

FOCUS

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

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[SBCV.ORG/FOCUS](https://www.sbcv.org/focus)



FOCUSING ON OUR CALL LEXI JUDY

TEACHING NOTES

INTRO:

In today's world, it's easy to feel as though your voice is drowning in a sea of other voices that appear to be far more relevant than you. That people will be more inclined to listen to someone with 100,000 times the social media followers that you have.

So many people ask,

“How do I know the will of God for my life?”

“How do I know what God is calling me to?”

I can look back on varying seasons of my life where this seemed to be the resounding theme.

(Give personal example)

Paul actually answers these questions in His letter to the church in Thessalonica.

(Refer to background information)

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)

BACKGROUND:

- » Paul was in Thessalonica preaching the gospel but the Jewish resistance against it was so intense, he had to leave.
- » He left Silas and Timothy behind to continue preaching.
- » This book is written in response to a letter Timothy wrote to Paul giving a report of the status of church growth in Thessalonica.
- » Paul writes this book to encourage new believers to live holy lives, reminding them that Christ will return.

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OUTLINE:

THE WILL OF GOD IS OUR SANCTIFICATION. (verse 3)

THE CALL OF GOD IS TO BE HOLY. (verse 7)

The only way to be holy is through sanctification. Therefore,

» **The ultimate will of God is fulfilled by the daily call of God being fulfilled in our lives.**

The call of being holy.

We can't fulfill our call apart from Christ because we cannot be holy apart from Christ. We can't be holy in and of ourselves, that's why we need Jesus. Jesus had to live the life we could never live and die the death we could never die so that He could empower us to live in a way we never could apart from Him.

» **God cares far more about our sanctification than our ministry.**

God cares far more about our personal sanctification than our public ministry.

» **The ultimate calling is to be in relationship with Jesus.**

Relationship with Jesus is what leads to our sanctification. It is impossible to be in a genuine relationship with Jesus without being sanctified.

If He has called us to sanctification, He will sanctify us.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

We tend to view God's calling on our lives as a destination we arrive at when really it is something we are becoming through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. Don't focus on asking God to bless your plan and bless your ministry, focus on asking God to transform your heart. We live in an immediate gratification society.

I was talking with a ministry mentor about how we, as a culture, and even in the Christian culture, are dealing with this phenomenon of "Christian Celebrities". There's so much pressure, like I mentioned in the beginning, because you feel like your voice isn't relevant.

We tend to feel like:

1. In order to be effective, we have to have "influence".
2. Everyone wants to have "influence" (i.e. write a book, be on a stage speaking to the masses), but no one wants to go through what it takes to be truly sanctified.

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THE PROBLEM WITH SO MANY YOUNG LEADERS TODAY IS THAT THEY ARE PUT IN POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP FAR TOO SOON. THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT THEIR MINISTRY IS NOT THEIR CALLING, JESUS IS.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS HOW WE LIVE IT OUT. (verse 8)

We talk often about how there is a war waging over our calling—this is an empowering thing to talk about because it makes us feel like we have so much to contribute to the Kingdom. But we need to talk about the war that is waging over our holiness—how apart from Jesus, we have nothing to contribute and we will fall flat on our face and give into sin every single time.

I'm afraid we severely underestimate how vulnerable we are when it comes to temptation. The moment we tell ourselves that we are exempt, that we could never do [blank], is a very dangerous moment.

If our ultimate calling is holiness, then of course satan is going to attack that before he attacks our ministries. Our ministries crumble when our character does.

HOLINESS IS ALWAYS WORTH THE FIGHT.

Paul talks a lot about this as well—Why would he if it wasn't hard? I think we're afraid to talk about hard things and talk about the struggle because we're ashamed.

We can never gain the power to live in holiness until we admit we need it. Why would God give us the Holy Spirit if we could do it by ourselves? Why would God have sent Jesus? The whole point is not only to admit, but embrace that we can't do it on our own. When we surrender ourselves, we can become consumed with the Holy Spirit.

But we can't be in control at the same time the Spirit is. God has given us what we need to determine His will and fight temptation through the power of the Holy Spirit. Not through our own strength. Not through our own wisdom. Not through our own knowledge.

When we choose sin over holiness, we choose ourselves over our call.

When we choose impurity, we disregard God.

Let's talk about this for a second—What is sin? What is impurity?

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"She thinks her ideas are better than mine, but clearly I have more insight and experience."

"It's not gossip, I just need to 'vent!'"

"It doesn't matter what I watch or drink or listen to personally in my own home, if it causes someone else to stumble, that's between them and God."

"I should be able to wear what I want, if it causes a man to think impure thoughts, that's his own struggle."

"I can teach this lesson without really studying this Scripture passage because I'm very familiar with it and I've taught it before."

Sin is when you're viewing things from the perspective of how you are personally inconvenienced instead of how it creates a barrier between you and God or someone else and God.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THE WILL OF GOD FOR YOUR LIFE?

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT GOD IS CALLING YOU TO?

- » You make the choice daily to be obedient to God right where you are.
- » You are constantly decreasing so that He can increase.

AS YOU TAKE DAILY STEPS OF OBEDIENCE—MEANING DYING TO YOURSELF TO BECOME ALIVE IN CHRIST, ALLOWING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO SANCTIFY YOU AND CHOOSING TO EMBRACE A LIFE OF HOLINESS, YOU WILL END UP EXACTLY WHERE GOD DESIRES FOR YOU TO BE.

GOD'S CALL ON YOUR LIFE IS FAR MORE ABOUT WHO YOU ARE BECOMING THAN WHERE YOU ARE GOING.