

DISCIPLE MAKING

A PODCAST WITH DR. JOHN TOLSON

Episode 20: “God Can’t Use Me”

Often when I talk to people about being involved in the disciple-making process they say in one way or another “God can't use me.” I'll never forget a few years ago here in Dallas when I was training a group of about 40 men in making disciples. Once we got them all trained and they got their book, this one businessman was lingering in the back of the room. Everybody was leaving and finally he came up to me and this very sharp, smart, successful businessman lowered his voice and he said “John I can't do this. I can't do this.” I said “What?” He said “This disciple-making thing. I don't think I'm ready for it. I can't do this.” I said “Let me ask you a question. Can you read? He looked at me and he started laughing and said, “Yeah I can read!” And I said, “Then get out of here and go make disciples!” So, he left.

About three or four months later, I was at one of my favorite greasy spoon breakfast places and I was there with a couple of guys, and we were just visiting, and I saw this gentleman walking toward me. He had two guys behind him, like little ducks following the momma, and he came up to the table and said, “Do you remember me?” I said, “Well sure I remember you!” He said, “Do you remember what you told me at that meeting?” and I said “Sure I do! Why don't you tell my friends?” So, he told the story and then he looked at me and he said “John, this whole disciple-making process has changed my life.”

A lot of people feel that God can't use them, that they simply can't do it, that they're not qualified, or maybe they've compared themselves to other people and don't feel like they're up to it. There's a great passage in Scripture (1 Corinthians 1:26-29) where Jesus, through the apostle Paul, talks about the kind of people that he uses: “For look at your own calling as Christians, my brothers. You don't see among you many of the wise, according to the world's judgment, nor many of the ruling class, nor many from the noblest families. But God has chosen what the world calls foolish to shame the wise. He's chosen what the world calls weak to shame the strong. He's chosen things of little strength and small repute (yes even things which have no real existence) to explode the pretensions of the things that are, that no man, that no woman, may boast in the presence of God.” Those are the kinds of people God has used in the past and will continue to use in the days ahead.

The next time you think God can't use you, just remember: Noah was a drunk, Abraham was too old, Isaac was a daydreamer, Jacob was a liar, Leah was ugly, Joseph was abused, Moses had a stuttering problem, Gideon was afraid, Samson had long hair and was a womanizer, Rahab was

a prostitute, Jeremiah and Timothy were too young, David had an affair and was a murderer, Elijah was suicidal, Isaiah preached naked, Jonah ran from God, Naomi was a widow, Job went bankrupt, Peter denied Christ, the disciples fell asleep while praying, Martha worried about everything, the Samaritan woman was divorced more than once, Zacchaeus was too small, Paul was too religious, Timothy had an ulcer, and Lazarus was dead. So what in the world is your excuse? You think about that.

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