

My Call with Christ



"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the Gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,"

II Timothy 1:8-9

**CREATED, CALLED AND EMPOWERED
BY GOD FOR SERVICE**

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Leadership Series

Book 1

MY CALL WITH CHRIST

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PREFACE

Welcome to the discipleship / leadership series. These little booklets were designed to give basic information concerning various topics about our Christian faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and to foster a clearer understanding of discipleship and servant leadership. These booklets can be used as a discussion tool for personal study, family devotion, youth meetings or in cell groups. Our hope is that this information will stir the readers and encourage them to go deeper into personal research and study.

Our desire is that these booklets will be a blessing to the reader and a tool that can be shared with others as a gift of encouragement.

Please feel free to mail or e-mail us for more copies or to just write to us with any feedback concerning the content of these studies. We hope you enjoy this offering of knowledge and experience. We pray that Christ will draw you into an ever deeper personal relationship with Himself as you study.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

MY CALL WITH CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

*“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the Gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and **called** us with a holy **calling**, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,” 2 Timothy 1:8-9*

As we look through our Bibles, we see the first remarkable thing that Jesus did was to call the twelve disciples. The day He started His earthly ministry was the day He called people to walk with Him, to be His companions and friends. Christ speaks and calls you to Himself – to awaken, to turn aside, and to follow Him. We must, above all, have at the center of our heart a “call” to follow Christ, to forsake the world and make Him Lord, Saviour, and King. This is the key component of what it means to be a true disciple.

The call of God is an important principle in our faith with Christ Jesus. We need to clearly understand who we are in Christ and how He called us with a purpose for our lives.

As we understand the meaning of words we get a deeper understanding of Scripture and what it says about us and what God wants to do in us. “Call” means to announce, to proclaim, to summon, to summon to a specific work, to call someone to ministry, to arouse someone from sleep. The idea of this word “call” is to move one’s life from where it is to another place, either physically, emotionally or spiritually.

The Bible is full of illustrations showing how God speaks to His people. Take time to look up these verses and reflect on how

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God called these people to be His vessels for service. Notice how God draws everyday people to Himself and His Kingdom.

Old Testament

One Old Testament personality that we can look at when it comes to the subject of call is Moses (Exodus 3:1-22). Here we have a herdsman who was once at a place of great leadership, now living out his life in a barren land looking after sheep. God calls to him through a burning bush and speaks to him concerning a mission that He has for him. Moses does not want to get involved but God persuades him to move forward. This call lasts for over forty years. It started by delivering the people, then leading the people, and finally preparing the people to enter the Promised Land.

New Testament

The New Testament examples are the disciples, some of whom were just fishermen (John 1:35-51). They had most likely been trained by their father and friends. Their business required long hours of hard work. Jesus comes to them and calls them to become fishers of men. The words of this call speak to their hearts and they leave all and go with Jesus. They walked with Him for about three years and then became the servants of Christ. They went out and built the church by spreading the Gospel of Christ wherever they went.

Our central verse for this chapter comes from a letter that Paul sent to Timothy instructing him on the importance of sticking to the call on his life. In 2 Timothy 1:8-9, Christ points out some important facts for the disciple today. First, we are not to be ashamed of God's calling on our lives. Next, this call will impress

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on our heart a love for serving God and others. There will be times of hardship and suffering but Christ will empower us so that we will be able to walk through these challenges. The call is not based on who we are or what we have done but it is according to who Christ is and what He has given. Christ has a purpose for us and His grace will help us to overcome the world and ourselves.

In both cases, God comes to the people, calls out to them, and challenges them to respond to His vision and will for their lives.

What follows are six critical parts, which give us the bigger picture of what it means to be “called” by God for a purpose and goal, which in turn give us several reasons for our existence here on earth.

CALLED TO FOLLOW

To be called to follow in someone else’s footsteps would require great faith in the person you have chosen to follow. It may mean leaving life as you know it behind and going in a new direction in your lifestyle and in what you believe. He leads. We follow. He goes before us like a shepherd before His sheep.

To “follow” means to come after, step into the shoes of, be guided by, give allegiance to, obey, observe, watch, adopt, to pattern oneself upon, be devoted to, support. The one in front sets the pattern for those who are coming behind to walk in; one step at a time, one after another after another.

