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## Joshua Nations

# Lesson 4. Called and Committed

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

God seeks individuals in every generation and country on this earth to partner with Him in His plan to establish the Kingdom of God here. He calls unbelievers who are bound by sin and living under the influence of the devil to repent and turn to Him so they can work together. He invites all Christians to discover their spiritual gifts, heartfelt motivations, abilities, personalities, and life experiences to serve in ministries that will help establish His Kingdom on this earth. He is calling some Christian men and women to collaborate with Him as leaders, understanding His heart and timing for what He wants to accomplish on earth, in their country, and in their community.

## II. THE SOVEREIGN PROCESS

A. Every Christian leader undergoes a similar process of ministry formation. This begins with an invitation from Jesus Christ to follow Him and an acceptance of that call. Essentially, we observe four key components in this phenomenon.

- There is an initial personal call from God, which aligns with one's conversion experience and subsequent faith development in Jesus.
- The individual exercises faith in Jesus' Lordship over them by committing to full-time discipleship.
- The focus shifts to learning, growing, and personally preparing for the specific ministry calling. This means that the new Christian begins to change their thinking, speaking, and actions by what God says in the Bible about that area.

This includes:

- Relationship with God
- Relationship with family
- Relationship with others
- Work
- Finances
- Entertainment
- Future
- Personal Character and Habits

- Fourth, during this process, the Holy Spirit endows individuals with spiritual ministry gifts and empowers them for their calling and ministry.

B. Every Christian holds the same value, but not every Christian has the same calling.

- Each Christian is called to serve in a ministry, yet the ministries in which we serve differ.
- God calls some Christians to serve Him as leaders. A leader is someone who has received a call from God for this role. He is a servant-leader, which means he serves the purposes of God rather than his own.

C. God calls, separates, appoints, and sends leaders according to His purposes for each individual leader.

- One leader cannot compare his calling, separation, appointment, and sending with those of another leader.
- For some leaders, their path is easy, but for others, it is difficult. All are governed by two points:
  - God's purpose for that leader and those whom he will lead.
  - The leader's response to God's calling, separation, appointing, and sending.

a.

### III. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF CALLING, PREPARATION, AND SENDING OF LEADERS

Name	Appointer	Method	Bible Reference
Abraham	God	God spoke with a voice	Genesis 12:1-5
Aaron	Moses the Prophet	God revealed to Moses and Moses told Aaron	Exodus 3:13-17
Joseph	God	Dream	Genesis 37:1-10
Jacob	God	At his birth	Genesis 25:22-26
Moses	God	In a burning bush and God's Voice	Exodus 17:9-11
Samuel	God	Heard a voice	1 Samuel 3:1-10
David	Samuel the Prophet	God spoke to Samuel and Samuel told David	1 Samuel 16:11-14
Solomon	David	God spoke to David and David told Solomon	2 Chronicles 1:1-12
Ezekiel	God	Vision	Ezekiel 1:1-3
Jeremiah	God	God spoke	Jeremiah 1:1-10
Peter, James, John	Jesus	Jesus invited them	Matthew 4:18-20
Paul	Jesus	Jesus revealed himself in Power	Acts 9:1-9
Timothy	Paul the Apostle	Paul chosen	1 Timothy 1:2, 18

#### A. Observations of the calling, preparation, and sending of these leaders:

- Some heard directly from God; others heard from God through a prophet or other leader.
- Some had a dream or vision or a memorable encounter with God.
- All of them were tested before they ascended to leadership.
- Some of them had a challenging ministry during their years of ministry.

- All of them had many difficulties at some point during their ministry
- B. Some concluded their ministry with great success in the eyes of others, while others ended theirs in significant pain, which some might see as failure. However, all of them served God and fulfilled God’s purposes in their generation, whether their journeys were easy or difficult, and whether they were considered successful or unsuccessful by human standards.

#### **IV. THE PROCESS GOD USES FOR EVERY LEADER**

1. God Calls	2. God Tests	3. God Breaks	4. God Empowers
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- A. Every leader goes through this process many times during his life as a leader. Each time God wants to introduce us to something new or elevate us to a new level of power, authority, or effectiveness, He will take us through this process.
- John 12:24 “Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”
  - God will send the leader again and again into difficult situations to break their flesh, humble them, and teach them to trust only in God.
  - If we reject the difficulties God brings us to, we will lack the depth of leadership and ministry God has for us.
- B. Three Ways to be Called into Leadership:
- Called and appointed by self.
  - Called and appointed by man.
  - Called and appointed by God.

1. Self-Appointed: Korah	Some people are born again, they are excited, and they want to do something for God, so they appoint themselves as a leader without going through the process that God uses for every leader. Others see the honor of a Christian leader or suppose they will receive a salary, comfortable life and secure future so they appoint themselves to be a leader. This is not the way God calls a leader. Numbers 16-17
2. Man-Appointed: Saul	Some people are appointed by others as a Christian leader, but they have no call. Missionaries appoint local leaders because they see that person has some ability and a good heart. Just because someone has some ability and a good heart doesn't mean God has chosen that man or woman as a senior Christian leader. They see that the person has an education or knows business or has experience in life, so they appoint them as a leader. The result often is no fruit and pain for God's people and disappointment for that person. 1 Samuel 8-10
3. God-Appointed: Paul	When God chooses, calls and appoints a leader he doesn't look on the outside abilities, skills or experience. He looks at the heart and he look at his eternal plan for that person and mankind. God will choose the weak and through a long process test, break and develop that person. Acts 9:1-31

C. When God calls a leader, there is grace (ability), anointing (power), and spiritual fruit that accompany that calling. That grace, anointing, and fruit are absent in self-appointed or man-appointed leaders.

