

Week 3

Where is God Calling Me To Go?

Small Group:

Why and what are they:

The purpose of small groups is to grow in the faith, to fellowship with believers, to encourage and be encouraged, and to discern the word of God in our life that we might live with purpose in our quest to be made in the image of God.

Small groups provide

1. Community: “None of us is supposed to live the Christian life alone. We gain strength and help from others
2. Intentionality: Our purpose is to become better disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. Accountability: We need others to ask hard questions about our prayer experience, temptations and struggles, and plans for spiritual growth. ¹

A few rules:

1. **Confidentiality is crucial.** What is said in small groups stays there unless permission is given to share. You want to foster safe places to grow in the faith.
2. **Give:**
 - a. encouragement as often as possible
 - b. advice, once in a great while
 - c. reproof, only when absolutely necessary
 - d. Judgement, NEVER ²



¹ Graybeal/Smith 1999, p. 9

² *ibid.*

Gather:

In person or on Zoom, use this time to catch up with each other. If this is the first time with each other, share names, inquire about one another. Be curious (not nosy)

Share:

Share how you have seen God at work recently. Has he brought peace in the midst of trouble, healing, used you to be generous or kind, or has someone been generous or kind to you, etc.

Prayer:

Use the following prayer or have someone open up in prayer.

Lord Jesus, we bring our life before you this day that we might discover the depths of your love, experience your presence, be encouraged by your Spirit, and be humble enough to hear your word for our life. We come as individuals and community to become the people you have called us to be. Amen

Lesson: Where is God Calling Me To Go?

Recap and Overview

Discipleship involves **CALLING** on God, **LISTENING** when God speaks, and **RESPONDING** to God's direction.

Stewardship is discipleship. Stewardship is about being caretakers of what God has given us in order to enrich our lives, our environment, and the lives around us **to reflect the Kingdom of God**. Our resources are our **time, talent, and fruit of our labor**. Our **life** is our #1 resources. No matter who we are, the amount of talent we have, the circumstances we are born in, our mental and physical capabilities, we all have the **ability and responsibility** to be good stewards of our life.

Together Read: Luke 17:17

17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

Watch Video: 18 minutes

Self Reflection:

Do believe Jesus is sending you into the world? If so, how have you represented?

Discuss:

- 1. How did you see God's calling at work and Christine's obedience at work in the story?**

In the video, pastor Cory talked about how little actions matter and can have a big impact on lives we don't know.

- 2. Have you ever thought of your Christian faith as being not just for yourself? What does it look like to have a faith in Jesus for the sake of others?**

Read back over the John 17:17 verse. Jesus is praying and declares that as the Father has sent him into the world, so he sends his disciples into the world.

- 3. How was Jesus sent into the world? What did he live for? How did he act? To what purpose was he sent?**

Henri Nouwen said, "we were sent into the world by God, just as Jesus was. Once we start living our lives with that conviction, we will soon know what we were sent to do."

- 4. What then does it mean for us to be sent in the same manner?**

Pastor Cory said that "one of the problems we encounter in churches today is that we forget our calling to "GO and Liberate". Instead we get caught up in "STAY and Defend". We keep asking God to protect us from the other and become caught in a defensive posture" Theologian, Dr. Robert Mulholland says, "we often look for God to act on behalf of our community of faith against its detractors, external or internal. God's focus, however, is on the redemption of our detractors."

- 5. What do you think the impact of ministry is when we live with the mentality of being persecuted vs being empowered by the Holy Spirit to liberate is?**
- 6. What our ways our churches are held back with this mindset and what does a church look like that operates with a "Go and Liberate" ethos look like?**

Mulholland also writes, "the Church is not just a proclaimer of Good News, it is to be the Incarnation of Good News"

- 7. What does it look like for the church to be the "Incarnation of Good News"?**

We often think that saying Yes, to where Jesus is sending us is about going over seas to some remote and desolate place, eating foods we are uncomfortable with, and in a language we don't know. But as exotic as Christine's story sounds, for her it was a matter of saying yes to God in everyday things. Maintaining her ethics and morality, of

meeting a need when it came available. Notice God did call her to start churches, but she didn't go about it by just trying to raise funds. She spent time in prayer. She then went about what she did know. She gathered a few people and they prayed together and learned scripture together. That group grew and then they said we want a church. This repeated itself. The widows started the same way. She answered the question of how do I help and attend to what is in front of me, and she let God grow it and provide, she was simply available.

