

**HWMR: BEING A VESSEL UNTO HONOR, A FULLY EQUIPPED MAN OF GOD, BY BEING
EMPOWERED IN THE GRACE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS TO FULLY ACCOMPLISH
OUR MINISTRY IN THE UNIQUE MINISTRY OF GOD’S ECONOMY (Week 8)**

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:17, 25; 2 Tim. 4:5d; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 4:11-12; Col. 4:17

“Fully Accomplish Your Ministry”

Acts 1:17	For he was numbered among us and was allotted his portion of this ministry.
Acts 1:25	To take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.
2 Timothy 4:5	But you, be sober in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelist, fully accomplish your ministry.
1 Timothy 1:12	I give thanks to Him who empowers me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He has counted me faithful, appointing me to the ministry,
2 Corinthians 4:1	Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;
Ephesians 4:11	And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
Ephesians 4:12	For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
Colossians 4:17	This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind,

Day 1

Acts 1:17 - For he was numbered among us and was allotted his portion of this ministry.

Acts 1:25 - To take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.

I. In the eyes of the Lord there is just **one ministry—2 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 4:12:**

- A. Speaking of the need of a replacement for Judas, Peter said that Judas “was numbered among us and was allotted his portion of this ministry”—Acts 1:17:
 - 1. The apostles prayed for the Lord to show them clearly the one whom He had **chosen** “to take the place of this ministry and apostleship”—vv. 24-25.
 - 2. As used in verses 17 and 25, the word *ministry* refers to the ministry that bears the **testimony of Jesus**—v. 8:
 - a. Though the apostles were twelve in number, their ministry was uniquely **one**—*this ministry*, a **corporate ministry** in the principle of the Body of Christ.
 - b. All the apostles carried out the **same** ministry to bear the **unique** testimony of the incarnated, resurrected, and ascended Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of all.

When I refer to "one ministry," I do not mean that this one ministry is my ministry. But I would say that my ministry is a **part of the one ministry**. Each member of the Body of Christ has a ministry that is a part of the unique New Testament ministry. Some sisters may be burdened organically to clean the hall. This cleaning of the hall is their ministry, which is a service for the work of the building up of the Body of Christ. The saints who go out to preach the gospel are carrying out their ministry as a part of the New Testament ministry to build up the Body of Christ. The Head has given all the gifted persons to perfect the saints so that they may **participate** in the ministry which the gifted persons are carrying out for the building up of the Body of Christ. To perfect the saints is to **develop their organs, equipping and furnishing** them with **functions** through the growth in the life of Christ. Eventually, all the saints **do the same one building up work** as the gifted members. The saints are perfected to do the work of the ministry for the direct building up of the Body of Christ by their growth in Christ. (The Body of Christ, Chapter 4)

Day 2

2 Corinthians 4:1 - *Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;*

2 Timothy 4:5 - *But you, be sober in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelist, fully accomplish your ministry.*

- B. In 2 Corinthians 4:1 Paul says, "Having this **ministry** as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart":
- The ministry in 2 Corinthians is the **corporate ministry** of the New Testament ministers:
 - All the ministers have their **own portion** of the ministry.
 - In this corporate ministry Paul had his portion, Peter had his portion, and Timothy had his portion—2 Tim. 4:5d.
 - When we **add** all the portions together, we have "this ministry," which is the **New Testament ministry**.
 - The **many** ministers have **one** ministry—the ministry of the new covenant for the accomplishment of God's New Testament economy.
 - All the apostles' works are to **carry out** this unique ministry, the ministering of Christ to people for the building up of His Body.

