

GOD CLEANS HIS OWN FISH

The Bible reveals some of the character flaws and weaknesses of the apostles, showing how God worked in their lives to transform them into the bold leaders who would spread the Gospel. Here's an overview of a few apostles and the areas where God helped them grow:

1. **Peter – Impulsivity and Lack of Self-Control**

Peter was quick to act and speak, often driven by his emotions. For instance, he boldly declared he would never deny Jesus, but in his fear, he did just that three times. His impulsivity also showed when he tried to defend Jesus with a sword in the Garden of Gethsemane. God worked with Peter, teaching him humility, patience, and reliance on the Holy Spirit, transforming him into a stable leader of the early church.

2. **John – Harshness and Lack of Compassion**

Known as one of the “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17), John initially had a fiery temperament. He once suggested calling down fire to destroy a Samaritan village that didn't welcome Jesus. But over time, John was transformed by Jesus' example of love and compassion, becoming known as the “apostle of love.” His later writings, especially 1 John, focus heavily on love as the foundation of the Christian life.

3. **James (John's brother) – Ambition and Pride**

Along with John, James had an ambitious streak, once asking Jesus for a prominent position in His kingdom. Jesus used this moment to teach humility, service, and sacrifice. James eventually learned these lessons, leading with humility and becoming one of the first apostles martyred for his faith.

4. **Matthew – Materialism and Worldliness**

As a tax collector before following Jesus, Matthew's occupation had likely encouraged greed and dishonesty, as tax collectors were often known for extortion. Jesus called Matthew from this life, transforming him into a faithful follower who would write the Gospel of Matthew, sharing Jesus' teachings on repentance and righteousness.

5. **Thomas – Doubt and Skepticism**

Known for his skepticism, Thomas refused to believe in Jesus' resurrection until he saw the evidence himself. Jesus met Thomas in his doubt, inviting him to see and touch His wounds. Through this, Thomas grew in faith and became a confident witness to Jesus' resurrection, preaching the Gospel even to the far reaches of India.

6. **Paul – Pride and Self-Righteousness**

Before his conversion, Paul (then Saul) was a Pharisee known for his strict adherence to the law, which made him prideful and self-righteous. After his encounter with Jesus, Paul learned humility and dependence on God's grace. He later described himself as “the worst of sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15) and emphasized the importance of grace over legalism in his teachings.

7. **Andrew – Reluctance and Low Profile**

Andrew often played a supportive role, sometimes seeming to lack the boldness of Peter, his brother. Yet, his quiet faithfulness was used by God, as Andrew introduced people to Jesus and served with humility. His example reminds us that God values a willing heart over personal recognition.

8. **Philip – Limited Vision and Doubt**

Philip struggled with seeing beyond the immediate, often focusing on the practical

instead of the spiritual possibilities. For example, when Jesus asked him how they could feed the multitude, Philip thought only in terms of human resources. Jesus taught Philip to trust in God's provision and to look with spiritual eyes, a lesson that would help him as he spread the Gospel.

9. **Simon the Zealot – Extreme Nationalism and Misplaced Zeal**

As a former Zealot, Simon likely had strong political views and was eager to see Israel liberated from Roman rule. Following Jesus meant learning that God's Kingdom was not about earthly politics but spiritual transformation. Simon's zeal was redirected toward spreading the Gospel, prioritizing Christ's mission above political ideology.

10. **Bartholomew (Nathanael) – Prejudice and Quick Judgments**

When Nathanael first heard about Jesus, he remarked, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" This reflected a prejudice that Jesus would challenge, teaching him to look beyond external appearances. Nathanael's heart was transformed, and he became one of the twelve who testified to Jesus' goodness.

11. **James, son of Alphaeus (James the Less) – Timidity and Uncertainty**

Often seen as less prominent, James the Less was one of the quieter apostles. His timidity may have been a weakness, but God used his humility to spread the message of the Gospel without seeking personal glory, highlighting the value of quiet, faithful service.

12. **Judas Iscariot – Greed and Betrayal**

Though Judas is infamous for his betrayal, he struggled with greed and personal ambition, leading him to sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. His tragic story is a reminder of how unchecked sin and lack of repentance can lead one away from God.

God shaped each of these apostles, transforming their weaknesses into strengths. Through their examples, we see that God can redeem any flaw, using it to glorify Him and accomplish His purposes.



JOHN 13:2-17 Service Above Self