



Paul the Tentmaker

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*P*aul, our apostle (Romans 11:13) and pattern (I Timothy 1:16), made his living as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). He conducted his life and ministry outside of the religious system. He taught the divine value and purpose of work.

Many believe that to *really* serve God, one must be religiously “employed,” but the truth of the matter is that every believer is called to “full time” ministry (I Corinthians 10:31; II Corinthians 5:18) in the context of their individual daily lives.

“Tentmaking” will find its own unique form in how we make a living. We may be a construction worker, or a computer technician. We may farm, or do electrical work. Perhaps we are a physician, salesman, or teacher. It matters little in the eternal perspective of things what the details of our “tentmaking” involves. The important thing is that we are “tentmaking.”

No matter what the circumstances of life are around us, regardless of what earthly occupation we may use to supply our needs and those of others, we each have a divine vocation to which we have been called. Yet it is not “tentmaking” that defines us or our lives. Paul was not ... “*Paul, the tentmaker.*” No, he was defined by heaven in light of his divine calling and vocation; he was ... “*Paul, the apostle.*”

We live our lives for the Lord, serving Him, and we do so in the context of “tentmaking.” More often than not, this context can have the appearance of a monotonous, daily routine; but the very Life of God running its full course in our day-by-day circumstances will make our lives anything but monotonous and routine.

We must not confuse what we do to make a living with the purpose of our lives. Our occupations are just the contexts in which we carry out our divine calling. The circumstances of our earthly labors are the backdrop of God's working in our lives.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

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