

Called by Name

Grace: Ask for the grace to see myself as God sees me and to love myself as God loves me.

Introduction:

Just as God sent Jesus with a mission, so too, YOU have a mission. The challenge is to figure out what your mission is. The hope this week is that by reading about how other characters in the Bible responded to their call, you might discover some clues in figuring out how to respond to your own call.

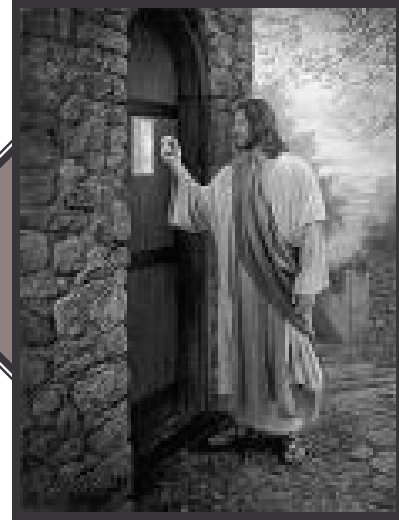
Perhaps you will discover that God has already called and you just did not hear or understand. Perhaps you do not feel worthy to be called and shy away from responding to it. Perhaps you need someone to help you explain what God's call means. What advice or words might you need to hear in order to better respond to God's call?

Read the Scripture passages and select the one that speaks to you the most. Use your imagination and begin to place yourself into the readings as one of the characters.

What would it be like to be Samuel and to hear God's voice in the middle of the night? How might your friends respond if you told them about such an experience? What would it be like to be Peter as he is called by Jesus? Can you imagine fishing with Jesus? What type of person does Jesus call? If you were to feel called, how would you respond?

Re-read the Scripture passage you have chosen. Pay attention to your feelings. Underline any key phrases that stimulate your imagination or that move your heart. Reflect on what God is revealing to you through those phrases and through your own feelings.

Imagine having a conversation with God about your own personal calling. How does that conversation go? After your reflection, describe your experience by completing the Spiritual Exercise Journal.



O Lord, Jesus Christ,
you did not come to the world
to be served,
but also surely
not to be admired
or in that sense
to be worshipped.
You were the way and the truth—
and it was followers only
you did demand.
Arouse us therefore
if we have dozed away into this delusion,
save us from the error
of wishing to admire you
instead of being willing to follow you
and to resemble you.
--Soren Kierkegaard

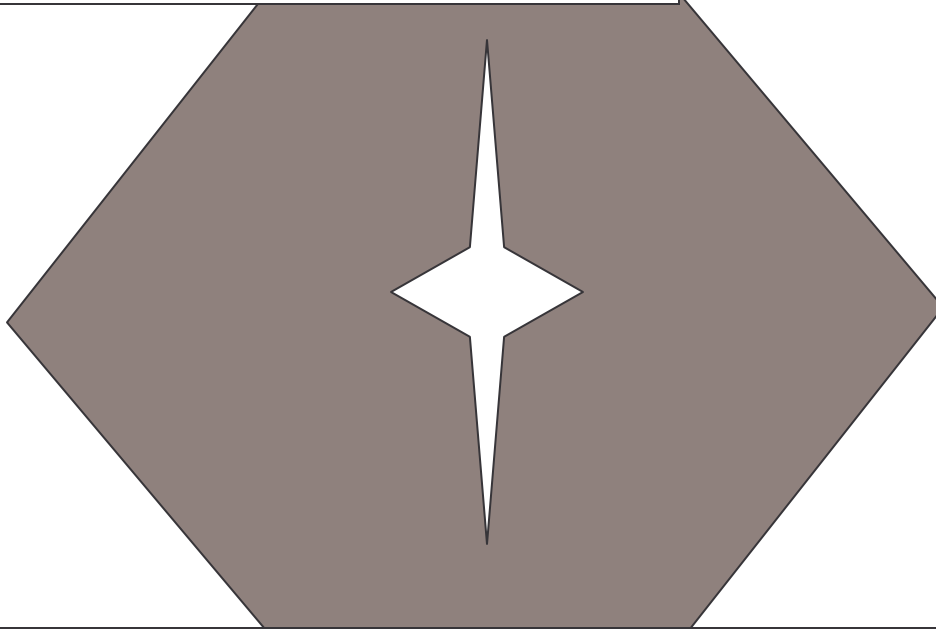
Luke 5:1-11 -The Calling of the First Disciples - One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

1 Samuel 3:1-21 -The Call of Samuel - The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions. One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD : The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them. Therefore, I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'" Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son." Samuel answered, "Here I am." "What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes." The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

Mark 1:16-20 – As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Luke 5:27-32 -The Call of Levi –

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."



In these or similar words ... What stood out to me most about this passage was Jesus' complete openness and compassion to Levi, a tax collector. Without any prompting or reason, Jesus offers this man, a sinner, the chance to follow him. Solely because Levi "left everything and followed him", Jesus ate and drank with him and thereby accepted him. This, to me, is a powerful testament to God's unconditional and saving love for me. Sometimes I think that my sins are too grave or I'm not "religious" or "pious" enough to be worthy of God's love. An example of this is my tendency to leave God out of my daily routine, going through the motions of the day almost as if He doesn't exist. Later, during times of reflection, I become aware of this and think it's a reason why I don't deserve to be loved by God, when actually, God seeks out the sinners more than the "healthy" or "righteous", who don't need to be sought as much. This idea of God seeking me out and loving sinners like me is a comforting and powerful example to me of how I am "called by name". Since as a sinner, I am one whom God seeks out the most, I am especially called to see myself as God does me and act to praise, reverence, and serve Him. This idea is also true as I place myself in the scene of this passage. As I imagine being Levi, I too willingly accept Jesus' call to follow Him, which helps me to understand my role and my vocation with Christ. Whereas I sometimes feel disconnected from God's love and therefore his vocation, by understanding how God sees me as one of his most valued of followers, I understand my connection to Him and now am able to see myself as "called by name".

Practicing What You Preach ... To more fully appreciate how God calls you to love and to be loved, attend a wedding or an ordination. Pay attention to how the person is responding to God's invitation to love and to be loved.

