

**TITLE: My Call With Christ**

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Author: Dr. James Paul Humphries

Editor: Dominique Kozarchuk

Copy-editor: Jacqueline Chartrand

Cover Design / Layout: Sarah Van Pelt

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Leadership Series

**Book 1**

# MY CALL WITH CHRIST

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the discipleship / leadership series. These little booklets were designed to give basic information concerning various topics about our Christian faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and to foster a clearer understanding of discipleship and servant leadership. These booklets can be used as a discussion tool for personal study, family devotion, youth meetings or in cell groups. Our hope is that this information will stir the readers and encourage them to go deeper into personal research and study.

Our desire is that these booklets will be a blessing to the reader and a tool that can be shared with others as a gift of encouragement.

Please feel free to mail or e-mail us for more copies or to just write to us with any feedback concerning the content of these studies. We hope you enjoy this offering of knowledge and experience. We pray that Christ will draw you into an ever deeper personal relationship with Himself as you study.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

# MY CALL WITH CHRIST

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## INTRODUCTION

*“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the Gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and **called** us with a holy **calling**, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,” 2 Timothy 1:8-9*

As we look through our Bibles, we see the first remarkable thing that Jesus did was to call the twelve disciples. The day He started His earthly ministry was the day He called people to walk with Him, to be His companions and friends. Christ speaks and calls you to Himself – to awaken, to turn aside, and to follow Him. We must, above all, have at the center of our heart a “call” to follow Christ, to forsake the world and make Him Lord, Saviour, and King. This is the key component of what it means to be a true disciple.

The call of God is an important principle in our faith with Christ Jesus. We need to clearly understand who we are in Christ and how He called us with a purpose for our lives.

As we understand the meaning of words we get a deeper understanding of Scripture and what it says about us and what God wants to do in us. “Call” means to announce, to proclaim, to summon, to summon to a specific work, to call someone to ministry, to arouse someone from sleep. The idea of this word “call” is to move one’s life from where it is to another place, either physically, emotionally or spiritually.

The Bible is full of illustrations showing how God speaks to His people. Take time to look up these verses and reflect on how

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God called these people to be His vessels for service. Notice how God draws everyday people to Himself and His Kingdom.

## *Old Testament*

One Old Testament personality that we can look at when it comes to the subject of call is Moses (Exodus 3:1-22). Here we have a herdsman who was once at a place of great leadership, now living out his life in a barren land looking after sheep. God calls to him through a burning bush and speaks to him concerning a mission that He has for him. Moses does not want to get involved but God persuades him to move forward. This call lasts for over forty years. It started by delivering the people, then leading the people, and finally preparing the people to enter the Promised Land.

## *New Testament*

The New Testament examples are the disciples, some of whom were just fishermen (John 1:35-51). They had most likely been trained by their father and friends. Their business required long hours of hard work. Jesus comes to them and calls them to become fishers of men. The words of this call speak to their hearts and they leave all and go with Jesus. They walked with Him for about three years and then became the servants of Christ. They went out and built the church by spreading the Gospel of Christ wherever they went.

Our central verse for this chapter comes from a letter that Paul sent to Timothy instructing him on the importance of sticking to the call on his life. In 2 Timothy 1:8-9, Christ points out some important facts for the disciple today. First, we are not to be ashamed of God's calling on our lives. Next, this call will impress

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on our heart a love for serving God and others. There will be times of hardship and suffering but Christ will empower us so that we will be able to walk through these challenges. The call is not based on who we are or what we have done but it is according to who Christ is and what He has given. Christ has a purpose for us and His grace will help us to overcome the world and ourselves.

In both cases, God comes to the people, calls out to them, and challenges them to respond to His vision and will for their lives.

What follows are six critical parts, which give us the bigger picture of what it means to be “called” by God for a purpose and goal, which in turn give us several reasons for our existence here on earth.

## CALLED TO FOLLOW

To be called to follow in someone else’s footsteps would require great faith in the person you have chosen to follow. It may mean leaving life as you know it behind and going in a new direction in your lifestyle and in what you believe. He leads. We follow. He goes before us like a shepherd before His sheep.

