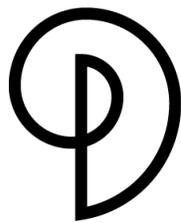


# SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE  
OF PEACE**  
Called to Connect



## Called by the God Within

*February 23 & 24, 2019*

Throughout this series we'll talk about the many ways in which God calls us. Here's another – God's still, small voice within. The story of God's dwelling place runs like a thread throughout the biblical narrative, but it ends with this profound truth from Colossians 1:27, "This is the great mystery: Christ lives in you." God's dwelling place is, by grace, within us. And so, part of our faith formation is learning to listen to God's voice within. This takes both commitment and practice.

### SCRIPTURE TEXT : JOHN 16:12-15

Read the scripture text together as a group.

### BACKGROUND INFO

We have been diving deep into the many ways God's calling is revealed to us: through others, through our gifts, through our service, through sorrow, joy or pain. This week we are going to look at God's call that is within us. This call is different since it takes some effort on our part. To attend to the call within, we do that through listening. We listen to the One who dwells within us. God abides within us and this call within is God's sheer grace, a gift of pure love, and on top of that a boundless power of source and identity. In this text Jesus is letting us know that he lives in us through the Holy Spirit. And he is calling us to be his very messengers in the world by calling us within.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced hearing God's call from within?
- Have you ever felt the call to silence? What was that experience like for you?
- If not, do you have a desire to know God through silence? How do you follow the call to silence?
- Do you read or study or memorize scripture? Why?
- How does your relationship with scripture lead you to follow God's call?

**APPLICATION:** This week, challenge yourself to take some time of silence each day. Maybe it's only for a few short minutes. Be intentional and listen for God's soft voice within.

*Additional Resource: The Stories We Live by Kathleen Cahalan\**

*\*This sermon series is based on concepts from Cahalan's book. This week's sermon and study guide following along with Ch. 8.*

# CALLED

Called Within

John 16:12-15

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Sandy Rothschiller

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We have been in a worship series that has focused on God's calling. We have heard how God's callings can come to us in many ways over the last few weeks. God calls us through others, through recognizing our gifts in service and work, even in sorrow or pain. Today we are going to hear Jesus teach the disciples and us about how Jesus calls us from within and speaks to us through the Holy Spirit.

Our text for today is from John 16:12-15 (The Message): *"I still have many things to tell you, but you can't handle them now. But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. He won't draw attention to himself, but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said. He will honor me; he will take from me and deliver it to you. Everything the Father has is also mine. That is why I've said, 'He takes from me and delivers to you.'"*

In this text Jesus is letting us know that he lives in us through the Holy Spirit. And he is calling us to be his very messengers in the world by calling us within. Now that is a loaded thought!

How do we go about identifying God's call within us? How do we identify Jesus speaking to us through the Holy Spirit? Now that is a great question! Let me say a little more about God's call within you. The call within is God's way of sharing God's heart for you and for the world. It resides within every living being. All of us are called from within by God.

God chooses many different ways to call or communicate within us. Sometimes we hear God's message in dramatic ways. But more often, we'll hear God speaking through our own thoughts, and ordinary practices such as reading the Bible, praying quietly, or even when we are doing mundane tasks such as driving a car or making a meal or taking a shower.

God can communicate with us is by putting thoughts or ideas in our mind through the Holy Spirit. God's voice can often sound like a flow of spontaneous thoughts. How

can we go about identifying God's call within us? I am going to suggest three different ways, believing there are more than three ways, but let's just start with three.

**1) Scripture:** Reading and praying scripture.

**2) Silence:** A feeling or thought that comes through silence.

**3) A Thought:** A seemingly random thought. A thought that comes to you when you are doing something else and you act on it, somehow knowing it must have been God.

Scripture: A woman named Jennifer shared this story. *A few years ago, I was in a really stressful time waiting for final results after my cancer surgery. I was desperate to hear God's voice. I couldn't conjure up big fancy prayers. I couldn't really even think clearly! So, I found one verse. I kept it on my phone and read it all day long. I memorized it, I meditated on it. I constantly quoted Jesus' words, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)*

*That Scripture became God's voice to me.*

*I didn't just hear it as a Bible verse; I listened to it as if God was whispering it in my ear. "I will never leave you or forsake you even if you need chemo. I will never leave you or forsake you even if the doctors didn't get it all. I will never leave you or forsake you — absolutely never no matter what!" I constantly heard it in my head and felt it in my heart. God was calling me to a sense of peace and wholeness through a difficult situation. I experienced God's call within me as I lived into scripture.*

We too can sense God's call within through scripture. It doesn't have to be a whole chapter, maybe it is just a verse or two. Sometimes a verse just seems to resonate with us. When it does, jot it down and read it over and over, maybe even for a few days. Think about it throughout your day. Meditate on it. Experience how God is calling you through scripture. When you find a verse and spend time with it God is there with you. You can hear God's call through Scripture.

Another way that God calls us is through silence. Silence. It is something which, I think we are all a little uncomfortable with on some level. Think of all the ways we try and avoid silence. When talking with friends and family we all try to avoid "awkward" silences. At times it can even seem as though we are scared of silence.

