

The call of God upon a life, vocation, is a great gift of God. The call comes not because of our personal attributes, or because of any of our alleged virtues, but solely out of the gracious goodness of God. Our only qualification to be disciples is the call of God. The authorization for each of our ministries is God's.

**Jeremiah 1:4-10** The word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

## Reflections

Teenagers around here sometimes refer to me as *Mr. Madi*. It's a reference to my wife, who has been involved with high school ministry in our community for several years. She's a biologist by training, not a teacher. She doesn't necessarily look forward to standing up in front of a crowd, but she is compelled to make sure these young people are connected with mature Christians. She is called to serve them and to share God's love with them. The work is challenging - sometimes well outside her comfort zone. However, the opportunity she has to do God's work - and to witness the impact it can have - is amazing. Each of us has this same opportunity.

How are you called into ministry? What does it mean to dedicate yourself to His service? It's a scary notion! Is it necessary to go back to school? Do you think you're too young or

too old? How do we know if we're good enough for the job? How do we know our efforts won't be in vain? We learn in scripture that even Moses - a man God called to lead His people from captivity to freedom - seemed to have such questions in mind when he was first called. He didn't believe his actions could

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make a difference and was afraid to act. Even when we acknowledge God, and accept that He has a plan for our lives, self-doubt is a mighty obstacle.

We know from scripture that God, in the form of the Holy Spirit, provides all that we need to do His work. We know that by grace, we are made clean and that our past mistakes need not hold us at bay. We know that through prayer, God hears our concerns and is with us. So why do we fear that His work may be too hard? Why do we consider ourselves unworthy to proclaim His name and serve in His name? And why do we try to do it alone?

God knew you by name before you were born, and He calls each of us to serve Him. Whatever talents or strength you lack, He will provide in abundance. This week, consider how He is calling you. Take comfort in His strength, and know that the only qualification we need to be a disciple, is His call.

*Mike West*

# Readings

Don't have a Bible? Access these Scriptures at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com).

## Sunday, August 26

Jeremiah 1:4-10

How old do we need to be to serve God? What credentials do we need?

## Monday, August 27

Exodus 3 and 4

Have you experienced a 'burning bush moment' in your life? How did Moses react to God's calling? Do we expect God to speak to us in words we can hear?

## Tuesday, August 28

Genesis 18:9-15, 21:1-7 and Luke 1:26-28

Sarah and Mary were both called to serve God in a way that seemed physically impossible at the time. Do you trust God to give you the strength and ability you need?

## Wednesday, August 29

Isaiah 6:1-8 and Ruth 1

Sin can make us feel unworthy of God's presence, or unable to do His work. Is there guilt or sin in your life for which you have not asked forgiveness? Consider where sin might be holding you back from God's work. Can we be too old for God to use? Did God provide the helper Ruth needed in her later years?

## Thursday, August 30

Acts 16:11-15

We might feel that we are already living a 'good Christian life', but God might have other plans for us. Lydia was a small business owner. What sacrifice did she make?

## Friday, August 31

Jonah 1

What did Jonah fear? Was Ninevah too dangerous, or did he simply consider its people unworthy of God's grace? Was Ninevah 'too far gone' for God's Grace? How does your physical, emotional, economic, spiritual health impact your ability to hear God's call?


## Saturday, September 1


Acts 9:1-9, 11:19-26, 16:6-10

How did Paul and Peter's service relate to their prior occupations? Is God calling you to serve where you are, or might he have something far different in mind?

## Let's Serve & Invite!

This summer check out this spot for simple ideas about how to extend hope into our surrounding community. We'll share practical tips you can use at work and at play, on your own and with your family, to encourage others in the name of Christ.

 **Pick up a spare:** *When getting school supplies this month, pick up a duplicate of an item. Have your child give it to their teacher in case another student has a need.*

 **Summer memories:** *Talk as a family about things you did that helped someone else this summer. How did it make you feel? How would you like to carry it forward into the next season? Let "Serve & Invite" become part of your family's way of life in Christ.*

Got a tip? Email [ServeandInvite@StJohnMD.org](mailto:ServeandInvite@StJohnMD.org)