

Profiles in Faith: Following the Call into the Unknown

1. The Foundation: Faith vs. Sight

At the heart of a journey with God lies a fundamental tension: the human desire for a detailed roadmap versus God's non-negotiable requirement for absolute trust. We often hesitate to commit until we understand every specific detail and the total cost involved. However, the biblical model of "walking by faith" operates on an entirely different principle. As 2 Corinthians 5:7 (AMP) explains, we are called to live in a manner consistent with our confident belief in God's promises rather than our physical surroundings.

Faith Defined: A confident belief in God's promises, leading a person to obey and act even when the specific details of the journey or the final destination remain hidden from sight.

This requirement for trust is the cornerstone of the relationship between the Creator and the follower. While we seek the security of details, God demands the priority of the "follow," promising that clarity will be revealed only through the act of walking. This principle is not a mere theological concept but is vividly demonstrated in the lives of those who pioneered this path of trust.

2. Case Studies in Immediate Response: The Pioneers of Trust

The following individuals exemplify the "All In" commitment God requires. Each responded to a call that offered a clear command but almost no logistical information.

- **Abraham:** When called to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, he obeyed and departed. **Specific Action:** He left his home and went out (Hebrews 11:8 CEB). **Lack of Information:** He went out "without knowing where he was going."
- **Andrew:** Upon first encountering the Teacher, he sought to know the location of Jesus's stay. **Specific Action:** He accepted the open-ended invitation to "Come and you will see" (John 1:39 ESV). **Lack of Information:** He was given no itinerary or address, only the opportunity to experience the journey for himself.
- **Philip and Matthew:** Both men were approached with a simple, two-word command: "Follow me." **Specific Action:** They immediately left their current lives and occupations to follow Him. **Lack of Information:** Neither was given an explanation of what following would entail or the personal cost involved.
- **Peter and Andrew:** Jesus invited them to move from their current trade to a spiritual one. **Specific Action:** They immediately followed Him. **Lack of Information:** While they were promised a better future as "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19 ESV), they were told nothing about the specific path, hardships, or geographic details of the mission ahead.

While these pioneers chose the path of immediate faith, others faced the same divine call but approached it with hesitation, attempting to negotiate the terms of their surrender.

3. Case Studies in Hesitation and Conditionality: The Cost of "One More Thing"

In contrast to the pioneers, some individuals presented "reasonable" conditions for their obedience. Jesus's firm rejection of these terms clarifies that God requires total commitment over a lukewarm interest that is "spiritually useless."

Figure	The Specific Request/Condition	Jesus's Response	The "Lacking" Element
The Wealthy Young Man	He claimed to keep the commandments but asked what else was needed.	"You are lacking one thing. Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor... and come, follow me" (Mark 10:21 CEB).	Total Devotion: His primary attachment to wealth prevented a full, "All In" commitment.
The Conditional Disciple	Asked to "first let me return home and bury my father" (Matthew 8:21 NLT).	"Follow me now. Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead."	Urgency and Immediate Priority: He attempted to place social obligations and "reasonable" delays above the immediate call of the Kingdom.

These choices carry ultimate gravity; following Jesus is not a negotiation of earthly preferences but a decision with eternal consequences for the soul.

4. Comparative Synthesis: The Spectrum of Response

The following archetypes illustrate the outcomes of our response to the divine call, ranging from the blessing of righteousness to the tragedy of missed treasure.

1. The Model of Absolute Faith (Abraham)

- **The "All In" Status:** Abraham departed exactly as directed (Genesis 12:4 AMP), operating without a map or a pre-determined destination.
- **The Outcome:** Because he believed God, his faith "made him right with God" (Romans 4:3 ICB).

2. The Model of Enduring Commitment (Peter)

- **The Sacrifice:** Peter's commitment was tested by the ultimate cost. Jesus revealed that in Peter's old age, others would "lead you where you don't want to go" (John 21:18-19 ERV).
- **The Outcome:** Peter's death was not a tragedy but a means to "give glory to God." For his enduring service, he is among those whom the Father will "honor" (John 12:26 NLT).

3. The Model of Hesitation (The Wealthy Young Man)

- **The Tragedy of "Lacking One Thing":** Despite outward morality, he could not relinquish his worldly security.
- **The Outcome:** He walked away from "treasure in heaven" because he was unwilling to trade his earthly possessions for total commitment.

The nature of the call has not changed; it remains a transition from the bondage of the self to the freedom of the servant.

5. The "So What?" for the Learner: Navigating Your Own Journey

As you navigate your own journey of faith, these three insights define the required standard of commitment.

Total Ownership: You Have Been Bought for a Price Following God is not a hobby, a part-time job, or just another interest; it is a total change of ownership. Because you were "bought for a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ISV), your life is no longer your own. Your body and existence now serve the singular purpose of glorifying God.

The Ultimate Choice: A Satisfying Life vs. Destruction You must choose your master. The "thief" (the devil and sin) is a cruel master whose purpose is to "steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10 NLT). Conversely, Jesus is a Master who requires total commitment to save you from that destruction and enable a "rich and satisfying life."

The First Priority: No Other Gods God will never be satisfied with half-hearted or "lukewarm" devotion. He views spiritual lukewarmness with disgust, warning that He will "vomit" out those who are spiritually useless (Revelation 3:15-16 AMP). To follow Him is to adhere to the first and greatest commandment: loving the Lord with *all* your heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37-38 NLT), ensuring no other "gods" or interests take priority.

While the journey ahead is unknown and requires the total sacrifice of self-will, the testimony of the faithful is clear: the journey is unpredictable, but the Guide is entirely trustworthy.