



## Daily Verse and Comment

### [John 6:44](#)

(44) No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

### [John 6:65](#)

(65) And He said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.'

*New King James Version*

When we parse what [Jesus](#) says in [John 6:44](#), 65, we learn some amazing things. First is the remarkable fact that the Father Himself initiates the relationship. The great, almighty, and omniscient [God](#), Ruler of the universe, decides to invite or summon a particular human being into fellowship with His Son. He does not consider such a task to be beneath Him, but He takes a personal interest in each individual called into His church. He knows each of them long before they ever thought of Him (consider [Psalm 139:13](#); [Jeremiah 1:5](#); [Romans 8:29](#)).

Second, Jesus explicitly asserts that *no one* can come to Him except through the Father's calling. While most people, even nominal Christians, believe that they can find God if they seek Him long and hard enough, the Bible disagrees. David tells us in [Psalm 14:2-3](#): "The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one." The apostle Paul repeats this in [Romans 3:11](#), "There is none who seeks after God." Human beings are milling about in a world of profound religious confusion—worshipping

thousands of gods of their own making, seeking gods to please themselves—but to know and worship the true God, they must be granted access by the Father.

Third, our Savior uses an interesting word to picture what God does to summon us: The Father "draws" us. "Draws" is translated from the Greek word *helkúō*, which in its most literal sense can also mean "to drag" (see [Acts 16:19](#); [21:30](#); [James 2:6](#))—and with some of us, it may well have happened with us kicking and screaming! *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Third Edition (BDAG)* provides a helpful nuance of this word's meaning:

To move an object from one area to another in a pulling motion, *draw*, with implication that the object being moved is incapable of propelling itself or in the case of pers. [sic] is unwilling to do so voluntarily, in either case with implication of exertion on the part of the mover. . . .

This explanation reinforces the points we have already seen. When the Father initiates His calling, the individual does not have the capability to move himself into a relationship with Him, nor would he do so voluntarily, being at enmity with God (see [Romans 8:7](#)). God, therefore, must make the effort to reach out to the individual and open the way for fellowship with Him and His Son. But how does He do this?

In [Hosea 11:3-4](#), God speaks of His treatment of Israel, "I taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by their arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of [love](#), and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck." In a similar vein, Paul writes in [Romans 11:5](#), "Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Here, the apostle uses the term "election" in a similar sense as Jesus speaks of few being chosen ([Matthew 20:16](#); [22:14](#)), an idea parallel to being drawn to Christ. The Father elects or selects only a few to understand the truth and have a relationship with Him and His Son, and He does this out of love by His grace. That is, His calling is a freely given gift; nothing that we are or have done compels God to draw us to Christ.

God's calling, then, is by grace, but *what does He do* to call a person? [John 8:43](#), where Jesus is arguing with some Jews, provides a clue: "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word." They were physically hearing His words, but they were incapable of spiritually comprehending His meaning. Yet, converted Christians can understand Him. Thus, part of the miracle of God's calling is that, through His Spirit ([I Corinthians 2:10-16](#)), the Father opens the mind to spiritual understanding, and as Paul explains it, "So then [faith](#) comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" ([Romans 10:17](#)).

In this way, He gives us the gift of faith ([Ephesians 2:8](#)), by which we can truly believe and then act upon what He says. We can see this in the calling of Lydia, whom Paul met in Philippi: "The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul" ([Acts 16:14](#)), and she was baptized soon thereafter.

The Bible tells us that God usually chooses the lowly among earth's people—the foolish, the weak, the base, and the despised of [the world](#) ([I Corinthians 1:27-28](#)), but our goal is to become "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" ([I Peter 2:9](#)). In other words, we have not been called to remain "just as we are." We have a "heavenly" ([Hebrews 3:1](#)) and "a holy calling" ([II Timothy 1:9](#)), one that we must "walk worthy of" ([Ephesians 4:1](#)).

The Father has summoned, invited, us to the greatest purpose any human being can be asked to participate in: "to be conformed to the image of His Son" ([Romans 8:29](#)), to prepare to be firstfruits of His spiritual harvest ([James 1:18](#); [Revelation 14:4](#)), to be kings and priests in His Kingdom ([Revelation 1:6](#); [5:10](#)), and to be the Bride of Christ ([Revelation 19:7-9](#)). As the author of Hebrews urges us, "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks" ([Hebrews 12:25](#)).

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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