

# “The Essentials Of Our Faith”

## Session III

September 26, 2010

### Does Riverwood Bible Church Have A “CALLING” Based Upon The Word Of God?

Our “faith” has a foundation. That foundation is the **Word of God!** The God of Eternity, the Creator of all, has chosen to show His love toward mankind by giving an “inspired” revelation of Himself. This revelation was given through ordinary individuals, moved by the Holy Spirit, who produced an “inspired” written record which is adequate to know Him and accurate as a base for personal faith!

How is this personal knowledge and experience made possible? It is made possible by God’s choice to “help” us find the truth!

--He has provided a “renewing” of the mind by spiritual **“rebirth”** or **“regeneration”**!

*“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

*Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ” --John 3:6-7*

--He has provided **“The Helper”**, the Holy Spirit, to enable the regenerated mind to find the **“Truth”** in the inspired text of Scripture!

*“But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth . . .*

*for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.” --John 16:13,14*

At the same time, He cautions all of mankind, even the greatest minds among us, that we cannot find Him, or final truth, in our own ability. The “search for truth” is fruitless without the help of God!

*“For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached, to save those who believe.” --Corinthians 1:21*

In our previous study, we listed a helpful breakdown of humanity into three categories:

1. The **“Natural Man”** – the person who has not been “born again” or made spiritually “alive” by regeneration (salvation), I Corinthians 2:14.

*“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”*

--This person is incapable of understanding God’s revelation of Himself!

2. The “**Spiritual Man**” – the person who has been “born again” or made spiritually “alive” by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, II Corinthians 5:17.

*“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”*

--This person **is** capable of understanding God’s revelation of Himself!

3. The “**Carnal Christian**” – the Christian who is “born again” and spiritually “alive”, but **not** controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God!

*“. . . for you are still fleshly (carnal). For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly (carnal), and are you not walking like mere men?”*

I Corinthians 3:3

--This person **is not** capable of “balanced” Biblical interpretation! (He/she will be “seeing” things from a human base or perspective!)

### Important Questions:

1. Are we suggesting that everyone who “differs” with our interpretation of Scripture is “carnal” or “ungodly”?

--Certainly not!

--There are many truly “godly” men and women who differ with our understanding or interpretation of Scripture – we have “doctrinal differences”!

2. Are we suggesting that we are “right” and that they are “wrong”?

--This is **not** the correct question – we are not the “judge” of our brother or sister!

--The correct question is, “Have you investigated the Scriptures for yourself and come to a personal conviction or “belief”?

--If so, we honor that fellow-Christian for “holding their conscience before the Word of God”, and wait for “the day” when Christ Himself will determine who is “right” and who is “wrong”!

*“But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you . . . the One who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes Who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.”* --I Corinthians 4:3,4,5

**The thing we must guard is the right, the privilege, the responsibility of holding to the “Truth” as revealed in the Scriptures and by Jesus Christ!**

--We must not, we cannot, surrender this “promised privilege”!

--Holding “personal convictions” before God is not an aspect of pride or arrogance; it is the necessary foundation of spiritual growth!

--Every growing Christian has “conviction” about God’s revealed truth!

--Without “conviction” (personal “beliefs”) a Christian cannot have a “calling”!

# Does Riverwood Have A “Calling” As A Church?

## I. What Does the Word of God Say?

### A. What is a Biblical “Calling”?

A Biblical “Calling” is the “revelation” (“unveiling”) of the will of God for an individual, a group, or nation!

--It is God’s “choice” based upon His eternal plan and purpose!

--It is God saying, “This is what I have chosen to do within human history!”

“This is my purpose for you!”

“This is how your life fits into My eternal plans!”

--Note: The fact that God has a “calling” for individuals, groups, or nations, **does not** mean that His “will” is always chosen or followed!

(Note: Because God is sovereign, nothing frustrates or hinders His overall plan for human history, Isaiah 46:9-11. The tragedy is that we can miss the privilege of being used by Him for His glory!)

### B. Three Major Biblical “Callings”:

1. **Israel** was “called” by God to be His nation, His people!

*“But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob,  
And He who formed you, O Israel.*

*‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;*

*I have called you by name; you are Mine!’ ” (Isaiah 43:1-2)*

--Note: Israel had a clear “calling” to Jehovah, as a wife to her husband, but Israel was not faithful to her calling – she committed spiritual adultery!

*“I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness,  
whereby they have forsaken me and have offered sacrifices to other gods,  
and worshiped the works of their own hands.”* --Jeremiah 1:16

2. The “**Believer**” is “called” by God to be “one” with His Son, Jesus Christ!

*“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we  
should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to  
adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the kind  
intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace . . .”* --Eph. 1:4,5,6

*“God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.”* --I Corinthians 1:9

--Note: Every Believer has a clear “calling” to walk in fellowship with Jesus Christ, which brings understanding of the will of God, yet, not every Child of God chooses a walk of fellowship!

*“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” --Eph. 4:1*

*“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” --Romans 12:1-2*

3. The “**Church**” is a “**called-out**” assembly of Believers in the present “age of grace” who are part of the “**Body of Christ!**”

*“So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church (ekklesia = “called out ones”) to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord . . . There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling . . .” --Ephesians 3:10-11; 4:4*

a. The “**Church**” is called to be “the pillar and support of the truth!”

*“ . . . I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, the Church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.” I Timothy 3:15*

b. The “**Church**” is called to “accurately handle” the Word of God!

*“Be diligent (study hard) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of truth.” II Timothy 2:15*

c. The “**Church**” is called to “care” for its own!

*“So, as those who have been chosen of God . . . put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.” --Colossians 3:12-14*

d. The “**Church**” is called to be an “example” of the truth we proclaim!

*“So . . . prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.” --Philippians 2:15*  
*“ . . . instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus . . . a people zealous for good deeds.” --Titus 2:12,14*

e. The “Church” is called to local and world evangelism!

*“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

--Matthew 28:18-20

f. The “Church” is called to prayer as the basis for spiritual power!

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying for us that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”*

--Colossians 4:2-4

*“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.”*

--Ephesians 6:18-20

## II. What Does This Mean For Us?

A. The understanding of our “\_\_\_\_\_” is a major aspect of our “\_\_\_\_\_” as a **Body of Believers!**

--Question: What are the Biblical truths we \_\_\_\_\_?

--The importance of this question is obvious – it underscores the need to \_\_\_\_\_ common “\_\_\_\_\_” which form the basis of \_\_\_\_\_!

--We must “\_\_\_\_\_”!

B. The spiritual “\_\_\_\_\_” of our Body is directly affected by “\_\_\_\_\_” unity!

--Spiritual power is a ministry of the \_\_\_\_\_!

--The “unity of the \_\_\_\_\_” produces \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_!

C. There must be general \_\_\_\_\_ about the things that are “\_\_\_\_\_” and those that are \_\_\_\_\_!

--Our study will investigate the “\_\_\_\_\_” of our faith!

--In the process, we must identify the “\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_” where there must be \_\_\_\_\_!

D. **Helpful Summary: Ephesians 4:1-6.**