

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS #21:
ANDREW, UNSUNG BIBLE HERO
By John Temples

Many Christians perhaps have the idea that to be successful in the Christian life and pleasing to God, they must do big things--dramatic things. They think that unless you are in a leadership position, you are just a second-rate church member--a "one talent" person. (But before you call yourself a one-talent person, consider which of the "talented" persons Jesus condemned.)

The truth is, the Lord needs leaders and eloquent speakers; but He needs ordinary people too. In fact, throughout Bible history, whenever God needed a big or unusual job done, He usually picked an ordinary person to do it.

Consider the twelve apostles. When Jesus chose the men who would carry the gospel to the world, he chose the most gifted, talented, dynamic men He could find. Right? Wrong! He chose fishermen, a tax collector, and a tent maker. Only one of the apostles (Paul) had any formal theological education.

By human reasoning, the Lord did it all wrong. In fact, I actually managed to find an extremely rare memo from the first century. It is from "Jordan Management Consultants" in Jerusalem. It is addressed to "Jesus, Son of Joseph, Woodcrafters Carpentry Shop, Nazareth." It reads:

"Dear Sir: Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for managerial positions in your new organization. After extensive testing and interviews, it is our opinion that most of the nominees are lacking in background, education, and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are planning.

"Your nominees do not have a team concept. Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no leadership qualities. The two brothers, James and John, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas exhibits a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. Matthew has been blacklisted by the Jerusalem Business Bureau. James the son

of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale. Simon the Zealot is a fanatical Jewish nationalist. Two of your prospects carry swords on a regular basis.

“One of your candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen financial mind, and has contacts in high places. We recommend Judas Iscariot to be your Chief Financial Officer. --Sincerely Yours, Jordan management Consultants.”

Did you notice the statement about Andrew? “He has absolutely no leadership qualities.” Sure enough, in the Biblical record, he does not stand out. He never made any headlines, never traveled extensively like Paul, or preached to thousands like his brother Peter. **Yet Jesus chose him to be one of the Twelve.** His name is in every list¹ of the apostles; in fact, Andrew is always listed in the top four names in each list.

SOME THINGS ABOUT ANDREW THAT OUGHT TO ENCOURAGE “ORDINARY” CHRISTIANS:

First, he was a man of firm decision and action. Once he made a decision, he acted on it. After he spent one day talking with Jesus, he resolved to leave his fishing business and become a full-time disciple (John 1:35-40, Matthew 4:18-20).

God has always respected decisiveness! Joshua pleased God when he challenged the Israelites: “And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve--whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). And in 1 Kings 18:21, we read “And Elijah came to all the people and said, ‘How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.’” And of course, Paul immediately and decisively chose to follow the Lord on the road to Damascus.

¹ Matthew 10, Mark 3, Luke 6, Acts 1

Second, Andrew was a man of courage. He was the first “full-time” disciple of Jesus (John 1:40). It always takes courage to be the first in anything. This is astounding if you think about it, because he (along with Peter) left their lifelong job security, the only thing they had ever known, everything that was familiar to them; and obviously they had to leave their family behind also.

Andrew was not only Christ’s first full-time disciple--

- He was the first to acknowledge Him as the Messiah (John 1:41).
- He was the first to bring another person to Jesus (same verse).
- He was the first to introduce Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20-22).

Andrew was also courageous enough to die for his faith. Tradition says that he was put to death by being crucified on an X-shaped cross (now called a Saint Andrew’s Cross). Truly Andrew was a man of quiet courage.

Third, Andrew was an active evangelist. His work was not in the pulpit, however; he was what we would call a “personal worker.” It almost seems that every time Andrew is mentioned in the Bible, he is bringing someone to Jesus!

He first brought his brother Peter. John 1:40-42 says, “[Andrew] first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah (which is translated, the Christ).’ And he brought him to Jesus.” Later, when Jesus fed the 5,000, it was Andrew that brought the young man who had the five loaves and two fishes to Jesus (John 6:8,9).

Andrew also brought those Greeks we mentioned earlier. John 12:20-22 says, “Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.” Andrew was not sure how to deal with the Greeks’ request, but he saw possibilities. And He knew somebody who did know!

Fourth, Andrew did not mind serving in the background. He epitomized the old saying, “There is no limit to how much good you can do when you don’t care who gets the credit.”

Did you notice that every time Andrew is mentioned, he is identified as “Simon Peter’s brother”? But he did not mind that. He did not hesitate to bring Peter to Jesus, even though he surely must have known that Peter would soon overshadow him. And he truly was in the shadow of his more assertive brother. Peter is mentioned some 160 times in the New Testament; Andrew, only 13 times. But Andrew enjoyed being a humble and dependable servant; he did not need the limelight.

And neither do we need the limelight to be successful servants of Jesus. The Lord needs a few Peters and Pauls, but he needs a whole bunch of Andrews! Are you a Peter or a Paul? Fine--serve God. Are you an Andrew? Just be faithful in service to Christ, and your reward will be the same. --John Temples