

What's Stopping You?

May I ask you a direct question? If you believe there are things God is calling you to do, what's stopping you from doing them? Why the holdup?

You might be wondering, *Doesn't this guy normally write about contemporary issues in the culture and the world around us?*

Yes, of course, I do, several times a week. But every so often I feel prompted to write about practical, spiritual issues. Now is one of those times.

So, I ask you again: What's stopping you from stepping out in faith? What's stopping you from obeying the Lord? If you know what He wants you to do, why the procrastination? Why the delay?

Excuses are a dime a dozen, and we all have them in abundance.

"Tomorrow I'll step out," we say. But haven't we been saying that for years? It's hardly a cliché to say that tomorrow never comes.

We say, "When my finances get in order, I'll obey." But there will always be financial challenges, at least on some level. And more often than not, we fail to take the steps we can take. We're stuck in a rut of inaction as we wait for that mythical moment when every need will be met and problem solved. That moment will never come

We say, "Once my family is established I'll be ready." But family dynamics are fluid, and we can put our own calling on hold for decades while we wait for every family member to get his or her act together.

Why not obey the Lord today? Why not determine that now is the time to take that major step of faith? Why not live by this motto? "No excuses. Ever."

I agree that maturity is important. But will we ever be mature enough? Will we ever be able to say to God, "I'm totally ready for Your assignment?"

Do you think the disciples were ready when Jesus called them? It's clear they were not. But they were ready to get ready. They were ready to leave everything and follow Jesus. They were to be trained. And they were ready to learn how unready they were.

God has no perfect vessels to work through other than His Son. Every one of us is flawed in some way or another.

What He is looking for is willingness more than worthiness, availability more than ability. If you make yourself available, He will give you His ability. If you are willing to serve Him and be used, He will help you to walk worthy of His calling.

What, then, is stopping you? What is holding you back? Is it fear of failure? Fear of people? Fear of consequences? Fear of yourself?

Sometimes the key to breakthrough is taking one small step. Don't worry about all the things you can't do. Do what you can, however small and insignificant it might seem. God does not despise baby steps, and you shouldn't either.

Is God challenging you to share your money with the needy? Perhaps all you have is one dollar to give, but it feels like one million at the moment because your finances are so tight. Give that one dollar. A year from now, you might well be giving away one million.

Is God calling you to share your faith more boldly? Perhaps you're shy by nature, and the idea of walking up to a total stranger is intimidating to you. Take a step in the right direction. Ask a friend to go out witnessing with you. Post your personal testimony online or print it up and hand it out.

Sow some seeds in the ground. You never know which ones will take root.

Is God speaking to you to get out on the mission field? Perhaps you see no way to leave your job or you feel you need years of training to prepare for ministry. Why not sign up for a single mission trip with your church or with a recommended organization? It might just rock your world and give you a vision for the future.

Throughout the Scriptures, people had to take a first step before the miracle came. The priests had to put their feet in the Jordan River before God split the waters (see Josh. 3). The disciples had to launch out into the deep (at the wrong time of the day, no less) before they caught a miraculous catch of fish (see Luke 5). And on and on it goes. People had to respond by faith before the breakthrough came.

It's the same thing today. Nothing will happen until we take the steps we know how to take. Even if the Lord gives us encouraging signs that He is with us and is calling us, we must step through the doors He opens.

Are you willing to do that today? Are you willing to acknowledge that your excuses are simply disguises for unbelief or fear or, worse still, rebellion?

Leonard Ravenhill once said, "One of these days some simple soul will pick up the Book of God, read it, and believe it. Then the rest of us will be embarrassed."

Could that simple soul be you? Believe God and take a step of faith. Seize hold of His promises today and get out of your comfort zone. Live today in such a way that you will have no regrets tomorrow.

Just do it.