

What is a Calling?

It is their first anniversary. It should be a time of excitement about the future. Instead, for Maggie and Bill Townsend, the time is of one of disappointment and uncertainty. In the previous year, the Townsends had completed training for foreign missions work with a large missionary organization. They have spent time in Dallas, Texas, attempting to raise the necessary funds for their projected living expenses during their time in the missions field. After extensive effort, they both came to realize that they were not going to be able to raise the required funds.

Maggie and Bill had felt strongly that foreign missions were their calling for this stage in their lives. After making Ephesians 2:10 an important foundation for their life, they had been convinced that such a commitment on their part was that “which God prepared in advance for (us) to do.” The recent financial setback has had such a profound effect on both of them that they are both now questioning what their future in the Christian body will be.

The Townsends met in college and married their senior year. Both of them came from strong Christian backgrounds. Maggie had grown up in rural Midwest. She had been active in youth groups in her local church, and her parents were strong supporters of sponsoring missionary work both locally and beyond their small community. Their support brought many missionaries into Maggie’s house over the years. In contrast, Bill was brought up in a family that moved a lot to meet the demands of his father’s work. While never a part of a specific church for very long, Bill’s family had always been active in the church where they lived at the time. Furthermore, his background of frequently moving had prepared him for living in a variety of environments. Both Maggie and Bill felt real excitement about the possibility of going into missionary work long before meeting in college.

They met first as members of one of the Christian groups sponsored by local churches on the college campus. Due, at least in part, to their Christian backgrounds, Bible study became a focal point early on in their friendship. Both Maggie and Bill immediately felt an attraction for each other, not only personally but also for their respective faith walks. Interestingly, it had been an important goal for both of them to ultimately fall in love with and hopefully marry another believer. Additionally, their college experience cemented their desires to share their faith with others. In college, they played an active role in witnessing to other college students and participated in several short term missions projects. Both exhibited a real talent for relating to others, whatever their circumstances, as well as for providing help and assurance to others when it was needed. The cumulative effect of this growing relationship between Maggie and Bill was a recognition that they worked very well as a team while witnessing to others.

Coming out of college, the Townsends were impressed with the long-term foreign missions program offered through a large campus ministry organization. They were particularly interested in long-term mission efforts because they wanted to make an impact on peoples' lives, regardless of where they were sent. In such an extended period of time, they would be able to not only learn the language and culture of the country they were witnessing to, but they would also be able to make more significant commitments to people's lives. Furthermore, both Maggie and Bill felt they had the backgrounds and personalities, coupled with their experiences in college, which would be effective in the mission field. This left the only major hurdle for them to experience their long term dream, which was to raise the necessary funds to not only cover their living expenses but also those of their outreach efforts. It was instilled in them by the foreign missions organization that sponsors could/would not only provide the necessary funds but would also create a body of praying partners in their effort.

Maggie recently called you to help provide some needed insight into their current situation. Maggie confesses to you, "I am very concerned not only for our faith but ultimately our marriage, which has been heavily grounded in the dream of doing missionary together."

She wants you to meet with her and Bill, because you have recently focused their young people's Bible study on personal accountability. They both realize that living the Christian life will experience its share of disappointments. She really wants you to return with them to the scriptures to provide the Biblical insight for their current situation and to help them discern what God may have for them in the future.

ASSIGNMENT

Provide Biblical based advice to the Townsends in their search for meaning in their lives following their disappointment.

My Scriptural Research:

Group Scriptural Research:

Decisions / Recommendations:

Primary Scriptural References: