



**Welcome & Intro :: Question**

**Question - posted by rdv, on: 2005/9/3 16:25**

How does one know if God has called them to the ministry in general or to a specific time and place? And how does free will play in this?

"any man who DESIRES the position of an overseer....."

**Re: Question - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/9/3 17:15**

Wow! What a great question! Unfortunately, there are no magic formulas. There are entire books written on this important subject. For now, I'll say that as we surrender our lives to Christ, he will guide us by his Spirit. Perhaps you could start by reading through the gospels and carefully examining the words of Jesus, asking for divine direction.

I see you are new on this site. Welcome!

Perhaps if you share a bit about yourself, and why you are asking this question, we may be able to help you out. We'd love to get to know you.

Diane

**Re: - posted by rdv, on: 2005/9/3 17:32**

This is a question that has been on my mind for years as I know that I have been called to Minister. And each time a new decision is to be made it comes again, I was hoping that others who have experienced this could give wisdom.

**Re: hearing God's calling - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/9/3 20:39**

I can only express some thoughts by share something about myself.

Through experiences I learned that God's calling doesn't necessarily fit into my expectations. As a teen I felt a strong call to be a missionary. The sense was so strong that I carefully wrote down my impressions. Then after I got married we went to the mission field. However before the term was up my husband decided that it was not for him and he resigned. I was devastated - feeling that I had disobeyed God's will. But I couldn't do anything about it. We were labeled "Missionary casualties" - a sure sign of failure. However, leaving turned out to be the will of God. He had something else planned that I could not foresee or comprehend.

Quote:

-----And each time a new decision is to be made it comes again,  
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Yes, I can relate to this. But, even years later, I still don't know where I am going with it - no tidy packages for me, it seems.

Some years later I found that very piece of paper on which I had written my calling as a teen. To my surprise, I had not used the word, "missionary". I simply had written about my passion to lead souls to Christ. Then later I falsely assumed that I had written "missionary", meaning that I was to be a career missionary, (as we use the word - ex: sign up with a mission board, raise funds, etc)

I probably am not the only one who has tried to box spiritual concepts into our modern day usage of words. For example: The calling to be a minister/pastor. We assume that to mean a position in a church, getting a salary, preaching weekly sermons. However, according to the Biblical teaching we are all called to be ministers of reconciliation. The calling to preach the gospel is not just those few who go to college and get a divinity degree. God knows, we need those roles in

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every day life and society - those who have Christ's love within them and are called and divinely enabled to reach the lives of people who don't go to church, and even those who do.

I have discovered many dear Christians who, through years of walking close with God are true elders, pastors, or teachers, even though they may not have those labels and positions in church or a mission board. Some of them have ministered more to me than "professional" pastors.

I have learned that where God calls us, he also leads us, and it may be just a step at a time, and may even seem unrelated.

The most important aspect of our calling involves BEING more than DOING - being conformed to Christ. Then the rest just falls into place - but differently, for each person.

Does any of that relate at all with the concerns that you expressed?

Diane

### Re: Question - posted by dann (), on: 2005/9/3 20:47

Contrary to the current christian culture - scripture doesn't teach that only some are "called to ministry" - in fact it doesn't teach that -ANY- are called to ministry.

What scripture does teach is that we are called to follow Jesus Christ.

That may seem a bit backwards in the modern church - since we have elevated the calling of a pastor to the pulpit as though the bible taught such a thing. Scripture makes it plain that Jews were born into the priesthood - and that becoming a priest, was not a something that men chose for themselves - but something that God assigned to men.

But the new testament teaches that all of us are now priests. We are all called to follow Christ, and presumably we are all called to ministry.

The role of a teacher however is special - what we would call a preacher in today's vernacular. James warns that those who teach will receive a greater judgment (since any error in their doctrine is passed on to those who listen) so we have that as a restriction - and the way the admonition is given suggests that the mantle of teacher is something any of us can put on or take off at will - that is, when I have the opportunity to instruct - I should consider the consequences carefully before I do so.

If one insists on being mystical about it, one can note that not everyone is gifted to preach, and one can rest in the secure knowledge that if one is gifted to preach, everyone around him will know it, and God wouldn't give the gift unless he expected the person to use it.

It is my opinion therefore that if any man is qualified (see the pastoral epistles) gifted spiritually to preach, and has along side these a clean desire to preach (that is, they want to preach because they want God's name to be glorified, and not simply because they think they could do a better job than someone else...) then I would say that God is likely preparing them to be called one day into the ministry.

If the door swings wide upon for such an individual one day - that is, if out of the blue they get an offer to preach somewhere, or are asked to take the pulpit - I would say they are very close to being called.

