

Answering God's Call

Have you ever wondered what God wants you to do for His kingdom? If you haven't, you're in the minority because each day, thousands of believers fall to their knees to query Him. "Lord, what do You want from me?" they ask. Or, "What should I do with my life?" And sometimes we wonder if He's called us at all: "Father, did You really call me to this area of ministry?"

From Noah to David to John the Baptist and the apostle Paul, men and women alike have bombarded heaven with these questions. Some of us—heaven forbid—have even consulted psychics or tarot cards in a futile attempt to search for purpose in life.

What are we actually looking for? Do we query for easy, pat answers that require nothing of us, or are we really looking for the truth? Are we searching for a heavenly lottery, or are we willing to do what God has called us to do in life?

In our 21st-century technocratic society, we are so distracted that we often miss the really important things in our lives. Computers keep us occupied from dawn till dusk. Our families, DVDs, CDs, hobbies and a myriad of other diversions take up the rest of our time. When do we have time to listen to God, let alone respond to His call?

If Isaiah were alive today, he might have missed God's call. He could have easily let the answering machine pick up, or he could have checked his Caller ID and decided to bypass the conversation entirely.

As Christians, we can be certain of one thing: If we are truly children of God, then we are called to His purposes. He is constantly talking to us. He's gently pulling us—and sometimes even dragging us—from our comfort zones into the "God zone."

The question is, are we listening? And when we hear His call, are we mistaking it for our own desires? Are we picking up the right line?

God calls every Christian into ministry. Some of us are called to preach, others to teach or prophesy, and some to evangelize. You may be a parent, a receptionist, a chef or a maid. God has called some of you to heal others through medicine, psychology, nursing or dentistry. Your call could be something fascinating or routine. But we are all called in a unique and individual way.

Even the way we are called will differ from person to person. God's call to Isaiah came in the form of a vision or a dream: "'Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.' Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me'" (Is. 6: 6-8, NKJV).

Your call may come as a gentle prod, a frequent thought or in the form of a person, a job or a project. You might have prayed for your call, or it may have been thrust upon you. And yes, we have all been called to something beyond our own lives.

If we choose to respond, it will require that we give up something. The United States may be considered a free country, but as believers in Jesus Christ, our commitment comes with a

price. There must be an exchange in order to enter into His kingdom. That exchange—the price—will inherently include some sort of sacrifice.

Different callings require different sacrifices. Your sacrifice may not be the same as your spouse's or your close friend's. You may be called to sacrifice your pride, arrogance or ego, while others surrender their time, talent or their finances. But make no mistake—you will have to relinquish something in order to live the life God has promised you.

You must be willing to give up your will for His will, your thoughts for His thoughts and your way of doing things for His righteousness. There is no way around it: Freedom, in Him, has a price.

In these last days, God is looking for people who will rise to the occasion. Not just ordinary men and women, but extraordinary people who are 100 percent committed to His kingdom and the call of God on their lives.