



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 03 The Messenger

Romans 1:1, *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God*

"Paul"

How could we ever understand Romans if we did not understand Paul?

How could you feel his heartbeat if you did not know something about him?

Any Christian who spends time in the word of God we so spend hours with him, reading what he wrote, dissecting every word that he wrote, and trying to emulate him.

Paul was his new name.

His old name was Saul.

Paul was a good Jewish boy named for a good Jewish king, Saul. He was born in Tarsus.

Tarsus because his father, though a Jew, was involved in the Roman culture as a Roman citizen. Tarsus was a university town.

It was a center of Greek culture. Tarsus was located in Cilicia, and that is at the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea.



He also received a portion of his education in Jerusalem under the most distinguished doctor of the law, Gamaliel. He was the grandson of perhaps the most famous rabbi who ever lived, Hillel.

He studied under this very distinguished doctor and so he was not only learned in matters of Greek culture and philosophy but also in the matters of Jewish law.

It is said in those times that there were three great universities in the Greek world.

1. Athens,
2. Alexandria and
3. Tarsus.

Paul learned Greek literature as well. He quotes Greek poet in Acts 17. He also knew Greek Philosophers.

Paul was educated at Tarsus and then further educated in the Jewish school of Gamaliel.

Now also in keeping with the tradition in a Jewish family, he had to learn a trade. He grew up learning the trade of his father. He was taught to work with hides, to be a leather worker, a tent maker.

History tells us that that was a rather common occupation in Tarsus. He was educated up until the age of about 13.

Then onwards he went to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel, who was called, "***The beauty of the law,***" because he so personified the law, the Mosaic, and the traditional law of Israel.

Now the kind of education he would have had under Gamaliel would have been a memorizing and interpreting of Scripture between he and Gamaliel in a question-and-answer format.

History tells us that he was the top student ever studied under Gamaliel.

So, from the age of 13 he was in an interchange with this greatest of Jewish minds. Since he never met Jesus in his earthly life, he probably completed his education and then returned back to Tarsus.

Historians believe he became the leader of a synagogue there. No matter where he was, he always became the leader.

He has had a consummate Greek education.

He has had a consummate Jewish education.

He has got all the credentials to move around in the Roman world.

His father is a Roman citizen and that makes him a free man and yet he has all the Jewishness that gives him access to that whole area.

He becomes an extremely zealous and utterly committed to the Judaism that he was given.

Philippians 3:5-6, *circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

He had zeal to the place where he began to persecute the church. On the righteousness, which was in the Jewish law, he was blameless. He was a first- class legalist!

God prepared Paul marvelously.

Paul had unusual and exceptional natural ability. We can witness that through all the Epistles which he has written.

Paul had the greatest brains in the world.

Soon after the second World War there was the series of lectures were given in London about '**The Master Minds of the Ages**' It was not organized by Christians but by the secular society.

The spoke about men from different walks of life and Apostle Paul figured in that and he was recognized one of the greatest men.

We can see how he reasons in his letters.

We can see how he has logical thinking.

We can see how he argues a point.

We can see how he supports his argument with materials from Old Testament.

How God prepared him?

He was born in Jewish Family.

He was born as Roman.

He studied under Gamaliel.

Why did God prepare Paul so much?

God wanted him to do 2 things.

1. Defend the Christianity among the Jews.
2. He was to be an Apostle to Gentiles.

Defending to the Jewish:

Almost in every epistle he defends the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to the Jews.

Galatians Chapter is a classic illustration of Paul's defining work.

Galatians 2:11-15, *Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; ¹²for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. ¹³And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. ¹⁴But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"*

What we can learn from this?

Peter was afraid of Judaism.

Who could stand against Peter?

Paul! Of all the people Paul withstood against him.

Paul had such a knowledge on Jewish position and his training under Gamaliel gave great value.

Many people had the difficulty to reconcile the teaching of Old Testament. The main accusation from the Judaism was that Christianity was an innovation it is not from God. This blasphemy.

Much of Judaism focuses on work whereas Christianity on faith.

Paul was able to show that this is not a new and he was able to marry both together. After his conversion for 3 years, he was trained by Christ in Arabia.

Apostle to Gentiles:

Romans 15:16, *that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

Paul's Roman citizenship was priceless!

Knowledge of Greek culture and Greek is great asset for him.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23, *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;²⁰ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;²¹ to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;²² to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.²³ Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.*

Paul can speak as a Jew

Paul can speak as a Greek

Paul can speak as Romans.

So, Paul present the gospel to the person in his background.

Romans 1:14-15, *I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.¹⁵ So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.*

As we go along in this letter to Romans, we will see how wonderfully God prepared him for His purpose.

How we will know difference between Holy Spirit work and natural work?

Is it God doing work through the Holy Spirit?

