

JOHN BEVERE



CALLED

GROUP COURSE GUIDE



UNLOCKYOURCALLING.COM

INTRODUCTION

We designed this course guide as a resource for you to use with the *Called* online course. Each lesson is crafted to help you interact with the video in a way that personalizes the content to your life. We are excited for you to unpack your unique calling as God speaks to you throughout this course.

After each video, you will be able to use this guide to reflect on what you've learned, meditate on key Scriptures and points from the lesson, and kickstart your conversation with God about your calling. While each video contains valuable teachings, this guide is the tool that connects those teachings to your life, helping you work with God's Spirit to map out your own specific calling.

If you're taking this course with others, your leader will begin each week with the video lesson, followed by group discussion. Hearing others' perspectives as you move through this course will help you process your own journey and help you see opportunities for growth toward your calling.

You won't need any special training or knowledge to make full use of this guide. The only thing you'll need is a heart that seeks God and wants His will for your life. If you bring that heart to this course and guide, expect God to speak to you as you pursue everything He's placed on your life.

Enjoy!

John Bevere

YOU HAVE A CALLING

CALLED: LESSON 1

Scripture is clear—we all have a God-given calling. In fact, there are two different kinds of callings that each one of us has. We have a general calling and a specific calling. God's general calling is for us to live a holy life, to know Jesus intimately, to forgive when we've been treated unfairly, to live in freedom, and to serve one another. Ultimately, each of us is called to advance God's kingdom through faith, hope, and love being expressed through our lives.

But God also gives each of us a specific calling, and this is what this course will be about. I want you to hear me clearly on this: You have a specific calling from God.

Right away, I need to tell you there's a common misconception about callings. Many think the only people who have callings on their lives are those who work in ministry. This is a complete and total lie, and it keeps many Christians from feeling fulfilled.

The truth is you were created on purpose for a purpose.

That is why I have made this course for you. In this course, we will go after three things:

- First, we will equip you to discover what you are called to do;
- Second, we will show you how to get there;
- Third, we will show you how to succeed in your calling.

So get ready, because God has wonderful things in store for you.

Group Discussion

1. How does knowing that everyone has a calling, not just pastors and ministers, change the way you approach life?
2. Why is your primary identity to be a servant, regardless of the specific calling God gives you?
3. Why is the connection between identity and calling so important?
4. What has God already told you about your specific calling?
5. What steps are you taking to walk or grow in your specific calling?

Activity

Start Fresh: We normally introduce ourselves to others based on our name and occupation. Begin again by having each person introduce themselves with their name and an aspect of their God-given calling. This will help you relate to one another based on who God says you are instead of simply what you do.

Scriptures and Prayer

As you work through this course, I encourage you to read through the Scriptures found in each lesson. These are the foundations for the teachings, and God will use them to show you more about your calling. Look into these passages, take your time with them, and let God use them to reveal who you are and what He calls you to do.

God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 1:9)

God chose me and called me by His marvelous grace. (Galatians 1:15 NLT)

We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure. (2 Peter 1:10)

Additional Reading:

- 1 Corinthians 12:27
- Acts 17:28
- 1 John 5:4
- Romans 6:1-14
- 1 John 4:17
- Deuteronomy 28:13
- 2 Corinthians 5:20

Prayer: Father God, thank You for making me Your child. I know that because I belong to You, I have purpose. As I work through this course, please speak to me deeply through Your Spirit and reveal to me who You say I am and what my calling in life is. I give myself wholeheartedly to this process and invite You to come have Your way in my life.

Keys to Your Calling

- You have a calling from God, and it is both specific and important. Your calling is holy because it comes from God.
- You have a responsibility to follow God's plan for your life. He will prepare the way for you, but only you can walk the path He lays out for you.
- Your primary calling is to be a servant. No matter what your specific calling is, it isn't about you. It is to establish you in a strategic position for the sake of serving those around you in a powerful way to build God's kingdom.

THE WHY BEFORE THE WHAT

CALLED: LESSON 2

Two important questions about your calling are, “What is my specific calling?” and, “How do I fulfill it?” But before we can answer those questions, we have to address the whys of your specific calling.

Why is it important to know your specific calling? First, knowing your specific calling will help you maintain the right focus. Just as a boat needs to engage its motor or it will drift on the current, we need to know our calling or we will drift through life.

Second, we will use our entrusted gifts effectively when we know our specific calling. A stock car and a tractor both have powerful motors, but you cannot have a tractor perform a stock car’s job, nor the other way around. Our gifts are designed for a certain arena and we will become most effective if we work in that arena.

Also, why is it important to live in your specific calling? There are so many reasons: You will be satisfied and fulfilled. You won’t envy what others do. You will be strengthened for life. You will flourish and be rewarded in this life. You will be filled with joy. I could go on, but simply put, living in your calling is the only way to receive the blessings and fulfillment that God longs to give us.

Finally, and most importantly, why is it important to fulfill your calling in life? The answer is simple, but profound: You will be eternally rewarded.

Group Discussion

1. What does it reveal about God that He fills the life He designed you to live with blessings, and then even promises eternal reward for fulfilling your purpose?
2. What does it look like to use your gifts in the wrong arena? In the right arena?
3. This lesson describes five benefits of living your calling. Which is the most meaningful to you? Why?
4. Why is the ability to celebrate others instead of envying them a sign that you are living your calling?

Activity

Dedicated and Blessed: Jesus told His disciples, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:19-20).

Simply put, it is powerful when you pray together about your callings. In groups of two or three, take turns praying for one another and dedicate each person to God’s purpose and calling for their life. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower each of you with His wisdom and grace.

Scriptures and Prayer

The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. (Psalm 37:23 NLT)

God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. (Romans 12:6 NLT)

Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won’t need to compare yourself to anyone else. (Galatians 6:4 NLT)

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.” (John 4:34)

Additional Reading:

- 2 Samuel 11:1
- Proverbs 11:31
- Philippians 4:1

Prayer: Father God, thank You that I don’t have to follow You blindly, but instead You offer to reveal my calling to me. It still amazes me that You would custom design me for a special purpose and calling. I entrust myself to You alone, because You know how you made me and the purpose You have placed on my life. I will follow as You lead me.

Keys to Your Calling

- Knowing our specific calling helps us maintain a right focus and use our entrusted gifts effectively. Following God’s design and plan for our lives keeps us from drifting through life and leads us to use our gifts in the arena for which they are designed.

- Living our specific calling leads to confidence, strength, fulfillment, joy, and blessing. God is a good Creator, so the life He designed us to live will also be the one that fits us the best, leading to a contentment we cannot find anywhere else.
- Fulfilling our specific calling leads to eternal reward. This is the most important and longest-lasting benefit of following God's plan for our lives.

THE BIG PICTURE

CALLED: LESSON 3

As I covered in Lesson 2, there are many reasons why it is important to know, live, and fulfill God's specific calling on our lives, but none are so important as the last one—we will be eternally rewarded if we do it. And the greatest eternal reward we could ever receive is meeting the people who were impacted by our faithfulness to what God placed on our lives.

God will determine our reward when we stand before Him for judgment. Yes, even Christians will be judged by God one day and receive rewards based off how they responded to God's grace. You see, our faith in Jesus will determine where we spend eternity, but the way we live will determine how we spend eternity.

This often raises many questions and concerns, like whether you've missed your opportunity, are getting started too late, or even simply how to know what your calling is. We will work through these questions over the next several lessons, but for now, really grasp this reality: God will reward you forever if you walk faithfully in the calling that He created for you.

Group Discussion

1. What impact did all the Scriptures about God's judgment for believers have on you?
2. Why do you think God would establish a day of judgment for believers?
3. How does it make you feel to know that God desires to reward you in eternity?
4. In a culture of comparison, what are some important keys to living your calling faithfully?
5. What concerns do you have about fulfilling your calling and receiving your full reward? What's a healthy way to navigate those concerns and entrust them to God?

Activity

Calming Concerns: Take the concerns you just addressed with your group and write them on a piece of paper. Place the paper in an envelope, write your name and today's date on it, and seal it. Put all the envelopes together and have the group leader lay hands on them, offering all the concerns up to God in prayer. In one year, open your envelope and see how many of your concerns God has addressed.

