

Clarifying Your Calling to the Ministry

A “calling” from God is mysterious. The Scriptures don’t give a “formula” for how God calls His servants (like you) into special service or vocational ministry. Your call is different from all others. Complete the following chart to see how God called some of His earlier servants.

(Note: This study refers to an individual’s call to ministry, not to a general or “salvation” call.)

Person	Mission or task	How was the call given?	Response to the call	Location change?	Length of mission or task
Moses Ex. 3:1-15, 4:1-8					
Elijah 1 Kings 19:9-18					
Isaiah Isaiah 6:1-10					
Jeremiah Jeremiah 1:4-10					
Jonah Jonah 1:1-3, 3:1-5					
Mary Luke 1:26-35					
Barnabas Acts 13:1-5					
Peter John 21:15-23					

Reflect

1. What common characteristics and differences do you notice about how God called these people?

Common Characteristics	Differences

2. What key observations do you have about how these people responded when God called them to their various missions?

3. How does your call from God resemble the experiences of any of these biblical people? How is your call different?

4. Think back and make notes about your decision to be in vocational ministry.

Significant People	Significant Scriptures	Significant Circumstances

Optional

Draw out your “*Calling Lifeline.*” Segment and label the phases of your life and spiritual journey, e.g., Early Childhood, Middle/High School, College, etc. What people, Scriptures, and circumstances significantly influenced you during each phase—for better or for worse? What decisions did you make in order to move into vocational ministry (e.g., schooling, job change, relocate, putting off major decisions, children, training and reading, experiences, purchases, seeking specific advice, etc.)? Also recall negative circumstances, obstacles, and setbacks. List these on your Calling Lifeline below, or use a separate piece of paper to record your story. Recording some of the key steps of your calling will help you gain confidence in describing God’s call on your life.

Sample:

Early childhood / school age	Middle school / High school	College	Early adult years	Later adult years	Recently
Grandmother prayed for me Sunday school teacher	Youth pastor and youth group Was angry at God when parents divorced	Christian professor Had lots of school debt to pay off	Small group at church Joined support team for some missionaries	Spouse w/ missions heart Childless—hard but also freed us to go Workshop on missions	Met some believers from the country where God has called me

Your Calling Lifeline

Early childhood / school age	Middle school / High school	College	Early adult years	Later adult years	Recently

Note to younger people:
This activity may seem less helpful to you than to older people simply because you have fewer years and experiences to reflect on. That’s OK. Each person’s story is unique. Feel free to adjust these headings to fit your story.

Clarify Your Own Call from God

1. Consider the U.S. Navigators' mission statement, *"To advance the Gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations of laborers living and discipling among the lost."* (NOTE: If you will be serving with an agency other than The Navigators, substitute your agency's mission statement here.)

a. What motivates you about this mission statement?

b. How does this organizational mission relate to your personal calling?

2. Describe the vision you have for your own life. (Picture yourself at the end of your life looking back. What did you do that you know God wanted you to do?)

3. Imagine a prospective giving partner asking you, "So what do you hope God will do through you?" In the box at the left, state the specific vision God has given you for ministry in **25 words or fewer**. For example, "I am believing God to introduce students to Christ in four fraternities at the University of Colorado."

4. If a prospective partner were to ask you the following questions, how would you answer them?

"Why are you joining the staff of The Navigators (or your mission agency)?"

"Why couldn't you do mission work as a part of your regular career?"

"Why don't you go with a church or mission agency that would pay your salary?"

5. How will a clear calling from God impact your ministry partner development?

**My vision for
ministry**

Explore Feelings

We may question why we're going into vocational ministry. In each statement below, circle the option(s) that *most honestly describe how you sometimes feel*.

- People *understand / question* why I'm going into ministry.
- I feel *confident / hesitant* about developing funding to do ministry.
- I feel *uncertain / reasonably certain* about my call.
- I feel like I'm *wasting / not wasting* my education and experience.
- I do ministry *in obedience to God's call in my life / because it's expected of me*.

Scriptural Truth: We minister in obedience to God's call in our lives.

Express the key thought in each verse or passage.

John 15:12-17	1 Timothy 4:12-16
2 Timothy 1:5-7	1 Thessalonians 5:24

Summarize your convictions about God's calling.

We may doubt we are "up to" God's calling, so we may struggle with fear or self-doubt. In each statement below, circle the option(s) that *most honestly describe how you sometimes feel*.

- I *don't feel qualified / feel equipped* to serve God.
- I *struggle with self-doubt about being "up to" God's call / I'm confident that God will empower me to accomplish His purposes*.

Scriptural Truth: God has called us and is at work in us, and He will also equip and empower us to accomplish His purposes.

Express the key thought in each verse or passage.

1 Corinthians 1:25-31	2 Corinthians 2:14-17, 3:4-6
1 Peter 3:13-17	1 Peter 4:7-11
John 14:10-14	1 John 3:18-24

Summarize your convictions about God empowering us to fulfill His calling.



Conclude

Scripture Memory. Meditate on and memorize Romans 8:32—either from the NIV as shown below or from your favorite translation. Write it on a card you will see or carry with you so you can review it daily.

Source of All

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Romans 8:32 NIV

Community (optional). Contact a missionary from the list you made in part 1 and ask how he or she recognized God's calling into vocational ministry.