Pastor Cory mentioned 3 things to do to help you have eyes to see and ears to hear what God is doing.

- 1. *Look with expectation that God is doing something***
- 2. *See the world through the eyes of Jesus, so you can see where to act (how would Jesus see your neighbor, your enemy, those with politically different agendas than you, etc)***
- 3. *Be Obedient to the stirring in your heart... does someone need a hand, mercy, grace, forgiveness, hope, a meal, etc.***

The promptings are there, but we must be still so we can hear it.

- 8. *What do you think of when you think of God sending you somewhere? Is it possible that by trying to avoid God calling us to do something big, we miss the smaller things right in front of us? Do you think we miss out on miracles because we avoid his call to the big? What are ways God has been calling you?***
- 9. *Discuss some ministry ideas in the Palm Beach county area that you think God is stirring in your heart. Are there ways this small group could do something in the next month. List some ideas.***

Read Romans 12:2

Romans 12:2

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Take 5 minutes to Read silently through this verse a couple of times. Write down at least 3 observations. What words 'jumped out' at you? What sentence spoke to you? Did anything seem odd or challenging, or inspiring?

10. Share with each other some observations you made?

Henri Nouwen said, “God has a very special role for you to fulfill. God wants you to stay close to his heart and to let him guide you. You will know what you are called to do when you have to know it.”

11. What practices can you put in place in your life that will renew your mind?

We are always saying yes to something that forms our thinking. The question you have to ask yourself is what do you spend the most time on and how is it forming your heart and your mission. Does it allow you to hear God more or less?

12. What are things we say “yes” to that keep us from hearing God? What are the things we say “yes” to that help us hear God

Knowing where God is calling us to be is directly related to us staying connected to Jesus. Keep your eyes clear and your ears open.

Plato said that the unexamined life is not worth living. Scripture is very clear that we need to bring our life before God

This series is about asking 3 questions of God to help us in our daily examen. Scripture is full of prayers in which the people call upon God especially when they realize that doing things the way they had been doing them wasn't working anymore. We need to follow their example if we want to be renewed and have a transformation of the mind.

The Three Questions:

1. Who are you calling me to be?
2. Where are you calling me to go?
3. What are you calling me to give?

Remember, when the people of scripture walked well with God, they:

1. Called Out to God
2. Listened to God
3. Responded to God

Here are 3 prayers from the book of Psalms I would encourage you to memorize and include them in your daily examen. Have someone, or several someones, look up and read these verses.

Psalm 119:133-136

Psalm 119:105

Psalm 139:23-24

Homework:

1. Reflect on these verses.
2. Take inventory of your habits and if they match your goals
3. Make a commitment to adjust your habits to meet your goals.
For example:
 - a. **Reading scripture more**
 - b. **Praying more**
 - c. **Blessing someone this week**
 - d. **Listen for God's prompting and acting on it**

13. **Some of you shared how we could pray for you and your goals last week, how did it go?**

14. **How can we as a group best pray and support you this week?**
(this is for each person to answer as they are comfortable)

15. **Share any prayer requests in the group**
Remind everyone that what is said in small group is confidential unless permission is given to share. Respect each others privacy and build a safe place in which you each can grow in your faith in mutual encouragement and accountability.

16. **Choose someone to pray for the group**

Next week we will look at Matthew 6:19-21 as we explore the third question

What is God Calling Me To Give?

Footnotes:

Smith, James Bryan. 1999. 'A Spiritual Formation Workbook: Small-group resources for nurturing Christian growth'. HarperCollins Publishers.