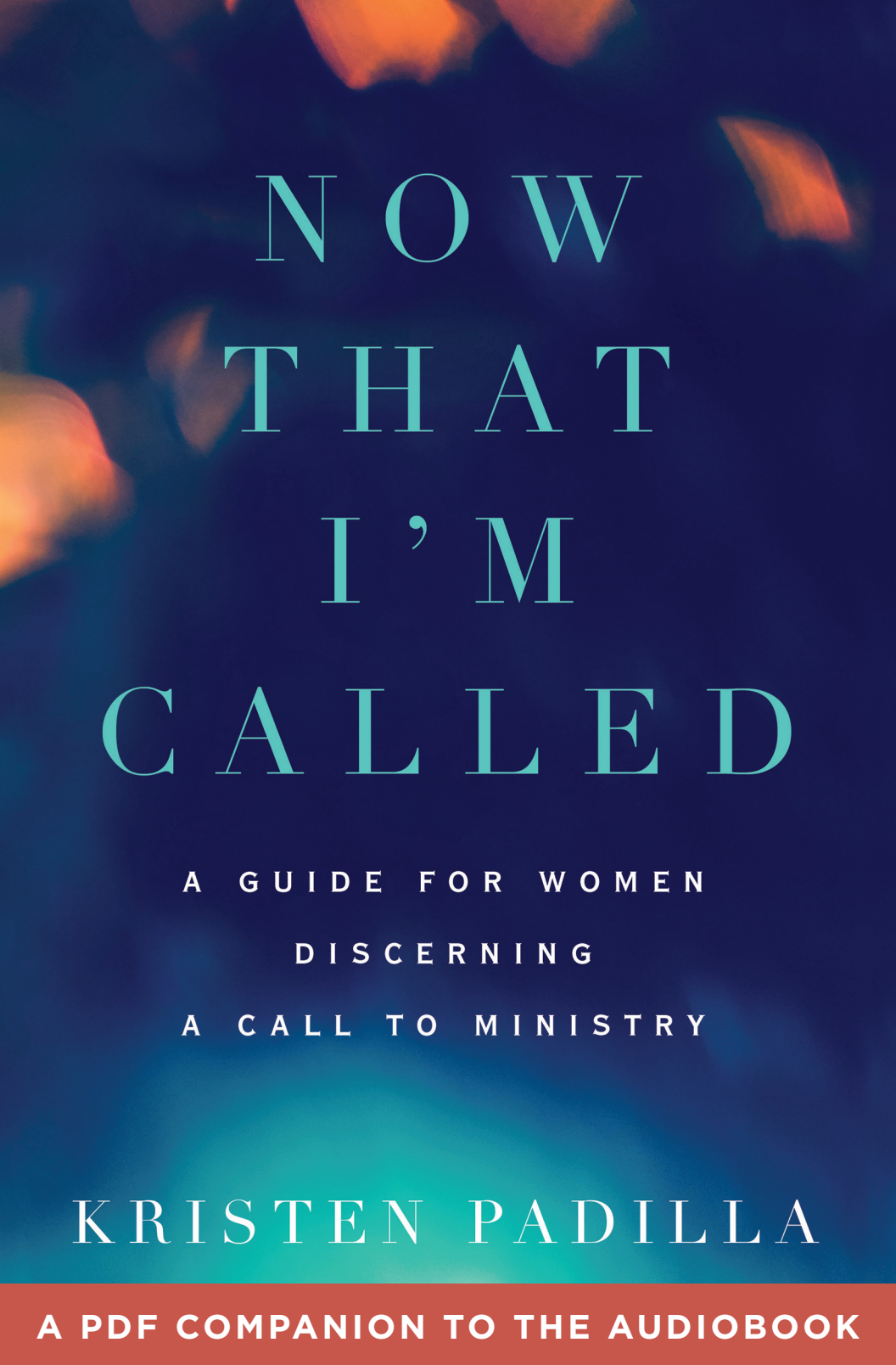




NOW THAT I'M CALLED

A GUIDE FOR WOMEN

DISCERNING

A CALL TO MINISTRY

KRISTEN PADILLA

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

To my husband, Osvaldo, with all my love.

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Now That I'm Called

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INTRODUCTION

GETTING STARTED ON THE JOURNEY OF MINISTRY

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever thought of calling as a long, complex process? Do you agree or disagree with that idea? Does it make you feel discouraged or relieved? Why?
2. Looking at your calling story, the one you wrote down earlier, can you see a pattern of God's faithfulness and affirmation in your life? If so, write down those points of faithfulness and affirmation.
3. What do you fear most in regard to your calling?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I would encourage you to find a mentor who can help guide you in the process of discerning your calling. The following are suggested questions you can ask your mentor.

1. What is your calling story? (Share yours with her.)
2. What wisdom can you give me at the beginning of my calling journey?
3. How do you remain faithful when the calling journey gets tough?

