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I Am a Minister



What's a chore you'd love to "outsource" to someone else?

QUESTION 1

#BSFLmore

God works through us to make a difference.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I hate working in the yard! Maybe it's because when I was growing up, I had to spend a portion of each weekend cutting grass, pulling weeds, trimming bushes, and blowing away the clippings—and all while my body was being cooked under the hot west Texas sun. Or maybe I dislike it because yard work is time-consuming and inconvenient, and I don't want to miss out on other things in my life because of it.

The solution to my dilemma is simple; I just don't do yard work! I now "outsource" this job to other people. A crew of five guys shows up, and with each of them doing different tasks, the yard work is completed in twenty minutes—and it looks great!

You and I love the idea of "outsourcing" the things in our lives we don't want to do or may not be good at doing, whether it's cleaning the house, cooking dinner, or doing our taxes. If we can outsource some tasks, that's great. But one aspect of life we can't outsource is ministry. God has called every believer to be a minister.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 (CSB)

⁴ Such is the confidence we have through Christ before God. ⁵ It is not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God. ⁶ He has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

I took my first ride in a helicopter with a friend who not only had learned to fly a chopper but actually bought one. It was an unforgettable experience hovering over the surrounding neighborhoods and seeing the countryside from that perspective. After watching my friend demonstrate the basic maneuvers of the bird, he suddenly looked at me and said, "It's your turn to fly," and he motioned for me to take the controls. An overwhelming feeling of inadequacy swept over my entire body. I'm normally a pretty confident person, but not at that moment.

If you're like me, you lack confidence when you feel ill-equipped or unprepared. We also may lose our nerve when we feel unworthy or unqualified. In this passage, Paul told believers we never have to lack confidence in our walk with Christ because we *are* equipped and we *are* prepared in Him. God has given us everything we need to be competent ministers of the gospel.

I'm sure we've all faced moments when we feel inferior or ill-equipped to serve the Lord. It may happen when you're teaching three-year-olds in Vacation Bible School or helping minister to villagers suffering from HIV while on a mission trip in Kenya. When we step out of our comfort zones to serve the Lord, we may sense something inside us saying, *What are you thinking? You surely don't have what it takes.* But in this passage, Paul wrote that our competence does not come from ourselves, and our sense of self-confidence doesn't arise from our own ability. Believers have the Spirit of the dwelling God living inside them; "our adequacy is from God" (v. 5). God has given us Himself, and we have more than enough to complete what God calls us to do.

When have you had the privilege of ministering to someone?

QUESTION 2

“He has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (v. 6). “The letter” Paul refers to in verse 6 is the law recorded in the Old Testament. The law is a good thing, because our obedience to it brings us into a right standing with God. The problem is that none of us fully obeys the law. Not a single one of us. As a result, “the letter kills” (v. 6) because our failure to obey it puts us under a curse.

Jesus Christ removed that curse and gave His Spirit to all who trust in Him (Galatians 3:13-14). So any competence we have to serve God doesn’t come from obeying the letter of the law because we’re unable to keep it on our own. The Spirit gives us competence because He empowers us.

2 Corinthians 3:7-10 (CSB)

⁷ Now if the ministry that brought death, chiseled in letters on stones, came with glory, so that the Israelites were not able to gaze steadily at Moses’s face because of its glory, which was set aside, ⁸ how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? ⁹ For if the ministry that brought condemnation had glory, the ministry that brings righteousness overflows with even more glory. ¹⁰ In fact, what had been glorious is not glorious now by comparison because of the glory that surpasses it.

God’s glory was experienced in the Old Testament in a tangible way. For example:

- » “The LORD’s glory appeared” over the children of Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 16:10).
- » “The glory of the LORD filled the temple” (1 Kings 8:11).
- » The glory of God was reflected in Moses’ face. “As Moses descended from Mount Sinai—with the two tablets of the testimony in his hands as he descended the mountain—he did not realize that the skin of his face shone as a result of his speaking with the LORD” (Exodus 34:29).

