

## Fear | Week One: Called.

- BIG IDEA:** God wants you, not "them," to change the world.  
**LAMENT:** What if I'm the problem?  
**SCRIPTURE:** Exodus 4:1 / Ephesians 2:10 / 1 Corinthians 12:4-7  
**TAKEAWAY:** I have a calling.

During the early weeks of my first year of college, I joined a social fraternity. I remember with vivid detail the first trip I made to the fraternity house as a new pledge. I was a bucket of nerves, not knowing what I would find or what would be asked of me. As I scaled the steps leading up to the front door of the house, I met a senior member of the fraternity. We worked through the normal "get to know you" conversation topics – hometown, prospective major, other university involvements. Suddenly, the conversation took an unexpected turn. This fraternity brother, think Delta Tau Chi of Animal House fame, asked me a very pointed question: "Alan, what is your purpose?" I mumbled something, dropped my head and slinked my way into the fraternity house hoping to find someone with whom to carry on a more shallow, fraternity house appropriate conversation. But the question lingered in my heart and mind. For what purpose was I created? Was my birth a random occurrence or am I to participate in a bigger story, grander in scale and significance than a life of laced-together experiences?

Suppose you found yourself in a similar situation today. How would you answer the purpose question? The life of Moses introduces us to a transcendent principle in the Bible – God uses people, flawed and finite, to accomplish his purpose and plans. God wants you, not "them," to change the world. "Them," in this case, refers to anyone other than you and me. Having just been commissioned by God to "go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of slavery" (Exodus 3:10), Moses responds predictably: "Surely there is someone, better suited than me, to accomplish this purpose. I'm not 'that guy.' No one is going to listen to me."

Is it surprising that Moses would respond to God's call with a flurry of self-doubt? I certainly observe a similar tendency in my behavior. You may think that "they" are more qualified, more Christ-like, less tarnished. But God wants to use you in his work to redeem people and right injustice. The issue of purpose and calling is, at the outset, an issue of faith. Do you and I believe that God wants to use us to accomplish his purpose? We know our faults and inconsistencies. Self-doubt is the predictable response of a person coming to grips with God's call on their life. Don't sidestep the doubt. Press into it. Pray your doubt, as Moses did, giving God the opportunity to win your trust as a first step in the process of directing your participation in his redemptive work.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS

- > Do you remember the first time you began thinking about purpose? Tell the story of how you began to grapple with the issue of purpose and calling.
- > Do you believe that God is calling you to participate in accomplishing his work on the earth?
- > What "self-doubt" messages would you bring to God if he appeared to you as a burning bush and commissioned you to a specific purpose? What do you do with your doubt? What would it look like for you to pray your doubt?
- > Today, what is God calling you to do? How are you responding to his call?
- > Bruce asked, "How will you let your calling blaze?" Words of affirmation fan the flame of our sense of calling. We need to encourage one another to see the ways God has equipped and prepared us for purpose and calling. Work around the circle allowing time for each person to hear from the group regarding gifts, talents, characteristics and experiences that God is using or could use to accomplish his redemptive purpose. This could be a very affirming, faith-building time. We often are blind to things that everyone else sees clearly. This is true of faults and so-called blind spots. But, it can also be true of our positive attributes as well.