Scriptures and Prayer

Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. (2 John 8)

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well-pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:8-10)

But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

Additional Reading:

- Hebrews 6:1-2
- James 4:14
- John 17:4
- 2 Timothy 4:7-8
- Ephesians 2:10
- Ecclesiastes 3:15
- 2 Peter 1:10-11

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You that You are just and merciful in Your eternal decisions, and thank You for telling me how to live faithfully so I will be ready on that day. Please lead me and guide me. Give me wisdom to walk in the calling You have given me. I want to be found faithful, but I need Your grace so I can stand before You on that day and receive a full reward.

Keys to Your Calling

- Every human faces judgment, even Christians. At the judgment for believers, God will make decisions about what reward we receive for eternity. Compared to eternity, our life on earth amounts to zero time, yet the decisions we make every day impact our existence forever.
- What we do with the cross determines where we spend eternity, but how we live our lives will determine how we spend eternity. We can receive a full reward, partial reward, or no reward, depending on how we lived our lives.
- We will not be judged according to what we did, but according to what we were called to do. God will not reward us for simply doing good works, but for being faithful to what He calls us to do.

DO YOUR PART

CALLED: LESSON 4

God could have designed us any way He wanted to, so why did He design us for specific callings? Why did He make this so important?

The reason our specific callings are so important is very simple. It is because we are both the co-builders of and materials for God's house. Scripture tells us we are fellow workers with God to build His house, and it also tells us that we are like precious stones being built together into a house for God. In other words, God is building a custom home, and we are part of it!

Many years ago, God blessed Lisa and me with the opportunity to build a custom home. I remember how each subcontractor had to come at just the right time or the house wouldn't be properly built.

Every house is built with many materials by many kinds of workers. Plumbers, electricians, framers, tile setters, roofers, carpet layers, sheet rockers, and more all work together in the right order to get the job done well. This is why our specific calling is so important. Just like these subcontractors, we all have a specific job to do at a specific time as we work with God to build His house.

Group Discussion

1. What was your first response to the examples of the football team, company, and home—each one being something that cannot function with only one type of player, role, or material?
2. In your own words, describe why God gives us specific callings for specific times.
3. How have you seen God direct your life toward a different, specific direction from other people you have known?
4. Why would few choose to follow God faithfully into all of their callings?

Activity

Joshua Generation Brainstorm: Discuss with your group the difference between the Moses Generation and the Joshua Generation. Brainstorm ideas of how to help make this generation a Joshua Generation.

Scriptures and Prayer

For we are God's fellow workers . . . you are God's building. (1 Corinthians 3:9)

You are members of God's family. Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself. We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. (Ephesians 2:19-21 NLT)

For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: "This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it." (Psalms 132:13-14)

You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. And you are living stones that God is building into His spiritual temple. (1 Peter 2:5 NLT)

Additional Reading:

- Isaiah 28:16
- Galatians 4:4
- John 17:4

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I'm so honored that You would choose me to work with You to build Your house, especially since I know You have given me a specific job and purpose. Please give me Your grace and equip me to do what You have called me to do. Show me how to build what will last forever.

Keys to Your Calling

- You are called to work with God to build His house. He is the master builder, the general contractor. He designs the house, orders the materials, and schedules the labor, but you are the laborer, called to do your particular task at the right time in the right way.
- You are part of God's house. Not only are the saints God's laborers to build His house, they are also the materials. God is building a house fit for Him, not out of ordinary materials, but with the most precious materials in creation—His children.

- The work you do in building God's house has the potential to last forever, or be torn out and replaced. Every work we do will be tested and only what is built by God's grace will endure.

IT STARTS HERE

CALLED: LESSON 5

We already know that your calling is specific to you. We also know that your calling is part of something bigger than you, that it fits together as one role on a much bigger team that is co-laboring to build God's house. But what is your calling? How do you discover it?

God is the only One who can tell you what your calling is. Scripture says that only those who seek God diligently will find Him and discover His plans for their life. We have to seek with faith, believing He will speak to us. We can't approach Him casually or with doubt and expect to hear the answers we need.

I learned this for myself as I began to seek God to discover my purpose when I was in college. There were three things I did to seek God with all my heart. First, I fasted—not as a hunger strike until God spoke, but as a means of earnestly seeking Him. God did not answer my questions during my fast, but He did speak to me not long after.

