

Dear Phil

to love God and others and how everything in the Bible relates to these two commands?

- show unbelievers from Scripture what the Bible teaches about homosexuality and abortion?
- explain to your children what the Bible teaches about how Christians should relate to their culture?
- help new converts understand what the Bible teaches about entertainment, dating and marriage, rearing godly children, wearing gender-distinct clothing, modesty in dress, adornment, and other disputed lifestyle issues?

NO CALL TO THE MINISTRY?

*I'm not called to the ministry, so why should I go to Bible college?  
—A student not planning to go to Bible college*

Dear Student-not-planning-to-go-to-Bible-college,

Let me shoot straight with you. The best I can tell, the last three or four generations of the holiness movement—conservative or otherwise—have almost completely quit obeying Jesus' last command: *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28:19-20).* Are you obeying this command?

Further, most Christians live as though they believe that Matt. 28:19-20 is the responsibility only of pastors and missionaries. What's even worse, our pastors and missionaries have forgotten or don't know that the primary reason God gave them to the church, according to Eph. 4:11-12, is to equip all Christians for "the work of the ministry, for the edification of the Body of Christ."

If I understand Jesus and Paul correctly, *there is no such thing as a Christian who does not have a call to ministry.* And no, I'm not playing games with words! Every single believer, regardless of talents, abilities, or lack thereof, has a responsibility to be involved in the ministry of discipleship. Young person, par-

ent, older person, if you claim that Jesus is your Lord, how can you live as if He has not commanded you to give your life to the ministry of discipleship? You either ought to be in the process of being disciplined yourself, or you should be involved in discipling others and teaching them all things that Jesus taught us.

So, let me ask you and any other students who think they don't have a "call" and aren't planning to go to Bible college: Are you equipped to—

- lead an unchurched person to saving faith in Jesus? (*Unchurched* means you can't use the church clichés you grew up with because they won't know what you're talking about.)
- disciple a new convert from spiritual babyhood to spiritual maturity?
- explain what the Bible teaches about entire sanctification—what it does and doesn't do for a person?
- teach the difference between a performance model of salvation and a Biblical relationship model?
- refute from Scripture the doctrine of "once saved, always saved," or the teaching that all Christians sin every day in word, thought, and deed?
- confute the teaching of the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons who show up on your front porch?
- teach fellow believers what it means

If you are not presently equipped to do even one third of the items I mentioned, then you are not yet equipped to fulfill the calling Jesus has placed upon your life. Jesus' call to service is also a call to preparation for service.

"But if I go to Bible college, I'll be behind in getting my education."

Jesus spent the first 30 years of his life getting prepared for his 3.5 years of ministry, and you're telling me that an extra year in college is too much to sacrifice? How does that thinking reflect a Kingdom-first set of priorities? My brother, Nathan, a mechanical engineer, would tell you that one of the most valuable things he ever did was spend one year in Bible college, taking all the Bible classes he could before he went to the University of Alabama. That one year's training equipped him to serve effectively as a solid Sunday school teacher, board member, and occasional preacher. He prepared to minister because every believer is called to the ministry of discipleship.

So, are you going to obey Jesus' command or not?

PHILIP 📌

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