

Chapter 7: The Call to Missions

The Need for Missionaries:

“The command to take the gospel to the ends of the earth is not a job reserved for specialists, it is the obligation of the entire body of believers. We all must participate in the Great Commission! The real issue which confronts every believer is not whether they need to do it, but what they will do to fulfill the Great Commission. Disinterest in missions is disobedience!”¹

The Qualifications for Missionaries:

The Neglect of Missionary Qualifications

- *“Over the last generation and into this one, we’ve seen an urgency to go overseas because of the lost. That is a good urge, but it does not trump the need for preparation. We’ve seen a lot of missionaries coming off the field quicker than they needed to because they didn’t have a good theological underpinning or weren’t centered in the local church.”²*
- *“Churches, their leaders, and missionary candidates feel the weight and urgency for workers to enter the fields now ready for harvest. However, that urgency has often meant that churches send missionaries to the field unprepared for the rigors and demands of cross-cultural ministry....the urgency of missions is not justification for taking unbiblical shortcuts;”³*

The Details of Missionary Calling

- The Divine Source
- The Scriptural Principles - *“Through examining the Scriptures, we can build a solid framework for evaluating God’s call on our lives.”⁴*

1. God’s Call is Grounded in a Biblical Command, not Feelings

“Compassion is a vital part of effective ministry and should stir our hearts into ministry, but we must build from a stronger foundation than feelings.”⁵

¹ David M. Doran, *For the Sake of His Name.*, p. 127.

² Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra • Ryan Robertson, “Gen Z Wants to Be Involved in Missions,” *The Gospel Coalition*, December 31, 2023, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/missions-cross-conference/>.

³ Tom Pennington, in Thomas Nelson and John MacArthur, *Biblical Missions: Principles, Priorities, and Practices*, ed. Chris Burnett and Mark Tatlock (Thomas Nelson, n.d.), p. 263.

⁴ David M. Doran, *For the Sake of His Name.*, p. 125.

⁵ David M. Doran, *For the Sake of His Name.*, p. 126.

2. God's Call is Governed by Godly Dedication, not Human Ambition

a. They Embrace God's Purpose

"Because he embraced God's ultimate purpose, he was able to embrace God's immediate purposes, even if that meant suffering for him. That kind of life is fertile territory for the missionary call!"⁶

b. They Commit to God's Perspective

"...those who know the most about God are the most responsible and best equipped to tell of him."⁷

c. They Operate by God's Priorities

d. They Reflect God's Purity

"the church must hold fast to the pattern of sending out elder-qualified missionaries to serve in elder or elder-like roles."⁸

3. God's Call is Given through a Settled Conviction, not Special Communication

4. God's Call is Confirmed by the Believing Community, not Personal Autonomy

"Schools, mission boards, and non-profits do not send out missionaries; local churches do. The question of giftedness for the task of ministry and mission must be asked and answered within the context of local church ministry. The gifts were given for ministry within the church (1 Cor. 12:28, 'God has appointed in the church') and for the church (1 Cor. 12:7, 'but to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good'). Ordination is the process of recognition by the church of the gifts given by God to the candidate for ministry (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6)."⁹

"Willingness to go to the mission field is not the sole requirement for doing so. A candidate for missionary service must be recognized by God's people as qualified for that service. Without that recognition, the question of God's call remains unanswered. We have too often neglected the role of God's people in the process of confirming God's call on an individual's life. The subjective belief of the individual himself must be confirmed by the assessment of God's people....When God is calling someone to ministry, He imparts a compelling desire, genuine godliness, and the appropriate gifts, and He causes His people to recognize His hand upon that person."¹⁰

⁶ David M. Doran, *For the Sake of His Name.*, p. 128.

⁷ Wells, *A Vision for Missions.*

⁸ Nelson and MacArthur, *Biblical Missions.*, p. 263.

⁹ David M. Doran, *For the Sake of His Name.*, p. 137.

¹⁰ David M. Doran, *For the Sake of His Name.*, p. 138.