Day 3

2 Corinthians 3:6 - *Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

1 Timothy 1:12 - *I give thanks to Him who empowers me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He has counted me faithful, appointing me to the ministry,*

- C. Second Corinthians 3:6 tells us that God has made us "**sufficient** as ministers of a new covenant":
- The Spirit, the ultimate expression of the processed Triune God, **imparts** the divine life, even God Himself, into the believers and the apostles, **making** them ministers of a new covenant.
 - Hence, their ministry is **constituted** with the Triune God of life by His life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b.
- D. "I give thanks to Him who empowers me, Christ Jesus our Lord, that He has counted me faithful, **appointing** me to the ministry"—1 Tim. 1:12:

1. In this verse Paul does not say, “He appointed me to my ministry.”
2. Paul says that the Lord appointed him to the one unique, corporate New Testament ministry.
3. We all should praise the Lord that by His mercy and grace He has appointed us to the corporate ministry that builds up the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:12, 16.

All the members of the Body of Christ are parts of the one organism. What a privilege, what a mercy, and what an all-sufficient grace that we are now in the one organism of the Triune God! As living members of this organism, we need the organic perfecting. We need to be perfected to do what the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers do. We have to be perfected so that the entire Body of Christ functions in the same way that the gifted members do.

There is much hope that we can be perfected to do what the gifted members do. In a local church some can do the apostles’ work to preach the gospel, teach the truth, establish churches, and appoint elders. The Lord needs many apostles, not just one or two. God’s intention is to perfect every saint to do what the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers do. Some saints will do the apostles’ work. Some will be perfected to do the prophets’ work to speak God, speak for God, and speak forth God, ministering Christ to all the people. They will be perfected not merely to give a testimony but to give a living word of revelation. Some of the saints who were not evangelists may be perfected to be evangelists. They will be those who are on fire and burdened for the preaching of the gospel. They will have the ability and the knowledge to talk to people about sin, the fall of man, the love of God, the person of Christ, redemption, forgiveness, and regeneration. Then there will be no need for the saints to bring their unbelieving contacts to a gifted person, because the saints will have been perfected to do the work of an evangelist. Some of the saints also need to be perfected to shepherd. Today very few of the ones whom we baptize are under the proper care because of a lack of shepherding. This is why we lose many of the ones whom we baptize. But if the saints are perfected to be shepherds, every baptized one will have a nursing mother. Immediately after the new ones are baptized, the saints will pick up the burden to care for them. They will care for the new ones as they would care for newborn babes, nourishing and cherishing them. (*The Building Up of the Body of Christ, Chapter 2*)

Day 4

Acts 20:24 - But I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 21:19 - And having greeted them, he related one by one the things which God did among the Gentiles through his ministry.

II. Although the foregoing verses reveal that the ministry in the New Testament is corporate, certain other verses indicate that the ministry is also personal:

- A. Acts 20:24 refers to Paul’s personal ministry because Paul speaks of the ministry which he had received from the Lord; the ministry in this verse is the personal ministry:
 1. Paul’s ministry was his being; he and Christ had become one—Eph. 3:17a; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 4:1.
 2. What he preached was what he was; he ministered his very being to others.
 3. Paul was one with Christ and had been constituted of Christ; thus, his ministry was a ministry of the Christ who had been constituted into his being.
- B. Acts 21:19 definitely and clearly refers to Paul’s personal ministry: “He related one by one the things which God did among the Gentiles through his ministry.”

- C. Colossians 4:17 says, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it”; Archippus had a ministry, and in the same principle, **we all have a ministry**.
- D. In 2 Timothy 4:5 Paul charges Timothy to **fully accomplish** his ministry:
1. For Timothy to fully accomplish his ministry was for him to fill up the full measure of his ministry.
 2. This ministry denotes the ministry of the word, which is to **minister Christ** in all His riches (Eph. 3:8) to both sinners and believers for the building up of the Body of Christ (4:11-12).
 3. Such a ministry is desperately needed to **counter** the trend of decline, as prophesied in 2 Timothy 4:3 and 4.

There is one ministry, but this does not mean that all the gifted persons speak exactly the same thing. The principle is that there is **one** ministry with **different** aspects. This principle is illustrated by the writing of the four Gospels. Although Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote concerning the Lord’s life on the earth, they did not repeat one another’s writing. The writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were different from one another, but their ministry was one. In this sense they all spoke the same thing.

