



**OVERCOMING THE  
CHALLENGES  
OF CALLING**

**COME  
Alive**



# OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF CALLING

## THE CHALLENGE OF CALLING

### INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to look at some of the challenges that we will need to overcome when God calls us to a task, project, or ministry.

Now as we begin, let's just go over a few basics:

- What is calling? And,
- How does calling occur?

### CALLING: A WORKING DEFINITION

You may have heard Christians define their understanding of calling as:

- "Where you see yourself in the future"
- "How and where you fit in the Body of Christ"
- "A sense of purpose"
- "Using the gifts and talents God gave me to serve"
- "Something, someone, somewhere God has placed on my heart to minister to"
- "Being a Christian in a world that is lost and needs Jesus".

In the Bible, the word calling (Greek: *kaléo*) means: to be spoken to, to be invited, or to be summoned by a king.

So we could say,

**PPT** *"Calling refers to the activity of God, whereby God asks, draws, motivates, or invites us to do something or to go somewhere"*

Or simply put,

**PPT** *"Calling is an invitation offered to us by God"*



## HOW DOES CALLING OCCUR

In today's world, there are many forms of communication: spoken, email, text, video conferencing, letters, phone, in-person, online meetings, sign language, or body language just to name a few.

When it comes to calling, God doesn't just communicate it in one standard way. Calling may happen in a time of prayer, or when you're reading the Bible, or through a spiritual experience. It may happen at the mercy seat or a sacred space, or it can happen naturally through a conversation.

Calling can occur in many different ways, such as:

- You might have a clear sense that God is asking you to do something specific.
- You might have an experience specifically attributed to the Holy Spirit, like a dream, vision or prophetic word.
- Perhaps it is simply the most logical response you can think of based on your Biblical worldview – again, coming back to the Great Commandment and Great Commission.
- It may be a growing sense of purpose and passion.
- It could be that other leaders around you recognise a gift and calling to ministry on your life and encourage you to pursue it.
- You may feel that the best way for you to express your dedication to God is to live out a specific covenanted lifestyle (for some, becoming an Officers is simply the best way to fulfil their calling).
- Or, maybe you will be out buying milk and bread - just going about your daily life - and something will cement in your heart and over time you will find yourself naturally outworking what you will later discern as your calling.

## TRANSITION

It can be challenging at times to follow after the call of God.

There are many hurdles and trials we will need to overcome along the way.

Today, we will look at four common obstacles and how we can overcome them.



## 1. THE CHALLENGE OF ENDURING

Calling isn't a guarantee of success. It would be nice if it were, but just because we may be called to a specific ministry, location, task, or role, doesn't mean that:

- It will work out as we hoped, or
- We will reach the entirety of the vision, and everything we dreamed about will be accomplished, or that
- The ministry we're involved in will grow larger and larger.

Of course, God does amazing things – and we should prayerfully anticipate God's blessing as we pursue His call, but we also need to be prepared to embrace tough seasons.

Calling has often been referred to as an anchor. Knowing your calling will help you get through dark days and challenging times. Sometimes it's not about what we can accomplish through our calling, but what God is forging in us through our calling. God doesn't call us to be superheroes and save the day with "our great ministries and calling".

Instead, God calls us to be consistent, to turn up day after day and serve, day after day, year after year. It may not be glamorous. You may not feel recognised. You may not feel appreciated. And yes, you may want to give up at times, but our world desperately needs people who will love others be a friend to the friendless.

It can be a real challenge to reconcile that one of the most powerful aspects of ministry is just to be there, consistently, for others. To overcome this challenge, we are encouraged to rely on Christ's strength,

**PPT** But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Cor 12:9).

**Point:** Calling isn't always easy but God's grace is there to help us endure.



## 2. THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE

There's also a lot of natural fears that will pop up from time to time that might prevent us from following after what and where God is calling us to:

- Will I earn enough money?
- Is the timing right?
- What will my family and friends think?
- Is this really for me?
- Did I hear God correctly?
- Will this be a good choice for my kids?
- Where will we live?
- What if I move to a place where I don't know anyone?

You may even find that people around you will try and talk you out of your calling; you might be the first Christian in your friendship group and the idea of ministry is new. You may face the obstacle of "It's not a normal career path".

All good things in life are worth fighting for – and calling is no different. It can be hard at times, but for every challenge we face, God will be there for us.

To overcome this challenge, we are encouraged to develop our trust in God,

**PPT**    **"That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Tim 2:12).**

Developing a strong sense of trust in God is foundational to overcoming the hurdles we will all face in life, and also with responding to God's invitation to follow Jesus.

**Point:** Trust in God is how we face the challenges of life.





### 3. THE CHALLENGE OF THE START

One of the other challenges we may need to overcome is a belief that unless we experience calling in a dramatic way, it is somehow not powerful enough, or genuine, or maybe it isn't even a calling at all? Many leaders have asked themselves the question, "God – did you really call me?"

Perhaps you've heard testimonies of God calling people very clearly; they had a dramatic sense of call or an experience with God that left them with no doubt.

That is wonderful! We celebrate those stories. But without reflection, these stories may leave us misguided in thinking that's the only way calling occurs.

The encouraging news is, that God, for the majority of time and perhaps in His most frequent way, calls us during the normal routines of our everyday lives. Consider the following examples:

- Joshua began his journey in a tent (Exo 33:11),
- David was in the fields minding his father's sheep (1 Sam 16:11),
- Elisha was working his dad's farm with oxen (1Kings 19:19),
- Peter was at work (Mk 1:16),
- Paul was out on another one of his religious crusades (Acts 9:1-3),
- Priscilla and Aquila were fleeing persecution (Acts 18:2).

All of these people were called, or stepped into their calling, during their normal, ordinary, daily routines. Yes, what happens next for each one of them is quite extraordinary, but their starting point wasn't a burning bush, open eyed visions, or angles descending from on high. They simply responded to what God was doing in that moment and calling unfolded as a result.

**PPT** "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:10).

**Point:** Our calling experience doesn't need to be dramatic to be real.



## CONCLUSION

### NAVIGATING CHALLENGING TIMES

So what are some ways we can push through these challenges and hold onto our calling? Here are a few suggestions:

- Seek out perspective through coaching or mentoring.
- Share your journey with friends who will pray for you.
- Share your journey with leaders who can help you get the resources you need.
- Learn about resilience.
- Understand how your personality type deals with and expresses stress.
- Seek out pastoral care and guidance.
- Learn new skills to manage the demands of ministry.
- Practice your favourite spiritual disciplines or engage in a new one.

### PRAYER

Pray for Holy Spirit's empowering presence to help us:

- To be consistent,
- Trust God for provision,
- Respond to following God.

### CALL TO ACTION

For more resources on calling you can visit:

**Website:** [www.salvationarmy.org.au/comealive](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/comealive)