

JOHN BEVERE

A 5-DAY DEVOTIONAL

**YOU
ARE**

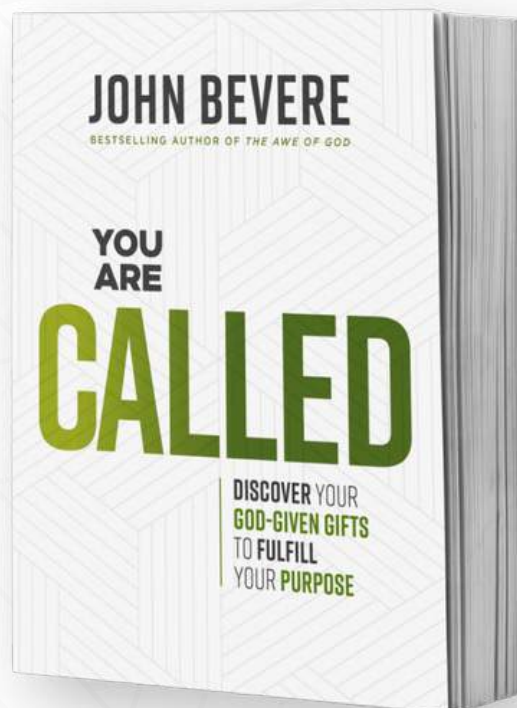
CALLED

**DISCOVER YOUR
GOD-GIVEN GIFTS
TO FULFILL
YOUR PURPOSE**

THE WORLD NEEDS YOUR GOD-GIVEN GIFTS.

These five daily readings are based on *You Are Called: Discover Your God-Given Gift to Fulfill Your Purpose* by John Bevere. Carefully and biblically, this book defines and portrays gifts, calling, and purpose, and how all these come together, by God's grace and guidance, to lead us faithfully on our life's unique calling.

**LIVE IN YOUR CALLING.
FIND YOUR ROLE.
MAKE YOUR MARK.**



ORDER NOW

DAY 1

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Scripture: Ephesians 4:7

Let's begin by examining a familiar portion of Scripture:

For by *grace* you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is *the gift of God*, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8–9 NKJV)

The focus of these two verses is the *grace of God*. It's clear—abundantly clear—that we're saved by grace, which is a gift from God. The twenty-first-century church has done an excellent job of communicating this truth. We can never work hard enough, live pure enough, or sacrifice enough to earn the privilege of spending eternity with our Creator, Almighty God. This familiar scripture has been the most looked-to reference to reveal this important truth.

However, we may have neglected what comes next:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10 NKJV)

Notice that the next word after the ninth verse is *for*. This word is a *conjunction*, which joins the two statements together. This tells us that the beginning of Paul's statement (verses 8 and 9) is not complete on its own. The word *for* means "because of this," so verse 10 should not be left out when citing verses 8 and 9; otherwise, we don't get the complete meaning of what's being communicated.

God designed things for you to do before you were born. He actually recorded these works in a book! We can only imagine how huge this book is, because every moment of our lives is recorded in it. These assignments He planned for us revolve around building His kingdom.

His deepest desire is that we fulfill His plans for our life—but it's not guaranteed that we will. Notice in Ephesians 2:10 the word *should*. It doesn't say "that we would walk in them"; it says "that we should walk in them." Here's where our free will enters the game. He prearranged our works—but it's up to us to walk in what He planned.

I'm firmly convinced that when we stand before Jesus at the believer's judgment seat (where we'll be rewarded for our labor as Christians or suffer loss for our neglect), He will open His book and say, "Let's compare how you actually lived to the original plan My Father and I had in mind for you." (In regard to the judgment, it's written in two different places in Scripture that the "books were opened"—see Daniel 7:10 and Revelation 20:12.) I believe these books were written by God about our life before we were born. Regarding our specific calling, we won't be judged on what we did, but rather on what we were called to do. That's both sobering and invigorating.

Here's the startling reality: How effective you are is not up to God, but up to you. That may sound irreverent if you've put all your life achievements in the basket of "God's sovereignty." However, I assure you it is not irreverent, nor does this statement take anything away from the sovereignty of God. It's a testimony of His trust in us, and His desire for His sons and daughters to exercise the free will He's given us.

Respond:

Have you realized things God designed you to do even before you were born? Explain.

Pray:

Almighty Father, please show me each day your plan for my life. I want to accomplish your plans and bring You glory and honor.

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DAY 2

ASSESS YOURSELF HONESTLY

Scripture: Romans 12:3

It's safe to say that we all tend to know what we don't do well. Sometimes I wish it were as easy to identify our gifts as it is to pinpoint what we're not gifted at.

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. (Romans 12:3–6)

Paul begins by positioning what he's about to write as a warning. Let's isolate and emphasize this warning:

Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves. (12:3)

Here we're told to do an honest self-evaluation. Of what? Of the gifts God has placed on our lives in real time.

