

## RECOGNIZING THE CALL OF GOD ON YOUR LIFE

Do you know the call of God on your life? Do you know what it is? Did you know there even is one? There is one for every person on the face of the earth. Does everybody do the call that God has for them? Probably very few people do. I think that is why you see so many people who do not feel like they are fulfilled. I think you see people who feel like they do not make a difference in this world. They say, "Well, I do not have the education. I do not have the money. I do not have what it takes. And no, I do not feel fulfilled and no, I do not think I am making a difference." Really, because God has a call on each person's life each person on the planet, they could find out what their call from God was.

I heard about a survey that George Barna, with Barna Research Group, took and then published the results in a book. In this survey he was talking to four or five different churches in a town and asking them if they have a problem with competition among one another. Did they enjoy working together with each other? Did they avoid each other? And what was the real problem? What he found out from all of that was the big church got all of the publicity. The little church felt like it did not matter that much. He discovered from all of his research that God has a plan for every church in the town. So, the big church has a plan, the little church has a plan, and God is in charge of both them. Both of them, when they do what God wants done, are successful in God's eyes and that is what everyone really wants to be. They want to be a success.

So many people say sometime in their life when they are by themselves, "What am I supposed to do with my life. Why am I here?" You might think that is a current thing in the world today. Actually, I know it has been going on for at least 2,500 years. Because recently I was in San Diego and went to the museum there in San Diego. They had the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was so exciting. I could not believe I was looking at them. The Dead Sea Scrolls! It was wonderful. When they found all of these scrolls, they found the book of Isaiah, Genesis, some of the book of Esther, and the Psalms. These were papers that had been written 2,500 years ago, 500 years before Christ. That was incredibly exciting to me. Also they had other works there. Other Jewish works, writings. And in these writings, they discovered that someone had written a paper on why am I here? What am I meant to do? Does my life have any meaning? What is the meaning of life? I guess since time began, people have wondered that. You are not by yourself to wonder that. The thing is, God can reveal His plan to you and He wants to.

(Look at this stick figure. Does he look puzzled? And look at this woman does she look puzzled? Trying to figure out what is going on? What am I supposed to be doing, Lord? That is what they are saying.) Most people never find it out. Why is that? Because for a lot of people life is so hard, it is all they can do just to make a living. They have to concentrate on how am I going to get food, how am I going to get the next meal? How am I going to feed these kids? How am I going to find a job? How am I going keep my job? How am I going to get a car? How am I going to make my car payments? And life is so serious for them. Just the daily basic of living is so difficult and so serious. They never even have time to think, "Does God have a call on my life?" If they would take the time to ask God, He would begin to pour into their lives. God is just waiting on you to say, "Lord, I will do anything you want me to do. Tell me what you want me to be doing with my life. I will do anything." How long does it take to pray a prayer like that? It took me about 5 seconds, and yet God heard me. God will hear you. Do not ever think, "I am not anybody important." Of course, you are important. You are very important to God. He let His child die for you. You cannot get any more important than that. He knows when you sit down. He knows when you stand up. He knows when you blink. He knows the hairs on your head, how many there are. (Palms 139, Matthew 10:30) Of course, He is interested. He wanted you born. You might say, "Well, Betty, the circumstances of my birth are not very good. They did not want me. I was an accident. Or, there were too many kids and I was just one more kid." No, it is not like that with God. He has something for you to do. He will help you do it. He will open doors for you. He will close doors that will keep you from going the wrong way, to the wrong things.

Is there just one call on your life? No, but I can tell you this, as you go through your life all of the different calls God has for that particular period of your life will dovetail into what He has really got going for you. As you look back over your life when you get older, you can say, "Well, it all fit together. There was a

pattern to it." You will even say many times, "I didn't have a clue about what was going on. I didn't think God was anywhere near me." But He was. Look at Romans 11:29, "For God's gift and His call are irrevocable." He never withdraws them once they are given. That is a very critical thing for you to know. He never withdraws them once they are given and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives the gifts. He gives grace to them. He sends His call on them.

How are you going to know what that call is? Is there any kind of a guideline that you can know? Yes. I am going to ask you four questions. They are simple, but they are going to require you to think. So get a piece of paper and write down the major words. This is really important. It could be life changing, especially if you are somebody who has just lost your job, your job was shut down or they just closed out the whole company. You are thinking, where am I going next? Get on your knees and say, "God where I am going next? Where do you want me to go?" Let me ask you these four very practical questions. What inspires you? What gets your blood boiling, get you excited, makes you want to pay the price to bring it about? What are you passionate about personally? Now it might be swordfish. It could be anything. But you are passionate about it. To you it is important. It does not matter if anybody else is passionate about it. If God put that passion inside you, it is from God. What do you love doing more than anything else? It does not count sleeping. You cannot say sleeping! And women you cannot say shopping, No, what do you love doing more than anything else? What are you good at? What do people say you are good at? So now I am going to go over these again, because I want to be sure you think them through. What inspires you? What are you are passionate about? What do you love doing, more than anything else? What are you good at?

