

A New You Ministry

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ELISHA DEMONSTRATES STEADFASTNESS

And Elijah said unto him [Elisha], Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

2 Kings 2: 6

The early years of the prophet Elisha were passed in the quietude of country life, under the teaching of God and nature and the discipline of useful work. In a time of almost universal apostasy his father's household were among the number who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Theirs was a home where God was honored and where faithfulness to duty was the rule of daily life.

The son of a wealthy farmer, Elisha had taken up the work that lay nearest. While possessing the capabilities of a leader among men, he received a training in life's common duties. In order to direct wisely, he must learn to obey. By faithfulness in little things, he was prepared for weightier trusts. Of a meek and gentle spirit, Elisha possessed also energy and steadfastness. He cherished the love of fear of God, and in the humble round of daily toil he gained strength of purpose and nobleness of character, growing in divine grace and knowledge. While cooperating with his father in the home duties, he was learning to cooperate with God.

The prophetic call came to Elisha while with his father's servants he was plowing in the field. As Elijah, divinely directed in seeking a successor, cast his mantle upon the young man's shoulders, Elisha recognized and obeyed the summons. He "went after Elijah, and ministered unto him" (1 Kings 19: 21). It was no great work that was at first required of Elisha; commonplace duties still constituted his discipline. He is spoken of as pouring water on the hands of Elijah, his master. As the prophet's personal attendant, he continued to prove faithful in little things, while with daily strengthening purpose he devoted himself to the mission appointed him by God....

As he turned to follow Elijah he was bidden by the prophet to return home. He must count the cost—decide for himself to accept or reject the call. But Elisha understood the value of his opportunity. Not for any worldly advantage would he forgo the possibility of becoming God's messenger, or sacrifice the privilege of association with His servant.

As time passed, and Elijah prepared for translation, so Elisha was prepared to become his successor. And again his faith and resolution were tested. Accompanying Elijah in his round of service....he was at each place invited by the prophet to turn back....As often as the invitation to turn back was given, his answer was, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee" (2 Kings 2: 2).For this work Elisha's early training under God's direction had prepared him.—Education, pp. 58-61