

Life Group Guide “Calling”

February 4- February 9th, 2019

Prep: This week, we will be focusing on the the concepts of vocation and calling. Our vocation is the work we spend our days doing (could be career, school, or parenting). However, sometimes we mistake our vocation to be our calling. Our calling is the spiritual impact that God has designed us to make with our lives. When we operate in our calling, not only do we experience more meaning, but the kingdom of God expands in the places we touch. Sometimes people fulfill their vocation and calling in the same place, but frequently they are separate! Tonight, our goal as leaders is to evoke a conversation that *inspires* people who are disconnected from their calling to uncover it, and *affirms* people who are walking in their calling.

Please make sure to review the material in the guide so you are prepared for the conversation in your Life Group.

Welcome:

Take a few minutes to reconnect with your group.

Video:

Show the video. It is about 4 minutes long. It will set up the conversation on vocation and calling.

Scripture: Daniel 2-

Leader say something like: “We pick up the story in verse 13 after Nebuchadnezzar has already asked everyone else he could find to try to interpret his dream and they all have failed.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

13 So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

14 When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. **15** He asked the king’s officer, “Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?” Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. **16** At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

17 Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **18** He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. **19** During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven **20** and said:

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

21

He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

22

He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

23

I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

Daniel Interprets the Dream

24 Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him.”

25 Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means.”

26 The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

27 Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, **28** but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

29 “As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. **30** As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

31 “Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. **32** The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, **33** its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. **34** While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. **35** Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

36 “This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. **37** Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; **38** in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

39 “After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. **40** Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. **41** Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. **42** As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. **43** And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

44 “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. **45** This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

“The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. **47** The king said to Daniel, “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

48 Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men.

49 Moreover, at Daniel’s request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

Reflection/Vision Statement Time

- We recommend taking about 4-5 minutes for people to reflect after the passage. But before you do, say something like:
 - “I encourage you to first take a couple minutes to reflect on this passage and the video, come up with any questions, connections, or what the passages says to you tonight.”

Questions for Discussion:

(Choose your favorites ahead of time that you think will benefit your group the most)

Question: What parts of this story feel the most powerful to you? Which characters do you resonate with the most?

Question: How would you define the word **vocation**? How is that different from **calling**?

Question: What was Daniel's vocation? What do you think were some of the real challenges in serving in that position? (HINTS: tough supervisor, lack of physical safety, loneliness, high pressure, lack of fulfillment)

Question: What circumstances/needs caused Daniel to step into his calling?

Question: How did Daniel move **outside** of his vocation to move into his calling?

Question: When do you feel like you are having the biggest impact on the people around you (ex. encouragement/conversation, solving a technical problem, dreaming up new ideas)? Can you share a time that you specifically felt this?

Observation: God has planted deep desires in each of us to impact the world for good. One of the best ways to identify *calling* in our own lives is to identify the moments our hearts are inspired and activated in the process of serving.

Question: What do you think might be a calling God has given you? (**Leader note: It may be helpful to give a quick example of what you mean. We want to keep this focused more on spiritual principles (healing, building, counseling, mentoring) than a specific career. Follow up with people to get to the "root" of who they feel called to be.**)

Question: Is your calling deeply connected with your job or not? Explain what this looks like in your life.

Observation: In the story of Daniel, many parties benefit from him walking in his calling. He grows in influence and resources, his friends' safety is secured, and even the Babylonian advisors are spared. It says in **verse 47** that the king of Babylon believed and was moved by the power of God as a result of Daniel's actions.

Question: How can a believer walking in his or her calling be a bridge to faith for people who are distant from God?

Observation: It says at the end of the passage that Daniel received increased position and wealth as a result of his bold follow after God's calling. However, we are not guaranteed physical/worldly rewards every time we pursue the purpose God gave us.

Question: What is the fruit or reward of following our callings that makes it absolutely worth it?

Prayer:

(LIFE GROUP LEADERS): Open up an opportunity for your group to express thanks to God in prayer. Also, open up an opportunity to pray for people who are struggling in their vocations or callings, or need clarity from God on what their calling actually is.