

Homework for Lesson 36: A Call to Follow

Being called by God is a unique and critical portion of every Christian's journey. When Christ asks, "Will you follow me?" and you say, "yes," then Christ responds, "Here's how..." We can go astray on our journey when we take our eyes off God or ignore God's call. Exploring God's calling is an important part of accepting faith for yourself. God calls each person to work for Him in special and specific ways, sometimes the call is exciting and fun, sometimes the call is challenging and outside our comfort zone, but whatever the call we are responsible for following it.

There are many ways to talk about calling, because God's call to each person is different. However, we can break God's calling down into two basic categories. God has both a general and specific calling for each and every person. The general "calling" we ALL have is to follow Jesus and to be molded into living as he lived. This calling shapes how we view the world and our place in it.

God gives us more specific callings. Sometimes our calling is ongoing, and involves a complete change in direction for of our life. We get called to a vocational direction or faithful cause and it becomes our focus for years of our life. This kind of specific calling shapes how we spend our lives in service to God.

As we are all trying to live out God's general call of following the way of Jesus, we also need to be aware of how to recognize God's specific call for us. Discerning if God's call is for a moment, a short or for a long period of your life, takes practice and time. This is just another example of how our faith is a journey with God.

The Bible gives us several examples of God having to use dramatic means to help people discern, or recognize, their calling. Your discernment may not come by being blinded by light or hearing an audible voice. However, you may recognize the call as a feeling that leads you somewhere you did not intend to go. God's call often is a specific "sense" we get, that is usually confirmed in several different ways.

- Have you ever "sensed" or experienced God? How?
- Have you ever had someone tell you about a call they received from God? What kind of words or imagery did they use to explain why they did what they did?
- In what ways does God call people? How might God call people to things that seem "ordinary"?

Components of a Call

If you have never experienced a call from God, or are uncertain if you have, that is completely reasonable. We're going to explore how we can become more attuned to God's calling. I would remind you of the importance of the Means of Grace that we talked about last session, as a wonderful way to help you begin to sense God's calling.

There are some Components of a Call that might be particularly helpful for you to know as you are figuring out when, if, and how God is calling you. We'll explore them as steps, though they may not always happen sequentially.

Step 1 – Skills: These are the things that you’re both naturally good at and that you develop over time. Right now you might be naturally good at making friends, this could develop over time into you being able to coordinate large groups of people to do a specific task. God’s call is going to use the skills that you already have or that you have that can be improved

List the things you are good at:

Step 2 – Excuses: Once you’ve figured out some of your skills, you may be inclined to come up with excuses to prove that God’s not calling you to use those skills for God’s purpose. You will always be able to come up with reasons why you don’t want to do something. Excuses are the first line of distractions that keep us from following God’s instructions.

List some of the reasons you have used for getting out of using your skills:

Step 3 – Confirmation: God’s not just going to speak to you about your calling, God’s also going to use the people around you to motivate you. God will open other people’s eyes to your skills and put them in your life to help direct you.

Who are some people who encourage you to discover and use your skills?

What skills and passions are they noticing in you?

Step 4 – Desire: There may be skills that people tell you that you are good at, but those skills bring you nothing but dread. God won’t call you to be a doctor if faint at the sight of blood. God’s call will be challenging, but at the end of the challenges you will have an overwhelming sense of joy in your calling.

Think about a time when you used your skills to do something for someone else, what did you feel?

What did they feel? What causes are you most passionate about?

Step 5 – Opportunity: You will have chance after chance to use your skills for God’s purpose. Even when you walk away from the chance, God will find a way to give you another one. God may be calling you to read scripture in worship, but you ignore the announcement in the bulletin, and tune out when your pastor asks for help, but you finally pay attention when your youth leader texts you the scripture reference and asks for your help.

List three specific ways you could use your skills and passions for God: