

God Is Calling His 'Unqualified' Warriors Out of Hiding

My friend Jesse has been following the Lord faithfully for 25 years, and he and his wife are raising two daughters to love Jesus. Jesse has been a fixture at Life Church in Allentown, Pennsylvania, since 1997, and he has served wherever needed—as an usher, a greeter, in the marriage ministry and on the homeless outreach team.

But like so many Christians I know, Jesse has stayed behind an invisible line in regard to certain leadership responsibilities. He especially doesn't like the microphone, even though people are blessed when he shares anything from the pulpit. He feels so insecure about public speaking that the thought of giving a sermon triggers intense anxiety.

Jesse feels more comfortable on the sidelines. But in this pandemic season, when so many people are still in quarantine, God is calling Jesse out of the shadows.

I relate to Jesse because I used to live in the shadows of insecurity and fear. God began calling me out of my comfortable hiding place 24 years ago, and I wrestled with Him for months before surrendering.

Is he calling you, too?

When the Lord sent the prophet Samuel to anoint the next king of Israel, David was on the backside of the family farm. He was not even invited to greet Samuel. Apparently, David's father and the others there did not consider David worthy to be considered for this job interview. But after Samuel met seven of David's brothers, the Lord said, "The Lord has not chosen these" (1 Sam. 16:10b).

When Samuel asked if there were any more candidates, David's father admitted there was one other son, the youngest, who was busy tending sheep. David was awkwardly presented to the prophet as an afterthought. But when Samuel poured the oil on him, and "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David" (v. 13b, NASB 1995). The unqualified suddenly became a warrior.

Whenever I pray over the global church in this season, I see a massive crowd of people on the edge of a battlefield. Some are awkwardly wearing battle armor; others are sitting down on benches; all are avoiding the spotlight. This crowd represents the reluctant warriors God wants to use. They know they are called, but their feelings of insecurity, disqualification and fear have paralyzed them.

They are stuck in a valley of shadows. But I hear the Holy Spirit saying this: "Now is the time for my reluctant warriors to surrender. Strip off the labels of failure you have been wearing. Stop listening to the accusations of the enemy. I have not disqualified you! Put on your armor and take your positions in battle. I am mobilizing My army, and I need my timid soldiers to come out of hiding."

If you are one of these reluctant recruits, you must make a powerful decision. You have been stuck in limbo, but God can deliver you from this paralysis. I would advise you to take a posture of surrender—get on your knees, lift your hands and tell God that you will do whatever He says, go wherever He commands you to go and say whatever He tells you to say.

Your prayer should be, "not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42b). Then take these three steps:

1. Surrender your fears. Whether it's a fear of public speaking, a fear of leading a small group, a fear of social interaction or a fear of criticism, renounce your fears in Jesus' name. 2 Timothy 1:7 says: "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."

Don't wait for the butterflies to go away or for your palms to stop sweating. You'll never break free until you actually step out and do what you fear. Goliath may look intimidating, but the truth is he is afraid of us because God is on our side.

2. Surrender your comforts. Many people have become complacent in this season of quarantine. Life is easier when we are cocooned inside our homes, watching TV in our pajamas and hiding from the stresses of life. But God didn't create you for selfish isolation. Whether you feel like it or not, venture out. It will feel very awkward when you first get out of your boat, but if you keep your eyes on Jesus instead of the waves, you will learn to walk in a new way!

3. Surrender your plans. Too many of us have settled for less. We've boxed ourselves in to the ordinary and predictable. Be willing to set aside what you thought was best, and ask God to reveal His big dreams for you. Simply pray: *"Lord, don't let me live a status quo life. I yield to Your plans, no matter how much bigger they are than my own."* {eoa}

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