Is it your natural ability and your work?

Often people say that nothing matters just accept the Lord and Holy Spirit will dispense the gift and you operate through Him. Nothing else matters.

Your natural ability does not matter.

Your natural gifts do not matter at all.

Paul being a Jew, Roman citizenship and possessing Greek culture has got nothing to do with his ministry.

Others view that all these natural gifts helped him to who Paul was.

1 Corinthians 1:27, But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

1 Corinthians 2:14, But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Also, our warfare is not natural.

2 Corinthians 10:4, For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

On the above scriptures they base their argument saying that it does not matter what is your natural giftings are, it all matters is Spirit of God.

So, they conclude its better that man does not need any qualifications whatsoever!

Even to the extent that the only qualification for a preacher is that a man should not possess any natural powers, understanding and knowledge.

When we read the Bible, it looks like that bible itself contradicts.

Notice the man whom God used they are all remarkable man with outstanding ability.

Moses:

The learning and the quality he acquired in the house of Pharaoh.

Acts 7:22, And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

David:

He was a skilled musician.

He was a man of courage.

He was a warrior.

He has control of his tongue.

He was handsome.

When we read the Psalms, he had written we will what a remarkable man.

Isaiah:

His poetic language.

Very moving language.

Jeremiah:

Trained as Priest.

Method arguing in his writings.

New Testament:

God did use John who had a clear knowledge about writing.

God also used all the other untrained men.

Acts 4:13, Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marvelled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

They were untrained in the Old Testament as a Priest, but they were with Jesus and trained by Him.

1. Natural talents are the gift of God

Natural talents are abilities that are part of who you are – they may be artistic talents, intelligence, physical strength, organizing ability and so on.

They are ‘innate’ – part of us.

Sometimes they are ‘latent’ – unrecognized and unused until some life circumstance brings them forward. We discover that we have this hidden capacity or talent that we had known nothing about. These ‘talents’ are part of the way God made us.

Exodus 31:1-6, *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²“See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, ⁴to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, ⁵in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship. ⁶“And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you:*

Exodus 36:1-2, *“And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the Lord has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the Lord has commanded.” ²Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and*

every gifted artisan in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, everyone whose heart was stirred, to come and do the work.

God gave Moses the plans to build a beautiful tabernacle. He gave Bezalel, Oholiab, and a bunch of others the various skills and abilities to build the tabernacle. He gave them skills in “all kinds of craftsmanship.”

Where did these abilities come from?

God.

Every ability comes from God our creator. Even the ability to make money.

Deuteronomy 8:18, *But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.*

2. Learned abilities are a gift from God

Learned abilities are the result of our informal and formal education – things we have learned to do as a result of observing other people do them [in the first instance, our parents], or by deliberately learning how to do them [at school, university or ‘on the job’].

Sometimes learned abilities overlap with our natural talents. For example, a person with a musical talent who has also studied music in a formal way.

The inter-relatedness of the three areas of ability

Natural talents are abilities we are born with. Someone might, for example, naturally be a fast runner or have the ability to sing in tune.

These talents become evident as we grow and mature, as opportunities for their use or expression occur, and as our environment facilitates their development.

It is possible that a person might never know what their natural talents are if their environment was repressive and/or no opportunities to express and use these talents arose.

Learned abilities are abilities which we have learned either by our own personal observations and trial and error, or by being taught by someone else. Sometimes learning a skill can cause a natural talent to come to light and/or be maximized.

For example: a person with a natural talent for math's must be taught geometry or algebra, but because they have mathematical talent.

They will learn it far more quickly and efficiently than a person who has no mathematical talent. Having been taught, will be able to develop and use their natural talent beyond where it was before they were taught.

Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities of a particular spiritual nature and/or a spiritual purpose. They may or may not overlap or coincide with natural talents or learned abilities.

For example: a person may be born with an aptitude for teaching. He goes to university and learns the practical ins and outs of teaching.

This gives direction and boundaries in which his natural talent is used. After his conversion and subsequent study of the Scripture he discovers that he has the spiritual gift of teaching – something that is more than his natural talent or learned ability.

God works powerfully and effectively through his teaching of the word of God for the instruction and edification of his people.

This includes God enabling him both to understand and to present his Word with spiritual clarity and spiritual power and authority.

As we observe Christians in action, we can see:

Spiritual gifts, learned abilities and natural talents coinciding
Spiritual gifts as the development of natural talents or learned abilities.

Spiritual gifts that are apparently totally additional to natural talents and learned abilities.

1 Peter 4:10, *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

So, God prepared Paul with unique abilities.

Paul had natural abilities.

Paul had learned abilities from Gamaliel.

Paul had Spiritual gifts from God.

Thus God prepared this man to be the defender of faith in the Jewish and Gentile world.