

When the Lord initiates a transfer of spiritual leadership, there are four primary considerations: calling; competence; confidence; and character.

1 Kings 19:21c: “Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.”

- Grammatical Usage: “**assisted him**” or in the Hebrew, “sharath” meaning, “servant.”
- Literal Interpretation: Then he arose and went after Elijah and became his servant.
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word, God continually uses His Word. The story of Elisha’s call contains a guidance for those who would be servants of God (some of which we considered in our series on Elijah):

1. ELISHA WAS AN UNLIKELY PERSON FOR GOD TO CALL TO SERVICE

Vv. 19 tell us who he was and what he was doing when God’s call came to him. Elijah’s successor was a ploughman. An unlikely successor? – many proved unlikely: Moses (**Exodus 3:1**); Gideon (**Judges 6:11**); David (**Psalms 78:70**); Amos (**Amos 7:14**) and compare **1 Corinthians 1:26-29**. The truth that God’s call comes unexpectedly and to unlikely people is illustrated throughout the Bible and in every generation.

2. ELISHA’S CALL WAS CLEAR, DEFINITE AND UNMISTAKABLE

God is the director of all His work. He chooses and commissions men and women for His service, and He does this definitely and clearly (**Matthew 9:38**; and compare **Acts 13:1-4** where these men whom God wanted for missionary service were called by name so there could be no mistake about His plan and purpose for them). Often, however, the call comes indirectly, as in the case of Elisha who received his commission through Elijah.

3. ELISHA RECEIVED HIS CALL WHILE HE WAS FAITHFULLY WORKING

Was he unsettled in his work and longing to get into “full-time service”? We do not know; but we do know he was faithfully doing his present job when he was called. This should be the attitude of all who are looking to the Lord to guide them into fuller service for Him. If you are praying to Him to lead you into missionary service, pastoral work...let me ask you: Are you doing your present job as unto Him? Are you punctual, conscientious, respectful and co-operative? You are in God’s school, so make the most of this training time.

4. ELISHA DID NOT ENTER GOD’S SERVICE UNTIL HE HAD CALLED HIM

Only when he was absolutely sure of God’s call did he leave his plough and his family and follow Elijah in obedience to the Lord. What constitutes the call of God to special service?

A. God’s calling on your life first is to a restored relationship followed by a close fellowship with God (**John 1:12**; **John 15:14-15**).

- B. God has a special and unique purpose, plan and calling on your life (Jeremiah 29:11-13; **Psalm 25:12; Ephesians 2:10**).
- C. God places a desire and a passion in our hearts to do the things He calls us to do (**Philippians 2:13**).
- D. God gives spiritual gifts to equip you for His calling on your life (**1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 14:23**).
- E. God's presence and power will always be with you when He calls you (**John 14:16-18; Acts 1:8**).

The call of God is that deep, inward conviction, accompanied by peace in the heart and confirmed by the Word of God.

5. ELISHA WAS CALLED TO A MOST DIFFICULT JOB

God's call always is to a difficult task – compare **vv. 16-17**. Could it have been easy for Elisha to slay those who escaped from the sword of Jehu? Could it have been easy to be Elijah's assistant for nine years? Once we respond to God's call we become involved in a spiritual warfare and are special targets for the Devil – look up **Ephesians 6:12**. We therefore need two special qualifications: stability and stickability.

6. ELISHA NOT ONLY RECEIVED GOD'S CALL BUT IS EQUIPPED

Elijah's mantle, cast upon Elisha, was the symbol of a holy anointing from the Lord – see **v. 19**. When God calls to His service He always equips – look up Gideon (**Judges 6:11-14**); Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 1:3-10**); the Lord Jesus (**Matthew 3:16**); the disciples (**Luke 24:49; Acts 2:4** – compare **Acts 13:1-4**), and notice the promise made to each one of us – **Acts 1:8**: “**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**” All God's commands are God's enablings, and in **2 Kings 2:9-13** we see how conscious Elisha was of his need for spiritual enduement in order to accomplish God's purpose through his ministry.

7. ELISHA RESPONDED WITH A WHOLEHEARTED SURRENDER

God's call to him was confirmed by the placing of Elijah's mantle upon him, and **vv. 20-21** tell us how Elisha responded. How should we respond to the call of God?

1. With a Holy Urgency. Compare the first nine words of **v. 20** with **Acts 8:29-30**.
2. With a Holy Determination. Compare **vv. 20-21** with **Luke 9:61** – but do not confuse Elisha with the man to whom our Lord spoke. Elisha went home to say goodbye; he was quite prepared to leave his loved ones, his home and his all to do the Lord's will. Every servant of the Lord must likewise be willing and ready for anything – see **v. 21**, where we read of his public farewell and the complete renunciation of the old life, even to the burning of some of his ploughs. This was symbolic of his wholehearted surrender to the Lord.
3. With a Holy Devotion. Read the great words at the end of **v. 21** – and compare **Luke 5:10-11**.

➤ Conclusion: When God calls...and He will...how will I respond?