In our fast-paced and busy lives we can find ways to ensure that we are never exposed to silence. When we drive, we listen to the radio; when we are at home, we watch TV or surf the internet. Even when working, we quite often listen to some music to help pass the time.

I think it is natural for us, on some level, to avoid silence, because in the silence we are confronted with our innermost thoughts and we are afraid that we may not like those thoughts. In the silence we see a different side of ourselves; our weakness and brokenness. Silence forces us to come face-to-face with the reality that we are broken and we need God. I think that the reason we fear silence is because we know we need God, but we are afraid that God will not show up. We are afraid that there is nothing in the silence.

Yet it is in that deep quiet and silence that God promises to show up. We may not hear a voice, we may experience a sense of peace, of hope, of love that will eventually embrace us.

*Listen to Andrew's story. When I was laid off in 2009 it was devastating. My ego was severely bruised. I went from making a six-figure income at a prestigious law firm to zero in the blink of an eye. I worried about how my wife and I were going to raise two children and pay our mortgage.*

*The next day my wife was off to work and even my children had things to do. They went to school to learn and play, but I had nowhere to go. I finished my breakfast and sat at the kitchen table in my gym shorts and t-shirt. The only noise I could hear in our empty house was the dull hum of the refrigerator. Everything was quiet.*

*Being plunged into that silence was unnerving at first. I had become accustomed to the noise of our busy household, the noise of my office, and the noise in my mind telling me all of things I had to do each day. But as I look back, I see that some of the most powerful experiences I have had in my faith were and continue to be in those moments of silence. All these years later my relationship with God continues to grow and I am often amazed to see how spending time in silence opens me up to God's call, listening with my heart, not speaking, letting go, getting direction and experiencing peace.*

Another way we can hear God's call within us is through our daily activities. We can have an inner calling in our mind and in our soul even when we go out for a run, go to the gym or put on headphones to listen to good music. God knows all of us so well. For some, the best way to listen to God is to keep busy with your hands or your feet or through listening to music. I know of a church that provides knitting needles and yarn at the sanctuary door. Why? Because some people listen best when they are keeping their hands busy. Some people listen best when focusing on something that you can do without much thought. So of course Jesus calls us through an inner voice when we are busy doing something else.

Some experience the inner calling of God while driving, they are actively doing something, and experience the inner voice of God at the same time. Elizabeth was driving home from work one day and the thought came to her that she should call Shirley. Shirley was a friend of hers, but they hadn't connected in awhile. So she thought, I'll give Shirley a call. The conversation was really hard. Shirley had just lost her job and she was really down. She didn't have the energy to call anyone, she was feeling in a deep, dark hole. Elizabeth went right over to her house. It was an amazing time together. Shirley was able to share what was happening in her life and felt such a sense of relief telling Elizabeth. When Elizabeth was leaving that evening, Shirley asked why she called her today. Elizabeth said, "I just knew, something inside of me let me know that I needed to call you. I believe it was God."

A few weeks ago Pastor Jeff spoke about how we experience God's call through nudges within us. God calls us so many ways to live as children of God. To experience God's love and share that love with the world. As our scripture says, God calls us through the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of the Truth will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is.

God calls everyone with a voice that is within us. There are many ways to experience God's inner call. Through scripture, silence, and the everyday activities in our lives. God uses the Holy Spirit to reach inside of us to guide us.

Let's take a few moments and ponder these words from John 15.

*"Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me.*

*"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant."*

How is God calling you within? Through scripture, silence, daily activity? Take time this week to listen to how God is calling you.

# CALLED

Called by the God Within  
John 16:12-15



God speaks to us in many different ways. Today we'll explore three of the ways that God calls us...and think about how we might make sure to leave ourselves open to receiving the call.

## CALLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

And Jesus said...

"He (the Holy Spirit) will honor me; he will

take from me

and

deliver to you."

## CALLED BY GOD WITHIN

We are all called. Unscramble the words below to find some of the ways God calls us...and then write the letters in the boxes with the same number for a great reminder!

### SETRRPUIC

	C			P		U		E
6	14	12	16	14	13			

### SELNECI

S		L		N	C	
6	12	13	10	13		

### LIDAY VATCITYI

	A		L	Y
1	9	12	11	

	C			V			Y
9	16	12	12	16	11		

### God calls us...

M			
9	10	11	

D		F	F					T
1	12	13	14	13	10	16		

W			
9	11	6	

## FOR THE RIDE HOME

### PRESCHOOL

Today we're talking about how God calls us through the Holy Spirit. To help your preschooler understand, talk often about how they're never alone...that God is always with them. Help them understand that God speaks to us through other people, through scripture (God's word), in the quiet of our day as well as in our daily activities. Help them to see you leaning in to God's calling in your life and share with them moments when you have responded. Pray the prayer below together...

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

God calls us in many different ways...through those around us, through scripture (God's word), in the quiet of our days and the busyness of our activities. Do you set aside time each day to be in God's presence? Spend time with God this week...either by reading your Bible, praying daily, sitting in silence or looking for God as you go through your day. Share with your family what you hear God speaking to you today.

### PRAY TOGETHER...

Gracious God, thank you for calling us. Open our eyes, ears and hearts to receive your words for us today. Help us to see you at work in us and through us. Help us to hear you calling. In Jesus' name. Amen.