

CALLED. CHOSEN, AND FAITHFUL

3 STAGES OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

WE CAN PLAN FOR, AND FULFILL, GOD'S PURPOSES FOR OUR LIFE!

- This was the pre-eminent goal of the Apostle Paul:

1) In Phil. 3:13-14, the "one thing" Paul aimed for, was the mark or goal of obtaining God's highest.

2) At the end of his life Paul testified that he had accomplished God's will, 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

- Christ's last words in John 19:30 show that He accomplished His goal.-"It is finished"

A ROADMAP FOR OUR LIFE

A simple "roadmap" for our life is shown to us in the title given to the overcoming Christians in Revelation 17:14- "And they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." This title records three stages or phases in a Christian's life which will bring them into completing God's plans.

#1. Called of God- by developing vision, this 1st stage brings a Christian into knowing God's plans for their life.

#2. Chosen of God- if we develop godly wisdom and character we can become qualified to start our calling. This happens in this 2nd stage, when God chooses us to begin accomplishing His plan for our life.

#3. Faithful to God- if we develop full consecration, we can persevere to fulfill all of God's calling and will end our earthly life with the commendation of Christ, "Well done, good and faithful servant," Mt.25:21.

If we come called, chosen, and faithful, this will qualify us for promotions and eternal rewards in God's kingdom, Mt.25:21, Rev.17:14, Rev.20:1 & 4.

#1 - CALLED OF GOD

A. WE ARE CALLED OF GOD. God has created every life with a plan or purpose, Jer.29:11, Ps.139: 14-18. There is a calling, or ministry, or work for each one of our lives. Some specific callings listed in the Bible include:

1. Eph. 4:11 Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers
2. Rom.12:6-8 Prophecy, Ministry (or Deacon), Teacher, Exhortation, Giving, Ruling, Mercy
3. I Cor. 12:8-10 The 9 Gifts of the Holy Spirit
4. Is.59:16; 62:6-7 Intercessor
5. Judges 13:3-5; Lk.1:13-17 Raising children for the call of God on their life.
6. Acts 16:9-10, Jonah 1:2 Missionary
7. I Cor.14:26, I Chron.15:16 Singers and Musicians
8. I Sam.16:1,12; Mt.19:28 Called to Government Rulership-now or in the millennium.
9. Mt.24:9, Jn.21:18-19 Martyr
10. Mt.19:11-12, I Cor.7: 7-8 Celibate

Some of these callings can be divided into several more specific ministries. For example, you could include under the gift of helps ministries such as: hospitality (Heb. 13:2), making clothes (Acts 8:39), feeding the poor (Mt 25:35) and visiting the sick and those in prison (Mt.25:36).

Not only do individual Christians have specific callings, but groups of people can also. This could be a family (2Kgs.10:30; Jer. 35:18-19), a church (Rev.3: 8), or an entire nation (Mt.21:43; Is.55:5).

Along with these specific callings that many Christians will receive, God can call individual Christians to accomplish individual works. These can be as various as the callings fulfilled by the men & women of faith recorded in Hebrews 11.