Second, I prayed. When we pray with confidence, God does hear us. And we can have confidence because God is the One who designed our callings. He wants them to be fulfilled even more than we do! Third, I read the Bible. It is amazing to me how God will speak to you as you read His Word.

Seek God diligently and you will find Him. When you make the pursuit of God your top priority, He will reveal everything you need to know about your calling.

Group Discussion

1. Describe a time in your life when you felt God leading you in a way that didn't make sense.
2. When God leads you in a way contrary to your own understanding, what can you do to find courage to trust God enough to follow Him?
3. Which of the three methods for seeking God do you struggle with the most? Which do you find easiest? Why?
4. God doesn't reveal the whole path at once. How have you seen this to be true in your own life?

5. We find God when we seek Him diligently. What does it mean to seek God diligently?

Activity

Orientation: Some within your group will already have an idea of God's calling on their lives, while others may have no clue yet. Some may even have taken steps toward fulfilling their calling. Take time to allow each individual to share where they feel they are in progressing in their calling. This will help you encourage and challenge one another to seek God diligently and then celebrate with each other as you grow and progress.

Scriptures and Prayer

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

For we walk by faith, not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Additional Reading:

- Acts 13:1-4
- Psalm 119:105
- 1 John 5:14-15
- Genesis 32:22-32

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are the Author of my life, the Creator of my calling. How can I possibly discover it without first discovering it in You? Thank You for showing me ways to seek You diligently. Thank You for being so dependable—when I seek You, I know I will find You. Now give me the determination to keep seeking You. As I seek You, continue to reveal my calling to me.

Keys to Your Calling

- Seeking God diligently is the key to finding Him. We must, however, seek Him in faith, believing we will actually find and hear from Him. God does not respond to doubt or wavering, but steady faith will draw us into His presence to hear His voice.

- We must trust God and follow Him even when we do not understand. While the path He guides us down may not make sense, it will always be the right path to get us where He has called us to go.
- There are three primary ways to seek God diligently. These three ways are fasting, praying, and reading Scripture. Our heart in these is not to force God into something or manipulate Him, as if we somehow could, but to grow our desire for Him by making Him our highest priority.

GET PLANTED

CALLED: LESSON 6

I am not a gardener. If you handed me a seed, I probably wouldn't know what it was, but I could tell you one way to find out: plant it. If you plant it, it will grow, and then I could tell you what it is because of the fruit it produces.

You and I are the same way. When we want to discover our identity (what kind of seed we are), we must plant ourselves in the local church. This means we have to give up what has become common to so many Americans who treat church like a buffet. It means we have to stay put and find ways to volunteer and serve. Our service in the local church might seem to have nothing to do with our calling, but that is the place where God promises to make us flourish.

Don't just plant anywhere, however. Ask God where to plant. Ask Him where to go to church. Ask Him where to work. He knows the right place for you. Once you follow God to where He says to go, stay there. It's true that you will have opportunities to be offended in that place, but stay put anyway. Wait for God's leading. He is the one who knows your calling. Trust Him, and He will help you fulfill it.

Remember that God uses hardship to build our character. No athlete becomes great without enduring difficult training. Your job, church, marriage, etc., will at times serve as a training ground, building Christ-like character in you.

Group Discussion

1. List the various needs and processes that cause a seed to eventually produce fruit. What does that teach you about your needs and processes to live fruitfully in your calling?
2. What is the relationship between your attitude at work and your ability to be faithful to your calling?
3. Why do you think God says, unless you've been faithful with what belongs to another, He will not entrust you with something of your own?

4. What do you think God's purpose is in calling you to plant somewhere you are likely to become offended? Do you think there is any place God could plant you where you would never be offended?

Activity

Fresh Start: Take time to process individually with the Lord whether you have been faithful to stay where He planted you and if not, repent. If your group is a safe place for discussion around this topic, confess publicly if you have not left churches or jobs or marriages well in the past. There will be healing in this confession. Finally, pray for one another, that God would help each of you remain faithful as you move forward.

