Dear Open Door Family,

We all have a longing in our hearts to belong. Sometimes that is fulfilled in our family or marriage, at other times through work or unique groups to which we belong. But for many of us there has always been that one group or that one place where we would love to be welcomed but we see no chance it would ever happen. For some of us that has caused ongoing struggles as we deal with the desire to belong and the sense of rejection that comes from being unable to make that dream come true. I know I experienced that on a very deep level when Carol and I ended up leaving the mission field and coming home. I had to learn to deal with the realities of not being part of that unique and special group of people that we worked with in La Paz. On some level we all have had similar experiences. That is why these words that Paul wrote have so much power. Let's look at them together.

Ephesians 1:4 *(HCS) For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, TO BE holy and blameless in His sight...*

Jude 1:24-25 *(HCS) Now to Him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless and with great joy...*

The amazing fact that God chose us before the world was formed should make us stop and think deeply about what that tells us about God. He already knew who we would be and when we would be ready to respond to His offer of salvation. But there is something that we tend to overlook in thinking about being chosen. We are chosen FOR a purpose and that is to *"be holy and blameless."* God chosen us and saved us but the goal has always been to mold and shape us and to make us more like Jesus Christ. That is the hard part; how in the world can I live a holy and godly life? That is why God chose me, but how can I make it happen? The truth is I do need to turn away from sin - I will need to fight against the world's pressure as it seeks to conform me. But, I will need God's help not only to be saved but also to live the godly life to which He has called me. That is why these verses from Jude are so encouraging. God is the one who can keep us from stumbling and help us to stand BLAMELESS in His presence. What an amazing God we have!

PRAYER: God, you chose me - that is amazing Grace; knowing ahead of time all my struggles and failures, You still chose me. In Christ You see me as pure, you have removed ALL the blame. But you also saved me to LIVE a holy and blameless life here and now. You have promised your help and strength. Please, Lord God, may I grow more and more and become more like Jesus every day.

Pastor Mark Kieft

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