



LESSON #1 THE CALLING OF A LEADER

If you feel the call or the urge to leadership at any level, then this course is for you. It will help you to identify your position as a leader in the Kingdom & Church of Christ. All believers have a function and role in the church, but leadership in God's House is not for everyone—it is for those whom the Lord appoints.

Two years ago, God began speaking to me more directly about kingdom leadership—the role of a leader has always been dear to my heart, but I felt the Lord wanting to take me to another level. Nobody really appoints themselves to be a leader in the church, that authority is God's alone. But He will confirm that call at the right time. As I mentioned, the Lord had been speaking to me about taking what I've learned through the years of leadership and to begin to teach others. As I was visiting a very ill woman in the hospital, she informed me that she had a special picture that she had painted and she wanted me to have it. She then said that the painting was called "Leadership". She had no idea of what was going on inside of me, God was affirming through a dying woman my desire to equip leaders. Can you recall an area where God confirmed His purpose for you?

Some may have always wanted to be a leader, but it's much more than a matter of *wanting*—it's a matter of being *called*. Even the definite calling of God on your life is not sufficient for success—it requires so much more. In his excellent book, "*Spiritual Leadership*", Henry Blackaby writes, "*Self-appointed affirmation of your leadership does not make you a spiritual leader nor does it make you acceptable to the people. You have to earn the reputation*"

That's what this course is all about and we begin at square one, "*The Calling of a Leader*". This course was originally taught to our church leaders as well as anyone who sensed God calling them into ministry of any fashion. Freedom Life Church International has this vision statement,

“Equipping believers to Rise Up and Fulfill Their God given Destiny”

This basic principle could apply to any church’s leadership team.

IN A FEW WORDS, DESCRIBE IN GENERAL WHAT AREA OF LEADERSHIP GOD IS PREPARING YOU FOR.

From the very moment I got saved in 1978, I knew that God was calling me to preach. 13 years later, on Dec 6, 1991, I was ordained into the ministry. On the night of my ordination, in the midst of several other ministers, family and friends, I heard the Spirit say to me, ***“You are not going higher, you are going lower. You will be a leader by serving others”*** The call of a leader is totally a personal thing between you and God. Although nobody can make that call for you, God does use others to confirm that call in your life. He will use a pastor, a book, a sermon, a song, to validate and support what the Holy Spirit is speaking to you regarding leadership. When I began sensing a call for ministry, I approached my pastor and shared it with him. His answer was that he already knew that, he was waiting for me to come to him about it. That’s how God works. He will speak to you first before anyone else. And then He will authenticate your call through others.

HOW DO YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN YOU’RE CALLED TO LEADERSHIP? Before you read any further, write down one or two specific indications that would persuade you into acknowledging that there is a calling on your life. And then we will examine seven distinct indicators that will help seal your assurance.

1. _____

2. _____

6 INDICATORS THAT VERIFY YOUR CALLING

1. It never leaves you!
The call to leadership forms the abiding, predominant purpose of your life.

2. You enjoy what you do, even with the challenges.
The call to leadership supersedes all other earthly pleasures and attainments.

3. *There's a confidence that accompanies the call.*

The call to leadership provides a supernatural enduing of power to perform!

4. *People are blessed by your ministry.*

The call to leadership enables God to touch others through you in their need.

5. *There is an intensity in spiritual warfare!*

The call to leadership attracts the demonic realm in an effort to defeat you.

6. *You will quite often feel out of place among others (misunderstood)*

The call to leadership is understood by fellow leaders but not always by others.

Choose one of the 6 indicators and briefly share how it speaks to you in your initial quest or advancement in leadership.

Another Thought Concerning The Call—God's call on your life and His sending forth are not the same thing! There is a space of necessary time known only to God for preparation that will enable you to withstand the long journey and hardships that come with the call. A very real and common danger of receiving a call is expecting it to initiate immediately. This can be very frustrating when God is not moving as fast as you think He should. The initial call is accompanied with a growing zeal and desire to step out on our own, but God's timing must be willingly embraced. David waited 13 years from the time of his anointing to be king until the fulfillment of God's call. to see the fulfillment of God's promise earlier before the promise came to pass. Moses was called 40 years earlier than when he actually delivered the children of Israel. I also waited many years in preparation before God sent me into the fullness of ministry. That is His prescribed method and there are no shortcuts! Can you describe a situation concerning your call to ministry where it was as if God put on the brakes?

Once again, let us establish the fact that God Himself chooses leaders, as we read in Psalm 4:3, "***But know that the LORD has set apart him that is godly for Himself***" He alone is above all else in the ministry of His choosing for us. We do not seek for anything other than Him and His glory. Our measure of godliness is in direct proportion with the measure of His presence we desire to be at work in us.

Again, Henry Blackaby expresses in *Spiritual Leadership*, ***“God’s call is to Himself, not to a place, a position, or an assignment. If you neglect developing your personal relationship with God, you have tainted the essence of why He called you. You must have a significant time with God—not thirty minutes of devotional time. I am talking of a life that is anchored in a relationship with God twenty-four hours a day”***

That is what we will be looking at throughout this course—beginning with God’s call and the disciplines that will prepare us for the sending. We must be honest and transparent with the Lord concerning our daily disciplines in our spiritual relationship with Him who has called us unto Himself. Answer these candid questions with a simple “yes” or “no”.

1. ***Do I spend quality time each day in God’s Word?*** YES NO
2. ***Do I have a secret closet of prayer where I meet with God?*** YES NO
3. ***Do I regularly engage in fellowship with other ministers?*** YES NO
4. ***Do I read good books to enhance my learning and passion?*** YES NO
5. ***Do I faithfully attend prayer meeting in my church?*** YES NO
6. ***Do I support my church with tithes and offerings?*** YES NO

These are a few spiritual disciplines concerning our faithfulness to His call to ministry that determine the extent of His ability to use us to the degree He desires.

Who exactly does God choose? Here’s a deeply profound, brilliant, theological answer to whom God chooses to be called into His ministry. God chooses the person whom He chooses—in other words, He sovereignly chooses whoever He wants, not only those who we think would qualify. God chose a man who went around persecuting and putting to death God’s own people. Yes, God called Paul,

Galatian 1:1 ***“Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father*** Galatians 1:15 ***“It pleased God to separate me from my mother’s womb, and call me by His grace”***

Think about that—when God called you, it was from birth. You may not become spiritually aware of that until many years later. At the age of 30, God awakened Jeremiah’s spirit to the incredible call upon his life in the role of a prophet, while he was yet in his mother’s womb. He makes it very difficult to refuse or abandon the call because it becomes part of our DNA!

God is raising up powerful leaders for the coming revival—although He will not violate their will, He will stir their heart! We will close lesson #1 with a true account of William Sangster who wrote this in his journal at the time that he was appointed to lead the Methodist Denomination in Great Britain in 1936. He struggled with taking on this huge leadership role at such a young age of 36, but Sangster knew God was calling him.

"This is the will of God for me. I did not choose it. I sought to escape it. But it has come. Something else has come too. A sense of certainty that God does not want me only for a preacher...He wants me also for a leader—a leader in Methodism. I feel a commissioning to work under God for the revival of this branch of His Church—careless of my own reputation; indifferent to the comments of older and jealous men. If I am to serve God in this way, I must no longer shrink from the task but do it, God help me."

Real and humble words for those of all ages who are called by God into leadership!