



“CONSIDER *Your* CALL” Adult Bible Studies

1
SESSION

PURPOSE: Whom Does God Call?

SCRIPTURE: *1 Peter 2:9*
Ephesians 1:18-19a
Romans 1:5-6
1 Samuel 16, 17
Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:1-9

2
SESSION

PURPOSE: Can God Call Me?

SCRIPTURE: *Jeremiah 1:4-10*
Judges 4:4 - 5

3
SESSION

PURPOSE: How Do I Know God's Calling?

SCRIPTURE: *1 Samuel 3:1-4:1*
1 Kings 3:5-15

4
SESSION

PURPOSE: I've Been Called. What Next?

SCRIPTURE: *1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:9, 21*
2 Timothy 1:9
John 15:16a
Romans 11:29

CONSIDER *Your* CALL in Missions through the Alma Hunt Initiatives

SESSION

PURPOSE: Whom Does God Call?

SCRIPTURE: *1 Peter 2:9*
Ephesians 1:18-19a
Romans 1:5-6
1 Samuel 16, 17
Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:1-9

WHOM DOES GOD CALL?

I. BIBLE BACKGROUND

SCRIPTURE:

- 1 Peter 2:9
- Ephesians 1:18-19a
- Romans 1:5-6
- 1 Samuel 16, 17
- Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:1-9

WHOM DOES GOD CALL? **EVERYONE**, OF COURSE!

A. God's desire is that every person in the world (*John 3:16*) will know Him, love Him, and have a personal relationship with Him. In that respect, He calls the entire world to salvation, to acceptance of the gracious gift of Jesus Christ. Our initial call to salvation has a second part for those who believe, and that is our call to live a holy life and to serve God. By accepting His gift of salvation, we become a part of God's chosen people, chosen for a purpose.

The letter of *1 Peter* was written in approximately AD60-63 at a time when persecution threatened the early church. The recipients of the letter were probably mainly Gentiles, believers who were scattered in exile throughout the Roman provinces. As Gentiles, "outside of the covenant," they previously had been "in darkness," "no people," "without mercy;" but now, as Christians, they have been called into light, as the people of God, with mercy and significance. In fact, as a Christian our greatest significance comes from the truth that God has called us to be His people and to do His work in the world. He calls us; He chooses us. We must respond. (See also *Ephesians 1:18-19a, Romans 1:5-6*)

God's call has its origin in God's purpose to create for Himself a People. Each person who responds to God's call through Christ becomes a part of the body which is sustained by the Spirit.

Part of the Spirit's work in sustaining the body of Christ is through the call to Christian service which can only be described as a spiritual gift. "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers . . ." Furthermore, we should say that God's call to service is not so much a spiritual gift to a particular person, but that it is the Spirit's gift of a person to the church. God's call of a person has as its purpose the provision of leadership within the church. The gifts of leadership listed in *Ephesians 4:11-12* is not an exhaustive list, but a representative one. Apostles, literally "ones sent," may well be compared to missionaries; prophets are those who proclaim the word of God to the People of God; evangelists proclaim the "Good News" of Jesus Christ, particularly to those who are outside of the church, while pastors and teachers are busy instructing believers through word and example in the various aspects of Christian living. These "gifts" are the various functions of leadership needed by the church. Other gifts, listed in *1 Corinthians 12:1-11* and *Romans 12:4-8*, are also given for the express purpose of building up the body of Christ, or the church. Sometimes discovering a spiritual gift can help people discern God's call in their lives.

B. Now let's look at three very different examples of persons who show that God indeed can call and use anyone He chooses to fulfill His purposes.

DAVID (1 Samuel 16, 17)

Shepherd, musician, and his father's errand boy, David, "a man after GOD's own heart," may very well be the most glamorous hero of the Bible. In *1 Samuel 16:1-13* God's anointing agent, the prophet Samuel traveled to Bethlehem to find the young (approximately 12-14 years old) David, youngest son of Jesse; his mission was to confirm the young boy as God's chosen king. Divine confirmation of this choice occurred in verse 13 as the anointing was accompanied by the coming of the Spirit of the Lord upon David in a mighty way ~ what proof of God's plan!

