

How to Enjoy the Bible Events Series

You hold in your hands one of the most remarkable Bible study materials ever written and published. This series was first published in English years ago and has been used by many thousands of people in the English-speaking world.

Now, with permission of the original publishers, the series is available in several languages as collections printed under many contemporary titles.

What makes this series so valuable is that each Bible event leads the reader or the group to discover the deepest truths of the Bible history for themselves. This is done through insightful multiple choice questions which draw the readers to enter into the story and find for themselves its meanings and implications and to apply the history to their own lives.

The series is best “taught” by persons who encourage the group to do most of the talking and thinking. The teacher best acts as a leader in which the group discovers its way through the Scriptural events. The teacher may help the group when he or she believes that valuable truths have been overlooked, but the first discoverers should be members of the group itself. This stirs tremendous interest on the part of the group. This also relieves the teacher of the responsibility, under older systems of teaching, to carefully master all the truths of the text and present them in a way that would hopefully interest and “teach” the group.

Almost all teachers report that their classes or groups show much more interest than before and that teaching this series is much easier than it was under the older systems of teaching.

In the same way, individuals who use these booklets for their own personal study find this investigative method much more interesting and meaningful. The reader is invited to sense the drama of each story in his or her own Bible, be it Catholic or Evangelical, and be led to discern the spiritual truths that are packed into each story.

“Every Community on Earth Deserves a New Testament Church”



Is GOD Calling ME?

From the “Bible Events” Series

NATIONAL BIBLE READING
CAMPAIGN



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Is GOD Calling ME?

What is my life for? This is an extremely important question that every person should both ask and answer. Most people today seem "lost" in that they do not know where they are going with their lives. They live for the moment, but are not ready for the future. As a result, much of their lives are wasted, and they face constant confusion and uncertainty.

The great news from the Bible is that God knows each one of us and has a wonderful plan for our lives. *"The Lord says, I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for"* (Jeremiah 29:11). However, it is not enough for God to have a wonderful plan for our lives. That plan will never become a reality unless we follow Him and allow Him to make His perfect plan come true in our lives. The New Testament is very clear that the Lord is calling each one of us. He calls us to be saved, to be pardoned of all our sins and become his special people. When He calls us, it is always for a special reason. That reason is to fulfil His plan for our lives.

How do we determine what God is calling us for, what He plans for our lives? How will we know His will so we can cooperate with God and enable Him to complete His perfect plan for our lives?

The Bible is full of the accounts of men and women who struggled with this same question and found answers. The following studies will help all people who want God's plan to be fulfilled in their lives.

HIGH CALLING

Luke 5:1-11



FOLLOWING JESUS

When the religious leaders of Israel questioned the Apostles, after the resurrection of Jesus, they saw that they were ***“unschooled, ordinary men”*** (Acts 4:13). However, they could not stand up to the wisdom and spiritual power of the Apostles. They had been to the “School of Christ,” and they were anything but ordinary men. What did Jesus find to be so special about the men he called to follow him? They were unquestionably men of faith and, as a result, they were men ready to follow the Lord immediately and wholeheartedly. Jesus continues to look for men and women who have this special characteristic - a faith that leads to immediate action.

1. If you had been Simon Peter when Jesus said, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch,” what would you have done?

- ☐ Wondered who he thought he was.
- ☐ Told Jesus I was too tired.
- ☐ Suggested another time when the fish were biting.
- ☐ Politely told Jesus to stick to his preaching.
- ☐ Grudgingly complied with the idea

2. When they caught so many fish that their nets began to break, how do you think Peter felt?

- ☐ Overjoyed.
- ☐ Dumfounded.
- ☐ Terrible about what he had said.
- ☐ He became aware of who Jesus is.

3. When he said “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” What did Peter mean?

- ☐ “Your power frightens me.”
- ☐ “I feel unworthy to be around you because of my sinful life.”
- ☐ “I know you are all you say you are, but I’m not ready to give up my life and follow you.”
- ☐ “I’m afraid of what you might ask me to do.”

4. Compared to Peter, how would you describe your spiritual beginning?

- ☐ Pretty tame.
- ☐ Just as confusing.
- ☐ More intellectual.
- ☐ Even crazier.
- ☐ Different, but just as real.

5. What would Jesus have in mind if he asked you right now to launch out into the deep and let down your nets?

6. Of the decisions Peter and his friends made, which do you have the hardest time making?

- ☐ Who to serve or follow.
- ☐ Where to live and work.
- ☐ What my mission and role is in life.
- ☐ To leave everything to follow Jesus.

7. What gifts do you feel God has given you? How do you think God wants you to use your gifts as you follow Jesus?

8. How do these fishermen’s decisions to leave everything strike you?

- ☐ How silly to give up a respectable career for who knows what.
- ☐ How exciting to try something new.
- ☐ It would take a lot more than this to get me to change careers.
- ☐ Following Jesus is more important than any career or job.

9. What connection can you see between your career or job and the call to follow Jesus? Can you let God use you more where you are, or would you be more useful for God’s purposes elsewhere?

10. What issues about working or about a career are most unsettling to you?

- ☐ Knowing if or how much I should work.
- ☐ Adjusting to a new job or career.
- ☐ Deciding whether I should change jobs or careers.
- ☐ Balancing work and family.
- ☐ Discerning how work and career issues relate to following Christ.

11. In order to “catch” people for Jesus, what do you have going for you to help draw them?

- ☐ My ability to make friends.
- ☐ My knowledge of the Bible.
- ☐ My willingness to help people.
- ☐ My willingness to take risks.
- ☐ My willingness to live like I talk.

12. Where have you grown in your understanding of yourself in this course? Where have you seen growth in other members of your group?

Second Bible Event

INVESTING YOURSELF Matthew 25:14-30



PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

When Jesus spoke about the end of the world and the final judgment, he compared it to a rich man who called his servants to make an account of how they had used what he had given them. We must remember when we read this parable that Jesus is talking about us!

1. Why did the servant with one talent hide his money?

- ☐ He was afraid of his master.
- ☐ He was afraid to take risks.
- ☐ He was lazy and irresponsible.
- ☐ He resented the way the master made his money.

2. What was Jesus saying to the two servants who doubled their money?

- ☐ I'm proud of you.
- ☐ Enter into a life of ease.
- ☐ My investment in you paid off.
- ☐ You'll get your reward in heaven.
- ☐ I can trust you with bigger things.

3. What is this parable's message?

- ☐ God cannot tolerate laziness.
- ☐ God has given Christians a "job" to do until Jesus returns.
- ☐ When we use what God has given us for Him, God gives us more.
- ☐ Judgment awaits those who don't invest their lives in God's kingdom.

4. Share two or three "talents" you are using for God. What is your favorite excuse for not using them?

5. If the Master returned today, how well would He say you have been using what He gave you? What can you do with your talents this week to prepare for Christ's coming?

6. What help do you need to use your abilities in a way that "measures up?"

- ☐ Help from God to overcome fear.
- ☐ Help from God to believe in myself.
- ☐ Help from others to see my talents.
- ☐ For others not to be so hard on me.
- ☐ For me not to be so hard on myself

7. What motivates you to use your talents at work?

- ☐ Fear of the "master" - my boss!
- ☐ Approval of the "master" - God
- ☐ Doing the best job I can with the abilities God has given me.
- ☐ Putting in an honest day's work.
- ☐ Doing whatever I can to help my employer be successful.
- ☐ A chance for greater responsibility

8. What changes would be required for you to be more satisfied with your life's investment?

- ☐ Get into a vocation that more fully utilizes my talents.
- ☐ Use my talents in my current vocation more than I do.
- ☐ Use my talents as a volunteer.
- ☐ Start risking and stop worrying.
- ☐ I'm satisfied with my "investment."

9. To which of the characters in the parable do you relate most in regard to managing your finances?

- ☐ The first servant – I've been greatly blessed.
- ☐ The second servant – I've done okay with what I've had to work with.
- ☐ The third servant – I've blown it.

10. What holds you back from taking responsibility for your financial problems?

- ☐ Like the third servant, I always seem to get the short end.
- ☐ Compared to others I wasn't given much "ability" to manage money.
- ☐ I've encountered some circumstances beyond my control.
- ☐ Something always happens to keep me from "investing" wisely.
- ☐ Nothing – I take full responsibility.

Third Bible Event

HEARING GOD 1 Samuel 9:1 – 10:8



SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL

Early in the history of Israel, God responded to the desires of the people and chose for them their first king. He used the great prophet and priest Samuel to speak for him and tell Saul that he had been chosen. God often uses others to help us understand what he wants to do with our lives.

1. What would you call God's decision to give Israel a king?

- ☐ Preordained
- ☐ Spontaneous
- ☐ Merciful
- ☐ Consequence of Israel's rebellion

2. When God looked for a king, what did he look for?

- ☐ Physical stature
- ☐ Social standing
- ☐ Popular appeal
- ☐ Spiritual perception
- ☐ Family pedigree
- ☐ Openness to the Holy Spirit

3. Since Samuel knew God really did not want Israel to have a king, how do you think Samuel felt in this story?

- ☐ Confused
- ☐ Sad
- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Relieved
- ☐ Detached
- ☐ Jealous

4. If you were Saul, how would you have felt about being anointed?

- ☐ Confused
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Proud
- ☐ Energized
- ☐ Humble
- ☐ Afraid

5. Why did Samuel anoint Saul privately (instead of publicly as later on)?

- ☐ To get Saul used to the idea.
- ☐ To demonstrate the king's need for the prophet.
- ☐ To encourage Saul to depend on the Spirit before he became a celebrity.
- ☐ To emphasize that God – not the people – chose Saul.

