



YES!

RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

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MY STORY:

Adrian Varlack, Sr., Minister and Church Historian (USA)

God is not far from any of us! He loves us and desires that we know Him, love Him, and labor together with Him. He made us for His glory, and it is in relationship with Him and in service alongside Him that we find our true purpose to worship God and to enjoy Him forever. The call to a right relationship with God begins with our acceptance and response to God's gift.

From a child I sensed God drawing near to me and inviting me into that relationship. I was near to my Mom each Sunday morning as she tearfully and openly prayed in our living room. I felt God especially near at those times. At age 14 I responded to His approach and He saved me by His grace. It was my fourth night at the revival in a Methodist schoolhouse on my home island of Anegada, Virgin Islands, but the service closed without me fully surrendering. Outside the door, a loving spiritual mother sensed my disappointment and said, "Don't be discouraged, son; keep on seeking." My heart broke and I wept so profusely that two of my sisters (one on each side) had to walk me home. I surrendered on the way home. The Lord and I have walked together since that time, sometimes nearer, sometimes farther, due to my slow growth.

What a blessed privilege and honor it is that God allows us to know Him intimately and to journey together with Him throughout our lives!

THE CALL: GOD'S GIFT

CHAPTER 1:

"Your calling is simply what God wants you to do with your life, and it is the key to life's deepest level of contentment and satisfaction."¹

God's call is a gift to every believer. Yet many believers do not intentionally seek to discover the gift of knowing what God wants them to do with their lives. The Message warns us, "Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants" (Ephesians 5:17). Or, as the NIV says, "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

Calling Is an Invitation to Join God Where He Is Working

God is not at the mercy of any of His creation. God has no lack, He has no need, and He has no deficiency. Paul described God's self-sufficiency in Acts 17:24, 25. "God does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything." When we consider Paul's words, we understand that God is sufficient within Himself. Through this understanding we realize how amazing it is that God calls us. This self-sufficient One who needs nothing outside of Himself to accomplish all He purposes, invites every believer to work alongside Him through the gift of calling. This is one of the most marvelous acts of our great God!




"For we are laborers together with God." 1 Corinthians 3:9

God takes the initiative to involve you, the one He created, in what He is doing. He does not need your abilities or gifts. He does not need your experience. He does not need anything you have to offer Him to accomplish what He has purposed. But He invites you to join Him where He is working. First Corinthians 3:9 reminds us of this truth, "For we are laborers together with God" (KJV).

Even though God is sufficient in Himself, He has always chosen to accomplish His will through human individuals. God called Noah to build an ark so that He could provide safety to him and his family, making it possible for a righteous remnant to survive the flood (Genesis 6).

God called Abraham to leave his country and go to an unfamiliar place so that through Abraham

¹ Kristopher Barnett et al., *Called: Understanding the Call to Ministry* (Anderson: AU Ministry Press, 2015), 6.



He could raise up a nation (Genesis 12). God called Moses to deliver the children of Israel from bondage and lead them to Canaan to accomplish what He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (Exodus 3). God called Paul to share the gospel with unbelievers throughout the Roman world (Galatians 1:15, 16).

Long before you came to know God through Jesus Christ, He knew you and began initiating His call on your life. In fact, God's initiative to call began even before you were born. Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart..." Paul states this truth very emphatically in Galatians 1:14–17, "In those days I went all out in persecuting God's church. I was systematically destroying it... Even then God had designs on me. Why, when I was still in my mother's womb he chose and called me out of sheer generosity!" (MSG).

Pause for a moment to reflect on these wonderful truths—God is sufficient within Himself. He does not need you to accomplish His purposes. Yet, this all-sufficient God invites you to work alongside Him in advancing His kingdom here on earth. He initiated His call on our lives long before we had acknowledged Him as Lord, even before we were born.

The Primary Call—Know the Giver of the Gift

You will never comprehend and fulfill God's call on your life without having an intimate relationship with God, the One who calls you. Understanding and responding to God's gift of calling starts with knowing Him. James 4:8 says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." In the book, *Answering the Call in the Spirit*, author Terry Cross says, "God calls us into relationship. This primary call repeats throughout Scripture and tells us that what is most important for God is that we have a relationship with Him ... It is out of one's relationship to God that callings are established and motives for doing the work that God has prepared for us in advance are to be considered."²

God's primary call is the call to salvation. It is a universal call for everyone. Second Peter 3:9 reminds us that He is not willing for anyone to perish in their sins but that all (everyone) come to repentance. How do we answer that call? After seeing God's deliverance of Paul and Silas as well as his own family's deliverance, the jailer asked, "What can I do to be saved?" Paul answered very simply, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31 NIV). Each of us has the opportunity to accept this primary call. It is the beginning of an intimate love relationship with our heavenly Father, and it is the first step we take toward recognizing and responding to His call.

Jesus asked His disciples, "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15, 16 NIV).

He Lived a Sinless Life, Always Pleasing His Father, God.

Throughout His life and ministry, Jesus experienced temptations just as we do. Remember that Satan tempted Jesus while He was fasting in the desert. But the Scripture makes it

² Terry L. Cross, *Answering the Call in the Spirit* (Cleveland, Tennessee: Lee University Press, 2007), 149.

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.” (Hebrews 4:15 NIV)

clear that even when He was tempted, He did not sin. Hebrews 4:15 states this truth, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin” (Hebrews 4:15 NIV).

He Died on the Cross to Take the Punishment for Our Sins.

Because Jesus lived a sinless life, He did not deserve punishment, but He willingly took the punishment for our sins so that we could have relationship with God. “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” (1 Peter 3:18 NIV).

He Rose from the Dead.

When Jesus’ friends went to the cave where Jesus had been buried, His body was not there. An angel spoke to the women,

Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: “He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.” Now I have told you (Matthew 28:5–7 NIV).

Through God’s power Jesus rose from the dead and is forever alive.

He Is Now in Heaven Speaking to God the Father on Our Behalf.

It is wonderful to realize that Jesus is continually interceding for you. “Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf” (Hebrews 7:25 NLT).

LIVE IT OUT!

Now take a few moments to affirm your belief in Jesus by reading the words below as a prayer. If you are a believer, regardless of how long it has been since you believed, take a moment to reaffirm your belief in Jesus as you audibly pray this prayer.



PRAYER

Jesus, I believe you are God's sinless Son. I believe you died on the cross for my sins. I believe you rose from the dead. I believe you are now in heaven speaking to God on my behalf. I believe through this declaration of faith, I am saved and am now a child of God.

LET'S TALK

The call to salvation is our primary call. How has your response to God's salvation impacted your beliefs, values, and life purpose?

MY STORY:

Stetson Harper, Youth Minister, Early Childhood Teacher (USA)

"Come, follow me!" is the call to discipleship; it is God's call to every believer. When I think about discipleship, I cannot help but reflect on the cost of discipleship. You see, salvation is a free gift of God, available to anyone who would call on Jesus to be saved. Yet discipleship, following Christ with everything that we are, costs us.

For me, it cost me my desire to always be right, or to always have the last word. Jesus displayed an amazing measure of grace during His time on earth as He listened to those that were lost and ministered to them right where they were.

Discipleship cost me my finances. Not in the sense that I live a poor life, but in the sense that I have relinquished my finances to the sovereignty of God. The realization that all that I have been blessed with belongs to God enables me to freely be obedient to what He asks me to do with my finances. It is not always easy, or comfortable, and I do not always get it right. However, to truly follow Christ with all that I am, I must give everything to Him, including my finances.

Perhaps the greatest cost of discipleship has been the relinquishing of my plans for my life. I intended to be a lawyer, and one day a judge. God asked me to be a minister and a teacher. To be sure, God asks men and women to be lawyers and judges, but His will for my life was not this. In order to truly be a disciple of Christ I had to relinquish my will for His.

In short, discipleship boils down to obedience. We all have a different set of things that are extremely dear to us. These things often represent that which God asks us to trust Him with so that we may be truly obedient to His will. He always stewards these things with the utmost care, and He never fails to exceed our greatest desires. But to truly be a disciple of Christ requires the relinquishing of all things into His care - unobstructed obedience. So what is it that you need to relinquish to Christ in order to answer the call of discipleship?

DISCIPLESHIP EVERY BELIEVER'S CALL

CHAPTER 2:

"Discipleship is not an option. Jesus says that if anyone would come after me, he must follow me. If you want to come after me—it's a general term—if you want to have any experience of me, any relationship with me, you have to be a disciple ... To be a Christian is to be a disciple." ¹

Discipleship Is the Call to Move Beyond Simply Acknowledging Jesus as Savior.

It is the call to recognize Him as Savior and Lord. Christians often embrace Jesus as Savior but are unwilling to accept Him as Lord over every aspect of their lives. Luke 9:23 reminds us, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (NIV). Or in other words, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat—I am" (Luke 9:23 MSG).

God Calls Us to Forsake Everything

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself." "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth (Matthew 19:16–22 NIV).

The young man came to Jesus confident that he had obeyed God's commands. But, in spite of the young man's declared obedience, Jesus knew there was one thing he had not surrendered. Because the call to discipleship requires forsaking all, Jesus required that one thing—the young man's wealth. Because he was very rich, the young man walked away, refusing God's call to discipleship.

Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, chose to forsake everything in response to God's call. When he graduated from college, his plan for life included ranching, obtaining a law degree, owning a newspaper, and running for the United States Congress. Soon after graduating from college, he started his own business called Bright's California Confections.

Bill worked hard; 18 to 20 hours a day was not unusual. His confections were a delight to the rich and 3 Tim Keller, "The Call to Discipleship," Sermon, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, (New York City, New York, 1993).

“BUT IN FACT GOD HAS PLACED THE PARTS IN THE BODY, EVERY ONE OF THEM, JUST AS HE WANTED THEM TO BE. IF THEY WERE ALL ONE PART, WHERE WOULD THE BODY BE? AS IT IS, THERE ARE MANY PARTS, BUT ONE BODY.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:18–20 NIV

famous. His products were in upscale retail stores. Bill’s business grew rapidly and soon his merchandise was being exported internationally.² But as Bill’s business continued to grow, so did his compassion for lost people. One day Bill asked God what He wanted him to do with his life. In obedience to God’s response, Bill wrote what came to be known as “Bill’s Contract with God.”

He (Bill) wrote that he renounced everything in his life to the control of the Lord Jesus Christ. He placed life and wife and family and home and car and business—all that he owned or would ever own, past and future—entirely under the Lord’s ownership. He thought of Paul’s New Testament description of himself as a slave of Jesus Christ. So Bill declared in writing that before God he assumed the position of a bond slave ... Whatever the Master said to do, Bill would do with God’s help.³ Bill later said, “Apart from my salvation, this was the most important decision of my life; the day I became a slave of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴

The impact of Bill’s contract with God can’t be measured:

- Campus Crusade for Christ, an evangelism and discipleship ministry targeting university students, was founded. (Currently Campus Crusade for Christ [CRU] has 20,514 full-time staff serving in 181 countries on 1,085 college campuses; 663,612 trained volunteer staff and millions of other trained laypersons.)
- In one year, the gospel was shared with 852 million people.
- In one year, 54.5 million salvation decisions for Christ were made.
- The Jesus Film was developed. (The film is now translated in 600 languages and has been seen by over 4.3 billion people.)⁵
- “The Four Spiritual Laws” a simple evangelism tool was written. (To date, over 2.5 billion copies have been produced.)⁶

Bill Bright did what many Christians have not done. Not only did he recognize Jesus as Savior, He yielded to Jesus as Lord of his life, master of everything. Bill Bright did what the young ruler chose not to do. He gave up everything to follow Jesus.

“Simply put, if you’re not willing to take what is dearest to you, whether plans or people, and kiss it

² Michael Richardson, *Amazing Faith* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2000), 18, 19.

³ Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 59.

⁴ Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 60.

⁵ Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 220.

⁶ Richardson, *Amazing Faith*, 252.

good-bye, you can't be my disciple" (Luke 14:33 MSG).

God Calls Us to Love Him and Others with Our Whole Being

During a public debate between Jesus and the religious leaders, a Jewish scholar asked Jesus,

"Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel [the Jewish people]: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself...'" (Mark 12:28–31 NIV).

In other words, Jesus was saying, "Love God with your whole self, with all of you." God's discipleship call asks all of us—our hearts, souls, minds and our strength.

How can you love God and others to such an extreme—with your whole self? You can't. You do not initiate your love for God and others. John reminds us, "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19 NKJV). God initiated this relationship because of His love for you. Now He asks you to cooperate with Him in sustaining and deepening that love relationship by "putting your whole self in."



Loving God and Others

Loving God and others with all your heart focuses on the relational side of you—the part of you that responds out of a desire to be significantly, intimately connected. The call to discipleship challenges us to love God and others freely, with our whole selves. Because we are human, we sometimes hold back our love because of fear, unforgiveness, prejudices, or the behavior of others. But as we learn to rely on God's love for us (1 John 4:16 NIV) we can love Him and others genuinely. John, "the disciple Jesus loved," reminds us, "Little children (believers, dear ones), let us not love (merely in theory) with word or with tongue (giving lip service to compassion), but in action and in truth (in practice and in sincerity, because practical acts of love are more than words)" (1 John 3:18 AMP).



Loving God With Your Soul

Loving God with all your soul is all about loving God from the very center of who you are—your emotions, your desires, your will. As we grow in our love toward God our emotions, our desires, and our will become more focused on this one thing—loving God. Aligning our souls (feelings, desires, will) with loving God



Loving God With All Your Mind

and loving others requires daily attention. Each day invite God to search your soul. “Investigate my life O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I’m about; See for yourself whether I’ve done (felt, desired, or chosen) anything wrong—then guide me on the road to eternal life” (Psalm 139:23, 24 MSG)


Loving God with all your mind requires that you, as His disciple, bring your thoughts into alignment with who God truly is. Paul uses warfare terms to describe this, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV). In his book, *Renovation of the Heart*, Dallas Willard states, “...to serve God well we must think straight...”⁷ How can you begin to “think straight” so that you can love God with all your mind? The primary discipline for loving God with all your mind is to memorize and meditate on God’s Word (Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1, Philippians 4:8). God’s Word will work with God’s Spirit to transform your thought life so that you are free to love God with all your mind.



Loving God With All Your Strength

Loving God and others with ALL my strength means using every ounce of my strength—my energy, my time, and my resources. David is a converted Hindu living in northern India. He is committed to using all of his strength to serve God. Acting as a journalist and lawyer, he rescues persecuted Christians and advocates for imprisoned pastors. Because he recognizes the value of children in the kingdom of God, he has developed tutoring programs for Hindu and Christian children in villages throughout northern India. He rescues and provides for the rehabilitation of young girls living as sex slaves in the Hindu temples. He plants large gardens to support his family, teach others to provide food for their families, and feed the poor. Out of his passion to multiply leaders, he trains pastors and mentors new believers. David and his family have experienced isolation from Hindu family members. They have experienced prejudice and persecution from their Hindu landlords. They choose poverty so that they can provide for those less fortunate. They love God and others with all their strength.

⁷ Dallas Willard, *Renovations of the Heart* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2002), 106



God's call to discipleship challenges us to love Him and others with ALL that we are—heart, soul, mind and strength. He is asking us to “put our whole selves in” to this wonderful opportunity He has given us to follow Him. Circumstances, relationships, even our own sinfulness tempts us to hold back something of ourselves. We hold back to protect, to preserve, to hide, or to hoard. Regardless, put your whole self in. Follow God with ALL your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

God Calls Us to Grow in Grace and in Knowing Him

Notice, we're never told to grow from grace. We're never told to grow beyond grace. We're told to grow in grace, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”(2 Peter 3:18 NIV). Very soon after the apostles died, writings began to appear that revealed a departure from the New Testament's teachings on grace—writings that tended to promote legalism and tradition in the early church. These early Christian writers meant well. They wanted to promote a strong morality, so that the church would have a spotless reputation in the world. But, in their emphasis on personal performance, they neglected the grace of the indwelling Jesus as the foundation for right living. Before long, there were certain sects that taught there could be no cleansing or return to God's favor if a Christian sinned in any significant way after being baptized. Other groups believed that the Christian was allowed one significant sin, but after that, there could never be forgiveness or restoration. Others taught that Jesus had paid the first installment on our moral debt to God. By His death on the cross, He freed the believer from moral bankruptcy. But, after being set free, he had to continue paying the debt through good works.

These attempts to keep Christians pure caused many Christians to believe that spiritual maturity was achieved by doing rather than being. Ephesians 2:8 reminds us, “For it is by grace [God's remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God” (AMP). You were saved because of God's goodness; not your own rightness. And it is in God's continuing goodness that you stand as a Christian. Often, we wrongly believe that we began the Christian life because of God's grace, but the maintenance of our life with God is our job, dependent on what we do.

Remember Romans 5:2, “Through Him we also have access by faith into this [remarkable state of] grace in which we [firmly and safely and securely] stand” (AMP). The ancient Greek word that Paul used is translated “access.” It describes the ushering of someone into the presence of royalty. You see, because we believe in Jesus Christ, we have access into the favor of God, the King of heaven. With no effort of our own, we have received and stand in God's grace every moment of every day.

When we understand where we stand—in the grace (favor, goodness) of God, we can grow in knowledge, developing an accurate perception of God. He is our loving Father who has chosen us to be His children and called us to work alongside Him to fulfill His purposes and advance the heavenly kingdom.

Don't spend the rest of your life trying to achieve favor with God. He called you to Him because of His desire to have a love relationship with you. Your calling does not demand works; it demands that

“Through Him we also have access by faith into this [remarkable state of] grace in which we [firmly and safely and securely] stand.”

ROMANS 5:2 AMP

you stand in the loving grace of your Father through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Author Terry Cross explains it like this:

You can't earn God's approval. If you think you are more valued by God because of what you do then what does that say about how God loves you? Isn't such a love warped? Isn't such a love conditional - that is, it is based on something such as our performance? God's agape love for us is unconditional - it is based on something other than our performance, indeed, something other than us entirely! That is the gospel. God wants us to be and do precisely what God calls us to be and do. Our value to God is based on being creatures of Him and on our being newly created in Christ Jesus. We are valuable to God simply because God says we are. ⁸

God Enables Us to Fulfill the Call to Discipleship

God initiates, God invites, God calls us to follow Him, to be His disciples. But not only does God call, He also enables. Second Peter 1:3 reminds us, “His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life...” When we accept this call to discipleship, God provides all that we need to follow Him.

- He has given us His Spirit. His Spirit convicts our hearts and brings us to confession of sin and turning away. It is His Spirit that causes us to say truthfully, “Search me, O God, and know my heart...” (Psalm 139:23, 24).
- He has given us His Word. “For the word of God is living and active and full of power [making it operative, energizing, and effective]. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as the division of the soul and spirit [the completeness of a person], and of both joints and marrow [the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and judging the very thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12, AMP). “To read the Bible as a spiritual discipline is to read it as a means of encountering God and being formed by God through that encounter. People who dwell in Scripture know who they are. They see the relentlessness with which God has called creation back to God's self.”⁹
- He has given us a means to communicate with Him through prayer. As we communicate with God, we recognize who He is and His wonderful works. We respond in thanksgiving and worship. We ask for our needs to be met. We intercede for the needs of others. We listen, and He speaks—sometimes with a Scripture, sometimes with a thought, sometimes with an inclination, sometimes with a direct command.

He has given us the community of faith, especially the local church. Here we learn and grow in our understanding of God's Word through worship, messages, Bible studies, and in conversation and fellowship with other believers. Hebrews 10:25 warns us not to neglect meeting together and reminds us that meeting together is how we encourage one another and motivate one another to love and good

⁸ Cross, *Answering the Call*, 140-141.

⁹ Douglas Koskela, *Calling and Clarity: Discovering What God Wants for Your Life* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 77.

LIVE IT OUT!

deeds. Yes, you have believed on Jesus as your Savior, but have you fully responded to His call to “follow me”? It is an everyday call. “Every day we have choices to make about how we will use our time, our energy and our gifts.”¹⁰ Jesus said to His disciples, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23 NIV).

For the next few minutes, be still in God’s presence. Quiet your body, your thoughts, and your feelings. Listen. Jesus is calling you to follow Him into a more intimate and fulfilling life with Him. He gives you the amazing opportunity to give up your own desires and plans, to grow in your love for Him and others, and to stand in His favor and goodness toward you. What will your response be?

PRAYER

A Prayer of Discipleship

***God of love,
source of mercy and compassion,
weave your dream for the world
into the fabric of our lives.***

***Remove the scales from our eyes
and lift the indifference from our hearts,
so that we may see your vision –
a new reign of justice and compassion
that will renew the earth.***

***Transform our lives,
so that we may accomplish your purpose.***

***Anoint us with your spirit of love
that we might bring good news to the
oppressed,
bind up the brokenhearted,
and proclaim release to the captive.***

***Give us a new urgency
and a new commitment
to feed the hungry,
clothe the naked,***

***shelter the homeless,
and visit those who live in isolation.***

***Help us to reach out to those
whom no one else will touch,
to accept the unacceptable,
and to embrace the enemy.***

***Surround us with your love,
fill us with your grace,
and strengthen us for your service.***

***Empower us to respond to the call of Jesus –
to deny ourselves,
to take up our crosses,
and to follow.***

Make us your disciples. Amen [11]

***He gives you the amazing opportunity to give up
your own desires and plans, to grow in your love
for Him and others, and to stand in His favor and
goodness toward you.***

What will your response be?*

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LET'S TALK

How do the choices you make each day reflect your obedience to God's call to be a disciple?