In *1 Samuel 16:14-23* David is introduced to King Saul's court as a favorite musician and armor-bearer, which sets the stage for the daring young warrior (approximately 17-18 years old) to become the hero of *1 Samuel 17*. Although he would be forced into exile a few short years after his triumph over Goliath, and would not become king until age 30, these early years of David's call give evidence of his character and reveal the qualities of his heart that God saw and chose to use. Young David was a person of honor and courage, with an adventurous spirit and openness to new possibilities. His willingness to let God work through him and his openness to the Spirit of God helped make him "a man after God's own heart." Although his later life would be shadowed by the sins of dishonesty, deceit, adultery, self-interest, and conspiracy, God still used him mightily.

SAUL/PAUL (Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:1-9)

Our first introduction to the young Pharisee from Tarsus named Saul is not a pleasant one. The stoning of Stephen in *Acts 7:54-8:1* places Saul on the scene as witness to the blood of the martyr. However, he was not a mere witness. Verse 58 indicates that as the crowd took off their coats and rolled up their sleeves, Saul was the "coat-watcher" ("Here, keep an eye on my coat for me, would you?"). Some have even felt that this identified Saul as being in charge of the execution. In any case, *8:1* says Saul was there giving his approval. The Greek for "giving approval" (syneudokōn) indicates active approval, not just merely consent. He was an accomplice; and his energetic opposition to the Church had only begun (*8:16*). In his persecution of believers (*8:2-3*), he began to destroy or "ravage" the Church; the Greek word, used only here in the New Testament, is elymaineto, which denotes "brutal cruelty." It describes a wild boar ravaging a vineyard or a wild animal savagely destroying a body. This indicates Saul's intense violence against Christians, which is in dramatic contrast to the sudden and complete surrender of *9:1-19*.

In Acts 9 we find Saul traveling to Damascus in order to extradite any Christians he might find there. This journey of approximately 150 miles would require about a week's travel. Although officers of the Sanhedrin probably accompanied him, as a Pharisee he would have had nothing to do with them, so he more or less walked alone on this long journey. About noon on the day he neared Damascus (see *22:6, 26:13*), a brilliant light, brighter than the sun, flashed around the travelers and they fell to the ground. A voice from heaven spoke and although all heard the sound, the understanding of it was meant for Saul alone, as it was his call to surrender to the will of God. This was not merely a vision; it is understood that the resurrected Christ actually appeared to Saul and called him into His service (verse 17). Three days later the Lord used Ananias to encourage Saul ("Brother Saul"), restore his sight, and confirm God's call on his life. And then his dramatic and astounding ministry began as God's chosen instrument. (See also *Acts 13:9; 22:4-21; 26:12-18*)

BARBARA COTTRELL - "A Woman Called" article

Barbara Cottrell's testimony appears in the Virginia Missions magazine. Obtain a copy of the magazine to use when teaching this lesson. The adults will see that Barbara is a contemporary example of someone who was first called into God's family, then called to preach, and then called to social ministry. The article outlines her pilgrimage from the beginning up through the present time. Barbara did not see herself as someone God would call to preach. Despite her deep love for scripture and the church, her initial response was disbelief that God would choose her. Notice how God did not give up but kept affirming her through other Christians. Eventually she came to understand that God calls everyone of us to serve Him. Through her testimony we can also see how God sometimes uses scripture to communicate a specific call to us.

II. TEACHING THE LESSON

A. OPENING ACTIVITY

Ask: **What are some things God can't do?** Allow for responses. Ask: **Can He call a serial killer to become a pastor? Can He call a stay-at-home mother of six to run for public office? Can He call a famous movie star to live in a small apartment and give his money to the poor? Can He call a 90 year old man to work with at-risk children?** Say: **The fact is He calls everyone of us into a relationship with Him and then into some kind of ministry to our world. We're going to look at three very different examples of persons who show that God can and does call and use anyone who will respond to Him.**

B. BIBLE STUDY

Direct the adults into three groups and give each group a different assignment (attached to this lesson.) Allow 15-20 minutes for the groups to complete their assignments. Have each group share their findings. Compare and contrast the three individuals and situations.

C. APPLICATION

Distribute blank index cards and ask adults to describe themselves - listing their own attributes and present circumstances. Have them consider what might make them likely candidates for God to use and what might make them unlikely candidates. Allow time for them to work. Ask: **Can God use someone with the attributes written on your card?** (Of course!)

