

The Call of God

by Walter Beuttler

Walter Beuttler emphasizes the importance of understanding and responding to the Call of God through personal relationship, application, and transformation in ministry.

Scripture: Psalm 5:3, Isaiah 50:4, Ezekiel 1:1, Daniel 5:12, Mark 1:17, Mark 3:13, John 5:19, John 14:10, Revelation 3:8

Topics: "Spiritual Calling", "Personal Obedience"

Description

Walter Beuttler emphasizes the importance of being called by God and the process of transformation that should follow. He stresses the need for personal application of biblical truths, leading to a life-changing experience. Beuttler highlights the significance of being with the Lord before engaging in ministry, focusing on the relationship with God above all else. He shares personal experiences of submission, obedience, and being led by the Spirit in various ministry opportunities, showcasing the faithfulness of God when one is faithful to Him.

Transcript

I thought I might profitably chat with you about the "Call of God." I spend most of my time overseas with national pastors, missionaries, and Bible schools. I teach this subject frequently, as it is very much on my heart. So I will share some truths along this line, and also try to apply them to your experience.

I have my own philosophy about teaching Bible subjects. In fact, the Lord gave it to me some years ago. It relates to: 1 - being, 2 - information, 3 - application, 4 - transformation, 5 - demonstration, and 6 - approbation.

The first one is "information." We need to be adequately and correctly informed. The next step is "application," namely, the application of the information. This is where Bible schools often come short. I can say this because I have been teaching in a Bible School for 32 years.

It is one thing to be informed. It is another to have the truth applied in our lives.

For instance: The Bible says, "You shall not steal." Is this so we will know that we should not steal? This is not the reason. The reason is that we should not steal. What is the point of knowing that we should not steal, then steal anyway? The truth needs to be applied in practice, and I try to help folk to apply it in their lives.

This applied truth, the "application" should result in a transformation. The truth should change us. A "transformation" should take place, not merely as an accumulation of facts. There needs to be, after the application, the transformation, or the working out of the truth. I will try to point this out to you, as we get into it.

"Demonstration" - The transformed life becomes demonstrative that is to say, the transformed life will become so evident that we become a demonstration of the truth. I was Dean of Men for some years at Eastern Bible Institute. One year a mother said, "Brother Beuttler, our girl is so different. What a change!" Transformation, demonstration - the transformation should become apparent to the folk at home and in our church.

Demonstration, "approbation" - The changed life should win the approval of God. So this is my underlying philosophy that I will share with you. First of all, the Gospel of Mark 3:13-14.

"And He goes up into a mountain, and called to Him whom He would: and they came to him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach."

Before the Lord gave me a definite call to "Go" and teach all nations, He made this passage very real to me. I had some personal training, and I am sharing some of these things with you. I have not reached all nations, but I have reached in excess of 100.

First, notice, "He called to Him whom He would." I do not know how many of you say that you have a call from God. A call does not have to be something phenomenal. A young man came before a credentials committee, and they said to him, "Are you called to preach?" He said, "Yes." They said, "How do you know?" He said, "I had a vision and I saw two letters in the sky GP which means go preach." One of the men said, "How do you know that it did not mean go plow?" He could not answer that one.

I know that the Lord does such things, but I believe a real call involves an inner awareness, assurance, a witness of the Spirit that simply knows. When I applied for credentials they said, "Brother Beuttler, how do you know you are called?" I said, "Brethren, I cannot tell you. All I know is that I know." Well I thought that would throw me, but one said, "This is the answer we like to hear."

The Lord may use other things, but there has to be more than a prophetic word, or a vision or dream. There must be an inner "I know" that nothing can change. Did you notice that the implication is that God called these men in sovereignty - "He called to Him whom He would." How many would have chosen you?

The Lord uses whom He wills, and sometimes He picks the black sheep of a family, the blackest, or the neediest one. He puts His hands on them and calls them to Bible school. The relatives say, "And where are you going?" You say, "I am going to Bible school."

"YOU? And you respond "I feel the Lord called me." And they say, "If the Lord called you, He sure is hard up." You will not survive, unless you really know.

I came to Eastern Bible Institute in 1939. It was remarkable, as the Lord opened the door. They asked me, "Brother Beuttler, we have an opening for a teacher, and our faculty felt that we should ask you to come and join us." When I read the letter, I knew that was God.

