

# (The New Covenant Servant) 1. God Calls and Prepares His Servants

by Zac Poonen

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*God calls and prepares His servants, but they must be broken and humble to be used effectively.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 12:40

**Topics:** "Spiritual Humility", "Gods Servants"

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## Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the importance of being ready and willing to respond to God's call for His work, emphasizing that God's plans are dependent on men who are prepared and broken to serve Him. Using the example of Moses, he highlights the necessity of being humbled and broken by God before being used as His servant. Poonen also discusses the danger of spiritual pride, especially for young men called to serve God, and the significance of remaining humble and recognizing oneself as a 'zero' in God's kingdom.

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## Transcript

God needs men to do His work, because He has made His work on earth to be dependent on man. If the man God calls is not ready, God's work is delayed or hindered. However if one man fails to respond to God's call, God will call another.

God called Abraham when he was in Ur, to leave his home and his relatives and to go into an unknown land. If Abraham had been unwilling to obey, God would not have forced him. God would have called someone else. And we would never have heard of Abraham.

It is a tremendous privilege to be called by God to serve Him. But it brings with it a great and awesome responsibility too.

In God's perfect plan for the descendants of Jacob, they were to spend exactly four centuries in Egypt. He had told Abraham many years earlier that his descendants would be slaves in a strange land for 400 years (Genesis 15:13). But when God finally delivered the Israelites from Egypt, they had spent 430 years in Egypt (Exodus 12:40).

Why did they have to spend 30 years longer than God's perfect plan for them?

In all probability, because Moses was not yet ready to lead them. To deliver the Israelites from Egypt, God needed a man. But that man had to be prepared by God first to be a spiritual leader.

### God's Servants have to Be Broken

When Moses was 40, he was strong in himself and felt qualified to be the leader of the Israelites. Yet in God's eyes he was not ready.

Acts 7:22 says that at the age of 40, "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action." (TLB). When Moses visited his Israeli brethren one day, he saw one of them being unjustly treated by an Egyptian. He defended the Israelite and killed the Egyptian. He thought that the Israelites would recognise him thus as their God-appointed leader. But they did not.

Moses still did not understand what it was to be a servant of God.

And so God took Moses out into the wilderness to break his confidence in his human strength and wisdom. In God's perfect plan, that training was probably scheduled to take only 10 years. But it took 40 years instead, for Moses to be broken.

And so the Israelites had to wait for 30 more years - for their leader to be ready.

God's plans can be delayed when God's leaders are not broken in time. God has an appointed time-period in which we must be broken. We cannot shorten that time-period. But we can lengthen it, if we do not yield to God's training. If we are hard and unyielding, we ourselves will lose much. And God's work also suffers.

We may see ourselves, like Moses, well-taught in the doctrines of Scripture, knowing the whole counsel of God, anointed with the Holy Spirit and in our own eyes, as "men of power in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). We may even be concerned, as Moses was, about our defeated and oppressed brothers. And so, we may imagine that we are well-equipped to serve God. But we are not.

We may be eloquent in our speech ("mighty in words") as Moses was. The mere fact that others are willing to listen to us preach for one hour proves nothing, for people are willing to listen to political leaders for even two or three hours!! We have to be careful that we don't seek to do God's work with our natural resources.

The more gifted we are, the more we are in danger of depending on our human abilities to serve God. That's why we need to be broken.

The Israelites did not have confidence in Moses. God also did not have confidence in him to appoint him as their leader. How can a man lead others when neither God nor man has confidence in Him?

We may consider ourselves as fit for God to use as His representatives. But God may not think so. If we are to do an effective work for the Lord, we must have the attestation of God on our ministry. And He won't attest our ministry until we are broken.

Once Moses was broken, the same man who was once mighty in words, finally said, "Lord, I cannot speak" (Exodus 4:10).

How did God break Moses? He sent him into the wilderness. There Moses got married and had to live with his wife's parents in their home. It is amazing how quickly one can be broken when he has to live in

helpless dependence upon his in-laws!! That was how God broke Jacob too, many years earlier.

It was in Moses' home situation (with his wife and children, and in-laws) and in his work situation (looking after his father-in-law's sheep) that God broke him and humbled him. And that education took 40 years. God was willing to wait. And God's people had to wait too - for God's man to be ready.

God is waiting even today. There are many places in India where there are needy souls who need to be built together as the Body of Christ. But God is waiting for men whom He can find, whom He can break and prepare, to be used as His servants to build that Body.