Why do I use the words real time? Simple. Think of the biblical example of Saul. Saul's honest assessment before he met Samuel would have been, "I cannot prophesy." This would have been true and accurate for Saul at the time. However, once he met Samuel and the gift of God came on his life, his honest assessment would have changed to this: "I can prophesy."

Regarding different gifts, Paul's words are crystal clear: "Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body" (Romans 12:4–5). Simply consider your own body: Your fingers can do things your nose can't; your nose can do things your ears can't; your ears can do things your stomach can't; your stomach can do things your liver can't; and the list goes on.

We're all called, and we all carry unique gifts that are needed to fulfill our kingdom assignment.

Our gifts aren't only for the gathering of saints in a building, although they are valid and important. I certainly don't want to downplay our gatherings. The intention here is to expand our view of the operation of God's gifts. If we're called to labor outside the church, which is the case for most of us, we're called to operate supernaturally through our gifts within our circle of influence—among our ethnos group. If you've separated the secular from the sacred, that mentality needs to change.

When you walk into the room, no matter where it is—the hospital ward for your work as a surgeon or nurse, the public school classroom for your teaching, the factory for your skilled labor as a machinist, and so forth—you've been gifted to bring the sacred into that atmosphere and to disciple it in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You have divine backing and authority to bring heaven to earth, just as Jesus did with Zacchaeus and others. You're called to multiply the kingdom's mode of operation throughout your arena of influence.

Respond:

What gifts for the kingdom has God given you?
Share a time when you utilized one of those gifts.
What was the outcome?

Pray:

Lord Jesus, help me see opportunities to share You everywhere I go.

DAY 3

STRATEGIC IDEAS

Scripture: Proverbs 9:10

With each passing year, I become more convinced of the tremendous value of an inspired strategic idea. Often, we look for God's provision or intervention to occur without a tactical plan, but frequently that isn't the process. What happens is a God induced strategic idea.

There are too many biblical illustrations of these to list, but let's mention a few that support this reality:

- The strategic idea to throw a piece of wood into the bitter water so millions of people could drink (Exodus 15:22–25).
- The strategic idea in a severe famine to ask a widow and her son to feed a prophet with their final meal, instead of eating it themselves; by obeying, they would not starve and die, as many other families did (1 Kings 17:8–15).
- The strategic idea of asking a widow in debt, who was about to lose her two sons, what she had in her house. Then instructing her to borrow empty jars from others and pour her only possession—a small amount of olive oil—into the other jars until they were full; then to sell the miraculous oil and pay the debt (2 Kings 4:1–7).
- The strategic idea to send a military officer with a disease to dip himself in the Jordan River seven times, resulting in his complete healing (2 Kings 5:1–14).
- The strategic idea to send the praise and worship team out ahead of the military troops, which produced a phenomenal victory (2 Chronicles 20:21–26).
- The strategic idea to eat vegetables, instead of the king's rich foods, to be healthier and better nourished, thus becoming standouts among the finest young men in the land (Daniel 1:8–16).
- The strategic idea to use existing water pots and fresh water to procure the best wine and save a wedding reception (John 2:6–10).
- The strategic idea to take a small lunch, then bless, break, and distribute it to feed thousands of people (Matthew 14:13–21).
- The strategic idea to spit and make mud and put it on the eyes of a blind man. Then telling him to go wash to restore his sight (John 9:6–7).
- The strategic idea to not leave a sinking ship in order to be saved (Acts 27:21–44).

Do you see common threads running through each of these events?

In every case, the inspired idea featured divine intervention. The strategy made use of what the recipients already possessed, such as an available resource or a repositioning of themselves. And in each case, the divine provision was wrapped up in the familiar; the key component leading to the miracle didn't "magically" appear.

God often gives strategies using the ordinary, in an unordinary way, to get extraordinary results.

All this highlights the importance of an inspired idea. We're told, "Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do" (Proverbs 4:7 GNT). One form of divine wisdom is a strategic idea, and the good news is that God doesn't withhold wisdom. When we face uncommon challenges, the apostle James instructs us:

If you need wisdom [a strategic idea], ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (James 1:5)

He'll make this wisdom plain, not holding back or hiding it from you. This is His promise.

Respond:

Describe a time when you asked the Lord for wisdom [a strategic idea] in a situation. What happened?

Pray:

Precious Savior, thank You that in every situation You are there. Your wisdom and guidance are available to me. I love You.

DAY 4 IMITATE ME

Scripture: Philippians 2:2

I was a youth pastor for one of the fastest growing churches in the nation, and our team had thought of a way to reach every high school student in the area. It was a unique and good plan. Our youth group's future would entirely revolve around this initiative, for which my assistants and I had taken eight months to develop a strategy. I'd shared the vision with our youth group, and they embraced it.

