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When the snow piles up in your driveway, who ya gonna call?

When the electricity goes off during a snowstorm, who ya gonna call?

When the water pipes freeze and you have no water, who ya gonna call?

Whenever you decide to call someone for help, I imagine you want someone well qualified, someone who won't argue with you or feel as though they can't get the job done.

For example, a friend once told me she hired someone to replace her windows. When he put in one window upside down, she asked him to fix the problem. His response was, "You'll get used to it." Needless to say, she found someone else for the rest of the job.

Have you ever stopped to think about the odd cast of characters throughout the Bible that God called? When seeing the slavery in Egypt thousands of years ago, I imagine the angels asking God, "Who ya gonna call?" Imagine their surprise at God's choice of Moses who lived in the Pharaoh's court.

When Moses saw an Egyptian beating a slave, Moses killed the cruel guard and then ran. Moses ran into the wilderness to escape and hide. Years later God called this Moses to help the slaves escape from the Pharaoh. Rather than saying, "Yes, Lord," Moses offered four excuses why he wasn't the right guy. Would you call someone who gave you four excuses why he's not the right person for the job? God did, and Moses helped the people escape from slavery.

What about Ruth—a outsider woman who just arrived in town and picked leftover grain from the fields to feed herself. Would you pick her as your new wife? Boaz did, and from their descendants came King David and eventually Jesus.

Remember the prophet Jeremiah who thought he was too young—just a boy—to be of any help to God? Would you call someone who said he was too young to help? God did.

Even Jesus' disciples seemed to be rag-tag group of followers. Would you call Matthew, a despised tax collector? Would you call an impatient Peter who later denied knowing Jesus? Would you

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call Judas who led soldiers to Jesus in the garden as he prayed? God did.

And what about Saul, later called Paul, who had been hunting down Christians and killing them? Why would God call such an unlikely person to write most of the letters in our New Testament?

How about calling a man to be an early church leader who:

lived the lifestyle of the rich and famous. Born into wealth and privilege, he was a notorious party animal. He lived a life of selfish ease. Much to the dismay of his mother, an upstanding Christian, he haunted the low-life dives of the city. He kept company with disreputable characters. He had a son by his live-in girlfriend and made no move to marry her.¹

How is it that God could shine some light into this man's life to see another way to live? You may have heard of this early church leader, Augustine, who wrote about his life in his *Confessions* to document how God turned around his life.

And then we have the scripture from Isaiah, another reluctant follower of God who experienced

God's awesome presence, along with mysterious winged creatures and a smoke-filled room that would be the envy of any special effects director. "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips." Is this the kind of person you would call—a reluctant person who admits he has unclean lips—a sinner!?

That seems to be the cast of characters that God calls over and over again. The reluctant. The ones with excuses. The imperfect ones with lots of flaws. People like you and me.

Even today, God seems to invite unlikely people to bring hope to the world, as was the case with Emily and her friend.

Emily grew up as an overachiever in an affluent community. Her parents gave her high expectations for success, but no personal faith. But then, at the age of 19, she experienced chronic health problems and her life became unglued. Talking to a friend of hers who had always had to struggle academically, Emily asked her how she coped with disappointed expectations. Her friend replied that she knew she was a child of God and that was all that mattered. She was loved.

Emily found that response different from anything she had heard before. It set her on a journey of spiritual discovery that ultimately led to her becoming a Christian and later being ordained as a Presbyterian minister. She is now a chaplain at a children's hospital.

Emily's friend had no idea that her casual comment about her relationship to God would have such an impact on the life of another.²

You may not even have an awareness of the impact you make on the lives of those around you. Maybe someone is watching how you live your life and finds hope while watching you cope with a difficult situation. Maybe a word of kindness inspires someone to keep living in the midst of a difficult life. Maybe a smile encourages someone to get through one more challenging day. Maybe God even calls you in ways that make a difference in the world. As writer Richard Rohr explains:

When God chooses someone in the Bible, the standard opening line is "Do not be afraid"

(Genesis 15:1), and the final line usually includes the promise "I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12).

Being chosen doesn't mean that God likes one over another or finds some better than others. *Almost always*, in fact, those chosen are quite flawed or at least ordinary people...

*The paradox is that God's chosenness is for the sake of communicating chosenness to everybody else!...We can only transform people to the degree that we have been transformed...We have no ability to affirm or to communicate to another person that they are good or special until we know it strongly ourselves...Only beloved people can pass on belovedness.*³

Have you discovered that *you* are beloved? Maybe God has even called you, in the midst of your struggles, on the difficult days, when life seems broken. From what God has offered you, maybe God hopes you might offer the same grace and hope to those around you. When the angels ask God, "Who ya gonna call?" the answer just might be you.

¹ Homiletics, 2/6/22.

² Homiletics, 2/6/22.

³ <https://cac.org/god-is-always-choosing-people-2021-07-02/>