



“CONSIDER *Your* CALL” Youth 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:** *1 Peter 2:9*  
*Romans 1:5-6*  
*Jeremiah 1:4-9*  
*Acts 16:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:12, 14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6*

**3**  
SESSION

**PURPOSE:** How Do I Know God's Calling?

**SCRIPTURE:** *1 Samuel 3:1-4:1*  
*1 Kings 3:5-15*  
*Acts 9:3-6*  
*Acts 16:2; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6*

**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*

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## 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 AD 60-63 at a time when persecution threatened the early church. The recipients of the letter were 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*)

**B.** Now let's look at two 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 martyrs. 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” (syneudokon) 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)

## **II. PREPARATION**

1. *Study the Scripture passages and read "Bible Background" for this lesson.*
2. *Prepare for the Opening Activity: obtain refreshments.*
3. *Prepare for the Teaching Activities: write the three Scripture references where they will be visible to the class and make copies of the "scrambled words" sheet for each student.*
4. *Prepare for the Closing Activity: make a poster of the unit benediction (optional).*

## **III. TEACHING THE LESSON**

### **A. OPENING ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)**

Prepare a table with refreshments (doughnuts, bagels, etc.) in view of the class. Indicate that they must wait to be invited to partake. Choose individual students to get their refreshments as they are arriving and settling in, taking attendance, passing out Bibles, etc. Finally, after everyone has been invited to have refreshments, ask the students to relate a time when they had been chosen for something. Ask: **What were your feelings?** Then ask if anyone would tell of a time when they were not chosen for something and what their feelings were about it. Ask: **Did anyone think they would not be chosen to get refreshments?** Say: **Of course I would choose all of you!** Indicate that today's lesson addresses the question, Whom Does God Call?

### **B. TEACHING ACTIVITIES (25-30 MINUTES)**

1. Direct the students' attention to the three Scripture references on the focal wall. Using information from “Bible Background,” discuss how these Scriptures may help us begin to answer the question, Whom Does God Call? (Be sure to point out that all Christians are God's chosen people; that as believers we are called to serve Him; that our hope is the assurance of eternal life; that “the saints” are those God has called to be His people: all Christians; that God may use others as His agents or instruments but the calling (which is God's invitation to salvation) comes from God.
2. Say: **Now let's look at two very different examples of persons who show that God indeed can call and use anyone He chooses to fulfill His purposes.** Use a creative method to divide youth into two groups (steak or chicken? football or baseball? Crest or Colgate?) Improvise as needed to make the groups close to equal in number). Give a “scrambled words” sheet to each student. Assign one name to each group and have them read the Scripture references for background information. Then instruct them to unscramble the words and phrases, which will help them to prepare a brief description of how God called this person and used him to fulfill His purposes. Allow each group to share their work. Highlight as needed with information from “Bible Background.”

## **C. CLOSING ACTIVITY (5-10 MINUTES)**

Ask for volunteers to respond to the following questions: ***How is your heart different from your outward appearance, or what is one way you are different from the way you appear?*** (Allow students to share.) ***Has there ever been a time when you heard or saw someone ridicule or criticize God's power, love, or existence? What did you do, or what would you do if something like that happened and you witnessed it?*** (Allow students to share.)

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 even more worthy. Our openness is enough. Our not knowing 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.**<sup>1</sup>

Offer the benediction for this unit, *Romans 11:33-36*: **“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.”**

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

**“SCRAMBLED WORDS” ACTIVITY**

**DAVID - 1 SAMUEL 16**

- 1) MESUAL
- 2) PEEHHRSD
- 3) GNUOEYST NSO
- 4) NINOETDA
- 5) LHTMBEHEE
- 6) CSINAIMU
- 7) MROAR-RREEAB
- 8) NUOYG IRORWRA
- 9) SENPONSE OT DGO
- 10) HIALGOT
- 11) CRUEOA NDA RNHOO
- 12) SHNCEO NIGK