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Write down your calling story, if you haven't already.
2. Read Genesis 12–20. Summarize Abraham's calling story. How did God call Abraham, and to what did he call him? What obstacles did Abraham overcome to remain faithful to God's calling on his life? Now read Hebrews 11:8–19. What is the testimony Scripture gives concerning Abraham?

CHAPTER 1

Calling in the Old Testament

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What additional observations can you make concerning the callings of Moses, Joshua, David, and Jeremiah?
2. What observations about their callings give you comfort as you think about your own calling?
3. All of these individuals faced hardships in their callings. Are you willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel? Why or why not?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Whose calling story in the Old Testament do you identify with the most? Why?
2. When have you felt God's presence as you have pursued God's call?
3. What promises of God have carried you through difficult times?

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Examine your calling within the framework I suggested in the chapter: called to serve on behalf of God, for the people of God, to administer the Word of God. How does your calling fit within this grid?
2. Have you given God excuses for why you are not up to the task? If so, write them down. Are they similar to excuses Moses or Jeremiah gave God? What does Scripture have to say about our excuses?
3. Examine the callings of one or two others in the Old Testament (examples: Abraham, Samuel, Isaiah, Jonah). Write down observations like I did in this chapter. Do you come to any of the same conclusions? Can you make any new observations?
4. Read Hebrews 11. What can we learn in this chapter about the calling and vocational ministry of those people in the Old Testament?
5. Read 1 Peter 1:10–12 and 2 Peter 1:20–21. What more can we learn about the ministry of the prophets from these verses? Notice how often the Spirit is mentioned—not just the Holy Spirit but the Spirit of Christ.

CHAPTER 2

Calling in the New Testament

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What other observations can you make concerning the calling of the disciples, in particular Peter and Paul?
2. Are your observations about these individuals consistent with what we found about people in the Old Testament? If so, how? If not, why?
3. What parts of the discussions about Jesus, Peter, Paul, and Timothy were helpful?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Whose calling story in the New Testament do you identify with most?
2. What might it look like for me to shepherd God's people?
3. What promises of God have carried you through difficult times?
4. Have you ever doubted your call? If so, what Scripture passages helped you confront these doubts?

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Reread and reevaluate the individuals in chapter 1 in light of Jesus' calling. How did they serve as precursors to Jesus' ministry, and how did Jesus surpass them in every role?
2. Write down all the descriptions Paul uses of himself (i.e., servant, co-worker). What do these descriptions teach us about how we are to view ministry?
3. Examine your calling again in light of chapters 1 and 2. How has our exploration of the New Testament strengthened, affirmed, or deepened your understanding of your calling?
4. Spend time in prayer for yourself as you continue to discern and obey God's calling. If you are having doubts, pray that God will continue to confirm his calling or will lead you clearly in a different direction.

CHAPTER 3

The Calling of Women in the Old Testament

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. I began by saying that church and ministry today are much different from what we find in Scripture. How so? Do you think there is a larger vocational space for women to serve in ministry today? Explain. If so, how does that encourage you as you pursue God's call?
2. What do you think of the argument that God calls women only when there are no good men to do the job? Was Craig Keener's explanation to the contrary convincing? Why or why not?
3. What did you learn from the Old Testament women we examined that helps you in your calling and ministry?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is your favorite Old Testament woman and why?
2. What do you think Deborah, Huldah, Abigail, and other Old Testament women have to teach us today?
3. What questions and/or insights do you have from Joel 2:28-29?

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. How have you understood the role of women in Scripture and in ministry up to this point in your life? Put in writing your beliefs or assumptions and any questions you have.
2. Take a look at one or two other Old Testament women called by God for his purposes. Choose one (or more!) and make notes about their calling and purpose in salvation history. Reflect on them in light of the women we discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

The Calling of Women in the New Testament

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What surprised you about Mary? Why is she significant?
2. Look at the women we surveyed in this chapter. What else can we learn about how God calls women to his service? Did I miss anything? Was anything surprising?
3. Did anything change regarding women in ministry from the Old Testament to the New? If so, what? Did you make any additional or different observations?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you approach ministry in light of Joel 2:28–29 and Galatians 3:28? Do you see yourself as a co-worker with men in ministry?
2. What does ministry look like for you as a woman? Challenges? Words of encouragement?
3. Which woman in the New Testament do you relate to the most? How have you been encouraged by how God called and used women in Scripture?

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Describe how these New Testament women help and encourage you in ministry, particularly in male-dominated areas.
2. Mary was afraid of her calling. Write down and discuss with your mentor any fears or stumbling blocks in regard to your calling that you need God's help to overcome.
3. Study a woman in church history whom God used in ministry. Some examples are Perpetua (d. 203), Marcella (325–410), Paula (347–404), Argula von Grumbach (1492–1554), Katharina Schütz Zell (1497/8–1562), Anne Askew (1521–1546), Lottie Moon (1840–1912), and Suzanne de Dietrich (1891–1981).

