

DISCOVER & RESPOND

to God's call

A 40-day devotional series to help you discover & fulfill the calling that God has put in your heart



Learn how to...
"Do justly, love mercy
and walk humbly
with your God"
-Micah 6:8

*When God calls and we respond,
transformation takes place.*

CALLING:

“He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
but to do justly, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God?”

— Micah 6:8

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS:

Step 1: God prepares

Step 2: God calls

Step 3: God supplies

Step 4: God transforms

INTRODUCTION

We hope that you will join us in this very special 40 day devotional series. As you search to discover and fulfill the calling (or cause) that God has put in your heart, may you be drawn to Micah 6:8 – “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God” (KJV).

More often than not, people suffer from poverty – both physically and spiritually – because of broken relationships between ourselves and God, others and creation. During this series, you will discover what the Word of God has to say about our pursuit of what is good, and the reconciliation of these relationships.

We chose a 40 day format for our series because of the importance of that number in the Scriptures. The Bible provides many examples of the significance of the number 40. Often, a period of 40 days or 40 years refers to a time of challenge, followed by a time of blessing. It rained 40 days and 40 nights, causing the great flood before the rainbow and a new start. Moses spent 40 days in the desert before God called to him from the burning bush to reveal his true calling. Moses was with God 40 days on the mountain before coming down with the Ten Commandments. Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights before formally launching his ministry.

We want to share with you 40 days of thoughts and Scriptures about how God has already prepared you for the calling He has planned for you. He will supply all you need to fulfill that calling. And in the process, you will be a catalyst to transform the lives of others...and you will be transformed.

As you join us in this journey through the Scriptures, we pray that you will have an open mind and heart as God speaks to you about ending spiritual and physical hungers worldwide. May this time in God’s Word bless you as you learn how He intends for you to bless others.

DISCOOV

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Step 1: God Prepares

None of us wants to enter into an undertaking without receiving the proper training. Our concerns can run anywhere from fear of failure to fear of harm. We don't want to appear inept, and we certainly don't want to look like we don't know what we are doing. With these thoughts running rampant, we may find ourselves leery of taking on a task that God calls us to perform.

When Rachel Esarey of Phoenix became a Christian in 2004, she began feeling God's tug on her heart. She had seen movies and spoken with people about children who had been kidnapped and forced into service as ruthless soldiers in Uganda. She remembers thinking, "Wouldn't it be nice if there were a local organization that dealt with that?" That was the beginning of her discovering and fulfilling the calling that God had put within her heart.

Rachel now understands that God had been preparing her – even before she was a Christian – for the ministry to which He would eventually call her ... through her life experiences as well as her passions, the people she admired and her skills. Once she became a Christian, the Bible proved to be a valuable resource, as we'll see as we pick up her story again in the introduction to Step 2.

Fortunately, we have ample biblical examples to show how God prepares us for the undertaking. He has a ministry in mind for all of us, even if we don't think so and, more importantly, even if we aren't aware of it. Just as David didn't realize that protecting his flock from a lion and bear was preparing him to face Goliath, so may you not know how your past experiences – or even the situation staring you in the face right now – will serve you in the future.



DEVOTIONAL

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS - EXODUS 20: 2-17

Exodus 20: 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

KEY THOUGHT: RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

Isn't it interesting that the majority of Americans will tell you that the Ten Commandments are a list of "thou shall nots?" Actually, close scrutiny reveals that they deal with relationships – the first four with man's relationship with God and the next six are about man's relationship with each other. ,

How fitting it is that the liaison between God and man for the Ten Commandments was Moses. His relationship with God is truly legendary. His time in God's presence found him anointed with Shekinah Glory. It caused him to hide his face from Aaron and others when returning from Mount Sinai. How wonderful it would be to enjoy that closeness to God!

Moses was chosen by God, however, because he understood the need of God's people. A prince in the house of Pharaoh, he saw their despair and suffering. He lashed out to right the wrong himself, slaying an Egyptian overlord. It took 40 years in the wilderness for him to learn what God really wanted him to do to bring relief to His people.

Hopefully, it won't take 40 years for God to get through to us. As you seek to do what God requires of you, become attuned to how you can help quell physical, emotional and spiritual suffering in the world today and the role relationships play in that. You will find that God does not require guilt from you. He offers no condemnation. He just wants you to be in healthy relationship with Him, His creation and other people. That often means that serving Him means simply doing the next right thing – the thing that honors those relationships.

DEVOTIONAL



THE WIDOW'S MITE - LUKE 21:1-4

Luke 21:2 "And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites."

KEY THOUGHT: NOT HOW MUCH, BUT HOW WILLING

It isn't hard to see that times are rough for a lot of people. The economy, at least for many, offers unprecedented challenges. It seems that money is spent before paychecks arrive. It's during times like this that we recognize that Second Century author, Terence, was inspired by God when writing, "Charity begins at home." However, sometimes giving isn't based on charity at all. It's based on faith in the relationship that God has with us.

As well as the widow who cast her two mites in Luke 21:14, there are several other widows who show the importance of the combination of faith and charity, such as the one who shared her last cake with Elijah or the widow of Zarephath and her bottomless cruse of oil. How intriguing it is that sometimes those who have the least to share are the ones who are the most generous.

Today, we need not be as much concerned with how much we have to share, but how willing we are to share what we have. Every penny given to help feed a mouth, every prayer uttered to help feed a soul, every action to right a wrong – this not only shows that we have generous hearts, but that we are strong in faith as well!

As you seek to discover and fulfill the cause that God has put in your heart, know that all of your life experiences – and all of the people with whom you have had any kind of relationship – will come together to prepare you for what God has planned for you. Your job is to be willing to allow Him to mold you and work through you.

DEVOTIONAL

EACH ACCORDING TO THEIR NEED - ACTS 4: 32-36

Acts 4:35b "...and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

KEY THOUGHT: NEEDS OUTWEIGH WANTS

There was a family who had an interesting rule when their children were little: Each family member's needs came before another's wants. It was easy to figure out which was which, so there seldom was an issue as to who would benefit from the family resources. There was no favoritism, and no hoarding. Without them realizing it, the children were being raised according to today's Scripture verses.

This worked well in their family of five, but in one as large as the whole of humanity, it is a little more difficult to manage. There is a solution, though, and it centers on the fact that it is up to the Family of God to be the impetus in ensuring that others receive "...according as they have need." As daunting as this task may seem, there is a way it can be simplified: The task becomes more manageable when our number one want is to help meet others needs!

