

Is God Calling You to Give Your Life for His Sake and the Gospel in Missions?

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Ten Means God Uses to Compel Those Whom He Calls

God's calling to missions is analogous to the gift of prophecy which we talked about on [Sunday, October 10](#). The calling is not authoritative the way the Scriptures are. Your calling is never beyond question. You can't claim it to others the way you quote scripture to them. Nevertheless our calling can be profoundly and durably sure in our own heart. It is the work of God to bring our heart to a point of conviction that, all things considered—including Scripture—this path is the path of obedience. The conviction is not infallible. But when it is of God, it brings peace.

How does God awaken such a calling? I will suggest ten means that He uses. Only one of these is infallible—the Bible. All the others are relative. They are not absolutely decisive in your leading. They are important. But any of them can be overridden by the others. Various combinations of these are the fuel God uses to drive the engine of His calling in your life.

1. Above all, know your Bible and saturate your mind with it.

The Bible shapes our minds for mission durability (Psalm 1:1-3), and makes us burn for Christ (Luke 24:32).

2. Know your gifts and know yourself.

Every Christian has gifts (1 Peter 4:10-11). Knowing them shapes your convictions about your calling. And knowing yourself (as Paul exemplifies in Romans 7:15-24) deepens your sense of fitness for various ministries. (Keep in mind that this can be overridden by other facts!)

3. Ponder the need of the world.

The Christian heart of love is drawn by perceived needs, whether near or far. Therefore, God uses what we know to awaken the measure of our desire that pushes us over the edge of commitment (Matthew 9:36-38).

4. Read missionary biography and missionary frontline stories.

Clearly the Bible treats heroes of the faith as divinely appointed inspirations for, or the awakening of, vision and ministry (Hebrews 13:7). "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

5. Inquire of your soul, “Where are you burdened for others?”

God sends and seeks the burden for lost people. Jesus carried such a burden: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! . . . How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings” (Luke 13:33-34). This burden was essential to his calling. What is your burden?

6. Know your circumstances.

Parents, health, houses, lands, children, age, etc. All of them matter in our calling, but none of them is decisive. They can all be overridden. “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life” (Mark 10:29-30).

7. Pray for God to throw you where you can be best used for His glory.

I say “throw” because in Matthew 9:38 that is the literal meaning: “Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to *throw* out laborers into his harvest.” The point is *pray*! Ask God to use you to the fullest for His glory. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him” (James 1:5).

8. Do not neglect passionate, Christ-exalting, corporate worship.

The most important missionary calling that ever happened took place in corporate worship: “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2).

9. Listen humbly to the spiritual people in your life.

They not only confirm your gifts, they are the instruments of God to awaken in you possibilities and joys of missionary service that you never dreamed (2 Timothy 1:5-7).

10. Cultivate absolute surrender of all you are and have to Christ.

This is the person that God leads to the greatest fruitfulness of life. Woe to the person who tries to be a half-Christian and never says from the heart: “I renounce everything for you, Lord Jesus. I am willing to go anywhere and do anything at any cost, if you will go with me and be my everlasting joy.” This is why Jesus said, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. . . Therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26-27, 33).