

If we are to be united as a body, and if we are to grow and be filled with the fullness of God, each part of the body must fulfill its function. If a man went to the doctor, and only half of his organs were functioning, that man would be a medical miracle just being alive, and the doctor would rush him to the hospital knowing that his condition was dire. In the same way, the body of Christ cannot function with half of its members not functioning, so it is imperative that we find our purpose and fulfill it, to the glory of God and to our own joy.

Day 1

Get Out of the Rut

Our lives very quickly become routine, and we find ourselves going through the motions until each day feels the same, and we are shocked by the passage of time. This rut that we often find ourselves in is not very conducive to growth in most situations, and so it is important to learn to recognize the rut and break out of it. In Exodus chapters 3 and 4, Moses has found himself in a long rut, herding sheep for 40 years in the wilds. How does Moses get out of his rut and become the leader that the people of Israel need? He has an encounter with God. Moses seems to be content to live out his life having each day be the same as the last, but God has bigger plans because God is moving in the world to bring it under His dominion where it will be glorified, and that starts with His people. God has heard the cries of Israel in captivity, cries that Moses seems to have forgotten about in his boring but predictable life. Moses has fled captivity and has found a kind of existence that is comfortable enough, even if it is not the life that God desires for him. In order to be placed on the path of having the life that God has envisioned for him, and in order to fulfill his role in saving Israel, Moses must be startled awake by an encounter with God that is so powerful, that to ignore it would be to embrace the utmost peril. This encounter reveals the heart of God for his people, his desire to see them freed, and his intention to use Moses to accomplish His desires. Just like Moses, we can easily find ourselves in a rut of complacency where we have forgotten about the heart of God for us and for the world, and we can become content with an existence that is far less than God desires. Spend some time this week meeting God in his word and in prayer, and see what He is calling you to do.

Verses: 2 Timothy 1:9, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Corinthians 1:9, John 15:16

Prayer Topics: Wisdom, Attitude, Courage

Day 2

The Fear of Inadequacy

One of the biggest problems I see people wrestle with when it comes to serving the community of faith is the feeling of inadequacy and the fear that it promotes. I often see people who have great gifts fail to use them because they do not recognize the gifts they have been given, but instead they are very aware of their faults, flaws, and sins. I have often heard people say that God could never use them, and they seem to think they are unique in this appraisal. The reality is that most of the people that God can actually use are very aware of their problems, sins, and limitations. When Moses is called by God at the burning bush, every fear is awakened in him as he runs through all the possible scenarios of failure with the God of the universe who knows all things. What Moses never seems to consider is that God's adequacy is great enough to make up for Moses' inadequacy. What is the alternative? Is there some person out there who is perfect enough to fulfill God's calling in his own power, without relying on God? Is that the kind of person that God uses? Look at all of scripture from the beginning to the end, and show me the person who God used that was faultless and did everything God asked because he was good enough and powerful enough on his own. Was that true for David? For Gideon? For Moses?

Which of these men had no faults, no sins, and perfect trust that never wavered? Which of these men never had any moments of weakness, never had any doubts or fears? God's answer to Moses' knowledge of his own weakness was to point to the strength that God possessed to overcome it, and that is still true. When we let fear rule us, it is not that we lack faith in ourselves, but that we lack faith in God. Repent of your lack of faith, and find your place of service.

Verses: 2 Corinthians 3:5, Romans 8:28, 2 Timothy 1:7

Prayer Topics: Shortcomings, Weaknesses, Limitations

Day 3

Start the Journey

When we think of serving God, we often think about what that job entails from the standpoint of complete maturity. When we think of a bible teacher, for example, we often think about a great teacher we personally knew, or even some mega-personality from T.V. or the internet. We then compare ourselves to that person, and find that we don't stack up, so we don't start the journey of service that God has planned for us. The problem we usually face is that we fail to understand that the person we are comparing ourselves to did not start as the person we see today. We can lament our lack of skill, our lack of wisdom, and our lack of proficiency and let that keep us from beginning the path that would lead to skill, wisdom, and proficiency. When I became a parent, I did not see myself as a parent, and yet there was no turning back. If children were purchased from the store, no one would ever buy them, because no one would ever feel ready for the challenge. All those people would be right. You are not ready for the challenge ever, but you become ready by accepting the challenge. Rather than seeing service in the church as some destination, we should understand that it is a journey of growth that begins when you trust in God enough to say "yes" to Him. When you see the growth that Moses goes through over the years of leading Israel, you understand that he could never have gotten there without the faith to begin the journey where he was at when God called him. So may it be for all of us.

Verses: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Psalm 51:10, Ephesians 4:22-24

Prayer Topics: Leap, Faith, Trust, Risk

Day 4

Renew Your Identity

When Moses was called, he had spent enough time as a shepherd to see himself as a shepherd. This, to me, is a strange thing. Not that Moses could see himself as a shepherd, but the idea of when identity gets formed. For example, most of us have lifted a weight before, but most of us would not see ourselves as weight lifters. How many weights would you have to lift before you saw yourself as a weightlifter? And, conversely, if you saw yourself as a weightlifter would you be more likely to lift weights? What I am getting at is this: the object dictates the word, but the word also shapes the object. If your back yard is full of weeds, you probably don't refer to it as a garden, but if you started to call it a garden, you might put more work into making it one, for most of the time the word is creative. When God created the world, He spoke and the world came into existence. It is almost always the same with man. If you drive by an empty lot and it has a sign on it that says, "future home of QT", you know what that lot will become. Someone put a word to that lot, and that word will determine what it becomes. If the people at QT simply drove around town looking for a QT store that they could inhabit, there wouldn't be any QT stores. We often expect that we can wait until we are something to start to call ourselves that thing, but that is to leave our identity up to the drift of our weakness. Are you a servant of the Most-High

God? Do you realize that you need to see yourself that way first, to embrace God's word in your life before it becomes manifest in the flesh? Do you realize that when you do, your identity will change, and so will God's identity in your life? Renew your identity, and see what becomes of your life!

Verses: 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 2:10, Galatians 2:20, John 1:12

Prayer Topics: Who, What, Where, Why?

Day 5

Team Up

The last objection Moses raised to the call God had for his life was that he could not speak. This is probably an exaggerated concern, although it is possible that Moses had some kind of speech impediment or other difficulty. Being raised in the household of Pharaoh, it is unlikely that Moses' problem was a lack of oratory training or being nervous in front of important people. When this problem is raised, God becomes angry with Moses, and yet God still comes up with a solution, that Moses' brother would accompany him and speak for him. When you consider serving in the community of faith, do you see yourself as part of a team, or as someone who will be completely responsible for the outcome of your service? Everything that happens in a church relies on teamwork, if it is to be done well and be fruitful. Many times, people fail to begin to serve because they are overwhelmed by the amount of responsibility they see in the ministry that they want to serve, not understanding that serving in the community is just like life in the community: it is done together. Don't serve alone, instead, be part of a team that meets needs and develops others. You will find it more rewarding, and you will be way more likely to get started.

Verses: Hebrews 10:24-25, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Galatians 6:2

Prayer Topics: Mutual Goals, Community, Partnership