MY STORY:

Katrin Fricke Children's Minister, Social Worker (Germany)

As a young adult, I never really planned to go to work. I was focused on being a mom one day. However, my mom insisted that I begin my studies and to honor my parents I did. I was clueless about what kind of job would suit me but I chose to study social work because a social work degree offered a variety of job opportunities and allowed me to work directly with people.

During the first month of my studies I met my husband. After completion of my studies we started a family just as I had always intended. Because my children were small I didn't search for a job. But one day God sent an opportunity to me through my neighbor who is a social worker as well. The job offer was hers, but because she already had a job, she asked if I would like to apply. I did and got the job! It was what I had always wanted—a job working with kids. Then I realized how God had worked in my heart even as a young girl. He planted a deep desire within me to work with kids. It is His calling on my life - whether at home, in church, or in the workplace. In 2015 the Syrian war brought many refugees into my country, Germany. Having a heart for internationals compelled me to help them by collecting donations for those living in overcrowded refugee camps. During that time my employer started a home for refugee minors without parents. When I heard about his plans I immediately felt the urge to apply for the job. Applying for this job was not an easy decision. The job I had paid well with regular hours. I had been doing it now for many years, with a "cozy" team, as my boss described it. The new opportunity would mean working shifts, nights and weekends. It was a pioneer project. No one knew exactly what to do and how to do it. And the wage advertised was lower than my current pay.

As I asked God, He kept telling me through the Bible: "be kind to the strangers." So when I applied I trusted God that my wage would not be lowered and I would be allowed to share the gospel with the kids I served, even though they were Muslim. God supplied both of my conditions and I began my new assignment.

It was very tough work with tough hours and a team that stretched me beyond what I thought I could bear. But I also was able to share the gospel, to invite kids to church and to our church's summer camps. Even though sick and needy kids did not believe in any god, they allowed me to pray for them. I shared my faith with my colleagues. And I discovered the need to pray for my bosses and their decisions as they directly affected my work situation. God also taught me to bless those who did not like me and through blessing them actually expecting and seeing something good happen in their lives. Most importantly, I learned that work is not about earning money. Work is about making a difference in the lives of the people you serve. You are able to make that difference because of God's presence in you.

WORK: GOD'S CALL AND COMMAND

CHAPTER 3:

God calls us to become His sons and daughters. That is the primary call of salvation. He calls believers to forsake all and follow Him. That is the call of discipleship. But did you realize that God calls, even commands, us to work?¹

- To the Israelites He commanded, "Six days shall you labor, and do all your work" (Exodus 20:9 NIV).
- To the believers in Thessalonica Paul wrote, "For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies" (2 Thessalonians 3:10, 11 ESV).

Too often Christians categorize work as secular or religious. And with that categorization comes a judgment that Christian work such as pastor, missionary, or evangelist is a higher, nobler calling. Secular work is often considered lesser. In fact, because of God's pronouncement to Adam, work is sometimes considered a curse (Genesis 3:17). It is dreaded, avoided, and often done without passion or excellence.

But God values work. In creation we see God at work. Genesis 2:2 tells us, "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing;" (NIV). What was God's evaluation of the work He had been doing? "And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31 NIV).

I'm sure you've wondered, "Why am I here?" In the story of creation, we read that God blessed the people He had made and said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28, KJV). The Message says it more precisely, "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill the Earth! Take charge!" Each of these commands is accomplished through every believer every day as they intentionally allow Christ to guide them in all the activities of life, or in other words, as they go about their work.

The men and women we read of in the Bible who loved and served God worked in various occupations—carpenters, fishermen, tentmakers, soldiers, seamstresses, stonemasons, shepherds, farmers, doctors, government officials, and more. In fact, there are 5,433 occupations mentioned in the Bible. Their work was not always religious, but through their occupations they provided for their families, honored God's commands, served their communities and nations, gave of their finances to support ministry efforts, and worked with God to see His kingdom established and His purposes accomplished.

In his book, *Life Without Lack*, Dallas Willard offers this insight on the value of work. "...God put us here to make a difference. Jesus confirmed this with these words, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven' (Matthew 5:16 KJV). That one verse encapsulates why there are people (why you are here)—to shine, doing good works and

¹ Dallas Willard, *Life Without Lack* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2018), 56.



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify you father in heaven.” Mathew 5:16

glorifying God.”²

God’s call to work comes out of His desire to bring us alongside Him in fulfilling all He has purposed. Consider the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under the direction of Nehemiah. The enemies of God’s people had broken down the walls of the city. Without the walls there was no protection from lawless gangs or wild animals of the desert. It was God’s desire that the walls be rebuilt so that the people could live in safety. How would this be accomplished? Nehemiah reported to the people on the condition of the walls and how God had sent him to encourage them in rebuilding the walls. The people responded, “‘Let us start rebuilding.’ So they began this good work” (Nehemiah 2:18 NIV). Even though the work was difficult and dangerous, everyone participated. Soon the walls were rebuilt, and the people experienced the peace and safety God had purposed for them.

What if the inhabitants of Jerusalem had refused to join with Nehemiah in the work of rebuilding the walls?

- They and their families would not have experienced the blessings of God—peace and safety.
- They would not have experienced the joy of partnering together with God to accomplish His purposes. After the walls had been rebuilt, the people celebrated “and their joy was very great” (Nehemiah 8:17 NIV).
- God would not have been glorified. As long as the walls were in rubble, God’s people were in disgrace and God’s name was held in contempt. But after the walls were rebuilt, God’s Word was read and the people “bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground” (Nehemiah 8:6 NIV). God was lifted high!

God values all good work. It really isn’t the kind of work that we do that matters most to God. It is why and how we do the work that we do. Dallas Willard reminds us, “But regardless of our specific work, the real challenge to every person’s faith is that we do everything to the glory of God, even in the smallest actions of our day.” [2] Paul reminds us in Colossians 3:22–24 (NIV), “Slaves (anyone who works), obey your earthly masters (your employers, supervisors, or bosses) in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you

² Willard, *Life Without Lack*, 61.

“But regardless of our specific work, the real challenge to every person’s faith is that we do everything to the glory of God, even in the smallest actions of our day.”

-DALLAS WILLARD

are serving.” Through work God gives us an opportunity to honor Him and reflect His character to those around us. Therefore, all work becomes sacred.

If all work is sacred, then God cares about our work. Take some time to reflect on these truths—

- We are here on the earth to make a difference through the work that we do.
- Through even the smallest activities of our day we can honor God and reflect God’s character to others.

Think of your work—your responsibilities at home, on the job, in your community, with extended family and friends, in the ministries of your local church. Look at your work through God’s eyes. He values you and desires that your work bring fulfillment to you and blessing to those around you. How will God’s perspective of your work impact your attitudes and actions today? How can you be more reliant on God as you work?

**How can you be more reliant
on God as you work?**

LIVE IT OUT!

List three aspects of your work for which you feel especially equipped.

- How can you honor God in your daily work?
- Find a Scripture passage that alludes to your work or some daily task that you are responsible to accomplish.
- Is there a truth in this passage that you can apply as you work?

LET'S TALK

Work is God's gift to us as well as His command. How would workplaces be affected if every believer lived out Colossians 3:23? "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" (NIV).

MY STORY:

Abigahil Avila National Children's Ministry Leader, Missionary with Evangelism Explosion (Honduras)

Hello, my name is Abigahil Avila. I want to share with you how God invited me to fulfill my call in His mission.

God gave me the blessing of being born into a Christian family. My parents are pastors of the Church of God of Prophecy, so I had the opportunity to always see God as something important in my life and family. But it was at the age of seven that I understood my need to receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

As a teenager at the age of thirteen, God moved in my pastor to invite me to serve in the children's ministry at my local church. This was the beginning of an exciting adventure for me, but at the same time I felt fearful and unprepared to serve in this ministry. Nevertheless, my pastor was used by God to affirm to me that "God had called me and He would equip me to fulfill my call."

God has used people who have taught me, inspired me, and who brought affirmation to my calling. One of the first people God used was a Sunday school teacher with many years of experience who taught me about ministry. This sparked a need in me to be equipped so that I could more effectively teach the Word of God. In response to this need, God allowed me to pursue a diploma in Christian education and align my university career to teaching for children. Not long after, God invited me to lead other children ministry leaders. This gave me the opportunity to learn about resources and other ministries that have nurtured my call.

At the same time, God connected me with the International Children's Ministry vision of developing leaders who impact children, which became an important piece to fulfill my call. I am convinced it is not my mission, but this is God's mission, and I have been invited to be a part of it.

In my heart a desire burns to continue to do God's will. He called me to minister to the little ones, but great treasures of God. My prayer is that in our church, an army of workers will be found-available, teachable, passionate, and prepared to serve God and minister to children for a change of life through Jesus.

Ministry: God's Specific Call

CHAPTER 4:

"What is the call of God? The specific call of God acknowledges your place on the team and asserts your role in God's redemptive plan. God offers His vision of your future and invites you to participate."¹

Our belief in God's specific call to ministry is founded in biblical examples. Noah, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, Jonah, Peter, Paul and other Bible characters received direct calls from God to accomplish specific tasks. But even though our belief concerning God's call to ministry is founded in biblical truth, we often doubt that God will call us. Many Christians wrongly believe that God's call to ministry is only for pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and others who serve God in a Christian setting such as a local church, a Christian ministry, a mission organization, or in a denominational headquarters. Many serving in these settings have definitely responded to God's call, but this call is not exclusively to them. Throughout the history of Christianity, men and women, in response to the call of God, have assumed roles that were not explicitly related to ministry. Yet, through their obedience to God's call they partnered with God to accomplish His divine purposes.

In 1953, the United Nations General Assembly elected Dag Hammarskjöld as the secretary-general of the intergovernmental organization. After Hammarskjöld's death in 1961, his private journal was discovered and published making his strong Christian faith unmistakably clear to the world in which he served. According to his journal, the Swedish diplomat prayed for years for God to give him a "life-defining task." His appointment as secretary-general opened the door for Hammarskjöld to become a "champion for the underdog," advocating for nations to obtain independence from colonial powers. Hammarskjöld believed that Jesus had a heart for the poor and marginalized and the oppressed and he worked with God to help oppressed nations become self-governing.²


C.S. Lewis is best known for his children's classic series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Lewis lost his mother at the age of 10, was wounded in the trenches during the First World War, and lost one of his best friends in that conflict. As a teenager, Lewis rejected Christianity and became an atheist. He came to God with extreme reluctance, or as he describes it—"kicking and screaming" at the age of 31. C.S. Lewis summarized the direct call of God on his life in the preface to his book, *Mere Christianity*, "Ever since I became a Christian, I have thought that perhaps the best, perhaps the only service I could do for my unbelieving neighbors was to explain and defend the belief."³ C.S. Lewis obeyed God's call and became the most famous and influential lay-theologian and Christian apologist of the twentieth century.⁴

1 Kristopher Barnett et al., *Called: Understanding the Call to Ministry* (Anderson: AU Ministry Press, 2015), 19.

2 Cristóbal Krusen, *They Were Christians: The Inspiring Faith of Men and Women Who Changed the World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 15-30.

