



# Lessons for Leaders

*Biblical Principles for Successful Leadership*

MINISTERING TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

APRIL 17, 2018



## SCRIPTURES OF THE WEEK



*“He 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.”*

II Timothy 1:9a (Holman)

## Responding to the Callings of God PART II

*God has called us to a life of high purpose, meaning and significance. How are you responding to that calling?  
This is Part II of a three-part series.*

### Followers of Christ are called to an eternal purpose

*“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them” (Romans 8:28 NLT).*

(a) God is purposeful in all that He does. He created the universe for a purpose. He created mankind for a purpose. And He has created and called every one of us to use our gifts and talents in helping His “eternal purpose” (Ephesians 3:11) to be realized.

(b) The purpose for which we have been called is the highest and most exalted purpose in all the universe: The building and advancement of the kingdom of God. Compared to all of the trivial pursuits of this temporal world, nothing else in this life is

***“It ought to be our chief priority to discover our specific God-given callings so that we may participate in the building of God’s kingdom.”***



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of more eternal value than playing our part in helping to grow and promote God's kingdom. As the great British missionary, C.T. Studd, once remarked: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

(c) When every other human desire and activity has passed into the dustbin of history, and all the "lust[s] of the flesh" and "things that are in the world" have passed away (I John 2:15-17 KJV), the only thing left standing will be the "everlasting kingdom" of God (Daniel 7:27). With this in mind, it ought to be our chief priority to discover our specific God-given callings so that we may participate in the building of God's kingdom.

(d) Jesus told His disciples: "Seek first [in order of priority and importance] the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these [other] things will be provided for you" (Matthew 6:33 Holman).

(e) Our prayer concerning this calling, as the writer of Hebrews says, ought to be: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably..." (Hebrews 12:28 KJV).

(f) The great heroes of the Bible always had a sense that fulfilling God's purpose was the preeminent concern of their lives. Of King David, it is written: "Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors..." (Acts 13:36a NIV). In Colossians 4:11 (ESV), Paul describes some of his faithful disciples as "fellow workers for the kingdom of God."

**QUESTION:** Are you engaged in helping to grow and develop the kingdom of God upon the earth? Do you understand what the kingdom of God is and how you can actively participate in helping it to grow and expand? If you are not sure, ask God to

show you what role He would have you to play in His kingdom and in the Church, which is the visible expression of His kingdom on the Earth today.

**We are called to acquire Biblical knowledge, understanding and wisdom, and to share what we learn with others.**

"Wisdom calls out in the street, she shouts loudly in the plazas; at the head of the noisy streets she calls, in the entrances of the gates in the city she utters her words. If only you will respond... then I will pour out my thoughts to you and I will make my words known to you" (Proverbs 1:20-21, 23 NET).

(a) God has a limitless amount of wisdom that He would like to impart to us, and He will impart His wisdom to anyone who responds to His call. James 1:5 (ISV) says: "Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to everyone generously without a rebuke, and it will be given to him."

(b) God has deposited vast amounts of His wisdom in His Word. He invites us to partake of that wisdom so that we can apply it in our lives. Proverbs 4:7-8 declares: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her."

**"According to Jesus, a true disciple is someone who studies God's Word and learns to live by it."**

(c) The study of God's word is the highest form of education in the universe. It is crucial for our success in the Christian life. Jesus prayed fervently for His disciples: "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:17-19 ESV).

(d) This heartfelt prayer—which Jesus prayed just before He went to the cross—reveals that a sacred transmission of truth took place between God the Father and Jesus, who then passed that truth on to His followers. In John 17:14a (ESV), Jesus says: "I have given them your word," and in John 17:8a (ESV), He reports to God: "For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them."

(e) We are called to continue this process by passing God's

**Members' Only Bible Study**



**The next Bible studies after this will be on Tues. April 14, Wed. May 2, Tues. May 8, and Tues. May 15.**

*Please join me in Room 211a (LOB) at 8:00 a.m. for coffee, a Continental Breakfast and our weekly MEMBERS' ONLY Bible Study!*



life-changing truths on to others. Jesus told His disciples: *"To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven..."* (Matthew 13:11 ESV). With that knowledge comes responsibility.

(f) Followers of Christ are called to become "disciples" (or students of the Word) and to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:19 ESV). According to Jesus, a true disciple is someone who studies God's Word and learns to live by it: *"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free"* (John 8:31-21 NASB).