Scriptures and Prayer

*Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.
(Psalm 92:13)*

*But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.
(1 Corinthians 12:18)*

*"If you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"
(Luke 16:12)*

Additional Reading:

- Acts 21:8
- Isaiah 55:12
- Mark 4:16-17
- Psalm 37:3

Prayer: Holy Spirit, thank You that You will lead me to where I should plant. Thank You for using my environment to help me grow into who You have created me to be and what You have created me to do. And thank You that when it feels hard to stay planted in that place, You will draw near to me as I seek You and You will comfort me. In all these things, I give myself to You.

Keys to Your Calling

- We will discover our callings as we plant ourselves in the house of the Lord. This is not only true for ministers, but for everyone, regardless of where God has called you. When we plant in a local church, God promises to make us flourish.
- Planting in the house of the Lord does not mean attending only. It means truly putting down roots and becoming involved. It also does not mean transplanting, hopping from one place to another, but it means to stay put for the long haul until God sends us out with joy.
- We must follow God's leading to the right place for us to plant. As certain plants only grow in certain soils or climates, so also there are right soils and climates for us. God knows where we belong and as we follow Him, He will cause us to flourish where He plants us.

THE CALLING KILLERS

CALLED: LESSON 7

As we pursue God's calling on our lives, we have to know that there are things that have the potential to derail our callings. In fact, the author of Hebrews tells us to cast off every weight and sin that can so easily hinder us.

Jesus showed us the three most common weights—security, money, and relationships. These three weights slow down, hinder, and even kill more callings than any other weight because while many are enthusiastic about following God's calling on their life, few are willing to make sacrifices in these three areas.

Weights that hinder us from running our race are not the only dangers of which we need to be aware. We also need to know the danger unrepentant sin is toward our calling. Let me tell you, if you have sin in your life and you don't receive God's grace to deal with it, it will absolutely sap your life. It has the potential to take you out completely, no matter how well you think you can manage it.

Here's the bottom line: Are you willing to pay the cost of following Jesus for the sake of your calling? Then follow Him regardless of how it affects your money, security, or relationships. And don't excuse sin in your life—Give it to God, and His Spirit will empower you to rise above the enemy's attacks.

Group Discussion

1. What part of my testimony about the weight and sin I struggled with is most encouraging to you?
2. What do you think is the biggest difference between the crowd who wandered away from Jesus and those few who continued following Him?
3. What risks have you taken for God in regard to security, money, or relationships, and how have you seen God provide for you when you took those risks?
4. What is the biggest lesson you learned from the warning about the two pastors who lost everything because of sin?

5. How have you seen God help you overcome sin in your life? I strongly encourage you to share any testimony you have with your group, as it will help others overcome the issues with which they may still struggle.

Activity

Walk with the Wise: Scripture says that when we walk with the wise, we will grow wise. Choosing to pursue God's call regardless of its cost is the pursuit of wisdom. Your group has the potential to be a group that grows in this pursuit together, challenging, strengthening, and encouraging each other. When one is weak, the rest can help until they become strong again. Consider this challenge—will you be a group of wise people who will walk alongside each other as you pursue God's calling together?

Scriptures and Prayer

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

"For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:14)

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." (Luke 10:1-2)

Additional Reading:

- Luke 9:57-62
- Luke 14:25-26

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I'm so glad that You know what it's like to live in this world while pursuing the calling on Your life. Thank You for giving us an example of how to press through despite the cost, remembering the joy and blessings promised to everyone who overcomes. Please expose any sins in my life that would keep me from fulfilling what You have called me to do. Give me Your grace that I might live a life that honors and glorifies You. Please surround me with friends who will encourage me to make good choices as I live for Your calling on my life.

Keys to Your Calling

- There is no guarantee concerning God's calling on our lives. While God will never stop offering our calling to us, it can be hindered and even stopped if we allow the cares of this world to choke our lives.
- The three weights that can hinder us in pursuing our calling are security, money, and relationships. In other words, if we don't trust God with our future, our finances, and our relationships, we will be ineffective in our callings.
- Sins from which we have not repented and gained freedom from are another danger to our callings. Many believers have tolerated sin in their lives, believing they could manage it or that it was no big deal, only to have it master them and destroy their callings. By the power of God's Spirit—the Spirit of grace—we must pursue freedom for the sake of God's calling on our lives.

FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS

CALLED: LESSON 8

You have heard me say this before, but only God knows your calling and how to get you there. It is completely impossible for us to get to our calling on our own. The only way to fulfill our calling is to be led by the Holy Spirit through life.

