

JESUS' DISCIPLES: THE KIND OF PERSON CALLED MATHEW 04:18–22

Introduction

What kind of persons does Christ call? This passage shows that Christ calls ordinary people who will simply make themselves available to Him.

Note from where Jesus called His first two disciples. They were not in a religious centre, nor a learning centre. Neither were they in a position of authority and power, nor did they possess wealth or financial security. They were out in the work-a-day world. This is not to de-emphasize the importance of religion or of learning, but it does teach at least two things.

First, position and power, wealth and security, religion and learning can block and keep a person away from God. Such things can make a person so self-confident and assured that he becomes useless to God. God is unable to work His power through him. The man's own abilities and energy block God's gifts and power from flowing through him.

Second, God can use and call anyone who is really available, whether religious or non-religious, learned or unlearned, ordinary or extraordinary. The main ingredient is to be available and willing to respond.

- I. The first men called (vv. 18-20).
 - a. Were brothers who worked together.
 - b. Were industrious workers.
 - c. Were called to follow Jesus - at once.
 - d. Were called to another work.
 - e. Were responsive.
- II. The second men called (vv. 21-22).
 - a. Were obedient sons working with their father — closely knit.
 - b. Were industrious, frugal.
 - c. Were simply called.
 - d. Were responsive: left their livelihood and family.

I. *Mathew 04:18–20 The Uniqueness of His Disciples*

The first men called: Five traits are seen in these men, traits that show what kind of person is called by Christ.

1. The men called by Christ were brothers who worked together. The fact that they were working together says at least three things.
 - a. They had good parents who had taught them to love and care for one another.
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- b. They came from a closely knit family, a family that worked together.
- c. They followed and obeyed the teaching of their parents and maintained a brotherly spirit throughout life.

Thought 1. The disciples' brotherly and cooperative spirit shows us three things.

- 1) The need for a brotherly spirit — the kind of spirit Christ desires of His followers. The kind of kingdom Christ is building is a kingdom of followers with a brotherly spirit.

Mat 22:39 *“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”*

John 13:35 *“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

John 15:12 *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”*

Rom 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.*

1 Pet 1:22 *Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

- 2) The need for reaching families for Christ: brothers and sisters reaching out to each other.

John 1:41-42 *The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).*

John 4:53 *Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and all his household believed.*

Acts 16:15 *When she and the members of her household were baptised, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.*

Acts 16:30-31 *He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household.”*

- 3) The need for parents to train up their children in the way they should go (Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21).

Deu 6:7 *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

Prov 22:6 *Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

Eph 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

Thought 2. There is one thing essential for serving Christ that must be stressed among God's people: cooperation — a nature and willingness to serve together (See *Church — The Body of Christ*. 1 Cor. 12:12-31).

Acts 11:25-26 *Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.*

Phil 2:19-20 *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.*

2. The men called by Christ were industrious workers. Remember that Peter and Andrew were busy at work when Christ called them. This is a second essential component for serving Christ that must be stressed: energy, industry, a willingness to work and to work hard. Jesus calls a person who is on the move — working continuously and not sitting idle. God does not choose the lazy and inactive, but the energetic and industrious. Too many believers are inactive. Therefore, they miss out the higher calling of God.

Amos 7:14-15 *Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore — fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"*

1 Kng 19:19 *So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.*

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

Mark 13:34 *"It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch."*

Luke 19:12-13 *He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of His servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'"*

3. The men called by Christ were asked to follow Him, and they were to *immediately* follow Him. The significant point is: the disciple is called to follow Christ personally, to attach himself to Christ before he does anything else. Personal discipleship, that is, personal attachment, is essential. A person must first learn Christ before he can serve Christ.

Thought 1. The Lord's call is to have a personal relationship, to become attached to Him.

Isa 43:10 “You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.”

Phil 3:8-11 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Thought 2. The disciples, although illiterate, were given nearly three years of the best and most extensive training in the world. They were taught by Christ Himself, God’s own Son. Every believer needs to have intimacy with Christ and to do it often, to study and meditate upon Him and His Word.