Use the information in "Bible Background" to lead a discussion on how God gives spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ. Encourage the adults to identify spiritual gifts they've noticed at work in their church. Tell them to look at their index cards again. Ask if their spiritual gifts appear on the cards. If not, they should be added now. As they review their list, ask them to consider the possibility that God is calling them to something beyond what they are currently doing. Encourage them to watch and listen for God's voice.

Conclude by saying: **"The surprising truth about the Spirit of God is that we do not do something to get it. We do not have to become more attractive or more worthy or have all the answers. Our openness is enough. Our willingness is enough. The Bible makes it clear that God delights in surprising the world by doing great things through small people. We may never be anointed with royal oil, as was David, but we can be anointed by the Spirit of God. We can look forward to a future that is filled with unknown opportunities for life and service and joy. We can become the persons God wants us to be; there is no greater goal in this life."**¹

1 - Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel, Tony W. Cartledge; p. 204

BIBLE STUDY ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT 1 - DAVID

Read *1 Samuel 16:1-13*.

Answer the following questions:

1. Describe David at the time of his call. List his personal attributes and life circumstances.
2. What things on your list make it seem unlikely that God would use him?
3. What things on your list make it seem likely that God would use him?
4. To what was he called?

ASSIGNMENT 2 - SAUL/PAUL

Read *Acts 7:57-58, 9:1-15*.

Answer the following questions:

1. Describe Saul at the time of his call. List his personal attributes and life circumstances.
2. What things on your list make it seem unlikely that God would use him?
3. What things on your list make it seem likely that God would use him?
4. To what was he called?

ASSIGNMENT 3 - BARBARA

Read "A Woman Called" in the *Virginia Missions* magazine.

Answer the following questions:

1. Describe Barbara at the time of her call. List her personal attributes and life circumstances.
2. What things on your list make it seem unlikely that God would use her?
3. What things on your list make it seem likely that God would use her?
4. To what was she called?

Cut these apart and be prepared to distribute as directed in Bible Study.

SESSION 2

PURPOSE: Can God Call Me?

SCRIPTURE: *Jeremiah 1:4-10*
Judges 4:4 - 5

CAN GOD CALL ME?

I. BIBLE BACKGROUND

SCRIPTURE:

- Jeremiah 1:4-10
- Judges 4:4 - 5

CAN GOD CALL ME? **YES, OF COURSE!**

A. Many people feel that they cannot be called and used by God. But that is exactly how He accomplishes His purposes. People often have an easier time understanding that they are called to belong to Jesus Christ, but feel inadequate to be called into His service. Excuses abound:

“I’m too young.”

“I’m too old.”

“I’m not good enough.”

“I’m a woman.”

“I don’t know enough.”

“I’m not experienced.”

“No one would listen to me.”

“I can’t get up in front of people.”

B. Let’s examine two examples of people called by God, despite their age, shortcomings, gender or lack of experience.

JEREMIAH (*Jeremiah 1:4-10*)

The son of Hilkiah, descended from the priestly line of Aaron, Jeremiah was both a priest and a prophet; he was born a priest through his family background and began ministering as a prophet when he received “the word of the Lord” (“prophet” is one through whom God speaks directly to His people). In *Jeremiah 1:4-9*, God Himself spoke to Jeremiah and told him that He had chosen him and set him apart for a special purpose even before he was conceived. Probably in his late teens or early twenties, Jeremiah expressed his self-doubt and lack of eloquence and ability, especially for dealing with the public. I am only a child emphasized his feelings of inexperience and unpreparedness, which God immediately dealt with and countered. He indicated to Jeremiah that he only had to be faithful and willing and God would take care of the rest. He commanded him not to be afraid and assured him of His continuing presence with him. Whether through prophetic vision or figuratively or perhaps even both, God then provided a visual aid, an object lesson, a visible proof in verse 9. “Now I have put my words in your mouth” is a compellingly accurate description of God’s purpose for Jeremiah’s life and would serve to remind him of God’s promise that He would always provide. Jeremiah’s ministry as prophet would last over forty years, and because of God’s assurances that he would become strong and courageous (*1:18-19; 6:27; 15:20*), they were forty years of fearless service to the Lord. (See also *Exodus 4:10, 1 Kings 3:7*)

DEBORAH (*Judges 4:4-16*)

This introduction to Deborah tells us that she is a wife, a prophetess and a judge. People would come to her for a judgement or ruling in local matters - she was the resident lawyer of her day. She was also the mouthpiece of God, speaking His words and issuing His commands to the children of Israel. When she delivers God’s message

to Barak, telling him to go into battle, he is fearful. He insists that she go with the army. Now Deborah is a woman. She isn't a soldier or experienced in matters of war, but she doesn't use that as an excuse. She accompanies the army and is present for God's great defeat of the enemy. Chapter 5 records the song that she and Barak sang in worship to God. Had Deborah not been willing to answer God's call in her life, she would have missed an awesome blessing.

II. TEACHING THE LESSON

A. OPENING ACTIVITY

Have adults name movies or books about people overcoming great odds. List their responses on a white or blackboard. Say: **Last week we learned that God can call anyone into His service. When that becomes personal and we consider God calling us, however, we may make excuses. Our human nature tends to focus on our inadequacies and limit God's abilities. This week we'll answer the question, "Can God call me?" and see that there are no shortcomings that God cannot overcome when He calls us to a particular ministry. Let's look at two Biblical characters and how they responded to God's call.**

B. BIBLE STUDY

Assign the Scripture references, *Jeremiah 1:4-10* and *Judges 4:4-16*, to volunteers to read aloud. Using the material from "Bible Background" and your own personal study, share additional information as needed. Allow discussion. Ask: **What were Jeremiah's main objections to God's call?** (*Too young, can't speak*) **How did God counter his objections?** Allow for responses. Ask: **How was Deborah's response different from Jeremiah's? What could her excuses have been?** (*Female, no battle experience*) Allow for responses. Ask: **Did God use both Biblical characters? Can you relate to either one of the Biblical characters? If so, how?** Allow for responses.

Our response to God can be to make excuses or to trust Him and just obey. No matter what our circumstances or shortcomings, God wants to work through each one of us. As *2 Corinthians 12:9-10* tells us, God's power is perfected in weakness.

C. APPLICATION

Have the adults make a "Top Ten" list of excuses that people give God. These can be real excuses that Biblical characters used or excuses the adults have heard or even said themselves. Have them rank the excuses with #1 being the most common or most frequently used.

Give the adults the attached matching activity. Have them draw lines to match the excuse with the Biblical character(s) that used it. Have them use the references given if they cannot complete the activity. Direct them to the "Top Ten" list and make any modifications needed based on the excuses used in the matching activity.

Pause for everyone to identify the excuse listed that they are most likely to make. Ask them to consider how God must feel when His children keep making excuses. Have a quiet time of reflection, where each person talks to God personally. Conclude with a prayer asking God to help us understand that He is calling each one of us personally. Ask God to make His call in our lives clear and give us the courage to obey Him without excuses.

SESSION 2

EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES

Matching Activity

Draw lines matching each biblical character with an excuse.
Use the scripture references as needed to complete the activity.
Hint: Multiple characters may use the same excuse.

Sarah (Genesis 18:11-12)	I'm too slow.
Gideon (Judges 6:15)	I'm not good enough.
Moses (Exodus 4:10)	I'm not invited.
Esther (Esther 4:10-11)	I'm not able.
Philip (John 6:7)	I'm too old.
rich young ruler (Mark 10:21-22)	I'm too rich.
Peter (Acts 10:14)	I'm not articulate.
lame man at Pool of Bethesda (John 5:7)	I'm too poor.
Saul (1 Samuel 9:21)	
Mary (Luke 1:34)	
Zacharias (Luke 1:18)	

3 SESSION

PURPOSE: How Do I Know God's Calling?

SCRIPTURE: *1 Samuel 3:1-4:1*

1 Kings 3:5-15

HOW DO I KNOW GOD'S CALLING?

I. BIBLE BACKGROUND

SCRIPTURE:

- *1 Samuel 3:1-4:1*
- *1 Kings 3:5-15*

How do I know God's calling? Good question! And not one with any easy, pat answers; as a matter of fact, there isn't just one answer that will work for everyone. This is one question whose answer could truly vary from person to person and age to age. However, there are some examples from the Bible that may help us to understand the variety of ways others have discerned GOD's call and make us aware of possible things to look for in our own lives today.

SAMUEL (*1 Samuel 3:1-4:1*) - God's Spoken Voice

Samuel was the son of Elkanah and Hannah. His mother had been unable to have children, which caused her great sadness, and she had prayed for years and years that God would give her a son. Hannah vowed that if God would grant her request, she would give her child to the service of the Lord. God did, indeed, answer her prayer and Hannah gave birth to a son, whom she (and not his father, as was customary at that time), named Samuel which sounds like the Hebrew for "heard of GOD." Faithful Hannah remembered her vow and presented her son, at the age of three, to Eli, the priest at the temple of Shiloh, to assist him in servicing the Lord. Samuel grew up in the temple, performing whatever tasks a young boy might to help the priest, and he began to mature physically and spiritually.

In *Samuel 3:1-4:1* we find Samuel at approximately 12 years old. Having been reared in the temple, Samuel obviously knew a lot about GOD, but it does not seem that he yet knew GOD; that is, he didn't have that intimate knowledge that came from a close, personal relationship with GOD. However, that was about to change.

One night while sleeping, Samuel was awakened by a voice calling his name. Three times the voice called and each time, not recognizing the voice of God, the boy thought Eli had called for him. Although not one to whom God directly spoke, Eli was finally able to discern the voice of the Lord and he told Samuel what to do should God speak again. He did, and the young Samuel was given a message of destruction regarding Eli's family; he was reluctant to reveal what God had said but shared with Eli the prophetic word he had received. Samuel then began to grow in his personal relationship with God and in his service to the Lord. Over the many years of his ministry as prophet, God used him powerfully; he was God's divinely ordained representative to help the nation of Israel transition from the rule of judges to that of kings. (See also *1 Samuel 1, 2*)

SOLOMON (*1 Kings 3:5-15*) - Revelation Through A Dream

Solomon, son of King David and Bathsheba, became King of Israel shortly before his father's death. God's special favor had been upon Solomon since his birth (see *2 Samuel 12:24-25*) and because of this he was known to be David and God's choice as David's successor to the throne. A young man about 20 years old when he began his reign, Solomon was very aware of his youthfulness and lack of experience in dealing with his kingly responsibilities. He loved God and wanted to follow his father's example of showing his love and honor for God. From his first days as king, Solomon had to deal with his and his father's enemies, some even among his own family. His new responsibilities as the leader and judge of the nation of Israel burdened him deeply. He needed a word from the Lord and a clear understanding of God's will for his life as king. Shortly after becoming king, Solomon went to the tabernacle at Gibeon and offered a thousand burnt sacrifices. That night God appeared to him in a dream, which was a widely known and accepted form of revelation from the Lord. God told him to ask

for whatever he wanted. Solomon's first words indicated that he knew he was king by God's design and he then acknowledged his own youth and inexperience and the overwhelming breadth of his responsibility. He requested from God a "discerning heart," that God-given wisdom which goes hand-in-hand with total dependence on the Lord.

God was pleased with Solomon's request and also that he did not express selfish desires. He promised to grant Solomon incomparable wisdom and understanding, as well as many other blessings. Solomon's subsequent insight and wisdom became legendary, known far and wide, and resulted in forty years of peace and prosperity for his people, Israel. (See also *1 Kings 1, 2, 4:29-34*)

TERRI - Alma Hunt Churchwide Bulletin Insert - Affirmation Through Experience

Read "Meet Terri" on the Churchwide Insert (located in the center of the Virginia Missions magazine.) She prepared herself through education, and asked God to reveal His purpose for her life. Then she got involved in various ministries. It's important that we not sit around waiting for God's call in our lives. Sometimes it is as we are busy about His work that we discover our personal calling.

II. TEACHING THE LESSON

A. OPENING ACTIVITY

Prior to class, enlist a recognized leader in your church (not necessarily a vocational minister) to give a brief testimony regarding their call to serve the Lord and how they discerned God's call in their life. If unable to enlist someone, be prepared to give your own testimony regarding your call to serve as a Bible Study teacher/church leader. After the testimony, say: *In this unit so far, we have talked about Who God Calls and if God can call me. Today we'll address the next question, How Do I Know God's Calling? and look at different ways God reveals Himself to us and how we discern, or understand, His call in our lives.*

B. BIBLE STUDY

Give summaries of Samuel's call (*1 Samuel 3:1 - 4:1*), Solomon's call (*1 Kings 3:5-15*), and Terri's call ("Meet Terri" on the front of the churchwide insert.) Include information from "Bible Background Study" as needed. After the summaries, review the ways God revealed Himself and how His call was discerned, including the guest testimony. Ask if any adults can relate to these different methods of hearing God. Discuss the possible differences in how God revealed His call and message in biblical times versus today.

C. APPLICATION

Have adults pair up and share a time when they have felt God speaking to them or revealing His call in their lives and how they discerned or understood God's message. Invite those who feel led to share with the whole group.

Conclude by saying: *"Yahweh's midnight visit to Samuel suggests that God calls each of us personally, not generically. And God will speak in a way that we can understand. To Samuel, the voice of God sounded like the voice of Eli as he heard his name called again and again. It was a familiar and comforting voice. God may speak to us in the words of a parent or close friend. Of course, ears are not required. God may whisper to our hearts and minds as we drive our cars, or sit by a shady lakeside, or lie awake in the still of the night. God's call to each of us may not be as specific as it was for Samuel, and the common notion that God has planned our lives to the last detail is almost certainly overstated. Yet God has given special gifts to each of us, and God calls us to use those abilities in service to Him and to our world. The first three times Samuel heard God calling his name, he responded in a most appropriate fashion, even though he thought it was Eli calling. Samuel said, 'Here I am! You called?' The Hebrew *hineni* literally means 'Behold, me!' Those who follow God best are those who know themselves and who make themselves available in God's service."³*

3 - Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel, Tony W. Cartledge; p. 67

SESSION 4

PURPOSE: I've Been Called. What Next?

SCRIPTURE: *1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:9, 21*

2 Timothy 1:9

John 15:16a

Romans 11:29

I'VE BEEN CALLED. WHAT NEXT?

I. BIBLE BACKGROUND

SCRIPTURE:

- *1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:9, 21*
- *2 Timothy 1:9*
- *John 15:16a*
- *Romans 11:29*

God calls everyone. First, He calls us to His love through eternal salvation; then He calls us into ministry, to share that love with others by example and service.

He calls us to Himself, by asking us to accept the sacrificial gift of His Son, Jesus. Our salvation comes through grace alone; it is God's greatest gift of love, His most dramatic "visual aid" of His love for us (*2 Timothy 1:9*).

God calls us to share His love with the rest of the world...

1. By example. Again and again throughout the Bible, God commands His people to be holy, as He is holy; to live a holy life; to be holy in all that we do. In other words, we are commanded to try to be like Him. The root of the Greek word for holy (hagios) means "different;" therefore we Christians are holy because we are different from others. We are God's people, by God's choice, "chosen for a task in the world and for a destiny in eternity."⁴ "Holy" means "set apart" for God's purposes. By being holy, different, and set apart, we set an example (*1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Timothy 1:9*). We are also to share His love by following the example of Christ. The Greek word hupogrammos, used only here in the New Testament (*1 Peter 2:21*) refers to the way children were taught to write, by filling in a pattern or copying the marks in exercise books. Jesus is our pattern to imitate. As followers of Christ, we are to "be imitators" of Him, to be like Him. In Swahili, the word for Christians is wakristo, meaning Christ-people. We are to be Christ-people, holy, set apart, different; and we are to share His love with the rest of the world.

2. By service. God does not act "unthinkingly" or indecisively; He has a purpose for everything He does, a reason for calling us and gifting us. We are to use the gifts God has given us, because they were given for a purpose. We've already seen that the only way to develop them is to use them (see Lesson 2, Timothy). So we serve God by telling others about Him and serving and ministering in His name (*1 Peter 2:9; John 15:16a*).

The Great Commission given to us by Christ (*Matthew 28:19-20*) instructs us to "make disciples," to share with others the love and good news of Jesus Christ as we are going about our daily lives. In order to live out our calling as disciples of Christ, we must "be on mission" "as we go;" we must be God's hands, eyes, ears, feet, heart here on earth. Some of us will be called to serve in a vocational manner, as professional ministers or missionaries. Others will find their calling and service to be through the local church, or association, or state or national ministries. Regardless, all Christians are called to live a holy life and serve God; to be different and share His love as we minister in His name (*Romans 11:29*).

This true story of Catherine Walker is taken from *Golden Opportunities: Ministry Ideas for Senior Adults*:

Catherine Walker served much of her adult life as a missionary in China and Indonesia. After retiring, she started an Intercessory Prayer Ministry. After five years and a second “retirement” she did research on unreached people groups and coauthored a book. Next, came a Monday Bible study for young mothers. “Teaching these women was one of the most enjoyable and profitable activities I have experienced since retirement,” Catherine shares. The class became a combination of Bible study, personal sharing, and group therapy. For several years they surveyed the sweep of God’s plan in both the Old and New Testaments.

Then at around 75 years of age, Catherine felt called to be an artist. She relates her call with these words: “God called me as a child to be a missionary and as a retiree to be an artist.” Catherine continues, “In 1995 I began to paint in my apartment at Lakewood Manor Retirement Home. The excitement and enthusiasm of my friends over the painting convinced me God had given me a special gift, so I began to thank and praise Him. I was encouraged to study art in an advanced class, hold a one-person show, and join an artist association.” Catherine received confirmation of her call to paint from Scripture: “Our God gives you everything you need, makes you everything you’re to be. He’ll fill your good ideas and acts of faith with His own energy so that it all amounts to something. If your life honors the name of Jesus He will honor you. Grace is behind and through all of this” (2 *Thess. 1:2, 11-12*, The Message).

“God has made it possible for me to give the money from sales of paintings to His work,” Catherine writes. “I invited friends to a ‘show-and-sell’ of 44 oil paintings. The proceeds from the month-long sale went to the Lakewood Manor Assisted Living Building Fund. Proceeds from another two-day show at an annual WMU meeting went to Virginia missions in the northeastern states.”

“Now as a missionary and an artist,” Catherine says, “I lead prayer retreats, teach Bible, and do missionary things, plus enjoy painting and the new contacts that brings. I keep thanking God for all the good things that come from following Him.”

The Alma Hunt Offering for Virginia Missions supports many, many different ministries. This lesson will help adults to look at specific ways they can live out their calling and minister here in our Commonwealth and in their local communities. Be sure to obtain a copy of the Virginia Missions Magazine (Alma Hunt Offering 2004 issue) and become familiar with it.

II. TEACHING THE LESSON

A. OPENING ACTIVITY

Tell the story about Catherine Walker in your own words, emphasizing her different calls from God at different times in her life. Say: **In this last lesson of our unit, we’ll address the question, I’ve Been Called. What Next? We’ll review that we, as Christians, have been called to minister and look at various possibilities.**

B. BIBLE STUDY

Assign the following Scripture references to volunteers to read aloud: *2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Peter 2:9; John 15:16a; Matthew 28:19-20; and Romans 11:29*. After each verse is read, ask for comments on how it relates to our being called by God. Conclude by reminding adults that this unit has helped them to understand that God calls all Christians to be involved in ministering to others in His name. Say: **Now we’re going to look at some specific ways we can do that.**

C. APPLICATION

Give every two adults a copy of the *Virginia Missions Magazine* to share. Say: **The Alma Hunt Offering for Virginia Missions supports many, many different ministries throughout our Commonwealth. Many of these ministries provide opportunities for Christians, from children to senior adults, to be involved in hands-on, day-to-day acts of service and ministry.** Instruct the pairs to look through the magazines and try to find ministries like ones in which they have been involved. Allow time for them to work. List the ministries they find on one side of a white or black board. When they are finished responding, tell them that the things listed are just some ways they can respond to God’s call and minister in His name. Have them brainstorm as a group the needs in the local community and church. List them on the other side of the board. Direct the adults to focus on all the ministries and needs listed on the board as you play soft music. Don’t rush this time. Tell them this is an open-eyed personal prayer time and encourage them to listen for God to speak. Conclude with a spoken prayer asking God to reveal His call in our lives and give us the courage to respond.