I will tell you the answers to those questions as they relate to me. What inspires me? People who do great things with their lives, are very good people-deep down through and through. They are very good people, they love others and they help others. That inspires me. I love to read those stories. I love to read those books. I love television programs when they tell about them. What am I passionate about personally? Jesus. When I was 26, I found out about the real Christian life that was so exciting you just could not wait to get to church. You could not wait to read the Bible. You could not wait to talk to Jesus. I found out about that at 26, and I took off like a rocket ship. I took off like a meteor hit me. Passionate, I am passionate about Jesus. What do you love doing more than anything else? What I love doing more than anything else more than anything else is talking to people and helping them figure out what they are good at and what God wants them doing...how they can be the best person they can be and what can I do to help them do it. I love doing that more than anything. What are you good at. I am good at speaking. It is not hard at all for me to do this. Now I have to admit to you I have done about 100 shows now and I am certainly a lot more comfortable with it than I was in the beginning. In the beginning I was like, "Oh Lord, are you sure you want me doing this. Lord I have never done anything like this." I love it. So, what is it that I am good at? Speaking and God has slowly and carefully put me in places, starting when I was a child in front of people speaking. And I love it. It is easy. So how about you? Think about this. It does not have to be what anybody else says is okay. It does not have to be. It has to be what God has said to you.

Throughout my life the things that God has called me to do and gifted me to do have all pretty much involved working with people and helping people. Helping People find out what they are good at, helping them grow in God, helping them get to know this Jesus I am so passionate about and speaking a lot.. I have done many different things: junior high ministries, high school ministries, college ministries, singles ministries, couples' ministries, women's ministries, traveling around the world. It has all pretty much been the same thing, it just kept expanding. That is what will happen to you, too. You may have a big dream right now and you think, "I am supposed to be traveling around the world, taking people with me." But you may not be ready yet. You may say, "No, I am ready. I am ready. I know I am ready." God knows when you are really ready. There may be some factors that you would never know how to handle. You just have to wait until he has worked on you enough that you can handle it.

God does not have a retirement plan. Americans do. I do not know how much they do in the rest of the world, but Americans seem to think that at 65 you are supposed to have a big change, quit working, do a part-time career or nothing at all. Not everybody wants to do that. I have met people that are 92 and do not want to stop yet. You need to realize that as a Christian, you are in God's service until the day you die, take the very last breath. Because for all you know, right before you take your last breath, you might say something that changes a life. Somebody did that. I heard about it and it changed my life. I will tell

you about it. This was way back when I was 26, I was in church one night and this pastor said, "I have a sad story to tell you. I went to the hospital this week and there was a man, very elderly, dying. He said. 'Pastor, I have lived my whole life. I did what I wanted to do. I do not feel like I did anything for God. I have really wasted my life.'" What I heard the man say had a powerful effect on me because I thought, "I do not want to be like that. I do not want to be caught up in my own plan. God I do not want to waste my life. What do you want me to do? Here and now, I say to you I am going to put you first in my life, ahead of my husband, my children. I do not know how you do it, God, but if You will show me how to do it, I will do it." A minute later, my life changed. So here that man is about to draw his last breath and he touched my life. Look what has happened in my life. Hey, his life just touched your life didn't it? Think about that. It does not matter where you are in the world, what he said in the last days of his life just touched you, so his life did have a good effect after all. How did that happen? He repented. He repented at the last minute and he still had an effect. I heard a pastor say one time, "The reasons you do not get your rewards from God the minute you die is because your reward continues after you die. The things you said, the things you did that people tell about, they keep having an effect, so you have to wait until the end of time is over and then you get your reward and you will be shocked. You are going to be surprised at all the people you touched. You are going to be amazed.

There are no circumstances that can stop God's call on your life. None. The devil cannot stop you, people cannot stop you, infirmities cannot stop you, illness cannot stop you, and the country you live in cannot stop you. A man with a plan cannot be stopped by a man without a plan. If you have a plan and you know it is God and you hang in there long enough, it will happen. How do I know that? Look at Romans 11:29 again because it is really important, "For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable." He never withdraws them once they are given. He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace to or to whom He sends His call. So, there you go again. No matter what you have done. Maybe you have really messed up your life. Maybe you are in jail. Maybe you have embarrassed yourself, embarrassed your family, maybe you think I cannot even hold my head up in my town. Maybe you have had an addiction that took everything away, but you are finally free of that thing, God can still do His call. Do you know this saying, "Out of your mess, you get your message, and out of your trial, you get your testimony." It will be a testimony of God's faithfulness. So, it is never over, until it is over. Until the last breath has been drawn by you. It is not over. I do not care how old you are. I do not care what happened. You know you are more than your physical body and you are more than your intellect. You are more than your creativity. You are more than your productivity. You are more than your relationships. You are more than all of these things because God wants to breathe on that.

When you let God breath on your life, it has a fire about it. Do you notice some Christians, you may not know what it is about them, but there is life? I used to look at them and say, "Well, I am a Christian and they are a Christian, but they are different from me and I want that. How do you get that?" I found out how you get it. You have to die to everything. You have to say, "God, you will be number one and I mean it. I will not be number one anymore. You will be." And then He does it.

