

# **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

BY

**Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship**

## **Lesson 3**

### **Walking with God**

By

**Chuck Smith**

Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa

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You know, it is a lot easier to get into a mess than it is to get out of a mess. And I have found that it is a lot easier to get people into the church than to get people out of the church sometimes too. And a lot of times, if our motivation is just to get people in and we are primarily concerned with numbers, we can actually coerce people into church whom God really had not intended to be a part of that particular body. Then we have to try to get them out.

People have come many times to men's prayer meeting and they wonder, "What in the world is going on?" We pray, "Lord, please keep away from the church those that You know should not be here, those that are coming for wrong motivations, those that You know are not to be a part of the body here. Lord, just keep them away from here."

So waiting on the Lord is a very important thing for us, as far as our position with the church, because we often times have the concept that it is our job to build the church. We are so busy trying to build up the church. But Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" ([Matthew 16:18](#)).

So for years and years I spun my wheels trying to build the church of Jesus Christ, and I wore myself out and never did accomplish very much. And then, I got out of the way and just started letting the Lord build His church. I was sort of standing on the sidelines and just watching what God could do, just waiting on the Lord. And I found that He was capable of doing a much better job than I ever hoped to do, or ever thought of doing.

The purpose of this message is really to just to provide you with enrichment, spiritual enrichment for your ministries. We are not going to try and lay a lot of heavy trips on you. We want to just give you things that will help you in ministering to the body of Christ. It is sort of a time for you to just come and get your batteries recharged and just to wait upon the Lord. It is a time for you to get into the Word, and to become refreshed in your whole spiritual walk and life. And so we are looking forward to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit to each of us while we are here. That is what it is all about, as we are just ministered to by the Spirit of God and equipped and enabled to go back to the various areas where we are serving the Lord, and become those servants that God would have us to be.

To me it is interesting that God was so pleased with the prayer of Solomon: "Lord, just give me wisdom that I may know how to really guide Your people" (cf. [1 Kings 3:9](#)). That is my prayer. God, give me wisdom that I may know how to guide Your people. They are not my people. They are not my flock. They are His flock. Now the Lord has me there to watch over His flock, but I will tell you that I need His wisdom, in order to know how to go in and out among them, and how to behave myself before them. Lord, I need wisdom in managing, and overseeing Your flock.

There is no biblical concept of the church that would be complete apart from the book of Ephesians, for as Paul is writing to the Ephesians, he is writing to the church. Ephesus was the church that Paul himself had founded and spent a couple of years in its early development, laying the foundations. The people were very dear to the heart of Paul. The book of Ephesians really brings you into some of the highest plains of the Christian experience. It is the church God intended, the church God has purposed.

And so in the sessions that I have with you, it is my desire to have sort of a study of the book of Ephesians, trying to understand the biblical concepts of the church—what God has intended for the church—so that we might become the church that God intends.

Now it is my conviction that God wants to bless every one of you and bless every one of your churches. I believe that is the will and heart of God. God is just looking for a place to work. He is just looking for people that He can bless. I do not believe that the lack of God's blessings ever stems from God's end. I believe it is the purpose of God and the will of God to bless you and to bless your church, and to bless your ministries more than you ever dreamed.

That is why I do not like to set goals. I think they limit what God wants to do. One time I had a goal to pastor a church of 250 people. And goals can be limiting, when they put limits on what God wants to do in your life. So I think it is important that we just know that God wants to bless us, and that we are open for those blessings of God.

In 2 Chronicles, the prophet said to Asa the king that when he was young and when he was weak, he recognized the fact that he was dependent on God, wholly and completely. And because he depended upon God, God delivered into his hands the great hosts of the Ethiopians and the Nubians. But he said, "Now that you have become strong, now that you have become powerful, you are relying now upon your strength, upon the alliances that you have made and you are not relying upon the Lord." And he said, "Don't you realize that the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him? (cf. [2 Chronicles 16:9](#)). In other words, "Don't you know that God is looking for people to bless? Don't you know that God is wanting to work, wanting to demonstrate His power, wanting to demonstrate His greatness?" God is desiring to show forth to the world the greatness of His power and love, but what He needs is a heart that is perfect. And the "perfect" always means "complete," a heart that is completely toward Him. Now I believe that the only criteria necessary for us, in order to experience the fullness and the richness of God's blessing upon our lives, is that we get our hearts perfect toward Him, completely toward Him.

Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" ([Matthew 6:33](#)). Now He is laying priorities. And in the ministry, one of the most important things is priority. You can waste days in stupid little nonessentials. "What kind of doorknobs are we going to put on the cupboards?" And there are committee meetings to determine the kind of doorknobs that go on the cupboards. And you can waste so much time in stupid nonessentials. "Oh, but that color does not go well with the carpet." There are so many silly things you can get involved in. And you can also become involved in seeking first your church growth and development. You can seek first the building up of your church. But if you will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, He will take care of the rest of it.

Do not try to build your church. Do not even worry about how many come to your church. "Well, I'm sorry, you do not go to our church, therefore we cannot help you and we don't want to minister to you." No, you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Get your heart completely toward God, the work that God is wanting to do. And as you do, when your heart is completely toward Him, then you are going to find that your life is going to be a channel, and God is going to begin to flow His love and His blessing forth from you. And listen, you do not have to worry about building your church; the Lord will take care of that.

I am convinced that when the church becomes what God wants the church to be, God will do for the church what He has been wanting to do all the way along. Just get your heart completely toward Him. All these other things—they will be taken care of. But in our misplaced priorities, we are spending so much time in the other things, we do not have time for Him or our relationship with Him.

Let us turn to Ephesians and begin to see the biblical concept of the church as it is revealed here in the book of Ephesians.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints  
which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:  
([Ephesians 1:1](#), KJV)

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...” Now we are encouraged to make our calling and election sure. God has called each of us for a full-time ministry. Every person, I feel, is called of God for a full-time ministry. Now it may be that for the time being your salary is paid by Shell Oil Company, because you have to eat. But that does not take away from the fact that God has called you to a full-time ministry. I think that we have made a tragic mistake in the church, classifying full-time ministers as only those who are paid by the church for the ministry that they do. Somehow if you are drawing your salary from a church or para-church organization, then you are considered full-time minister. But if you are drawing your salary from someplace else, then you are not really considered a full-time minister, part-time minister, or whatever. And I think that that is a bad concept. I think that the people need to realize that they are *all* called by God to a full-time ministry. Their lives belong to Jesus Christ. Now everybody has to eat. So someone may be paying your salary that is not a church or para-church organization, but still, your life should be totally given over into a full-time ministry to the Lord. I am serving the Lord. And the people need to have this concept, the fact that they are serving the Lord, and they should not be made to feel second rate because they are getting their salary from someplace else.

It is an interesting thing when a man is a dentist and he signs up with a missionary organization and goes down to Central America, and there he is in a clinic. And all day long he is checking the teeth of the little children or of their parents, filling teeth and all of this kind of stuff. It is interesting because the mission board back here is paying his salary, we say, “Well, he is a full-time missionary, a full time minister.” Now we might have a man who is up here in the States. He loves the Lord, and he has a home Bible study in his house. He is teaching in the Sunday school class, and he is helping in the church. He is witnessing all the time, but he spends his days filling teeth, pulling teeth and all. And we say, “No, he is not a full-time minister because his customers are paying his salary. The patients are paying his salary.” Well, in reality he may have a more valid full-time ministry in that he is not drawing out from the funds of the Lord.

We need to get away from this idea of full-time ministry or part-time ministry and know that each of us has a full-time calling to serve God. No one has been called to serve God part time. We have all been called to serve the Lord in a full-time service.

Now it says, “Paul an apostle.” It might well be “Paul a service station attendant,” or “Paul a fisherman,” or “Paul a carpenter by the will of God,” because the Lord knows people have to live in houses and people have to eat food. “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God” (cf. [Colossians 3:17](#)). If I am just a farmer, God needs farmers. People have to eat. If it were not for the farmers, I could not be doing what I am doing. I would have to be out in the fields growing my own food.

So God has a place for each man and no one should feel like a second-rate servant of God just because he does not have a pulpit ministry, or just because he is not drawing a full-time salary from a church or a para-church organization. We are all full-time ministers.

Now of course Paul has always been my model. He said, “Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Jesus Christ” ([1 Corinthians 11:1](#)). And he has always been a model for me. I was always

encouraged that Paul was willing and able to go out and make tents. Though, he says, “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,” even as an apostle of Jesus Christ, he could draw a salary by making tents.

While Paul was in Ephesus, it was there in Ephesus where they came and they took handkerchiefs from Paul. The word is actually *sweatbands*, because Paul was working and he had a sweatband around his head. And they would take these sweatbands from Paul and lay them on the sick and people would be healed. Now that does not sound as glamorous as a little piece of cloth with perfumed oil, but to me it is glorious to realize that here is a guy who is willing to get in and sweat to provide his livelihood. But during the siesta time in the afternoon when people took time off and just rested, then he would be teaching the Word of God. Come evening, he would be teaching the Word of God. And so: “To the Ephesians, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.”

