

Soul Strong Study – Week 3 “SIGNIFICANT”

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(Chapter 2 “Be Authentic” in *Soul Strong*)

“I discover and embrace my unique calling.”

“If you do not STAND firm in your faith, you will not STAND at all.” Isaiah 7.9

My Life with Insecurity

“Yes, there is that voice that speaks from above and from within and that whispers softly or declares loudly: *You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests.* It certainly is not easy to hear that voice in a world filled with voices that shout: *You are no good, you are ugly; you are worthless; you are despicable, you are nobody—unless you can demonstrate the opposite.*” Henri Nouwen

When we are unsettled and focused on our lack, too often we struggle with:

Insecurity _____

Identity _____

Isolation _____

Intimacy _____

“Your past doesn’t have the right to give you a name, your sin has no naming rights, and certainly your environment can’t name you. Only the One who has created you has the authority to give you the name of His choosing – and God’s name for you is Beloved.” Carol McLeod

“Now I will heal and mend them, I will make them whole and bless them with an abundance of peace and security.” Jeremiah 33.6

You Matter. Your life has purpose. You are significant. The real you. That’s why we studied “Be Authentic” this past week and will continue tonight. We are called to STAND in our identity, with our calling, and to share our unique stories. How? By seeking to “Be Authentic.” As we live into this SIGNIFICANCE, we will thrive, and serve and flourish for something greater than ourselves.

⁴ The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

⁶ “Alas, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”

⁷ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.

⁹ Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant...”

***¹⁷ “Get yourself ready! STAND up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. ¹⁸ Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to STAND against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. ¹⁹ They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.* Jeremiah 1.4-10, 17-19**

Spiritual Gifts

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord.” 1 Corinthians 12.4-5

“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. ¹¹ Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.” 1 Peter 4.10-11 NLT

ptoikilos = _____ multi-colored forms (origin of “polka dot”)

T rue You

“Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.” Gal. 6.4-5

“The willingness to see ourselves as we are and name it in God’s presence is at the very heart of the spiritual journey.” Ruth Haley Barton

Appointed & Anointed

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” Jeremiah 1.5

“Our true calling from God will not only showcase our talents and strengths, but it will also put on display our insecurities, weaknesses, and shortcomings. God doesn’t want you to fulfill your assignment in life without His strength, power, and wisdom, which is the precise reason why your calling might cause you to tremble rather than to boast.” Carol McLeod

Never Alone

“But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 1.7-8

Do the Next Thing

“Get yourself ready! STAND up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to STAND against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. Jeremiah 1.4-10, 17-19

*Looking to Jesus, ever serener,
Working or suffering, be thy demeanor.
In the shade of His presence, the rest of His calm,
The light of His countenance live out thy psalm,
Strong in His faithfulness, praise Him and sing.
Then, as He beckons thee, do the next thing. – Mrs. George A. Paull (1897)*

What it looks like when I choose to be authentic:

1. I know who I am and who I’m not.

Paul knew *“It is in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.”* Ephesians 1.11-12 MSG

2. I live for an audience of One.

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 2 Peter 1.3

3. I reject comparison and competition.

“Isn’t everything you have and everything you are sheer gifts from God? So what’s the point in all this comparing and competing – you already have all you need.” 1 Corinthians 4.7 MSG

4. I passionately pursue my calling.

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” – Frederick Buechner

Your deep gladness? _____ World’s deep hunger? _____

“To live as a follower of Jesus today. In every aspect of life, in small and large acts, with family, neighbors and enemies, we are to seek to live out the grace and truth of Jesus. This is our calling.” Mark Labberton

Spiritual Gifts

TTrue You

Appointed and Anointed

Never Alone

Do the Next Thing

Closing Prayer – singing over you

In heav'nly love abiding, No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding, For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me, My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me, And can I be dismayed?

Wherever He may guide me, No want shall turn me back;
My Shepherd is beside me, And nothing can I lack.
His wisdom ever waketh, His sight is never dim;
He knows the way He taketh, And I will walk with Him. -Anna L. Waring (1850)

Small Group Discussion

1. What was the hardest part for you in doing this week's chapter "Be Authentic?"
2. Where are you on this journey of being able to say "I know who I am and who I'm not. I am confident with how God created me uniquely with gifts that serve His purpose for my life."
3. On pages 24-26 there are 13 biblical affirmations. Share one of those that you are determined to embrace in your own life.
4. As you reviewed some of the voices that have spoken into your life (pages 29-30), was there anything new you discovered?
5. "Her success does not mean your failure." (page 35) Do you ever struggle with comparing or competing with other women? What helps?
6. What spoke to you most about the story of God calling Moses' to lead his people? (pp. 39-41) When have you argued with God?
7. Remember all those questions you were asked on pages 43-44? Can everyone share at least one of your answers? If you can't think of what to share, or didn't answer yet, everyone answer this one please: "What is something most people don't know about you?"
8. Close in prayer.

HOMEWORK – Please try to complete chapter 3 "Dwell Deep" before next week. Pray for those in your group. (*"Be Authentic" was a long chapter, so go back and finish it if you haven't yet.*)