We need to study the Bible. Our concepts concerning the spiritual things are too natural. When we use the term the ministry, we mean the New Testament ministry, but many saints understand that the ministry means the ministry of Brother Lee. In the Lord’s recovery today there is not only my ministry but also Brother Watchman Nee’s ministry. These are not two ministries; they are **one ministry and one speaking**. In the New Testament age God has raised up many gifted persons with many gifts and functions, but they all belong to the same one ministry. This one ministry ministers **Christ for the church**. This is the ministry, the unique ministry. When we use the term the ministry, we do not mean a ministry that is only Brother Lee’s ministry. Brother Nee, the apostle Paul, and Martin Luther did not each have a different ministry. They all had one ministry. Martin Luther had a gift, Brother Nee had a gift, and I have a gift, just as Paul, Peter, John, and the other apostles all had different gifts. However, all the gifts constitute one ministry. Therefore, when we use the term the ministry, we mean the unique New Testament ministry, which includes all the apostles in the early church and all the servants used by the Lord since then. They all speak one thing. They do not minister the law or their own concepts, ideas, or opinions; rather, **they all minister Christ for the church**. Thus, when others speak to us of different ministries, we should point out that there is actually only one ministry. (*Crucial Principles for the Proper Church Life, chapter 4*)

Day 5

1 Corinthians 1:10 - *Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion.*

Ephesians 4:12 - *For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,*

- E. Because the New Testament ministry is the service of the Body of Christ and because the Body has many members, **every member** has his own ministry—Eph. 4:11-12:
1. According to the **members**, there are **many** ministries; however, according to the **Body** as a whole, there is just **one** ministry—1 Tim. 1:12.
 2. Our personal ministry **should not be separate** from the corporate ministry.
 3. The Body has a corporate ministry, and all the members of the Body have their individual ministries.
 4. As we have seen, **all** the ministries of the members of the Body **added together** equal the **corporate ministry**—Eph. 4:12.

- F. There should be the **same** speaking from **different** angles—1 Cor. 1:10:
1. There is a need for many to be **raised up to speak** the same thing from different angles.
 2. We believe that the Lord will **raise up** many more to carry out the unique ministry—2 Cor. 4:1.
 3. We all have a part in this ministry, which is the one ministry with **different functions, different angles, and different aspects**—Eph. 4:11-12.
 4. We are **not** following a man or imitating anyone; however, we are **ministering** the **same thing**.

Day 6

Ephesians 4:11-12 - And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers, For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

III. “For the **perfecting of the saints** unto the **work** of the ministry, unto the **building up** of the Body of Christ”—v. 12:

- A. The **apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherd-teachers** (v. 11) are for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry mentioned in verse 12.
- B. The many gifted persons in verse 11 have only **one ministry**, that is, to **minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ; this is the unique ministry in the New Testament economy**—2 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:12.
- C. The **perfecting of the saints** is unto the **work** of the ministry, and the work of the ministry is unto the **building up** of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:12, 16.
- D. “This is the Lord’s recovery, this is our commission, this is our burden, and this is our ministry. How blessed we are to have a part in this ministry!”—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1978, vol. 3, “Truth Messages,” p. 323.

Ephesians 4:12 says that the gifted persons are “*for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ.*” According to the grammatical construction, the work of the ministry is the building up of the Body of Christ. The perfecting is unto the work of the ministry, which is the building up of the Body of Christ. The word **unto** in Greek in Ephesians 4:12 means “**in view of,**” “**for the purpose of,**” “**resulting in,**” “**issuing in.**” The perfecting of the saints is in view of the work of the ministry, which is the unique ministry in the New Testament. Thousands of believers may be doing a work of a thousand parts, but every part should be **for the unique work of the unique ministry** to build up the Body of Christ. Paul referred to the building up of the Body of Christ, not to the building up of the church. Paul’s stress was not on the building up of the church as a congregation but on the building up of the Body as an organism. The saints are perfected unto the work of the ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ as an organism. The New Testament ministry builds up an organism, not an organization. (*The Building Up of the Body of Christ*, chapter 2)