

How to Recognize the Prophetic Calling on Your Life

Do you have a prophetic calling?

In *The Art of Hearing God*, John Paul Jackson talks about the three phases of prophetic development:

–Called.

–Trained.

–Commissioned.

The first phase is the shortest of the three. The call happens in an instant—but sparks an incredible journey that lasts a lifetime!

There are *many* ways someone can be called to prophetic ministry. Though different, each way involves some kind of supernatural experience. It could be a prophetic word and impartation, a dream or vision, a visitation or some manifestation of God's voice.

Let's look at a few examples from Scripture and what they reveal about prophetic callings.

When God Called Samuel

When Samuel was just a boy, he lived at Shiloh where the tabernacle was located. Technically he was "in ministry," but the Bible says he "did not yet know the Lord, nor had the word of the Lord been revealed to him" (1 Sam. 3:7).

One night while he was sleeping, he heard a voice calling his name. Three times he jumped up and ran to Eli, thinking the aging high priest needed him. Finally Eli recognized it was

God calling the boy, and he told Samuel to say, “Speak, Lord, for your servant listens” (v. 9b).

God “came and stood” there (v. 10a), and He gave Samuel a prophetic word about Eli and his sons. That was Samuel’s calling to prophetic ministry.

2 Things We Can Learn From This Encounter

We don’t have to know the Lord before we’re called, but *responding* to Him is important. Personally, I think responding to His call brings someone into relationship with Him.

A person’s calling doesn’t necessarily come with the words, “You are called to prophesy.” Sometimes the calling is a significant revelation about someone else.

When God Called Elisha

Elisha was a successful farmer. At the beginning of his story, he was out in the field working with 12 yoke of oxen—a fleet of tractors, in today’s terms.

He was going about his business when Elijah appeared and threw his coat on him. (We could call it a “mantle,” but that word is linked with so much Christian superstition that “coat” is more helpful. A mantle in Elisha’s day was the same thing as a coat today.)

Elisha left everything and accompanied Elijah as his servant (1 Kings 19:19-21).

2 Things We Can Learn From This Story

Sometimes the calling to prophetic ministry is not convenient and interrupts our plans. Are we willing to obey God’s call even when it costs us something? Elisha left his job, his family and his home to pursue God’s call on his life. And not because a huge position waited for him—he started off as just a servant.

The fulfillment of our prophetic call might be on the other side of serving someone with a similar call. This wasn't the case with Samuel, but we do see it with Elisha.

When God Called Jeremiah

"Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; and before you were born I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations'" (Jer. 1:4-5).

Jeremiah's call was significantly different from the others.

God began talking to him when he was just a boy and told him an interesting detail—that Jeremiah had been called even before his birth. The Bible doesn't say this specifically, but it isn't a huge stretch to assume Jeremiah probably grew up hearing God's voice and having different kinds of prophetic experiences.

Jeremiah had a direct encounter with God that clarified his calling and hinted at what his ministry would look like. God also told him to expect resistance and that he would minister to other nations.

What do we learn from Jeremiah's calling? Some people are called from the womb and grow up "prophetic." That is, they hear and see things in the spiritual realm even as very young children.

Sometimes the way we're called gives us clues about God's plans for us in the future.

A few things to keep in mind about prophetic callings. Many other principles of the prophetic calling can be found in Scripture. If you're wondering about your own prophetic call, here are a few nuggets of wisdom I hope will bring peace to your heart.

All the stories in Scripture are different, so we don't need

to compare how we were called with how someone else was called. One person hears God's voice, one gets a word from another prophet, one sees God appear in a physical form—we are all different, and our journeys with God are different.

But each of these biblical stories has something in common: Years passed before the person stepped into their ministry. We can't doubt our calling just because it's taking a long time to appear. That's God's normal way of doing things. He uses this time to form us into people who can *endure* the calling long term, without hurting themselves or those around them.

After God calls us, we need to respond to what He's doing. But that's a teaching for another time.

If you want to learn more about the calling, training and commissioning of prophetic people, I highly suggest taking *The Art of Hearing God*. John Paul Jackson wrote this course from decades of experience so others wouldn't have to make the same mistakes he did when he was starting out. This course will help jump-start your calling—it certainly jump-started mine! {eoa}

John and Dawna Thomas were radically saved out of the drug culture in 1996. Personally mentored by John Paul Jackson, they've been on staff with or have worked alongside Streams Ministries since 2004. John pastored The Bridge Metrowest (planted by John Paul) for five years before he and Dawna stepped out into full-time itinerant ministry. After John Paul passed away, John began to work more closely with the Streams leadership team and in 2016 was asked to become the president of Streams Ministries. John co-authored *The Art of Praying the Scriptures: A Fresh Look at Lectio Divina* with John Paul Jackson and has also written courses on prophetic ministry, dream interpretation and the kingdom of God. As president of Streams Ministries, he ministers internationally to help restore the awe of God to a world that has lost its wonder. He and Dawna live outside of Dallas, Texas.