Paul tells us in Ephesians 4 that God has placed in the church apostles; and then He has also placed prophets, and evangelists, and pastors and teachers. And as we look at Paul’s life, he actually wore many hats—the hat of an apostle, for sure. There were other times when he wore the hat of a teacher. To the church at Ephesus, he was its pastor for a time. He began his work in Ephesus in evangelism. And he surely exercised a prophetic ministry among them, speaking forth God’s truths to them.

Now I believe that there are ministry gifts and I believe that the listing here is of ministry gifts. Men have been called of God as apostles, called of God as prophets, called of God as evangelists, called of God as pastor/teachers. And these are the various ministries or administrations within the church, along with governments, and helps, and so forth. And I believe that for each of these callings there are certain gifts of the Spirit that enable us to fulfill that particular calling that God has placed upon us for the ministry that we have. And I believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are to enable us and to empower us to fulfill the particular ministry that God has called us to fulfill. And thus I think for a pastor/teacher, the gift of the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and prophecy are very important. For an evangelist perhaps the gift of faith, the working of miracles, the gifts of healing are given. Gifts vary according to the calling of God upon our lives for that place of ministry within the body that we are to fulfill.

So, “Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus and”—notice he does not limit it to just the saints at Ephesus—“and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” I believe that if there is a theme that runs through the book of Ephesians, it is: In Christ Jesus. And thus, Paul introduces the theme of the book very early. And if you are going to ever make a thorough study of the book of Ephesians it is important that you underline every time he makes a reference to the relationship in Christ Jesus, in Him, by Him, for Him, and through Him. He shows that the believer’s life is totally bound up in the person of Jesus Christ and that we are nothing, really, apart from Him. It is in Him. It is through Him. It is by Him and it is for Him that our lives exist.

Naturally when you start talking about this kind of a relationship, your mind must go back to the words of Christ in John 15 where He talks about that relationship. “Abide in Me. My words abide in you.” There is a necessity for this if we are to bear fruit for Him. And the purpose of the Father is not that you just bear fruit, “But that you bear much fruit. Herein is your Father glorified...” (cf. [John 15:8](#)).

Now God wants to bless you. God wants to work in your life. God has a work He wants to do in your area, in your community, a greater work than you have yet seen, a greater work than you can

even imagine. And God wants to use you as His instrument in accomplishing His work in that community. But relationship is first. And thus, your relationship with God has to be the first priority of your life. And may God just really help you to draw close to Him, to be open to Him, to get that relationship established; so that God can begin to do the work in your life that He wants to do. He will do through your life what He wants to do.

But here again, you have the vertical and the horizontal relationships. The vertical is always important because it is the axis upon which your life revolves. Your relationship with God (the up and down) is so vital because if this is out of kilter, your horizontal plain is going to be out of kilter. You have a fixed axis, and there is no way that you can have a well-balanced life on the horizontal plain unless you have a corrected vertical axis upon which your life is revolving. And thus, the problems always come back to our relationship with God. That relationship is established and maintained in Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ; as that relationship is right, then this horizontal plain becomes right and you become effective. God is looking, first of all, for what He can do in you.

But God never stops at that point. God is interested in what He can do in you because He is interested in doing work through you. But it is important that He first of all works in you. And when that work of God has been accomplished in you, then God can do through you what He has been wanting to do. If God started doing through you what He is wanting to do before first of all doing *in* you what is necessary, that can lead to problems. We are all so stupid and dumb and flesh oriented that we would go around boasting and parading what we were doing for God and we just totally blow it. So God works in us first, and this relationship must be established first.

And thus, the top priorities in my life must be the Word of God, my relationship with Him, a heart perfect toward God, or a heart that is completely toward God. And this is something that you do not do once and then say, “Well, I did that already. Where do I go from here?” It is something that you must maintain. It is something that is a continual thing.

The Apostle Paul is speaking of his own ministry and said, “I beat my body,” literally until it is black and blue, until it is bruised, “to keep my body under, lest having preached to others, I myself would be set aside” (cf [1 Corinthians 9:27](#)). In other words, be put on a shelf, cast away, no longer fit for the Master’s use. Toss it out; it is a vessel that no longer can be used for the Lord. And I look at the broken vessels along the side of the road, men who one time had an effective, powerful ministry for God, and I realize the importance of keeping the body under. For the body, the area of my flesh, desires praise. It desires adoration. It desires the glory of man. And if you do not keep the body under, it is going to be doing little antics to draw attention to itself.

