

AUGUST 19th
MADE WITH A PURPOSE

“The LORD said to Moses, “See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.” **EXODUS 31:1-5**

“Second fiddle.” Have you ever heard that term before? Do you know where it originated? According to Gary Martin from the Phrase Finder website, the term was first used in writing in September of 1801 and referred to two opera singers that were “upstaged by...rival operatic performers.” They were forced to sing backup to the chief opera singer. While we may not use the phrase often, the concept still makes sense in our competitive world. In his book “Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome” Kent Hughes emphasizes that success equals being a servant. One key illustration he uses is this: “The conductor of a great symphony orchestra was once asked which was the most difficult instrument to play. ‘the second violin’, he answered. ‘I can get plenty of first violinists, but to find someone who can play second violin with enthusiasm—that is a problem. And if we have no second violin, we have no harmony.’ As men, we see this pride in much of our relationships, often deep below the surface where no one sees. But God. God uncovers our pride and shows us His way.

We must admit the truth that most of us men don’t want to be brought up in front of people. We start to get sweaty palms or our pulse races when we are asked to do something publicly. Because of this truth, we excuse ourselves from the table in this conversation about pride. But God. God shows us that sinful pride works in ways that we don’t often realize. What is God saying here in Exodus 31? We’ve already been introduced to Moses, the great leader of Israel. We’ve been introduced to God’s priest Aaron (and his sons). We’ve even been introduced to Moses’ sister in Exodus 15. But what about the rest of them? Does God have a role for them? Indeed, he does! One of the grandest roles that anyone could ever think of...building the tabernacle pieces that God just described. Enter the names Bezalel and Oholiab. Men called by God to “work in every craft.” But notice that it’s not just them, God says in verse 6, “I have given to all able men ability.” God makes these men with a purpose. It is God who gives them the skill and God gives them a holy vocation. I wonder if our root of our pride begins here. How often do we thank God for his skills and abilities that he has given us? Furthermore, how many of us compare our skills with others? How often do we critique and grumble about someone else receiving recognition. Men, just because you don’t want to get up front doesn’t mean you’re off the hook. If someone else is given a raise and you stay at your wage, does this cause jealousy? This comes from your pride that you weren’t recognized like someone else.

Wait...there’s more. Ever feel like you don’t have much to offer God? This attitude comes from the same root of pride, because you are still making it all about you. God has made you His masterpiece, for His purposes. There is no role in God’s kingdom that is second rate because it all comes from the Creator of the universe. This perspective can shape us for eternity if we allow it to penetrate our hard hearts. God doesn’t make junk. He makes men that are His workers that have the most glorious calling...pointing to His glory in whatever we do in our vocations. How will you think about God’s mission for you today?

Spend some time thinking about God’s call on your life. How has he uniquely gifted you to serve Him in your work or retirement? Ask Him for humility to serve Him and thank Him for allowing you to serve Him.

Further Reading: I Corinthians 12:12-27