That is why we need to see our home and work situations as God's University. The tense situations that we face with our in-laws and other family members are all part of God's education process whereby He prepares us to be His servants. He is teaching us something more than doctrine in these situations. He is breaking us.

But how few God finds who submit to Him, as clay in the potter's hand. Most trainees rebel and refuse to die to themselves - and so God sets them aside.

What Moses learnt in those 40 years was not doctrine. Doctrine can be learnt in a very short time, if one has a clever mind. But it takes time to be broken. It is not easy to be rooted and grounded in small thoughts about ourselves at all times.

We may not consider ourselves as important people when we are in the midst of more mature believers. But when we go to our own home-churches, there we can begin to think we are quite important. That's the danger. God has to break us so thoroughly that we recognise ourselves as the least of all the saints, everywhere we go.

### God Calls Young Men

Jesus called very young people to be His apostles. Many think that to be an apostle one must be at least 60 or 65 years old. But Jesus chose 30-year-olds to be His first apostles. Jesus Himself was only 33½ when He died. And the eleven apostles were all younger than Him - for we know that rabbis among the Jews always chose people younger than them as their disciples. John may have been only 30 on the day of Pentecost.

When Jesus called these young men, He didn't look at their experience, but at their wholeheartedness. On the day of Pentecost these young men were anointed with the Holy Spirit and equipped supernaturally to be apostles of the Lord. Their experience and maturity came later. Timothy too became an apostle as a very young man (1 Timothy 4:12).

God calls young men to His service even today. But they must remain humble. The main danger that faces any young man who has been called of God, is spiritual pride.

I have seen many tragic cases in India, of young men called of God to be His servants, who have fallen from their calling. In some cases, as soon as God began to use them in some way, they got puffed up - and God had to set them aside, because they took the glory to themselves that belonged to God. In some other cases, they sought worldly comfort, and ended up as paid workers of Western Christian organisations that paid good salaries. Thus they went astray like Balaam. And in yet other cases, they were attracted by pretty Delilahs, and lost their anointing like Samson. Thus these fine young men

sacrificed the calling of God and their anointing, for gaining man's honour and money or for satisfying their lust for pretty women.

Where are the prophets of God in India today who speak forth God's Word fearlessly, and who do not care for money, or for pretty women or for the approval of men?

They are rare to find. Those who were called of God have mostly fallen by the wayside.

The sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite spirit. If we are broken and humble, God will always use us. But the day we think we have become somebody, because of the great revelations that we have received, or because of the tremendous ministry that God has given us, we have started backsliding. God will then set us aside.

We may still retain our position as elders in some church. But we will discover in eternity that we have wasted our lives.

God Calls "Zeroes"

In 1 Corinthians 3:5, Paul asks the question "What then is Apollos and what is Paul?". We would reply that Paul was a mighty apostle of the Lord, who had raised the dead, established many churches, and even written Scripture. But he says of himself, "What is Paul? A SERVANT". That was his opinion of himself until the end of his life. No wonder Paul never fell by the wayside.

The moment we begin to think of ourselves as anything other than servants of others, we have begun to backslide.

Paul says further, "I planted, Apollos watered". Which of the two is greater? The one who plants - who goes as a pioneer to an unreached area and does a work for God where nothing existed before? Or the one who comes along later and waters the plant through the teaching of God's Word and encouragement, and builds the believers into a Body? The answer is "Neither". Both are "nothing" - says Paul (verse 7). Both are zeroes. Only God - Who caused the plant to grow - is everything.

Paul considered himself a zero until the end of his life. And so God could use him till the end of his life. God was everything to Paul.

The Lord needed a donkey once to speak to Balaam. He needed a donkey at another time to ride into Jerusalem. And He has need of donkeys even today for His purposes. Who are we then? Just donkeys whom the Lord has picked up, to speak through, or to ride on.

Wherever brothers are willing to be nothing so that God might be everything there will never be any competition among them as to who is considered to be the most spiritual or the greatest etc.

Whenever a person tries to project himself as the leader of a group, God will put him on the shelf. It is true that every church must have leaders. But the leader is someone whom God selects.

And if God gives another brother the grace to be recognised by the others as their leader, we should be quick to humble ourselves and accept that fact. If however, we become jealous of his ministry, or covet his position, we will become agents of Satan who hinder the building of the Body of Christ in our locality.

God in His sovereignty knows who is the best person to lead any church. And He doesn't look for the clever and the intelligent. He chooses those who are weak and broken and those who realize that they are zeroes. Have we realized that?

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