**SAUL/PAUL - ACTS 7:54-8:3; 9:1-9**

- 1) RSAEHEIP
- 2) SSRUTA
- 3) PSTNEEH
- 4) TACO-HWERCTA
- 5) ROTREPUCES
- 6) YRSDOTE EHT RHCCUH
- 7) SCAADMSU
- 8) GTIRHB THILG
- 9) NIAANSA
- 10) TRDRSRCEUEE SHCTIR
- 11) NSHEOC TNETSNIMUR
- 12) HROERBT LASU

# SESSION 2

**PURPOSE:** Can God Call Me?

**SCRIPTURE:** *1 Peter 2:9*

*Romans 1:5-6*

*Jeremiah 1:4-9*

*Acts 16:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:12, 14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6*

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## CAN GOD CALL ME?

### I. BIBLE BACKGROUND

SCRIPTURE:

- 1 Peter 2:9
- Romans 1:5-6
- Jeremiah 1:4-9
- Acts 16:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:12, 14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6

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

**A.** Many teenagers may feel that their age and inexperience prevents them from being called and used by God. However, many vocational ministers and missionaries indicate an initial understanding of their call during their teenage years. Review Lesson 1, “Bible Background,” especially regarding *1 Peter 2:9* and *Romans 1:5-6* (emphasize the passage from *Romans 1:6*; “And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ”). Although many teenagers may become Christians and understand a call to salvation, most of their doubts probably pertain to a call to service and being used by God for a purpose. However, “*age and inexperience do not disqualify when God calls; He equips and sustains those He commissions.*”<sup>2</sup>

**B.** Let’s take a look at two examples of young people called by God “in spite of their youth.”

#### **JEREMIAH (*Jeremiah 1:4-9*)**

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 spoke directly 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 regarding dealing with the public. Jeremiah’s statement, “*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*)

#### **TIMOTHY (*Acts 16:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:12, 14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6*)**

Our first introduction to the teen-aged Timothy occurs in *Acts 16* when Paul came to his hometown on his second missionary journey. Timothy is a young man from Lystra whose unnamed father was Greek and whose mother, Eunice and grandmother, Lois, were Jewish Christians. In spite of his young age, church leaders thought and spoke highly of him and seemed to consider him gifted for future leadership roles in the church. Paul determined to make Timothy his apprentice and began training the young teenager as his probable successor. His circumcision occurred as a requirement of Jewish law. It would have been offensive to the Jews to whom they would

minister if a man with Jewish lineage were uncircumcised, and then his Greek lineage would not be a hindrance as well.

Approximately twelve to fifteen years later, Paul wrote two letters to Timothy. At the time of the first letter, a difficult situation involving heresy was threatening the Church at Ephesus. The prophets of the Church, men known to be godly and in God's favor, seemingly had decided that Timothy was the one to handle it. In *1 Timothy 1:18*, Paul reminded the young man of the prophecies concerning Timothy's call and his giftedness and abilities for service. He encouraged him to remember these prophecies and to be inspired and motivated by them in difficult times. Paul seemed to think a significant leadership role was about to come Timothy's way and it was as if he were saying, "You were chosen and you can't back out." By his reference to Timothy as "my son," we sense the trust and confidence Paul had in him as well as the closeness of their relationship.

In *1 Timothy 4:12, 14*, Paul indicated that Timothy should not be intimidated by his age or by what others might think. Although Timothy was probably about 30 years old at the time, such a significant leadership role was not usually held by one so young and Paul instructed Timothy to deflect any criticism regarding his youth by demonstrating mature conduct and a godly lifestyle. He reminded Timothy that he was "set apart" for a special purpose through his ordination years earlier when he first joined Paul as his assistant. Paul attempted to strengthen Timothy's confidence by reminding him that God had given him the ability to be a minister.

At the time of his second letter to Timothy a year or so later, a great battle lay ahead for the churches because of the persecution under the Emperor Nero. Paul knew that his young "son in the faith" might need encouragement to remain faithful and strong during a very difficult time. He reminded Timothy of his confidence and trust in him. He encouraged him to remember his family tradition of faith and the fine heritage he had received from those godly women. Paul reminded him of his ordination, his being "set apart" and gifted by God for a special task. Paul instructed Timothy that God's gifts must be developed through use and only then will they reach their highest and best potential. This outstanding young leader's ministry, both with Paul and as his successor, would carry the Church through some difficult days as he proved himself worthy of the apostle's trust and confidence and remained loyal to God's calling.

## II. PREPARATION

1. *Study the Scripture passages and read "Bible Background" for this lesson.*
2. *Prepare for the Opening Activity:* obtain candy or gum for prizes and write the topic, "Movies or Books About Young People Who Have Done Something Special/Extraordinary/Really Good" where it will be visible to the class.
3. *Prepare for the Teaching Activities:* make a poster with the title, "\_\_\_\_\_ 's Top Ten List" and fill in the blank with your church's name; write these Scripture references on individual slips of paper: *Jeremiah 1:4-9; Acts 16:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:18; 1 Timothy 4:12, 14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6.*
4. *Prepare for the Closing Activity:* cut enough index cards in half vertically in order to have one half per student.

## III. TEACHING THE LESSON

### A. OPENING ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

As youth arrive, direct their attention to the topic, "Movies or Books about Young People Who Have Done Something Special/Extraordinary/Really Good." Have them work with a partner to come up with as many titles as possible. After approximately five minutes, call time. Explain that each team will share their list and will receive a point for each title that does not appear on any other team's list. As the teams share, you will need to write the titles and cross out duplicates. Have individually-wrapped candy or gum for the winning team (or for all students, "just for participating and being great youth who do really good things"). Say: "**Last week we addressed the question, Whom Does God Call? This week we'll talk about another question, especially as it relates to youth: Can God Call Me?**"

## **B. TEACHING ACTIVITIES (30 MINUTES)**

1. Direct the students' attention to the "\_\_\_\_\_ 's Top Ten List" poster and explain that they are going to create their very own "Top Ten List" of reasons why youth might feel God could or would not call them. Allow the class to brainstorm and then decide upon their "top ten" reasons. Explain that some of the reasons may seem very valid and make a lot of sense, while others may just be excuses. Indicate that the lesson for today will help them to see that God can, and does, call youth to serve Him and to do His will in their lives.

2. Assign the Scripture references to volunteers and ask them to be prepared to read them aloud. Using the material from "Bible Background" and any additional study, share a mini-lecture with the students about Jeremiah and Timothy after the volunteers have read aloud the corresponding Scripture references. After your lecture, ask if they notice any similarities between their "Top Ten List" and either of the two biblical examples. Allow discussion. Ask: **What seemed to be Jeremiah's main objection to God's call? How did God counter his objection?** Allow for responses. Ask: **Can any of you relate to Timothy? If so, how? If these letters had been written to you, how would you react?** Allow for responses. Remind the students that the Bible was written for everyone and we all could be encouraged and affirmed by the words directed at Jeremiah and Timothy.

## **C. CLOSING ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)**

Give each student one half of an index card. Have them write on it the one reason from your "Top Ten List" they can relate to most and also what they believe would be God's response to their reason. Encourage them to use the card as a bookmark in their Bible to remind them that indeed God can, and does, call young people to salvation and to service.

Conclude with the unit benediction from *Romans 11:33-36*: **"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen."**

# 3 SESSION

**PURPOSE:** How Do I Know God's Calling?

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

*1 Kings 3:5-15*

*Acts 9:3-6*

*Acts 16:2; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6*

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## HOW DO I KNOW GOD'S CALLING?

### I. BIBLE BACKGROUND

SCRIPTURE:

- *1 Samuel 3:1-4:1*
- *1 Kings 3:5-15*
- *Acts 9:3-6*
- *Acts 16:2; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6*

**How do I know God's calling?** Good question! It is not one with any easy, formulaic 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 calling 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. This 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 do to help the priest. 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 comes 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 eventually shared with Eli the prophetic word he had received from God. 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's and God's choice as his 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*)

#### **SAUL/PAUL (Acts 9:3-6) - A Voice From Heaven/A Visit From Christ**

Refer to the "Bible Background" material from Lesson 1 as it pertains to Saul/Paul, especially Acts 9:3-6.

#### **TIMOTHY (Acts 16:2; 1 Timothy 1:18, 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:5-6)**

##### **- Affirmation of God's Giftedness By Other People**

Refer to the "Bible Background" material from Lesson 2 as it pertains to Timothy, especially regarding the Scripture references cited above.

## **II. PREPARATION**

1. *Study the Scripture passages and read "Bible Background" for this lesson.*
2. *Prepare for the Opening Activity:* enlist someone for the testimony.
3. *Prepare for the Teaching Activity:* copy the appropriate information from the "Bible Background" material and prepare slips of paper with the names of the four biblical examples and Scripture references.
4. *Prepare for the Closing Activity:* screen and select video clip (if choosing this option).

## **III. TEACHING THE LESSON**

### **A. OPENING ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)**

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

### **B. TEACHING ACTIVITIES (30-35 MINUTES)**

Using a creative method, divide youth into four groups (brands of favorite sneakers, birth months, number of siblings, etc.) improvise as necessary to make the groups close to equal in number. Assign each group one of the four biblical examples and give them a copy of the appropriate "Bible Background" material and Scripture references. Explain that each group will present a "talk show interview" with their biblical character, sharing about how God revealed Himself in their lives and how they discerned His calling and message. One student in each group should role-play the biblical character and the others will be the interview panel. Tell them they will have ten minutes to prepare and that each interview should be three-four minutes long. Assist groups as needed. After approximately ten minutes, have each group perform their interview (You may want to enlist one of your more "dramatic" students to be the emcee or talk-show host.) After the interviews, review the ways God revealed Himself and how His calling was discerned, including the guest testimony. Ask if any students can relate to these different methods. Discuss the possible differences in how God revealed His calling and message in biblical times versus today. Ask for a volunteer who would be willing to share how they have heard God's calling and how they discerned or understood it.

## **C. CLOSING ACTIVITY (5-10 MINUTES)**

*Option 1* - Show a brief video clip that illustrates someone hearing and discerning God's calling. Suggestions: Oh, God! (George Burns, John Denver - when God first reveals himself to the supermarket clerk); The Ten Commandments (Charleton Heston - when Moses encounters the burning bush); It's A Wonderful Life (Jimmy Stewart - when Clarence the angel first meets George); the television series, Touched By An Angel or Joan of Arcadia. Be sure to screen ahead of time for anything objectionable.

*Option 2* - Have students pair up and share a time when they have felt God speaking to them or revealing His calling on their lives and how they discerned or understood God's message.

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 *hinnenī* literally means 'Behold, me!' Those who follow God best are those who know themselves and who make themselves available in God's service.***<sup>3</sup>

Offer the unit benediction from *Romans 11:33-36*: **"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen."**

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

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## 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 and then He calls us to share that love with others by example and service.

1. He calls us to His love through eternal salvation, by accepting 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).

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

a) *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."<sup>4</sup> "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 *upogrammos*, 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.

b) *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 and 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).

The Alma Hunt Offering for Virginia Missions supports many different ministries that do just that. This lesson will help students 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 the allocations lists.

## II. PREPARATION

1. *Study the Scripture passages and read "Bible Background" for this lesson.* Obtain a copy of Virginia Missions Magazine (Alma Hunt Offering 2004 issue) and become familiar with the allocations lists.
2. *Prepare for the Opening Activity:* obtain early elementary writing exercise tablets and large, kindergarten-style pencils.
3. *Prepare for the Teaching Activities:* write these Scripture references on individual slips of paper: *2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Peter 2:9; John 15:16a; Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 11:29.* On a large piece of butcher paper or newsprint, write "Graffiti Wall" and display the paper in a location that makes the entire writing area accessible. Make four copies of the Alma Hunt Offering 2004 allocations lists or secure four copies of the Virginia Mission Magazine.
4. *Prepare for the Closing Activity:* have a large variety of colored markers available.

## III. TEACHING THE LESSON

### A. OPENING ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)

As youth arrive, give each student one sheet from an early elementary writing exercise tablet (the kind with the alphabet in dotted lines to trace over) and a pencil (the big, kindergarten-style, preferably). Explain that you are going down "memory lane" this morning and re-living the days when they were first learning to write. Have them complete their sheet, tracing the lines carefully. Make this activity light-hearted and fun. When finished, say: ***You have all had lots of practice writing your "ABC's" by now, so this exercise was probably pretty easy. But it is a good way to remind us of what it is like to follow an example, or pattern, especially if it's very clear. In this last lesson of our unit, we'll address the topic, I've Been Called. What Next? and review what we, as Christians, have been called to do and what are our examples.***

### B. TEACHING ACTIVITIES (30-35 MINUTES)

1. Assign the Scripture references to volunteers and ask them to be prepared to read them aloud. Share a mini-lecture with the students based on the material from "Bible Background" and any additional study (stop after *Romans 11:29*) and have the volunteers read aloud the corresponding Scripture references at the appropriate time. Use the classroom chalkboard or dry-erase board to write summary notes or phrases as you talk. Conclude by reminding students 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."***
2. Divide the students into four groups and give each group a copy of the allocations lists from the Virginia Missions Magazine and a blank piece of paper. Introduce this activity by having a volunteer read "Meet Matthew" on the Youth Insert located in the center of the Virginia Missions Magazine. It is about one young person here in Virginia living out his call and ministering to others. After you share the story, 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 groups to look over the lists of allocations and try to pinpoint those ministries that seem to be ones in which they, as youth, could be involved. Have them list their ideas on one side of the blank sheet of paper. Assist the groups as they work, as needed (suggestions: Bland Ministry Center; Impact VA!; Family Transformers; Disaster Relief; Camp Piankatank Counselors; CrossRoads Camp Counselors/LIT; Dorcas Project; Acteens, Youth on Mission; New Church Starts; Emerging Leaders Call-Out Events; YEC; etc.) When they are finished, tell them that these lists are just a sample of the possible ways they, as young people, can respond to God's calling and minister in His name. Have them brainstorm in their groups and list on the other side of the paper any other ministry opportunities they can think

of. Again, assist the groups as they work, as needed (suggestions: mission trips; assist with VBS, Backyard Bible Clubs, Missions VBS; clowning, puppets, drama with children or senior adults; homebound ministry: visiting, yard work, raking leaves, etc; fundraisers for missions; become a prayer warrior; \*invite friends to church, YEC, youth group activities; volunteer at a local ministry site, i.e., homeless shelter, food pantry, clothes closet, after-school tutoring program, etc.). It is okay if groups duplicate ideas.

## **C. CLOSING ACTIVITY (5-10 MINUTES)**

Preface this activity with any personal comments you may wish to make to your students regarding commitment to God's calling and to serving Him. Point out the "Graffiti Wall" you have displayed and the available markers. Invite the students to write on the "Graffiti Wall" the different ideas of ministry opportunities their groups came up with. Each student should only write one ministry at a time, giving everyone a chance to participate. Remind them that they may return to the "Graffiti Wall" as often as needed. Also, several students may write at the same time. Encourage the youth to do this activity quietly, prayerfully considering the ministry opportunities as they write them. When the youth have finished writing, ask if anyone would like to share anything regarding their understanding of God's call in their life and/or ministry opportunities. Allow time for responses.

Conclude with the unit benediction from *Romans 11:33-36*: **"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen."**

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