(f) As Christians, one of our core responsibilities is to learn as much of God's truth and wisdom as we can and to pass that truth and wisdom on to others; they, in turn, can pass on God's truth and wisdom as well. In I Timothy 2:2 (ISV), Paul writes: *"What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well."*

(g) Teaching God's truth to others is not only the calling of pastors and teachers, but of all believers. Our first responsibility is to disciple ourselves and our own families; then, we should disciple others as God leads us. Deuteronomy 11:18-20 (NIV) says: *"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."*

(h) The Bible doesn't tell us to know only a tiny smattering of God's Word and to say, sheepishly, "Well, I'm not much of a Bible scholar." It tells us that we should be continually filled with knowledge of God's Word: *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom"* (Colossians 3:16a ESV). The Expanded Bible translates this passage: *"The word of Christ, let it be continually at home in you in abundance."*

**Question: How are you responding to God's invitation to learn and live the truths taught in the Word of God and to pass these truths on to others?** The Bible contains the most important information in the universe. It reveals God's answers to all of mankind's most important problems, and it has the power to change people's lives in glorious and remarkable ways. Through the Bible, we discover God's purpose for our lives, how to live fruitful and satisfying lives, and how to prepare properly for the glorious life to come.

## Each disciple of Christ is called to be a servant and to have the attitude of a servant

*"Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God..."* (Romans 1:1 NIV).

(a) Servanthood is an important concept to understand for anyone who desires to live a successful and fruitful Christian life. The apostle Paul referred to himself as *"a servant of Jesus Christ"* (Romans 1:1 RSV) and *"a servant of God"* (Titus 1:1 ESV).

(b) Although the Greek word for "servant" ("doulos") can mean "bond-slave," Paul uses the term to describe something much more noble: Voluntary and heartfelt service given to God out of love. Out of gratitude to God for His forgiving mercy, Paul dedicated his life to serving Him wholeheartedly. As a result of responding to this call, he arguably accomplished more for the kingdom of God than anyone else who ever lived.

***"The salvation of Jesus Christ is an invitation to an intimate and interactive relationship with the Creator of the universe."***

(c) In most of Jesus' parables regarding the kingdom of God, He refers to His followers as servants. In these cases, again, a "servant" is someone who has been given a job to do by God, and who willingly devotes himself to it. The servants depicted in these parables are Christians who have been given gifts and talents by God to use in blessing others and promoting the growth of God's kingdom.

(d) Christian service is willing service. Jesus never forces anyone to become a disciple or servant of God, but He does invite every person to do so. In Luke 9:23b (NET), He says: *"If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me."* Notice: this is not a command; it is an invitation. Jesus told His disciples: *"I don't call you servants anymore, because a servant doesn't know what his master is doing. But I've called you friends, because I've made known to you everything that I've heard from my Father"* (John 15:15 ESV).

(e) A "good and faithful" servant (Matthew 25:21 KJV) ought to esteem his or her calling or job assignment from God as a sacred privilege and exalt it above his or her own desires and



plans. Those who serve faithfully and willingly will receive rewards in the next life, even they only give someone a cup of cold water: *“For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward”* (Mark 9:41 KJV).

(f) Paul’s Damascus Road conversion caused a radical reversal in his life. Paul shifted from wanting to do his own will to steadfastly pursuing the plan and will of God for his life. Paul, Matthew, Luke, Peter, James and John changed careers to fulfill God’s highest purpose for their lives.

(g) In Romans 12:1 (KJV), believers are urged to adopt this same attitude by presenting ourselves to God as His servants: *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* The word “reasonable” (Greek: “logikos”) in this verse means “logical,” “rational,” or “intelligent.”

(h) Paul believed that giving one’s life to serve Jesus Christ was the most sensible and intelligent thing that a person could do. When we truly surrender our lives to God, we discover what the good and perfect will of God is for our lives: *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* (Romans 12:2 KJV).

(i) The calling to be a Christian (i.e., someone who is like Christ) is, of necessity, a calling to become a servant of God. Why? Because Jesus was a servant. Jesus is called a servant in Isaiah 52:13 (ESV), where God proclaims: *“Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.”* This passage refers to Christ’s sacrifice of Himself on the cross to provide the means for our salvation.

Jesus’ life was that of a perfect and wholly-devoted servant to God the Father. In John 6:38 ESV, He declares: *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me”* (John 6:38 ESV). And in John 8:29 (KJV), He says: *“He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”*

(j) Philippians 2:5-8 (KJV) challenges us to adopt the same attitude: *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And*

*being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”*

**QUESTIONS:** Do you see yourself as a servant of God? Do you have a desire to please God and to be used by Him for His eternal purposes? Is it more important for you to do God’s will than to have your own way? Do you regularly ask God to lead you in making decisions and to show you His will for your life?

### Believers are called to live lives of love

“Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ...” (Ephesians 5:2a NLT). It is an idea well-supported by Scripture that, next to loving God, the highest and most important task to which we have been called is to love others. We were created by God to become vessels through which He can express His love and share it with others.

***“The law of love is the greatest and most central law in the kingdom of God.”***

(a) Genesis tells us that man was created to display the “image” and “likeness” of God (Genesis 1:26-26 KJV), and I John 4:7-8 (ESV) teaches us that God is love: *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.”*

(b) The Bible teaches that Jesus is the greatest and truest expression of God’s nature and image. Hebrews 1:3 (KJV) calls Him *“the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”* It is our God-given calling to be like Him. Romans 8:28-29 (NASB) says: *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”*

(c) When Jesus was asked, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (Matthew 22:36 NIV), he replied: *“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’”* (Matthew 22:37-39 NIV). He then added in verse 40 that “[all] the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”



(d) The Book of James makes two similar statements. According to James 2:8 (NIV), *“If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right.”* The word “royal” means “kingly” or “preeminent,” and indicates that the law of love is the greatest and most central law in the kingdom of God. Romans 13:8 (ESV) expresses the same truth: *“Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.”*

(e) Though God calls believers to many tasks (including studying the Bible, sharing our faith, using our gifts to help the Church, etc.), we should never lose sight of our primary mission: To love the people that God places around us. This includes our families, our friends, our neighbors and even strangers whose needs may come before us. To love other people means a couple of things:

(i) To personally treat people in a Christ-like way. Though loving others is not a new concept, Jesus raised love to the highest level possible when He gave His life for us on the cross. He then gave His disciples what He called “a new commandment: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another”* (John 13:34-35 ESV).

(ii) To love also means to give. Philippians 2:4 (KJV) tells us to: *“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”* To truly love others means more than to just to have a warm feeling toward them. It may mean to leave the comforts of home to respond to their needs in real and concrete ways, or even to part with some of our hard-earned treasure. I John 3:17-8 (NIV) says: *“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”*

**QUESTIONS:** How successful are you being in becoming a truly loving person? Is the love of Christ in you evident in the way that you treat others? Does the love of Christ cause you to give of your time, talent and treasure to meet the needs of others? Have you discovered that there is more joy in giving than there is in receiving?

## We are called to grow and mature as believers

“The calling to become a Christian does not end with salvation. Salvation—acknowledging Christ as the risen Son of God, inviting Him to become one’s personal Savior, and asking forgiveness for sin—is only the beginning of a person’s Christian life. God’s plan and purpose for our lives involves conforming us to the image of Christ through a lifelong process of spiritual growth and transformation.

(a) God does not save individuals so that we may remain as we are. Rather, He has the ambitious goal of growing believers into mature Christians who become more and more like Jesus in the ways that we think, speak and act. This means learning the Word of God and holding ourselves accountable to live *“not by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4b ESV).

**“God has the ambitious goal of growing believers into mature Christians who become more and more like Jesus.”**

(b) According to Jesus in John 8:31-32, true disciples of Christ are those who continue studying the Word of God and become progressively transformed by it. Hebrews 6:1 in the Berean Study Bible says: *“let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity.”* True disciples of Christ don’t remain *“like babies”* (Hebrews 5:12 NLT), but progress on to spiritual adulthood.

(c) In I Corinthians 3:1 (NIV) Paul rebuked the believers in Corinth for remaining in a carnal and immature state when they should have matured: *“Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly--mere infants in Christ.”*

When visiting this church, Paul was disappointed to find people acting in immature ways unworthy of their Christian faith. He said to them: *“For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder”* (II Corinthians 12:20 NIV).



(d) The Bible teaches that God will allow believers to go through various kinds of tests and trials in order for us to become “*fully developed*” and “*lacking nothing*” in Christian character (James 1:3 Amplified). Similar teachings are found in Romans 5:3-5.

(f) Some areas in which believers can mature include:

- listening to, communicating with and obeying God;
- learning and applying the teachings of God’s Word;
- being continually filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit;
- growing in humility, patience, kindness, longsuffering, faithfulness, generosity;
- handling trials gracefully;
- controlling the tongue;
- overcoming the lusts of the flesh;
- controlling our emotions;
- loving, forgiving and living at peace with others; and
- finding true joy and satisfaction in our relationship with God.

**QUESTIONS:** Are you growing and maturing as a Christian? Can you see ways in which God is changing your life and making you a more loving, giving and Christ-like person? Are you growing in your relationship with God, your understanding of the Bible, and your commitment to do God’s will?



PASTOR DALE WALKER, CHAPLAIN

## Greetings!

As a pastor serving Members of the New York State Legislature, it is my desire to make the life-changing truths of the Bible available to the Members in as many ways as possible. One way to accomplish this is through weekly Members Only Bible Studies.

Another way that I share the truths of God’s Word with Members of the Legislature throughout the year is through the Facebook page entitled “New York State Legislative Bible Study,” where I regularly post a “Scripture for the Day” to help you start your day with inspiring spiritual truth. If you hit the “Like” button on the top right of the Facebook page beside the word “Message,” these scriptures and quotations will appear on your Facebook wall whenever they are posted. The Scripture for the Day may also be sent by email to those who email me requesting it.

Rev. Walker is affiliated with  
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