If a pulpit were offered to such a one as this thereafter - I would be inclined to say that this same fellow was being called - though I would still expect the person to pray about it.

The reality is, filling the pulpit is a lot more work than writing sermons. How many funerals, marriages and death beds does the average pastor attend each year? Does the idea of being awoken at 3:00 a.m. to settle marriage disputes between backslidden pew-warmers entice you? etc. 60 hours a week and 40 more on the week ends - a pastor's life is service, and it certainly doesn't belong to himself. Pastors also do not make a lot of money.

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Really, anyone who still wants to be a pastor after they find out all about the job description - how can it be that this person is not called? Who in their right mind willfully chooses to live with that kind of unending abuse? :-)

Only those who are truly called to it can expect to last it out - and the only reason they can last it out is because it brings them more joy than anything the world has to offer.

My old pastor, retired after 60 years in the pulpit, when asked what advice he would give to anyone who sought to be a pastor - his advice was unexpected - "count the cost."

Dan  
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**Re: - posted by Will (), on: 2005/9/3 21:45**

Quote:

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dann wrote:  
What scripture does teach is that we are called to follow Jesus Christ.  
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Yes as has been said we are all called to follow Christ.

My advice is stay close to the Lord, in prayer, Bible reading and meditation. And as your mind comes closer to the mind of God you will be able to go forth and make decisions that are the ones God wants you to make.

**Re: hearing God's calling - posted by Kadmiel (), on: 2005/9/3 21:54**

Sister roadsign,

First of all; Thank you for sharing your personal experience on this issue. I saw so much of myself in what you shared not to mention blessed. I was called into ministry over 20 years ago and went to Bible College but soon left. I have regretted that so many times over the years. I have wasted my whole life when I should have obeyed God. Believe me when I say I have paid dearly because I disobeyed him and went on my own and to the world. It's only been in the past few years that I grew sick of not obeying God and turned around. I do hope in the near future I might be able by his grace to obey him fully. I've recently started studies in B.H. Clendennen's "School of Christ International" (through correspondence). A very old minister years ago once told me that Bible College or any studies don't make you a minister. Only God by his Holy Spirit does that. Bible College and any other studies only prepare you. So I've begun my studies. Anyway, I was very touched and moved and again I say blessed by your response in this thread. I know this might not sound like much to anyone reading this but it's only been two years now that I've been paying my tithes and offerings as well as monthly missions to David Wilkerson ministry's and I honestly feel like a kid at Christmas. It's so exciting to give to the Lord. Not to mention I will become a monthly donor to sermonindex because I'm extremely blessed here. Lastly I would like to say that on one occasion I can think of; I was negative in regards to one of your postings. For that I truly am sorry. The Lord has really been purging and cleansing me a lot lately. It's so spiritually painful to. From now on if I read anything I don't agree with anyone on; I will not say anything. Like Greg has said, these forums are for lifting up and encouraging the body of Christ. I do hope you will forgive me and again your posting really did touch me.

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**Re: Question - posted by Kadmiel (), on: 2005/9/3 22:02**

rdv,

Welcome to "sermonindex", glad your with us.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/9/4 2:28**

rdv posted:

Quote:

-----How does one know if God has called them to the ministry

for years as I know that I have been called to Minister

hi rdv

welcome to the family.

I have quoted from your two earliest posts here. I sometimes think we should 'ban' the words 'ministry' and 'minister' for a while. In the NT the word usually means 'to serve' or 'service'. So if we re-ask your question and comment we get something like how does one know if God has called them to service?

for years as I know that I have been called to serve So the bottom line is that we are called to 'minister/serve'. It was built in to the 'job definition' given to Adam from the first; "And Jehovah God taketh the man, and causeth him to rest in the garden of Eden, to serve it, and to keep it." (Gen. 2:15, YNG) You can see the link to in Christ himself; "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;" (Phil. 2:7, KJVS) Human-ness and servant-hood were inseparable. It has to do with the disposition of our hearts; are we seeking for thrones or bowls of water and towels?

There may well be specific calls to dedicate yourself to some 'aspect' of service which would make earning your own living difficult or impossible. If God does call you to do this, you will know, but if he does you will understand that he has called and he is responsible for your wages. One of the most amazing missionaries ever was William Cary in India. His labours were incredible and as far as I know he never received a salary from a Christian organisation. When once asked his occupation he answered "I save souls but I mend shoes to pay expenses".

Quote:

-----"any man who DESIRES the position of an overseer...."

