

**September 22, 2019**

**Series: You Can Better Your Life On It**

**Part 5: Personal Ministry**

Intro: Invite five different people to each talk about one of the following avenues through which God transformed their life:

- Practical Bible Teaching
- Private Disciplines
- Providential Relationships
- Pivotal Circumstances
- Personal Ministry

Everyone finds themselves in a situation from time to time where they feel like they're in over their head, or are inadequate in some way. What might God want to teach you in those times?

There may be times when you clearly lack qualifications, skills, experience, or resources for a job, task, or assignment you've been given. How do you decide when you should stay with it, and when you should quit?

Does the availability of other, more qualified people factor in to your decisions? i.e. would you stay with it if the cause was important and there was no one else to do it?

Do you think God sometimes chooses people for a task who may not have the most experience or be the most qualified? Why?

How many times did Jesus perform a miracle where he fed a mass of people with a tiny amount of food? [*A: Twice. Matt 14 (5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish) and Matt 16 (4000 with 7 loaves and a small amount of fish)*]

READ: Matthew 14:13–21 (NLT)

“As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and followed on foot from many towns. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. That evening the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.” But Jesus said, “That isn’t necessary—you feed them.” “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!” they answered. “Bring them here,” he said. Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!”

Why didn’t Jesus simply produce bread and fish out of thin air? (He could have, but didn’t.)

Why didn't Jesus simply cause bread and fish to appear in everyone's lap? (He could have, but didn't.)

Jesus likely had many reasons for performing this miracle. What might be some of the lessons Jesus wanted his disciples to learn through this?

Invite several people to read aloud the following verses:

- 2 Corinthians 4:7 (TNIV) “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”
- 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 (NLT). When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan. For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.”
- 1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (NLT). “Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.”

What are some reasons why God may want to work through people who might seem unqualified by the world's standards?

Can you think of any Biblical examples of God working powerfully through people who felt like they were over their heads, under-qualified, or inadequate for the task?

- *Moses (Exodus 3-4)*
- *Gideon (Judges 6-7)*
- ??

*[Consider taking a few minutes to reflect on each story]*

Does God “equip those he calls” or does he “call those who are equipped?”

Complete this sentence: You will never find the best version of “you” *[inside your comfort zone]*.

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Just for fun.

Here is a partial list of some people in the Bible whom God used who were “unqualified”:

- ~ Noah was a drunk
- ~ Abraham was old
- ~ Isaac was a daydreamer
- ~ Jacob was a liar
- ~ Leah was ugly
- ~ Joseph was abused
- ~ Moses had a speech impediment
- ~ Gideon was a coward
- ~ Samson was a womanizer
- ~ Rahab was a prostitute
- ~ Jeremiah and Timothy were too young
- ~ David was an adulterer and a murderer
- ~ Elijah was suicidal
- ~ Isaiah preached naked
- ~ Jonah ran from God
- ~ Job went bankrupt
- ~ Peter denied Christ
- ~ The disciples fell asleep while praying
- ~ Martha worried about everything
- ~ Paul was a former terrorist
- ~ Lazarus was dead!