3 C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), xiii.

4 Philip Vander Elst, "The Relevance of C.S. Lewis," Accessed September 6, 2019, bethinkin.org/apologetics/the-relevance-of-cs-lewis.



“I believe the need is the call. I did not respond to an audible ‘call.’ I responded to a desperate situation.” - Bill Wilson

The Call to Ministry Is Initiated by God

a direct call through mentoring relationships. Elijah mentored Elisha. When Elijah ascended to heaven, **The Call to Ministry Is Initiated by God**

God initiates His call to ministry in various ways. In the Bible, we find examples of God initiating a direct call through supernatural means. Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord (Isaiah 6). Moses was confronted with a bush that was on fire but would not burn (Exodus 3). We also find God initiating and confirming a direct call through mentoring relationships. Elijah mentored Elisha. When Elijah ascended to heaven,

Elisha assumed his prophetic ministry. Moses mentored Joshua. Paul mentored Timothy. Often God initiates His direct call through a deep awareness of an unmet need. Metro World Child is a global, faith-based humanitarian organization dedicated to serving 200,000 children weekly throughout New York City, various urban centers and rural communities around the world.⁵ When Bill Wilson, the founder of Metro World Child, was asked how he was called to serve children, he responded, “I believe the need is the call. I did not respond to an audible ‘call.’ I responded to a desperate situation.”⁶

Regardless of how God calls us to ministry, we must be certain of His call. Certainty of God’s call will help us to remain faithful during difficult times in ministry. The prophet Jeremiah experienced loss of friendships, mocking by the people he served, imprisonment, and a forced retreat to Egypt. Yet, God’s word, that he was called to declare, burned within him and he could not hold it in. He was sure of his calling and he was sure of God’s presence with him as he fulfilled it. He declared, “but the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail” (Jeremiah 20:11 NIV).

The Call to Ministry Aligns with Who You Are

“When one begins asking, ‘What should I do?’ one should consider first what lies within.”⁷ Some believe that God’s specific call may fill us with dread because it does not align with “what lies within.” However, God’s direct call to Moses was in full alignment with his life experiences, unique abilities, and passion. Moses was born as a slave and his early childhood was spent among slaves. He compassionately identified with the people he would lead out of bondage. While living in Pharaoh’s household, he was trained in leadership, warfare, and writing—skills he would need in his role as deliverer, com-

⁵ “About,” Metro World Child, accessed September 6, 2019, <https://www.metroworldchild.org/about>.

⁶ Bill Wilson, *Whose Child Is This?* (Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House, 1992), 108, 109.

⁷ Cross, *Answering the Call*, 58.

“But regardless of our specific work, the real challenge to every person’s faith is that we do everything to the glory of God, even in the smallest actions of our day.”

- DALLAS WILLARD

mander, and writer of the first five books of the Old Testament. Above all, Moses was passionate to see the deliverance of his people from slavery. He was so passionate that as a young man he killed an Egyptian who was abusing an Israelite slave. Finally, his 40-year exile as a shepherd provided a thorough knowledge of the very desert that he would guide the Israelites through.

God knows you well—your passions, your abilities, your life experiences and more. He allowed all these things to develop within you to equip you to accomplish all that He calls you to do. Rather than being filled with dread, God’s call will allow you to experience the deep joy that comes from using all that you are to accomplish all that God has called you to do. Eric Liddel, the main character in the 1981 movie, *Chariots of Fire*, won a gold medal and a bronze medal for Britain in the 1924 Olympic Games. He understood the joy of following “what lies within.” He declared, “God made me fast, and when I run, I feel his pleasure.”⁸

“God’s call is not an affirmation of your abilities (what you have to give); it is an acknowledgement of His activity in your life.”
- Kristopher Barnett


The Call to Ministry Focuses on God’s Sufficiency

When God called Moses to go to Pharaoh and declare boldly, “Let my people go,” Moses responded,

Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue. Then the Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?” (Exodus 4:10, 11 ESV).

Fulfilling God’s direct call often demands much more than it seems we have to give. But remember, “God’s call is not an affirmation of your abilities (what you have to give); it is an acknowledgement of

⁸ Cross, *Answering the Call*, 149.



His activity in your life.”⁹

This recognition of our limitations may reveal a self-focus. When God calls us to a specific task, we often respond as Moses did—with excuses that focus on our insufficiencies. But the call of God requires a relinquishing of the past self with both its strengths and weaknesses. Now the focus is on God and His all-sufficiency. Note what God said to Moses, “I will help you...(I) will teach you.” Regardless of our strengths or limitations, our sufficiency is of God.

The Call to Ministry Requires a Response

When Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” He was directly calling them to ministry. They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Others that God called were reluctant yet obedient. Moses reminded God of his inability to speak. Jeremiah hesitated because he was just a child. Jonah was rebellious, refusing to go to Nineveh in response to God’s call. Through a series of God-ordained calamities, Jonah eventually repented and went. God’s call to ministry is an opportunity to respond with a faith-filled “YES!” to a life you were born to live, to a relationship with God as a fellow laborer, to intimate fellowship with others who share your passion for God’s call.


When responding to God’s call you may wonder, “Does God’s call require that I leave the work I am doing (i.e. occupation, career) to provide for myself and my family?” Peter, James and John, Paul, as well as other leaders in the New Testament, sometimes pursued occupations. Paul worked as a tentmaker providing funds to meet his needs. His labor assured that he was not a financial burden to those he served (Acts 18:1–4; 2 Corinthians 12:14, 15). Paul’s tent making could also have been another avenue for ministry. “A workshop was a relatively quiet environment, which could facilitate conversation. Such an environment would have enabled Paul to speak about Jesus with customers and colleagues alike. His occupational setting was therefore a major means of evangelism.”¹⁰Keep in mind, when Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia with an offering from the church at Philippi, Paul left tent making and devoted himself exclusively to preaching (Acts 18:5). Tent making was just a means to fulfill God’s ministry call.

When prayerfully considering continued pursuit of a career or occupation after responding to God’s call to ministry, we must constantly keep this in mind. Regardless of what they were doing or what they continued to do, each of Christ’s followers “left everything” or “counted it all loss.” In other words, after Christ’s call to ministry, they never again perceived their career or occupation as the most significant aspect of their lives. So, while you may pursue a job or career as an avenue of ministry or to provide support for ministry, Christ’s call demands that you “leave everything.” The job or career becomes secondary to Christ’s call to follow Him.

The Call to Ministry Is Irrevocable

⁹ Barnett, Called, 19.

¹⁰ Steve Walton, “Corinth in Acts: Paul’s Financial Support,” Accessed September 6, 2019. bibleodyssey.org/en/places/related-articles/corinth-in-acts-pauls-financial-support.



“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (for He does not withdraw what He has given, nor does He change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call)” (Romans 11:29 AMP).

The *Names of God Bible* translation says, “God never changes his mind when he gives gifts or when he calls someone.”

After Jesus’ death and resurrection, Simon Peter said to several of the disciples, “I’m going fishing!” Perhaps he was filled with guilt and discouragement because of his denial of Jesus. Perhaps he had decided, “I’m not worthy of God’s call. I will return to my fishing.” The others agreed to go with him. They fished all night and did not catch anything. In the morning, Jesus called to them from the shore asking if they had caught any fish. When they told Him they hadn’t, He called for them to cast their net on the other side of the ship. Peter and the disciples obeyed and their net was filled with fish.

When the disciples recognized it was Jesus, they brought their boat to shore. Jesus had prepared breakfast over the campfire. As they sat around the fire, Jesus asked Peter, “Simon, do you love me?”

Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Jesus asked this question twice again. Each time Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” And each time Jesus reaffirmed Peter’s call, “Feed my sheep.”

Even though Peter had become distracted and unfaithful, Jesus had never revoked the call. Neither will God change His mind about the calling and gifts He has given you even though you may become disobedient or unfaithful. He will not change His mind even when you are discouraged and doubt the impact and value of your calling. He will not change His mind when you become distracted allowing His call to become less of a priority. He will be faithful to reaffirm His call if you will allow Him to. He called you and He gifted you. And He isn’t taking it back!

The Call to Ministry Does Not Change—Assignments May

In Acts 9, Saul was on a mission to arrest any followers of Jesus. On his way to Damascus, a brilliant light shined down on Saul and he heard a voice say, “I am Jesus the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you are to do.”

Saul was speechless. He had experienced an undeniable call of God. From that day forward, Paul gave all of himself to fulfilling God’s call to preach the gospel. At the end of his journey Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

When you acknowledge and accept the gift of God’s calling on your life, you may think your assignment will never change and will always look a certain way. This isn’t always the case. Your call might possibly



offer you many different assignments that are all equally valuable to God.

Paul had many different assignments as he fulfilled his calling. Yes, Paul preached. But he also acted as a missionary, philosopher, politician, mentor, and more.

You can read about one of Paul's most interesting assignments in the book of Philippians. Since the time of Paul's encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus, Paul had dreamed of preaching in Rome. Preaching in Rome was important to Paul because it was the capital of the empire and the center of the known world. Paul knew that winning the citizens of Rome to Christ would impact the entire world for generations to come. But, surprisingly for Paul, God had another assignment for him to fulfill. Paul was assigned by God to be a royal prisoner of Nero in the city of Rome. During Paul's stay in the Roman prison:

- The royal guards were chained to Paul each day, four hours at a time. In two years Paul could have personally shared the gospel with 4,280 of these men.
- Many of Nero's family members accepted Christ because of Paul's life and teaching. These people were in influential positions of authority that was used to spread the message of the gospel.
- Most importantly, while Paul was in prison, he wrote a large portion of the New Testament letters. His writings encouraged the believers they were written to in the early church and continue to provide sound doctrine and personal guidance to believers today.

Tyler, a young Christian leader, is a current example of the many different assignments experienced as you fulfill God's call.

Tyler grew up loving Jesus. His one goal in life was to be a Christian businessman. His teachers and classmates in university business classes declared that he was destined to be a CEO. Five years after graduation, Tyler became a CEO, the highest executive position in his company.

During this time, Tyler still maintained a passionate relationship with God.

One night while praying, Tyler felt God calling him into the ministry. He left everything behind to be the pastor of a small community church. For 10 years, Tyler served the church with passion and love. As time passed, the church began to thrive. New families started attending and hundreds of people gave their lives to Christ. Tyler loved serving families and the community.

But in Tyler's heart there was a shift. Tyler continued loving the people of his congregation, but he knew in his heart that his pastoral ministry was coming to an end. Following the open door God provided, Tyler resigned from pastoring and began a new role at a large corporation in the city. The other pastors in the community were shocked when they heard that Tyler was leaving his pastorate; they considered it "giving up."