There is no doubt that we live in a needy world. God calls us to be willing not only to share what we have, but to share ourselves as well. We need to open not only our purses, but also our hearts. We must not only strive to feed other's bodies, but also their souls.

As you seek God's direction in your life, seek His face with a humble heart and a willing spirit.

DEVOTIONAL



HUMBLE YOURSELF IN THE EYES OF THE LORD - JOHN 13:1-17

*John 13:8 “Peter saith unto him, ‘Thou shall never wash my feet.’
Jesus answered him, ‘If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.’”*

KEY THOUGHT: TRUE HUMILITY OR FALSE PRIDE

Today’s reading is one of the more intriguing portions of Scripture. In Jewish tradition, the foot washer was the lowest rung on the ladder of servants. Just thinking about what folks were walking through in the course of a day pretty much explains why. The feet were not enclosed like they are today, rendering them open to all kinds of bad things! In washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus could not have lowered Himself any further than He did.

While it may appear that Peter was trying to protect the Lord, what he was really doing was exhibiting the contempt he held for the people whose role Jesus was assuming. Peter’s pride motivated him to not want Jesus to wash his feet. In subsequent verses, he pled that Jesus wash his hands and head as well, but Jesus refused. When finished, Jesus taught the meaning of His actions. He explained that he had been an example to them, that they should be as willing to serve others as He was to serve them.

Today, we face the same challenge as Peter – to swallow our pride and serve our fellow man. Your choice to serve others may not take the form of literal foot washing. Rather, you may find yourself serving others by sharing your time, talents and possessions. Simply serve others as God directs, without allowing pride to determine if you think others are worthy of your attention.

DEVOTIONAL

BEING GREAT IN HEAVEN - MARK 10:35-45

Mark 10:44 “And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be a servant of all.”

KEY THOUGHT: SERVITUDE LEADS TO REWARD

Though not a Christian, Mahatma Ghandi’s well-known quote is sobering: “I like your Christ. I don’t like your Christians. They are so unlike your Christ.”

Most of us have undoubtedly quipped, “If you want to be great in Heaven you must be a servant on this earth.” The question becomes, how often do we walk the walk of this sentiment? Today’s world is geared to creating individuals who want to be served rather than be servants. We need to combat that mindset constantly.

Perhaps the key to implementing today’s Scripture verse is determining how you can serve others. A good start may be to ascertain their needs – physical, emotional or spiritual – and then rise to the occasion of meeting them. You may find that following lyrics of the chorus of an old hymn to be a prayer for you:

*Make me a blessing
Make me a blessing
Out of my life
May Jesus shine
Make me a blessing
O Savior, I pray
Make me a blessing
To someone today!*

May you be a blessing to someone today!

DEVOTIONAL

FAMILY TIES - RUTH 1:1-6

Ruth 1:4 “And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.”

KEY THOUGHT: ATTITUDES AFFECT ACTIONS

When Elimelech left Bethlehem with his family, he had no idea he was laying the foundation for one of the greatest love stories ever told. His sons each married a Moabite – one named Orpah and the other Ruth. Over the next ten years or so, they lived as one big happy family. Elimelech’s wife, Naomi, nurtured her young daughters-in-law as they grew into womanhood. We don’t know exactly what happened during that time, but we do know that a bond grew between the three women that would not be easily broken. When Elimelech died, Ruth refused to leave Naomi even though it seemed that her life would be better if she returned to her own family.

This story provides a beautiful example of how God can use what appear to be daily routine and mundane activities to prepare you to do His will. Frequently, what you do isn’t as important as your attitude while doing it. God calls each of us to relationships. Ruth responded to her mother-in-law because of her relationship. Nurture your relationships today – through a kind word, a kind deed or simply a warm smile.

DEVOTIONAL

LIONS & BEARS, OH MY! - I SAMUEL 17:32-37

I Samuel 17:34a “And David said unto Saul, “Thy servant kept his father’s sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear.””

KEY THOUGHT: BE BRAVE

When David went to visit his brothers as the armies of the living God prepared to battle the Philistines, he was amazed that no one was willing to pick up the gauntlet tossed down by Goliath. Filled with the courage of youthful faith, he asked King Saul to let him answer the call to slay the Philistine. To validate his qualifications, he shared that he was ready because he had slain both a lion and a bear in the course of protecting his flock.

As you find yourself called upon to slay giants, you need only recall past victories against apparent insurmountable odds to muster up the courage to do battle. Don't be like the Hebrew children wandering in the wilderness. Don't forget how God has parted the Red Seas in your life and provided the equivalent of manna and quail when you needed them. Remember how God provided money you needed, a kind word from someone who had no idea how badly you needed to hear it, or a feeling of total peace as you sat in a sea of chaos. When God calls you, you are ready to win the victory! He has been preparing you all your life.

DEVOTIONAL

DON'T BE AN ONLOOKER - ACTS 7:58 - 8:3

Acts 8:3a "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church."

KEY THOUGHT: "THE BEST LAID PLANS OF MICE AND MEN." ROBERT BURNS

What is often overlooked about Saul/Paul is that he was present at the stoning of Stephen. In fact, he held the coats of those who carried out the evil deed. To say that Saul was a religious zealot would be an understatement. He was, without a doubt, as well grounded in "The Law" as anyone his age in the land. His zeal explains today's verse, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church." What he didn't know was that what he had been learning would eventually point to the truth of Jesus being the Messiah.

Just as Saul thought he knew what he would be doing in life, we often feel safe and secure in the knowledge that we have prepared ourselves for our own self-assigned niche in this world. The truth is, while God may have orchestrated your training and experiences in life, He may plan for you to perform a completely different symphony than you had considered. As unnerving as that thought may be, remember the words of Jesus in the Garden when He said, "Not my will, but thine," and be willing to recognize and accept whatever His will may be for your life.

DEVOTIONAL

PROPER UPBRINGING - ESTHER 2:5-7

Esther 2:7b “Esther ... whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.”

KEY THOUGHT: LET’S NOT FORGET WHAT WE WERE TAUGHT

It has often been said that if we would strictly adhere to biblical principles, we wouldn’t need a welfare system. Esther adds credence to that sentiment. When her mother and father died, she was taken in by Mordecai, who treated her as his own daughter. Mordecai was in a foreign land, but clung tenaciously to his Jewish tradition and, more importantly, to the love for his God. As his adopted daughter, Esther was taught the law, which includes the Fifth Commandment, “Honor thy father and mother.” It was her adherence to that law that not only put her in a position to become queen, but to save the life of Mordecai as well.

