

# God Calls 'Zeroes'

by Zac Poonen

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*The key to effective ministry and avoiding pride and jealousy is recognizing that we are 'zeroes' in the eyes of God and being willing to be used by Him for His glory.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3:5

**Topics:** "Humility", "Servanthood"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of humility and servanthood in the Christian life, drawing from Paul's self-identification as a servant and 'zero' in 1 Corinthians 3:5-7. He explains that both planting and watering in ministry are equally insignificant without God's power to bring growth, highlighting that true greatness comes from recognizing our dependence on God. Poonen illustrates that God uses those who see themselves as nothing, just as He used a donkey for His purposes, and warns against competition and jealousy in church leadership. The message encourages believers to embrace their role as servants, allowing God to be everything in their lives.

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## Transcript

In 1 Corinthians 3:5, Paul asks the question "What then is Apollos and what is Paul?". We would reply that Paul was a mighty apostle of the Lord, who had raised the dead, established many churches, and even written Scripture. But he says of himself, "What is Paul? A SERVANT". That was his opinion of himself until the end of his life. No wonder Paul never fell by the wayside.

The moment we begin to think of ourselves as anything other than servants of others, we have begun to backslide.

Paul says further, "I planted, Apollos watered". Which of the two is greater? The one who plants - who goes as a pioneer to an unreached area and does a work for God where nothing existed before? Or the one who comes along later and waters the plant through the teaching of God's Word and encouragement, and builds the believers into a Body? The answer is "Neither". Both are "nothing" - says Paul (v.7). Both are zeroes. Only God - Who caused the plant to grow - is everything.

Paul considered himself a zero until the end of his life. And so God could use him till the end of his life. God was everything to Paul.

The Lord needed a donkey once to speak to Balaam. He needed a donkey at another time to ride into Jerusalem. And He has need of donkeys even today for His purposes. Who are we then? Just donkeys whom the Lord has picked up, to speak through, or to ride on.

Wherever brothers are willing to be nothing so that God might be everything there will never be any competition among them as to who is considered to be the most spiritual or the greatest etc.,

Whenever a person tries to project himself as the leader of a group, God will put him on the shelf. It is true that every church must have leaders. But the leader is someone whom God selects.

And if God gives another brother the grace to be recognised by the others as their leader, we should be quick to humble ourselves and accept that fact. If however, we become jealous of his ministry, or covet his position, we will become agents of Satan who hinder the building of the Body of Christ in our locality.

God in His sovereignty knows who is the best person to lead any church. And He doesn't look for the clever and the intelligent. He chooses those who are weak and broken and those who realize that they are zeroes. Have we realized that?

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