

# Are You Being Called?

Many wonder if they are being called of God. How can you know? Are feelings sufficient on such a vital matter? What *is* a calling? What does God's Word say? You need to know.

BY DAVID C. PACK

**M**OST BELIEVE THAT God is trying to save the world now! This thinking goes something like this: God and the devil are at war over the fate of mankind. This is seen as a desperate struggle between good and evil—God and Satan.

Let's put this another way: Is today the only opportunity for all human beings to choose or to reject Christianity? Must all people "decide now" to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior? Is this what the Bible teaches? The answer is an emphatic NO! If it were *yes*, then God is failing miserably in His battle with the devil for control over the fate of all men. In other words, God is "calling" all of mankind, but most are NOT ANSWERING!

Consider! In 1920, when my father was born, there were about 2 billion people on Earth. There are now about 7.5 billion—and more every day. Approximately 2.2 billion, or one-third, believe—to one degree or another—in the name of Jesus Christ. This represents a total that includes every conceivable brand of the over 2,000 *different forms* of professing Christianity. Approximately another one-third of mankind has *heard* of Christ but has not accepted Him and does not *claim* to follow Him. Finally, the last one-third of all people on Earth know nothing about Christ. Many in

India, Africa, Japan, China and parts of South America and Southeast Asia have never even heard of Him. Are they condemned to be lost, having never had an opportunity to understand what they missed or why—having no opportunity to be "called"?

When speaking of Christ's name, the Bible plainly says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is *none other name under heaven* given among men, whereby we must be *saved*" (Acts 4:12). Further, Romans 10:13 states that men must call on *this name* to be saved. Understand! It is obvious that all who have not yielded to the God of the Bible and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior are certainly *not* saved! Countless billions have died in this condition. Most have assumed that the only other option for these is that they were lost to salvation and that God long ago planned this for the vast majority who have ever lived.

If the war to win souls is as most supposed Christian ministers depict it, then the devil is much stronger, and much more effective, in his effort than God is. This is the only other possibility—unless there is a third category containing the vast majority of people. But it must be a category that has not been recognized. There is!—God is simply not calling the masses of humanity today.

But He *is* calling a select few!

## Called and Chosen of God

The Bible plainly speaks of those who have been called by God. Notice what

Paul said to the Thessalonian brethren: "Faithful is He [God] that *calls* you..." (I Thes. 5:24). As a warning to the Galatian congregation, who were losing sight of the true gospel, he said this: "I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that *called* you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (1:6), and later added, "This persuasion comes not of Him that *calls* you" (5:7-8). To the Corinthian congregation he wrote, "For you see your *calling* brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are *called*" (I Cor. 1:26).

Christ Himself spoke on many occasions about the Christian calling. You may be familiar with His statement, "For many are *called*, but few are chosen," found in both Matthew 22:14 and 20:16. Later, adding meaning to the second part of this phrase, He explained this to His disciples: "You have not chosen Me but I have *chosen* you" (John 15:16), and then "But I have *chosen* you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (vs. 19).

God is calling a few people—actually a *very few*—out of the world for His supreme purpose. Those who respond to His calling can then go on to repentance, baptism and conversion.

## What About You?

After reading some of the literature from The Restored Church of God, many come to recognize that they have been brought into contact with

extraordinary understanding. They find themselves learning things that they have never heard before. They notice that the Bible makes sense—that it is not as hard to understand as they had previously thought. Then, feeling a growing need to *act* on what they are learning, many wonder, “Am I being called by God?”

Sometimes this question takes the form of “Am I undergoing ‘conver-

well-known, respected denomination of my youth—I had always found the Bible boring and hard to understand.

Actually, people of all ages and backgrounds puzzle over just what a “calling” is. Many reduce it to little more than a particular *feeling* that comes over them, which they attribute to God. Millions in the world feel “called”—in some cases to the “church,” in other cases to the “ministry,” or “missionary

that is “given” to them. While many today appear to understand that they must in some fashion be called, they do not seek to understand—from the Bible—how to know for certain that it is God who is calling—drawing—giving to them whatever it is they are to receive.

