



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: LESSON 155

**Internal call** – There is also another type of call, the second aspect of calling, which in theology is known as the internal call. This is closely connected to the external call, for it is the same message of salvation heard by sinners in the external call, however, it is made effective by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the elect. Thus, this call is also referred to as the effectual call (Isaiah 55:10-11; Hebrews 4:12).

In John 10 Jesus presents a great imagery of the Shepherd and His sheep, where God's sheep are known by God the good Shepherd "by name," and He calls them, and they hear His voice and follow Him, and He leads them out (vv. 3-4; 27-28). This is the meaning of being elect (eklektos), the ones who are called out of the world. In Genesis 1 the phrase "And God said, "Let there be ...,"" is repeated nine times, and each time God's desired purpose is accomplished. The universe came to be by the word of God, by a divine decree or command. God didn't invite or persuade the world into being, rather He commanded or called it into being, and it happened exactly as planned (Psalm 33:6, 9). We see the same power when Christ raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43-44). There was no persuasion, nor was there any hesitation. God spoke and the dead was made alive. God's call was effectual.

As the universe was created out of nothing, and as Lazarus was quickened from death, so the same is true with respect to the salvation of sinners (Romans 1:16; 4:17). The external call of the gospel is an offense and foolishness to those who are not called; but to those who are called, the external call is made effective by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and thus they will unfailingly respond in faith. For such Christ crucified is the greatest, most marvelous power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

Of course the majority view in the Evangelical church is opposed to the above view, as they do not distinguish between an external and internal call, but rather affirm that God provides sufficient grace to all sinners, which makes it possible for them all to respond to God's call in faith. Some accept God's invitation while others reject it. But such a view denies the full reality and implication of humanity's fallen condition. The Bible teaches that as a result of the Fall human beings are born spiritually and morally deformed (total depravity of man). The Fall has polluted the whole man, in body, spirit, mind, heart, emotions and will. Fallen man has nothing spiritually or morally good in him (Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Numbers 15:38-39; Jeremiah 17:9), but is a slave of sin and an enemy of God (John 5:42; 8:32-34; Romans 5:10; 6:20; Ephesians 2:1-3). Fallen man is unable to do anything spiritually good (Matthew 7:17-18; Romans 3:10-18; 8:7; John 6:44; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Hebrews 11:6). Fallen man is also unwilling to do anything spiritually good (Proverbs 21:10; Romans 8:5-7; Ephesians 2:1-3; Titus 3:3).

In order for man to respond to the call of God a radical change must first take place in his nature, in his core, in his heart. In John 3:3 Jesus told Nicodemus that something must happen before a person can see the kingdom of God, and unless that happens he cannot have eternal life. The "unless" is a universally necessary condition, and that condition is not faith or repentance but being born again.

**Regeneration** – By virtue of the internal call, the Holy Spirit penetrates into the core of sinful man, and performs a supernatural work of changing his nature, raising him from spiritual death to life. This operation of the Holy Spirit is known as the work of regeneration, where a spiritually dead person is spiritually born again; where the heart of stone is transformed into a heart of flesh; where the mind is enlightened, and the will renewed. The internal or effectual call of the Holy Spirit is thus synonymous with the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, which is accomplished through the proclamation of the Word of God (John 6:63; Acts 13:48; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23). Those whom the Holy Spirit regenerates become new creations, and with their natures changed they are now inclined toward and desirous of God, and enabled to answer His call, and thus respond in faith (Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:25-27; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 5:17; Ephesians 2:1, 4-5).