



BLINDSIDED BY A CALLING ON YOUR LIFE

It's an amazing and fulfilling thing to live life in line with God's design and calling. It can seem difficult and overwhelming to discover what your calling is. Sometimes we just don't pay attention to what it is God intended us to be. We don't all meet our calling as a result of being blindsided by lightning and knocked off our horse as was the case with the apostle Paul.

Before he met Christ, the apostle Paul was an activist and a zealot—an articulate opponent of the church. When he met Christ, he continued to be an activist and a zealot, but he changed for whom he worked. Scripture tells us that after having spent several days with the disciples, Paul at once began to preach that Jesus is the Son of God ([Acts 9:20](#)). Paul didn't change who he was by design, but he did change the Lordship in his life and that changed his life forever.

There may be consistent patterns very noticeable in you that may be clues to your design and calling. A calling shouldn't necessarily be confused with a spiritual gift. A spiritual gift can be defined by something like a skill that comes very easily for you, but comes very hard for others. A calling on the other hand doesn't necessarily imply there is an easy road ahead. Quite the contrary is often the case; just ask a missionary. Talk about being blindsided...Imagine being called to life as a missionary. Sell practically everything, raise money to use along with your own to start your new life in a foreign land, possibly hostile, leave friends, family and "the good life" behind to answer God's call for a better life. Not many children say they want to be a missionary when they grow up...totally dependent on God. No-it usually happens by being blindsided. Some families plan on joining Jacobs Well but God changes that with a calling to be missionaries in China. There is a little bit of a difference between life in Plano, IL. and life in China.

The calling of a missionary is not all that different from the calling of Abraham (formerly Abram). Abram was called to leave his homeland and go to a place he had never seen and certain promises were made to Abram, if he would do what God was instructing him to do. Abram was called to leave his home, livestock, friends and the "good life" behind for a life as a pilgrim and a stranger ([Genesis 12:2-3](#)).

What gives you life? What are you good at? What do you love to do? Do you think this is your calling?

Abram was 75 years old when he got the call and set out for Canaan from Ur, a distance of 400 miles...on a donkey with his barren wife Sarah. He did this and God made several promises to him before during and after, not the least of which that his offspring would outnumber all the stars in the sky. Given the promise of fertility for Sarah and greatness of Abraham's name, obedience was a fair trade for the blessings God had in store for him.

Do you think that in these modern times, God's call will result in a promise of reward for our obedience?

God calls all men today through the gospel of Jesus Christ ([2 The. 2:14](#))

God's calling is complete with its promise to you to become part of the greatest nation ever known to men ([1 Pet. 2:9](#); [Rev. 1:6](#)).

All believers are called by God to be missionaries as part of the Great Commission ([Matt 28:19-20](#)). By that we are called to "go" and preach the gospel; and if necessary-use words. We often let ourselves be misguided that being a missionary means to go to the ends of the Earth. Jesus said that the whole church, and each member of it, must take up this task. All who receive the apostles' teaching become witnesses. Today the call for the church to be a missionary church is still in force. The fact that the Great Commission is the last instruction of the risen Jesus gives it great weight. This is not an option given to churches that have the funds to do so; The Great Commission is the primary task the Lord left his church. The church must always be a missionary church; the Christian must always be a world Christian and for most of us, that world is as close as the neighbor next door.

What qualifies you and me to preach the gospel anyway if we are not "called" to it?

Do you believe a calling is something that can be discerned between you and God alone or do you think affirmation from spiritual leadership is necessary?

It's been said that few men in history that became president of the United States were president material; that the office of president made them presidential. [Do you think it's possible that God might sometimes blindside the common man with an uncommon calling; that the man would rise to the occasion?](#)

You might ask the group to name some examples of people in the bible that were blindsided.



What a "calling" looks like can be different. The discernment process for a believed calling should include various elements such as prayer and fasting. The process should include wise counsel of trusted spirit-filled friends, mentors and Pastors. Who's to say how long this process should take? The process may very well have been initiated by God months or even years before the calling. So what might the confirmation of a calling look like? Let's say you are Jerry and Jennie Bell. Jerry Bell had been working as a trainer for almost a year and was laid off because his particular position was eliminated in July of 2009. He filed for unemployment and began searching for employment immediately. There were several employers that he interviewed with that seemed genuinely interested but no offer was made. Jerry started working some odd-jobs and continued looking for permanent full-time employment.