B. HOW CAN GOD SHOW US WHAT WE ARE SPECIFICALLY CALLED TO?

1. We must seek God Eph.1:16-18; I Cor. 2: 9-10. If we are not interested in finding out, then perhaps God will not be interested in showing us! Prov.25:2; Mt.7:6.
2. Our vision should be increasing, or progressive, Prov.4:18, Eph.1:17. These steps include:
 - a. We are first called of God to be born again and enter God's kingdom, 2 Pet.2:9. The word for "Church" in the original Greek is "ekklesia," which translates as "called out." Every true Christian is called out of the world, and called into the kingdom of God!
 - b. Every Christian has important ministries to accomplish, just as every member of the human body has important functions, 1 Cor.12:12, 15-18. (One of the greatest ministries you can accomplish is to help others to know and develop their own gifts & ministries: learn to train and delegate, 2 Tim.2:2.)
 - c. We need to embrace the high calling of the Church to prepare a glorious, victorious Church (Mt.16:18, Eph.5:27, Rev.19:7) and complete the Great Commission (Mt.28:18-20 & Mt.24:14).
 - d. Our vision must be enlarged to understand that we have been created for eternal purposes which we can prepare for, Mt.19:27-29, Eccles.3:11, Is.9:7.
 - The Called, Chosen, & Faithful return with Christ to rule the world for 1000 yrs, Rev.17:14, Rev.20:4.
 - There will be many further ages, or dispensations, or levels through which redeemed mankind will relate to God in greater and purer ways, Eph.2:7, Rev.21:1 & 4, Rev.22:1-5.
 - God called mankind to rule the world, Gen.1:26. Adam & Eve first started ruling over a garden, but in the New Earth, the redeemed will rule the world forever with a capital city that is 2000 km wide, long, and high, Rev.21:14-16.
3. God may speak directly to you through: a word Jer.1:4-5, a dream Gen.37:6-8, or a vision Ez.1:1-3, 14.
4. A man of God may see that you have a special call from God:
 - a. Samuel with David, I Sam.16: 1,12,13
 - b. Elijah with Elisha, I Kgs. 19:16, 19-21
 - c. Paul with Timothy, Acts 16: 1-3
5. Circumstances may help show you:
 - a. A time of need, Est.4:14
 - b. Our job, or talent Neh 1: 11, I Cor.15: 46
 - c. Our parent's call and inheritance, Ex.28:1
 - d. Names can be prophetic, I Sam.25:25. Judah: Gen.29:35, 49: 8
6. The call of God can be revealed to a person of any age.
 - a. Jesus (Is.49: 1, Lk.1:30-32) and Samson (Jud.13:2-5) were both called before birth.
 - b. Samuel was called as a child, I Sam. 3.
 - c. David was called as a young man, I Sam.16.
 - d. Noah was over 500 years old when God called him to build the ark, Gen.5:32; 6:9-14.
 - *Do not try to do what God has not called you to do. If you use the wrong tool for a job, the job might not get done or you might break the tool. It is dangerous for both you and the work!
7. Beware of being called by men, seeking man's approval instead of God's approval! There are 3 classes of being called.
 - a. Called of God: Aaron. Heb.5:4; Num.17:1 10
 - b. Called of Men: The Scribes and Pharisees: Mt.23:5 10, King Saul: 1 Sam. 8:19 22; 12:12,13
 - c. Called by Yourself (Self appointed): Uzziah was not a priest, 2 Chron.26:18. Adonijah was not called to be a king, 1Kgs.1:5,13

#2 - CHOSEN OF GOD

This is when God chooses you to begin to do the works of your call. First we must be called of God; then we must prepare ourselves to become ready to fulfill the call; and then the Lord can choose us to start functioning in our calling or ministry.

A. MANY WHO HAVE THE CALL OF GOD DO NOT QUALIFY THEMSELVES TO BECOME CHOSEN OF GOD. Jesus said in Mt.22:14, “many are called, but few are chosen.” Some examples are:

1. Gideon’s army- 32, 000 were called, but only 300 were chosen, Jud.6:34-35; 7:2-7.
2. Reuben- He was called to inherit the birthright double portion, but because of his sin, Joseph and Judah received his inheritance instead Gen.49:3-4; I Chron.5:1,2; Rev.3:11
3. Israel- There were over 600,000 men who were called out of Egypt (Num.1:45) but only two of these men were chosen to enter Canaan, Num.14:30.
4. Elijah's 1st servant was faithful in revival but not in difficulty, so was rejected, 1 Kg.18:42-44, 19:1-3.

B. AFTER WE KNOW THE CALL OF GOD, WE MUST PREPARE OUR LIVES, or God will not choose us.

1. In natural callings (such as to become a doctor or lawyer), it takes many years of careful preparation before someone will be chosen for these jobs. The greater the vocation or job, the greater the preparation must be, I Cor.15:46.
2. With spiritual callings (such as to become a minister or leader) it can take years of preparation before we are ready to be chosen, Is.48:10. Also; the higher the call, the greater the preparation must be, Phil.3:13-14; Lk.12; 48.
 - a. Moses was called of God when he was the educated, mighty son of Pharaoh’s daughter, Acts 7:21-25; I Cor.1:26. But he was not ready to be chosen until after years in the wilderness, when he had been humbled and stripped of his worldly talents and training, Deut.8:2, Ex.4:10, Num.12:3. I Cor.1:27-29, Is.48:10, Zech.4:6. We also have areas that are “mountains to be made low” to prepare the way of God to use us, Is.40:3-5.
 - b. Peter was called when he was an uneducated, unworthy fisherman, Mt.4:18-19. Lk.5:8. Christ prepared and then chose Peter for a great ministry, Acts 4:13. The Lord can build up the areas of weakness and inability in our lives, just as we read “let every valley be lifted up”, Is.40: 4.
 - c. When it is time to use a vessel; a clean, prepared vessel will be chosen, not a dirty one, 2 Tim.2:20 22! But this scripture makes it clear that everyone can be chosen. God does not make vessels to dishonor, but if we don't cleanse and prepare ourselves, that is what we will be! It is our responsibility to prepare and become ready for God to choose us.