6. From what you know of Saul, how much (or for how long) do you think he was actually "changed into a different person" (10:6)? How come?

7. How have you seen God mercifully use your wrong or disobedient choices to bring about good in your life (as he did with Israel's desire for a king)?

8. When has God used what seemed like chance circumstances to bring you to a place where he could bless you or make you a blessing? Does the Lord seem to be leading you to anything new now?

9. What does this story say to you about hearing God's call in your life?

- ☐ We may seem to be on a "wild goose chase," but God is at work (9:3-4).
- ☐ Status and position don't matter when it comes to God's call (9:21).
- ☐ When God calls, the Spirit empowers (10:6).
- ☐ Letting God change us is more important than what we do (10:6).
- ☐ God often calls us through others (10:1).
- ☐ Don't back down if you know what God's will is for you (10:7).
- ☐ If God says wait, that means wait (10:8).

10. Which of the previous points are most relevant to you in your desire to know how God wants to use your life? What input have you received from others about your gifts and calling?

Fourth Bible Event

RUNNING AHEAD **1 Samuel 13:1-15**



SAUL WON'T WAIT

The Bible relates many cases where God's servants became impatient and went ahead of God. For example, Abraham and Sarah began to doubt that God would ever give them a child, so Sarah asked Abraham to father their child by her servant girl. Great sorrow resulted in the family, and history was changed for the worse.

God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel. Saul was a man of great potential and promise, but with his increasing sense of personal power, he became impatient with God and tragically assumed authority that was not his, as we shall see in today's Bible event.

1. What do you do if someone you are meeting is late?

- ☐ Go on without them.
- ☐ Wait a little while.
- ☐ Wait a long time.
- ☐ Blow a fuse.
- ☐ Stay cool.

2. Saul's biggest mistake was presuming to:

- ☐ send most of the troops back home (v. 2).
- ☐ attack the Philistines (v. 3-4).
- ☐ rally a bunch of cowards (v. 6-7).
- ☐ offer a sacrifice (v. 9).
- ☐ disregard the Lord's command through his prophet (v. 8 & 13).

3. Who was to blame for Saul getting in trouble?

- ☐ The Philistines – for oppressing God's people.
- ☐ The Israelites – for deserting Saul.
- ☐ Saul himself – for going ahead.
- ☐ Samuel – for cutting it so close.
- ☐ God - for putting Saul under such pressure.

4. Saul's punishment (v. 13-14):

- ☐ seems unreasonably severe.
- ☐ was deserved.
- ☐ affected his descendants more than Saul himself.
- ☐ opened the way for a better king (David).

5. What does this story tell you about Samuel and Saul's relationship?

- ☐ The Lord directed Saul through Samuel.
- ☐ Samuel was testing Saul.
- ☐ Saul resisted Samuel's authority.
- ☐ Samuel was trying to make Saul look bad.

6. What do you do if someone in your life is late in arriving and you feel under a lot of pressure? How often do you take matters into your own hands the way Saul did? Are you in those circumstances now?

7. When you sin, which of the following are you most likely to blame?

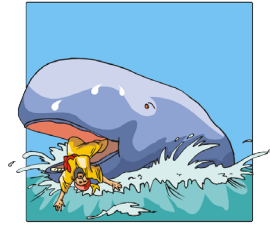
- ☐ Circumstances
- ☐ My past
- ☐ Bad timing
- ☐ My genes
- ☐ Someone else
- ☐ Myself
- ☐ My sin nature
- ☐ God

8. How do you feel about Saul falling so fast from success to failure? In what way are you afraid of failure?

9. How have you related to authority figures: Your father? Mother? School and government authorities? Bosses and employers? Spiritual leaders? God? Do you need to make peace with your past? If so, how?

10. Is relating to persons in authority something you struggle with now? If so, in what way?

LAGGING BEHIND
Jonah 1:1-17



JONAH TURNS AWAY FROM GOD'S CALL

While it is dangerous to run ahead of God, as king Saul did, it is perhaps even more dangerous to turn away from the call and opportunities that God gives us. Jonah was a greatly gifted man of God, but when God chose to send him to bring repentance to an enemy nation, Jonah foolishly chose to hurry off in the opposite direction. Many of God's people are doing the same thing today.

