

What is Your Vocation?

What is your vocation? What is your work? What kind of work do you do? What is your particular line of work? What do you do for a living? What's your calling?

What *is* our vocation? There are so many things in the word that talk about what we are to do, but there is a specific place in the Bible where it talks about what we have been summoned to. We have all been summoned from the world into the Body, and then what we do in the Body is our vocation. And the main thing we do in the Body is to maintain our unity — that is our calling (Eph 4:2-3).

But how do we do it? Then it tells us an authoritative prescription of how to maintain our unity. Eph 4:1 — What do you have to do to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called? What is the main thing you have to do to maintain unity? [Bear with one another's faults, die to yourself, bear with one another in love...] There is a lot to being a disciple. Who could even dream of something like this except our Father in heaven. It is no social club, is it? It is a social order. As a disciple you are to live as becomes your calling, with complete lowliness of mind. When it says *complete*, it means death. In order to live a life worthy of the calling, it says be completely, *completely* humble. Does it say *complete humility* or does it say *almost*? It says “with all humility...” — total, complete, everything. What if we do not do that? Then we are not going to live a life worthy of our calling, and therefore we are not going to maintain the unity. Did the first church maintain the unity? Did Christianity maintain the unity? Christians think they are doing it since they think the whole of Christianity is the Body, and they have unity “in diversity”.

So Eph 4:2-3 says, “Living as becomes you with complete lowliness of mind, humility, meekness — that means unselfishness, gentleness, mildness — with all patience, forbearing with one another and making allowances because you love one another.” What does *forbearing* mean? It means you have to look over their faults, forbearing, not getting indignant or frustrated. What is frustration? The conflict between two goals — there are two things you have to do and

you are called to do both of them at once and you do not know which to do. As disciples, we have countless opportunities to get frustrated with a thousand things to do at once. But we do not look at it that way, externally trying to obey some principles. We know it is something we could only accomplish with the Holy Spirit. If you try to accomplish this without the Holy Spirit, you would become frustrated. You would have to wait until you get to heaven to do it without getting frustrated (like the Christians say).

So when someone is demanding one thing of you and someone else is demanding something else from you, you may be provoked. This circumstance may provoke you. But that is when you have to forbear. How do we forbear? It says to forbear with one another in love. Forbear with one another because you love one another. If we love one another, we can forbear.

First of all, we have to have all patience and all humility. How are we going to have all patience and all humility? Is this what it says? How are we going to do it? It is a command, so if we do not do it, we are disobedient since we have grace and we have the Holy Spirit to help us. So, “*with all patience, bearing with one another, making allowances because you love one another.*” Forbear because you love one another. *Forbear* means restraint in the face of provocation. What is provocation? Have you ever been provoked? Sometimes we feel provoked by a brother or sister or wife or husband or your children, or one child may even provoke another child. They may not intend to provoke you, but it is the circumstances in the community that make it so; it is designed that way so that we can grow thereby.

Forbear means restraint, and *restraint* means self-control, and *self-control* is the fruit of the spirit. The fruit of the spirit is self-restraint. So if you do not have self-restraint, you do not have love, do you? Because the fruit (not fruits) is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control — it is all one fruit. We must have self-control in the face of provocation. In the face of provocation we are to turn the other cheek, tolerate, endure with one another's weaknesses and lacks. Sometimes it may be another's weakness that provokes you, and we have to make up for those weaknesses and lacks. We cannot get mad at them; we cannot get provoked, like “he did something wrong,” or, “he's too

slow,” or, “he didn't do it right,” or, “he did this again,” or, “he did that again, he ran off with the keys to the van in his pocket.” Does that provoke you? That he did it again?

In the face of provocation, we are to have self-restraint, enduring with one another in their weaknesses and lacks, not saying, “He *always* does that!,” not throwing your hands up in the air. That is the straw that broke the camel's back, if you throw your hands up in the air. That means you have been in the flesh all day. Our refined nature finally comes to the breaking point when the last straw comes. If you live around certain people, they will bring your refined nature to the end. You have to transfer over to the spiritual in order to live around them. So, you want to know what you do for a living? You bear with those people. That is your vocation. We bear with them because there is only one Body, one Spirit, one hope.

That is an illustration so that we can understand this. We are to guard the oneness of the Spirit in the bond of peace, because there is only one Body, one Spirit, and one hope. That is our calling. So the next time someone asks you what your calling is, tell him you are a peacemaker. What do the sons of God do? They keep peace — *oseh shalom*. Mt 5:8-9 — You were not a son of God when you let your brother's fault provoke you; you did not *have* self-restraint; you threw your hands up in the air when too many people were demanding something of you at the same time. We know where we are spiritually by how these agitations, these irritants effect us — and pretty soon these irritants cause a beautiful pearl to be made. The day will come when we will have to be judged on these things that we did not judge ourselves. Everything that is not covered by the blood of Messiah, by our confession, we will have to answer for. It is very important to be able to judge yourself and confess yours sins and not let your sins pile up. We have to judge ourselves right.

Dean: Our occupation is to die for a living, to die to ourselves in order to maintain the unity.

Havah: It's a command to be humble and patient in order to maintain the unity. We *can* do it because He has given us grace to do it since it is a command.