It seems to be human nature to drift away from the teachings of your youth as you age. Solomon addressed the issue in Proverbs 6:20 when he declared, “My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” It is not unusual to hear someone say, “I can’t do what God has called me to do, for I have not had the proper training.” The reality is, often the only training you need is to be well grounded in the Word of God. Whether or not that was an integral part of your upbringing – make it so now by daily Scripture reading accompanied by prayer that seeks to understand and be in humble relationship with God!

DEVOTIONAL

JUST BE NORMAL - I KINGS 19:19-21

I Kings 19:20a “And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, ‘Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee.’”

KEY THOUGHT: MUCH OF OUR TRAINING FOR GOD IS RECEIVED AT HOME

Elisha was leading a pretty average life when Elijah found him in the field. One of Elisha's main concerns was his parents, about whom he cared a great deal. Realizing he had been selected by Elijah, he requested permission to go tell his parents goodbye. At this point in time, Elisha was to join Elijah to minister to him and provide him with companionship – much as he was undoubtedly doing with his parents.

As you go through your daily life, you may have no idea how much of your efforts are actually meant to prepare you for God's calling. Showing love and compassion goes a long way, both in your home and in the world around you. As we learn, live and teach the Golden Rule, we may be preparing ourselves for the greatest task of all – for as we do unto the least of these, so do we unto Him.

Step 2: God Calls

Few of us will find our calling by God to be as blatant as that of Moses or Gideon, or even Samuel. Rather, you may feel a quickening in your spirit, or be impacted by a verse of Scripture or a moving sermon. The key is not how you are called, but how you respond to that calling. You can either be like Samuel and respond, “Speak, for thy servant heareth,” or you can be like Jonah and suffer great indignation and inconvenience.

We met Rachel Esarey in the introduction to Step 1 of this devotional. Before becoming a Christian, she didn’t approve of missionary work. However, God brought people and events into her life that changed her perspective. She was attracted to Isaiah 6:8:

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send?
And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

A friend introduced Rachel to Food for the Hungry. She soon realized that not only was God calling her to serve people in Uganda, but Food for the Hungry was the vehicle through which she would fulfill her God-given calling. “I’ve sponsored two children and been on three short-term mission teams to my sponsored children’s community,” she said. As we pick up Rachel’s story in the introduction to Step 3, we’ll see how God supplied all Rachel needed for her calling.

As you read the devotions in this section, search your heart and soul to determine what God has called you to do. If you, like Moses, make excuses to avoid the call, know that you need not worry about failure. If, like Gideon, you need to put out a fleece, rejoice when God fulfills it. If, like Jonah, you need to spend a little time in the belly of a great fish, be prepared to eventually be spewed out. Regardless of your response, rejoice in the knowledge that God has called you to His cause so that He will be glorified. He has been preparing you for this cause your entire life, and He will continue to prepare you in the future.

Learn how to...
“Do justly, love mercy
and walk humbly
with your God”
-Micah 6:8

DEVOTIONAL



LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE - ISAIAH 58:10

“If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness.”

KEY THOUGHT: FULFILL WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF YOU

When Jesus said, “I did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill the law,” He was referring to the written body of work with which the Pharisees, Sadducees and other learned individuals of His day were well familiar. Part of that written body was the words of Isaiah, which includes today’s Scripture verse. Jesus often based His comments on the words of early Jewish writers. He may have been alluding to today’s verse when He said in the fifth chapter of Matthew, “...ye are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.”

This verse clearly says that we are called to spend ourselves on behalf of others to ensure that we will, in fact, be the light of the world. Today, as in the days of Christ, there are countless individuals with countless needs. Our world is hurting and, as the salt of the earth, it is your opportunity to serve as the balm of Gilead and relieve the hurt as much as you can.

As you go about your daily routine today, make a special effort to find someone who is hurting – physically, emotionally or spiritually – and dedicate yourself to helping meet that need.

DEVOTIONAL

SUPERNATURAL PATIENCE - PROVERBS 15:18

“A hot tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.”

KEY THOUGHT: OTHERS MAY BE MORE IMPORTANT

We live in a frustrating world. Unfortunately, that frustration can sometimes make us a little hot under the collar. As a result, we may need to seek help from God to allow us to view life and others in a calm manner. Sometimes only supernatural intervention can prepare us to face our days and the people who fill them.

In a society where we are programmed daily to look out for number one, most people don't share the idea that others' needs might be more important than our own. While we often believe God expects more than that of us, it is not easy to live our lives exhibiting a servant's heart.

From yielding a parking spot to sharing the abundance with which God has blessed you, learn to be patient with others who truly may be more needy than you. Once you start living life in this manner, it becomes much easier than you ever imagined it would be! The key, of course, is simply to start.

DEVOTIONAL

LET MY PEOPLE GO - EXODUS 3:1-12

Exodus 3:11 “And Moses said unto God, ‘Who am I that should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt.’”

KEY THOUGHT: GOD WILL BE WITH YOU

If you ever come across a burning bush that isn't being consumed or hear an unseen voice from above that tells you that you are on holy ground, then you might assume you are hearing from God! For most of us, we hear the voice of God in a more subtle way – a knowing within us verified through the Scriptures, prayer and seeking wise counsel.

Many of us, like Moses, would undoubtedly balk at what we are told to do. We devalue ourselves as unworthy and unable to accomplish the seemingly monumental task that would be laid before us.

Unlike Moses, however, we have an example to confirm that God is greater than our deficits. As with Moses, when God calls you, He will provide the miraculous power needed to carry out the task at hand regardless of how insurmountable it may appear.

Every day we find ourselves called to do the will of God – either in a major or minor way. You can either rally to the call, or you can balk at it like Moses did. The truth is that if you are called, you will never be alone in carrying out the task. Remember, the only ability God expects you to have is availability!

DEVOTIONAL

RANK DOESN'T MATTER - JUDGES 6: 11-16

Judges 6:15b "...and I am the least in my father's house."

KEY THOUGHT: GOD LOOKS BEYOND THE APPARENT

On the surface, Gideon appears to be one of the least likely superheroes in the entire Bible. The circumstances in which he found himself didn't improve his likelihood for greatness. When first introduced in the Bible, he is threshing wheat in a hidden place so the Midianites wouldn't find him. He had a poor self-image, as he referred to himself as "the least in my father's home." God, however, hailed Gideon as He saw him, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor."

