



**GOOD THINGS ONLINE...**

To add to our sermons of last Sunday:

"Science and Religion," by Joe Slater

<http://tinyurl.com/25hq9bu>

**Vocational Awareness**

by *David Lemmons*

(Ephesians 4:1)

Paul teaches about how Christians are to act by stating a challenge to develop a bit of "vocational awareness." In the earlier part of the letter to the Ephesians we are taught about WHO we are (Ephesians 1-3), and then, in 4:1, we are urged to live our lives accordingly. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1).

We commonly use the word VOCATION to describe our occupation, business, or profession. Then there is the word AVOCATION, which is "something a person does in addition to a principal occupation" [dictionary.com]. Think about that definition for just a moment, especially that word, PRINCIPAL. Is it not true, that as a Christian, if I truly have my priorities aligned properly, walking the Christian walk will be my vocation and whatever I do to earn money to support myself would have to be considered an avocation? We do not deny that there is value and

importance in what we do to earn a living (1 Timothy 5:8). But that aspect of our lives relates to our temporal existence on the earth whereas walking the Christian walk has to do with the eternal existence.

The Bible teaches us that the way we are called (according to the way Paul uses the term here) is by hearing the saving message of the gospel (Romans 10:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:14).

Now, think about the word WORTHY Paul uses. He **pleads** with us that we will walk in such a way that our walk will be worthy of the vocation. In the ESV, the expression is perhaps more clearly stated as: "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called." We might even say that Paul pleads for VOCATIONAL AWARENESS.

If we can ever gain a more complete understanding of the value of the gospel which CALLS us, and then apply Paul's powerful words from this text to our lives, we will be so much less in the mood to object to matters related to a faithful walk with the Lord.

Does God's Word give us examples of those who were "vocationally aware"? I think that it certainly does with abundance.

One example would have to be the Apostle Paul, himself. On the occasion of his meeting with the Ephesian elders at

Miletus, Paul says, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). This remarkable statement of dedication to the task is a reaction to the fact that he had been warned that bonds and affliction awaited him if he continued on in his planned itinerary to the city of Jerusalem. Paul counted his project of delivering relief from the Gentile churches to suffering Jewish Christians in Judaea to be more important than sparing his own life. It is my opinion that Paul considered this special collection to be a way of promoting unity between Jewish and Gentile brethren. There is no question but that Paul had an awareness of the value of the gospel and of the importance of his own involvement in getting it spread by a UNITED body of Christ.

A second example of a man who was "vocationally aware," would be young David. At the time of this incident in his life, he was not yet king, but only the younger brother, sent by his father to check on the older brothers in Saul's army.

Israel was encamped in battle array against the Philistines in the Valley of Elah (1 Samuel 17:10). As David was on his way to see how his brothers were doing, he saw the host of Israel going forth to battle and

we are told that he "shouted for the battle" (v. 20). The giant, Goliath (9'9" tall) was coming out twice a day for 40 days issuing a challenge to a duel (v. 16) to anyone in Saul's army. On the LAST of those 80 boastful challenges, Goliath's words reached David's ears. Though some 79 times Israel's finest had heard this defiant Philistine make fun of them, no volunteers were to be found.

Along comes David with these words to his king: "...Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" (v. 32). And you know the rest of the story.

Here was young David, whose vocation was tending his father's sheep. Yet, he took offense at the proud Goliath's loud and blasphemous chatter. David could not sit idly by and allow his God to be insulted in such a way. He knew that God would be his helper as this giant of a man would be humbled.

Brethren, we are in need of "vocational awareness" today. We have instruction from Almighty God about how best to live our lives here. When we disregard these instructions and live like the rest of the world is living, can we not see that we are disrespecting the gospel that has called us? What a **TREASURE** the gospel of Christ is and how **vital** it is for us to be respectful of it by the way we live our lives!