

**When God Calls**  
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God calls every believer to ministry. The good news of a general atonement that Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for everyman is that for every believer our loving Father provides not only salvation but also a meaningful place of ministry. Finding and living out that personal place in ministry is one of life's most noble goals. Spiritual gift inventories, nominating committees, and the general sense that someone ought to do something can all contribute to the discovery of a believer's ministry.

God calls some believers to the ministry of pastor-teacher (see Ephesians 4). The Scripture illustrates a variety of mechanisms God uses to call believers to the special ministry of pastor-teacher. **For some the Lord uses very dramatic experiences.** The Damascus Road has come to symbolize this dramatic process of being called into ministry. For the Apostle Paul the high drama of that bright light and commanding voice guided a lifetime of service as a pastor-teacher. Many years after that fact, he explained to King Agrippa his inability to be disobedient to that vision from heaven (Acts 26:19). Many faithful pastors remember a vivid, dramatic experience by which they understood God's call into the full work of the gospel ministry.

**Still others discover the call of God into the ministry of pastor-teacher through an experience of worship.** Such was the case with Isaiah when from a worship experience he understood the call of God and found himself responding "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6). The current trend to plan ordination services as part of the worship services of the church rather than as a specialized function of the regional presbytery has allowed the Lord to use the experience of worship to call others to serve the church as pastors.

The Lord Jesus illustrates still another means by which God reveals his call to individuals. Luke 2 reminds us that in Jesus' life at about age 12 he understood the need to be about his Father's business. **The developmental process of growing up lead him to a maturing awareness of what God had in mind for his own life.**

Many people have attempted to thwart or suppress the call of God only to find it to be an irresistible compulsion. So it was that Jeremiah attempted to suppress the call of God only to find it to be a burning flame that kept bursting forth (see Jeremiah 20:9).

The young boy Samuel discovered the call of God through the assistance of a mentor. Neither of them seems to fully comprehend all that the Lord has in mind yet together they learn to hear and recognize the voice of God (see I Samuel 3).

How do I know if the Lord is calling me to the ministry of pastor-teacher?

1. When God calls there will be an internal and somewhat intuitive awareness as his Spirit bears witness with our spirit. Thus I will know it and I will feel it.
2. When God calls there will be a drive for preparation for 'a call to preach is a call to prepare. Thus I will recognize the need for adequate, formal preparation.
3. When God calls there will be the recognition by others of that call. Thus the church sets apart through a careful process of ordination those who announce a call.
4. When God calls he will also open a door for expression of that call. Thus most ordination councils will not authorize ordination to the full work of gospel ministry until there is an avenue for expression of that ministry in a local church.