

CHAPTER 1

An Interesting Call

Let's play a game of make-believe. When I was a kid, we started many conversations with the words, "Let's play like ...". Humor me for a moment. Plus, what choice do you have? You really can't quit reading this book in the first paragraph, can you?

Play like it is a Saturday afternoon and you are just settling in to watch your favorite college team play football. You are ready to relax and watch someone else take a beating for a change. You might already be getting drowsy. This is going to be a nice day.

Suddenly, the phone rings and after a couple of rings, you decide to go ahead and answer. The Caller ID says "Restricted" so you can't tell who is calling. The operator on the other end says, "Please hold for the governor of the state." You are somewhat interested but you suspect that this is a trick or, at best, a recorded message. While still watching the game, you listen to the call. Maybe you glance out the window to see if

some of your friends are out there playing what seems to be an obvious joke on you.

When the next voice comes on, you realize that this might not be a spoof. You think you recognize the voice of the *real* governor say, “Roger, how are you? It’s good to talk to you. You may be wondering why I’m calling. I want to meet you and get to know you, and I want you to get to know me as well. I would like for you to work with me and help me in an important service to our citizens. You have a special skill set, and I have a position that fits you perfectly. Our state needs a person like you. You can become a great person of influence from this position, and we will help equip you to do the job. Would you be interested in meeting with me right away?”

Now you are wide awake. You no longer care if you voted for this person or if you agree with any or all of your state’s policies. All you know is that you are talking to the leader of your state, and he called *you*. What does this call say about you? You must have characteristics and talents that you did not know you had. Maybe you are really important and didn’t even know it! You are engaged and ready. If this is a real offer, you are definitely going to check it out.

“I can be ready whenever you need me.”
The words have come flying out of your mouth.

You cannot wait to get to that meeting! This is a chance to serve the people of your state, but more than that, it is an opportunity to work with an influential leader who picked *you* as a partner. It may be a chance to influence history! This will most likely cause a significant change in your own life.

“OK, my assistant Marge will come on and set up the details. All you have to do is be ready. I will fly in from the capital and will pick you up at your house. I will personally brief you as we travel. We have already run your security clearance and you passed. I will see you on Thursday morning. Thanks for your help.”

The phone goes into hold mode and after a few seconds, Marge comes on and informs you that the governor will be at your home on Thursday at 9 A.M., just as you were previously told. Marge already has your address. She tells you what to bring and to pack enough clothes to last three days. She has no other information for you. The rest will be conveyed to you personally by the governor during the meetings you two will have. As she gets ready to hang up, she casually asks you how your spouse is (called specifically by name) and mentions that you ought to be proud of your son’s straight “A” report card that he got last month. She hopes that she can

meet them soon. As quickly as the call began, it is now over and the dial tone notifies you of this fact.

The football game is forgotten. You now go back over the conversation. What if this was a hoax? You check your email and sure enough, a confirmation has already arrived, along with a note from Marge. The email address, of course, ends with “.gov”. The phone number, which you are urged to call if you have any questions matches the capital area code. You are now ready for a trip, but there are several things that you don’t know.

No one mentioned *where* you were going. You first assumed that the capital would be your destination, but since you are being picked up, you really don’t know. The details of your meeting with the governor were totally left out. You don’t know *why* you are going. You know that the governor will be accompanying you, but you don’t know *who* else will attend. And you have no idea as to *what* you will be doing. But who cares? This is the governor, a national figure. You’ve seen him on CNN, for heaven’s sake! You cannot miss this chance!

If the story above happened to any of us, we would react just like “you” reacted to the invitation. The call was not to go *to* some place. You

were simply invited to meet with the governor. The location was irrelevant. If it were at the local coffee shop, you would still go. The job that you would do is not that important. You will do whatever the governor wants you to do. It is a once in a lifetime call and you don't want to miss it. Who knows what will come out of this? Your whole life will probably be changed. No one would turn down an opportunity like this. You will get to know the governor! You must go. You are compelled to go. Who wouldn't go?

