

The Building Blocks of Faith Toolkit

The Need to be Called and Equipped

For our faith to grow, we need to discern God’s call and be equipped to use our gifts and talents in the service of God and our neighbor. **We are called to work in God’s kingdom and equipped to do God’s work.**



Like many parents, Laura and Bob Keeley saved some of the artifacts from their children’s younger years. A particular favorite is a picture of the biblical story of Esther, drawn by their oldest daughter when she was about six years old. Esther’s arm is outstretched, pointing at Haman, with the words “That vile Haman!” in a word bubble above her. Haman is so shocked by the accusation that he drops the apple he is holding, and there is a “bonk” written next to the apple as it hits the floor.

The Esther story has become a favorite Keeley family reference, especially the part in Esther 4 where Esther is deciding whether to help her people or not. Her cousin Mordacai says, “Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” (4:14). It turns out that this is a handy line for parents to use in a variety of circumstances. If a Keeley child did not want to bring out the garbage or cut the grass or pick up toys, Bob or Laura would say, wryly, “Perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this.”

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The Keeleys have fun with that verse, but it’s also a great reminder: God has a special call for each of us. God has placed us in a particular spot at a particular time with particular gifts for a purpose—and we have been called to that purpose. But more than that, we are also being *equipped* for that purpose.

The Bible offers multiple examples of people being called and equipped. God talked to Moses through a burning bush, calling him to lead God’s people out of Egypt (Exodus 3). Moses was well equipped to meet Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, even though he wasn’t confident in his abilities. Moses had been raised as a member of the royal family. He knew Egypt. He knew Pharaoh. He knew how Pharaoh lived and what was important to him. Moses was not only called to do God’s work; he was uniquely positioned to do it in a way that others could not.

Our call (or calls—for we are called to more than one thing in our lives) may not be as dramatic as those in the stories of Esther or Moses, but each one is a divine calling nonetheless. Because we belong to God, because we know who God is and who we are in relationship to God, and because we have hope that we are part of God’s plan for renewing all things, we each have a particular call. To be able to answer this call, God equips us in particular ways. When Esther was called to speak to the king with regard to his plan to kill the Jews, she was able to do so with authority and to speak with a voice that the king was willing to hear.

Discerning exactly what our call is can sometimes be a long process, but it is not necessarily a mysterious one. God does not hide our calls from us, at least not in the long term. Moses heard his call directly from God at the burning bush. Most of us don’t hear our call from God so directly, but God uses other means to guide us. Esther’s call on her life became clear when Mordacai spoke with her. He nudged her to accept her call. Sometimes our call comes in the voice of others.

And sometimes the call comes from a combination of our heart’s desire and our own equipping. Jim retired after years of work but still wanted to be busy. He knew he had some skills in working with his hands, and he also had a desire to work for social justice. He began to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity in helping to build homes for people who needed them.

Sometimes our call comes by way of doors being closed to us. Bethany was a college junior who was exploring several career paths. She applied for a fellowship that was designed for people who were considering ministry work, but she didn’t receive the fellowship. Then she received a different fellowship to work with a communications professor doing research. Now, years later, she is herself a communications professor, feeling very much that she has been called to that particular career to serve students in that particular field.

Our need to be called and equipped takes the global aspect of hope and makes it personal. God has a task for us as a Christian community, and God also has a task for us as individuals. My call is not the same as yours. My gifts may be different from your gifts. My equipping is not the same as yours. But we are all called, and we are all being equipped. God has given us a unique combination of gifts and opportunities to serve in his kingdom.