

**IF YOU WANT TO  
WALK ON WATER  
YOU'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THE  
BOAT**

Session Three:  
Find Your Calling and  
Get Your Feet Wet

# Find Your Calling and Get Your Feet Wet

*If I am to experience a greater measure of God's power in my life, it will usually... begin by my acting in faith – trusting God enough to take a step of obedience. Simply acknowledging information about his power is not enough. I have to get my feet wet.*

*John Ortberg*

## **Questions to Think About**

1. What would cause you to take a step out of your comfort zone and risk getting your feet wet?
2. What do you see as the difference between a calling and a career?
3. How do we know when God is calling us to do something?
4. What impact do our personal knowledge and experience of God have on our faith in him and our willingness to water-walk?

## **Sermon Observations**

A mission from God

Water-walking: what it takes to do it

How do I know my calling?

Know your gifts

Know your limitations

Know your passions

Prayer



## Large Group Exploration

### A Mission from God

How do you know if you're on a mission from God? In his book *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, John Ortberg writes, "It is possible for us to make courageous, high-risk decisions that are stupid." To avoid such potential disasters, let's look at several passages of Scripture that will help us understand the difference between identifying and responding to God's call and making foolish decisions that have nothing to do with what God wants us to do.

1. What do we learn about Peter from the following vignettes of his life?
  - a. Luke 9:28-33
  - b. John 18:1-11
  - c. Mark 8:31-33
2. Read Matthew 14:25-28
  - a. When we compare how Peter responded to the above situations with how he responded to Jesus on the water; what do you notice?
  - b. What does the conversation between Jesus and Peter reveal about water-walking?
3. The Bible doesn't record what the other disciples said or felt when they saw Peter walking on the water toward Jesus, but if you had been in that boat, how might you have felt? What might you have thought? What difference would that night have made in your life?
4. In *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*, John Ortberg highlights four indicators that reveal when God is calling us to take a first step of faith. Next to each indicator, write down how it can help us know where God is calling us.

Indicator	How It Leads Us to Respond to God's Calling
1. Fear  2. Frustration  3. Compassion  4. Prayer	

### What is God Doing?

Scripture makes it clear that God is at work in the world and that he wants us to be partners with him in accomplishing his purposes. So what does he actually *do*?

Here are a few highlights:

- Psalm 104:10-32 describes some of the work God does to maintain life on earth.
- Psalm 121:1-5 tells us that God never sleeps. He is always watching over us and protecting us.
- 2 Chronicles 16:9 says that God works constantly to strengthen people who are fully committed to him.
- Isaiah 40:10-11 portrays God as a loving shepherd who faithfully tends his flock.



2. Just as the disciples in their storm-tossed boat had “spiritual comfort zones” in which they felt most comfortable trusting God, we also have spiritual comfort zones. John Ortberg says there is only one way to increase your spiritual comfort zone: “You will have to follow the Path of God, which requires taking a leap of faith. You need to get out of the boat a little every day.”
- d. Peter obviously stretched his comfort zone when he stepped out of the boat. How would you describe the comfort zone of the disciples who stayed in the boat? [see Matthew 14:25-33]
  
  - e. Another comfort zone that God often calls us to expand is that of trusting him for our daily physical needs – clothing, food, shelter. What steps of faith does Jesus command us to take that will expand our comfort zone in relationship to our physical needs? [see Matthew 6:11,28-34]
  
  - f. Our personal accomplishments, wealth, and strength can provide a comfortable degree of security and earn for us the respect of other people. What does Jeremiah 9:23-24 teach us about expanding this comfort zone?
  
  - g. Physical safety is another comfort zone we tend to guard closely. What step out of his comfort zone did God call Ananias to take in Acts 9:1-19?

## **The High Price of Saying Yes**

Everyone in Scripture who said yes to their calling had to pay a high price. So will you and I.

Sometimes it will mean putting in hours of work and effort when you would rather not. Will you do it?

Maybe your calling will not involve the kind of recognition or wealth or influence you had always hoped for. Can you let that go?

