

How to Know If You Are Called to Missions

One of the most frequent questions asked related to missions is: How do I know that I am called?

It's a question we hear all the time at Bethany Global University, since our school is dedicated solely to training missionaries. If you're curious, you can learn more how you can earn your degree while doing missions at [bethany.edu](#).

While there are many ways in which God leads and guides His people into world missions, there have been two classic answers that people tend to give: "You don't need a call because He has already called you" and "You better know God has called you before you go." I believe a combination of both is necessary.

The 'Everybody Is Called' Perspective

On one side of the coin, you have the often quoted line from the late singer Keith Green, who stated that "You don't need a call. You're already called!" Another person has stated that "You don't need a call when you have a verse" referring to the multitude of Bible verses in the Old and New Testament that form part of God's revealed will (the Great Commission) that we go to all nations and preach the gospel.

In another song, Keith Green wrote: 

[Listen to the full song here.](#)

Keith Green had to go to the extreme end of the spectrum to balance out the Church that emphasized a need for a special revelation or manifestation to go to the mission field.

Think for a minute of what the world would look like today if every Christian literally embraced God's command to go and sincerely said to God, "I am going to the nations to preach the gospel. If it's not Your will for me to go, stop me!" I can hear many of you saying, "That's too radical and extreme!" Yet to be truthful, we have gone to the other extreme, not bearing the spiritual fruit I believe the Holy Spirit desires.

I believe that as we get to know God's character and study His Word, it becomes impossible not to know His will! We cannot be moved by a message that does not move us first; therefore, it is vital and necessary to understand God's global plan and what He desires for His Church. Understanding where we fit in this plan is another thing altogether, and the best way to describe this, in my opinion, is that it is a process.

The 'Specific Call' Perspective

During the 30-plus years I have served as a missionary, there have been circumstances and difficulties during which the only thing that kept me on the mission field was that I knew God sent me. The prophet Jeremiah arrived at one of these crossroads in his ministry where he wanted to "throw in the towel and call it quits." Jeremiah was thinking about returning home to the "normal" life when he cried out to God saying:

"But if I say I'll never mention the Lord or speak in His name again, His word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am worn out trying to hold on to it. I can't do it!"

As it was with Jeremiah, the call of God on your life is something you cannot escape. We obviously have free will and can choose to serve Him or not, but if we are in a right relationship with God and walking with Him, we will learn to be in tune with his desires and plans for us. Ephesians 2:10

states:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them.”

5 Tips for How to Discover Your Calling

Finding God’s direction for our lives is very personal and often subjective, yet here are a few basic principles that have helped me:

1. **Be in movement.**

God uses those who are actively serving Him and stepping out in faith to test the waters and discover what He has in store. Be in movement. Start knocking on doors to see which one He might be opening.

2. **Be willing to do anything.**

If you really have a servant’s heart, you will be willing to serve in any capacity. God will place specific desires in your heart, but don’t rush to push open the door yourself. Serve, and in the process of serving, God will open the door for you, and He does a much better job of it!

3. **Start by serving at home.**

We must be faithful in the little before we can be released to serve in “greater” areas. It is vital to understand the ministry and local church before you can be sent by them to the “uttermost parts of the world.”

4. **Be involved in short-term missions.**

Before thinking about going out full time, get some short-term cross-cultural experiences under your belt and, better yet, mission training. Where you serve short term may or may not be an indicator of where God wants to send you long term. Be open to His leading.

5. The call of God is something that grows on you.

Many missionaries testify that when they began sensing God calling them to Thailand, for example, that everywhere they turned they saw something relating to Thailand. They turned on the TV, Thailand! They opened the newspaper, Thailand! They attended a conference and sat next to someone from Thailand! God specializes in this, and we need to be in tune with how He is leading.

Perhaps you have not yet identified God's will for your life. If that is the case for you, get closer to Him, ask Him what He has for you, and search your own heart to make sure you have correct motives. Put into practice the steps listed above and don't forget it's all about being connected to Him.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"
(John 10:27).

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