

## **1 Corinthians Chapters 1-3: All Are Called**

### **From the Theology of Work Bible Commentary on 1 Corinthians**

It is no coincidence that the concept of calling is front and center in the beginning of 1 Corinthians. Paul states in the very first verse that he was “called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God” (1 Corinthians 1:1). Likewise, the Corinthian believers are “called” along with “all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:2). The basis of our calling is not individual satisfaction, but the work we are meant to accomplish in community.

Paul’s letter continues with his thanks that the Corinthian believers have been blessed by God so that they “are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:7). Paul specifically names two gifts, speech and knowledge, that the Corinthian church enjoyed in abundance.

It is especially important to note that Paul is convinced that the believers in Corinth have received the spiritual resources they need to fulfill their calling. God has called them, and he has given them gifts that will enable them to be “blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:8). Although the day of perfection has not arrived yet, whether at work or

anywhere else, Christians already have access to the gifts that will come to complete fruition on that day.

It is hard to imagine that all Corinthian Christians felt as if their work was a special occupation designed individually for them by God. Most of them were slaves or common laborers. What Paul must mean is that whether or not each person's occupation seems special, God gives the gifts needed to make everyone's work contribute to God's plan for the world. No matter how insignificant our work seems, no matter how much we long to have a different job, the work we do now is important to God.

Paul reminds the congregation in Corinth that most of them do not come from the ranks of the privileged classes. "Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth" (1 Corinthians 1:26). But the effectiveness of the church did not depend on having people with all the connections, educations, or fortunes. God accomplishes his purposes with ordinary people. The value of our work is based on God's gifts, not on our credentials.