When God calls you, remember that He sees you as you are, not as you think you are. The task for which God chose Gideon was far beyond anything that Gideon thought he could do, but God knew better. That is what you need to remember when God calls you – He is not concerned with what you think you can do, but what He knows you can do! The person God chooses when He calls you is not the one you see in the mirror, but the one He sees through the eyes of His omniscience!

DEVOTIONAL



SHIP AHOY! - GENESIS 6:14-22

Genesis 6:22 “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”

KEY THOUGHT: KEEP THE FAITH!

What a lot of questions Noah could have had! First of all, he could have wondered, “Why me?” Then, he could have asked, “What’s a flood?” He could have even wondered who was going to clean up after all those critters. Instead, he never disobeyed – nor even hesitated. The Word tells us simply, “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him.”

As Noah built an ark on dry ground, he was undoubtedly ridiculed. Yet he didn’t falter. He had to get tired and frustrated, yet he never wavered. He might have even thought what he was doing was futile, yet he doggedly continued his work. We are never told that he felt unequal to the task, we are only told, “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him.” Would that we could have such blind dedication to God’s calling, for when we reach that platitude, it could be said of us, “But (they) found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8).

DEVOTIONAL

LOVE CONQUERS ALL - RUTH 1:6-18

Ruth 1:16b “..for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

KEY THOUGHT: SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR OTHERS

We considered the importance of the relationship between Ruth and Naomi on Day 6. Now, we'll take another look at that relationship from the viewpoint of how it prepared Ruth to fulfill her calling.

The story of Ruth and Naomi is almost an early version of O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi." True to Jewish tradition, Naomi pointed out to Ruth and Orpah that there would be no younger brothers to marry after their husbands' deaths. Caring about them, she encouraged them to go back to their mothers' homes so they would be available to marry again. Though unwilling at first, Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye and returned home. Ruth, on the other hand, utters what is, perhaps, one of the greatest sentiments recorded in the Bible, "Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God."

Ruth's calling to care for Naomi truly was from God, though she may not have known it. She only knew that she loved Naomi because of the relationship Naomi nurtured with Ruth.

That's often the way it is – if you simply do what you know is right, you may very well be fulfilling a far greater plan than you realize. This is especially true when you are meeting someone else's needs at the expense of what might appear to be the best for you. In the end, both Ruth and Naomi benefitted from Ruth's faithfulness to the relationship.

DEVOTIONAL

RECOGNIZING GOD'S CAUSE - I SAMUEL 17:20-29

I Samuel 17: 29 "And David said, 'What have I now done? Is there not a cause?'"

KEY THOUGHT: VICTORY COMES TO THOSE WHO RISE TO THE CAUSE OF GOD

Even four thousand years ago, little brothers proved to be irritating. That is exactly what Eliab, David's oldest brother, would have told you. There Eliab was in the midst of the army of Israel, facing the ridicule of the Philistine champion, Goliath, and up came David asking questions and making a nuisance of himself. Even though David was doing the will of their father, Jesse, Eliab accused him of having a wicked heart and abandoning his post to see the battle. Exasperated, David couldn't understand what he had done wrong. With the naiveté of youth, he got to the heart of the matter and asked, "Is there not a cause?"

Like David, when you encounter insurmountable odds, you need to focus on the heart of the matter and recognize God's calling for you. He wants you to do your part, not out of guilt or condemnation, but out of excitement to do what God asks of you. Just do the next right thing. Don't be deterred by the opinions of others. Simply be true to your calling to be part of the fulfillment of every cause of which God chooses to allow you to be a part.

DEVOTIONAL

I SAW THE LIGHT - ACTS 9:1-9

Acts 9:5 “And he said, ‘Who art thou, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.’”

KEY THOUGHT: DON'T KICK AGAINST THORNS

The conversion of Saul/Paul is, without a doubt, dramatic. There he was, on the way to Damascus to arrest and return to Jerusalem all of the Christians he could find, and suddenly he was blinded by a bright light and the voice of Jesus asking why he was persecuting Him. Saul responded by asking who was speaking to him.

Now, a key that is often either overlooked or not recognized is that Saul's question was rhetorical in nature – he knew who was speaking, for he referred to Jesus as Lord. Virtually every Bible translation shows this with a capital “L.” At that point, Saul not only recognized who had blinded him, but swore his allegiance to Him by addressing Him as Lord.

God's call may not be as dramatic for you as it was for Saul. It is no less important. Often we are kicking against thorns with thin shoes, not in admitting whom Jesus is, but in agreeing to do what He has called us to do – or having the faith to trust Him to provide what we lack in skills, experience, resources, time, etc.

While there may not be a blinding light to get your attention, you can rest assured that if God wants you to do something He will bring you to the point that, like Saul in Acts 9:6, you will ask, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

DEVOTIONAL



MORE THAN PART OF THE CROWD - ESTHER 2:8-11

Esther 2:8b “Esther was brought also unto the king’s house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.”

KEY THOUGHT: WE ARE IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD

When King Ashuerus sought a new wife, he decreed that a number of eligible young women be brought to the palace for his scrutiny. As a result of that request, Esther was one of those in Shushan who were presented for consideration. Though lovely in both appearance and in spirit, Esther was different than the rest of the young ladies in a most dramatic way – she was a Jew who both honored and worshipped Yahweh. She was in that group of young ladies from whom the king would choose his new queen, but she was not part of that group.

As you lead your daily life, you may find that you are called to be in a group where you feel you don’t belong. That does not mean, however, that you are not to join that group! As Esther was able to shine in her surroundings, she put herself in a position to save her uncle and the Jews. You may be called to be in a position where you can shine and save untold numbers from their plight – whether emotional, spiritual or physical. It doesn’t matter in what group you may find yourself. It matters that you don’t allow yourself to become a part of it, thus neutralizing the effectiveness for that which you were called to do!

DEVOTIONAL



HAND PICKED BY GOD - I KINGS 19: 15-16

I Kings 19:16b “And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.”

KEY THOUGHT: RECOGNIZE YOUR CALLING

Elisha's first thought after he recognized that he was called by God was to say goodbye to his parents. His second thought was to dispose of his oxen. Did he ever wonder why God had chosen him? While he may have been curious, he never questioned that he had received a divine calling. Rather, he merely accepted his plight and served his master to the best of his ability.