He also warned them of the commitment that it would take and the hardships that could come out of their decision. Matthew

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16:24-25 states, *“Take up your cross and follow.”* John 12:26 tells us that to be a true disciple of Christ one must have a heart of service. To serve you must follow in Christ’s footsteps and by doing this the Father in heaven will honour you for your faithfulness.

There is a time of crossing over from one way of living to another. Jesus gives us new life and is a bridge into that new way of living. If we will take that first step of faith and be willing to follow Him, we see three specific paths outlined for us in John 14:6. Here Jesus declares, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father but through me.”*

1. He offers a new way of living to follow.
2. He gives us a new truth to follow.
3. He gives us a new life to follow.

He does all of this through grace and love. He pours Himself into our lives so we can be poured into the lives of others. Freely we have received and now, freely, we give. He models for us so we can be a model to others.

There will be challenges and the road will not be easy. Many people say they will follow but their actions and heart show differently, and in time they are nowhere to be found (Matthew 8:19-23). The disciples heard the Master’s call and left everything and followed Him (John 1:35-51).

Relevance and Reflection

What have I left behind in my following of Jesus Christ?

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CALLED TO FRIENDSHIP

A call to friendship has at its center an intimate relationship with Christ. Friendships are made through time and communication. There is a lot in common and a strong root system that holds these friends together.

To be a “friend” means to have affection, alliance, attachment, benevolence, closeness, good fellowship, harmony, intimacy, love, rapport. We enter into a place where two people know, understand and trust each other’s hearts. Christ does not want to make us slaves but to be friends (John 15:13-15).

Scripture points out some important truths about friendship for us. Proverbs 17:17 states a friend loves at all times. He also is one who loves in spite of who we are (Matthew 11:19, a friend of tax collectors and sinners).

The world wants to keep us enslaved but Christ wants to call us to friendship. A friend is aware of the attitude and the heart of the one he has befriended, knowing specific details concerning that friend and what causes him to do what he does.

We are no longer islands with no one to talk to or walk with, but we become part of a family. This relationship can build strength and maturity in each individual. There is accountability between friends, a deep desire to help and bless one another. A friend will even lay down his life for another.

We choose to love and to give, not because we have to, but because we want to. Christ desires us to be close to Him like a friend, and therefore calls us to friendship with Himself.

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The human body can picture for us the relationship that the parts have to each other and the importance of the relationship that we have to the whole. We work together as a unit, a team, and this becomes possible and unique as we work together as friends. The heart of friendship is the idea of giving, ministering and serving one another so that the others can succeed in ministry and in life.

Relevance and Reflection

Do I have a close friendship with Christ? Am I open and transparent with at least a few of my closest friends?

CALLED TO SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE

To change from my will and desire to His, to obey His plans and purposes for my life and ministry will require me to be willing to submit to and obey the leading of the Lord.

Many people struggle with submission and obedience because we think we are giving up freedom but when we understand these words properly, they actually give us a greater level of freedom. “Submission” means to surrender, yielding, compliance, meekness, obedience, resignation. The word “obedience” denotes, to abide by, act upon, adhere to, be ruled by, carry out, embrace, follow, perform, serve. Each word gives us a fuller picture of what it means to enter into the call of Christ.

The Scriptures uses these two words to describe how we should walk with God. They need to become part of the disciple’s attitude for his life journey. James tells us to, “submit to God” (James 4:7). Peter states that we are to be in obedience to the truth (I Peter 1:22). Paul tells the Romans to be slaves to obedience in

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Christ and their lives will produce “fruit of righteousness”. The Bible exhorts us to obey and submit our lives to God; to show the same courtesy to those who are of God who instruct and minister to us (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

Each day we face a battle – will we do our will or God’s will? It is a battle between pride and humility before God, a battle between the head and the heart. This is what many have called the “eighteen-inch battleground.” The greatest battle will be fought within our own hearts and minds.

Christ has called us to be obedient and this will require us to submit to Him as Lord and Saviour. Many have Christ as Saviour but few have Him as Lord. It means humbling ourselves before Christ as our mentor and letting Him be the total Lord of our lives.

A good example of submission and obedience can be found in the concept of a body; each part needs to work together. If they do not do this, the whole body cannot function, move or live. The body must submit and be in obedience to the head. As we look at the example of the church, we see it is to be the body with Christ as the head. He leads so that the power can flow through us so that we can minister to and serve others. As disciples it is very important that we submit to and obey Christ with all that we are.

Relevance and Reflection

Can I humble myself in Christ so He can lift me up? What are some things that He has called me to submit to and obey?