to God's calling or who want to suppress or replace the terms eternally established by the Lord for His callings and ways of bestowing gifts.

A firm understanding that God does not change the principles of granting gifts and the calling in Christ Jesus serves as a warning against proposals that say that God is "moving" differently today than He "moved" in the early days of the establishment of the gifts and of the upward calling in Christ Jesus.

And what more could lead some people to deliberately try to change God's calling or vocation, as well as God's way of bestowing gifts?

Many people seek to propose alternative ways to the terms in which God works because they indeed do not like (1) the content and form of God's gifts in their original aspects or what they offer for their lives and (2) how they are offered and granted, as exemplified below:

*Philippians 3: 18* **For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:**

**19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their mind on earthly things.**

**20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**  
**21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.**

**Galatians 6: 12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.**

**Mark 8: 34 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."**

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There are many people who want the gifts and the calling of God, but only the parts that they think are convenient for them or that do not result in them also needing to consider themselves, in Christ Jesus, as crucified or dead to the world.

Because God generously gives His gifts and His callings, there are people who come to think that God should serve them in all their lusts, vanities, and pride, not accepting, for example, that God can deny them favors or bring them into a condition where they would be grieved. Thus, however, they despise the sovereignty of God and godly sorrow because they do not aim to repent of their acts contrary to the calling of God.

**2 Corinthians 7: 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**

**Matthew 20: 15 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'**

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Every calling coming from God is perfect from its beginning, for the will of the Lord in everything is righteous, good, perfect, and acceptable, even when it implies the call to renunciation and abstention from aspects that a person appreciates in one's flesh or soul, but which are not beneficial indeed.

**And since God's will is perfect, it does not need to be modified at all.**

**Considering that all the necessary provisions for salvation, mercy, grace, righteousness, love, or power are already included in the perfect calling of God in Christ Jesus and in the terms of the calling that the Lord extends to all people, neither this calling nor the gifts associated with it need either change or be revoked to be reintroduced with adjustments.**

**A person's true happiness lies in accepting the gifts and the calling of God on the terms the Lord proposes to grant, for only the Lord's terms are eternally perfect.**

*Revelation 15: 3 **They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!"***

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**The gifts and the calling of God need no alteration or are irrevocable because, in everything, they are perfect as God is perfect.**

On the other hand, despite the irrevocable condition of God's vocation and gifts, we again emphasize how much people try to adjust God's gifts, their bestowal, and the various aspects of God's calling to what they would like the gifts and callings to be in fact, going so far as to look for teachers who say what they want to hear instead of what God established as truth.

*2 Timothy 4: 3 **For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.***

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Many people who claim to have received a calling from God are promulgating callings that they themselves have created according to their carnal minds and visions or that are called according to the fables or delusions of the teachers with whom they surrounded themselves.

When the Lord Jesus exhorts people to listen to what the Spirit of the Lord has to say to the Church of Christ, that is, to all those who are the children of God in Christ Jesus, the Lord does not tell people to listen to what they think is suited to the calling of life as Christians or what other people declare that they think their calling is. On the contrary, those who believe in God are called to hear what the Holy Spirit has to say to them from Christ Jesus and the Heavenly Father.

Many people, for example, spend their lives thinking, imagining, and trying to make the Church of Christ what they want it to be. Many seek the most diverse assumptions about what the Church of the Lord should be instead of asking Christ what the vocation the Lord has for His Church is or what the genuine calling of God previously defined for His Body or His Bride both in Heaven and on Earth is.

**The Church of the Lord Christ only has the vocation to be what the Lord established for it to be, no more and no less.**

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is made up of those saved in Christ Jesus, and not of buildings, institutions, or any other associations of people, has the vocation of being the body and not the Head. A condition that can never be altered, for the calling of the Church to be the body and not the Head, having only Christ Jesus as the Head, is irrevocable before God.

Nevertheless, the calling of the Church of Christ to be the body, and not the Head of other members, does not please those who want to dominate their fellow men to be “the supposed heads” of the people of God. Human institutions and their boards will never be the living body of Christ, for the Church of the Lord was never called or has no vocation to be a human institution and to be limited by those who direct these institutions. The true Church of the Lord has the calling to be free and linked to only one Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. (A subject discussed more widely in the themes of The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ and The Fellowship of Christians in the World).