God has called all Christians. There are, of course, a number of ways you can discover and confirm the specifics of that calling. Few of us, however, are chosen by one of the major prophets of our day to first be his protégé and then to replace him. That would, undoubtedly, remove any question as to whether or not we were actually being called. When you may be in doubt as to whether or not you are truly hearing from God, you can rely on John 10:27, which says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” Remember, like Elisha, we are all hand picked by God to carry on the good work that He has started.

Step 3: God Supplies

When the head of a well-known, Arizona ministry was asked if he was concerned about the cost of a project, he replied, “God’s will, God’s bill.” While that may appear to be flippant, there is a great deal of truth in the statement. All too often we shy away from doing what God has called us to do because we can’t calculate how it is going to be funded. What we need is fewer calculators and more faith.

Rachel Esarey was single and had recently started a new job when she realized God wanted her to sponsor a child through FH. She asked God, “How can I possibly come up with the extra money every month?” He gave her the answer while she was driving to work. “I stopped every day for coffee and realized that if I stopped fewer times a month, I could easily afford to sponsor a child,” she recalled.

She wanted to lead a short-term mission team to her sponsored child’s community. She hadn’t been a Christian long and didn’t know how to organize the trip or raise the thousands of dollars to fund it. God supplied. “The field liaison I was working with said, ‘Somehow, it always works out. God provides.’ I hung on those words, and, just like she said, everything just fell into place, and I had everything I needed.”

From the loaves and fishes to the widow feeding Elijah and then having a never ending supply of meal and oil, the Bible shows us time and again that God meets needs. It is not your job to figure out how God is going to provide for a need, it is your job to have faith that He will and follow His leading!

DEVOTIONAL

THE LOAVES AND FISHES - JOHN 6:1-14

John 6:9 “There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two fishes.”

KEY THOUGHT: GOD MULTIPLIES WHEN WE SOW

Have you ever marveled at the faith a farmer has? For example, they must take perfectly good grains of corn and put them in the ground to rot so that they can bring forth a new crop. They could, instead, grind the corn into meal and eat it. If they did that, there wouldn't be a new crop to harvest. Sometimes, we need to have the faith of a farmer and be willing to rely on the new crop – and not what we have in our hands.

The lad with the loaves and fishes did just that. He let go of what he had so it could be multiplied to feed vast multitudes. In the natural, his provisions were not sufficient for the purpose – but he didn't worry about the “how.” He just concentrated on the “what” – he gave his food and did not worry about how God could use so little to achieve so much.

That's what we need to do with our resources and our talents. Regardless of how limited you think what you have to offer is, sow it in the Kingdom and let God multiply it to serve His purposes. Never feel what you have to give isn't enough. Rather, just be willing to share!

DEVOTIONAL

ABUNDANCE IN DROUGHT TIMES - I KINGS 17: 10-16

I Kings 17:13 - “And Elijah said unto her, ‘Fear not; go and do as thou has said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.’”

KEY THOUGHT: YOUR FAITH WILL SUSTAIN YOU

Life sometimes deals a hand that makes us believe that the only option we have is to fold. That’s what had happened to the widow in today’s Scripture reading. She was going to go home and bake a small cake, share it with her son, and then the two of them were going to simply lie down and die. But God had other plans – He needed her to bless one of His servants. Fortunately, she had faith enough to do as she was directed. She shared what little she had with someone in need.

There are times when God asks us to do things that just don’t make any sense given what we view as our limited resources. The thing is, compared to God, your view of the matter is extremely limited. You might be so immersed in your own situation that you can’t see beyond it. That’s why when you feel God nudging you to do something, you need not evaluate the extent of your resources, but rather evaluate the extent of your faith!

DEVOTIONAL

WHO WILL SPEAK FOR GOD? - EXODUS 4:10-16

*Exodus 4:14b "...Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother?
I know that he can speak well."*

KEY THOUGHT: YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

Have you ever wondered why Moses balked at going to Egypt and leading God's people out of captivity? We know he was sympathetic to their cause or he wouldn't have attacked and killed the Egyptian overlord. He should have surmised that he would gain both power and renown in doing the task God had given him. He may even have known that he would live forever in that nation's history and lore. Yet, he constantly tried to avoid the task for which God had chosen him.

Without a doubt, Moses' greatest enemy was one that we face daily even today – fear. In most instances, it is the fear that we won't be able to complete the task at hand because we don't have all of the necessary tools to complete that task. In Moses' case, he lacked the ability to articulate and be glib – thus, in his mind, he was.

Do you feel inept and useless when God calls you to deliver people from their plight? If so, commit the story of Moses and Aaron to memory and rest assured that God will never ask you to do something without providing what you need to accomplish it!

DEVOTIONAL

TO GOD BE THE GLORY - JUDGES 7:1-8

Judges 7:2a “And the Lord said unto Gideon, “The people that are with thee are too many...”

KEY THOUGHT: LESS MAY BE MORE

Gideon finally accepted his role to deliver God’s people from the hands of the Midianites and gathered his army to do just that. Through the course of today’s Scripture reading, however, he saw the unbelievable happen – the limited resources he started out with were dwindled to virtually nothing, at which point he had the exact right amount.

As you prepare to do the tasks for which God calls you, you may think you are sorely under supplied for the job. The reality is that if you wait until you think you have enough, you may never get the job done. The key to today’s Scripture is simply that God looks at quality and not quantity! It is reassuring to know that not only will God provide you with the resources you need, but also His strength.

DEVOTIONAL

TRUST AND OBEY - I KINGS 17:1-7

I Kings 17: 4b "...and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee."

KEY THOUGHT: GOD KNOWS WHAT YOU NEED

It seems that great men of God in the Bible would have been revered and honored. The truth is that they often were despised and hated! That was the plight that befell Elijah, especially when he had to predict that there would be a devastating drought. As today's Scripture tells us, God sent his servant Elijah to the brook Cherith to be cared for. While there, he drank from the brook, and God sent the ravens to bring him food in the morning and in the evening.

Often, we overestimate our needs while underestimating God's ability to provide them. One of the most exciting parts about this story is that God had commanded the ravens to supply Elijah's needs even before he left for Cherith.

That's why you need to remember that when God directs you to do something, you don't have to worry that He will make provisions to take care of you. As with Elijah, He already has!

