

Called ^{by} Name

ISAIAH 43:1

Theme Verse: *Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine.*

—Isaiah 43:1 NRSV

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Called by Name-Part 3: Called to Vocation

Opening Thoughts: Knowing our first call by God is a *Call by the Gospel*, we learn we are not only God's children, but also disciples, followers of Jesus. We are then *Called to Discipleship*. In the obedience of discipleship we are called to love both God and our neighbor. How we show this love is part of another call, the *Call to Vocation*.

When God gives us faith, we are no longer what we were. We are a new creation. This is our heavenly call and it is sealed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. We become God's instruments and he uses us to help others. They, in turn, help us as well.

Opening Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are thankful you are active in our lives today, and thankful you meet our needs through the efforts of others. We ask that you continue to equip and enable us to serve and support those who are in need around us. We ask for your wisdom and your grace so we may show your love to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Called to Vocation: We know God still creates and provides for his creation. As believers, we accept the fact that all good things are given to us by God. Through faith we can pray God's gracious gifts will continue. We confidently ask that God would give us "our daily bread" in the same breath we ask for his forgiveness. Faith assures us both have happened.

There are many times when God provides for the needs of his people directly through a miracle:

1. **God caused bread to fall from the sky during the Exodus.**
2. **God stopped the sun from setting and rained stones on the Amorites to ensure Joshua's victory.**
3. **God commanded ravens to feed Elijah by a brook.**
4. **God first grew a vine to shade Jonah, but then caused a worm to wither it.**

We can also point to the miracles of Jesus. They show that God sometimes chooses to work directly in the world, and could choose to do so at any time. God is, after all, limitless.

God typically works through people, however. We are *Called to Vocation*. This is our station in life through which we serve others.

Be sure to download both Part 1 and 2 of this Adult Bible Study at the web page listed below.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Exodus 16
Joshua 10:8-14
1 Kings 17:1-7
Jonah 4:5-8

There is nothing our God cannot do!

- **What are some ways your congregation or organization serves others?**
- **What are some ways you or your family serve others?**

Read Galatians 5:13-15

- **Paul tells us we are *Called to Freedom*. What does that mean?**
- **How does this God-given freedom enable us to serve each other?**

We know the *Call by the Gospel* and the *Call to Discipleship* are calls of grace. In both of these cases, God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. The *Call of Vocation* is different. Through the *Call of Vocation*, we become God's instruments to help those around us. In the same way, those around us meet our needs on a daily basis.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10

- **How would you define good works?**
- **Paul makes it clear our good works cannot save us. However, what should we do because we are saved?**

Part of God's plan for our lives includes doing his work. We may not understand why he has chosen us, but we can be assured it is God's plan. Although he does not choose us based on our potential, it is obvious he has a purpose for our lives. We see that in our service to others.

- **Has God's plan for your life helped others?**
- **Has God's plan for your life helped you?**

Vocation means different things to different people. Parenthood is a vocation, as is being a carpenter. Being the sponsor of a child in baptism is a vocation, and so is being an attorney. Local congregations, Bible studies, church boards and men's and women's organizations are the venues in which we practice our vocation. The list is endless! Our vocation gives us the freedom to serve God as who we are and where we are; it is our calling.

Read Galatians 6:9-10

- **How does this passage add to what we read in Ephesians 2?**
- **As Christians, where is our first responsibility?**
- **How does your vocation enrich the *Body of Christ*?**
- **How does it enrich your community at large?**

Our calling of vocation changes constantly. As life events occur, our duties may be different. It may even depend on who we are with or who we are talking to. Changes in employment, family, friendships, and fellowship will often result in a new form of vocation.

Read Genesis 50:15-21

- **How many different vocations can you recognize?**
- **Can you identify with Joseph?**

We may be tempted to believe our vocation is not as important as another's. It is certainly easy to do, especially if we are influenced by the culture in which we live. We may also be tempted to believe our vocation is more important than another's.

Body of Christ is a term used to describe all those who believe in and follow Jesus Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:24-31

- **How could this passage be applied to our vocation?**
- **Now consider the life of Jesus. How could his life be a model for our vocation?**

Our vocation is a gift from God, a calling he has given to us. It is something we do as a response to God's acts of grace. It is only possible through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian has a vocation, and ignoring it hurts the *Body of Christ*. Also, not allowing another to fulfill their vocation can be harmful.

Part of our responsibility in the *Body of Christ* is to enable and encourage every person in their vocation. This includes people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. God calls each of us as individuals. We are all equally important in God's eyes. All of God's children should be using their gifts to help others.

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for calling us to you and for making us your disciples. We ask that you continue to strengthen us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Enable us to follow your ways as we serve and help others. Thank you for your loving gift of vocation. We know we do not deserve your love, but you have chosen us by your grace. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.