

FULFILLING OUR POTENTIAL

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John 1:35-51

1. Jesus had been baptized by John the Baptist.
2. He was then led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil.
3. After the Temptation Jesus returned to the Jordan where John was baptizing, and John pointed Him out to two of his followers by saying, “Behold, the Lamb of God.” (Behold the One I was sent to bear witness of.)
4. We know from the text that one of the men was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, and the other was probably John, the author of this Gospel.
5. Later on we are introduced to Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel.
6. All of these men were later chosen by Jesus to be Apostles, but here we are provided some insight into an earlier encounter with the Lord.
7. God had a definite plan and purpose for each of these men. Just like He does for each of us.
“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10
8. Note how different the five men were.
 - a. John and his brother James were nicknamed, “Sons of Thunder,” by Jesus in Mark 3:17.
 - (1) The name referred to a fiery and destructive zeal.
 - (2) In Luke 9:53-56 it is recorded that they wanted to command fire to come down out of Heaven to consume a village that refused to receive Jesus.
 - (3) John later became known as the Apostle of love.
 - b. Andrew.
 - (1) G. Campbell Morgan described Andrew as a rugged and strong soul.
 - (2) I would call him, “Andrew the opportunist.”
NOTE: He took the opportunity to introduce his brother to Jesus, and in John 6:9 he introduced a young boy to Jesus who had in his possession five barley loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed a multitude.
 - c. Simon Peter.
 - (1) Peter was outwardly impetuous, verbose, and confident, yet inwardly a changeable and weak man.
 - (2) Others might say of Peter, “He means well, but he is too changeable—all noise and little substance.”
 - (3) Jesus told him he would become a rock.
 - d. Philip.
 - (1) Having been enlisted by Jesus he sought out Nathaniel.
 - (2) He was practical and pointed in his view of things.
NOTE: In John 6:1-7 we see him being tested and manifesting his practical side, and in John 14:8-9 his no nonsense side.
 - e. Nathanael.
 - (1) He was open and honest—a Jew who was nothing like his ancestor Jacob.
 - (2) He was given a great promise.
9. We can learn some valuable lessons about fulfilling our potential from these men and their experience with the Lord.

I. We must spend time with Jesus.

A. Having heard John the Baptist refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God Andrew and John began to follow Him.

B. Jesus saw that they were following Him and asked, “What do you seek?”

NOTE: Spiritual progress depends on what we are actually seeking.

C. Their response led to an invitation to spend some quality time with the Lord.

D. It was time well spent because it is evident that they both became convinced of the fact that Jesus was who John the Baptist declared Him to be.

E. Based on his time with Jesus Andrew immediately went looking for Peter and confidently declared, “We have found the Messiah.”

II. We must believe Jesus’ promises, and the other promises contained in God’s Word.

A. I wonder what people who knew Peter thought when Jesus gave him the name Peter, which means a rock or stone.

B. Peter sometimes spoke and acted as if he was strong and confident, but in reality he was neither.

C. Simon eventually lived up to his new name, but the transformation was a long and sometimes painful process.

D. Peter knew personally that what he wrote in I Peter 1:2-4 was true.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

III. We must listen to Jesus and respond accordingly.

A. Jesus found Philip and said, “Follow Me.”

B. Philip responded by following.

NOTE: There is no substitute for simple and straightforward obedience when it comes to making spiritual progress and fulfilling our potential.

IV. We must have an interest in others.

A. Whoever is found is to become a finder.

B. We often speak of finding Jesus when in reality it is Jesus who has found us.

NOTE: Jesus stated this truth to Zaccheus when He said, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:9-10

C. How do we find others?

1. We think about and pray for others who need to be found—Philip thought of Nathanael.

2. We share with them the Gospel and what we have found to be true.

3. We answer their preconceived notions and ideas by inviting them to, “Come and see.”

NOTE: If we do our part the Holy Spirit will do His part.

V. We must trust Jesus to do what we cannot do.

A. Nathanael was willing to come and see because he was an honest seeker.

B. Jesus:

1. Revealed His intimate knowledge about who Nathanael was and what he was doing. (Probably reflecting on the story of Jacob and his vision of the ladder extending to heaven.)

2. Promised Nathanael that he would see far greater things as he openly and honestly followed Him. John 14:12-15

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 13 "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 "If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

APPLICATION

1. Ask yourself, "What does Jesus see when He examines my life?"

2. Does He see an honest seeker and an obedient follower; a person in whom there is no guile, no deceit, and no hidden agenda?

3. Let's all live a life before God and men that demonstrates our love for God and a Christ-like love for each other and for others.

4. Let's do all we can to prepare to be used by God in the lives of others, and then trust Him to use us as we live and speak for Him.