DEVOTIONAL



PICKING THROUGH THE LEFTOVERS - RUTH 2:4-17

Ruth 2: 15 “And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his his young men, saying, ‘Let her glean even among the sheaves and reproach her not.’”

KEY THOUGHT: GOD MAY CHOOSE YOU TO HELP PROVIDE FOR OTHERS

The story of how Ruth refused to leave Naomi is so important that we’re going to take another look at it today.

With no men to provide for them, Ruth took it upon herself to care for herself and Naomi. Being harvest time, she went to the fields to glean after the harvesters had finished. The field she chose belonged to Boaz, a relative of Naomi’s by marriage. Noticed by Boaz, she was given preferential treatment both in her gleaning and in her personal well-being.

When you see someone who is obviously in a foreign environment, do you reach out to give them preferential treatment, or do you avoid them? As Christians, we are all called to disciple new Christians and share our abundance with those less fortunate. An often used verse in the Bible that alludes to this is Luke 12:48b: “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required”(KJV).

God will provide. Remember that you may be the source for someone else’s provision!

DEVOTIONAL

NEITHER STICKS NOR STONES - I SAMUEL 17:38-47

I Samuel 17:45 “Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.”

KEY THOUGHT: KNOW YOUR GREATEST WEAPON!

If you were to ask 100 knowledgeable people what David used to defeat Goliath, they would tell you a sling and five stones. And they'd be wrong! What David used to bring Goliath to his knees is revealed in today's verse. He used the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. Even today, we know that there is power in the name of Jesus – the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.

When you go into battle as part of the Lord's army, you can't let others try to arm you as Saul tried to arm David. Rather, know that God will supply you with all the weapons you need, even though they may seem inadequate in the eyes of the world – like a sling to slay a giant. Remember that it's not the weapons you have that will slay the giants you face. It's the fact that you are going out to do battle in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel!

DEVOTIONAL

BELIEVE YOUR VISION - ACTS 9:10-22

Acts 9:12 “And he hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.”

KEY THOUGHT: GOD PROVIDES WITHOUT YOU HAVING TO LOOK FOR IT

Saul of Tarsus was a mess. He was at the home of Judas, couldn't see and wasn't eating or drinking anything. During this time, however, he was given a vision that a hero would come to his rescue – a man named Ananias. Newly converted from a Christ-hater to a servant of our Lord, he had little from which to draw hope ... except the vision he had received. Delivered from the midst of this peril, he regained his strength and began fulfilling his calling, as Acts 9:20 tells us, “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”

While your situation may not be as bad as Saul's, you may find yourself in a position where your only hope comes from a vision that God has given you. Let the vision come to fruition in due time, rather than exhausting your energy and time attempting to make it a reality on your own. When God gives you a vision, realize two things: The vision was from God, and it is God's responsibility to bring it to fruition.

DEVOTIONAL

LISTEN CAREFULLY - ESTHER 2:21-23

Esther 2:22b "...and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name."

KEY THOUGHT: DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF WHAT YOU KNOW

Mordecai, uncle of Queen Esther, spent his time sitting in the King's gate with a number of the elders of the day (this was a typical undertaking, as we know two angels came to Lot in Sodom as he sat in the gate). He overheard a conversation between two of the king's servants who were angry with the king and plotted to do him bodily harm. Mordecai shared this with Esther, who passed it on to the king in her uncle's name, thus deterring any attempt on the king's well being. It was this sequence of events that eventually put Mordecai in a position to thwart the plans of Haman to carry out genocide against the Jews of the land.

When you think of God's provision in your life, it might turn out to be something as simple as the knowledge you already possess. Just as "faith without works is dead," knowledge without action often is useless. Constantly be alert as you go through life, for it is very possible that God wants to reveal information that will help meet the needs of others, whether emotional, spiritual or physical. God uses what you know and makes it work.

DEVOTIONAL

ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE - II KINGS 2:1-11

I Kings 2:9 “And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, ‘Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.’ And Elisha said, ‘I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.’”

KEY THOUGHT: EVERY PROMISE HAS A CONDITION

Elisha sensed that it was time for Elijah to depart from this earth. As the time grew precariously close, Elijah asked what he could do for Elisha, who requested a double portion of his master’s spirit be upon him. Elijah explained that this would be a hard thing, but that if Elisha saw him depart, the wish would be granted. Sure enough, Elisha watched as Elijah departed in a fiery chariot. As a result, Elisha was able to retrieve the mantle that fell and was left behind. With this, Elisha had the courage and confidence to carry on in the same manner as Elijah had before him.

As you scan the Word of God, reveling in the promises that exist there, recognize that there is a condition for every promise. “Ask, and ye shall receive,” “Knock, and it shall be opened,” “Seek, and ye shall find,” “To whom much is given, much is required,” “Honor thy father and mother, that thy days upon the land might be long.” There is a definite pattern in regard to claiming what is promised in the Word of God, and it involves your faithful response.

Step 4: God Transforms

Often the reward for helping others is a result few would expect. As you keep on doing the next right thing to fulfill the purpose that God has put in your heart, you'll most likely find a transformation occurring in your own life. Two wonderful examples of this are Ruth and Rahab, two Old Testament women who risked their own well being to care for others who crossed their paths.

"My sponsored child and her mother went from being in a cult to following Jesus the way the Bible tells us to," said Rachel Esarey about her sponsored child's transformation. "My sponsored child started attending school for the first time, and she now excels. She learned to speak and read English. Her community has been transformed through the development work that child sponsorship funds."

But that's not all that happened. "My heart has changed," said Rachel. "I had a lot of pride in the work my short-term team was doing. The Ugandans we were serving wore rags, and they were dirty. I've learned to look beyond that and love their hearts. Also, God has shown me that my sin is like dirty rags, and He loves me anyway. I've been transformed."

We should not only expect transformation, but we should also strive for it. Paul told us in Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The act of blessing others is the "good and acceptable and perfect will of God," and we should strive daily to fulfill that goal.

Learn how to...
*"Do justly, love mercy
and walk humbly
with your God"*
-Micah 6:8

DEVOTIONAL

DEFENDING THE WEAK - EXODUS 2:11-22

Exodus 2:21 - "And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter."

