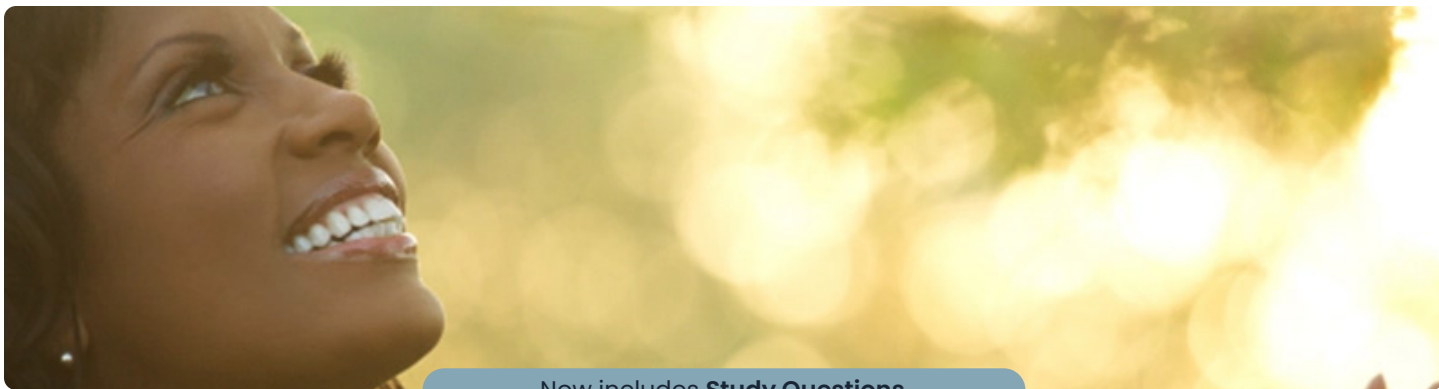




Now includes **Study Questions**

Equipped & Ready

Encouragement for Obeying God's Call on Your Life

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Has God called you to do something that doesn't really fit with your personality or skill set? Something that pulls you outside of your comfort zone? Well, you're not the first and won't be the last—but be encouraged!

Throughout Scripture, we can read of many examples of ordinary people being called by God to accomplish the extraordinary. Some parted the sea, raised the dead, survived a fiery furnace, destroyed armies, ruled kingdoms...the list goes on. Simply put, God called and they obeyed. But in some situations, between being called and obeying, there was doubt, insecurity, and even resistance. Such was the case with **Moses, Gideon, and Jeremiah**.

There is one thing these three servants had in common: they couldn't see themselves as being of value to God. They shrank back and doubted they had what it took to accomplish the call of God on their lives. They looked at themselves according to a human's perspective, as if God relies on a person's natural abilities.

Let's first examine Moses's response after hearing God's assignment for him to lead the children of Israel out from the bondage of Egypt:

Then Moses said to the Lord, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." Exodus 4:10 (Read Exodus 3-4 for full context)

Based on the information God provided to Moses, he knew that his assignment required speaking and he just wasn't good at it. Because he lacked this skill, he obviously didn't feel comfortable taking this on. He even goes so far as to ask God to choose someone else (Ex 4:13).

Now, let's read Gideon's resistance after hearing God's assignment for him to save Israel from the Midianites, who had oppressed Israel for seven years:

14 Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" 15 So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Judges 6:14-15 (Read Judges 6-8 for the full story of Gideon)

Gideon questioned how he was going to do this. Not only was he from a poor family but he also happened to be the youngest in his family. How in the world could he be the one to save Israel at this time? I think it's safe to say that Gideon didn't feel qualified to save Israel.

And finally, let's read Jeremiah's response to hearing God's calling for his life as a prophet:

5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." 6 Then said I: "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." Jeremiah 1:5-6 (Read Jeremiah 1:4-19 for full context)

Jeremiah initially resisted his calling. He explained to God that he wasn't a skilled speaker and was too young (more than likely a teenager at the time of his calling). How could he be a prophet?

Each servant recognized that there was a substantial contrast between who they were (mere flesh with flaws) in comparison to who God is and what He wanted accomplished. It was obvious that it was impossible for them to truly measure up (in the natural) to their God-sized assignment. And surely it had to have been downright frightening for them to hear what El Shaddai wanted them to do. But God revealed to each of them some reassuring information: **HE WOULD BE WITH THEM**. Let's look at His response to each.

To Moses...

11 So the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? 12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say." Exodus 4:11-12

To Gideon...

16 And the Lord said to him, Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man." Judges 6:16

And to Jeremiah...

7 But the Lord said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. 8 Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you," says the Lord. Jeremiah 1:7-8

The reality is this: these servants weren't doing something for God, He was doing something through them.

All they had to do was obey—to listen to what HE said and say or do what HE said to say or do. He didn't require any special skill, talent, net worth, or age limit. He only required their obedience. The assignment would be accomplished by God's sovereign power. The same is true today.

No prophet, priest, judge, king, disciple...no one...in the Scriptures EVER accomplished anything God called them to do on their own ability. In fact, when anyone intentionally attempted to do things on their own, destruction and judgement were right around the corner. And the same is true for any modern-day disciple— you can't and won't do anything worthy of bringing God glory if God is not with you, instructing and empowering you. And if He called you, then He will be with you. WHY? To make Himself known. When God does something that only He can do, people can identify Him as the true and living God. It's not about the servant. (Exodus 6:6-7; Judges 7:2)

Trust God in whatever He's called you to do. It may not be on the scale as the servants discussed here, but it is definitely equally important. And whatever it is, it's larger than you.

Stop examining the natural and relying on the superficial.

- You're afraid because you don't have the skills needed.
- You're worried that you don't have the finances.
- You're nervous about the lack of needed resources or connections.

Don't waste your time thinking about these things! Instead,

- Focus on God and maintain your relationship through the Word and prayer.
- Obey what He says.
- TRUST HIM.

I think it's important to emphasize that as children of God through the blood of Christ, we join Him where He is at work, according to His purposes and plans. We hear from Him on what He's called us to do. We are not to decide what we want to do and then move on our own or inform Him of our plans so He can move for our benefit. In Scripture, **every servant heard clearly from God**; He expressed plainly what He wanted them to do. He was already at work in the Spirit and he chose and called the servant to do what was required on Earth. All Scriptures used in this article are from the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB).

Pause & Yield: Self-Reflection

Before you move on, take a moment to search your heart and reflect. Let these questions guide you into surrender. Meet with God in a quiet place and bring these reflections to Him in prayer, asking for His forgiveness and help as needed.

1. When God calls me to obey, do I focus more on my weaknesses than on His power?

2. Have I allowed fear, insecurity, or feelings of inadequacy to keep me from obeying what God has asked me to do?

3. Am I relying on my own abilities and resources, or am I trusting God to accomplish His work through me?

4. Do I truly believe that God will equip me for every assignment He calls me to fulfill?

5. What is one area where God is calling me to stop focusing on my limitations and begin trusting His presence and power instead?

