



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

*Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)*

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

JULY 1, 2011

STUDY TO SHEW THEMSELVES APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15

## Accepting God’s Call to Preach

Dr. Eddie Idefonso

### Isaiah 6:8 (NASB)

**Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”**

**Donald Grey Barnhouse** shares a story about a miner in Scotland who began to preach among the mining community with tremendous power. Soon he began preaching beyond the mining towns and someone asked him how he had received his call to preach. His reply was interestingly simple:

“Oh, I had such a burden on my soul for those who did not know the gospel, I argued with the Lord that I had no education and no gift. But He said to me, ‘Jamie, you know what the sickness is, don’t you?’ I answered, ‘Yes, Lord, the sickness is sin.’ And you know what the remedy is, don’t you, Jamie?’ I answered, ‘Yes, Lord, the remedy is the Lord Jesus Christ.’ And He said to me, ‘Jamie, just take the remedy to those who are sick.’ That is my call to preach.”

On his website, “**Preach Him with Dr. Jim,**” **Dr. James McCullen** shares his call into the ministry in a sermon titled, “Jonah Called of God.” He recounts how he tried to persuade God that he just could not be a minister by reminding the Lord how he had dropped out of high school and did not want to return to school. Finally, realizing

that the Lord would work out the details, he surrendered to God’s call, thus preempting all the plans he had made for his life.

In **1 Thessalonians 5:24** we are reminded, “**He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.**” There have been many that have heard God’s call to preach but never said yes. These have spent the rest of their lives wondering what might have been. “Paul Lawrence Dunbar writes, ‘Nobody else can do the job that God’s marked out for you.’”

In *My Utmost For His Highest*, **Oswald Chambers** refers to the call to preach as “something that is incalculable, supernatural, surprising.” He states that if you can explain every detail about your call to preach, he would question whether you have been truly called. **Chambers** explains that the call to preach differs from the call to salvation or sanctification and is a “compulsion to preach the gospel.”

The call to preach begins with God’s will, but it also involves man’s will. **Psalm 37:4** tells us, “**Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.**” The psalmist also says, “**I delight to do thy will, O my God...**” (**Psalm 40:8**). Accepting God’s call to preach encompasses the desire to preach, the decision to become a preacher, and the delight of preaching.

**D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** confesses, “To me the work of preaching is the highest and greatest and most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called.” (**Sound Biblical Preaching**.)

## The Desire to Preach

### 1 Timothy 3:1 (NASB)

**<sup>1</sup> It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.**

In an article titled, “**Consider Your Calling: The Call to the Ministry**,” **Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr.** explains in the words of **Charles Spurgeon**, “The first sign of God’s call to the ministry is ‘an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work.’” **Mohler** also states that there is an increasing “‘compulsion’ to preach and teach the Word, and to minister...” by those who are called. In **1 Corinthians 9:16**, Paul confesses, “**...for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!**”

**G. Campbell Morgan** explains that the call must come from the Spirit for a man to be able to go. He refers to this as the “high doctrine of the ministry” that neither institutions nor the Church can produce. “Unless he hear that call sounding in his soul, ringing like a trumpet night and day, giving him no rest until he is compelled to say, ‘Woe is me if I preach not’....”

There is an all consuming desire to preach the Word. For example, Jim, a man in his mid-forties, suddenly develops a deep hunger and thirst for the Word of God. He invariably feels compelled to share what he is learning with others. As he shares with the tenacity of a forceful preacher, it is obvious that God is placing the desire for preaching within him and he may not even recognize it as God’s calling.

Occasionally, the desire to preach comes much earlier in life. For example, a young boy who has recently been born again has begun to imitate the preacher in the way he dresses and walks around the church. He suddenly has the desire to memorize Bible verses and quote them in public. Although this might not always indicate the desire to preach, it certainly can be the beginning of the Holy Spirit

preparing him and should be taken just as seriously as the adult.

**Dr. Ken Blue** shares how he came to know that he was called to preach. **Blue** confessed that initially he wrestled with the call at first, but doors opened in the church to serve the Lord. He was asked to teach a boys’ Sunday school class which he loved. Then the pastor asked him to join a Monday night Bible doctrine class and he loved it, too. He shared that with each opportunity he accepted to serve the Lord the greater the desire grew. As preaching opportunities came his way at a rescue mission, he accepted and loved it. He still prayed that the Lord would stop him from going to Bible College or into the ministry if He was not calling him. In spite of praying this way, the desire continued to grow. Even though **Blue** worked with Boeing for seven years and enjoyed his work, he felt a growing dissatisfaction with his job. He experienced an increasing desire to serve the Lord all the time. In 1969, he moved to the Seattle area and started Open Door Baptist Church. Over 31 years later, **Dr. Blue** emphatically declares, “Preaching, teaching, and soul winning has been the heart of my ministry. I love it and there isn’t anything in this world I would rather do.”

In a **McCall’s** magazine interview in the early 1960’s, **Billy Graham** was asked, “How does one know God’s call?” He responded with the question, “How do you know you are in love?” One of Graham’s friends reportedly said, “God became his only passion.” To which biographer **Marshall Frady** concludes, “That, indeed, seems to have been the transfer.”

In accepting God’s call to preach there must initially be a desire to preach even if the desire is very small. **Wayne A. Detzler** writes, “Often I have seen a young man pressed to preach. Reluctantly, he takes his first assignment and suffers greatly through it. Soon however, if the call of God is on him, he would rather preach than do anything else in the world. Preaching becomes his passion!”

**David W. Cloud** states, “One of the greatest problems in churches today is leaders who have not been called of God!” They are like those referred to in **Jeremiah 23:32** where God says, “**I sent them not, neither commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.**” Those who are called by parental instruction or mere personal

## NOTES

interest will not have the same concern for the things of the ministry as those who are called by God. When a man is truly called by God the confession of Jeremiah can adequately describe his feelings. **“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jeremiah 20:9)**. Those called to preach will possess an inextinguishable desire to proclaim the unsearchable riches of the Word of God.

Quite often when one is initially called to preach he can honestly confess with the **apostle Paul**, **“...who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Corinthians 2:16)**, or question with **Moses**, **“Who am I?” (Exodus 3:11)**, or doubt with **Gideon** that God could be calling him (**Judges 6:36-40**). Just because a man has apprehensions about his calling does not mean that he totally lacks a desire to fulfill that assignment. The intensity of desire may fluctuate. However, there will come a time as **Charles Bridges** explains, “the work is more desirable than the highest earthly honors; so that, even under the most desponding anticipations it cannot be relinquished.”



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