God does not promise that a Spirit-led life will be easy. In fact, He promises that it will often bring great difficulty! I remember my own story, knowing God's call on my life and having that desire planted within me by Him. I started well, following God to take a position serving my pastor by being his personal assistant, and at first it was like a honeymoon. I even loved picking up the man's groceries for him.

But before long, I started grumbling and looking for ways to hurry up the process. I almost moved to Orlando with no job, just to be where I thought I was supposed to be. But God stopped me. I almost took my dream job, planting churches and winning souls around the world, but the Lord stopped us from going through with it.

I was so angry with God, until He asked me, "Are you serving me, or are you serving your dream?" I finally let it go. I stopped trying to make it happen on my own. Finally, God sent me to Orlando, but it was for a job that felt like going backward. Little did I know, this was all a setup and part of God's plan to lead me in my calling.

Group Discussion

1. How would you describe the difference between the two Greek words for "son"?
2. Why do you think following the Spirit's leading develops godly character? What kind of character would we develop if we only followed our own desires?
3. What was the most impactful part of the testimony shared in this lesson? Why?
4. What counsel would you have given me when I first pursued moving to Orlando?
5. What counsel would you have given me when I was offered a job with T.L. Osborn?

6. When you see how the Holy Spirit led me through all this process, how does it change the way you think about the path of fulfilling your calling?

Activity

Listening for Step One: Take five to ten minutes as a group to allow each person to ask God's Spirit for what step He is leading them to take in their calling right now. It might be, "Serve faithfully where you are," or it might require some sort of change. After this time of listening, let whoever is willing to share tell the group what they feel the Holy Spirit spoke to them.

Scriptures and Prayer

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. (Galatians 5:5 NLT)

Additional Reading:

- John 15:1-11

Prayer: Holy Spirit, thank You for the promise that comes with following You—that I will grow to be like my Heavenly Father. Thanks for letting me know in advance that this journey will likely be difficult at times, but that You will be with me the whole way. I submit myself to Your leading. I want to be found faithful with my calling. I will follow You.

Keys to Your Calling

- Only those who follow the Holy Spirit's leading through life will develop godly character. Many people believe in God, but do not submit to the Holy Spirit's leading. These people cannot expect to grow in godliness or fulfill their calling.

- God will lead us in every aspect of our lives. He cares about our family, friends, occupation, hobbies, and everything else. He will lead us in a way that works all these things toward His ultimate purpose and plan for our lives.
- Following God often doesn't look how we expect it will in the beginning, and it is often painfully difficult. It is worth it, however, as God leads us in our purpose and toward the eternal prize that awaits those who are faithful.

STAY THE COURSE

CALLED: LESSON 9

Every person's calling has a process that includes time and trials. There is no way around it. Joseph knew God's plan for his life, but his unexpected road took him seventeen years and routed him through betrayal, slavery, jail, and famine before it was finally fulfilled. David was called specifically by God's prophet and went directly to the king's tent, yet it was at least another fourteen years of running for his life before he became king of anything.

Examples like this fill the pages of Scripture. God calls each of us to endure these trials of faith on the way to our calling. As I went through my own trial of faith, I cried to God (complained really), and asked Him why I was in so much pain. He explained to me that I had impurities within me that I didn't know about, and that this refining process was the only way to get them out. He told me I would stop hurting when I died to my flesh completely.

As hard and painful and difficult as those years—yes, years—of my life were, I am so thankful for them. I can recognize now God's protection that came through those years, because if I had started doing then what God has enabled me to do now, I would have fallen into pride, along with a good many other sins. Those sins would have destroyed me.

Listen, I didn't enjoy the process, but I *needed* the process. Every single one of us needs the process, and that's why God leads us through it.

Group Discussion

1. Be honest—how do you feel about going through God's process to fulfill your calling?
2. Explain in your own words how God leading you through a process is a sign of His love for you.
3. What are some of the important steps you have learned, either through this course or on your own, to help you persevere through the process?
4. What is God's role in your life as you go through His process?
5. How can you prepare yourself now to help you avoid creating an Ishmael when your process gets painful?