As a minister, it is important that I be spiritual. But one of the problems is that I like to appear to my people more spiritual than I really am. And thus, I like to give forth little innuendoes of deep spirituality. I let little things sort of slip out so that they will understand how deeply spiritual I am. So they will say, “Oh my, isn’t it wonderful? Our pastor is so spiritual.” My flesh loves to have people think that I am a deeply spiritual man of God, and so I like to just sort of let it slip out once in a while. “Well, this morning as I was in meditation, I figured it was getting close to morning because I could hear the roosters crowing. The Lord just seemed to reveal to my heart...” “Oh man, isn’t he spiritual? Wow, he is up before the roosters, praying and getting revelations from God. Wow!” What they do not know is that I was stupid enough to have onions on my hamburger the night before and I could not sleep, so I was just tossing when I heard the roosters crowing. And the Lord revealed to me that I should not have onions so late at night! But let me tell the story and it is going to come off deeply spiritual, so that people are going to stand

in awe and wonder of me. No, they need to stand in awe and wonder of our Lord, and in awe and wonder that our Lord would use one such as me to do His work.

You see, what we do is we sort of close off from the mind of people the concept that God can use them. God only uses deeply spiritual, committed people. What does that mean? They are never available for God because they are thinking, “I know I am not worthy. I know I do not deserve it. I know I am not deeply committed and spiritual and all, so how can God use me? Well, God blessed the pastor. And God used the pastor. He is a deeply spiritual man, but God cannot use me because I am not.”

But it also comes down then to me, because I know the truth about me. Though they may think that I am deeply spiritual, I know the truth about me. And I think, “Well, how can God use me, because God only uses deeply spiritual people?” And as a result, God has nobody to use. Nobody is available. We must realize that God is willing to use anyone He can get His hands on, who is just available for Him to use, and that He wants to use me. And He begins by working in me, and as He has worked in me, He is able to work His works to others through me.

But in God’s work I must remain in that position of spirit, soul, and body and keep the body under. The minute you become body, soul and spirit, then man, you are going to get set on a shelf. You have to maintain the spiritual balance of spirit, soul, and body in order to maintain that usefulness for God.

“In Christ Jesus” is the theme of the book of Ephesians. “Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” ([Ephesians 1:2](#)). Grace and peace are the Siamese twins of the New Testament. They are always coupled together. You rarely find them apart from each other. But they are always in this order. You never read “peace and grace,” because that is out of order. The proper order is always grace and peace, because no one can really experience the real peace of God until they have experienced the grace of God.

Now I had peace *with* God years before I had the peace *of* God in my life. The peace with God was established years ago when Jesus Christ came in and cleansed me from my sin. I had peace with God, but it took years, years actually in the ministry, before I ever experienced the peace *of* God within my life. And I never did experience the peace of God in my life until I discovered the grace of God towards me. As long as I was trying to deserve and merit and earn a place in God’s kingdom, I was striving and I never did know the peace of God. It was only after I discovered the glorious grace of God and accepted that grace of God that I then began to experience the peace of God. So there is a peace of God you can only know once you have really discovered the grace of God in your own life. “Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” ([Ephesians 1:2](#)).

Some people look at the Lord Jesus Christ and think of that as His first, middle, and last name. Not so. Actually they should have put a comma after the word *Lord*, to get the correct understanding. Lord is not His name at all. His name is not Lord. Lord is not a name, Lord is a title. It is a title that signifies relationship. Jesus is His name. *Yeshua* means “Jehovah is salvation.” Christ is His mission, you might say. It is the Greek of the Hebrew word *Mashiyach*, the Messiah, the Anointed One. It denotes His mission, but Lord is His title.

Now there are many people who, when speaking of “the Lord,” use that title as a name. But it does not truly signify a relationship. And Jesus tells us that many are going to come to Him in that day saying, “Lord, Lord, [a repetition for emphasis] did we not prophesy in Your name and do many mighty miracles? We cast out devils. Lord, Lord, we did all these things.” And He is

going to say, “Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you” (cf. [Matthew 7:22–23](#)). He never knew them in that relationship. He was never really the Lord of their lives.

