

You May Be Delaying Your Divine Calling—Here's How

A newly married husband said to his bride, "Darling, now that we're married, I'd like to tell you about some of your flaws. Do you mind?" She responded, "I don't mind. It was those very flaws that caused me not to get a better husband than you."

Ouch!

The Bible says, "be holy because I am holy." (Leviticus 11:44, NLT) Jesus said, "But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48, NLT)

Many people want to wait until they are perfect to become a leader. They say, "I don't have what it takes because I'm not perfect enough!"

Thankfully, years ago, I made an amazing and liberating discovery: *God is not looking for perfect people. He is looking for people with perfect hearts toward Him.* When Jesus said to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect, he meant "growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity." (Matthew 5:48 AMP)

Perfect means *growing*.

No leader is perfect. You can take some relief knowing that you will never arrive at perfection. Great leaders have leaps of faith and lapses of faith. Take Noah, for example. He was called perfect, but he got drunk after the Flood. Abraham, the father of faith, let his wife go with another man because he was afraid. Job was called perfect, but God rebuked him strongly for what Job said. David, a man after God's heart, committed terrible sin and covered it up with an even worse sin. None of Jesus' disciples were perfect. James and John

wanted to call fire down out of heaven on people who would not receive Jesus' message. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit but still made many errors as recorded in the gospels and the book of Acts.

You can find such examples of "leaps and lapses" through the entire Bible. David wrote, "I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." (Psalm 101:2, NKJV) What does it mean to have a perfect heart?"

Here are three keys to enlighten this subject of what God means by being "perfect," and how to be a perfect master-level leader.

Surrender

A perfect heart is first a surrendered heart. We know we have a surrendered heart when we say, "God, I'll do it Your way and not my way." Moses tried to deliver the children of Israel in his own power and his own way but failed. When Moses finally surrendered to the Lord, the Lord was able to use him mightily! When you surrender to God, he will use you mightily, too.

The Late Pastor Chuck Smith in Costa Mesa, California, gave a message called, "How to Accomplish the Impossible." He got so tired of the church promotions to attract members that he threw in the towel and in frustration prayed, "God, I can't do this anymore. I surrender." Chuck dumped all the clever strategies and began simply teaching the Bible. He surrendered to God, and the church grew to over 25,000 and launched branch churches around the world.

God's not looking for perfect people, but people with perfect hearts toward Him. A perfect heart is a surrendered heart.

A perfect heart is also a heart for study. The apostle Paul wrote from prison to Timothy, "Bring the cloak that I left

with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments” (2 Timothy 4:13, NKJV). Paul was a studier. He didn’t just study the Scriptures, he studied books by other anointed leaders. He wrote, “Study and be eager to do your utmost to present yourself to God approved, a workman that has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15, Amplified) He also wrote, “But avoid all empty (vain, useless, idle) talk, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness.” (2 Timothy 2:16, Amplified)

It is amazing the number of would-be leaders who refuse to study. They may get everything else right and be authentic leaders God wants to use, but they won’t commit to studying, and so they cannot advance in their leadership. They make it partway down the road God has for them and then say, “The study is just too much.” Their leadership stalls at that point.

A temple is built one brick at a time, and master-level leadership is built one principle at a time through on-going study.

How to Study Well

Number One: Find a special place where you can be alone every day for a while.

Create a sanctified space for studying the Word.

Number Two: Use highlighters in your Bible and the books you read.

Number Three: Record what you learn

Proverbs 10:14 says that “Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of the fool invites ruin.”

Number Four: Read, read, read!

A reader isn't always a leader, but every leader I know is a reader.

Remember, empty hearts are never fed by empty heads. A leader should be studying to store up knowledge so that he can bring out treasures both old and new for those he or she is leading.

God's not looking for perfect people, but people with perfect hearts toward Him.

A perfect heart is a surrendered heart and a heart to study. These two characteristics lead to stability, a necessary attribute for master-level leaders.

Too many believers are changeable, up and down, into this and then into that. They constantly operate by feelings and zigzag all over the mood map. One of the most liberating moments of my life was when I realized that my feelings do not determine my thoughts or actions. I don't have to "check in" with my feelings before doing what I know to be right. I can lead with stability.

Some people's impulsiveness and unpredictability prevent God from using them or promoting them. Reliability, dependability, and stability are much more important than ability. Ability is highly overrated. Ability without reliability is like trying to walk with a broken leg. Stability trumps ability every time. A surrendered heart will lead to study, study will lead to stability, and stability will lead us to being used greater by the Lord.

I knew an expert pianist, Mary Ann, who practiced eight hours a day to maintain her skills and knowledge. She didn't have the option of saying, "I didn't feel like practicing today," if she was going to continue being the best. Neither do we have the option of saying, "I don't feel like studying this week," if we are to enjoy master-level leadership. Eighty percent of the time, you won't feel like studying. There will be something else screaming for your attention. But you do it

because it's the right thing to do. That is the fruit of stability.

God is not looking for perfect people but for people with perfect hearts toward Him. Maybe you have felt useless to God because you realize your imperfections. The good news is that He's not waiting for you to be perfect. He wants you to begin being a master-level leader right now! Surrender your heart, study diligently and become stable. Over time you will find yourself being exponentially more fruitful in His Kingdom.

Dr. Dave Williams served for over 30 years as pastor of Mount Hope Church in Lansing, Michigan, with over 500 outreach ministries around the world. Dave led the church in giving over \$40,000,000 to world and local missions. His leadership training course, *The Art of Pacesetting Leadership*, is credited with catapulting one church from 226 to over 4,000. Another church went from 8 to over 1,000. His all-time best-selling book, *The New Life: The Start of Something Wonderful*, is a practical, step-by-step guide to help new believers become established in their Christian walk and has sold over 2.5 million copies. His latest book, *Hope in the Last Days*, is published by Charisma House. Dave now focuses on helping young ministers whenever he has an opportunity.