

7 Keys for Women to Answer God's Call

You may feel that you're the least qualified for God to use and the most unlikely candidate for His Spirit to fall upon. Guess what? You're just the kind of person He chooses! God is glorified in your weakness.

The apostle Paul wrote, "But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Cor. 12:9, NIV). If you fall into the category of the least likely, you are a prime target for the Lord to come and wrap Himself around you.

The Chosen Ones

When you count yourself among God's chosen, you must understand that your position carries great responsibilities as well as privileges. I am really thankful that the Lord is bringing a release for women in ministry today.

He is setting our hearts and our voices free, but in the midst of it all, we must be careful to keep our focus. We will have opportunities for far more battles than we can possibly endure. Therefore, we must choose wisely and carefully discern the battles that the Lord has given us to fight.

The issue isn't the Lord's releasing women to minister. The issue is the lordship of Jesus Christ. We're not here to promote our agenda.

Constantly harping on women's rights comes from the wrong spirit. We want to build the body of Christ by focusing on unity. This means repairing the breach between men and women.

When we stand before others we must be careful not to be

guilty of self-exaltation. Jesus told us in Luke 14:10 to take the lowest seat and to let the host invite us to a higher place.

In many cases women have assumed leadership or responsibility because men have failed to do so. Women have seen the need and jumped in. Unfortunately, many times they have done so out of a wrong spirit and have taken an inheritance that was not meant for them.

We are to be “labourers together with God,” as Paul says (1 Cor. 3:9, KJV). Whether we are men or women, we are to take our stations on the wall and do our jobs, thankfully receiving the inheritance that God has given us and running with it, all the while helping those next to us to do the same.

It’s called servant leadership, and it requires a humble heart. You must be willing to let God raise you up.

If you want to be able to walk in the authority God wants to release to you, then you must learn how to walk under the authority that is over you—the Lord’s authority. If you want to see release in your own life, then you must be in right relationship with the Lord and with those whom He has placed in authority over you.

When you are in your proper place, doing God’s will and exercising the gifts that He has given you in the body of Christ, then you experience victory and impart to others their sense of destiny and calling.

Each of us has a great responsibility to the generation that will follow us—our children. If they are to fully realize their place in God’s plan, then we must give them a pure stream from which to drink—a stream unpolluted by bitterness, division and fear; a stream whose way has been cleared by heroes who have gone before.

A Time for Heroes

The book of Nehemiah describes how the exiled Jews who returned to Jerusalem rebuilt the walls and repaired many of the buildings, including the “House of the Heroes” (Neh. 3:16, NIV). What was this House of the Heroes?

According to historians, it was probably a barracks that had a section set aside to honor the memories and exploits of the great heroes of the Israelite nation. It contained artifacts such as scrolls, carvings and shields. The importance of keeping alive the memories of the heroes of God was honored.

Today God wants to place a heroic anointing on His people. We have been set free for a purpose. God is restoring the heroic anointing of His leaders to shape a generation that will walk in power.

A hero breaks through a barrier in one generation so that the next can go even further. For centuries no runner had broken the four-minute mile.

In 1954 a British medical student by the name of Roger Bannister did so by developing new ways of training. You might think that a record that took so long to achieve would stand for a long time.

However, less than two months later, another runner broke the four-minute mile. By the end of the year, 13 people had done so.

Once someone proves that something can be done, it creates an environment of hope and possibility that enables others to do it. That’s what being a hero means. God has chosen thousands of people to be the heroes for future generations. It’s great to be free in Christ, but if we celebrate that freedom for its own sake and hoard it for our own benefit, then we miss our ultimate calling. God has anointed us to live heroically beyond the immediate and beyond the personal.

Shaping the Next Generation

How can you be sure to maintain an unpolluted stream to pass on to those who follow? It requires hard work, prayer and vigilance. There are seven general principles that will help us keep our stream pure.

1. Develop a passion for God's Word. How important is the Bible in your daily Christian life? Do you read it devotionally, or study it vigorously, trying to understand everything you can?

If you are interested in accepting the anointing of a hero and living vicariously for another generation, understand that God is calling you to be exactly what Scripture teaches. None of us can afford to distance ourselves from Scripture, to settle for anything less than learning and understanding everything we can. For the sake of future generations we've got to hammer into the Scriptures and ask God for the understanding.

2. Expect to be wounded. Have you ever been hurt taking a stand for Jesus? Do you carry deep pain over something that another person said or did to you? Wounds are occupational hazards used by God to make us into the heroes that He has called us to be.

Anything of value costs something. King David said that he would not offer to the Lord that which cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). Everything we do as Christians takes on more meaning when we have paid a price for it. The pain is worth the price if it means you can pass on an untainted stream to those who come after you.

3. Build character from your wounds. To many, character means not doing certain things. However, in the Scriptures, the word "character" means to bear up under suffering and difficulty. Ruth is called "a woman of noble character" because she bore up under difficulty (Ruth 3:11). The Lord uses the hardships of your life to build in you pillars of character that can sustain the anointing that will rest on them.

4. Don't give place to bitterness. Hebrews 12:15 says, "See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." The Greek word for "defile" carries the idea of a dye for coloring clothes. If you allow roots of bitterness to spring up in your life, they will dye or taint everything you do.

What do you do about bitterness in your life? When the Israelites in the wilderness complained to Moses because the water was too bitter to drink, Moses threw a piece of wood into the water and the water became sweet (Ex. 15:23-25). When you throw the wood (the cross of Jesus) into your waters of bitterness, they will become sweet.

5. Submit to one another. A lot of us get uncomfortable with the word *submission*, and with good reason. Men have mistreated women throughout history, acting as if they could go it alone without the gifts that women bring. The great danger that lies in the current release of women into ministry is that it will degrade into a feminist Holy Spirit women's movement that is at odds with the men.

All of us, men and women, need to re-examine the Scriptures to understand the model that God intends. The apostle Paul summed up that model very nicely for the Ephesians: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21). God didn't intend the women to go it alone any more than He intended for the men to do so. We can't afford to pass on to the next generation an ungodly spirit of independence.

6. Don't compromise your call. There is a tendency among Christian women today that when the traditional corridors of ministry are closed to them, they seek alternative routes. Let's take intercession, for example. Now, if that's your calling, get after it! But don't choose that route simply because it's a well-worn path for women—especially if your calling is somewhere else.

The path of least resistance may not be the right path! If you settle for what's easy or open to you right now, you may miss out on God's higher calling on your life.

7. Drive a stake in the heart of the fear of man. Often the fear of man stems from having too lofty a picture of humanity and too limited a picture of God. Man and his institutions seem so big and substantial while our concept of God is restrained by sin and unbelief.

The book of Isaiah contains some powerful descriptions that compare mankind to God. The prophet wrote: "'All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. ... The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.' ... He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than He blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom" (Is. 40:6,8,23,24,28).

The God who created the universe is the same God who has commissioned you. He will strengthen and empower you. When you realize this, the fear of man will fade into the background.

Seize the Day

Take courage! You are chosen! The King of heaven and earth has called you to be a hero in this generation. The Spirit of the Lord is with you, the same Spirit who led and gave courage to Joan of Arc, Perpetua, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Corrie ten Boom and countless other women who heard God's call and seized the opportunity in their day. May we rise up and join this exalted company of the chosen—His beloved!

There is a call to courage being pronounced in our day. Do you hear it? If so, then sign up right now. Volunteer freely to be

on the front lines in Jesus' name, so that the Lord can be glorified through your life.

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