KEY THOUGHT: BLESS AND BE BLESSED

Moses had his life turned upside down in a matter of just a few days. He came to the aid of a Hebrew slave and had to flee Egypt. Then, he came to the aid of some fair maidens and helped them water their flocks, standing up to the shepherds who would have driven them away from the well. As a result, he found sanctuary in the wilderness in the tent of Jethro, who gave his daughter to Moses in marriage. For the next 40 years, Moses worked as a shepherd, preparing for the greatest responsibility God will entrust to any man on earth – leading His people to the Promised Land.

As Moses had no idea what lay in store for him when he rose up to help those maidens at the well, you can never know how God intends to change your life when you rise up to meet the needs of others. Your role is very simple: Meet needs as you encounter them. As you strive to do the next right thing, you can safely rest in the knowledge that God will use you, and what happens next will be part of His Master Plan!

DEVOTIONAL

ANSWERING THE CALL - I SAMUEL 3: 1-10

I Samuel 3:10 “And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, ‘Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak: for they servant heareth.”

KEY THOUGHT: IT MAY BE GOD CALLING

The story of Samuel is one of the most heart-warming stories in the Bible. His mother, Hannah, wanted a child more than anything. She wanted a child so badly that she promised to give him to God if He gave her a child. And He did. And she did. And Samuel, once weaned, was delivered to Eli where he was to serve the aging priest.

Samuel knew that his role was to bless Eli, but he did not know that his destiny was to anoint God’s choice for the first king of Israel. The child had no idea when he heard God calling. He mistook God’s voice for that of Eli. Samuel, who truly possessed a servant’s heart, went from obscurity to one of the most prominent positions in Jewish history.

When you are called to bless others, be prepared for more. Be prepared for greatness should God deem that His plan. The key, however, is that you must beckon the call with an open heart and an open mind, for only then can God speak to you and tell you His whole plan for your life!

DEVOTIONAL

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR? - LUKE 10:25-37

Luke 10:36 - “Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?”

KEY THOUGHT: UNKNOWN REWARDS

The story of the Good Samaritan is one that always intrigues people. First, as Jesus told the story, He took a shot at the clergy of the time and their indifference toward the attacked victim. Then, He used one of the untouchables of the day – a Samaritan – to be the hero: A hero who unselfishly helped someone who despised him. The hero looked beyond who or what the need was and attended to the need.

Do you find that you sometimes ignore a need because you are repulsed by the needy person? Do you move to the other side of the road rather than contend with a physically, emotionally or spiritually needy person. While God offers no condemnation and requests no guilty feelings, those kinds of actions are more priest and Levite than Good Samaritan.

The hero in Jesus’ story expected no reward for what he did and received none. Yet, there are few biblical characters better known than the Good Samaritan. Due to his kindness, he has gained stature that has lasted over 2,000 years.

Sometimes, when you show kindness to the repulsive, you receive praise that you are never aware of. Your reward is not in knowing, but rather in doing.

DEVOTIONAL

A GLIMPSE OF JESUS - LUKE 19:1-10

Luke 19:9a - "And Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house."

KEY THOUGHT: JUST BE WILLING TO GIVE

Do you remember the children's chorus about Zacchaeus?

*Zacchaeus was a wee little man
And a wee little man was he
He climbed up in a sycamore tree
For the Lord he wanted to see
And when the Lord, He walked by
He looked up in that tree
And He said, Zacchaeus, you come down
For I'm going to your house today
Yes, I'm going to your house today.*

(Copyright Unknown)

Encountering Jesus had an awesome effect on Zacchaeus. He immediately offered to give half of his wealth (which was great) to the poor and to restore fourfold everything he had cheated others out of. In doing so, he knew he would be blessing those in need immeasurably. What he didn't know was that the simple act of doing what he knew to be right would change his life forever – even throughout eternity. As a result of his change of heart, he was granted salvation.

While you may never know how your willingness to bless others might affect your life, you can rest assured that it will. If you are already a Christian, it won't bring you salvation as it did Zacchaeus, but once you learn to give without reluctance, you will never be the same again.

DEVOTIONAL

BOWS AND ARROWS - I SAMUEL 20:17-23

I Samuel 20:17 “And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.”

II Samuel 21:7 “But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the LORD’s oath that was between them.”

KEY THOUGHT: GOOD DEEDS HAVE LASTING EFFECTS

What a wonderful friend David had in Jonathan! Not only was he loyal, but he was astute as well. He first sensed, and then knew, that his father, Saul, intended David mortal harm. To save his friend’s life, he devised a plan that involved three arrows and a message shouted to David. Carrying out his plan flawlessly, Jonathan saved the life of the man who later would become the king of Israel.

Jonathan’s actions, while intended to preserve David and his lineage, actually preserved his own as well. Many years later, David came across Jonathan’s crippled son, Mephibosheth, and honored their friendship by taking Mephibosheth into his own home and allowing him to sit at the king’s table. When you bless others, you have no idea how your act of kindness may be rewarded – or how it may affect you and the ones you love...for generations.

DEVOTIONAL



FUTURE GENERATIONS - RUTH 4:13-22

Ruth 4:22 “And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.”

KEY THOUGHT: KIND DEEDS ARE NEVER FORGOTTEN

Typically, the Bible’s “begats” are not very interesting reading. The ones found in the book of Ruth are a different story. This showed a recorded love story so powerful that it actually impacted the lexicon of America – to be ruthless is to be without compassion or concern for another. You see, because of her love and concern, we discover in today’s verse that Ruth was an ancestor of arguably the greatest king in Israel’s history ... King David, an ancestor of Jesus Christ himself! Matthew 1:16 “And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”

Ruth could have no way of knowing that from her lineage would come both a great king and the King of Kings. She couldn’t have known. Her vision was very narrow in scope. All she wanted to do was to take care of someone in need (her mother-in-law). What a wonderful challenge for us to go through life with the narrow vision of taking care of those who are in need, not knowing the future blessings we will reap.

DEVOTIONAL

JUST REWARDS - II SAMUEL 2:1-4

II Samuel 2:4a “And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.”

KEY THOUGHT: DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE OUTCOME

What a roller coaster of a life David led! As a child, he was anointed as God's choice to become king of Israel. Then he served as a shepherd where he had to fight off lions and bears to protect his flock. Sent by his father to deliver food to his brothers as they battled the Philistines, he heard and answered the challenge of Goliath. That was an act that made David such a hero in the land that it bred jealousy in the heart of Saul, who then spent most of his energy trying to kill him. All the while, David had but one thought in mind – to live in the perfect will of God!