**The true Church of Christ is a synonym for the set of free people in Christ and who are directly united to Him, having Him alone as the Lord and Unique Head of their lives. Whoever believes in the Lord, and therefore is a child of God, is the Church of Christ together with the others who are also children of God in Christ. And all these, by vocation, are called to have Christ alone as Lord.**

Yet another aspect of the vocation of those called to be children of God in Christ Jesus is that they also are called children of Abraham by faith in Christ.

And in turn, **as descendants of Abraham through faith in Christ, Christians have a calling to be channels of blessing to all nations and not just to themselves, a part of God's calling that is also irrevocable.**

*Galatians 3: 8 **And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."***

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In the days leading up to and in the days that were related to the coming of Christ in the flesh into the world, when a group of people from the Jewish people wanted to take hold of the salvation of God and Abraham's descendant or seed for themselves alone, and not share this gift with all other peoples, this group turned away from the irrevocable vocation or calling of God that the Lord had promised Abraham centuries before.

When God, for a short particular time, rejected a group of people so that they would reject Christ, it was not God who rejected it in the first place, but this group of people rejected God's irrevocable calling by trying to prevent the descendant Christ from coming to be the long-awaited blessing to all the nations of the Earth.

The calling of God for salvation, in Christ Jesus, was given from the beginning so that both “Jew” and “Greek” (the Gentiles) would be blessed by the Savior who would come as a descendant of Abraham to offer the provision of eternal salvation to all peoples.

Nevertheless, when, in the days of Christ as the Son of Man on Earth, various natural descendants of Abraham looked down on the Gentiles in the sense of not wanting to regard them as also being the target of heavenly salvation, they tried to modify the unalterable and irrevocable calling that God had given from the beginning to Abraham still in Ur of the Chaldees. They were seeking to restrict the general calling of salvation available to all in Abraham's descendant to their own people only and not to all peoples as had been announced from the beginning.

So, we believe it is interesting to highlight here that the Scriptures, when declaring that the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable, do not say that people cannot have the gifts and callings that were extended to them revoked from their lives, but that the gifts and callings of God themselves are irrevocable.

**To say that the conditions and terms under which God bestows gifts, vocations, or callings on human beings are also irrevocable is quite different from saying that the people, to whom these aspects are addressed, cannot come to place themselves in conditions in which the gifts, vocations, or callings are revoked from their lives.**

For example, if God declares that He gives gifts through the Holy Spirit and bestows them for what is useful or beneficial, this is irrevocable or will always be the condition on which the Lord will act regarding the mentioned gifts. However, if a person, who has been granted to act on a specific spiritual gift, starts to want to act on this gift not by the power of the Spirit of the Lord, but by the strength of the flesh, or wants to use this gift not for useful and profitable purposes according to the will of God, the first condition of the gifts being granted according to what God has established prevails and is irrevocable. And so, an individual's attitude can cause the Lord to immediately interrupt the manifestation of the heavenly gift in the one who placed oneself in a condition contrary to the calling of God for one's life.

**If people who have already received God's gifts and calling persist in wanting to change them or use them contrary to God's will, they put themselves at risk of having revoked what the Lord has given them, for the gifts and the calling will never be withdrawn from their form and objectives established eternally by the Lord.**

**As much as the gifts and the calling to salvation and life in Christ Jesus are given by the Lord irrevocably by His grace and mercy, the fact that they continue to be given according to God's grace and mercy is also irrevocable.**

Thus, if a person despises God's grace and mercy, one also rejects God's gifts and calling on the irrevocable terms on which they are offered, for it is by the Lord's grace and mercy alone, received by faith in God, that salvation and eternal life are granted.

In human history, the situation is recurrent in which some people form groups that want to take control of God's gifts and callings and their distribution. However, when they do not repent of this practice, God moves His gifts and callings to others who receive them according to the purpose and the way that God from the beginning defined for them to be granted and received, exemplified by the Lord also in parables, as follows:

*Matthew 21: 33* **"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.**

**34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.**

**35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.**

**36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.**

- 37 *Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'*
- 38 *But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'*
- 39 *So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.*
- 40 *Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"*
- 41 *They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."*
- 42 *Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"*
- 43 *Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*
- 44 *And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."*
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**In God's calling to salvation and the newness of eternal life, Christ is the only Foundation, the unique Head, and the only Cornerstone. Christ is the only Lord, the only Shepherd, the only High Priest, and the One Mediator between God and people. And Christ is the only King over everyone and everything.**

And if what is exposed in the previous paragraph is not accepted and received as the Lord established it, God, in due time, casts out the evil vinedressers who do not repent, continuing the Lord with His work through those who receive the gifts and the calling of God as they are assigned to them and for the purpose for which they are irrevocably assigned by the Lord.

