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# What Is Your Calling?

## CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY 153<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly

- **TUESDAY @ 7:30 AM** in 123 CAP
- **TUESDAY @ 9:00 AM** in 417 CAP
- **TUESDAY @ 12 NOON** in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held every week on Tuesdays. *Three times are available for Bible study:* (1) an early morning Bible Study from 7:30-8:00am in 123 CAP (during the month of February); (2) a legislative Bible study from 9:00-9:30am in 417 CAP; and, (3) an open-to-all Bible study from 12:00-12:45pm in 123 CAP (*where we have ministry donors provide lunch*). The *weekly* Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. *The study for the 2016 General Assembly is the book of First Kings.*

**I pray that this study will be edifying to you.** My sole intent is to serve you, and to be a resource to you for pastoral care, counsel, and prayer. **Please accept my study in the Word of God, as evidence of my desire to serve you.**

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

## Capitol Commission Bible Studies *are* Tuesday, 9 February 2016

### I Kings 5 – “What Is Your Calling?”

Late one night, a member of the British Parliament sat at his desk studying documents regarding the slave trade. William Wilberforce was already maturing quickly in importance and popularity within the political realm, yet he had become a Christian two years earlier, in 1784. When he considered resigning, ex-slave trader John Newton, who was then a pastor, convinced Wilberforce that his most important spiritual duty was to remain as a witness for Christ.

*Romans 8:28, 31 – 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. . . . What shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?*

He had already been challenged by other Christians to consider slavery from a biblical perspective. Wilberforce was not naïve for he knew that many of his contemporaries regarded slavery as hideous and inhuman but a necessary evil. If he were to oppose slavery, Wilberforce could almost certainly expect that his political career

would be halted abruptly, resulting in antagonism toward him from influential enemies, including the royal family.

Nevertheless, as he studied the current facts, in light of the Word of God, he was convinced with regard to the will of the Lord. On Sunday, 28 October 1787, subsequent to a conversation with Newton, he penned a memorable entry in his journal: “God Almighty has placed before me two great objects: the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners [i.e. public morals].” Wilberforce already had a political career, albeit he now received a God-given mission that stimulated his resolve for the next fifty years and eventually led to the transformation of British society. His parliamentary campaign against the slave trade eventually led to the passing of the Slave Trade Act of 1807.

With a profound Biblical allegiance to the central distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, Wilberforce understood the impact of these beliefs upon the political welfare of a nation. Conviction of these doctrines, he said, gives rise to true affections for spiritual things. It breaks the power of pride, greed and fear, and it transforms the morals of an entire nation. If true Christianity gains ground, “there is no estimating the effects on public morals [“manners”], and the consequent influence on our political welfare.

Like Wilberforce, we [Capitol Commission] know that submission to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word will lead to the political well-being of our nation. If you believe that radically God-centered Christians serving as leaders in government will profoundly impact our nation, please pray in accordance with that belief, and partner with us in calling men and women to this place to faith and service [as quoted from Capitol Commission brochure].

How would you answer the question, “What is your career?” Probably you could respond quite easily. Would you be able to answer just as readily, if asked, “What is your calling?” Christians are those “who are called according to” God’s purposes (Rom 8:28). God’s people “are called” by grace through faith to Christ, and then commissioned by the Lord for the furtherance of his purposes. Christians are those with a divine calling, which may include a career, yet is more comprehensive than that alone. God’s holy calling involves a unique purpose for our lives, which comprises the correlation of our experiences, gifts, and skills (with the needs of our world) in light of the Lord’s eternal kingdom.

Solomon possessed a political career because he was the leader of a nation requiring expansion and stabilization. The king also possessed a divine calling not only to lead the nation but also to be certain that the people were in right relationship to the living Lord. God has always desired for his chosen people to be a witness and a light to all nations (cf. Isa 49:6; 60:3; Matt 28:19; Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23). The nation thrived when the king heeded his calling; however, when Solomon was focused solely upon his career, the king made foolish choices that affected everyone.

### HEEDING THE CALLING

(*1 Kgs 5:1-18*) Chapters 5-7 of 1 Kings portray Solomon at his finest. A primary aspect of the account involves building the Temple.



**Capitol Commission Bible Studies**  
Tuesday (9<sup>th</sup> of February) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, 123 CAP  
Tuesday (9<sup>th</sup> of February) @ 9:00am – 9:30am, 417 CAP  
Tuesday (9<sup>th</sup> of February) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP  
Lunch provided from event sponsorship by **Walton EMC Natural Gas**



Solomon's career was undergirded by his calling: to focus the nation upon the worship of the Lord God by building "a house for the name of the LORD his God."