Let’s consider a few scriptures that make plain what it is Christians are “given” when they are called. We must clear up all possible confusion.

In Matthew, Christ’s disciples asked, “Why speak you unto them [the multitudes who heard Him] in parables?” (13:10). His answer summarizes how and with what God calls: “He answered and said unto them, Because it is *given* unto you to *know the mysteries of the kingdom* of heaven [or kingdom of God], but to them it is *not given*” (vs. 11). The next several verses amplify what He meant, explaining how many in the world can hear the truths of God (the “mysteries of the kingdom”) but not grasp them. Since the overwhelming majority of mankind are not being drawn by the power of God’s Spirit, they have not been given the ability to comprehend God’s Word.

How does this apply to you? The answer directly explains how to know if God is calling you: A calling, in the simplest terms, is understanding the truths of God when you see, read or hear them.

Ask yourself: “Do I understand Bible teachings and truths when I hear them? Do the scriptures about the gospel of the Kingdom of God; the plan of salvation and the purpose of human existence; climactic, soon-coming prophesied events; God’s warning message to His people; His Law—including the Sabbath command—the Holy Days; tithing; clean and unclean meats; the one true Church; and many other teachings make sense to me?”

When you read or hear these things in our magazines, books, booklets, articles and *The World to Come* programs, do they have meaning to you? Are you grasping them? Are they PLAIN to your understanding? Do you see them as SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE others do not have? Do you feel tempted to pinch yourself in disbelief that you could be shown things of which the masses have no idea?

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sion’?” or “Should I get baptized?” or even “Have I come in contact with God’s true Church?” At best, most are unsure of how to *answer* these basic questions, and many have absolutely no idea whatsoever how to even properly *address* them.

This brief article will make plain, from God’s Word, how to know if God is calling you. I intend to keep it simple, virtually impossible to misunderstand. After all, this question is one of the most important you will ever face. Properly understanding its answer is of PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE to your life!

I first began learning God’s truth when I was 17 years old. Before God called me, I had not known a single one of the true doctrines of the Bible. The calling process for me began when I heard the voice of a man named Herbert W. Armstrong, being broadcast from Pasadena, California. This was 1966, and it was immediately evident to me that I was hearing things from this man that I had NEVER heard before—and with plain scriptural PROOFS to back them up. I remember being astonished at how clear the Bible became—and how much fun it was to study. Prior to this—throughout the time I attended the

work,” in still other cases to work with children, and in yet others to serve in the medical profession or even in the military. Ignorant of what God says, so many people are left to rely on mere *feelings*, assuming that their lives—and the paths they choose—are divinely inspired. They attribute this “inspiration” to being called of God. Sadly, most never learn that these “callings” have nothing to do with following the true God of the Bible.

A true calling from God is far more than a kind of abstract *feeling* that human reasoning concludes is from God!

### Defining a True Calling

In John’s gospel account, Jesus stated, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me *draw* him...” (6:44). Nineteen verses later, He repeated to His audience, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were *given* unto him of My Father” (vs. 65). In the next verse, John records that “From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.”

Many who heard Christ simply could not understand that God has to “draw” people and that a calling is something

If the answers to these questions are “yes,” then God *is* calling—“drawing”—you! The mysteries of the Kingdom of God *are* being given to YOU!

### Responsible for Knowledge Given

Babies are born knowing nothing. They do not know even the basics of right and wrong. They have to be taught virtually *everything*. Similarly, the world does not know the things of God—*spiritual* right from *spiritual* wrong. But with the knowledge of these things comes the responsibility to act on *them*.

Two Bible passages demonstrate that God holds people accountable for what they understand. Notice James 4:17: “Therefore to him that KNOWS TO DO GOOD, and does it not, to him it is sin.” Now read Hebrews 10:26: “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, there remains no more sacrifice for sins.”