To “follow” means to come after, step into the shoes of, be guided by, give allegiance to, obey, observe, watch, adopt, to pattern oneself upon, be devoted to, support. The one in front sets the pattern for those who are coming behind to walk in; one step at a time, one after another after another.

He also warned them of the commitment that it would take and the hardships that could come out of their decision. Matthew

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16:24-25 states, *“Take up your cross and follow.”* John 12:26 tells us that to be a true disciple of Christ one must have a heart of service. To serve you must follow in Christ’s footsteps and by doing this the Father in heaven will honour you for your faithfulness.

There is a time of crossing over from one way of living to another. Jesus gives us new life and is a bridge into that new way of living. If we will take that first step of faith and be willing to follow Him, we see three specific paths outlined for us in John 14:6. Here Jesus declares, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father but through me.”*

1. He offers a new way of living to follow.
2. He gives us a new truth to follow.
3. He gives us a new life to follow.

He does all of this through grace and love. He pours Himself into our lives so we can be poured into the lives of others. Freely we have received and now, freely, we give. He models for us so we can be a model to others.

There will be challenges and the road will not be easy. Many people say they will follow but their actions and heart show differently, and in time they are nowhere to be found (Matthew 8:19-23). The disciples heard the Master’s call and left everything and followed Him (John 1:35-51).

## **Relevance and Reflection**

What have I left behind in my following of Jesus Christ?

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## CALLED TO FRIENDSHIP

A call to friendship has at its center an intimate relationship with Christ. Friendships are made through time and communication. There is a lot in common and a strong root system that holds these friends together.

To be a “friend” means to have affection, alliance, attachment, benevolence, closeness, good fellowship, harmony, intimacy, love, rapport. We enter into a place where two people know, understand and trust each other’s hearts. Christ does not want to make us slaves but to be friends (John 15:13-15).

Scripture points out some important truths about friendship for us. Proverbs 17:17 states a friend loves at all times. He also is one who loves in spite of who we are (Matthew 11:19, a friend of tax collectors and sinners).

The world wants to keep us enslaved but Christ wants to call us to friendship. A friend is aware of the attitude and the heart of the one he has befriended, knowing specific details concerning that friend and what causes him to do what he does.

We are no longer islands with no one to talk to or walk with, but we become part of a family. This relationship can build strength and maturity in each individual. There is accountability between friends, a deep desire to help and bless one another. A friend will even lay down his life for another.

We choose to love and to give, not because we have to, but because we want to. Christ desires us to be close to Him like a friend, and therefore calls us to friendship with Himself.

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The human body can picture for us the relationship that the parts have to each other and the importance of the relationship that we have to the whole. We work together as a unit, a team, and this becomes possible and unique as we work together as friends. The heart of friendship is the idea of giving, ministering and serving one another so that the others can succeed in ministry and in life.

## Relevance and Reflection

Do I have a close friendship with Christ? Am I open and transparent with at least a few of my closest friends?

## CALLED TO SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE

To change from my will and desire to His, to obey His plans and purposes for my life and ministry will require me to be willing to submit to and obey the leading of the Lord.

Many people struggle with submission and obedience because we think we are giving up freedom but when we understand these words properly, they actually give us a greater level of freedom. “Submission” means to surrender, yielding, compliance, meekness, obedience, resignation. The word “obedience” denotes, to abide by, act upon, adhere to, be ruled by, carry out, embrace, follow, perform, serve. Each word gives us a fuller picture of what it means to enter into the call of Christ.

The Scriptures uses these two words to describe how we should walk with God. They need to become part of the disciple’s attitude for his life journey. James tells us to, “submit to God” (James 4:7). Peter states that we are to be in obedience to the truth (I Peter 1:22). Paul tells the Romans to be slaves to obedience in

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Christ and their lives will produce “fruit of righteousness”. The Bible exhorts us to obey and submit our lives to God; to show the same courtesy to those who are of God who instruct and minister to us (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

Each day we face a battle – will we do our will or God’s will? It is a battle between pride and humility before God, a battle between the head and the heart. This is what many have called the “eighteen-inch battleground.” The greatest battle will be fought within our own hearts and minds.

Christ has called us to be obedient and this will require us to submit to Him as Lord and Saviour. Many have Christ as Saviour but few have Him as Lord. It means humbling ourselves before Christ as our mentor and letting Him be the total Lord of our lives.

A good example of submission and obedience can be found in the concept of a body; each part needs to work together. If they do not do this, the whole body cannot function, move or live. The body must submit and be in obedience to the head. As we look at the example of the church, we see it is to be the body with Christ as the head. He leads so that the power can flow through us so that we can minister to and serve others. As disciples it is very important that we submit to and obey Christ with all that we are.

## **Relevance and Reflection**

Can I humble myself in Christ so He can lift me up? What are some things that He has called me to submit to and obey?

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## CALLED TO CHOICES

Man has been given a free will to choose. God does not force us to follow Christ but we make a decision to do so. Life requires us to make many choices each day; we are given the free will to make those choices wisely. The idea of the word “choice” means the act of choosing, selection, the right or privilege of choosing, option, alternative, election, selection, pick, preference.

Again, Scripture sheds some light on the call to choose rightly. In Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Moses challenges the people to choose life or death. Joshua tells the people to choose for themselves whom they will serve (Joshua 24:14-15). Peter tells the church that they are a chosen race... *“He called you out of darkness”* so we need to be certain about His calling of us (1 Peter 2:9-10). God makes choices and He wants us to understand and see this clearly for our lives, so that with His help and guidance we will be able to make right choices also (1 Thessalonians 1:4).

Each day we face hundreds of choices. We choose to stay or to go, to walk away or to come near. Each of these choices will require a decision. We make decisions each day that will affect the total man: our body, soul and spirit. The Bible challenges us to choose life or to choose death. We will have to make many choices, and if we refuse to choose, often others will make the choice for us.

Christ chose to love us just the way we are now. Will we choose to love Him and thank Him for what He has done for us? Will we let the Holy Spirit guide our choices and work? He desires to flow through us each day.

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Each day we find ourselves on a journey. We will walk either on a road or on a pathway or sometimes we are called to blaze a new trail altogether. However, on this pilgrimage there will be lots of obstacles and twists and turns in the road. We will come to intersections and forks in the road and at each junction, we will have to make a choice. The challenge of this choice is that it will affect not only our lives, but also others around us.

## Relevance and Reflection

Do you choose just to go part of the way or all the way with Christ? What were some choices that you made today that reflect the type of relationship you have with the Lord Jesus Christ?

## CALLED TO CHANGE

We are called to move from our ways to His way, from our nature to His nature, from self-centered to God-centered.

Changes are always a hard thing to accept in our lives. Nevertheless, change is often good for us if we are willing to submit to it because it is a way that God uses to help us to grow and mature as disciples.

"Change" expresses the idea of convert, metamorphose, reform, reorganize, transform, exchange, replace, trade. There is a movement and a shift in our thinking that must take place if we are to change.

Malachi wants us to see an important truth that God does not change (Malachi 3:6). If God does not change it only leaves me to do it. Life is full of changes each day, some that we decide and

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others that are forced on us. Paul tells the Roman disciples to be transformed...renewing your minds...approve what God's will is (Romans 12:2). The change that we will undergo each day will be to become more like Christ (Philippians 3:20-21 transformed... into bodies like His body).

To repent means to go in a new direction – a 180 degree turn. This takes place when our hearts have received Christ's life. Our thinking will change, our outward countenance will be different and even what we speak will change.

It is like a butterfly going through a time of metamorphosis. As disciples, we have to become a new creation; old things have passed away. We are given new life, being born again. Change will come from the inside out turning fear into faith, taking that which is dead and breathing life into it.

A caterpillar changing into a butterfly is an example of the process we will go through. We should experience a change of thought and action, and if we do not see any change, then we should go back to Christ, the change-maker. Seek Him in prayer and study His Word until there is evidence of change. As we take off the old ways and put on the new in Christ Jesus, we will live and look more like Him.

## **Relevance and Reflection**

How has your walk with Christ changed your life so far?

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## CALLED TO DISCIPLESHIP LIFESTYLE

We are called to live a moment-by-moment lifestyle that will model and reflect Jesus Christ to a lost world.

