

A Call from Within

From a sermon preached by Jack Hyles in 1974:

I was an introvert when I was a boy. I was still sucking my thumb when I was fourteen. On my 17th birthday I weighed 93 pounds dripping wet and full of bananas. I could not pass public speaking. I was called "Jackie boy." Nobody took me seriously. When God called me to preach, the angels wept and Heaven's flag was flown at half-mast for three days!

One day when I was an older teenager, the chairman of our deacon board, Jesse Cobb, met me after the service on a Sunday morning in the back of the auditorium. Jesse was the best lay soul winner I think I ever met. He said, "Jack, will you do something with me this afternoon?"

"What, Jesse?"

"Will you go soul winning with me this afternoon?"

"Jesse, you know better than that! You know I am a timid introvert. I would not know what to say if I went out soul winning. Jesse, I couldn't do it."

"Jack, I will make you a deal. All you will have to do is to just go with me. I will do the talking. All you will have to do is listen."

Well, since I had a Ph.D. in listening, I said, "Now, let us get this straight. You talk, I listen."

He said, "Well, you may have to say hello."

I said, "I think I can handle that."

So that afternoon for the first time in my life, I went soul winning.

Jesse Cobb and I knocked on the door. A big high school football player, tackle on the Adamson High School football team named Kenneth Florence, came to the door. Kenneth

looked down at Jesse and at me. Jesse looked up to Kenneth and said, "Kenneth Florence?"

"Yes, sir."

"My name is Jesse Cobb."

"How do you do, sir?"

"And this is Jack Hyles."

I generated all the extroversion at my disposal and said, "Hello."

"Kenneth, Jack here wants to say a few words to you."

Stuttering, I said, "Kenneth, will you go to church tonight?"

Jesse said Kenneth said, "Yes, I will."

And I said, "You will?"

Kenneth said, "Yes, I will."

I said, "I will come back and get you at seven o'clock tonight."

At seven o'clock that night I went by to get Kenneth Florence. For the first time in my life I knew that God had given me a soul I had to win. I didn't know one single Scripture of the Roman Road. I had never taken a soul-winning course. I had no idea in this world what to do.

The sermon was finished. I put my arm around Kenneth's big, broad shoulders and said, "Kenneth, would...would...wouldn't you like to be saved?"

He said, "Yes, I would."

I said, "I can't tell you how, but if you will come with me, the preacher can. Follow me."

We went down this aisle. The pastor met me. I said, "Pastor, Kenneth wants to be saved." I then turned and walked away. I got about two rows back, and the pastor said, "Hold it, Jack. Kenneth, Jack here wants to kneel and show you how to be saved." No, Jack didn't!

But I knelt and put my arms around Kenneth's big, broad shoulders and said, "Kenneth, I do not know how to tell you how to be saved. John 3:16 says something like this: Jesus died for you because God loved you and gave Himself for you. Now, I believe that if you would be willing to ask God to forgive you and trust Him as your Savior, God would save you tonight."

Thank God, somebody had already told Kenneth how to be saved. So Kenneth Florence bowed his head, and on his knees he began to pray something like this: "Father, thank you that this fellow is interested in me. I know I am a sinner. I know Jesus died for me, and I know that You, God, can save me, and I do now trust You as my Savior."

While he was praying, something turned loose inside my soul! I tell you, the fireworks of Heaven began to ignite! The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, the sparklers began to sparkle as I realized that here was something I could do. I couldn't make the football team, but I could point a person to Heaven. I couldn't make the senior play, but I could point a person to Heaven. I couldn't get a date, but I could point a person to Heaven. I couldn't make the basketball team (I did make the team, but because my legs were so skinny, people laughed at me, and I would not go on the floor); but I could point a person to Heaven.

I got off my knees and said, "Dear God, this is something a little introvert can do. This is something 'Jackie boy' can do."

There is not a man or woman or a boy or a girl in this house tonight who can't point someone to Jesus Christ...I am saying, there was a call in my breast, a call from within! I am praying that God tonight will give you that call, burning in your soul, and you will leave this place determined to be a soul winner. ¹

¹Curtis Hutson, ed., *Great Preaching on Soul Winning*, (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1989), p. 44-46.