Let’s understand. Each time you learn more of God’s truth (what is “good”), and it makes sense to you—you at least generally understand it—you are being *given* extraordinary spiritual *knowledge* for which God holds you accountable.

This is part of the calling process—and is actually central to it. Further, it makes understanding how God calls one much more serious than most have believed. Recognize that God will only call each human being once. Therefore, you are responsible *now* for the knowledge that you are being given. If one does *not* act on what he is learning, God will take that understanding away (Rom. 2:13; Psa. 111:10), and such a person is in a grave spiritual condition.

### The Greatest Freedom

God’s truth is most exciting to understand. It is the path to all the wonderful, good things in life—things God wants you to have. It is also the path to the greatest *freedom* that there is! Christ told certain Jews professing to believe on Him: “If you continue in My word [the truth – John 17:17], then are you My disciples indeed; and you shall *know the truth*, and THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE” (John 8:31-32). You must be willing to “continue” in your studies of God’s Word, learning ever more of His truth, which Christ

explains will “set you free” from a world cut off from God and held captive by Satan. Even *this* understanding is precious knowledge.

Your associates in the world probably understand none of these things. Neither do your relatives. Without God’s calling, they have no possible way of enjoying *now* what is being offered to YOU—if you are understanding *and* acting upon God’s truth.

It is also vital that you make certain in your mind the things you are learning. You should find yourself wanting to PROVE the doctrines of God. Paul also told the Thessalonians to “PROVE all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). If you know God is calling you, take time to *prove* that He exists. Then prove that the Bible is truly His inspired Word for mankind.

Finally, *prove* the identity of God’s Church. Remove all doubt, leaving no room for confusion. There are many counterfeit churches—many spiritual “look-alikes” in the world. Do not be fooled by any of them. Christ promised, “I will build *My* Church” (Matt. 16:18). Determine to know for certain if you have come in contact with it. (I urge you to read our booklet *Where Is God’s Church?* and our book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!*)

At the same time you are proving these things, pray fervently about what you are learning. When you are unclear on a matter, remember that Christ taught, “*Ask*, and it shall be given you; *seek*, and you shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7:7).

John 14:17 explains how those coming toward conversion begin to find that they can see clearly the things of God. Notice what Christ said when speaking to His disciples about the Holy Spirit they were soon to receive: “Even the Spirit of truth; [which] the world cannot receive, because it sees [it] not, neither knows [it]: but you know [it]; for [it] dwells *with* you, and shall be *in* you.”

At this point, the disciples were much like many today—perhaps like you, too. They were seeing many spiritual truths in part, but did not yet *fully* grasp the enormous importance of learning God’s Plan and way of life. Through the Holy Spirit working *with* them, God was

revealing certain things that they would only understand in a greater way once it was *in* them, beginning at conversion. Ultimately, to fully understand all the things of God—all the mysteries of the Kingdom of God—one must be begotten of the Holy Spirit. This occurs when it enters directly into the mind! Lacking baptism and the vital receiving of God’s Spirit, it is completely impossible for *anyone* to truly understand even a single biblical truth!

Before discussing how this happens, let’s look at the big picture.

### God’s Master Plan

There is a great reason that God is calling only a few now.

The core of God’s Plan encompasses 7,000 years. Few have understood this. Many *have* correctly understood at least some of the verses describing God’s 1,000-year reign (Rev. 20:4). And while most know little more than this, they know *nothing* of the fact that God has allotted 6,000 years, or six millennial days of a “seven-day week,” to man’s rule, prior to the seventh 1,000-year “day.” The sixth “day” will draw to a close and Satan will eventually be bound (Rev. 20:2).