How can we tell if we’re relying on our own competency instead of trusting Christ to work through us?

QUESTION 3

How would you summarize Paul's point in these verses?

QUESTION 4

Paul mentioned this last example in his Letter to the Corinthian church. Moses had been in God's presence receiving the law; as a result, the glory of God was reflected all over his face. But Paul also noted that the glory associated with the law wasn't a lasting glory; it was a fading glory—"set aside" by the "ministry of the Spirit," which endures (v. 7-8). Paul did not dismiss the glory that came with God's law, but it pales in comparison to the glory that comes through Christ. The law was glorious even though it brought death and condemnation, but Christ's glory—which brings righteousness to us—is far greater.

Fourteen-time NBA All-Star Michael Jordan is universally recognized as the greatest basketball player to ever play the game, but his career had a humble beginning. When Michael was a sophomore in high school, he failed to make the varsity team. Motivated by the cut, he practiced, worked hard, grew several inches, and eventually reached his goal of becoming a starter—and a star—on the squad.

Michael would have missed a lot if he had settled for that high-school glory. He never would have led the North Carolina Tar Heels to win the 1982 NCAA Championship. He never would have been chosen by the Chicago Bulls in the first round of the NBA draft, been a six-time NBA champion, nor won two Olympic gold medals. Had Michael Jordan merely been satisfied with his high-school glory, he never would have experienced the greater glory that came with being inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame. But even with all the greatness that Michael Jordan has experienced, none of it can compare with the glory Paul described.





Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit equips us and empowers us for a ministry greater than anything possible through our own efforts in keeping the rules and regulations of the law—and with that greater ministry comes a greater glory. And what is that greater glory? It is all tied to Jesus Christ. We achieve no glory through our own efforts at righteousness; instead, Christ imparts His righteousness to us. He lives in believers, empowering and equipping us to live and serve. We can know no greater glory on this earth than to walk in His righteousness.

2 Corinthians 3:11-12 (CSB)

¹¹ For if what was set aside was glorious, what endures will be even more glorious. ¹² Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness.

The idea of talking to someone about Jesus can feel like a terrifying thing—but it doesn't need to be. In Christ, we have a glory that will endure, and an eternal glory means we have an eternal hope. It doesn't matter what happens; nothing can take away that sure hope! That kind of hope enables us and empowers us to live our lives on mission with a supernatural confidence and boldness. We don't have to worry or be fearful as we do the ministry God has called us to do. God is with us and gives us exactly what we need along the way.

This truth is not just for preachers, teachers, and other church leaders. Paul's words are for all who have trusted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. It's a privilege for each believer to do the work of a minister and boldly share this hope we have. In other words, if you're truly a believer—a servant of God—you also must be a servant of people and share the hope you have in Jesus.

Since Christ has given us this competence, confidence, and hope, we can lovingly serve God and others with boldness. We don't minister in vain. We have a sure hope, and that is a hope worth sharing.

What does it look like to serve Christ with boldness in today's culture?

QUESTION 5

"God has given us everything we need to be competent ministers of the gospel!"

JORDAN EASLEY

CHRIST IN ME



How is God currently calling you to serve Him in the following areas?

Home

Work

Church

Community

What truth from today's study gives you confidence to take steps of obedience this week?

LIVE IT OUT

What can you do this week to live out the truth of this passage?

- » **Seek God first.** Pray and ask God to give you a fresh dose of confidence so you can boldly minister to those around you for His glory.
- » **Put your faith into action.** Look for an opportunity this week to share Jesus with someone you know. God has empowered you and equipped you for this opportunity and He is ever-present in your life. Go in confidence and trust the Lord with the results.
- » **Dig deeper.** The Holy Spirit empowers us to minister. Make it your goal to learn more about this member of the Trinity by reading through the Book of Acts in your personal devotional time. If you read one chapter per day, you'll finish this incredible book in 28 days.

As Christ-followers, we're equipped with all we need to complete any task God has for us. **In fact, God Himself works through us. Because of this truth, serving others is one thing you won't want to outsource to anyone else.**



My thoughts