What else can happen to people who have a lot of power and ability? They can get caught up in that and lose themselves in it. It really was not what God had planned, but it did some good, just not God's main plan for their lives. Do not make that mistake.

Another thing that is a real problem is parents who that think their child ought to be a this or a that. Whatever. You ought to be an athlete because I was a football coach. Who knows? Something like that. They just try to put their ideas on the child. Do not make that mistake of doing that. I can tell you right now that is a dead-end road. I can tell you for sure. It does not work. You do not know what is inside of a person. You do not know what God has said to that person. You do not know what inspires them. Have you ever thought about asking your kids, your teenagers, "What inspires you right now?" They will probably say, "I do not know," but they might not. When they can tell you are interested, they might tell you. What you have to learn to do is not have that response where your eyes get big like this. Just say, "Really" and then try to guide them in the right path and pray.

Even with actors, God does call people to act. God wants Christians in the media. God wants Christians in film. He wants that. That is not just the devil's territory. God can use it. You know what happens to actors? They get caught up in the glamor and the traps that are set there and they lose what they had, and they go down. They get caught in the glamour and the glitz of it. Was there anybody in the Bible that

did something like that? There really was. Samson. Go back in the book of Judges and read about Samson. He was called before birth to be God's man. His parents knew it. He knew it and he was a judge. He was so caught up with the women. He really messed up the call of God on his life because of women. The wrong kind of women. The women that God said stay away from.

Let me ask you this, "Do you have a pride in the gifts that God has given you? The good kind of pride? Do you have an appreciation that God has a call in your life? Do you treat it with respect? Do you do the very best job you can possibly do with this call where God can look at you someday and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." There will never be anything in the world that will make you happier than to stand in Heaven before the Lord of the universe and have Him look at you with that love in His eyes for you, that pride in His eyes for you, how proud He is of you, that you obeyed. And you did it with excellence. Oh, it is going to be the greatest thing that ever happened to you. And you do not want to miss out on that.

You need to realize these qualities and these gifts that have been given to you are to help the world. There are people that, it is one of the saddest things in the world, you look at them and they are so gifted and so talented and they are just wasting it away. It is interesting thing to me that you can see somebody out there is not nearly as gifted and nearly as talented, and they just try harder than everybody and succeed. Now remember the scripture I said earlier, Romans 11:29, "God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." He never withdraws it. God is never going to take his call off of your life when once given. And He does not change his mind about those to whom he gives them. He knows what you have done. He even knows what you are going to do. And he does not rescind that call. That is such an important verse.

What about people like television preachers, somebody that had this big call on their life and then they really, really messed up bad. Does God take the call away from them? No. It is still there. They cannot help but do it. And how sad to know what they could have been. Even Samson as he was being captured by the Philistines and they put his eyes out and they were going to bring him up to show him in front of their god, he prayed one last thing, "God, at least when they bring me out, please give me my strength back. One last time to destroy your enemy." And God did. So his calling finished. He did it. He did what God said.

Sometimes your true calling has to take place in spite of your work. You think, "Well, my work really is not my calling but I cannot afford to do like you, Maybe you are a painter, you are an artist. "I cannot really afford to live with my art but I know it is my calling." It is okay. It is okay to have a job that pays the bills and then you have this calling. Sometimes people work part time in the ministry. Maybe the church cannot afford to pay them. Maybe they cannot afford to do that. Or maybe people need bigger amounts of money coming in for their big family or something. It is okay. The main thing is that you can say in your heart when you lay in bed at night, "Thank you, God. Thank you that I am getting to do it. Thank you for revealing it to me. Thank you for equipping me to do this." I cannot tell you how many times I thank God over and over and over, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you for letting me get to do this. I love it because He put the stuff inside me that made me want to do it.

You are supposed to help the world, but first you have to get Jesus in your life. If you have never asked Jesus into your heart, I want to talk to you about that. I want to give you a chance to do it right now. Jesus died for your sins. He loves you. He loves you so much. He knows your name. He knows what you are doing right this minute. He knows what you have done that is wrong. He knows about your sins. They are not hidden to him. And he says, "I love you anyway and I will pay price for those sins if you will give me your life, if you will receive Me into your life." Ask him now, "Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God. Come into my life and let me do my call."

#### QUIET TIME QUESTIONS

1. What keeps a person from finding out what the call of God is for their life?
2. Look up Romans 11:29 and how does it give you assurance regarding God's call on your life.
3. When do you retire with God?

4. What can be done to fan the flame to ignite the call of God on your life?
5. What could you do with your life now in order to hear God say to you one day, "Well done, good and faithful servant?"
6. What are the four questions you can ask yourself to determine the call God has on your life?

To watch the video on RECOGNIZING THE CALL OF GOD ON YOUR LIFE, Pillar One, Basic Discipleship, go to: [www.bettyswann.com](http://www.bettyswann.com)

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