Now Jesus points out an important inconsistency when He said, “Why callest thou Me Lord, Lord and yet you do not do the things I command you?” (cf. [Luke 6:46](#)). Lord is a title. If I use that title of Lord then that means I am the servant. I am the slave. I am the *doulos*, the bond slave. He is my *kurios*, my Lord, my Master; and thus, I have no rights of my own. I cannot say where I am going to serve, or how I am going to serve, or what I am going to do and not do. I have relinquished those rights to my Lord. That is what the title means, that I have relinquished my rights of self-determination to Him.

This is relationship. Relationship is vital. If I am going to be a servant, the relationship has to first of all be established, and it is a Lord/servant relationship. But so many of us are like Peter, when the sheet was let down from heaven and he saw all of these various unclean animals on it and the Lord said to Peter, “Arise Peter, kill and eat.” And Peter said, “Not so, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unclean” (cf. [Acts 10:13–14](#)). That is the most inconsistent statement in the Bible—“Not so, Lord.” You cannot say that. That is a perfect inconsistency. You can say, “Not so, buddy. Not so, friend.” But you cannot say, “Not so, Lord.” If the Lord tells you to do something, if He indeed is Lord, then you have no place of argument. You have no place of question. Yours is just to obey and to do, because He is the Lord. “Why callest thou Me Lord, Lord and yet you do not do the things I command you?” You are inconsistent.

The Lord Jesus Christ—this is where I think a lot of people get confused in [Romans 10:9–10](#). As far as salvation, they make salvation actually easier and simpler than it really is. Though I think most of the time we are making it more complex; but yet, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth [King James says] the Lord Jesus Christ.” Literally, from the Greek it is: “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.” It is actually a submission of myself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, which is so important.

Especially if I am marked as a servant of God, what does that imply? It implies the Lordship of Jesus Christ? So above all others in your position as a servant, you should have that “Lord” concept in regards to Jesus Christ. He is the Lord in the relationship. Get that relationship established. Until it is established, you cannot go to point B.

I do not know how much truth there is to it, but some people say that you have certain developmental tasks that you must fulfill psychologically within a certain period of time. And if you do not fulfill it then you stay stunted until that is fulfilled. In other words, during your teen years there are certain developmental tasks and all that must be accomplished during your teen years, in order for you to really enter into your twenties. And while you are twenty, there are certain other emotional, psychological, and developmental things that need to be established before you can enter into the maturity of the thirties. And if you do not accomplish them while you are in your twenties, you are going to remain stunted in that area of development until that is finally accomplished. You will never be able to mature into the thirties and so forth, in judgment and all, until you have fulfilled these developmental things in the twenties.

One of things people say is that you are supposed to get married in your twenties and get that part of your sociological development taken care of or you are never going to fully develop beyond that. And you grow older and you are still going to be a kid and undeveloped in a certain area of your structure and all. This is what some people are saying, but I do not know if I believe that.

I do know this: there are certain spiritual developmental tasks that need to be experienced before you can go any further. And before you can really be effective or go any further in your service toward God, the relationship must be established in Christ Jesus. And until you are submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in that proper relationship, until that is established, you are going to stay in this limited area of service to God. You will never be able to go beyond that particular point until this is first of all established.

Now in [Ephesians 1:3](#) Paul said,

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

There you have it, “in Christ.” All of the blessings that God has for you are in Christ.

This is the record. God has given to us eternal life. And this life is in the Son; and thus, he who has the Son has the life. (cf. [1 John 5:11](#))

You have no life apart from “in Christ.” You have none of the blessings of God apart from “in Christ.” So in reality it is in that relationship that you realize the appropriating of all that Christ was intended to be for you. All of the spiritual blessings that God has for you will never come to you apart from Christ or your relationship with Him.

Ephesians 1 says it is, “God the Father, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Relationship. If I am going to experience and know—no matter what blessing you may be talking about—it has to come through that relationship in Christ Jesus.

Now notice he does not even talk here of physical blessings. He is talking of spiritual blessings. It is tragic that we so often want to reduce things to the physical plain as though the physical plain were the more important plain of existence. And many people would opt for the physical blessings over the spiritual. And I think there is a great danger today in a lot of the teaching on physical prosperity. They ought to go to Red China and preach that doctrine to the Christians over there. They would not find such a popular ear.

Paul warns us about perverse teachers who teach that “godliness is literally a way to gain” (cf. [1 Timothy 6:5](#)). That is literally what Paul says. He calls it perverse—that godliness is a way to gain. “You want to be rich? You want to be wealthy?—godliness, man.” Paul says it is perverse.

