

**JEREMIAH 33:3 "CALL TO ME" GROUP BIBLE STUDIES – LEADER'S STUDY -
LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

LESSON #6 – A CHRISTIAN'S CALL TO GOD FOR REFERENCES

A CHRISTIAN'S CALL– People always surprise me at the things they will and won't believe. For example, most people will believe me if I tell them that there are 581,678,934,341 known stars in the sky. But, if I tell him there is fresh paint on the chair, they have to touch it. In like manner, many people blindly trust the false and foolish statements of their fellow men; while they question and reject the truth of God. This lesson deals with people who feel they have to ask God for references.

THE PRAYER – We begin with prayer: Dear Lord, time and again You have proven that You will look with favor upon those who call to You. Help us realize that we don't have to ask you to prove Your commitment or capabilities. In Jesus' Name we begin our lesson. Amen.

ILLUSTRATION - All of us have seen videos of a person who is helplessly trapped inside a burning building. To live, that individual must leap into a net being held by the firemen, floors below. We can imagine the terror that must be in the mind of that individual. We can imagine the fear that grabs him. What we can't imagine is that man screaming from the broken window: "I will not jump until you give me a satisfactory explanation of the following questions:

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| (1) How did this fire get started? | (2) How has it managed to spread so quickly? |
| (3) What happened to the sprinkler system? and | (4) How do I know the net will hold me? |
- Until you guys can answer my doubts; I'm going to stay right here!"

SATAN'S SUMMONS – For any person to do what is suggested in our illustration would be foolish. When you are in a life and death situation, you do not spend time debating unimportant issues and asking your rescuer for his references. Surprisingly, when it comes to calling upon the Lord for deliverance, that is exactly what many people do. God says, 'call to Me', and Satan puts doubts into our hearts, we hesitate and ask God for His references. Before many people call on Him, they want Him to provide answers to their questions.....

1. "Lord, tell me why You let sin enter the world?" or,
2. "How do I know that You are the God Who will really help me?" or
3. "Why don't you destroy all of sin so we don't ever have this problem again?" and
4. "How do I know that another God won't do just as good?"

Lord, until You answer every one of my questions, I will stay right where I am?

THOUGHT: You may think that nobody would ever be so foolish as to ask God for His references. You might believe that nobody would dare challenge the Lord or His will. We can tell you, from experience, that if you believe that, you would be wrong. Look at Scripture and you will soon find that many people, including some pretty popular prophets, did exactly that. Examine these passages and answer the questions that follow:

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 1

TEXT	QUESTION	ANSWER
Exodus 3: 4, 7-10	What is God doing? / Who has He picked to help?	Rescuing His people. /Moses
Exodus 3: 13	What credential from God does Moses want?	His Name.
Exodus 4: 1	What other credential does Moses want to share?	Proof that God appeared.
Exodus 4: 2-3	What proof does God give?	Rod turns to a snake.
Exodus 4: 6-7	Any other credential?	Moses' hand turns leprous.
Exodus 4: 9	A last credential offered as to God's involvement?	Water turns to blood.
Exodus 4: 10	What does Moses say?	He is not eloquent.
Exodus 4: 11-12	What credential does God offer?	God is in control of man, his mouth, and his words.
Exodus 4: 13	In spite of all God's credentials, what does Moses say?	Send someone else.
Of course there are other leaders who did the same.		
Judges 6: 12	Who does God pick to do His will?	Gideon.
Judges 6: 13	What does Gideon want?	God's credentials in the form of wonders.
Judges 6: 17	What does Gideon want next?	A sign that it really is God.
Judges 6: 21	What credentials does Gideon see?	Food is burned up by a miraculous fire.
Judges 6: 36-37	Does Gideon need any more credentials from the Lord?	A wet fleece.
Judges 6: 39	Is Gideon content with God's credentials?	No, next he wants a dry fleece.

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People regularly ask the Lord for His credentials. Look at just a few New Testament passages:

Matthew 8: 24-27	What credentials do the disciples want?	They want Jesus to do a miracle.
	How do they feel when He does one?	They are amazed.
Matthew 11: 2-5	Who is asking Jesus for credentials?	John the Baptist.
	What are Jesus' credentials?	Blind see; lame walk; deaf, hear; good news preached.

FIRST APPLICATION: It is quite possible that you are secure in your faith, and you never ask the Lord to produce His credentials. If so, congratulations. I, on the other hand, having looked at those passages from the Bible, have to confess that I regularly ask the Lord to prove Himself. I think it started at a young age ... maybe you can identify these things from school ...

WHEN..... BUT WE ASKED FOR THE LORD'S CREDENTIALS WHEN WE....

THE FOLLOWING EXAGGERATED ANSWERS ARE MEANT TO BRING A SMILE..AS THEY MAY SOUND FAMILIAR:

You had to take an unstudied-for test ...	You said, "Lord, prove You care, close down the school."
After you took the test, you prayed ...	"Lord, if you love me, make London the capital of France."
Teacher was going to your house for a visit ...	You said, "Lord, show You exist, let her break her leg."
You got a "C-" in math ...	You said, "Lord, be gracious, don't let dad spot it."
When the choir teacher was calling for solos ...	"You said, "Lord, I will believe if she skips me."

Today people do the same thing ... but in a more serious way ...

When someone is ill they say,	"Lord, if You want me to believe, You will do a miracle."
When a tragedy occurs, they say,	"Lord, how can You be so cruel?"
When we don't get our way, we threaten,	"I will never worship a God like You again."

All of these are just our way of asking God to show His credentials. But it doesn't have to be that way. Look at this chapter from Hebrews and see what God says is the way for righteous people to live:

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 2 - CHRIST'S CALL -

TEXT	PERSON	WHAT DID HE DO / NOT DO?
Heb 11: 7	Noah	Built an ark / Did not ask God to send a "mini-flood" to prove Himself.
v. 8	Abraham	He went where God instructed / He did not ask for a road map.
v. 28	Moses	Kept the Passover to save the people / Did not ask God to explain the ritual.
v. 30	Children of Israel	Walked around Jericho for 7 days/Didn't complain to God about the walk.

The truth is, God has shown His credentials to us, in many, and miraculous ways. It should not be necessary for Him to prove Himself to us. Look at these passages and see God's credentials.

PASSAGE	WHAT IS GOD'S CREDENTIAL HERE?	WHAT SHOULD WE DO
2 Samuel 22: 31	God is a fortress/perfect/flawless	Take refuge in Him.
Psalms 32: 10	Unfailing love	Trust Him
Psalms 34: 22	Redeems His servants	Take refuge in Him.
Romans 1: 16	God's word is salvation	We should believe in that Word.
1 John 5: 4-5	Jesus gives us the victory to overcome the world	We should believe in Him.

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION - Usually, none of us test our chairs before we sit down. We just sit. After years of experience, we knew that the chair would hold us. Before we drive a car, we don't look under the hood and examine every piece of equipment. Experience says, (generally) that when you turn the key, your vehicle will start. If it doesn't, you get frustrated. In the same way, the Lord Who has never let His people down can be trusted. He shouldn't have to prove Himself. He shouldn't have to convince us. His credentials have been shown in a promise made to Adam and Eve - a promise that was fulfilled in a Bethlehem manger, on a Jerusalem cross, and inside an empty tomb. He has shown us His level of commitment. Won't you join us in telling people that their trust should be as strong in Him as His commitment is to us?

THE WAY OF PRAYER – Dear Lord, we believe; help our unbelief. Forgive us for challenging You. Forgive us if we think You don't care and don't listen. Help us to call on You, dear Lord, and then believe that You hear and act. In Jesus' Name. Amen.