

1 **Geniuses Wanted?**

- The Making of Great Disciples

2 **Scripture Reading**

- As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. (Mark 1:16 NIV)
- “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 NIV)
- When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. (Mark 1:19–20 NIV)

3 **Introduction**

- Who's the smartest person in the world? Any ideas?
- Some people could make a case for Ken Jennings who is from Mountlake, Washington.
- In 2004, he appeared on the Late Show with David Letterman and was selected by Barbara Walters as one of the "Ten Most Fascinating People of 2004.”
- He's the guy who won 74 consecutive matches on Jeopardy! and took home more than \$2,500,000.

4 **Introduction**

- Garry Kasparov is a name that's often brought up in discussions about smarts.
- He's the famous Russian chess player who, at the age of 22, became the world's youngest undisputed chess champion.

5 **Introduction**

- Some people have nominated Sheldon Cooper, the renowned physicist featured on The Big Bang Theory.
- True, he is smart, but there is a problem with this nomination.
- Sheldon Lee Cooper is a fictional character.

6 **World's Smartest Person?**

- So then, who would get your vote as the world's smartest person?
- If you're at a loss, Dr. Jason Betts can help us out.
- He's developed the World Genius Directory, which he argues is the definitive ranking of the world's top minds.

7 **The World Genius Directory**

- While other lists exist, Betts claims that his is the only one without a bias, allowing anyone in the world who thinks he or she might be among the smartest of the smart to submit her or his scores.

- And according to the World Genius Directory, the smartest person in the world is Dr. Evangelos Katsioulis, a 36-year-old Greek psychologist.

8 **Dr. Evangelos Katsioulis**

- His IQ score is 198.
- To put that into perspective,
 - his score is 30 points higher than the ranking of "genius,"
 - almost double the score of your average human,
 - and 23 points higher than Ken Jennings' paltry 175.

9 **Smart People**

- The bottom line is this, no matter how you rank them or whether or not you can name them, there are some incredibly smart people in this world.
- In fact, there always have been.
- And imagine how helpful it would be to have a chorus of crazy-smart people at your disposal to help you with solving problems at work and at home.

10 **Jesus Calls His Disciples**

- In our Scripture reading in Mark's gospel we see Jesus in recruitment mode.
- He's actively drafting members of his team, a team that he knows will eventually be given the daunting task of igniting a spiritual movement that will spread around the globe and endure for millenniums.
- If you were Jesus, who would you pick to be members of this elite team?

11 **Choosing God's Team**

- If you were the Son of God, building a cohort of spiritual ninjas, wouldn't you choose the best of the best, the smartest of the smart?
- Wouldn't you hit up the World Genius Directory, find the biggest brain in Palestine, and recruit him to be in charge of logistics?
- Perhaps you'd round out the team by finding the funniest guy you could, someone who could keep the tone light when ministry got hard, as well as the strongest dude in town for when ministry got dangerous?
- That's how most of us would build our crew. That's how Jesus should have gone about building his, if he was smart.
- Instead, who does Jesus choose? He chooses the unqualified.

12 **Young Men**

- You may think it harsh to label Simon and Andrew, James and John as unqualified, but it's not.
- The details given to us by Mark make this point clear. These are young men.
- In a world where the life expectancy was low, James and John were old enough to be established in a trade, but still young enough to have their father, Zebedee, in the boat with them.

13 Leftovers

- In first-century Palestine, the ideal career for most young Hebrews was not to be taking over the family business but to be under the tutelage of a rabbi.
- The brightest of boys, those who had shined in Hebrew school and who stood out in their memorization of the Torah, would, upon completion, seek a rabbi, and, if they made the cut, they would spend the next few years tagging along as disciples.

14 Leftovers

- So to be a young man, already embedded in the family trade, meant that, in all likelihood, you were not the cream of the crop in Hebrew school, and you did not have what it takes to run with the rabbis.
- They were the leftovers, the kids who didn't get picked for kickball.
- Jesus didn't cherry-pick the brightest kids from other rabbis and build a dream team.
- He didn't even take the normal route and allow the best and brightest to choose him.
- Instead, Jesus went on a mission looking for the leftovers, seeking out the also-rans and he drafted them.