The blessings that God has for us (spiritual blessings) they are ours in Christ Jesus.

Now, as you go through chapters 1, 2, and 3, you are going to find these spiritual blessings. He is going to start listing them for you. We sing: “Count your blessings. Name them one by one. And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” Hey, it really will. You can go through and see what Paul pulls out here, all of the spiritual blessings wherewith God has blessed you.

You say, “Oh, it has been a long time since I have been blessed by God. Oh, I feel so dry. I have not been blessed.” Hey, wait a minute! You are blessed every day and the first blessing is the fact that God chose you.

And so Paul said, “According as He hath chosen us.” [Where?] “In Him.” [When?] “That we should be the first fruits.” But we are “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world” ([Ephesians 1:4](#)). The first spiritual blessing that you have is that God chose you. Do you ever wonder why you were not born a Chinese? One person in four is Chinese. The odds for you being born Chinese are much greater than being born whatever you are. Had you been born in China and reared there, it may be that you would have never known about Jesus Christ. But God foreknew you and He chose you that you should be in Christ, before the foundations of the world.

I think that the Scripture utterly repudiates this doctrine that is being propagated in some organizations regarding the limited knowledge of God. They say that God does not know if you are going to be saved or lost until you make up your mind for Jesus Christ. And God does not know what you are going to do until you make up your mind to do it. They say that God did not know Adam was going to sin until Adam sinned. It took God by surprise. I cannot accept that, because God chose me before the foundations of the world.

A lot of people get upset with God for choosing. But goodness, I personally want the power of choice and I like to choose the people I am going to be with. When we were kids and we used to play scrub football, we would choose up teams. And quite often I was the captain. I got to choose my team and I liked that power of choice. And you know what? I always sought to choose winners when I was making my choices. I would always try to choose the guys that were the best. You are not going to deliberately choose a loser. That would be sort of dumb. God chose me and that excites me. He is not going to choose a loser, and so it is thrilling to me that God chose me. It is a blessing to me. He chose me before the foundations of the world.

Now herein, we enter into a realm that we do not understand fully. One of the problems in the ministry is that people expect you to know all that God knows and to understand God. And thus, so many of the questions that I am being asked to answer are questions that begin with, “Why did God?” And I have come to a place where when a person says, “Why did God?”—I will say, “Do not ask any more. I do not know. I do not know the “whys” of God. God said I would not even know them.” He said, “My ways are not your ways. They are higher than your ways. They are beyond your finding out.”

When I was a young minister, I felt it very important that I know all that God knew and was at least able to give an answer for every question. I used to try to answer the most difficult questions. In fact, in my own life I was trying to answer questions that were in my own mind. Then if God chose me, where did my choice come in? If He chose me before the foundations of the earth, then why did I have to choose to submit my life to Jesus Christ? If I was predestined by God, according to His foreknowledge, then what part do I have? And for years I sought to understand the place of human responsibility in the plan of God.

When I looked at one side, the sovereignty of God—He chose, He ordained, He called, He predestined. And then I looked at the other side which says, “Choose you this day”—and the human responsibility—I could not put them together. I could not reconcile them. I could not reduce them to my understanding until one day, in frustration, I put my Bible down and said, “God, I cannot understand it.” And I was disgusted. Hours and hours I had wrestled with these things. And the still small voice said to me, “I never asked you to understand it. I only asked you to believe it.” And from that day I have not sought to understand; I only believe. You say, “But how can...?” I do not know. “Well, what part does your choice have?” Well, it has a part. I am told to choose, therefore, it has a part. And I have chosen. “Yeah, but how can you choose if God has already...?” I do not know. I know He chose me before the foundation of the world. No, I

cannot understand it and I do not understand it, but I believe it. I believe both sides of the truth, but I believe by faith, not by understanding, but by faith.

Now faith is believing what I do not understand; reason is understanding what I believe. But faith is believing, even though I do not understand it. Now God has called me to faith in some areas. I do not understand where these truths meet or balance, but I believe that they do. I do believe in what, in my mind, are irreconcilable positions. Now I do not have to understand them to believe them. I need the faith to believe that God said it, and He definitely said it, so I believe it. And God is honored by my believing, in faith, that which I do not understand.

Do not try to understand the whole thing. You never will. There are going to be areas that God is going to deliberately leave unexplained, and you are going to have to just, by faith, believe them in order that God might be honored by your faith. We will get on into this in our next lesson, as we look at the blessings that we have in Christ. The spiritual blessings, how glorious they are!