However, Satan has *not yet* been bound and replaced as the “god of this world.” When Christ, having overcome sin, qualified to replace him (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) He assured that Satan will someday no longer be present to deceive and confuse mankind (I Cor. 14:33). We must understand that Satan seeks to do everything, within the power that he does possess, continually striving to thwart God’s plan. He has certainly deceived his ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15) into believing that God has failed terribly in His plan to save the vast majority of a mankind that He is not yet even calling to salvation. But it is only by God’s permission that Satan holds sway over this “present evil world” (Gal. 1:4).

God is not losing any supposed wrestling match over which He would clearly have complete control. He knows exactly what He is doing, and the beauty of His plan *can* be known. Be assured that no true God would ever choose to condemn the vast majority who have ever lived without giving

them a *full opportunity* for salvation. Such a God would not be worth following. He would be an unjust monster whose primary purpose is the business of *condemnation!*

We must understand! The Bible says, “But, beloved, *be not ignorant* of this one thing, that *one day* is with the Lord as a *thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day” (II Pet. 3:8). Of course, most people *are* “ignorant” of not just this “one thing,” but almost everything that the Bible teaches.

Yet, this is a fascinating verse.

Man has been given six days, or 6,000 years, to try his own ways, governments, religions, philosophies, value systems and forms of education. Under the sway of Satan, he has practiced sin—DISOBEDIENCE to God’s commands—for nearly 6,000 years. Man has then tried to treat all of the ill *effects* instead of treating the *cause* of having broken God’s laws. This includes the invention of many religions that merely teach the hollow *ideas of men* in place of the wonderful TRUTHS OF GOD.

God is allowing man to learn bitter lessons. The vast majority, who have never known the precious truth of God, are having to learn that their own ways do not work! Just before humanity is about to erase itself from the Earth, through a combination of weapons of mass destruction and the irreversible pollution of a planet that has limits to how much it can withstand, Christ will intervene and save mankind from itself!

Now continue with II Peter. Notice verse 9: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance.” Did you notice that God wants to save *everyone*? Speaking of God, Paul states, “Who will have *all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4). That is the plain truth of this scripture. God is not, and never has been, in the “mass condemnation” business.

But God is calling and training a tiny select few who will rule with Christ and setup His glorious world-ruling Kingdom. (Also read our absolutely vital book *The Awesome Potential of Man.*)

Remember. Satan has proliferated many forms of false religion all over the Earth. He counterfeits the truth in endless ways, and God’s calling process is no exception. He is a MASTER DECEIVER and the fruits of his efforts lie everywhere.

### Your Path to Conversion

Your Bible states, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God *they* are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). Verse 9 there states, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” These two passages reveal just what a Christian is—one who has and is led by the Holy Spirit of God. This Spirit is received upon repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

If the truth is becoming clear—really PLAIN—to you, set the goal of repentance, baptism, and the receiving of

God’s Holy Spirit—the beginning of TRUE CONVERSION!

While you are preparing for conversion, focus on examining all the wrong habits and attitudes that you can. There are certain *physical* changes you can make before baptism. Understand. Conversion is entirely about changing, growing, overcoming—and developing the *character of God*. This involves getting into the habit of regular prayer, Bible study, meditation and even periodic fasting.

Then take time to study all of our books, booklets and articles dealing with faith, conversion, baptism, your human potential, and the proofs of God’s existence, His Word and His Church. Much—actually everything—is at stake for you if God is calling you now.

Take each step carefully. Follow the timing that is right for you. Yet, do not unnecessarily delay, merely because you have not asked fervently or often enough for the “gift” of repentance (II Tim. 2:25; Acts 11:18). Be careful that you do not follow the pattern of the world, falling into waiting for a magical *feeling* that “now is the time.”

The Bible teaches that “repentance is toward God” and that “faith is toward... Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Conversion is a personal private matter between the Father and Christ, and each individual. If God is truly calling you, make certain of your calling (II Pet. 1:10). It is most precious!

This is the only way to approach the marvelous gift you are being given! □

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