15 Using Leftovers

- Why would Jesus forsake the genius list and deliberately pursue those who belonged at the bottom of the list?
- The answer is this: Jesus chose simple and unaccomplished disciples to follow him so that the love of God and the work of the kingdom would be undeniably evident in an unbelieving world.

16 Object Lesson to Others

- In other words, these simple and unschooled tradesmen would become living, breathing object lessons on the depths of God's grace and the scope of God's power.
- No one would be able to say that they were privileged to walk with Jesus because of their résumés.
- No one would be able to say that the growth of the kingdom could be credited to their IQ.
- It was all God.

17 A Man Crippled from Birth

- One of the best examples on how God can do extraordinary things through ordinary people is found in the book of Acts.

- There at a gate called Beautiful, Peter looks at a cripple and says to him, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” (Acts 3:6 NIV)
- The man jumps to his feet and begins to walk. In fact, he goes into the temple, walking, jumping, and praising God.
- When all the people saw him walking and praising God, . . . they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (Acts 3:9–10 NIV)

18 Peter’s Response

- When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” (Acts 3:12 NIV)
- Then he goes on to preach to the crowd, “You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.” (Acts 3:14–15 NIV)
- Peter’s boldness doesn’t stop there, he exclaims, By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. (Acts 3:16 NIV)

19 Peter & John Arrested

- Well the leaders of Israel are infuriated by Peter’s remarks and have the Temple guards to throw both Peter and John in jail.
- The next day they are put on trial and Peter filled with the Holy Spirit, confronts his accusers by saying . . .
- He is “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:11–12 NIV)

20 Ordinary Men

- When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13 NIV)
- The key here is not that they were unschooled and ordinary men, but individuals who had become emboldened with faith because they had been with Jesus.

21 Why You?

- Why do you think God chose you?
- In other words, is there anything in you or about you that made God want you to be on His team?
 - Perhaps it's your IQ.

- Maybe it's your keen sense of style. God thought you could make God look good.
- Or maybe it was the fact that you're a type-A go-getter, and God wants a high-functioning, action-oriented winner on the team.

22 **God's Purpose**

- God called you to Christ for the same reason he called those original 12 disciples: because you make an excellent object lesson on the depths of God's grace and the scope of God's power.
 - You, with all your weaknesses.
 - You, with all your secret struggles and issues.
 - You, with all your areas where it is difficult for you to believe God.
- God chose you so that the world might look at you and see that God is indescribably merciful and incredibly powerful.

23 **God's Purpose**

- The Apostle Paul says this is writing to the Corinthians.
- Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. (1 Cor 1:26–29 NIV)

24 **God's Grace**

- God hates the proud and those who think they're cool.
- In fact, God doesn't just hate the proud, He opposes them.
- As the Scripture says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6 NIV)

25 **Fellowship with God**

- As you remember from Acts 4, the leaders of Israel were amazed with Peter's and John's faith that gave them courage to not only pray for the sick, but preach boldly concerning the resurrection of Christ.
- What they called to mind about this ordinary men was that they had been with Jesus.
- So then, how can we fellowship with God today?

26 **Fellowship with God**

- For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. (Is 57:15 NIV)

- “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word. (Is 66:2 NIV)
- In other words, when we are repentant and humble ourselves before the Lord, we are actually putting ourselves in a position where God’s grace can be poured out into our lives.

27 **Abiding in Christ**

- We have the same thing in John’s gospel account, when he quotes Jesus saying, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5 NIV)
- And how do we abide in Him?
- If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:7–8 NIV)
- So if we humble ourselves before the Lord and abide in Jesus’ teachings, we will produce the faith that will not only attract attention but give God glory.

28 **Examples of God’s Glory**

- When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the angels didn’t appear to the rich and famous or to the suave and sophisticated.
- They appeared to a group of men who were on the bottom step of the social ladder—poor shepherds.
- This too was an object lesson from God to show us that He gives grace to the humble—especially those who are contrite in heart.
- They will fellowship with God and become examples to everyone of what He can do with those who trust Him.
- Let us therefore, humble ourselves before the Lord and be Jesus’ disciples!

29 **Conclusion**

- Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matt 11:29 NIV)
- “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” (Mark 1:17 NIV)