Before I started, a preacher saw me on campus and said, "I hear that you are joining the faculty." I answered, "Yes." He said, "You! We do not want a German with a German brogue. We want a fellow that

knows how to speak English." It stung a bit, but the Lord called me. I am still going strong at 68, all over the world. The race is not to the swift, the battle is not to the strong. He does not necessarily call the best of the family. He might call the worst, so take comfort. The Lord calls His instruments in sovereignty. Who would have called these fishermen to be apostles? You would not have considered them, but He did.

I remember one of our girls who had been involved in many things. One day the FBI came to the school and asked for this girl. He said, "I want to place this girl under arrest." We were shocked. The president talked with him and said, "Could one of our faculty members accompany her?" I was the senior faculty member, so I was asked to go to Philadelphia to the FBI. He turned that girl inside out. She had to come out with everything and lay it on the table. I felt so sorry for her.

After a couple of hours or so, he said, "This girl has had enough. We should hold her, but if you promise to bring her back in one week, I will let her go back to school."

I said, "I will promise to bring her back." So we came back and the interrogation continued. Here was this girl saved and filled with the Spirit being turned inside out. She had to expose her life. Then she broke, leaned over the desk and wept bitterly.

When it was over, he said, "Reverend, I should place this girl under arrest, but tell me, what is this girl doing?" I told him how the Lord saved her, filled her with the Spirit, transformed her, and called her to the ministry. He leaned back in his chair and said, "I believe you. I will let you take her back to school. We shall not prosecute, but we will prosecute the fellow who was associated with her."

I took her back to school, and the Lord used her in the gifts of the Spirit. Nobody would have picked this girl, but the Lord did.

Now notice something else here. "He called to him whom He would, and they came to Him." That is, they responded. "And ordained twelve that they should be with Him." Notice this. I will make a statement here which at first may sound a bit overextended, but it isn't. The Lord did not call these men primarily, or first of all, to go and preach. He called them "to be with him." Remember this.

I emphasize, especially to new students, "Your primary calling is not to become a preacher, but your calling is to be with Him." Students, our personal relationship to the Lord takes, or should take, precedence over preaching. Our communion, our relationship, is more important than our preaching, for in the final analysis, our true ministry does not come out of the encyclopedias, it comes out of our personal relationship with a personal Christ.

I established that priority when I was a student in Bible school, and no one could rob me of my personal devotion. I spent hours a day with Him. Our studies were easier then, and understanding came quickly to me. If I listened in class, I had no trouble getting by. I did not have to do much homework. But it was easier then, as I said, than it is today.

I continue to follow this principle, to this day. Now, I go all over the world. I will begin a round-the-world trip in about 2½ weeks. All through this journey, which will be about 5 months, my first calling is to be with the Lord. I need to maintain a communion, a relationship, a fellowship with Him, and out of this fellowship will flow the ministry.

I am sure that you recognize that we are living in a strange age. We have today with us the cult of sloppy dress, and the dirtier people are, the more they like it. It is the strangest thing what has gotten into people.

Many a parent is ashamed the way his son and daughter look. I do not believe in the cult of sloppy dress.

Also, we are living in an age of an intellectual ascendancy, which is crowding out the things of the Spirit of God. I see it everywhere, even in Bible school. I see it as I travel, especially in the United States, where people move away from the things of the Spirit into the area of more and more intellect, to the expense of life in the Spirit. We need a renewing of the vision of Ezekiel, when he said, "The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God."

We need an open heaven and a fresh revelation of God. This comes only when we are with Him, when we put our times of devotion, fellowship, union, in first place, when we establish this priority. I follow this, even when I travel. During a round-the-world trip (I go every year), I set aside, somewhere, an entire week in fasting and prayer in some hotel where no one knows where I am; to be with Him. Out of this flows a ministry that is in ever increasing demand.

I was in Melbourne for the first time some years ago. The pastor, who is also in charge of a camp, said to me, "Brother Beuttler, would you consider coming down here for our camp meeting over the Christmas holidays?" In Australia, it is summer then. Their camp meeting time is from Christmas to New Year's. We had school vacation and I said, "As far as time is concerned, I could come, but Green Lane is a long ways from Melbourne." He responded, "I know that you are thinking about the fare, if I am asking you to come, I will pay your fare." I said, "Do you know how much that is?" He answered, "No, but I think it's quite a bit." I said, "I can tell you. It is \$1,450 round trip." "That's all right. I will send you a ticket. Are you coming?" I said, "I will come."

Then he continued, "I am also getting one of the men from Springfield. He will be the evangelist, and you will do the Bible teaching in the morning, and have the ministers in the afternoon. I will send him a ticket also." I said, "Brother Greenwood, I have one favor: Please do not put him and me on the same flight." Fearing that he might think I had something against the man, I said, "Do you understand?" He said, "From your teaching this week, I think I do. You want to be alone on the way here so you have time with the Lord." Some people who have so much to say, have nothing to say, and say it anyway. I was afraid that I would have someone who would fill my ear, from Los Angeles to Melbourne, and I wanted to be alone.

