

"I used to be a Bible teacher."

TC's Thoughts for Discussion

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My late mom tried her best to make me into a preacher. My pastor/evangelist dad kind-of-sort-of supported her in that. Mom's motives were purely subliminal, I think:

- To be able to bask in the admiration of her would-be preacher mommas peer group.
- To qualify her for special preacher-momma blessings in Heaven.

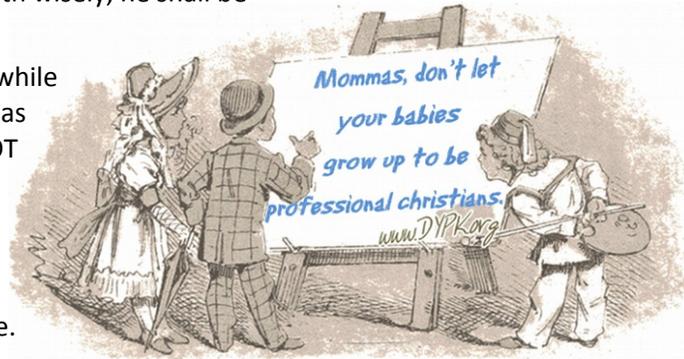
The fact that her dad was an uncommonly well-known "super-preacher" may've played a big role in that. She kept telling me I could become the next Oral Roberts and stuff like that. Hmmm...

(Read 2 Corinthians 11:5 in several Bible versions to understand why I've used the term, "super-preacher," here.)

Mom was, in fact, a godly woman who would stop to actually get onto her knees and pray for me several times every day. Her prayers were worthy and appropriately effective. They may've been responsible for my acquisition of discernment. Along with that and a touch of Godly wisdom, I have learned to lean more to my God-given intellect than to my feelings in matters of importance:

- > "The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked: who can know it?" —Jeremiah 17:9
- > "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered." —Proverbs 28:26

Jesus' humble disciples who simply practice "being Christian" while earning a living via secular trades and professions are special. (That was Paul's position...and mine.) Preachers, bishops and theologians are NOT special. Instead, their legitimate function within Christ's body is simply DIFFERENT from yours or mine [1 Corinthians 12]. Those who believe otherwise cannot be effective in "the ministry." The "We're 'called and chosen' and y'all are not" mindset is inappropriate. In fairness, I think it is subconscious for the most part. Still, though, it is readily observable. Who can remedy that?



Jesus' "The Great Commission" (Matthew 28:19-20) clearly did not assign "the ministry" to career professional christians. The apostle, Paul, believed that the establishment of a professional clergy would inevitably corrupt "the ministry." And it has! It is unfortunate that, after the Reformation, Protestant groups quickly adopted and adapted the business model the Romans have used ever since that A.D. 325 Council of Nicea. Because "money talks," several of those Protestant organizations soon amassed political power, too. Like the Roman "church," accountable to no one, those Protestant "churches" have become a lot like the proverbial manufacturer of industrial lubricants that uses all or almost all of its output to lubricate the machinery with which it manufactures lubricants. Are your tithes and offerings going to such an organization? If you pay to play, I'll bet they are.

Among the very destructive messages of the visible church is the implication that each of us should anticipate a "special" calling, much like the one Samuel experienced as a young man. A valued correspondent wrote this a couple of years ago: "When a naïve believer fails to receive this 'special' calling, the door is left wide open for a preacher's voice to become 'the voice of God'." That is why so many impressionable young people who admire their preachers come to believe that they should make lifetime career commitments, too. They're most vulnerable when they feel The Holy Spirit drawing them to a close, personal relationship with Christ.

A large megachurch near us is publically proud of its commitment "to turn out at least 50 new preachers every year." It is clear to objective observers that the senior pastor of that church confuses Christ's mission – to make Disciples – with making Preachers! (Great for bragging rights at his denomination's annual national convention.) Yep; you guessed it: There are hundreds of BELIEVERS who faithfully warm the pews of that church. But guess how many DISCIPLES there are.

Like millions of the naïve faithful, I waited and prayed for decades that God would reveal His "special" calling on my life. (While I loved my mom and appreciate the fact that she wanted God's best for me, I really needed divine confirmation!) In the meantime, I pursued things I enjoyed and was pretty good at doing. Those were secular pursuits for the most part. They yielded

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I knew what my denomination believed and that's what I taught.

Yes, I should've checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn't I do that? Well, maybe I didn't do that for the same reason that you haven't really checked out what your denomination teaches.

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a really good living and I had a ball, too! Still, though, I often thought God just didn't have a plan for me, except maybe to be a good adult Sunday School teacher and effective spokesman for our denomination's "what 'we' believe" franchise. Much later, I learned that He had been preparing me for TODAY. So, what was my "calling" during all those years? It was to pursue things I enjoyed and was pretty good at doing! Might that be God's initial plan for the young folk you know and love?

Here's the take-home message: PREACHERS are NOT "special." BELIEVERS are NOT "special." DISCIPLES, alone, are the "special" Christians. So, mommas, please don't let your babies grow up to be professional christians. According to Our Lord at Matthew 6:5-7, those guys have their reward! Instead, pray for your babies and encourage them to make lifetime commitments to become effective DISCIPLES.

—T. C. Newsome 

PS: To participate in Bible discussions about articles like this one – or to just read and enjoy them – join us at TC's Friends Club. Here's the hot link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/136708110091989/>

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