

ULTIMATE UPGRADE: WHO'S CALLING?? HEARING GOD'S CALL ABOVE THEM ALL

Caller ID & Call Waiting are great things- they allow you to see who's calling & decide who you want to talk to at any given time. If you recognize the name/number & want to talk to them, you pick up. But if you don't, you simply refuse the call or put them on hold. Caller ID technology started to develop in the late 1960s; but it wasn't until the late 1980s that it became a common feature for home phones. In 1995, 'Call Waiting' technology allowed you to receive multiple calls at one & decide which one you wanted to take & which you wanted to put "on hold." So it's basically been 20 years since people had the choice to see who's calling & decide who they wanted to talk to at any time. Of course, these are common features with every phone nowadays.

So the big question is who's calling you & why are they calling? I can look at my phone log & tell you the answers pretty quickly. It's mostly friends: Jason, Larry, Mike, Earl... calling about events, ministries, little problems, get well messages, stuff like that. If I'm not busy, I try to take these calls. Sometimes I get calls from my boss (Randy B) or my wife (Katie); I always try to answer these calls. Then there are the "Unknown Callers" or the robo calls from California that mask themselves as local calls. Sometimes I pick up (by mistake) other times, I ignore these often nefarious scam calls. I'm sure that in general, you're about the same in your calls.

There used to be a really cheesy TV game show called "Dialing For Dollars". You'd fill out a form, send it to the TV station, then they'd randomly pick a number & call it. If it was your number, you had to pick up the phone & answer to get the prize. But if you didn't pick up & answer after a certain number of rings, you wouldn't win & they'd pick a new number to call for the prize. So what there was a world-wide mega "Dialing For Dollars" with the prize being \$1trillion! If you got called by the show & "Dialing For Dollars" showed up on your caller ID screen, what would you do? You'd surely take the call & wouldn't put them on call waiting.

Here's the truth, what God offers through Jesus Christ is far, far greater than \$1 trillion. We will all die someday & we all leave this world with the same thing we came into it with: NOTHING. You see, you can't take anything with you in death: accomplishments, money, possessions, good-looks, experiences, trophies, awards, you can't take people with you either when you die. God says that if you trust in my Son Jesus Christ for the payment for your sins, YOU WILL INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE! Is eternal life in paradise with God & His people worth more than \$1trillion? And beyond eternal life, God is saying I will give you freedom from the sins (bad behaviors) that are destroying you. He promises to replace this destructive sin with peace, joy & contentment that defy all human explanation.

You see God is calling each & every human being on this planet and that's why you're really here tonight. God is calling you:

1.) Though His creation (Ps 19:1; Rom 1:20); 2.) through circumstances & experiences-both good & bad (Ps 25:8-9); 3.) through godly, wise people in your life (Heb 12:1), & 4.) through His Son Jesus Christ, His Spirit & His Word (Mk 4:23-24a).

God is calling, but are we hearing His voice? Are we too distracted, too busy, too mind-numbed to hear from God? God's word says Satan has blinded many (2Cor 4:4); has Satan also deafened many?

God is calling & He's telling us that this world is crashing down (1Jn 2:17) & Jesus Christ is the only way to escape (Jn 14:6; Jn 11:25-26). In the Parable of the Great Feast, Jesus concluded by saying, "Many are called, but few are chosen." (Mt 22:14)

So tonight, I can tell you with complete confidence that God is calling you. He's inviting you to new life, eternal life- greater than any worldly lottery prize. But are you looking at the Caller ID & saying "Not now, I don't want to take that call from God right now?" Please don't refuse the call of God. It's the most important call you'll ever receive & you might not get another chance. Hit "Call Back", Seek God now, call out to Him while you still can (Mt 6:33).

Key Verses

Ps 19:1 The heavens keep telling the wonders of God, and the skies declare what he has done.

Rom 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Ps 25:8-9 The LORD is good & right; He points sinners to the right way. He shows those who are humble how to do right, & He teaches them His ways.

Heb 12:1 We are surrounded by a great cloud of people whose lives tell us what faith [in God] means. So let us run the race that is before us & never give up. We should remove from our lives anything that would get in the way and the sin that so easily holds us back [from Him].

Mk 4:23-24a [Jesus said] "If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear. Consider carefully what you hear,"

1Jn 2:17 (AMP) The world is passing away, and with it its lusts [the shameful pursuits and ungodly longings]; but the one who does the will of God *and* carries out His purposes lives forever.

Jn 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Jn 14:6(NIV) *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

Mt 6:33 *Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.*

Discussion Questions

1. Do you use the Caller ID and/or Call Waiting functions on your phone? Who calls you the most? Do you refuse some callers & always pick up for others? If so, why?

2. Imagine a Dialing-For-Dollars \$1trillion game. If you knew you'd win the \$, what would you do to *make sure* you picked up that call?

3a. Tonight, Dan said that God is calling every person on this earth thru various means: experiences, people, etc.

 Dan said God calls people thru His Creation. Read Ps 19:1 & Rom 1:20. Has God ever called to you thru His Creation? Explain.

3b. God calls people thru circumstances. Read Ps 25:8-9. Has God ever called out to you via good or bad life experiences? How so?

3c. God uses His people to call out to you. Read Heb 12:1. Has God used godly people to call out to you in your life? Explain.

4. Dan said Satan has blinded & deafened many to God's call. Is that so? How does Satan attempt to block God's call?

5. Read 1Jn 2:17, Jn 11:25-26, Jn 14:6 & Mt 6:33. Dan said God is trying to call every person in this world with a message of eternal Hope in Jesus Christ. If God were to call you tonight on your phone, what do you think He'd say to you?

6. Have you answered God's call in your life to accept Jesus as Lord & Savior? If not, why are you blocking or refusing God's call?

PRAYER: Father God, help us to never block Your call or refuse to hear from You. Help us to resist the deafening lies & distractions of the enemy. I pray for everyone here, that they may all receive Your call of Salvation thru Jesus Christ. Right now, I pray that everyone in this circle accepts Your Son, Jesus Christ as our Savior, so that one day we can all stand before You in Heaven blameless & free from our sin.