

CALLED

When I answer my phone, the first thing I want to know is “Who is calling?” In fact, I seldom answer unless I recognize the number on caller ID, but that’s another story for another time. The Bible had much to say about being called. In the OT, God often specifically called certain individuals to certain tasks (esp. prophets & kings). God still calls today, though not in the direct way He did back then.

In 1 Cor. 1:9 Paul wrote that “God is faithful BY WHOM you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” Two key things to see are, first, that it is God who called them; and second, that He called them INTO the fellowship of His Son.

That brings up the question of “how?” How does God call people? Many have the idea that the calling of God is a mysterious, subjective, “better-felt-than-told” event. Paul told the Thessalonians that “He called you by our gospel” (2 Thess. 2:14). We can read about Paul preaching the gospel in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9). God didn’t call them through dreams, visions, or voices in the night, but by the preaching of Paul, Silas, Timothy, et. al.

Then there is the question, “for what purpose does God call us?” We’ve already seen one purpose from 1 Corinthians 1:9 – we are called into the fellowship of God’s Son. Here are two more from 1 Peter 2:9 – “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” So, we have been called out of one thing (the darkness of ignorance and sin), and into something else (the light of knowledge and righteousness).

Here are two more things into which God has called us. “Walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:12).

God wants us to be in His kingdom; that certainly includes being in the church, but in a broader sense it has to do with the fact that God reigns over us as we subject ourselves to His will. Therefore we also participate in His glory. In a limited way, that's true even now. Paul taught in 2 Cor. 3:18 that we "are being transformed into His image from glory to glory" – that is, as we grow spiritually & become more and more like Jesus. But in a greater way we will share in Christ's glory in the after-a-while. Paul wrote, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared w/ the glory wh/ shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

We could expand much further on this, but let's wrap up with one more passage. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to wh/ you were also called in one body" (Colossians 3:15). Notice that God called us in one body. That one body we learn elsewhere is the church, the body of Christ. And He called us to have the peace of God in that one body. As we've seen many times before, we can have peace with God; we can have peace with each other; and we can have peace within ourselves – the peace that passes all understanding. God wants that for us; He called us to that end.

So, it is God who calls us. He does so by means of the Gospel of Christ. He calls us out of darkness into His marvelous light. He calls us into the fellowship of His Son. He calls us into His kingdom and glory. And He calls us to have the peace of Christ in one body, the church.

God calls. It's up to you to answer, or else refuse to take the call.