



**SUCCESS**

AND THE **SHAPE**

**OF LIFE**

*Qualified*

## *Jeremiah 1:4-10, 14-19*

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<sup>4</sup> The word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>5</sup> "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." <sup>6</sup> "Alas, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

## *Jeremiah 1:4-10, 14-19*

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<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. <sup>8</sup> Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. <sup>9</sup> Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth.

## *Jeremiah 1:4-10, 14-19*

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<sup>10</sup> See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant..." <sup>14</sup> The Lord said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land.

*Jeremiah 1:4-10, 14-19*

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<sup>15</sup> I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms," declares the Lord. "Their kings will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem; they will come against all her surrounding walls and against all the towns of Judah.

<sup>16</sup> I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods and in worshiping what their hands have made.

## *Jeremiah 1:4-10, 14-19*

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<sup>17</sup> "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. <sup>18</sup> Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. <sup>19</sup> They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord.



GOD DOESN'T CALL  
*the qualified*  
HE QUALIFIES  
*the called.*

God is not looking for *impressive* people.

He is looking for *yielded* people.

“Whether it’s Abraham following the call of God to an unknown country, the Israelites walking through the Red Sea en route to the Promised Land, Gideon reducing his army by 99% from 32,000 to 300 to defeat the Midianites, or simply the peculiar combination of personalities and backgrounds from which Jesus chose his disciples—none would have been an easy job for the marketing department.”

(Pete Portal)

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (v. 5)

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God's calling is personal and readied.

"We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)

Our lives are *received*, not *constructed*.

“Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” (v. 6)

“Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” (v. 6)

If you feel the tug of the Holy Spirit on your life—whether in a moment, a season, or a pivot point—try to respond with questions instead of objections.

“I am with you and will rescue you... I have put my words in your mouth... I appoint you over nations and kingdoms...”

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Calling is about obedience, not ability.

"I am with you and will rescue you... I have put my words in your mouth... I appoint you over nations and kingdoms..."

Calling is about obedience, not ability.

"My power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9)

God is not looking for *impressive* people.

He is looking for *yielded* people.

The calling that God places on Jeremiah's life is not a pleasant or easy one.



To obediently follow God's leading is not a guarantee of comfort. To answer the call of God may not lead to applause or affirmation.



“The problem is, we are expecting to reap the harvest we have sown—where most of the time we reap a harvest someone else has sown.”

(Jackie Pullinger)

“What if the harvest you reap were to have nothing to do with what you sowed but is the direct result of the obedience of someone you will never know this side of heaven? It’s a peculiar kind of entitlement to expect the entirety of God’s promises to be fulfilled in one’s own lifetime. Visible fruit does not make you successful. What makes you successful is doing the will of God.”

(Pete Portal)

“Success nowadays is seen as starting something new or being ‘self-made,’ and it often focuses on the here and now. But what if that’s a myth peddled by the individualism that prevails in our world? What if, biblically speaking, success is about joining in with the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us in fulfilling God’s plans to redeem the earth and make all things new?”

(Pete Portal)

## *Philippians 3:4-9*



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If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

## *Philippians 3:4-9*

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<sup>7</sup> But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him...

If Jeremiah shows us the danger of feeling underqualified, Paul shows us the danger of feeling overqualified.

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“God reserves the right to waste any of your worldly accolades and qualifications, however hard you worked for them and however proud of them you are.”

(Pete Portal)

“whatever were gains... I now consider loss”

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“everything a loss” when compared to the “surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus”



I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them **garbage** that I may gain Christ.

Philippians 3:8

“whatever were gains... I now consider loss”

“everything a loss” when compared to the “surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus”

Perhaps Paul’s former “gains” or successes became viewed as “losses” because he came to realize that they were actually preventing him from coming to Christ.

# Customer Reviews



“Abraham is presented as a man who is happy enough to trust God’s overall plan for his life but finds it almost impossible to show this trust through obeying God in times of specific challenge... We are—each of us—a beguiling mix of contradictory virtues and vices, neither the summation of our best features nor purely the product of our worst.”

(Pete Portal)

“What if your unique contribution to the world is not primarily your talent, training, or temperament? What if your unique contribution to the world—the most successful thing you could ever do—is first and foremost your yieldedness to God’s voice?”

(Pete Portal)

## Closing Reflections



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Ask God to reveal to you what "good works" He has prepared for you, both short-term and long-term.

## Closing Reflections



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Do you see yourself as "not enough" or "unqualified" for some reason, or for multiple reasons? What area of weakness do you (falsely) think is holding you back from following God's calling on your life?

## Closing Reflections



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Is the Spirit convicting you to lose something in order to gain the “surpassing worth” of knowing Christ more deeply?

## Closing Reflections



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Are you measuring your success by what you are accomplishing, or who you are becoming?



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