2 Tim 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Josh 1:8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

4. The men called by Christ were asked to perform another task. This was a call to a different kind of employment, to another work and profession. It was a drastic, traumatic change. This throws light on several facts.
 - a. The call to a personal relationship had already been issued. John tells us this (Jn. 1:35-42). A personal relationship must always be stressed before service.
 - b. This call, the call to “fish for men,” was a call to service. It was a call to care for men, to help and minister to them. No greater call can come to a man, for helping another human being is the greatest act in all of our life. Imagine a person who gives himself to nothing but ministering and helping people. Is there a greater call than this? (See Mt. 20:26; Mk. 10:43; Lk. 9:48.)
 - c. The call was to *immediate and total detachment* from everything else and to *immediate attachment* to Jesus and His mission. (See *Call to Discipleship*, Mt. 4:19).

Mat 4:19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

Jude 1:22-23 Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them: to others show mercy, mixed with fear — hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

John 15:16 *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.”*

Isa 6:8 *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

Thought 1. The Lord's call is twofold.

- 1) To follow Him, the Messiah. Before doing anything else, a disciple must first learn Christ.
- 2) To become a fisher of men.

Thought 2. Christ relates a person's call to the knowledge and experience of the person. These fishermen were called “to fish for men.”

- 1) This fact stirs some confidence and prevents some apprehension and fear in accepting the call of Christ. It means that Christ always considers a person's knowledge and experience when He calls him.
 - 2) This fact also enables a person to serve more efficiently and effectively — to accomplish much more for God.
5. The men called by Christ were responsive. They responded immediately.

Thought 1. The call of God is critical and demands a decision.

- 1) It is immediate — right now! A person is to get up now, not tomorrow. Some people desire to follow Christ; therefore, they attach themselves to Him and join the church. Yet they come ever so short and miss eternal life. Why? Because they never knew the price of discipleship. They were to pay a great price, but they knew nothing about it or else were unwilling to pay the price. True discipleship costs everything a person is and has. This is an excellent picture of how some put off the call.
- 2) It is unequivocal. It demands a positive response — immediately. How tragic that many are called, but few are chosen.

Mat 20:16 *“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”*

Luke 9:59-62 *He said to another man, “Follow me.” But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*

MATHEW 04:19 CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

This was a call to service. Peter and Andrew had already been called as disciples (Jn. 1:35-42). The thought is *immediate and total detachment* from everything. Mathew emphasizes the call to the Lord's *official mission or work*. Mark stresses the call to a *changed life*: "To become fishers of men" (Mk. 1:17). Luke stresses the call to a *different profession* (Lk. 5:10). John stresses the call to a personal relationship (Jn. 1:40-42). □

II. *Mathew 04:021–22 Features of Discipleship*

The second men called: Four traits are seen in these men, traits that also show what kind of person is called by Christ.

1. They were obedient sons working with their father. They were from a closely knit family, and a closely knit family has an important influence upon the lives of its children. The point is that obedience is essential, both as a child and as a servant.

Eph 6:1-2 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother" — which is the first commandment with a promise.

1 Tim 5:4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

Lev 19:3 "Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God."

Mat 7:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Mat 12:50 "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

John 14:23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

2. They were industrious and frugal. Note how they were mending their nets, making use of what they had instead of running out to secure new nets. The point is that God does not care for wastefulness. The person God calls is frugal and thrifty, not wasteful.

John 6:12 When they all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."

Prov 12:27 The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions.

Prov 21:20 In the house of the wise are stores of precious treasure, but a foolish man devours all he has.

3. They were simply called. There was nothing dramatic or spectacular about their call. A dramatic experience was not necessary to reach them.

Thought 1. Some receive very simple calls, but they are as much called as those who receive more dramatic and spectacular calls. God's call matches the nature and needs of a person. God's call considers a person's emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual needs. Some need more emotional calls than others. Some need more rational calls.

Isa 1:18 *"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*

Isa 55:1 *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."*

Mat 11:28 *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

4. They were responsive; they left their livelihood and family.

Thought 1. Some are called to leave more. Some leave not only businesses, but fathers and mothers. In some cases, this involves persecution and even the threat of death.

Mat 10:21 *"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death."*

Luke 14:26-27 *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*

Thought 2. God's call involves a drastic change. It involves both a change of life and a change of one's primary profession.

Mark 10:28 *Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"*

Luke 5:27-28 *After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.*

Luke 14:33 *In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*

Luke 18:29-30 *"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."*

Phil 3:8 *What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ. ■*