The word 'position' or 'office' is not in the original scripture. This is how Darby translated it "The word faithful: if any one aspires to exercise oversight, he desires a good work." (1Tim. 3:1, DRBY) Darby has differentiated well here the difference between 'position' and 'function'.

**Re: words and different usages - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/9/4 16:01**

Hi, Kadmiel,

Thank you for sharing your own experiences and also for bearing witness to my experiences. Our life stories show that God doesn't work in formulas, but guides us all individually.

Quote:

-----From now on if i read anything i don't agree with anyone on; I will not say anything.

Now, I know that you are saying this because you don't want to be disagreeable. However, I challenge you to share your thoughts anyway. There are ways to express differing thoughts while still valuing the person. Just as this thread is exposing, words have a funny way of changing in meaning, through usage. I suspect that many times when we seem to disagree, we are merely using words slightly differently (without realizing it).

Besides that, you may have further insight to share, that would benefit us all.

Diane

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**Re: - posted by beenblake (), on: 2005/9/4 16:38**

Hello Diane,

This quote, "our calling involves BEING more than DOING" seems to be a theme I keep encountering this week. I have heard this message several times through other people.

I am still trying to understand this more and better apply it to my life. (Maybe you can help me with understanding that?)

There is a bit of a contradiction to application. If I apply it and try to do, then I am less being and more doing. The difficult lesson then, I suppose, is just letting things be. Sometimes I get so eager and passionate to do God's work that I do more harm than good. I am trying to let God do the "doing" and just be ready and willing to let Him work through me in His time.

This is what I gather so far, but I have so much more to learn.

Thanks for sharing,

Blake

**Re: words and different usages - posted by Kadmiel (), on: 2005/9/4 17:12**

Sister Diane,

Thank you for your kindness. I'm grateful.

**Being and doing - posted by roadsign (), on: 2005/9/4 23:00**

Blake said:

Quote:

-----If I apply it and try to do, then I am less being and more doing.  
-----

In other words, to sit down and do nothing so that we can simply BE, is really a focus on our doing. Ahh! The challenges of trying to fit concepts into formulas!!

Really, there is no such thing as being without doing, or doing without being.

I used to be a DOING person. That meant that I found my sense of worth in what I did. I was addicted to DOING. But inside, I was fearful, lonely, shamefilled, etc. Everyone valued what I did, but no one really cared about who I was on the inside— that is, except God.

God changed my value system through some hard knocks of life. He took away all my DOINGS through a very long illness. I felt useless, a nobody, and at first it was horrible. With God's help I discovered that who I AM was more valuable to Him than what I DO. I learned that what I DO doesn't define who I AM.

In our world, almost everyone plans their life according to their DOING, but few plan to go after developing their BEING. I think that is true for Christian careers as well as secular careers. That's why we see religious leaders who may have graduated with high standing, but their inner character is weak, and underdeveloped. These kind do not make the best servants of God. They need inner transformation— something that cannot be learned academically.

I suspect that there are more scriptures that speak of our need to develop inwardly, (grow, mature, be holy, etc.) than there are about our doings. That would make a good Bible Study.

**Re: Being and doing - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2005/9/5 0:09**

I read something recently that touched on this idea of being vs. doing. I thought I would share it here in the hopes that it would edify others as it has edified me...

The calling to be a bondman is God's general calling for everyone...in the Old Testament the bondman has no rights, had no recourse when wronged and received no remuneration for his labors. The Hebrew people were prohibited to become bond-slaves to each other; however they did take bondmen from conquered nations...in the New Testament the picture seems to change. What amazing disclosure we have when Paul casts aside this prohibition and refers not only to his own relationship as a bondman, but Philippians chapter two presents the Lord Jesus as the great example of a Bondman. He explains how the Lord Jesus deliberately laid down His rights in heaven, stooped to becoming a man. But even more, He "made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a Bondman."

Is there any question as to how God might use us as bondmen? Here is the method often hidden from our view. We are not primarily called *to doing* but rather *to being*. It is when we will *be* in His hands that we are made usable. We see this in both Paul and the Lord Jesus. It was because our Lord was willing *to be* a bondman that "He was made..." (Phil. 2:7). We see the same pattern in Paul's testimony where he insists: "I have made myself a bond servant..." (1 Cor. 9:19 A.N.T.). Then a few verses later how God "made him all things to all men." This is God's way! It is not so much our working as it is His working through us. When we choose *to be* then we *are made*. Oh that God's children could understand this being instead of doing. *To be* as broken bread in His hand, *to be made* food for the hungry, water for the thirsty, light for the darkened. This is God working.

-from *Unto Full Stature* by DeVern Fromke