What does it mean to be a disciple and come under the discipleship training of another? “Discipleship” means forsaking everything to follow and requires discipline: a disciple is one who is mentored by another who has also been mentored himself.

Then what does it mean to have a discipleship lifestyle? The word still portrays a manner or custom that we hold to; a way of life that we personally live. Our lifestyle as a disciple takes on the lifestyle of Another, no longer reflecting us but reflecting Christ’s image.

The Scriptures show us various characteristics of living a discipleship lifestyle here on earth. Jesus tells the disciples that the very basic root of their purpose is being willing to give one’s life for another (Matthew 10:42, a disciple who gives to one of these... a cup of cold water). In Luke we see what it means to carry our cross daily, willing to die to ourselves and live for Christ and others (Luke 14:27). If we are unwilling to do this we cannot be His disciple. There is also fruit that should come forth from our life, the most obvious one being the fruit of love. Jesus tells the disciples to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:35). Christ expects from the disciples that their lives will count and make a difference. Jesus said to the disciples, "*bear much fruit...so prove to be my disciples*" (John 15:8).

Your call is to become a disciple. The fruit of that is to go out and make other disciples. Discipleship lifestyle is a daily commitment to the truth and teachings of Christ. It is a daily walk

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of following after Christ and His call on our lives. It is asking the question moment by moment, “What would Jesus do?”

We are to become disciplined into a new way of living. We are to walk in Christ’s footsteps, our way of life reflecting Christ in everything we say and do.

Discipleship should be like an earthly culture that has specific distinction so that when others look at us, they can tell what country or people group we belong to. We are called to be Christ’s ambassadors, representatives of His Kingdom. This is not our home: we are from a distant land, citizens of the kingdom of Christ Jesus.

A university is a good example of discipleship training and lifestyle. You are forced to practice a certain type of discipline for a while and that discipline must reach a certain standard or you are unable to move on. Students also take on a different lifestyle during this time in training, affecting their schedule, eating and sleeping habits. The school and teachers are attempting to change personal habits and lifestyle. Higher education helps you to become more disciplined in a specific field of learning. Discipleship is being a disciplined one in Christ. We are to become the best we can in all ways for Christ, developing a new discipleship lifestyle that will reflect who our Master and Mentor is.

## **Relevance and Reflection**

What actions and habits need to be changed in my everyday walk with Christ?

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## CONCLUSION

Will you make the commitment today to respond to His call and to walk with Him, to be willing to hear and then act upon His Word together with others of like faith? Remember that there are two levels of call. One is to be a disciple and follower of Christ and the second is to different kinds and types of ministry. The call of ministry can also be a short specific time or something that may take a lifetime to fulfill. God is calling you to something that is most likely larger than what you think you are able to do. The call of Christ is to follow, change, submit, choose wisely and to live as His disciple.

## APPLICATION

Are you committed to walk in His way, His truth and His life? Daily ask the question, “*What Would Jesus Do?*”

**W. W. J. D.**

What steps do you intend to take this week in each of these areas? How will you carry them out? Draw up an action plan for growth and change. Move from words to actions. Share with others through words (spoken or written) your testimony about how God has personally called you to Himself and ministry.

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## MEDITATION

**For further insight and understanding, please study these other supporting Scriptures:**

Matthew 9:13

Acts 2:39

1 Peter 2:9

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

1 Corinthians 7:17

Romans 9:11

2 Timothy 1:8-9

1 Corinthians 1:9

1 Peter 5:9

1 Thessalonians 2:12

**Here are some study questions for individual or group interaction:**

1. What further insights have you learned from these Scriptures?
2. What is the key truth you would like to share with someone else?
3. List some truths that you have learned from this discipleship step.
4. What are some attitudes and actions that you sense the Holy Spirit is challenging you to change in your life?
5. What word in the definitions have you seen in a new and fresh way?

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## MEMORIZATION

**Take time to plant the Word of God in your heart.**

*“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the Gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.” 2 Timothy 1:8-9*

## PRAYER

*Dear Lord Jesus,*

*“I come to you now to thank you for calling me and for making me new. I pray that I will be able to hear your still small voice each day calling to me and directing my pilgrimage with you. Help me to remain committed to follow your call. I also pray that my heart will be soft enough to go wherever you want me to go.”*

*Sincerely your servant,*

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## **Project L.A.M.B.S. International**

Making disciples is the call and mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus urged the disciples to follow Him. He laid down before us the teaching and the walk that we need to follow with Jesus as our supreme example. It is imperative for every believer and the church to know that disciples are not born but they are made. For the church to be strong in the last days, we must be about the business of equipping the saints (disciples) for the work of service.

Dr. James Humphries has been ministering for over 40 years, and has experience in a variety of ministries including church planting, children's ministry, street ministry, youth ministry, camp ministry, pastoral work and directing and teaching in schools all over the world. In addition, he has taken part in traveling and ministering in the USA, Mexico, Ukraine, Myanmar, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Thailand and across most of Canada. He completed his B.R.E. and his M.A. from Briercrest, and his Doctorate of Ministry from Providence Theological Seminary in the spring of 1999.

In January 1996, Dr. James Humphries resigned as pastor of a local church with a vision to reach further abroad with the Word of God and to use it to train labourers for Christ (Matthew 9:36-38). He shared this with Dr. David Smith and Dr. Chuck Nichols of Providence Theological Seminary and they greatly encouraged Dr. James Humphries and his wife Irene to develop what God was laying on their hearts.

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In March 1997, they traveled to Jamaica where they met several pastors who were very concerned about the need for training and disciplining their young people as leaders in their churches. Dr. James Humphries and Irene did not know this would be the starting point to an international ministry of discipleship training around the world known as Project L.A.M.B.S. International.

To date, Project L.A.M.B.S. has ministered in Canada, Myanmar, Ukraine, Africa, Jamaica, Mexico, Israel, Thailand, Japan, Dominican Republic, Naga Land and China. We offer over 30 different courses. Our graduates number over 1000, and are serving worldwide. Out of this group of graduates, we have equipped and trained directors, teachers and pastors who in turn are carrying out II Timothy 2:1-2 to an even larger group of people.

In 2002 it was discovered that Irene had cancer again. God gave Irene another three years and because of that she was still able to travel and teach in many different countries. Shortly after what was to be her last trip, Irene was hospitalized in February, 2005. A few weeks later she went home to be with her Lord and Saviour on March 9.

My second wife Hkaw Win was raised and trained mostly in the land of Myanmar. She has earned B.th, University Degree and a master of Divinity Degree in Myanmar. In April 2007 she finished a second Master's Degree at Providence Theological

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Seminary in Christian Education. After July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 she headed back to Myanmar to head up the Christian Education Department for the Myitkyina Kachin Baptist Association and oversaw various ministries to 62 churches. After her four-year term was completed, she has been traveling and working as an interpreter and doing translations concerning various kinds of discipleship books and materials.

Over the last ten years we have lived in the countries of Myanmar and Thailand preparing a variety of resources in the Burmese (Myanmar) and Kachin Languages. To date we have published over 20 different kinds of books. Our goal is to equip and establish people as Disciples of Christ. Please pray for God's leading and wisdom. Our walk with Christ has taken us down many challenging pathways but we have seen the faithfulness of our Lord and Savior in every area. His grace has been sufficient.

Founder and Director,

Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

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## Discipleship / Leadership Booklets

1. My Call with Christ
2. Called to His Purpose
3. Abiding in the Vine
4. Knowledge, Wisdom and Understanding
5. Scripture: The Disciples' Anchor
6. Baptism: The Disciples' Testimony
7. The Disciples' Church
8. Servant Leadership
9. Teacher / Learner, Learner / Teacher
10. Being Wise Builders
11. Shepherds of God's Sheep
12. End Times
13. Relationship Pilgrimage
14. Christ's Disciple
15. Disciple's Prayer Life
16. Communion
17. Ambassadors for Christ
18. Full Armour of God
19. Good News for Challenging and Changing Times
20. Christ our Mediator
21. Jesus our Deliverer
22. Mission and Missionaries
23. Full Gospel Discipleship
24. Romans Road of Discovery

## Bible Tools

1. Bible Information (18 different languages)
2. Bible Dictionary and Concordance (Kachin, Burmese)
3. Disciples' Principle of Faith (Kachin)
4. Called

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