I discovered that it was contrary to my pastor's heart. He asked that we not execute the program. I argued with him for about twenty minutes, but he didn't budge. I finally shut my mouth when I could think of nothing else to say—but I was furious. Our whole vision was built around this program. We had to completely start over. How would I tell our twenty-four leaders and the entire youth group? They'd worked so hard.

Devastated, I went to Lisa for comfort. After rehearsing my frustrations, she sweetly countered, "Well, John, it looks like God is trying to teach you something." Now I was angry with both my pastor and my wife.

I thought, *My pastor and my wife must be totally blind*. I felt alone and frustrated and was inconsolable. *Could this really be happening?* At one point, I even thought it was a nightmare—that I would soon wake up and all would be normal again.

In that moment, God spoke so clearly to my heart. He said, Son, when I judge you for your time of being a youth pastor, I will not judge first how many young people you won to Me. I will first judge how faithful you were to the man I put over you.

Those words riveted me, but not nearly as much as His next statement. He firmly said in my heart, You can win every high school student in the entire city to Me and lose all eternal credit and rewards for your labor because you were unfaithful to your pastor.

I suddenly began to tremble in holy fear. I immediately repented and asked for forgiveness.

I called my pastor and did the same with him.

A few days later, I walked into the meeting with my leaders. Now that I had a holy fear burning in my heart, I had a skip in my step, a twinkle in my eye, and a spark in my voice. I said with great enthusiasm, "Guys, I've got great news! Our lead pastor has spared us from birthing an Ishmael. He has declared that what we've been working on is not in the direction he wants this church to go, so we're scrapping the program!"

They all immediately responded with joy. Some smiled, others high-fived each other, and the rest gave a shout of approval. They each caught my heart because I'd finally caught my pastor's heart.

I learned that God was more concerned about my character than my results. He wanted a firm foundation in place before He would entrust Lisa and me with our own mission.

My dear friend, you are a leader too. If we walk in His ways, God has promised leadership opportunities to all His children.

Learn from me—so you, too, can advance in kingdom responsibility.

Respond:

Recount a time when you and a ministry leader disagreed on direction. What did you do? What was the outcome?

Pray:

Heavenly Father, forgive me for times when I've disappointed You when dealing with others. May I keep my mind, heart, and focus on You and Your plan.

DAY 5

ANOINTED

Scripture: Ephesians 4:1

A great blessing that has resulted from consistently submitting to truth is “the anointing.” To understand this, let’s turn to the great ordination—the day when God the Father inaugurated Jesus as King of heaven and earth. The author of Hebrews quotes these Old Testament lines addressed to God’s Son:

For you have cherished righteousness and detested lawlessness. For this reason, God, your God, has anointed you and poured out the oil of bliss on you more than on any of your friends. (Hebrews 1:9)

Jesus’s immovability on two particular issues resulted in a great benefit, and His example should be our standard. First, Jesus loved righteousness. And at the same time, He hated lawlessness. Many Christians may dislike lawlessness, but this is not the heart of Jesus; He hates it. Jesus hated anything to do with departing from God’s authority. Period. Jesus’s steadfast obedience, no matter the difficulty, was the reason the anointing on His life was more powerful than that of any of His companions.

You are called as much as anyone—including even your greatest heroes of the faith. More than likely, your calling is not in the organized church world, because only some—a small number— are called to this sphere. You’re privileged to excel, to stand out in the arena of life you’re sent to. Listen to Scripture’s record of Bezalel and his team of workers: The LORD has gifted Bezalel, Oholiab, and the other skilled craftsmen with wisdom and ability to perform any task involved in building the sanctuary. (Exodus 36:1)

These men didn’t possess the ability to speak the Word of God and minister to the people, as Moses or Aaron and his sons did. But these craftsmen were gifted with hands that could build the tabernacle.

You, too, have been gifted to build God’s tabernacle with the skills He has given you. However, this sanctuary isn’t made of gold, silver, bronze, precious stones, fine linen, acacia wood, or any other materials used to build the tabernacle of the Old Testament or the temple in Jerusalem. Today, God’s tabernacle is made of living stones—human beings—and these living stones are being built up as a habitation of God (1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:20–22). You’re gifted to build people for God’s glory.

Remember: God is for you!

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

And again, we’re emphatically told:

If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else? (Romans 8:31–32)

Listen to these words, not the discouraging statements that originate from the god of this world—the chief accuser and discourager. Your Creator is your Father, and He desires your success in the labor He’s called you to.

We serve one King; we are citizens of one kingdom, and members of one household; we have one faith, one mission—to build the house of God that He’ll inhabit for all eternity.

Let’s work together. Let’s become one and maintain unity. Let’s see His glory fill His dwelling place once again. There’s no other solution for the world’s problems.

Respond:

How has your life changed since becoming a follower of Christ?

How do you contribute to building the house of God?

Pray:

Lord God, thank You for calling me and trusting me to serve You. Please place someone in my path today who needs to hear the message and know the love of Jesus Christ.