I felt that if people are willing to pay \$1,450 for one week of ministry, they are entitled to get something. I sat on that plane, hour after hour, in fellowship with the Lord, waiting on Him. The result was that when I got there, I had something. And the thing was so acceptable that I went down to Melbourne for 4 years in a row for one week at a time. Each time they paid \$1,450 for the fare and \$200 for my pocket, for coming.

The secret behind this was, "that they should be with him." I followed this, and out of it flows the ministry.

"And Jesus said to them, Come you after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Mark 1:17

We are not in Bible school merely to learn, to acquire information, as necessary as this is. Rather, we are in Bible school to give the Lord the opportunity to do a work within us, by way of transforming our lives. There needs to be a change within each one of us.

A spiritual life is a highly disciplined life, and the Lord needs to teach us discipline and submission. I like to be in bed at 10:00 because very often I am up early with the Lord, before the sun is up.

All through our ministerial life, we will come up against unfairness and have to submit to unfair situations and unfair doing of people. I travel all over the world every year and I have to face many unfair things. I

was in one of the Pacific islands and worked hard all week. Sunday night a missionary was there who did not like my type of teaching. I have never succumbed to the new-fangled ways, and I will not.

Sunday night he said to a big congregation, "Tonight we are going to take a love offering for a certain brother laboring on a certain island." I had labored there all week. I could have used the love offering, but he took it for somebody else, and I knew it was just spite and was as a slap in the face. We are to experience a transformation, "Follow Me and I will make you to become." We are being made, not just educated. The Lord fashions us as an instrument in His service in the school of obedience.

I was in Chile one year, in San Diego with a missionary, and what I have had to put up with there was very unfair, but I could not say, "Well missionary, I am going to leave and go somewhere else." No, I had to stay there, in the name of the Lord.

I went to Bible school in 1927, after I came from Germany. I was a young man then when I arrived and came to Bible school. The matron said I was to wash dishes. Do you wash dishes here? I protested, "Miss Sunder, I am not doing dishes. German men do not wash dishes. She said, "Walter, you are going to do dishes until you like them." Well, judging from the tone of her voice and the expression of her face, I thought I would be well advised not to say anymore.

I went to my room, packed my cases, walked out of the school without saying goodbye.

I thought, "If Pentecostal people believed that men should wash dishes, I am in the wrong religion; and if this Bible school believes that men should wash dishes, I am in the wrong school." And so out I went in a huff.

Nearby in another city, there was an all day service. I have always liked them, so I thought, "I will attend my last Pentecostal meeting by way of saying goodbye." My two suitcases stood on the outside, so no one knew that I was attending my last Pentecostal meeting. During the song service, someone gave a message in tongues. I knew it was for me, and I slid down in my seat. Later, I was asked whether I got sick. I was sick all right, but not the way they thought. Then came the interpretation. Brother Allan Swift interpreted: "Rebellious man, rebellious man." I was rebuked by the Lord for my rebellion. He went on, "Submit thyself to the Lord, unto the mighty hand of God, and He will do thus and so."

I realized that the matron's hands were the hand of God. I saw something different now, and that night I went back to the school. They always locked the doors at 10:00 o'clock, and it was well after 10:00 when I arrived. The matron's living quarters were right next to the door, so she would answer the bell. I stood there wondering what shall I say. I was scared to ring the bell. I thought, "Maybe I ought to try the door first." So I tried the knob, and it opened. I picked up my suitcases and tiptoed past her door. I went up to my room and unloaded my things, and went to bed.

The next morning, I was down washing dishes. I was gone a whole day, skipped classes, skipped my duty. Not a soul said, "Where were you yesterday?" I do not understand it. The teachers never said, "Why weren't you in class yesterday?" The matron came to the kitchen, but she never said a word. So I went on washing dishes for four weeks. She had said to me, "Young man, you are going to do dishes until you like them."

Four weeks went by and she said, "Walter, I am changing your duty." I said, "Miss Sunder, do not do that, as I like to wash dishes." The Lord dealt with me, and I had to learn to submit along a number of lines.

"Follow Me and I will make you." All through our ministerial life, we will meet situations that we do not agree with, yet we have to submit and make the best of it for the Lord's sake.