- It is often the leadership ministries that are pursued without a calling because they are public ministries. Many men and women have been hurt due to the actions of those who are self-appointed or appointed by others.
- In the Old Testament, serving in a ministry role without God's calling was considered a grave sin.

D. Three primary ministry roles existed in the Old Testament to establish the Kingdom of God on earth:

- Prophet
- Priest
- King

E. A self-appointed prophet was rejected by God, even though the citizens loved him. It was wrong and sinful for a priest to take on the role of a prophet or king without God's calling. The same applies to a king. King Saul assumed the role of a

priest (1 Samuel 15), and as a result, he lost his kingship. In the following verses, God repeatedly states, “I have not sent them.” It is a serious matter to claim that we represent God in a role when we have not been called by Him. Jeremiah 23:21, 32; 27:15; 28:15; 29:9, 31

F. Victory in ministry depends on a person knowing for certain that they have been called by God. When we encounter betrayal, hardship, lack, persecution, or failure, we return to our calling. Our calling serves as our foundation.

## V. IDENTIFYING GOD’S CALL IN YOUR LIFE

### A. Level

- **ALL:** God calls all people to return to Him and walk with Him. God calls all Christians to serve in some ministry to establish His Kingdom on this earth.
- **Leader:** God calls some Christians to serve Him as leaders. However, there are different levels of leadership. God instructed Moses to select leaders from among Israel who would help care for and shepherd His people.
  - There would be leaders over **tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands.** (Exodus 18 and Numbers 11) This represents various capacities of leaders and different levels of leadership. Our level of leadership involves God’s calling and our personal development. If God calls us to a 10-person level, we should not assume we can lead 100 or 1,000. On the other hand, we may lead 10 people now, but God has called us to lead 1,000 in the future.
  - We must pray, fast, study, find mentors, and do whatever it takes to develop our capacity to become the leaders God calls us to be.

### B. Duration

- God calls some people to leadership for a season, after which they step down. (John 4:37; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9) Each of these activities represents a season.
  - Some are called to plant a church but not to build it.
  - Some are called to start a ministry, but God calls others to expand that ministry.
- It’s crucial to understand the duration for which God has called us to serve in a leadership role.
  - Some leaders resist stepping back and allowing others to take the lead into the next level or next period of God’s time.

## C. Role

- It's important for us to understand the role to which God has called us. It's one thing to plant a church, but another to build one. An evangelist will plant a church, while a pastor or apostle will build it. Some people are called to senior leadership roles, while others are called to support those leaders.
- Many Christians have been disappointed and hurt because they attempted to lead in a role for which God has not called them.

## VI. IDENTIFYING YOUR CALLING FROM GOD

A. Five ways you can discover your calling from God:

### 1. Follow your passion?

What's in your heart? What are you passionate about?

### 2. What is your fruit?

Are you creating lasting fruit? What are the outcomes of your efforts? Who are the individuals whose lives have been transformed because of your actions?

### 3. Personal encounter with God.

What has God spoken to you about personally? Are there any Bible verses? Is there a time when you encountered God and He revealed something to you about His calling?

### 4. What do others say?

The Bible says that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word will be established. Are there two or three or more others who confirm what you are feeling or what you believe God has spoken to you about? Has there been a prophecy regarding what God has called you to do?

### 5. What do your leaders say?

One of the most important factors that can help you identify your calling and God's timing for it is your leaders. What do your leaders say about what God has called you to do? Do they confirm what you think and what others say? Sometimes, leaders might recognize that you are indeed called, but it is not God's timing for you to step into that level of leadership because they perceive weaknesses in your skills or character (Hebrews 13:17).

## **VII. CASE EXAMPLE**

There is a story about a woman who was skilled at baking cakes. She loved to bake cakes, and her cakes were delicious. All her friends ordered cakes from her for their children and parties. Eventually, her friends started encouraging her to open a cake shop and sell her cakes to everyone. The woman thought that was a good idea, so she borrowed money and opened a cake shop. However, after a few months and about a year, she became very frustrated. She had to open the shop early and work late into the night. She had to handle accounting and pay bills. She had to hire staff and train, supervise, and pay salaries, taxes, and insurance. She was not happy. All she wanted to do was bake cakes. When she baked cakes, she felt happy, but she was not satisfied with owning a cake shop.

This lady stepped out of her calling into something God has neither equipped her for nor called her to do. Eventually, she received advice from an advisor and acquired skills to manage human, financial, and material resources, leading to the success of her business.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

Sometimes we may have a heart to serve God, and we assume He wants us to lead. However, we must be very careful to only do what God has called us to do, at the level He has called us, and in the role He has assigned. Don't rush into something simply because you believe God has called you to it. There is a process. Allow God to guide you through the journey of becoming the leader He has called you to be, at the level He has designated, and in the role He has prepared for you. Don't fear stepping down or changing your course to align with God's calling on your life.

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*This lesson was provided by Joshua Nations ([JoshuaNations.org](http://JoshuaNations.org)).*