

Called by Name

ISAIAH 43:1

Lesson Truth: *Just as God gives many of his people names for specific reasons, he gives each of us, regardless of abilities, a specific and unique calling.*

Bible Verse: *Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine.*

—Isaiah 43:1 NRSV

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Adult Bible Study: We each Have a Specific and Unique Calling

Opening Prayer: Dear God our Father, help us understand the significance of your calling in our lives. Help us be reassured you have called us by name and have a purpose for all of us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Opening Discussion Questions:

- **Does your name have a specific meaning? Was it given to you for a specific reason?**
- **Did your parents pick your name before you were born?**
- **If you are a parent, did you pick your children's names before they were born?**

Message: (Note: Consider having a *Baby Name Book* on hand to assist name discussion.)

From the beginning of conception, many expectant parents flip through pages of baby names and meanings. They intentionally examine each name, trying to find the perfect fit for their unborn child. Eventually, most narrow it down to a few favorites. Many run the ideas past family and friends to hear their reactions. Some even nail down two names. When they meet their baby for the first time face to face, and look them in the eye, they suddenly know exactly which name to call their child. They take what they know about their child's identity, as well as what they hope they will become, and solidify it in one name. This specific name the child is given will become their most essential form of identification; it sets them apart.

- **Read Isaiah 43:1. What does it mean to be called by name?**

In the Greek language, there is a strong similarity between the words name and call. The word name is translated to mean "title or reputation." The word call is translated to mean "invite or summon." The authority of the speaker dictates the nature of the meaning. For example, the name of someone who studies for 8-12 years in the medical field earns the name Dr. Jones. A college or university can use its authority to honor someone by calling him Dr. Smith. These two words are similar and they make the identity clear.

- **Can you think of other examples?**

In certain circles, the word *call* may be related to one's position in the church. For example, a church worker is called to a specific congregation. This is a God-ordained position or role. It is trusted that God convicted their hearts to serve in that specific location and capacity.

- **Can you give an example from your congregation of a person's name and their calling?**

Exodus 33:12
Leviticus 20:26
Jeremiah 12:3

The authority of the speaker dictates the nature of the meaning.

Sometimes we may feel called to a specific vocation or job. Some people feel they are to glorify God at work, or through another specific role they hold: mother, father, sibling or friend. As Christians, we may have heard of our calling, or commissioning, to spread the word. We are called to be God's children, trusting in him and walking in his ways.

- **Do you feel as if God has placed a specific calling on your life?**

Often times in biblical accounts, God commands parents to give their child a specific name. God then explains what the name means or reveals characteristics of the child. All of these explanations of names foreshadow the specific call to each child's life.

- **What does each of the following names mean?**
- **How do they suggest God's calling to that person?**

Eve—Genesis 3:20

Moses—Exodus 2:10

Ishmael—Genesis 16:11

Jesus—Matthew 1:20-21

Isaac—Genesis 17:17-19

John the Baptist—Luke 1:11-17

Esau and Jacob—Genesis 25:24-26

There are several Biblical accounts when God turns someone in a completely different direction from where they are headed. With this change, they become more in line with God's calling on their life. Their identity changes so much in that moment, it is imperative that their names change as well.

Read: Genesis 16:5-8, 15-16

God promises Abram that he will be the father of many nations despite the fact that he had no children. After God makes this promise to Abram and his wife Sarai, he changes their names to Abraham and Sarah. They had a child in their old age and their offspring was blessed. God had so drastically changed their callings in life, he changed their names as well.

- **Have you ever considered changing your name after a major transformation?**

Often God calls those who we least expect; this may even include you! But God speaks to all of us in Isaiah 43:1. God has named us all; therefore he has called us all. God calls men and women, church and unchurched, brave and timid, and those with all types of abilities. God calls us according to his purpose for a purpose.

- **Think about the following categories. Do you believe God has placed a calling on each and every one included below?**
 - **men and women**
 - **churched and unchurched**
 - **brave and timid**
 - **those with all types of abilities**

Lastly, God calls us by name to be part of his family forever.

Read: Luke 10:20

- **How does this verse make you feel?**
- **Does this verse give you comfort?**

Reread Isaiah 43:1 replacing the final "you" with your own name. God is calling you. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, _____ is mine.

Closing Prayer: Dear God, thank you for naming each of us for a specific call. Be with us as we sort out exactly what your call for our lives may be. We have no need to fear, because you have called us by name and made us yours. Lead us to continually walk in your ways. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Matthew 28:30

1 Peter 2:9

If you are a parent:

Did you feel called to name your child a certain name?

Check the reference section of your Bible.

Can you think of a Biblical word that means "turn around?"

God calls us according to his purpose for a purpose.

Psalms 139:13-16

Jeremiah 1:5