Many a preacher got himself out of the will of God because he never learned to submit to that with which he does not agree, so I suggest to you that you re-evaluate your attitude, if need be, in the light of those remarks. In Mark 4:34, the last part of the verse: "And when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples."

I am a strong believer in Christ-centered preparation. I will read my list for you, so you will see what I mean.

Christ-centered preparation:

Called by Him Sent by Him

Made by Him Accompanied by Him

Taught by Him Maintained by Him

Equipped by Him - "When they were alone."

We need to learn to be alone with the Lord. I learned this in Bible school, in 1927. I spent entire evenings in my room alone, waiting in His presence, because studies came easy for me. Instead, I spent hours and hours to be with Him. I love to spend time with the Lord. Many, many times on a long flight while they show movies, I sit there waiting on the Lord.

Many times the Lord calls me aside. When I say call, I do not mean that I hear the sound of a trumpet, but just an inner drawing in which I know that I must be alone. I cannot image true ministry apart from having learned to be alone with the Lord, and let Him expound the riches of His word.

Last summer I was in Bangkok. I was walking to the Siam Hotel for lunch because I did not particularly care for the place that I stayed. Thai Airways had put me in the Asia Hotel, and while it is a first-class hotel by Asian standards, I was not particularly fond of it. So I went over to the Siam.

On the way, I found a lotus flower. It was still closed, and I took it with me and looked on the inside, what beautiful colors. Finally, I took it apart as I wanted to see deep within, so I cut it in two. The Lord, when we are alone with Him, takes Scriptures: First you see only the outside, the words. Then He begins to open things up and oh, what truths. This is what we need, so we can speak, not merely from information that we have acquired by the usual processes of acquiring information, but we get things from the Lord by revelation, when He expounds the Scriptures to us.

I want to take you to the secret of the ministry of Jesus. "The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isaiah 50:4). I like the Revised Version, as it says, "that I should know how to sustain with a word him that is weary." I like this word "sustain." People are weary of religion, and want to hear from God. The Lord wants us to be able to speak to the condition in which people are, without knowing their condition.

I love a statement from Daniel 5:12. There, it says that Daniel had the ability to do this. The Aramaic reads, "the dissolving of knots." I have often said, "Lord, give me the ministry of dissolving knots." People have problems that defy explanation and solution. They need to hear from God. Once, our little girl put on

her shoes. She was real small and they did not go on right. Finally, Mother said, "Let me help you." She responded, "No, I can knot it myself." She knotted it all right, as when it came to take the shoes off, she could not get them off, so she said, "Mummy, will you please unknot my knot."

There is a ministry of unknotting knots, a ministry of solving problems in peoples lives, unknotting their knots by the ministry of the Spirit, so they can say, "Brother, I did not know what to do, but I listened to you. Now, I have the answer." We need not merely to speak to people's ears, but to their needs, as they sit there, crying for help.

Once I received a letter from Tokyo, "Brother Beuttler, will you come for a week. We would like you to engage in a debate with a Japanese philosopher on the existence of God." I wrote back, "No. In the first place, you overrate my capabilities. I am not the man for anything like that. If you want me to come and share with you what God has shared with me, I will be pleased to come."

They wrote back and said, "You come and share with us what God has shared with you." I went several times. They said, "We are so glad because you have spoken to us the very thing that we needed most."

"The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned..." The Father taught Jesus when to speak - "in season." "To him that is weary" - to whom to speak, "A word" - what to speak. All this came from the Holy Spirit. But now comes the secret: "He wakens morning by morning; He wakens My ear to hear as the learned."

Jesus did not preach these marvelous truths because He was the Son of God. He had these things because He was taught by the Father. The secret of Jesus' ministry did not lie in His deity, but in the fullness of the Spirit. He said, "The words that I speak to you are not mine, but the Father's which sent Me. I can do nothing of Myself."

Here is the secret, "He wakens morning by morning; He wakens My ear to hear as the learned." Jesus said in John, "As the Father has taught Me, I speak these things." For me, this class began early in the morning. The Lord would awaken me every morning on the dot at 2:30. I was up for a half an hour to two hours. Sometimes, I would be up the rest of the night, as the Lord expounded His Word.

I wondered why at 2:30, and asked the Lord. Finally it came, "Because by 2:30 you have had enough rest to stay up with Me while I am visiting you, and then there is time left to go back to bed and get more rest for the work of the day." I am a strong believer in being up with the Lord early, to sit in His Presence with His Word.

