



Highlighting Our Heritage

WEEK 10

Life Application: Identifying God's individual call on our lives and responding in obedience to the task God has assigned to us.

Key verse for meditation: I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. — Revelation 3:8

For personal study: Genesis 12:1-8; Acts 8:26-40

God's Call

God's Way

AFTER I RECEIVED my spiritual experiences, I still had my own plans for my life. However, I had a cousin, George Hughes, whose main topic of conversation was consecration. Again and again he would tell my brothers and sisters and me, "Give your life to the Lord. Let Him choose everything you do." A hunger for God filled my heart. However, I was afraid if I

completely surrendered to Him, my own plans might never materialize. My desires were not sinful, but they were not God's plan for me. I would begin to surrender and then draw back. That battle warred inside me for over a year.

Finally, one Sunday I knew I had to make a decision. The conflict raged between my ambitions and the deep feeling within my heart that I must surrender my will to God's will. I found a place to be alone with God and there He showed me two paths. One was sunny and sheltered by trees, had lovely homes and children playing, and the Lord stood at the end of it. The other path was rutted and unprotected and hard, and the Lord stood at the end of that

path also. I realized I could have my ambitions and still make Heaven, but I also knew that the Lord wanted me to take the difficult path.

I wondered if I could ever live my life God's way. Then He reminded me of the verses in Luke 18:29-30, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Weeping, I told the Lord I would lay down all my plans and follow Him whatever the cost. The decision came from the depths of my heart.

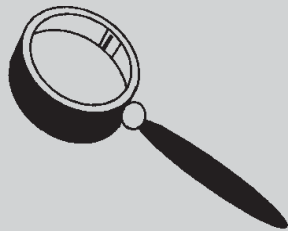


Ruth Ashwell at her desk in the office at Sixth and Burnside.

The path God chose for me far surpassed any dreams I ever had. Not long after, I began working at the headquarters office. That meant sacrificing the salary I could have made elsewhere and living by faith. I was afraid, but God helped me to trust Him. That was over sixty years ago, and I have had a wonderful life serving Him. I have never been sorry I answered His call.

Historical Context: A short time after Florence Crawford’s visit to Portland at the end of 1906, the pastor of the group meeting in the blacksmith shop offered to turn his church over to Florence Crawford. It would be her church—the church that would become the Apostolic Faith Mission of Portland, Oregon. During a Gospel outreach trip to Minneapolis, God spoke to her, saying, “If you will go back to Portland, Oregon, and stay there, I will make that place the headquarters of the Apostolic Faith work, and I will raise up the standard of the Gospel in that city.” God’s plan was unmistakable, and in 1908, Florence Crawford gave up her home in Los Angeles and moved to Portland.

A Closer Look . . .



- 1.** What is the difference between the call to salvation and the call to service?
- 2.** How can we prepare ourselves to answer God’s call?
- 3.** What things might hinder us from hearing or responding to God’s call?
- 4.** Why doesn’t God always show us His full plan at the time of our call?

Challenge: Think of someone you know who has been called to a particular area of service in the Gospel work. Write them a note expressing your appreciation.

Florence Crawford’s Call

Brother Ray Crawford gives this account of his mother’s call: “One morning, when the thousands in that great city [Los Angeles] were stirring themselves from their slumber to take up their daily routine, a definite call came to her. Distinctly she heard these words: ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.’ Though she did not know how she could ever reach the whole world with the Gospel message, she began to consecrate and make preparations to fulfill her responsibility. Everything seemed to be against her leaving Los Angeles at that time. The minister at the Azusa Street church did not see how he could spare her from their meetings; but she remarked that if God was truly calling her, He would make the fact plain.

“One day, as she sat meditating on her call, it seemed that a door opened before her, revealing the radiant light of Heaven. God spoke to her, saying: ‘I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.’ She immediately responded: ‘I will go, God, I will walk through that open door.’ Years later she remarked, ‘I didn’t know what suffering, heartache, and reproach would follow my answering that call, but I had said that I would go, and I kept my word.’”