Given this, those who claim that the gifts and vocation of God are irrevocable in the lives of those who received them, even when they are inclined to iniquity, under the pretext that once called, they cannot have the gifts and the calling revoked from their lives, make these allegations wrapped in deception and to deceive others. However, despite the Lord in His righteousness being merciful with human weaknesses and with those who respond to the calling that Heaven makes to them, showing them that when they stumble, there is also a path of repentance, the Lord will never be an accomplice of those who persist in walking associated with the way of unrighteousness.

*Hebrews 6: 7 **For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;***

***8 but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.***

*Hebrews 12: 25 **See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,***

*26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."*

*27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

*28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

*29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

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***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights, and they are always given through God's grace and mercy, but also in line with heavenly righteousness. And this last aspect is also an irrevocable point.***

Thus, as to the manner of granting salvation and its purpose in the Lord, nothing is revocable regarding the gifts of God, His calling to eternal life, and the calling to the condition of a new creature and heavenly children by the new birth through the Holy Spirit.

As much as a person claims that one has seen a vision of angels or had dreams that say that God changed the way of calling people to salvation and eternal life, or that the Lord changed the manner of bestowing His mercy and life, the gifts or the heavenly callings will always continue to be offered exclusively by the grace and goodness of the Lord, and can be accepted and received through faith in the only Mediator between God and the human beings, namely: The Lord Christ Jesus. An eternally irrevocable condition.

*Ephesians 2: 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

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It is because of the immutability of heavenly grace, also in all terms of the granting of God's gifts and callings in Christ Jesus, that a person can have firm confidence in God's promise of protection to everyone who believes in the Lord according to the irrevocable way that God calls an individual to believe in Him. And this is God's own eternal testimony to us.

*2 Timothy 1: 12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.*

*1 John 5: 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

...

- 9 **If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.**
- 10 **He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.**
- 11 **And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**
- 12 **He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**
- 13 **These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.**

**2 Timothy 1: 9 (God) has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,**  
**10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.**

**Hebrews 12: 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.**

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Concluding the chapter, by way of additional information or emphasis, we remind here that this same topic on the irrevocable condition of the gifts and the calling of God in Christ Jesus is also addressed, with a higher focus on the gifts, in the theme on Every Good Gift and Every Perfect Gift.

## C10. Diligent to Confirm God's Calling and Election

God's gifts and calling are irrevocable and unalterable in content and form of bestowal. Therefore, they can only be accepted or rejected, never modified.

A similar situation occurs, for example, in some invitations that some people make to others when they call them to a social event or to some type of work, where the invited people confirm or do not confirm their participation in what they were invited to.

Nevertheless, if we look more closely at the matter of whether or not to respond to a calling, we can see that non-confirmation may be done actively, where a person declares non-acceptance of the invitation, or passively, where a person just does not respond to the invitation extended to him or her. On the other hand, confirmation of attending the calling can only be active, encompassing much more than mere confirmation of acceptance.

For instance, for an individual to confirm attendance at an invitation to an event, which only materializes with one's participation in what someone was invited to, an individual will need actually to go through several steps to confirm one's participation.

For a person to be able to respond to an invitation to an event, one must first be willing to listen and receive the information about the invitation extended to him or her.

Then, for a person to respond to that invitation, one needs to be willing to respond to the received invitation, even recording it in one's schedule so as not to forget about it, if this is the case.

Considering, however, that the mere receipt of an invitation is not yet having effectively responded to this invitation, a person also needs to prepare and actually go to the event to which one has been invited. Otherwise, no matter how much one declares accepting the invitation, this person did not respond to the invitation indeed.

A person who says "yes" to an invitation, but does not really go to what one was invited to, has not responded to the invitation made to him or her. On the other hand, a person who initially says "no" to an invitation, but ends up attending to it in practice, is the person who indeed answered the calling made to him or her, as exemplified in the following text:

- Matthew 21: 28 **But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.'***  
*29 **He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.***  
*30 **Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.***  
*31 **Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first."** Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.*  
*32 **For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.***

----

Finally, in this process of responding to a calling or invitation extended to an individual, the invitee needs to remain at the event to which one was invited and attend at least until the core aspect for which one was invited has been performed. And in several cases, it may still be polite or appropriate to remain at the event until one says thanks for the invitation received.