Around January of last year, Jerry began to feel the Lord calling him to become more involved in ministry; however, he wasn't sure if his involvement was to continue as a layperson or as a "vocational" minister. He talked to his lead pastor and associate pastor and received some excellent advice from them such as; continue to seek counsel from spiritually-mature individuals who knew him, dig into the Word and earnestly seek God's face and counsel with Jennie his wife to make sure he had her support, and begin researching ministry opportunities.

Jerry did everything his pastor's suggested. He knew that Jennie was thrilled at the prospect of him going into "vocational" ministry. Jerry counseled with several men he respected and who knew him well (this is very important because sincere friends will be honest with you and point out things we tend to not see about ourselves). Jerry spent even more time in the Word and in prayer than usual and searched out possible ministry opportunities. God revealed to him through his own time in prayer, time reading His word, through sermon messages and through small group lessons that He indeed was being called into vocational ministry. All through this time he continued to look for work and began to realize that as very attractive job opportunities came along, God kept shutting those doors of opportunity because He had a different path for Jerry to travel.

Jerry and Jennie shared with their families, friends, church and small group about the Lord calling him into "vocational" ministry and we all began to pray for discernment and direction as to where the Lord wanted them to serve. Jennie and Jerry both have a heart for the Philippines and had considered this a possible ministry opportunity. They had also been in contact with a church in Slaton, TX that was looking for a worship leader and an education minister. They thought this was a huge possibility considering that Jennie's grandparents live in this community and there was a need for family to begin "checking in" on them frequently yet this was not what God had in mind. The couple prayed about Jacob's Well too. They saw Rob and Christy last year at a Missions Symposium in Waxahachie, TX and mentioned to them what the Lord was doing in Jerry's my heart. Jennie and Jerry secretly wondered if Jacob's Well was another opportunity that they should consider and began praying.

Christy invited Jennie to speak at a women's conference for Jacob's Well this past June and they brought their daughter Rene and son Jackson. They were both impressed with the work the Lord was doing in and through Jacob's Well. After returning home, the couple continued praying, counseled more with their pastor and spoke more with Rob. The Lord confirmed to them that He wanted them to be a part of what He was doing through Jacob's Well. Jerry and Jennie felt that there was no decision to make other than to choose to follow where God was leading, without a home, and without employment.

God showed them over, and over and over again, that they were doing exactly what He was calling them to do: 1) the Hager's offered to share their home with the family until they were able to secure housing for themselves, 2) the BMAA granted them associate missionary status and chose to offer them part-time support; this happened literally as they were traveling on their way to Illinois (the "stepping out of the boat") and 3) Pastor Rob asked Jerry to take on the role of Pastor of Administration and Discipleship. The Lord had shown both Rob and Jerry that he had the education and strengths in areas where there was a leadership need to be filled.

Pastor Rob: "Sometimes a calling requires us to leave all that we know and sell all that we have; other times it means using all that we own and all that we have. Our calling might be the ability to produce revenue to further the efforts of those who trust God to meet their needs as they follow His will in a calling that leads them to the far reaches of the earth."

TJ and Jenni Johnson, modern day “tent-makers”:

TJ, Jenni and family moved to China in 2007 as “tent-making” English teachers and since moving there have had the privilege of seeing college-aged Chinese grow a heart for God through intentional friendship and evangelism. You might be wondering, what is the tent-making thing about? Here’s a little background: Tent-making missionaries are missions-committed Christians who support themselves abroad, and make Jesus Christ known on the job (such as teaching English) and in their free time. They are in full-time ministry even though they have full-time jobs, because they integrate work and witness. They follow Paul’s model of tent-making, for the same reasons he did it. Paul usually had church support and only made tents during financial emergencies. TJ’s and Jenni’s tent-making strategy for China (teaching English), you could say is their passport per-se’ or backdoor tactic to reaching and teaching the gospel.

Because we are one body made of many parts, we should never set out to diminish our own calling or the calling of another or be jealous of someone because of their calling; or be ashamed of our own calling. To do so diminishes our opinion of and the work of God. Never underestimate the purpose of God’s call on your life. If your call is to be a Pastor then be the best Pastor you can be. If your call is to be a caregiver then be the best caregiver you can be, if your calling is to be a garbage truck driver then be the best garbage handler you can be. Remember-all of us are called to ministry and it is highly probable that Heaven will be filled with called followers, that while in this world their works may have gone largely unknown and unseen except by God the Father Himself.

GOD PLACES A DESIRE AND A PASSION IN OUR HEARTS TO DO THE THINGS HE CALLS US TO DO: *Philippians 2:13~" For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose."* (You will have a love & joy & passion for doing the things God has created you for & calls you to do).