David's only intention in killing Goliath was to bring honor to God. It resulted in him becoming, first, the son-in-law of the king and then, later, king himself. We must strive to serve God and bring honor to His name and then let the chips fall where they may. We know that life was not a bed of roses for David, as exemplified by many of the lamentations he recorded in the Psalms he wrote. Yet he never wavered in seeking to do God's will, so much so that we are told David was known as “a man after God's own heart.”

As you labor daily for the Lord, don't worry about the future. Simply be concerned with how to best serve Him in the present. Your own transformation is in the making.

DEVOTIONAL

MESSENGER TO THE GENTILES - ACTS 9:20-31

Acts 9:22 “But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ.”

KEY THOUGHT: SUCCESS CAN PROVE TO BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH

After his conversion, Saul pursued his Christianity with a vengeance! He took the fact that God called him to be a teacher to the Gentiles seriously. He daily laid it all on the line for Christ. From one who condoned the stoning of Stephen to one who had to flee for his own life on numerous occasions, he went from persecutor to purveyor of the Truth. His goal, after he literally saw the light, was to lead as many people as possible to salvation.

His dedication to the cause led Paul to a role he probably never would have dreamed possible: Paul became the mentor of Christians and churches alike.

It is possible that as you doggedly pursue what God has called you to do, seemingly oblivious to the dangers and perils it takes you through, you will be able to mentor others in their quest to serve God and answer His calling.

DEVOTIONAL

TRUST GOD - ESTHER 3:1-5 / ESTHER 10:1-3

Esther 10:3a "For Mordecai the Jew was next unto King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews."

KEY THOUGHT: KEEPING THE FAITH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN LIFE ITSELF

Mordecai knew that the only one he should bow his knee to was the God of Abraham and Isaac. When he was decreed to bow to Haman, he refused. As could be expected, this resulted in the fueling of Haman's anger and wrath. Mordecai stood his ground, though it appeared that it would mean not only his own life, but also that of his fellow Jewish countrymen. The end result was that, as usual, his faith was rewarded and God's servant was exalted.

While serving God is its own reward, you'll find that great men and women of God are often recognized for their efforts. There is, perhaps, no better way to serve God than to meet the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves. Whether they hunger for truth, bread or kindness, don't be surprised that seeking first to meet others' needs without worry about the consequences to you – you will be changed and never be the same again.

DEVOTIONAL



EXPECT A CHANGE - II KINGS 2:12-15

II Kings 2:13 “He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan.”

KEY THOUGHT: WE MUST BE PREPARED TO CARRY ON ALONE

Elisha had spent time with Elijah, comforting him in his old age and learning from him at the same time. He knew that Elijah had a high calling, that he was a prophet to the king, revealing the heart of God to the earthly ruler. When it came time for them to be separated, Elisha sought a double portion of the Spirit that guided Elijah. He knew that before long, he would be on his own and that the task before him was immense. He wanted to be able to serve God and the nation of Israel in the best way possible.

As you labor with others to meet the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the world around you, recognize that there may come a time when the job will be your job alone. Fortunately, like Elisha, you can rest in knowing that God will prepare you to meet the need He calls you to fill. It is the personal sanctification that takes place as you serve God that ensures you will be ready for whatever you encounter, even if you find yourself encountering it alone.

As we end the 40 days of devotions, pause now to consider the calling that God has placed within you. You’ve learned the following truths from Scripture:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>1. God calls</i> | <i>3. God supplies</i> |
| <i>2. God prepares</i> | <i>4. God transforms</i> |

As Christians, we are all called to serve others. Most of us even know what God has called us to do. The sad truth is that few of us actually fulfill our calling, often because we feel unprepared and can’t accept that God will supply all we need to perform the task. We at Food for the Hungry encourage you to continue your quest to discover and fulfill the special cause that God has put in your heart.

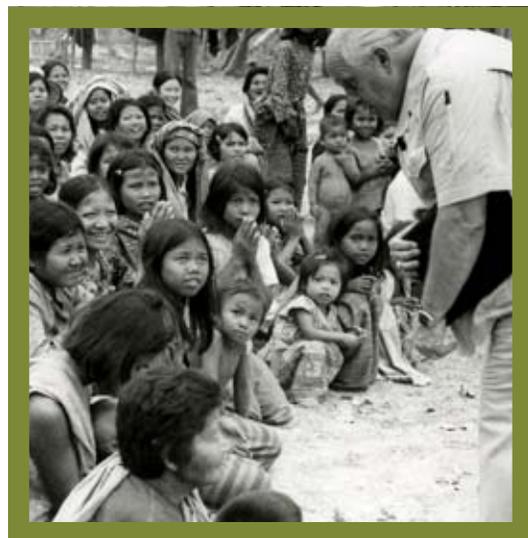
We also invite you to pray about how we might be of service to you as you seek to respond to God’s call. Visit us at www.fh.org to learn about what God is doing through us...and through those who partner with us.

Over 40 Years of Responding to His Call

In response to God's call to serve the poor, Larry Ward founded Food for the Hungry in 1971. The name was inspired by Psalm 146:7: "He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry." As a Christian organization, the transforming truth of God's Word has been a foundational value for 40 years, reflected in these short stories of our founder.

Finding God's Word in Vietnam

Larry Ward first visited Vietnam in 1958, right before the Vietnam War started. His love of the people and culture inspired him to return in 1965 to work in the war-torn country.



In a demolished Vietnamese village, Larry stepped out of a command post into firing and bombing. He looked around at the destruction. He cried out asking God why he was brought to this place and what he could do.

After praying, he looked down and in the rubble found a burned and torn Bible opened to Mark 16 with the chapter title, "Jesus Christ rises from the dead." This encouraged Larry to continue bringing Christ's love, message and assistance to the Vietnamese people.



FH's compass – The Bible

As the Vietnam War ended in 1975, thousands of Vietnamese fled the country in undependable boats crossing the South China Sea. In 1978, Larry and his colleagues purchased a 190-foot ship to assist Vietnamese drifting at sea without fuel, food or water.

In one mission, Larry and his colleagues rescued a group of Vietnamese who were out to sea in a sinking boat after being robbed by pirates. The leader of the rescued Vietnamese crew gave Larry the compass from their boat.

Moved to tears, Larry gave the man a Bible. He told the boat's leader and people that the Bible would be their new compass to lead them to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It would give them a source of direction as they began their new lives in foreign lands.

DISCOVER & RESPOND
TO GOD'S CALL