Was this really giving up on the gift of God's calling? Fast-forward six years later to glimpse Tyler's life. Tyler again became the CEO of his company. He served over 1,600 employees and their families daily. He was viewed as a key influencer and leader in the community. His financial success allowed him to

***Faithfully pursue His calling
wherever He places you!***

be the largest financial contributor to the church he had once led. He attended each week and served on the worship team, taught a Bible study and served as a church board member.

Tyler's call from God and the impact of his ministry continued even after he left pastoring. His assignment had changed but God's call remained. Today, Tyler has returned to a pastoral assignment, shepherding pastors as they pursue their personal calls to ministry.

As you prayerfully seek God concerning the ministry to which He has called you, be open to the unique assignments He has for you. Invite God to examine your motives, seek godly counsel from spiritual leaders, and bring your spouse alongside in the decision-making process. Faithfully pursue His calling wherever He places you!

LIVE IT OUT!

Perhaps you have never stopped to consider that God's call to ministry is for every believer, including you. Spend some time reading about those God has called in the Bible and in Christian history. Seek God daily asking Him to make His call known to you. And respond with a resounding "YES!" to this amazing gift of calling.

LET'S TALK

What area(s) of ministry do you sense God is calling you to? How can you cultivate the gifts and skills that could be used in this specific area(s) of ministry?

MY STORY:

Asma Sardar Gann, Missionary (Fiji)



Hello, my name is Asma Sardar Gann. I am serving the Lord as a lay minister in the Church of God of Prophecy. Seven years ago, God called me to be a missionary in the Fiji Islands. My husband and I married in Pakistan and I joined him in Fiji where we serve the church in overseer ministry. But my ministry began in Pakistan. God chose me to serve Him. He called me by my name.

When I was small, we had cell meetings at my home. There was a pastor who was from Spain. He prophesied over my mom that God had seen her tears and heard her prayers; he would choose her children to serve Him.

When, I was in the tenth grade, I attended a crusade. At the end of the service, the pastor gave an altar call to pray for people. So many people went to the altar for prayer, but I did not go because I was a bit shy and hesitant at that time. However, while I was praying, I felt the pastor's hand on my head, and he started to prophesy over me. He said, "God has chosen you to serve Him. God is going to use you in His mighty name." The pastor told me how much God loves me.

I remember when I was 18. My mom prophesied over me, "God says, 'I have chosen you. You won't be staying in Pakistan for a long time; you will serve me in another country.'"

And there was another time that I attended a regular Sunday church service. A local pastor, who was preaching that Sunday, prophesied over me, "God has called you to serve Him. Soon God will take you to another country."

This is one of the ways I know beyond any doubt that God has called me into the ministry and that I am serving within His will for my life. I believe that as He spoke directly to me, and through others, that He can also speak to you.



AFFIRMATION: GOD'S ASSURANCE

CHAPTER 5:

In the e-book, *Called! Understanding the Call to Ministry*, Chuck Fuller writes, "It seems that a genuine call to ministry involves two necessary components: an internal compulsion for the task, and external confirmation."¹ God works internally within the called one to affirm His call and He works externally through others to further confirm that internal affirmation.

Dr. Mark Rutland is the founder and executive director of the National Institute of Christian Leadership. He has served as president of Oral Roberts University as well as Southeastern University and is a New York Times best selling author.

Dr. Rutland first received his ministry call one night when responding to a salvation invitation.

As I walked up that aisle, wanting only forgiveness and salvation, a shocking and alien thought pushed its way into my mind and insistently demanded attention. It was like an announcement, a declaration of self to soul. I nearly said the words aloud as I walked toward the front.

I must preach. I am meant to be a preacher. This is what my life is meant to be.

A preacher? The thought was amazing to me. Even as I prayed with Jack (youth pastor) at the altar to ask Jesus into my heart, the urgency of the thought grew. By the time the prayer of faith was finished, I felt compelled to share the thought with Jack.

Many people find themselves at this same crucial moment. They experience a call from God and soon share the experience with others. The confirmation from Dr. Rutland's youth pastor was a pivotal turning point for his entire ministry. Dr. Rutland goes on to share Jack's response:

He placed his hands on my head and began to pray. He prayed that God would lift the sense of the call or confirm it. Then he prayed that having done that, God would never release me from it. "Break him, bend him and take everything he holds dear until he obeys the call and claim on his life." Such ruthlessness in prayer was remarkable to my heart. It made an indelible impression on me.

Later, God continued to use the local church to affirm Dr. Rutland's ministry. When describing his first church, Dr. Rutland said:

I did not so much pastor these people as they adopted my wife and me. Yet for all the 12-minute sermons filled with useless quotations by German theologians, for all the crazy, half-baked ideas, for all the misplaced, youthful enthusiasm, for all the inability and ignorance, that rural Georgia congregation poured on the love. They overlooked so much that was bad and pretended they could see plenty of good through a generous camouflage.

From his spiritual birth until his first pastorate, Mark Rutland experienced both the internal compulsion initiated by the Spirit of God and the external affirmation of godly men and women.



"For you created my inmost being..."
Psalm 139:13

Internal Compulsion

Internal compulsion is like a magnet drawing you toward certain values, actions, relationships, career paths, and more. Internal compulsion includes all that "lies within us." It includes our spiritual gifts, our natural strengths and weaknesses, our personality (introvert or extrovert, confident or insecure, fearful or courageous, etc.), our life experiences, impacting relationships, and more. As we consider each of these when seeking affirmation of calling we must pause and remind ourselves that these things were predetermined and formed within us by God. Psalm 139:13 affirms this, "For you created my inmost being." The *Good News Translation* states it this way, "You created every part of me." We are tempted to think that these internal factors that make us unique and sometimes even quirky or difficult happened by chance as we have lived our lives. But God's acts are always intentional. The internal person that you are has been determined by God so that you can fulfill the good works He purposed for you to do.

A significant aspect of internal compulsion is passion. "Charles Spurgeon claimed that the 'first sign' of the calling is 'an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work.'"¹ Passion is the internal compulsion that can lead someone to external acts of compassion. Passion is awakened when we become aware of and filled with compassion concerning an unmet need in our community, in our local church, in the world, or in the global body of Christ. I believe God ignites passion within a believer's heart so that he or she is compelled to act. What lack within the body of Christ or within your community awakens passion with you that compels you to act? Do you find yourself overwhelmed with a passion for a specific cause such as serving the poor, discipling children, strengthening families, freeing children and women from abuse or some other unmet need within the body of Christ, your community or the world?

A young woman raised in a dysfunctional family and placed in the foster care system at various times during her childhood received Christ as Savior as a young adult. After several years of serving in her local church in children's ministry and community outreach, God confirmed his specific call for her life—foster parenting. Though her childhood was difficult, God had intentionally woven life experiences, gifts, relationships, and personality traits into her life. The unique aspects of her inner being created a passion within her for the ministry God called her to. Currently, she provides a loving, safe environment

1 Barnett, Called, 22.

to two young siblings who were taken from a dysfunctional home and placed in the foster care system.

How can you better understand your inner compulsion—those things within you that draw you and compel you to act?

- Prayerfully consider all the things that make up your inner being. Invite God to guide you in this time of self-discovery as you consider specific things that have contributed to who you are. Included in the appendix is an examen, a devotional practice involving reflection on one's thoughts and conduct. The examen will guide you as you take time to prayerfully appraise your life, heart, and soul.
- Participate in available inventories such as a spiritual gifts inventory or a personality test. The S.H.A.P.E. test helps you discover God's purpose in your life through an inventory that examines your spiritual gifts, heart (passion), abilities, personality, and experiences. These inventories are included in the resource list at the conclusion of this course.
- Serve where God has placed you. Too many believers sit on the sidelines in their local churches, in their communities, even in their homes and wait for God to call them into ministry. When God created you, He called you. Don't wait for another invitation. As you serve, you will better understand your spiritual gifts, passion, abilities, and personality. And you will move closer to understanding the specific ministry assignment God has called you too.

**"... Set Barnabas and Saul apart to do the work I have called them to do."
Acts 13:2**

External Affirmation

Your community of believers—local church leaders, godly mentors, and believing family members—provides external confirmation.

An example of external confirmation of calling by the local church is found in Acts 13:1–3. Saul and Barnabas served as prophets and teachers in the local church at Antioch. As they were worshiping and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to the local church saying, "Set Barnabas and Saul apart to do the work I have called them to do." After the church had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on Barnabas and Saul as an act of affirmation and commissioning to do the missionary work that God had called them to do.

The responsibility of the local church is very significant in "sending out" those God has called to minis-

**“... a wide door for effective service
has opened to me.”**

1 Corinthians 16:9 (AMP)

ter. Ephesians 4:11, 12 reminds us that God gave the leadership of the body of Christ to prepare God's people for works of service. We see in Acts 6 that the local church also provides opportunities for individuals to serve allowing those God is calling to gain ministry experience. Finally the local church provides encouragement as the called one moves out to fulfill his or her calling. Does the leadership of your local church recognize God's call on your life? Have they seen evidence of your willingness and ability to minister with passion and skill?

Have you submitted yourself to the counsel of a godly mentor? If not, ask a faithful Christian in your local church or among believing family members to meet with you regularly for the purpose of helping you discern calling and develop the Christ-like qualities that will enable you to minister with integrity.

Believing family members can also provide confirmation of calling. If you are still living under the authority of your parents, it is a biblical principle to seek their approval. While unbelieving parents may not fully understand or embrace that God is calling you to ministry, it is important to seek their approval as well. If you are no longer under your parents' authority due to age, financial independence, or marital status, seeking their counsel concerning your call to ministry is an act of honor and respect that will bring blessing to you and to your parents.


Another external affirmation of calling is an open door of ministry. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 16:9 (AMP), "... a wide door for effective service has opened to me." As you continue to respond to God's call to spiritual maturity and to do good works, God will provide an open door to respond to His call at just the right time and in just the right setting.

Counting the costs of ministry can also provide external affirmation. Have you counted the cost of obedience to God's call? In his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer made a statement that is now well known. "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."² Dietrich Bonhoeffer was hanged for his part in a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. Many others that obeyed God's call to ministry have lost their lives, their freedom, their wealth; they have had to leave their families and travel to unfamiliar places. They have experienced discouragement, criticism, isolation, fear, and doubt.

Hebrews 11:35–38 lists some very difficult experiences that men and women who responded to God's call experienced. Yet, they were faithful and were commended by God for being full of faith (Hebrews 11:39 NIV). We've already discussed the difficulties Jeremiah experienced as he prophetically declared the Word of the Lord. But in his difficulties, there was a strong assurance of God's presence and favor.

In Jeremiah 20:10, 11 the prophet declares, "I hear many whispering, 'Terror on every side! Denounce him! Let's denounce him!' All my friends are waiting for me to slip, saying, 'Perhaps he will be de-

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1963), 99.



ceived; then we will prevail over him and take our revenge on him.’ But the LORD is with me like a mighty warrior; so my persecutors will stumble and not prevail” (NIV).

