

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## OUR SUFFICIENCY

*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves;  
but our sufficiency is of God.*

*II Corinthians 3:5*

Most careers that men undertake require a certain amount of know-how in the craft or practice of that profession. Most lawyers have a minimum of seven years of training in the liberal arts and in the study of the law itself. The majority of doctors spend at least eight years in training before they are considered competent in the practice of medicine. Then they must continually educate themselves about new techniques, medical equipment, medicines, changes in the law, etc.

Even those crafts which are considered "blue collar" jobs require that those, who would succeed therein, have a certain level of expertise and ability. Those who are willing to apply themselves to improving their skills and becoming more proficient in their understanding and ability, usually gain the admiration of those less skilled in these endeavors. All of the natural employments of men and their ability to profit from them depend upon their know-how and aptitude to carry out the tasks which they are assigned to do.

Thus it would naturally occur to men that those who are called to the ministry of the saints should, of necessity, undergo specialized training in order to be proficient and efficient in that undertaking. The first error that occurs in this line of thinking is assuming that the "ministry of the saints" is to be undertaken only by a select few with certain oratorical gifts, when the scripture indicates that the "ministry of the saints" is to be undertaken by each member of the body as every joint supplies that which the body lacketh. The second is that "ministry" is the product of men, rather than completely of the supply of GOD's grace.

Somewhere in the sojourn of the LORD's people through this lowland of sin and sorrow, it became the norm to equate "the work of the ministry" to the preaching or declaration and teaching of the scriptures. Now it is indeed true that the exercise of such gifts are a "work of the ministry", as the LORD uses them to build up the saints, for the "*work of the ministry*". The "*work of the ministry*" is not limited to a few with a certain skill-set, but is rather the activity of each member of the body seeking the benefit of the other members of the body.

The scriptures exhort the saints to "*bear one another's burdens*" (see Gal.6:2), "*to esteem one another above themselves*" (see Phil 2:3), and to build one another up in the most holy faith. (see Jude 1:20). Since the saints are members one with another in the Body of CHRIST, they are exhorted, to love one another, to pray for one another, to watch over one another, to distribute their wealth among the saints as necessity might arise. (see Rom chap 12) We are indeed our brother's keeper.

These things are the true work of the ministry as each seeks his brother's welfare. To limit our understanding of the "*work of the ministry*" to the teaching gifts is to have a sterile view of what the true work of the ministry actually is, and results in the exaltation of certain individuals above the rest of the body, which is not healthy for them or the body, since man is naturally filled with pride and desires the accolades of others. This practice also lessens the esteem that each member of the body is to have for one another, since deference is paid to a few.

Regardless of a man's calling, and the measure and type of gifts that he might be given, there is one principle which must govern the regard that one has to his own gifts or those given to others. Paul declares this "principle" to the Corinthians as he rejoices in the work which GOD saw fit to perform through him for the benefit of the saints. He said, "*our sufficiency is of GOD.*".

By this he meant that he knew that without CHRIST, he could do nothing. "*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves*". It has become quite vogue among many who profess to be the followers of CHRIST to quote Philippians 4:13, which says, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*" (Php 4:13)

Most miss the whole point of the scripture, which is not to encourage them to do many things, about which they may then boast, but rather to confess that they are nothing without HIM. The modern psychologist/preachers use this scripture as a motivational tool, when in reality it is an occasion to fall down upon one's face in worship of HIM who provides all things necessary for the sons of GOD, who, themselves, can supply nothing, not even an ability to be encouraged by such a scripture apart from the work of HIS SPIRIT in them.

Paul again refers to this very same principle when he says, "*For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*" (1Cor 4:7) There is absolutely no place for individual glorying in ones accomplishments before GOD. Each must confess that we have nothing and are nothing apart from that which CHRIST is pleased to do. "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" (Php 2:13)

Our SUFFICIENCY is of GOD:

As HE is pleased to send HIS SON into the world as an atonement for our sin, taking upon HIMSELF our guilt, satisfying all of the requirements of the law, past, present and future, nailing it to HIS cross. "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*"

As HE stands as our REDEEMER, who has obtained our eternal redemption, wherein HE has seen fit to purchase that possession which was HIS by right and kinship. "*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*" (Heb 9:15)

As HE is pleased to give HIS people faith in such time as HE calls them out of darkness and into the LIGHT. "*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*" (Isa 9:2)

As HE unfolds the promise of HIS calling. "*For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*" (Acts 2:39)

As HE teaches HIS people and makes known the TRUTH to them. "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" (John 8:32) "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*" (John 8:36)

As HE makes HIS people "holy", even as HE is HOLY, which holiness cannot be improved upon or enhanced. "*That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*" (1Cor 1:29-31)

As HE has risen from the dead. "*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*" (1Cor 15:20) "*And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*" (Rom 8:23)

"*For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And **who is sufficient for these things?** For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*" (2Cor 2:15-17) HE is our SUFFICIENCY.