Thus, similarly to the process of answering the invitation exemplified above, it also occurs concerning the gifts and the calling that God offers or extends to people in Christ Jesus, a subject regarding which there may be several steps for the acceptance of the offer of gifts and the calling of God becoming confirmed indeed.

In the first place, the invitation to receive gifts and the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus needs to be announced or propagated so that people can know of their existence and so that they know at least the essential information for their acceptance or rejection, as shown in the text below:

*Romans 10: 14 **How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?***  
*15 **And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"***

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Secondly, people to whom the invitation to the gifts and calling of God in Christ Jesus is extended also need to be willing to listen to what is announced and proposed to them, as is also explained below:

*Romans 10: 16 **But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"***  
*17 **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***  
*18 **But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world."***

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Nevertheless, just listening may still not be enough to respond to an invitation. A person may also need to believe what is proposed and accept what God offers, as mentioned in the three texts below:

*John 3: 16 **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***

*John 1: 12 **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:***  
*13 **who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.***

*Revelation 3: 20* **"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."**

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And yet, finally, as mentioned in the example of an invitation to an event, to confirm that one has accepted the invitation one received, a person may need to remain answering or attending the invitation for the time that is pertinent to the confirmation of one's position concerning what one was called to, as it is also taught in the Scriptures concerning the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus, and exemplified by several of the following texts:

*2 Peter 1: 10(a)* **Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure;**

*John 15: 16* **"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."**

*Matthew 24: 13* **"But he who endures to the end shall be saved."**

*James 5: 11* **Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord; that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.**

*James 1: 12* **Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

*Hebrews 10: 37* **"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.**

**38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."**

**39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.**

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Considering that the calling of God is for eternal salvation or eternal life, and that eternal life also has the essence of knowing more God, it is in this essential condition of the calling that every Christian should grow as the confirmation of the answer to the calling extended by the Lord to those who believe in Him.

After listening, accepting, and receiving God's calling and the offer of the newness of life in Christ Jesus, it is in remaining, persevering, and growing in this calling that a Christian confirms one's adherence to the calling extended by God. Thus, this posture proves to be the appropriate way for an individual to confirm one's broad dedication to the calling of God, as well as for one to experience more and more of what is found in this calling, as also exposed in the text that we present once again below:

- 2 Peter 1: 1 Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:*
- 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,*
- 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*
- 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*
- 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,*
- 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,*
- 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*
- 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.*
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The degree of intensity and continuity in participating in the calling to fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, a gift available to all who received Him as the Lord in their hearts, is what increasingly confirms the acceptance of God's invitation by those who have been called to the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, remaining, living, and walking in Christ show the practical expression of continuous confirmation of the acceptance of the path to which the Lord calls all those who receive His offer of the newness of life in Christ Jesus.

*John 8: 12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

*Isaiah 26: 7 The way of the just is uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just.*

*Proverbs 4: 18* ***But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.***

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Mentioning once more: **Confirming the response to God's calling is first to attend to His invitation to salvation in Christ Jesus, but it is also equally to attend to fellowship and permanence in Him, for it is only in the Lord that there is salvation and the novelty of life according to the new creature in Christ.**

**And it is from these first and irrevocable points of God's calling to salvation, which are to trust in Christ and to remain in fellowship with the Son of the Heavenly Father's Love, that all the other aspects already foreseen and contained in this calling spring up.**

*2 Peter 1: 10* ***Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;***

*11* ***for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.***

*John 15: 4* ***"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.***

*5* ***I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.***

...

*8* ***By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."***

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**The calling of God is for people to become attached to Him because of the love that the Lord shows towards them, having the guarantee from the Lord that those who indeed attend to His call, also by the gift of heavenly love that to them is offered, will also be kept eternally by the One and in the One who called them to an eternal fellowship.**

*1 Thessalonians 2: 11* ... ***as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,***

*12* ***that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.***

*Psalms 91: 14* ***"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.***

*15* ***He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.***

*16* ***With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."***

*1 Corinthians 1: 9 **God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

*1 Thessalonians 5: 23 **Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***  
*24 **He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.***

## Bibliography

Note on Biblical Texts referenced:

- 1) The biblical texts without explicit indications of reference were drawn from NKJV Bible, as indicated below.
- 2) Highlights in the biblical texts, such as underline, bold, or similar were added by the author of this study.

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