As you seek external affirmation of ministry, don’t fail to consider the joys of ministry.

- Obedience to God’s call leads to a greater knowledge of God and intimacy with God. Each time you take a step of faith to fulfill the ministry He has called you to, you discover more about His character—His faithfulness, His wisdom, His provision, His love. As you study His Word, you gain a deeper understanding of His truth. As you spend time pursuing Him through the spiritual disciplines you experience His presence, His transforming love, His healing power.
- Obedience to God’s call allows you to experience the highest form of worship. “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1 NIV). Offering our lives in obedience to God’s call is worship in its purest form.
- Faithful obedience to God’s call allows you to experience fruitfulness that is eternal. “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16).
- Faithful obedience to God’s call allows you to experience fulfillment of all God purposed for you in this life. In Paul’s last letter to Timothy, his spiritual son, he wrote, “I have fought the good and worthy and noble fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith [firmly guarding the gospel against error]. In the future there is reserved for me the [victor’s] crown of righteousness [for being right with God and doing right], which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that [great] day...” (2 Timothy 4:7, 8 AMP). Paul had experienced the fruitfulness of ministry, he had witnessed God’s power at work in and through him, he had birthed spiritual sons, he had established churches throughout the Roman world. Paul had accomplished all that God had called him to.

God is still calling, offering this amazing gift to every believer, regardless of age, gender, race, education, or status. On the authority of God’s Word I can say with confidence, “He is calling you!” What is your answer?

LIVE IT OUT!

Take time to understand your inner compulsions.

- What are your passions?
- What life experiences have encouraged the development of these passions?
- What abilities or spiritual gifts do you have that could be used in fulfilling these passions?

Consider the external affirmation you have received.

- How has your calling been affirmed by individuals in your congregation?
 - How has your calling been affirmed by members of your family and close friends?
- Have recent experiences or opportunities affirmed your calling?

LET'S TALK

What words have been spoken to you by another person that has affirmed your calling? How has God's Word affirmed your calling?

APPENDICES & RESOURCES

DISC PERSONALITY PROFILE WORKSHEET

Working left to right across the page, place a 4 next to the word which most accurately describes you and then a 3, 2 and 1 next to the words that progressively are less accurate at describing you. You must use each number (1-4) once in each row..

How I see me in an exercise situation (sport or gym)...

Directing	—	Influencing	—	Steady	—	Cautious	—
Self Certain	—	Optimistic	—	Deliberate	—	Restrained	—
Adventurous	—	Enthusiastic	—	Predictable	—	Logical	—
Decisive	—	Open	—	Patient	—	Analytical	—
Daring	—	Impulsive	—	Stabilizing	—	Precise	—
Restless	—	Emotional	—	Protective	—	Skeptical	—
Competitive	—	Persuading	—	Accommodating	—	Curious	—
Assertive	—	Talkative	—	Modest	—	Direct	—
Experimenting	—	Charming	—	Loyal	—	Consistent	—
Forceful	—	Sensitive	—	Sincere	—	Perfectionist	—
TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—

How I see me at home...

Directing	—	Influencing	—	Steady	—	Cautious	—
Self Certain	—	Optimistic	—	Deliberate	—	Restrained	—
Adventurous	—	Enthusiastic	—	Predictable	—	Logical	—
Decisive	—	Open	—	Patient	—	Analytical	—
Daring	—	Impulsive	—	Stabilizing	—	Precise	—
Restless	—	Emotional	—	Protective	—	Skeptical	—
Competitive	—	Persuading	—	Accommodating	—	Curious	—
Assertive	—	Talkative	—	Modest	—	Direct	—
Experimenting	—	Charming	—	Loyal	—	Consistent	—
Forceful	—	Sensitive	—	Sincere	—	Perfectionist	—
TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—

How my peers see me...

Directing	—	Influencing	—	Steady	—	Cautious	—
Self Certain	—	Optimistic	—	Deliberate	—	Restrained	—
Adventurous	—	Enthusiastic	—	Predictable	—	Logical	—
Decisive	—	Open	—	Patient	—	Analytical	—
Daring	—	Impulsive	—	Stabilizing	—	Precise	—
Restless	—	Emotional	—	Protective	—	Skeptical	—
Competitive	—	Persuading	—	Accommodating	—	Curious	—
Assertive	—	Talkative	—	Modest	—	Direct	—
Experimenting	—	Charming	—	Loyal	—	Consistent	—
Forceful	—	Sensitive	—	Sincere	—	Perfectionist	—
TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—	TOTAL	—

Scorecard: Circle the numbers which relate to the totals found in the previous tables.

Excercise Personality

Home Personality

Peers see me

D I S C

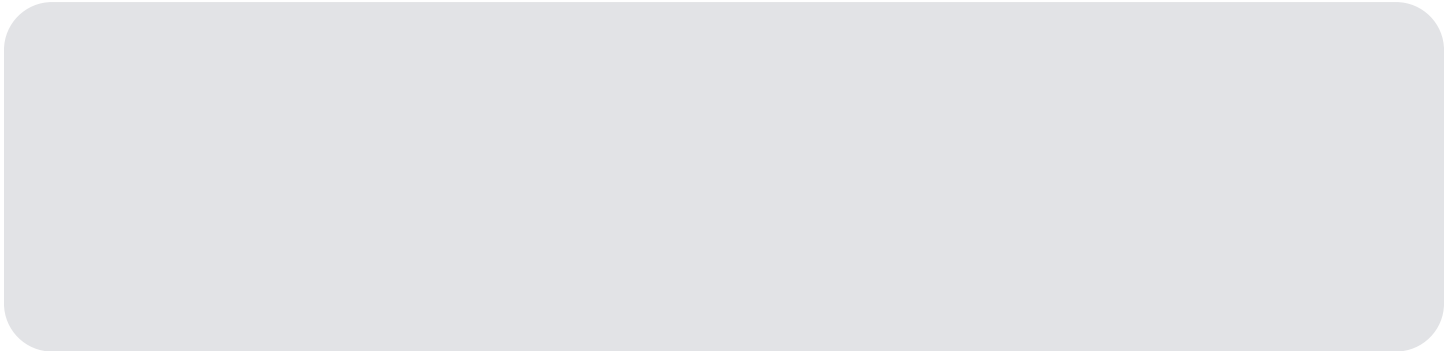
D I S C

D I S C

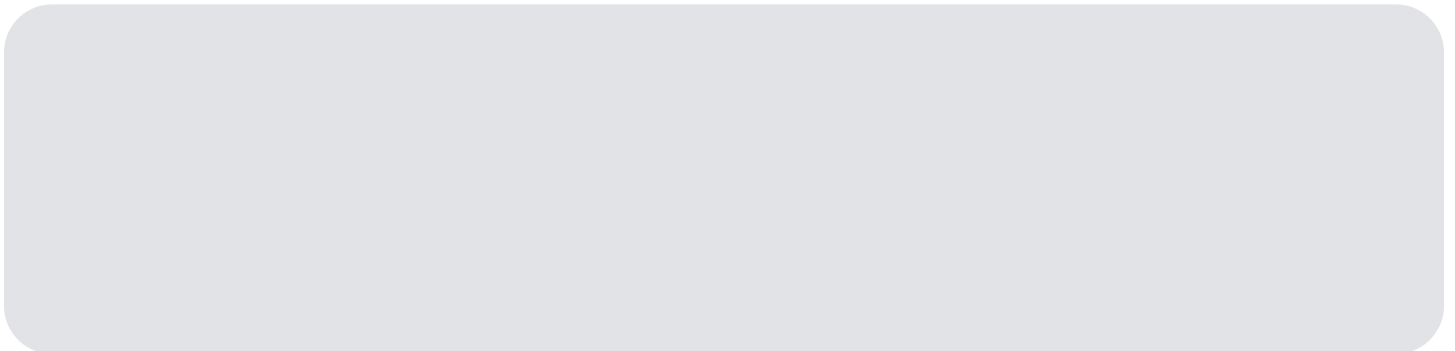
40	40	40	40	—	—	40	40	40	40	—	—	40	40	40	40	—	—
38	38	38	38	—	—	38	38	38	38	—	—	38	38	38	38	—	—
36	36	36	36	—	—	36	36	36	36	—	—	36	36	36	36	—	—
34	34	34	34	—	—	34	34	34	34	—	—	34	34	34	34	—	—
32	32	32	32	—	—	32	32	32	32	—	—	32	32	32	32	—	—
30	30	30	30	—	—	30	30	30	30	—	—	30	30	30	30	—	—
28	28	28	28	—	—	28	28	28	28	—	—	28	28	28	28	—	—
26	26	26	26	—	—	26	26	26	26	—	—	26	26	26	26	—	—
24	24	24	24	—	—	24	24	24	24	—	—	24	24	24	24	—	—
22	22	22	22	—	—	22	22	22	22	—	—	22	22	22	22	—	—
20	20	20	20	—	—	20	20	20	20	—	—	20	20	20	20	—	—
18	18	18	18	—	—	18	18	18	18	—	—	18	18	18	18	—	—
16	16	16	16	—	—	16	16	16	16	—	—	16	16	16	16	—	—
14	14	14	14	—	—	14	14	14	14	—	—	14	14	14	14	—	—
12	12	12	12	—	—	12	12	12	12	—	—	12	12	12	12	—	—
10	10	10	10	—	—	10	10	10	10	—	—	10	10	10	10	—	—

Instructions: Write briefly about your personality at work, at home, and as seen by others.

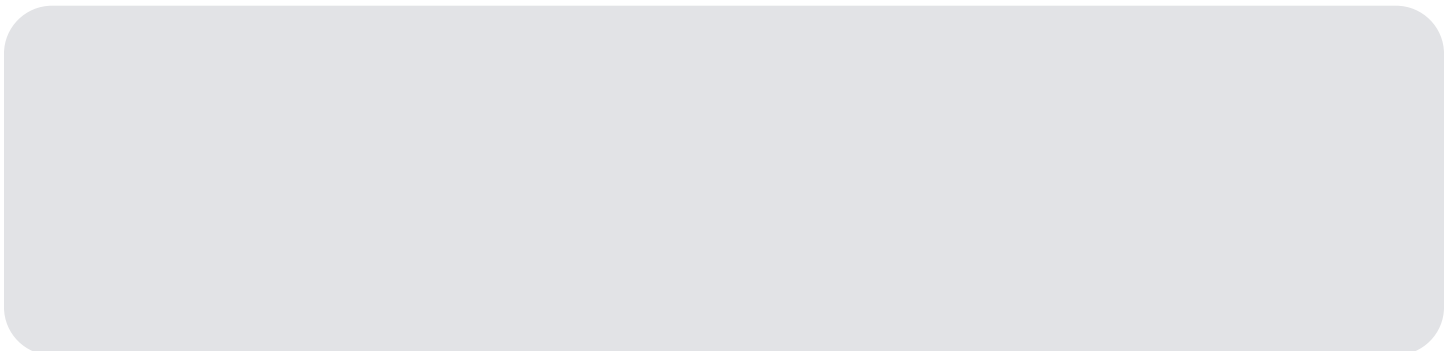
At work my personality seems to be



At home my personality seems to be...