1. How do you think the prophet Jonah felt when he heard the "word of the Lord"?

- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Afraid
- ☐ Confused
- ☐ Enraged

2. Tarshish was about 1,900 miles in the opposite direction of Nineveh. What did Jonah think as he fled?

- ☐ God can get another prophet.
- ☐ God is going to get me!
- ☐ God will never find me.
- ☐ I'm due for a vacation about now.
- ☐ Nineveh doesn't deserve anything.

3. How do you think Jonah felt when he found out about the storm?

- ☐ Responsible
- ☐ Repentant
- ☐ Guilty
- ☐ Suicidal
- ☐ Afraid

4. Why did Jonah tell the sailors to throw him into the sea?

- ☐ He still hadn't "hit bottom."
- ☐ He still thought he could get away.
- ☐ He felt guilty about causing the sailors to perish.
- ☐ He regarded going to Nineveh as worse than death.

5. How do you hear the "word of the Lord" most clearly?

- ☐ In nature
- ☐ Reading Scripture
- ☐ Through others
- ☐ Through worship
- ☐ God's "still, small voice"

6. In your spiritual life, which direction are you running?

- ☐ Away from God
- ☐ With God
- ☐ Back to God
- ☐ Behind God

7. What do you do when you want to avoid doing God's will?

- ☐ I avoid hearing his message.
- ☐ I bury myself in work and other commitments.
- ☐ I face up to my rebellion.
- ☐ I slip away from Christian fellowship.
- ☐ I become spiritually depressed.

8. What keeps you from doing something you believe God is calling you to do?

- ☐ I'm comfortable where I am.
- ☐ I don't want to make waves.
- ☐ I'm not qualified.
- ☐ I care too much what others think.
- ☐ I'm afraid I might not be hearing God correctly.

9. How does this story relate to your outlook on life?

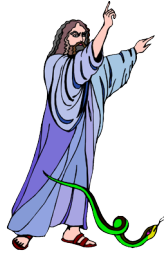
- ☐ I've set myself up with unrealistic expectations.
- ☐ My ideas and God's ideas about what's best for me seem different.
- ☐ When I'm unhappy, it's probably my own fault.
- ☐ I need to accept that this is where God has called me.

10. What does this story say to you about your job or career?

- ☐ I'm running away from something.
- ☐ I'd like to run away from something.
- ☐ I need a career adjustment.
- ☐ I need an attitude adjustment.
- ☐ I need to go the way God wants.
- ☐ I think I am living according to God's plan.

WORRYING ABOUT GOD'S WILL

Exodus 4:1-17



MOSES ISN'T SURE

It is hard for most of us to believe that God can greatly use our lives. Like Moses, we would rather stay in some out of the way place caring for our business than to get into the fray, through which a nation might be saved. It is common for us to justify ourselves, saying that no one will pay attention to us anyway. In our lives, as in Moses' life, God gives us opportunities and gifts with which we can serve him successfully in even the greatest spiritual challenges.

1. What was behind Moses' first objection in verse 1? (Actually Moses had objected twice already in ch 3.)

- ☐ An honest question
- ☐ A poor excuse
- ☐ A need for people's approval
- ☐ Lack of trust in God
- ☐ Memories of past rejection

2. What was the point of the miraculous signs?

- ☐ God was showing off.
- ☐ God was answering Moses' objection about people not believing him.
- ☐ God was demonstrating His power to Moses.
- ☐ God was transferring His power to Moses.

3. If it were you, what effect would the miracles have on you and your reluctance to do what God asked?

4. What was behind Moses' second objection in verse 10?

- ☐ A speech impediment
- ☐ An inability to think on his feet
- ☐ Low self-esteem
- ☐ Humility
- ☐ Pride

5. How did God respond to this objection? How would that have made you feel? How has God responded to your limitations or insecurities?

6. What was behind Moses' third objection in verse 13?

- ☐ Laziness
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Rebellion
- ☐ Lack of confidence
- ☐ Isolation

7. How did God respond to this objection? Overall, how would you characterize God's dealings with Moses?

- ☐ Loving
- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Patient
- ☐ Accommodating

8. What excuses do you make to God? How do you think He feels about them?

9. What gifts has God given you? What gifts do you see in the others in your group?

10. What excuses do you use for failing to acknowledge and/or use your gifts? What do you need to stop making these excuses?

- ☐ A miraculous sign.
- ☐ Encouragement from God.
- ☐ An encourager like Aaron.
- ☐ God's wrath.

11. How can you relate to Moses' uncertainty about God's will? How much of your uncertainty is honest searching, and how much of it is making excuses? How can you worry less about your future?

12. How has your perception of the way God wants to use your gifts changed during the studies? How can your group continue to support you in your quest to know and follow God's will?