C. THE LORD WILL TEST US to see if we are prepared to be chosen. Yet we do not know when our “final test” will prove if we are ready to “graduate”, or be chosen. Some examples:

1. Gideon’s soldiers- Were chosen by how they drank water, Jud. 7:4-7.
2. Abraham- He was chosen because he was willing to sacrifice Isaac, Gen.22:1-18.
3. Rebekah- She was chosen by how she helped water the 10 camels, Gen.24:12-20.
4. The Israelites in the Wilderness- They had 10 trials to test them.
5. The tribe of Levi- was chosen because they were impartial in judgment, Ex.32:26-29, Deut.33:8-10.
- 6 Elisha- was tested by whether he would follow Elijah all the way, 2 Kings 2:1-10.

* Man’s tests check our minds, but God’s tests check our heart! Developing godly character and wisdom will cause us to pass God’s tests and qualify to be chosen of God, 1 Sam.16:7.

3. FAITHFUL

A. THOSE WHO ARE CHOSEN OF GOD MUST THEN BE FAITHFUL to fulfill this ministry. These are some people who were called and chosen but not faithful:

1. King Saul- I Sam.15:17, 24 He became proud, and feared the people more than God.
2. Eli- I Sam.3:13; 2:35 He did not discipline his sons, and let them corrupt the ministry.
3. Judas- Jn.12:6 He was a thief who ended up selling Christ.
4. Samson- Judges 16: 1,4,17,20 He committed fornication and lost his consecration.
5. Queen Vashti- She was not submissive to her husband, and another took her crown,

Est.1:10-12, 1:19-21, 2:17, & Rev.3:11.

B. 3 KEYS TO LEARNING FAITHFULNESS:

1. Luke 16: 10 Be faithful in little things, Zech. 4: 10; 2 Kgs. 5: 9-13, 2 Kgs.13: 14-19.
This prepares us for when the Lord gives us greater things, I Sam. 17: 33-36; Lk. 19: 17.
2. Luke 16: 11 Be faithful in natural responsibilities, I Cor.15:46; I Kgs.19 21. Then we will be prepared for the Lord to give us spiritual riches, I Tim.3:4-5; 2 Kgs. 2:9-15.
3. Luke 16: 12 Be faithful with the possessions of others, Gen. 39: 2-9; Gen.24:12-22; Phil.2:19-22. Then we will be prepared for the Lord to give us our possessions, both natural and spiritual, Gen.41:39-45; Gen. 24:60-67; I Tim.4:14.

C. EXAMPLES OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO WERE CALLED, CHOSEN, AND FAITHFUL:

Many are called, few are chosen, and fewer are faithful! Yet the Bible contains many life stories of those who hit the mark. We must enter into all 3 of these stages of Christian growth if we want to hit the mark for our lives and receive our full inheritance. Some of the clearest examples are:

1. MOSES- 3 PERIODS OF 40 YEARS:

- 40 years in Egypt- called but not yet chosen, Acts 7:22-25
- 40 years in the wilderness- chosen, Acts 7:30-35
- 40 years leading Israel- faithful, Deut.34:7; Heb.3:5
- * LIFE KEY: Meekness, Num.12:3

2. JOSEPH- 3 POSITIONS IN LIFE:

- Called as a son- Gen.37:3-11
- Chosen as a slave- Gen.41:14, 37-43
- Faithful as a ruler
- * LIFE KEY: Forgiveness to Fruitfulness, Gen.41:50-52

3. JACOB- 3 NAMES:

- Jacob “supplanter, deceitful”- was called of God, Gen.25:22-33; 28:10-15
- Israel “Prince with God”- was chosen by God, Gen.32:28
- Jeshurun “upright”- declared faithful by God, Deut.33: 5
- * LIFE KEY: Cleansed Through Suffering, 1 Pet.4:1-2, Heb. 12:5-10, Gen.31:7, Gen.47:9

4. DAVID- 3 ANOINTINGS:

- #1- Called to become King, I Sam. 16:1, 11-13
- #2- Chosen King of Judah, 2 Sam.2:4
- #3- Faithful over Judah, so he became King of all Israel, 2 Sam.5:1-5
- * LIFE KEY: A Man After God’s Own Heart, Acts 13:22

5. ESTHER- 3 HOUSES:

- #1 House of Mordecai (house of adoption)- called from, Est. 2:5-8
- #2 House of the Women (house of preparation)- chosen from, Est.2:12-17
- #3 House of the King (house of authority)- faithful in, Est.4:13; chapters 5-9
- * LIFE KEY: Submissive, Est.2:15

CONCLUSION: Let us seek to follow the testimony of all those who have been called, chosen, and faithful! We can also finish our lives to hear the Lord greet us with the words “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of your Lord,” Mt.25:21. Praise the Lord, we will then be qualified both to be with, and to rule with, the King of kings when He returns to establish His kingdom over all the earth! (Revelation.17:14).