CHAPTER 5

Does the Bible Restrict the Callings of Women?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. I began this chapter saying that for me, this passage was an obstacle to ministry when I was a freshman in college. Has this passage been an obstacle for you? If so, why? Write out how you understood the passage before and the questions it raised for you. Now, in light of this chapter, is it less of an obstacle? Did this chapter raise other questions for you? If so, what are they? Do you feel confused or comforted? Journal your response.
2. Many scholars believe that our passage, read in light of all of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, teaches that women are to learn, in part and at least, to teach other women. How does this viewpoint encourage you in your own call?
3. What kind of attitude does this passage prompt us to have? Read this passage in light of these Scriptures: Ephesians 5:21, Philippians 2:1–18, Colossians 3:12, and 1 Peter 5:5. What kind of attitude should Christians have? Now write out or think of ways this attitude is important in ministry contexts.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. What do you understand to be the meaning of this passage? Work out questions, explanations, and applications with your mentor. Read commentaries and books on this passage together.
2. What would application of this passage to your ministry look like?

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Read what other people have to say about this passage and on the topic of women in ministry. This chapter is only a brief introduction to or summary of what scholars are saying.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 14:34–35, another passage that seems to restrict women from some ministry areas, in different translations. Write out observations or questions you have. Does this chapter shed any light on any of this passage? If so, how?

CHAPTER 6

What Are Spiritual Gifts?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. If spiritual gifts are not gender-based but given freely and equally to both men and women, how does this shed light on your understanding of what it means to be called to ministry?
2. Sometimes we might be tempted to use spiritual gifts to promote ourselves or to give us a bigger platform. What's the purpose of spiritual gifts? Where might you be tempted?
3. What connection do you see between our definition of calling and the spiritual gifts given to leaders of the people of God? Anything new or surprising?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What spiritual gifts do you see in me? Why?
2. Have you struggled with matching a role or position to your gifts? How do you compensate in a job that might require a gift you do not have?
3. Do you think God still gives the gift of prophecy today? Discuss this part of the chapter.

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Read Romans 12:6–8, 1 Peter 4:10–11, or 1 Corinthians 12:1–31. What are some other spiritual gifts we didn't discuss? What observations can you make? Go deeper by studying these verses with the help of commentaries.
2. Ask your parents, others in your church, and your pastors what gifts they see in you. Is there a common theme? Talk to your pastor or youth pastor about ways you can use your spiritual gift(s) within the church.
3. Write down the names of some women (women you know personally or women you know through their ministries) who exhibit the different gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11–13. I already mentioned Anne Graham Lotz and Beth Moore. Who else could you add? Consider doing this exercise with your mentor.

CHAPTER 7

Do I Need a Theological Education?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever considered seminary before? If not, why not? List any fears or excuses you may have for not attending seminary.
2. No one in the Bible had the kind of theological education we have today, but it doesn't mean they didn't have any theological training. What kind of training did those who were called to ministry receive?
3. What is the connection between the weight of our calls and being prepared for ministry?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did you go to seminary?
2. Where did you go and what were the reasons that led you there?
3. How did seminary prepare you for your calling?
4. What advice would you give to me as I think about seminaries?

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Go to www.ats.edu/member-schools and look up the listing of accredited theological schools. You can search alphabetically or by geography, denomination, or degree. If you are interested in a seminary in your denomination, make a list of those you see. If you are interested in a divinity school that is interdenominational, make a list of those that interest you. Perhaps you are unsure. In that case, make a list of both. For detailed information about a school, click on the name of the school. What's the faculty-student ratio? What are the school's beliefs? What degrees do they offer? Have you heard or read what other people are saying about these schools? Find reviews. Talk to mentors or people you trust for recommendations. You can use the questions above as a guide.
2. If you are in college now, then ideally, by your junior year you should request more information from the admissions offices of some of the schools of your choice and go for a campus visit or Preview Day. You will never really know how you feel about a place until you go for a visit. Do not go to school somewhere you haven't visited unless you are living overseas or are in a situation where that's not an option.

CHAPTER 8

The Benefits of Mentors and Internships

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Can you find other examples of mentorships/ internships in Scripture in addition to the ones we looked at? Write out observations about these relationships, the value of them, and their purpose.
2. If God has called and gifted us, then why do we need internships and mentorships? How do internships and mentorships fit with our biblical understanding of ministry?
3. How are internships or mentorships an act of giving God our best? What would you say to someone who asks you this question?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What internship experience was most valuable to you and why?
2. What advice would you give me in finding an internship?

PERSONAL EXERCISES

1. Connect with others your age who are called to ministry. Perhaps begin a Facebook group to share internship and mentor possibilities.
2. Pray and ask God for a mentor and/or internship. Ask others for recommendations, and look outside your church or town.