We need to be sent by the Lord. I had no home. My home was in Germany and I was here, alone. When graduation day came, I did not know where to go. A few weeks before graduation, a student said, "Walter, where are you going to go after you graduate? What are you going to do?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "What do you know?" I said, "Well, I guess I don't know anything." And I'll never forget that scene. I sat on my cot and he said, "I am glad I am not like you. My father is the superintendent and he will give a large church to me."

I sat there, head in my hands and thought, "I guess I am in a fix. I do not know where to go." Then I dropped on my knees. Now I pray differently from the way most people pray. I do not make ecclesiastical prayers. "Father, did You hear what He said?" He caused me to know that He heard, and that He would be my superintendent and make a way for me. I was thrilled.

Just before graduation a letter came from a pastor on Long Island. "Dear Brother Beuttler, If you do not know what to do or where to go after graduation, come to Long Island for a week of Bible studies." I did not know what else to do, so I went. Before we were finished the pastor said, "Could you stay another week?" "Yes, I could stay." So I stayed another week. In the meantime, a preacher came to attend the second week and said, "Brother Beuttler, what are you doing next week?" "I am not doing anything." "Could you come to my church?" he asked. "Yes, I could come." So I went. Before the week was up, he said, "Could you stay a second week?" "Yes, I can stay a second week."

That second week another pastor walked in and toward the end said, "Brother Beuttler, what are you doing next week?" "I am not doing anything." "Could you come to my church?" This was in 1931, and to this day, I have never been without an open door. My feet have stood in more than 100 countries, some of them often (like France).

I am going to close with another incident. The time came when I was a pastor of a small group. Well, I was there for a short time and the Lord impressed me that it was time to leave. So I resigned. My wife and I did not know where to go, as I just knew that the Lord wanted me to leave. Since we were acquainted with the city of Elizabeth, New Jersey, we thought we would go there and rent a furnished room. We had very little money, so we rented a cheap room, unheated, in the winter, as we could not afford anything better.

We decided, "We are going to spend a week in prayer." Because it was so cold, we took the blankets from the bed, put them over the kitchen table, then sat under the kitchen table to do our praying. That way, we kept the heat in a little bit, not heat, but at least it was more comfortable. We were there for three days or so, and there was a knock at the door. Here was a strange man. He said, "Are you Brother Beuttler?" I said, "Yes."

He said, "The church has sent me. We are without a pastor and need somebody to lead our prayer meeting on Thursday night. Someone told us that you lived here and we wondered whether you could come and teach us." I said, "Yes, I could. I see no reason why not." "All right Brother Beuttler, we will look for you on Thursday."

On Thursday, Wife and I went. The Lord gave me a message and they liked it and said, "Brother Beuttler, we have a pastor, but he is in British Columbia, he cannot get here right away, but we need somebody to take the services until he comes. Could you take our services on Sunday and teach Sunday school?" I said, "Yes I could," and I was there.

At Sunday school, the Lord gave me such an anointing. After Sunday school, I came out and two of the deacons walked behind me. I heard one say, "That young fellow gave us a feast, didn't he?" I believe the Lord let me hear it for my encouragement. Do you remember Gideon when he was in the tent and he overheard some men say something that showed Gideon that God was with him?

I had the services and the Lord blessed. That night they said, "Brother Beuttler, could you move into the parsonage until the man comes to take all of our meetings?" So, we moved into the parsonage. After a few weeks a telegram came from British Columbia, "We are now on our way and expect to assume our pastoral duties in one week."

The chairman said, "Brother Beuttler, it looks like your time is up, but I have to tell you something. The people believe they made a mistake. You should be the pastor. They wished they had not called the other man." I said, "Well, there's nothing you can do about it. When he comes, I will be leaving." He said to me,

"Let's pray about it."

So we prayed. I knelt, he prayed. While he prayed, the Lord spoke to me, "Behold I have set before you an open door and no man can shut it." I knew I was going to be the pastor, evangelist or no evangelist. I told no one but my wife. I said, "Elizabeth, we are going to keep as quiet as a mouse. The Lord has to work this out."

A few days went by and there came a telegram, "We were on our way, but have had an automobile accident. We are not hurt, but the car is badly damaged. Could we delay our arrival until the car is repaired?" So they wired back and said, "Yes, you may delay your arrival until the car is repaired." Maybe two weeks went by and a telegram came, "The car is now repaired, but we started evangelistic services. The Lord is saving and baptizing souls and we would like to continue the campaign. Could we delay our arrival some more?" They said, "Brother Beuttler, could you stay?" I said, "Yes, I can stay." To make a long story short, we stayed in Elizabeth for several years and pastored this church.

Our Lord will be faithful to us, when we are faithful to Him, and put Him first.

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