

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 8/26/2024
Callings

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

ONE AT ONE – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, August 27 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for first responders in their important work of caring for others in need. Ask that they be kept safe in their efforts to care for the injured, threatened, or in other need. Pray that their efforts bring blessing to those who need their help and that there be positive outcomes from their important work.*

I have a friend and recently retired colleague who has been navigating some significant changes in his life. Besides being an outstanding pastor, my friend, Steve, is a gifted musician. A few years ago, however, he began losing his hearing. That hearing loss progressed to where he now struggles greatly to hear others despite having received cochlear implants to assist him. And, sadly, he is no longer able to compose music or sing. This has been a great sadness in Steve's life.

I share this because I was thinking about callings. GOD gifts us to do different things, particularly those that most fully utilize these abilities. When we become passionate about using these gifts, that has often been identified as a calling. But what happens when you lose your calling as Steve has? Steve's love and passion are gone. So, does he have a calling any longer?

While using our gifts in significant ways can bring focus to and drive our lives, I think there is more. We all have callings that come from GOD, and they go beyond the use of these GOD-given gifts. The Bible tells us some specific behaviors of GOD's people that should consume us beyond our gifted abilities. And they are things that everyone can do—callings for all of us.

For example, I Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, *“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is GOD's will for you in CHRIST JESUS.”* It is GOD's will, GOD's calling that we be joyful always. This doesn't mean being happy about misfortunes or challenges that come. Rather, it means that in all things, even in misfortune, to delight in the knowledge that GOD is with us. No matter how things turn out, GOD is and will be there. Paul could find joy even when in prison or while being chased out of town because he knew that the LORD was with him. Thus, he could speak with GOD always and be thankful that, even when things weren't good, it was good to be with GOD. The more we conform our minds to GOD's way of thinking and focus on GOD's promises, we can deal with anything that comes knowing that ultimately, GOD's glory. Paul echoes this in Philippians 4:4 where he writes, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”*

Another calling we have from GOD comes from JESUS' own words in John 13:34-35. *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* Caring for others, even seeking to bless them in whatever way we can is also a calling from GOD that all can do. To see others as dearly loved by GOD should motivate us to treat them as GOD would want them treated. When we remember that JESUS died for all people (*“This cup is the new covenant in MY blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins.”*) we should be moved by GOD's love for them. If JESUS died for them, as HE did for us, how can we do less than show them the unconditional love that HE showed us?

My friend, Steve, misses greatly his music writing and singing. Yet he still joyfully shares GOD's love with others. More than that, he finds his purpose and meaning in this important work to which he and all of us were called by GOD. GOD's calling is for everyone and can be done by everyone. It is what GOD desires for GOD's Kingdom on earth.

In CHRIST's love,
Pastor Jeffrey