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**EVEN TODAY, GOD IS BUILDING HIS "HOLY TEMPLE" (EPH 2:19-22), AND HE USES THE SERVICE OF ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.**

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God gave David the design for the Temple (1 Chron 28:11-19), and he and the people supplied the majority of the building materials (1 Chron 29). Hiram, king of Tyre, provided the timber, and a significant number of the workers (1 Kgs 9:20-22). Tyre was an ancient Phoenician city-state located on the Mediterranean coast, northwest of Israel in modern Lebanon.

The cedar trees of Lebanon were greatly heralded in ancient times for their beauty, commercial value, fragrance, and utility in building. The Bible refers to the cedar forests as "the glory of Lebanon" (Isa 35:2; 60:13). The psalmist likened a righteous individual to a cedar from Lebanon (Ps 92:12-15).

*Psalm 92:12-15 – The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*

Hiram provided David with carpenters and cedar trees to build his palace in Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:11). Solomon discerned the importance of maintaining an alliance between the two kingdoms, thus he sought to purchase sufficient materials from Hiram to build the Temple (1 Kgs 5:1-6, 12). When he received word from Solomon, the king of Tyre "rejoiced greatly" and Hiram had his workmen float the logs "down from Lebanon to the sea" (vv. 7-10). Hiram lacked sufficient agricultural resources to feed his own people, thus, in return, Solomon provided the king of Tyre with barley, oil, wheat, and wine (v. 11; 2 Chron 2:10; Ezek 27:17).

Although building the Temple was a divine calling, it was also very much a human project. Consequently, it required all sorts of labor and materials, as described in verses 6-18. Solomon drafted a large corvée, which was a tax paid in the form of human labor, to work the trees in Lebanon and to quarry limestone blocks from the Jerusalem hills (vv. 13-18). Solomon's recruitment of laborers was similar to the Egyptian pharaohs and Mesopotamian kings who conscripted their own people for massive building projects.

Although the labor was "forced," it is assumed that many of the people worked readily, knowing that their efforts were providing a principal focus for their developing national and religious identity. Nevertheless, it is a sad commentary on the part of Solomon for a nation who knew the horrors of slave labor in Egypt to now be reverting to that same precedent. For the moment, at least, the emphasis was upon preparation for construction.

The effort between the Canaanite and Jewish workers was cooperative, and supervised by Solomon. The bodies of God's people are the Lord's temple in current times. Even today, God is building his "holy temple" (Eph 2:19-22), and He uses the service of all kinds of people who are called according to his purpose. How are you helping in God's work to build his church?

*Ephesians 2:19-22 – So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.*

As members of "God's household," believers participate in the teachings of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, and Christ Jesus Himself who is the cornerstone. The unity of the church is based upon the Person of Jesus Christ. God has accomplished the unity, and thus commands believers to maintain it by "growing into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph 2:21).

The believer's access to God is beyond imagination. Not only have believers be reconciled to Him, but they are also united spiritually with Him, having become the children of God. The truth with regard to heavenly realities should seize perspective as regards all earthly endeavors and experiences.

The study of God's Word is crucial because it grants us the obligation and privilege to chisel and hammer our lives for the purpose of being a stone that fits with others and which heeds the Lord's calling for us. We need to regard ourselves as stonemasons, who are allowing God's Word – the Holy Bible – to form us into the perfect shape (and in relation with others) that our Lord desires.

*Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the nobility to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.*

#### About Capitol Commission

Scripture calls the church to pray for the salvation of our leaders, resulting in them having knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:1-4). As churches are faithful in prayer and proclaiming the gospel of God's grace, our society and government *will be impacted*. Capitol Commission, in partnership with the church, is committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ and promoting the biblical mandate to pray for those in authority in the capitol communities throughout the United States and the world.

Romans 10:14-15 affirms, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent. . . ?" Please notice the reverse progression. If we desire anyone, including our government leaders, to (5) *call* upon the Lord and to seek Him and his Word for life decisions, they must prior to that (4) *believe* in Him, which means they must previously have (3) *heard* the Word of God, which means prior to that someone needs to (2) *preach* to them, which requires that others have first (1) *sent* someone to preach.

Capitol Commission is committed to the second part: *preaching* (proclaiming) the good news of salvation. Of course, that cannot occur without someone doing the first part: *sending*. All funding and prayer for this work comes from people who want the light of the gospel of God's grace brought into our State Capitol and throughout the nation. As you do #1 and we do #2, we can rejoice together as the Lord accomplishes in the Capitol what only He can produce in someone: #3, #4, and #5.

What an exciting co-mission! Please join us in this ministry!

this week's Bible studies sponsored by:

 **Walton EMC**  
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Bible study copies made by:

 **THE Kennickell Group**

**NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:**

Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> of February @ 7:30am in 123 CAP;  
also @ 9:00am in 417 CAP;  
and again (with lunch) @ 12 NOON in 123 CAP