Sometimes you will devote yourself to a dream – like Jeremiah – and things will not turn out the way you wanted, and you will experience crushing disappointment and discouragement. Can you persist?

Somewhere along the line, people will oppose you, disapprove of you, or block what you are trying to do. Can you endure?

Maybe it will take a long time to discern your calling. Maybe it will involve much trial and error and many false starts. And we tend to be impatient people, wanting immediate results. Will you be patient?



## Group Discussion

1. John Ortberg describes a calling as “something you discover, not something you choose.” He goes on to explain, “The whole idea of a calling is taken from Scripture, where time after time God calls someone to do his work... You and I are the call-ees and God is the Call-er. God equips the worker and assigns the work.”

We aren't used to thinking of our life's work in these terms, are we? Most of us have been raised to do our own thing in our own power. Let's talk about the adjustments we have to make in our thinking and actions if we are to get out of the boat, get our feet wet, and live like people who are on a mission from God.

2. Sometimes we think we need to take a huge step out of the boat in order to fulfill our calling. But in our study together, big steps are often the result of many smaller steps. So whether we have a big, long-term vision of God's calling for us, or see only the next step, let's share some of the ways in which each of us can step out of the boat a little more each day. Perhaps we can encourage one another to take the next step in following God's call.
3. Let's share some times when we vividly experienced God at work in and through us. What was challenging about following God's call? What happened that could have happened only with God's help? In what ways did the experience affect our faith?

## **Personal Journey: To Do Now**

1. John Ortberg writes, "If I have the courage to acknowledge my limits and embrace them, I can experience enormous freedom. If I lack this courage, I will be imprisoned by them." What failures, fears, or limitations may be keeping you from getting out of the boat and discovering God's calling on your life?
2. Write out the activities you really enjoy, those that lift your spirit.
3. Considering your life so far, in what ways are you satisfied or dissatisfied that your gifts match your pursuits? What has your life so far revealed about the person God has made you to be?
4. What are you doing today as a result of stepping out in faith that you could not do apart from the power of God?
5. Who do you talk with regarding your desires, dreams, failures, and efforts to step out of the boat and pursue God's calling?
6. Try completing this sentence: I think my calling is...

## Personal Journey: To Do On Your Own

God longs for us to be in close relationship with him and to discover the calling he has for each of us. But discerning a calling involves great challenges of self-exploration and judgment. It requires ruthless honesty about gifts and limitations. It requires the willingness to ask tough questions and live with the answers. And it usually involves numerous attempts and failures. Yet there is no greater satisfaction than to fulfill our purpose in life and participate in God's great dream for the human race. Before the next session, set aside some time to consider the following.

1. Why is it important for each of us, in the words of the apostle Paul [Romans 12:3], to regard ourselves with "sober judgment," to accurately assess our passions, gifts, and limitations?
2. Read the table on the next page, which compares career with calling. Where are you placing most of your energies right now? Why?
3. If you don't feel that you are living out God's calling for your life, what steps might you take to begin exploring what his calling for your life may be?
4. What can you do to get to know God better, so you find it easier to trust him and step out in faith?
5. As you consider the world around you, what need, area of the world, or group of people do you think God would have you pray for during the next six months?

<b>Career</b>	<b>verses</b>	<b>Calling</b>
Promises to give recognition, wealth, influence, and other positive benefits		Fulfilling God's calling may lead to difficulty and suffering, but it also gives us the opportunity to be used by God.
Often viewed as a means to a positive end – fulfilled dreams		Fulfilling God's calling may be disappointing, discouraging, and always requires deep faith. People may oppose us, disapprove of us, and block what we try to do.
Something we choose for ourselves		Something we receive from God
Something we do for ourselves		Something we do to serve God
May end with a comfortable retirement		Ends when we die
Provides temporal rewards		Significance of a calling lasts for eternity
Can be disrupted by events		Can, by God's enabling, be fulfilled despite the most oppositional circumstances
Often built on our reason and abilities		Is built on trust in God's faithfulness