Now let's change the story up, just a little. It's the same scene. It's the same football game and the same day. The phone call is different, however. This time the voice on the phone says, "Please hold for the Creator of the Universe." This is the One who *created the governor*. The contents of the call are very similar to the previous one.

"Roger, this is God. I am calling you to invite you to be a part of something great. I want you to know Me and to be a part of My world. I created you with a great set of gifts and talents that I want to use for My purposes. I will give you all the tools and energy that you need. All you have to do is follow along. I would like to meet with you so I can tell you what I want you to do. I have made special arrangements in order for

us to get together. This is going to be a fantastic assignment that will change your life. When can you meet?”

Miraculously, here is your response: “Well, God, I am pretty busy today. Next week doesn’t seem possible, either, since I have to go to Seattle and meet with a client. Our kids are graduating from high school and grade school this spring and we just don’t have much time. My wife has been on edge lately because of her job and she is keeping me up late at night because she needs to talk. My work is just awful and I am there nearly ten hours a day. This is just such a tough stretch for me. Could we visit some other time?”

Who in the world would have such a reply to this invitation? The answer is that almost *all* of us have replied to God like that. Isn’t it interesting? Why would we jump if someone “really important” called us and asked us for a meeting, but when God calls, we put Him off?

There are a couple of reasons why we might react in this way. First, it has been pounded into our head that a life with God is all about “church” stuff. You know ... being good, getting sent to Africa as a missionary, having to attend church every Sunday, giving all your money away, and otherwise missing out on the real fun. We only get one life and why should we

spend it just trying to be good? Why not really enjoy life? Didn't someone say, "Eat, drink, and be merry, because tomorrow we may die?" Besides, who wants to be good just so we can go to heaven and fly around with little wings and play a harp?

Secondly, we have a misunderstanding about God's intentions. We do not realize that He is offering us a relationship and a chance to get to know Him. We don't understand that God's call is an invitation to experience His presence and to know how each of us fits into His kingdom. It is about coming to first know Him and secondly, to know why He created us.

Most of us love to imagine ourselves knowing important people. We like to meet celebrities and get their autographs. We follow famous people on Twitter and sometimes send them a tweet, hoping to get a reply. If that should happen, we wind it into every conversation. We received a Twitter message directly from our favorite baseball star. How exciting! And if the governor called us, we would bring it up every chance we got. No matter what question we were asked, we would mention the governor.

If someone said, "Pass the potatoes," our answer would be, "You know, the governor loves potatoes. Did I tell you that I had lunch

with the governor just the other day? I am on a big state project. Yep, I was with the governor last week. A real nice person, the governor. A good friend of mine.”

We love to be important and to be viewed as someone with influence and power. A meeting with the top official of our state might make you feel special, but what if you got the chance to meet the Creator of the World? What if He offered you *His* friendship? The chance to be in His presence and to glimpse into the mind of God would be an astounding offer. And what if that Presence could actually transform you? If you could know God maybe you could know why He created you. You could understand what your purpose is and what you are really supposed to be doing. To know God would unlock mysteries about your life and the universe. If that was possible, there is *no one* who shouldn't be interested.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

What if we were invited to know the way to life? What if there is a real purpose to your life that goes far beyond just living until you die? What if life is not just “play like,” but a one-and-only chance to be all you can be? Wouldn't

that opportunity to know God prompt you to read a short book and ask some questions?

My hope is that you will make yourself available for a brief look at an invitation that will forever change your life. We will begin by looking at an ancient conversation in which a group of unlikely candidates were asked a very unlikely question.

Discussion Questions

Chapter 1

Who is the most famous person that you have ever met? What are the details of the meeting?

If you could meet anyone on earth, living or dead, who would it be? Why?

What does the “man on the street” think about God and Christianity?

Why do people not investigate the Christian life?