

When You Want to Quit God's Calling on Your Life

"Why am I doing this to myself?" I asked. Excuses to resign from the call of God flooded my mind:

- I can be normal like other women and stay home.
- I am sacrificing my time, energy and finances to help people who do not appreciate what I am doing.
- My husband and children do not treat me the way some of these people treat me.
- My family will appreciate my spending more time with them.
- I really need to have more quality time with the Lord. I can do that if I stop what I am doing.
- Since I am experiencing difficulties, maybe I am out of the will of God.

All the excuses made sense to me. After all, I had three young children and a husband who was able to support me financially. Tradition had taught me that a woman should stay home and care for her children and husband. My church emphasized to me that the highest call of God for a woman was to be a mother and a wife.

The most important high call of God was reserved for men. If I wanted to serve Him, I could teach Sunday school to women and children. I should be satisfied with that role and forget about doing ministry outside the home.

Thoughts tormented me for several weeks. Some of them centered around hurtful, negative comments that had been made by others. When those comments were rehearsed in my mind, the excuses for resigning came to the forefront.

It was not the first time I had experienced this type of mental harassment. In fact, several times before I had made

the decision to quit the ministry and be a stay-at-home mom and wife. Each time I did, I somehow found myself gradually returning to the place I had quit.

Why had I done that? How many times would I need to resign before the resignation took?

I Quit!

I will never forget the day I made the decision to resign from resigning. Somehow the Lord revealed to me that I was not created to be a “normal” woman.

I realized that what I was doing in my ministry was actually an offering to the Lord and that my husband and children would appreciate me more when I was in the will of God than when I was out of it. I also understood that my walk with God would only be a pleasant experience if I was living in obedience to Him.

As I read my Bible, a Scripture “leaped” off the pages: “Then I said, ‘I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.’ But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not” (Jer. 20:9). How many times had I read that verse? Yet that day it was as if I was seeing it for the first time. The words burned within me. There was a fire deep within me. It was put there by God.

The fire was His call on my life. I could never get away from it. I would never find true happiness outside God’s plan for my life.

At that moment, I took a pen and wrote the date in the margin of my Bible next to the verse. It was like drawing a line in the sand. I declared with great passion from my innermost being, “I have resigned from resigning!”

From that day forth, each time an old thought of resigning

would hit my mind, I would remember my decision. Never again would I resign. Never again would I question the call of God. Never again would I consider an alternative to God's purpose for my life.

I have never regretted the decision. Today, people ask me when I am going to retire. I boldly tell them, "Never!"

My plan is to walk with God and serve Him as long as there is breath in my body. Are there hard places in serving God? Yes. Does that stop me? No. My mind is settled on following God's plan for my life.

Obstacles to Fulfilling God's Call

How does a person get where I was so many years ago? Here are a few of the obstacles Satan puts in our path:

1. Double-mindedness. Often, it is the result of being double-minded. "For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:7-8).

A person who is double-minded vacillates in his thinking. He lives in the midst of doubt. He is unstable, and his life consists of being pulled back and forth between two options.

That was me. One day I wanted to fulfill the call of God. The next day, I wanted to resign. There was no peace living that way. My only answer was to stop doubting and make a firm decision about the way I was going to live.

2. Expecting a trouble-free life. Double-mindedness was only one thing that tempted me to resign from the call of God. Another was that I was not seeing the obstacles I was facing as opportunities for growth.

My Christian background had led me to believe that serving Jesus would be free from trouble and difficulties. If I had

enough faith, life would be a “bed of roses.” What I was experiencing was definitely not a bed of roses. Thorns, maybe, but not roses!

Through the years, I have met many people who were taught the same thing I was. I have prayed with women who were told their child died because they lacked faith. Some people were told their sickness was the result of sin or bitterness in their hearts.

Many were accused of being out of the will of God since they were having difficulties. I remember those years of facing obstacles and questioning whether I was in God’s will.

Years later, while pastoring a local church, my husband, Dale, and I discovered many people with the same wrong theological thinking. During a time of intense warfare, a couple from our church sat down to meet with us. They wanted to express their concern about some of the difficulties we were experiencing.

“There must be sin in your lives,” they remarked. “We have been looking but have not been able to find it. It must be there, though. Otherwise, why would all this be happening to you?”