Colleagues/peers see me as...



Aspects of my personality that might need adapting when working with clients...

BEHAVIORAL STYLE WORKSHEET

Describe your usual behavioral style, and then your behavioral style when you are under pressure or stressed (give brief examples of the characteristics of your behavior in each instance)

Usually (In normal circumstances)	Agressive / Passive / Assertive / Upset (circle one) Examples of Characteristics - body posture, tone of voice, gesture etc.
---	---



Under Stress
or Pressure

Agreesive / Passive / Assertive / Upset (circle one)

Examples of Characteristics - body posture, tone of voice, gesture etc.

What aspects of your behavioral style will you need to manage to ensure you interact effectively with others at all times?

DISCOVER YOUR SHAPE

Rick Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Church and author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, created an assessment to help individuals discover their God-ordained purpose that focuses on five aspects—

- **Spiritual gifts.** These are the unique abilities given to us by God when we become Christians.
- **Heart.** The passion that draws you to specific needs, causes, individuals.
- **Abilities.** What are you good at? What do you enjoy doing? Why have you learned these skills instead of others?
- **Personality.** Your personality helps guide you in how you will express your purpose or calling and also brings understanding of the environments where you will flourish.
- **Experiences.** You have had a unique mix of life experiences that will help you more fully understand God's purpose for your life. Experiences to consider—accomplishments, career, relationships, education, and spiritual life.

Below is a link to the Saddleback Church SHAPE assessment.

http://storage.cloversites.com/trentonchurchofchrist/documents/Shape_Assessment1.pdf

EXAMEN

An examen is the practice of taking time to prayerfully examine your own life. If you want to continue growing in intimacy with the Lord, it is good to regularly take time to reflect and consider what God is doing within you.

The practice of examen originated with the Jesuits. The society of Jesus, better known as the Jesuits, was an order of priests founded by Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier. Jesuits believe that Christian reform begins within every individual believer. Two important pillars of the society are self-awareness and indifference.

Self-awareness examen was a daily exercise for the Jesuits. (You can read more about this company of men in *Heroic Leadership* by Chris Lowney.) Before Jesuits were sent out to minister, they did a rigorous assessment of who God had made them to be and sought spiritual and emotional healing for wounds of the past.

Every day the Jesuits spent time examining their own hearts. First, they reminded themselves of their identity in Christ. Then, they reflected on those things that were drawing them closer to Christ and those things that were drawing them away from Him. Finally, they evaluated their calling and considered whether their time was spent fulfilling that calling.

The second pillar, indifference, has an entirely different meaning than the meaning it has today. Ignatius described this concept as “living with one foot raised.” Jesuits were always ready to step into whatever God called them to—immediately, without hesitation. Rather than not caring, they cared so much about God’s mission that they were willing to go anywhere at any time.

The examen below provides a brief opportunity for you to seek after the self-awareness that the Jesuits pursued. Take time to understand who God has made you to be so that you can be ready to live life with “one foot raised,” ready to say “yes” to Jesus again and again.

STILLNESS.

Focus your attention on Jesus. Invite Him to establish you in His love for you. Pray this Scripture verse in the first person, “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17–19).



REFLECTION.

Consider the shape of your heart by asking these questions:

- What am I good at? (Consider your spiritual gifts and abilities.)
- What is important to me? (What do I value? For example, relationships, excellence, integrity, etc.)
- What kind of life do I want to live? (What am I passionate about? What spiritual fruit do I want my life to produce?)
- Does the way I spend my time and energies align with my gifts, values, and passion?

AWARENESS.

Discovering your life's calling or purpose:

- "God, what is holding me back from living the life you have for me?"
- "God, give me the strength and courage to let go of everything but You." Speak to God about those specific things that you are holding on to. For example, "God, I trust you with _____ (hidden sins, regrets, fears, etc.)."
- "What do you want for me?" Don't just seek God for more things to do; also ask Him to show you what activities you need to let go of.
- "God, I would like for you to _____." Make a list and pray specifically for these things.

GRATEFULNESS.

Take time to thank God for who He created you to be and for the calling or purpose He has for your life.

CELEBRATION.

Give praise to God for His presence during this time of examen. Give Him praise for what thoughts and Scriptures He has spoken to you. Give praise for what He will allow you to do and be. Give praise for what He is doing on your behalf.

PERSONALITY STYLE INVENTORY

Just as everyone has differently shaped feet and toes from every other person, we also have differently shaped personalities. Just as no person's feet size is "right" or "wrong", so no person's personality shape is "right" or "wrong." The purpose of this inventory is to give you a picture of the shape of your preferences, but that shape, while different from the shapes of others, has nothing to do with mental health issues or problems.

The following items are arranged in pairs (a and b), and each number of the pair represents a preference you may or may not hold. Rate your preference for each item by giving it a score of 0 to 5 (0 meaning you really feel negative about it or strongly about the other member of the pair, 5 meaning you strongly prefer it or do not prefer the other member of the pair). One of the pair must have a higher score than the other and the scores for a and b must add up to 5 (0 & 5, 1 & 4, 2 & 3, etc.). Do not use fractions, such as 2 1/2.

I prefer:

- 1a. ____ making decisions after finding out what others think.
- 1b. ____ making decisions without consulting others.

- 2a. ____ being called imaginative or intuitive.
- 2b. ____ being called factual and accurate.

- 3a. ____ making decisions about people in organizations based on available data and systematic analysis of situations.
- 3b. ____ making decisions about people in organizations based on empathy, feelings, and understanding their needs and values.

- 4a. ____ allowing commitments to occur if others want to make them.
- 4b. ____ pushing for definite commitments to ensure that they are made.

- 5a. ____ quiet, thoughtful time alone.
- 5b. ____ active, energetic time with people.

- 6a. ____ using methods I know well that are effective to get the job done.
- 6b. ____ trying to think of new methods of doing tasks when confronted with them.

- 7a. ____ drawing conclusions based on unemotional logic and careful step-by-step analysis.

- 7b. _____ drawing conclusions based upon what I feel and believe about life and people from past experiences
- 8a. _____ avoiding deadlines.
8b. _____ setting a schedule and sticking to it.
- 9a. _____ talking a while and then thinking to myself about the subject.
9b. _____ talking freely for an extended period and thinking to myself at a later time.
- 10a. _____ thinking about possibilities.
10b. _____ dealing with actualities.
- 11a. _____ being thought of as a thinking person.
11b. _____ being thought of as a feeling person.
- 12a. _____ considering every possible angle for a long time before and after making a decision.
12b. _____ getting the information I need, considering it for a while, and then making a fairly quick, firm decision.
- 13a. _____ inner thoughts and feelings others cannot see.
13b. _____ activities and occurrences in which others join.
- 14a. _____ the abstract or theoretical.
14b. _____ the concrete or real.
- 15a. _____ helping others explore their feelings.
15b. _____ helping others make logical decisions.
- 16a. _____ change and keeping options open.
16b. _____ predictability and knowing in advance.
- 17a. _____ communicating little of my inner thinking and feelings.
17b. _____ communicating freely my inner thinking and feelings.
- 18a. _____ possible views as a whole.
18b. _____ the factual details available.
- 19a. _____ using common sense and conviction to make decisions.
19b. _____ using data, analysis, and reason to make decisions.

- 20a. _____ planning ahead based upon projections.
20b. _____ planning as necessities arise, just before carrying out plans.
- 21a. _____ meeting new people.
21b. _____ being alone or with one person I know well.
- 22a. _____ ideas.
22b. _____ facts.
- 23a. _____ convictions.
23b. _____ verifiable conclusions.
- 24a. _____ keeping appointments and notes about commitments in notebooks or in appointment books as much as possible.
24b. _____ using appointment books and notebooks as minimally as possible (although I may use them).
- 25a. _____ discussing a new, unconsidered issue at length in a group.
25b. _____ puzzling out issues in my mind, then sharing the results with another person.
- 26a. _____ carrying out carefully laid, detailed plans with precision.
26b. _____ designing plans and structures without necessarily carrying them out.
- 27a. _____ logical people.
27b. _____ feeling people.
- 28a. _____ being free to do things on the spur of the moment.
28b. _____ knowing well in advance what I an expected to do.
- 29a. _____ being the center of attention.
29b. _____ being reserved.
- 30a. _____ imagining the nonexistent.
30b. _____ examining details of the actual.
- 31a. _____ experiencing emotional situations, discussions, movies.
31b. _____ considering how you are being impacted by a emotional situation.
- 32a. _____ starting meetings at a prearranged time.
32b. _____ starting meetings when all are comfortable and ready.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Transfer your scores for each item of each pair to the appropriate blanks. Be careful to check a and b letters to be sure you are recording scores in the right places. Then total the scores for each dimension.

You will notice that there are four (4) dimensions: I-E, S-N, T-F, J-P

In each pair of letters, one score will be higher than the other. Total the scores of each column. Take the higher score of each dimension and enclose in the four (4) boxes at the bottom of the page. These four (4) letters make up your profile. Look at the thumbnail sketch of your personality profile.

DIMENSION

I Item

1b. _____
5a. _____
9a. _____
13a. _____
17a. _____
21b. _____
25b. _____
29b. _____

Total I. _____

E Item

1a. _____
5b. _____
9b. _____
13b. _____
17b. _____
21a. _____
25a. _____
29a. _____

Total E. _____

DIMENSION

T Item

3a. _____
7a. _____
11a. _____
15b. _____
19b. _____
23b. _____
27a. _____
31b. _____

Total T. _____

F Item

3b. _____
7b. _____
11b. _____
15a. _____
19a. _____
23a. _____
27b. _____
31a. _____

Total F. _____

DIMENSION

S Item

2b. _____
6a. _____
10b. _____
14b. _____
18b. _____
22b. _____
26a. _____
30b. _____

Total S. _____

DIMENSION

J Item

4b. _____
8b. _____
12b. _____
16b. _____
20a. _____
24a. _____
28b. _____
32a. _____

Total J. _____

N Item

2a. _____
6b. _____
10a. _____
14a. _____
18a. _____
22a. _____
26b. _____
30a. _____

Total N. _____

P Item

4a. _____
8a. _____
12a. _____
16a. _____
20b. _____
24b. _____
28a. _____
32b. _____

Total P. _____

_____	_____	_____	_____
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CHARACTERISTICS FREQUENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH EACH LETTER

The following phrases and words describe the various letter designations. Circle the applicable letter and descriptions on the page.

E for Extraversion

Expend energies
Interaction
External events
Multiplicity of relationships

S for Sensing

Experience
Realistic
Actual
Practicality

T for Thinking

Objective
Principles
Laws
Logical analysis

J for Judging

Decided
Closure
Let's get the show on the road
Deadline!!!

I for Introversion

Conserves energy
Concentration
Internal reactions
Limited relationships

N for Intuition

Hunches
Speculative (what if?)
Possible
Ingenuity

F for Feeling

Subjective
Values
Extenuating circumstances
Sympathy

P for Perception

Gather more data
Open options
There's plenty of time
What deadline???

SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

A. Instructions:

1. There are a total of 110 statements below. Please indicate whether you **Strongly Agree, Agree Somewhat, are Undecided, Disagree Somewhat, or Completely Disagree** with each question.
2. Transfer your answers to the profile sheet at the end of this document.
3. Total your scores for each of the gifts. Each gift will have a score between ZERO and TWENTY.
4. Order the gifts in descending order of score. Higher scores indicate your more dominant gifts.

B. Please use the following selections for your answers:

- 4 – Strongly Agree
- 3 – Agree Somewhat
- 2 – Undecided
- 1 – Disagree Somewhat
- 0 – Completely Disagree

- ___ (1) People seem to be willing to follow my leadership without much resistance.
- ___ (2) I like to proclaim God's Word to fellow Christians.
- ___ (3) It is a joy for me to proclaim God's plan of salvation to unchurched people.
- ___ (4) It is enjoyable to have the responsibility of leading other people in their spiritual life.
- ___ (5) I'm excited by helping people discover important truths in the Scriptures.
- ___ (6) I have special joy singing praises to God either alone or with other people.
- ___ (7) It is enjoyable to motivate people to a higher spiritual commitment.
- ___ (8) People with spiritual problems seem to come to me for advice and counsel.
- ___ (9) I received excellent grades in school.
- ___ (10) There is great joy in doing little jobs around the church.
- ___ (11) I look for opportunities to assist people in their work.
- ___ (12) There is great joy in leading people to accomplish group goals.
- ___ (13) I like to organize people for more effective ministry.
- ___ (14) There is great satisfaction in giving large amounts of money for the Lord's work.
- ___ (15) I feel great compassion for the problems of others.
- ___ (16) It seems easy to perceive whether a person is honest or dishonest.
- ___ (17) I am ready to try the impossible because I have a great trust in God.
- ___ (18) There is great joy in having people in my home.
- ___ (19) I find that the repair and maintenance of things in my environment come easily to me.
- ___ (20) I seem to recognize prayer needs before others.
- ___ (21) I enjoy the opportunity to pray with and for a person who is physically ill that they may be made well.
- ___ (22) I adapt easily in a culture different from mine.
- ___ (23) I feel a sense of authority in my relationship to the group.
- ___ (24) I like to proclaim the Word of God to comfort others.

- ___ (25) I seem able to determine when the Spirit has prepared a person to receive Jesus Christ.
- ___ (26) It is exciting to provide spiritual leadership for a congregation.
- ___ (27) Teaching a Bible class is one of the most enjoyable things I do (or could do) in the church.
- ___ (28) God has given me the ability to play a musical instrument, and I enjoy it.
- ___ (29) It is a joy to give encouragement to people who are discouraged.
- ___ (30) I enjoy providing solutions to difficult problems in life.
- ___ (31) It seems easy to learn difficult truths.
- ___ (32) I enjoy doing routine tasks for the glory of God.
- ___ (33) I enjoy helping with the emergency tasks around the church.
- ___ (34) People seem to enjoy following me in doing an important task.
- ___ (35) There is joy in making important decisions.
- ___ (36) I find real joy in giving a generous portion of my money to the Lord.
- ___ (37) Visiting people in retirement homes gives me great satisfaction.
- ___ (38) I seem to know very quickly whether something is right or wrong.
- ___ (39) When things seem impossible, I'm ready to move forward.
- ___ (40) I do not feel uncomfortable when people drop in unexpectedly.
- ___ (41) I have enjoyed creating various kinds of arts and/or crafts.
- ___ (42) Prayer is one of my favorite spiritual exercises.
- ___ (43) I have prayed for an emotionally ill person and seen the person get better.
- ___ (44) It is easy for me to move into a new community and make friends.
- ___ (45) I have little fear in leading people where God wants them to go.
- ___ (46) I enjoy relating and sharing God's Word to the issues of the day.
- ___ (47) I feel a burden to share the Gospel with people.
- ___ (48) I like to assist people with their spiritual problems.
- ___ (49) It seems that people learn when I teach them.
- ___ (50) I have enjoyed being involved with church, school and/or local musical productions.
- ___ (51) I like to encourage inactive church members to become involved Christians again.
- ___ (52) It seems that people generally follow my advice.
- ___ (53) I am able to understand difficult portions of God's Word.
- ___ (54) I receive great satisfaction in doing small or trivial tasks in church.
- ___ (55) I desire to do the tasks which will free others for important ministry.
- ___ (56) It is more effective to delegate a task to someone else rather than to do it myself.
- ___ (57) I enjoy the responsibility for the achievement of group goals.
- ___ (58) I appreciate the opportunity to financially support a critical situation.
- ___ (59) I sense joy in comforting people in difficult situations.
- ___ (60) The difference between truth and error is easily perceived by me.
- ___ (61) I am often ready to believe God will lead us through a situation when others feel it is impossible.
- ___ (62) People seem to feel very comfortable in my home.
- ___ (63) I like to create things with my hands.
- ___ (64) God consistently answers my prayers in tangible ways.

- ___ (65) I have visited a person who was sick, prayed that God would make them physically whole, and the person got better.
- ___ (66) I am able to relate well to Christians of different locations or cultures.
- ___ (67) I appreciate the opportunity to proclaim God's Word to others.
- ___ (68) It is important for me to speak God's Word of warning and judgment in the world today.
- ___ (69) It is a joy to share what Jesus means to me with an unchurched neighbor.
- ___ (70) People like to bring their troubles and concerns to me because they feel I care.
- ___ (71) One of the joys of my ministry is training people to be more effective Christians.
- ___ (72) I feel secure in the fact that my musical ability will be of benefit to other people with whom I come in contact.
- ___ (73) People who are feeling perplexed often come to me for encouragement and comfort.
- ___ (74) I feel that I have a special insight in selecting the best alternative in a difficult situation.
- ___ (75) I have a clear understanding of biblical doctrines (teachings).
- ___ (76) I find more satisfaction in doing a job rather than finding someone else to do it.
- ___ (77) I enjoy helping other people bear their burdens.
- ___ (78) It is a thrill to inspire others to greater involvement in church work.
- ___ (79) The development of effective plans for church ministry gives me great satisfaction.
- ___ (80) It is a joy to see how much money I can give to the Lord.
- ___ (81) I enjoy ministering to a person who is sick in the hospital.
- ___ (82) I can judge well between the truthfulness and error of a given theological statement.
- ___ (83) People seem to view me as one who believes everything is possible.
- ___ (84) When missionaries come to our church I (would) like to have them come to my home.
- ___ (85) I see that the results of my working with various objects in God's creation help to improve and beautify that which other people have not seen or developed.
- ___ (86) I faithfully pray for others recognizing that their effectiveness and total well-being depends on God's answer to prayers.
- ___ (87) I like to participate in ministry to the physically or emotionally ill and pray for their recovery.
- ___ (88) The thought of beginning a new church in a new community is exciting to me.
- ___ (89) I enjoy training workers in the congregation.
- ___ (90) In a Bible class, it seems essential to share God's Word even if it irritates others.
- ___ (91) I feel a deep concern for the unreached people in my community.
- ___ (92) I enjoy a close relationship with people in a one-on-one situation.
- ___ (93) It is easy to organize materials for teaching a Bible class.
- ___ (94) Leading others in singing songs of praise to God or for pure enjoyment is personally satisfying.
- ___ (95) I would rather call on a delinquent family in my church than an unchurched family.
- ___ (96) I have a strong sense of confidence in my solutions to problems.
- ___ (97) It is an exciting challenge to read and study a difficult book of the Bible.
- ___ (98) I like to do things without attracting much attention.
- ___ (99) If a family is facing a serious crisis, I enjoy the opportunity to help them.
- ___ (100) There is great satisfaction in having others follow me in performing a task.

- ___ (101) I would rather make decisions for the group than persuade them to reach the same decision.
- ___ (102) I can give sacrificially because I know that God will meet my needs.
- ___ (103) It is a special satisfaction to visit people who are confined to their homes.
- ___ (104) I often seek the motives of a person and look beneath the words.
- ___ (105) When people are discouraged, I enjoy giving them a positive vision.
- ___ (106) People seem to enjoy coming to my house.
- ___ (107) There is pleasure in drawing, designing, and/or painting various objects.
- ___ (108) I find myself praying when I possibly should be doing other things.
- ___ (109) I feel strongly that my prayers for a sick person affect wholeness for that person.
- ___ (110) More than most, I have a strong desire to see all people of other communities and countries won to the Lord.

The Discovery Tool Profile Sheet

Transfer your scores for each question into the table below and on the following page, then compute the sum of each row.

PLEASE NOTE! The numbers on this sheet go VERTICALLY, in sequential order. To score questions 1, 23, 45, 67 and 89, add them together horizontally, giving you a grand total for the gift of Apostle. Continue this scoring through missionary gift at the bottom of the table. This provides your score for each gift.

1. Apostle	1___	23___	45___	67___	89___	=___
2. Prophet	2___	24___	46___	68___	90___	=___
3. Evangelist	3___	25___	47___	69___	91___	=___
4. Pastor	4___	26___	48___	70___	92___	=___
5. Teacher	5___	27___	49___	71___	93___	=___
6. Music	6___	28___	50___	72___	94___	=___
7. Exhortation	7___	29___	51___	73___	95___	=___
8. Wisdom	8___	30___	52___	74___	96___	=___
9. Knowledge	9___	31___	53___	75___	97___	=___



10. Serving	10___	32___	54___	76___	98___	=___
11. Helps	11___	33___	55___	77___	99___	=___
12. Leadership	12___	34___	56___	78___	100___	=___
13. Administration	13___	35___	57___	79___	101___	=___
14. Giving	14___	36___	58___	80___	102___	=___
15. Mercy	15___	37___	59___	81___	103___	=___
16. Discernment	16___	38___	60___	82___	104___	=___
17. Faith	17___	39___	61___	83___	105___	=___
18. Hospitality	18___	40___	62___	84___	106___	=___
19. Craftsmanship	19___	41___	63___	85___	107___	=___
20. Intercession	20___	42___	64___	86___	108___	=___
21. Healing	21___	43___	65___	87___	109___	=___
22. Missionary	22___	44___	66___	88___	110___	=___

Name_____

ABOUT ME

Name: _____

Age: _____

Birthday: ____/____/____

Male Female

Married Single

Do you have children? Yes No

If yes, please list their names and ages.

Address: _____

Best phone # to reach you: _____

Do you prefer a text or a phone call? Text Phone Call

Email: _____

Emergency contact and relationship to you:

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