

So You Want To Be A Missionary?
Seminar hosted by Living Word Missions
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Discerning Your Assignment
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Discerning Your Assignment

Big Takeaway: *Everyone has a role to play in world missions and God wants to show you your part!*

1. Acknowledging different assignments:

Burden (sender) -vs- Call (goer)

Paul had a burden for the Jews -- Romans 9 and 10:1 "Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved."

Paul had a call to the Gentiles -- Galatians 2:7 we read the account of Paul, Barnabus, and Titus visiting the church leaders in Jerusalem, "...they saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews."

Today we could identify a burden in missions as a helper/pray-er/supporter/sender role. (Acts 15:3, Titus 3:13, 3 John 6-8)

Whereas, a call to missions would indicate a spiritual gifting for a specific assignment/people group/location. A goer. "Apostle" means "sent one" in Greek.

Romans 10:15 shows how important both roles are:

"And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?"

2. Acknowledging different functions within the assignment:

As either a sender or a goer, there will be a specific function for you to fulfill. (Romans 12:6-8)

Sender: Is there a nation, a region, a culture, a particular ministry, or missionary on your heart? You certainly are called to pray. You probably are called to support financially. You might be called to visit short-term, to impart a skill, to assist a missionary or missions ministry with your skill or talent. Human resources are invaluable to missions work.

(Tertius transcribed the Epistle of Romans for Paul--Rom. 16:22)

Both Jesus (Luke 8:3) and Paul had financial supporters. (Philippians 4:15, Romans 16:1-2-- Phoebe was a "patroness of good works," Romans 16:23 and 3 John 5-8-- Paul mentioned Gaius as his host in Rome, John wrote to Gaius instructing him to support the traveling teachers/missionaries)

Goer: Are you called to pioneer or to come alongside? To which location? To which people group? Are you called to work in urban or rural ministry? Are you called to churches, Bible schools, children/youth ministry, relief work, social justice? Are you called to an open or closed nation?

Even in the Early Church, the goers had different functions:

--Paul and Barnabus were pioneers/apostles/sent ones. (Acts 13:2-4)

--Silas, Mark, Timothy, Titus, Luke, Tychicus, Priscilla and Aquila and many others were support ministers, who came alongside the apostles. (Ephesians 6:21-22, Colossians. 4:7-8, Philippians 2:20, Philemon 24)

3. Being led by the Holy Spirit:

Serving in world missions, it is essential to receive your specific assignment from the Head of the Church.

When you received Jesus as your Savior, God moved on the inside of you. He no longer has to lead by external elements as He led His people in the Old Testament. (John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 1 John 4:4, Romans 8:14)

Regarding missions, Romans 10:15 *"And how will anyone go and tell them [effectively] without being sent [by the Holy Spirit]?"*

Paul shared his divine calling as significant: Galatians 1:1 *"This letter is from Paul, an apostle. I was not appointed by any group of people or any human authority, but by Jesus Christ himself and by God the Father..."*

Luke shared the process by which Barnabas and Saul were selected for missionary service: Acts 13:2-4 *"One day as these men were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.'...So Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit..."*

Note, this direction came as these men were before the Lord, fasting and praying.

More examples of the Holy Spirit leading in missionary endeavors:

--Paul was constrained by the Holy Spirit from going to Asia--Acts 16:6-8

--Paul was compelled by a vision from the Holy Spirit to go to Macedonia--Acts 16:10

Note that there is no New Testament example of the apostles being led by prophecies or fleeces. New Testament prophecies should be edification, exhortation, and comfort. (I Corinthians 14:3) **Confirmation, not direction.**

4. Confirming the call:

Whatever your personal assignment in missions, others should be able to observe an obvious gifting. Self-evaluation is not enough.

Paul found it significant to recount in Galatians 1:15-2:9 the receiving of his call from God and then seeking confirmation of his call from the church leaders in Jerusalem.

Galatians 2:2 "I went there because God revealed to me that I should go. While I was there I met privately with those considered to be leaders of the church and shared with them the message I had been preaching to the Gentiles. I wanted to make sure that we were in agreement, for fear that all my efforts had been wasted and I was running the race for nothing."

Galatians 2:9 "In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers..."

Mature leaders in your life should confirm your gifting, maturity, integrity, and readiness to step into your call. (Proverbs 11:14)

Additionally, before you step into full-time, cross-cultural missions work, test your gifting and your readiness by serving people of other cultures in your locality now.

Recommended Resource:

Processing The Plan of God Through Prayer by Mark Brazee