Dale and I sat there amazed at what we had just heard. Although we did not view ourselves as perfect, our lives had been an open book. Why did they believe there was some hidden sin in our lives? Why did they believe that if a person is in the will of God, there are no hard places?

Apparently the questions asked us that day were not new. Gideon wondered the same thing.

“Gideon said to Him, ‘O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, “Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?” But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites’” (Judg.

6:13).

The couple in our office was using the same logic as Gideon. It was the same logic I had used years before. But it is faulty.

As we move forward in God's plan for our lives, we will meet with resistance. The enemy does not want us to reach our destinies.

To be victorious in warfare, we must allow the Lord to change some of our old mind-sets. I had to force myself not to listen to my thoughts or give credibility to my feelings.

The enemy comes to hinder God's call and keep us from fulfilling the destiny of the Lord. In the Bible the apostle Paul referred to a time when he was hindered from carrying out the Lord's call on his life. "Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us" (1 Thess. 2:18).

Another time Paul wrote, "For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you" (Rom. 15:22). If Paul was hindered by the enemy, you and I will experience the same type of opposition.

3. Fear. One of the main fiery darts of the enemy is fear. Fear, doubt and worry are designed to keep us from our destinies.

Fear had always been my enemy, but I did not recognize it while growing up. I simply thought some people were born fearful and shy, and others were naturally outgoing and confident. I was not part of the latter group.

For years, I let fear prevent me from fulfilling God's purpose for my life. When asked to speak at a meeting, I told people I was not a speaker and willingly gave them a list of names of other women they could call.

I did not want to speak because of my fear of failing. What if I did it wrong? What if I forgot what I was going to say in the middle of speaking? Other people sounded so much better than I did.

I kept waiting for the feelings of fear to disappear before accepting speaking invitations. Not only did the feelings not disappear, they became stronger.

Finally I realized I had to face the fear rather than run from it. During that season in my life, I heard a speaker say something that changed my life: "You will never walk in the fear of the Lord until you lose the fear of man."

It felt as if arrows were penetrating my heart when she spoke those words. Wow! The fear of man. Was that what I was dealing with? I had never thought about that.

I made a firm decision that day. I told the Lord how desperately I wanted the fear of the Lord in my life. Pleasing the Lord rather than people became my passion.

But walking out my passion was a different story. Each time I ran into my fear and chose to speak to people, it felt as if a large claw clamped around my throat.

Then I would hear the sweet voice of the Lord asking me, "Is this the fear of the Lord, or is it the fear of man?" Each time I would have to make a firm decision.

What was I going to yield to? Would I yield to the fear of man, or to the fear of the Lord? "I choose the fear of the Lord," I would reply. Then I had to follow through and force myself to do what I did not want to do.

The feelings of fear did not go away immediately. In fact, it took years of continued obedience. But today, I am able to speak to thousands of people in large meetings without fear of failure or of what people will think about me ever entering my

mind.

Choose to Become Unstoppable

As my example shows, it is not necessary to get rid of fear before obeying the Lord. Sometimes we have to practice doing the will of God in spite of fear.

You are either a person who will be stopped or a person who won't be stopped. You must choose. No one else can choose for you. With the help of the Lord you can choose to become unstoppable in your pursuit of God's will for your life.

Today, I am so thankful that God's grace helped me press through the fears, doubts, difficulties and questions in my mind. Those were not easy years. Yet with each victory I experienced transformation into the person God made me to be.

Does that mean everything in my life is easy or without problems? No. What it does mean is that there is contentment on the inside of me. I can face each day knowing that I am walking in the will of God.

I can dare to step out of the limited box that life offers me. I can take risks without the fear of failure. I can willingly do whatever the Lord asks me to do since my desire is to please Him.

Although my circumstances did not change, I changed on the inside. I am no longer struggling with whether I am in the will of God. I know that I am!

Often I think of the day that I wrote a date in my Bible and resigned from resigning. What a life-changing day that was. My destiny was set on a course designed by God.

What God did for me that day, He will do for you. Take a pen right now. Open your Bible and put today's date in it. Say to the Lord, "Today, I resign from resigning." Now, start to experience the freedom of fulfilling your call from the Lord!

Read a companion devotional.

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