

QUESTIONS CHRISTIANS ASK

CAN “ORDINARY PEOPLE” MAKE A CONTRIBUTION?

ACTS 8–9



The Heart of the Matter

Evangelism and discipleship were never designed to be ministries limited to “the pros.” One of the archenemies of evangelism is false propaganda—wrong ideas that get embedded in the Christian’s mind before the truth can find lodging.

The propaganda sounds something like this: “Christian service is for superstars—spiritual giants like the apostle Paul, Hudson Taylor, and Jim Elliott. It’s not for ordinary people like me.” It’s almost as if a sinister force creeps into every church nursery and whispers, “Psst, hey kid, wake up! Being a missionary is for superstars and pros, and you don’t qualify. Now go back to sleep.” So, many of us grow up believing that serving God is for somebody else. Let’s take some time to examine the truth.



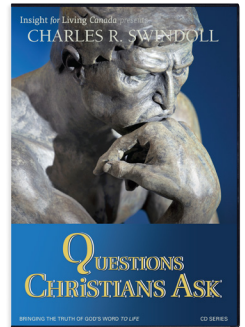
Discovering the Way

1. Regarding Giants, Celebrities, and Superstars

If we take a closer look at the superstars of ministry, we find that they struggle with the same things we do: doubt, temptation, greed, self-pity, prayerlessness, and selfishness. But God often does the most extraordinary things through His anonymous children. Ordinary people talk to others about Christ, disciple more “important” people, and help others get started in successful ministries. If you think of yourself as a plain, ordinary person without superstar qualities, take heart. There are no insignificant people in God’s economy!



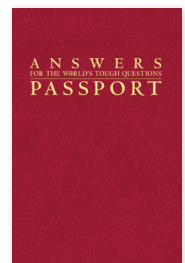
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2. Ordinary People Doing Unlikely Things (Acts 8–9)

Let’s look at a few ordinary people in Acts 8 and 9 who did some unlikely things because they allowed God to use them. These people are not the most obvious ones in Scripture—or even in these passages in the book of Acts. But they are significant because they found ways to use their gifts.



GETTING TO THE ROOT *A Lesser-Known Encourager*

Barnabas exemplified a servant of God, who not only accepted his supporting role but excelled in it. As the apostle Paul’s partner in ministry, Barnabas encouraged and supported him from the beginning—even before others trusted Paul (Acts 9:26–28).

So what made Barnabas such a good friend to Paul? The name *Barnabas* literally means “son of prophecy,” but Acts 4:36 renders it “son of encouragement.” In both the Old and New Testaments, prophets proclaimed God’s Word, served as His spokespeople, and reminded God’s people to obey Him. Perhaps Barnabas reminded Paul of Jesus Christ’s words on the Damascus road (9:3–6) and encouraged Paul to keep walking in faith when he faced persecution and trials.

When the young, struggling church needed reinforcement, Barnabas, a godly man who yielded to the Holy Spirit, “began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord” (11:23). Barnabas then found Paul and urged him to take a leadership role. Barnabas recognized the gifts and calling God had given Paul, and Barnabas took second place. May we all value the role of encourager as essential to the work of God!

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Starting Your Journey

Don't talk yourself out of serving the Lord because you're not apostle material, you can't walk on water, you don't have a high enough GPA, or you have never taken a course in seminary. If God has transformed your heart and you present yourself to Him, He will use you!

Are you willing to serve in obscurity? Do you value eternal significance over worldly importance?