Activity

Strength in Numbers: Chances are pretty good that at least one person in your group is experiencing a painful season in their process. Gather together anyone from your group who is in a painful season or facing a difficult decision and have the rest of the group pray for them. Pray specifically for God's grace, mercy, peace, comfort, and strength to uphold them in this time. Continue to encourage and comfort them in the weeks and months ahead.

Scriptures and Prayer

So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (1 Peter 1:6-7 NLT)

We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed . . . that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. . . . Therefore we do not lose heart. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Corinthians 4:8-17)

Additional Reading:

- James 1:2-8

Prayer: Holy Spirit, it's comforting to know that I'm not the only one who has to go through a painful process to live in my calling. I'm comforted because of John's testimony and seeing what You have done in his life, knowing that You are my God, too, and You will be faithful to me. Please help me to hold on to Your vision for my life as I walk with You through the process.

Keys to Your Calling

- God leads all who will follow Him through a difficult process on the way to fulfilling their calling. He does this to develop character in us so our gifts don't destroy us.

- Examples of people in Scripture who went through an extensive and painful process for the sake of their callings include Joseph, Moses, David, John the Baptist, and others. The details from my testimony in this lesson show how those painful moments in my journey were all because of God's mercy.
- When we try to force our callings to happen outside of God's leading and timing, it creates problems rather than promises. As Abraham's choice led to Ishmael, our choices also matter. We need to walk only by God's leading during the entire process of our calling, even when it is painful to do so.

THE COMPOUND EFFECT

CALLED: LESSON 10

At this point in the course, there is one more thing you need to know about your calling. You need to know how God measures faithfulness.

When you look in Scripture, God's definition of faithfulness boils down to one word: multiplication.

God doesn't want you to sit on your gifts. He isn't even interested in you using them casually here and there. The only thing God considers a faithful use of our gifts is to multiply them. Whether you are multiplying profits while working for another man or woman in business or whether you are on your own working in whatever realm of society God calls you to serve, you are called to multiply.

This might be a scary word for some of you, but I have a word of comfort. God promises us that it is never too late for us to start living our calling. Hear me clearly on this—it is truly never too late for you to start pursuing your calling. While there is still breath in your lungs, God will not take it away from you.

Wherever you are, however old you are, pursue God's call on your life today. Endure to the end and be one of God's chosen, faithful servants who will receive eternal rewards on that day.

Group Discussion

1. What gifts have you seen in your life that you know are God's grace and not your own ability?
2. How does it change the way you think about your calling to know you will need supernatural gifts from God to accomplish it?
3. What was your first response to learning that God's definition of faithfulness is multiplication?
4. How can you keep the perspective that your gifts are from God so you remain thankful and never take them for granted?
5. What does it mean to you that God will never take away your gifts or calling, yet expects multiplication of them in your life?

Activity

Consider Your Reward: Several of the lessons in this course teach some heavy truths. Take time as a group to review the blessings of living in your calling from Lessons 2 and 3, then discuss the rewards you desire and look forward to the most.

Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us it was for the joy set before Him that Jesus endured the cross. As you finish this course, find ways to set God's promised joys before you as you journey toward fulfilling your calling.

Scriptures and Prayer

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them. (Romans 12:6)

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. . . . And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? (Luke 16:10, 12)

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (Romans 11:29)

Additional Reading:

- Luke 19:11-27
- Revelation 17:14
- 2 Peter 1:1-11

Prayer: Father God, thank You for everything I've learned through this course. I gave myself to You in the beginning, and I give myself to You now. You are my God and I want to be faithful to You. Teach me how to multiply what You have given me. Give me determination to work diligently at my calling wherever I am, throughout my life. May the world know You better because I lived my life well.

Keys to Your Calling

- God gives His grace to each of us. This grace is unmerited favor, but it is also God's power to do something we couldn't previously do. When we receive this grace from God, He expects us to use it.
- God's standard for faithfulness is different from how most people define it. His definition of faithfulness is multiplication. We are faithful with the gifts He gives us when we multiply them by using them in our callings. This is the faithfulness He rewards eternally.

- It is never too late to pursue your calling. You have not missed the boat, because God won't take away the gifts He's placed on your life. He is a good God, full of patience and mercy.

CALLED: COURSE GUIDE

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