

## SESSION2 : The Response

**Recap from last session: Ministry or leadership of any kind comes with pressure. It comes with challenges and difficulties. That pressure will expose your heart and your character. This is why you must let God work things out in you so that you don't get crushed under the pressure; and so that your families don't crumble under the pressure. If you do not allow God to work in you to expose your weaknesses and character flaws, and deal with them, this can result in leadership failure that brings shame to Christ and becomes a stumbling block for others. David allowed the tests in his life to expose his weaknesses, develop his character, and challenge his faithfulness to God. Just like David, tests will come your way. These tests are meant to expose your weaknesses, build your character, and prove your faithfulness to the call of God on your life.**

**Acts 13:22** “And when He had removed him, (Saul) He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, “I have found David the son of Jesse, **a man after My own heart** *who will do all My will.*”

### **I. The RESPONSE and HEART CONDITION**

#### **A. Importance of the heart**

##### **Student assignment: Read these scriptures**

Ps 4:23 - keep your heart with diligence - it is a source of life

Mat 12:34-35 - out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks

Mark 7:14-23 - out of your heart come evil thoughts, foolishness, evil eye,, adulteries etc.

#### **THE HEART:**

**What happens in you, is more important than what happens through you.**

What God is doing in you is what God is after. It is more important to God that your heart is right. What is happening in you, is an indication of what He wants to do through you.

***“for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”***

***Philippians 2:13***

***\* He must first work it in you, before He can work it through you.\****

Your heart is the seat or throne on which your thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, and purpose sits. Your actions are the expressions of your heart. That is why God is always working on your heart.

**“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”**

**Proverbs 4:23**

Keep (Hebrew def): to guard, to watch over, to preserve, to set a guard posted as a watchman on a watchtower

- Guard your heart diligently, from it comes life.
- If your heart's not in the right place, it will soak the life out of you.

## **II. The RESPONSE and ESCAPING EXCUSES**

**Each one of you is called. In the Bible we see everyone is called. There is calling for your life to do work for the Kingdom of God. We also know according to Matthew 22:14, that many are called, but few are chosen. Who did we say are chosen?**

*Those who will respond*

*Those who will pass the test*

*Those who will be faithful in that call*

*Those who build their character*

**The question is, what will your response be? Will you say “Yes,” or will you give excuses as to why you cannot respond?**

### **A. Defining the word “Excuse”**

Excuse: to decline, to shun, to avoid, beg off

**Student Assignment: Read Luke 14: 16 - 24**

## **Common Excuses that are Unacceptable**

### **1. Profitable Priorities**

**Example:** an excuse of wrong priorities/necessities/business pursuits

**“But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, “I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.” (Luke 14:18)**

### **2. Reasonable Activities**

**Example:** an excuse of activities to do

**“And another one said, “I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.” (Luke 14:19)**

Is it bad to buy oxen? No. But if it is a reason why you can't accomplish' God's calling, then it is an unacceptable excuse. God's priorities come first.

There are activities which will take your energy, time, attention, it can be good, but it will stop you from what God calls you to do. You can miss your destiny.

### **3. Wholesome Pleasures**

**Example:** an excuse of family or relatives obligation

**“Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ (Luke 14:20)**

Does it mean we should not marry? No. But if you marry a person and because of that marriage you do not accomplish God’s calling, it’s an unacceptable excuse.

Don’t search for a partner first and then try to obey God. First, obey the call of God on your life. Follow His lead and go the direction He told you. If you trust God with this, He will put someone in your life who will walk with you in the same direction. He will partner you with someone who’s calling and passion align with yours.

This is a major problem in many marriages today, they have yoked themselves together and they are pulling in different directions. You will have a miserable life if you do this.

*\*Go in the right direction, and God will give you someone to help you in the assignment.\**

#### **4. Ignoring Invitation**

**Example: indifference**

**“But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business” (Matthew 22:5)**

#### **5. Honorable Hindrances**

- Need to provide a home (Luke 9:57-58)
- Must see to my parents business - bury father (Luke 9:59-60)
- Must say goodbye to my family (Luke 9:61-62)

While all of these sound so right, Jesus didn’t accept any of these excuses.

**WHY? Because He is looking for a heart fully committed to Him.**

Too often, we come up against an obstacle that provides a good reason for us not to fully commit, then this obstacle becomes the foundation of an excuse to not totally commit to our call to serve Christ.

**“But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62)**

**He who puts his hand to the plow (who enters ministry) but then looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God!**

### **III. The RIGHT RESPONSE to the INVITATION**

#### **1. Present your bodies as a living sacrifice**

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom 12:1-2)

**We are called to present or give our entire selves, everything that pertains to our life, to God. This is a true act of worship and devotion when we present our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him.**

2. **Obey**

"So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." (Acts 9:6)

**Paul asked God and God told Him, "arise, go and you will be told what to do," and Paul obeyed.**

3. **Accept God's will**

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:38)

**Mary's response: "Let it be unto me according to your word.". She said "yes and amen" even when she didn't understand! Sometimes it requires a lot for us to accept God 's will. We have to accept things when we can't fully understand or see the outcome in advance. Sometimes it means people will reject us, despise us, or make fun of us.**

4. **Do Whatever He Tells You to Do**

His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it*." - John 2:5