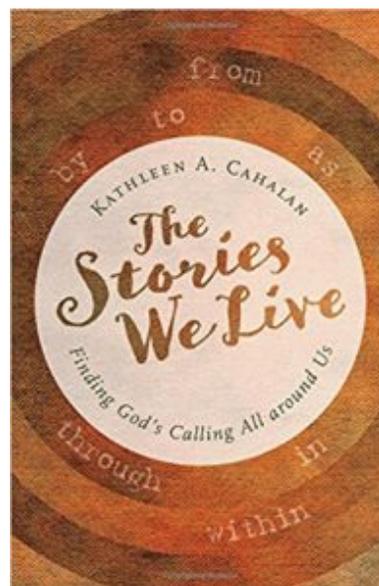




CREATING A CULTURE OF CALLING

Stories We Live Study Guide

- Session 1. Called by God in Multiple Ways
- Session 2. Called to Be Followers of Christ
- Session 3. Called as We Are
- Session 4. Called from People, Places, or Situation
- Session 5. Called for Service and Work
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Session 1. Called *by* God in Multiple Ways

Reflection: How Do You See Your Calling and Vocation

- Consider your callings: Are you more like the acorn, the pilgrimage, or a surprising discovery? Share a story that illustrates why you chose your type of calling.
- What images of God and vocation come to mind from your callings?

Session 2. Called to be Followers of Christ

Reflection #1

- How has Christ called you to follow him today? OR What does it mean for you to be a follower of Christ today?

Reflection #2: Six Ways of Following Jesus

1. How do you follow Jesus as a *worshipper*—one whose heart is filled with adoration and love for the source of life, the One on whom we depend?
 - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 8:1-13
2. How do you follow Jesus as a *witness* to what God has done for us?
 - Suggested Scripture: Luke 24:36-49
3. How do you follow Jesus as a *neighbor* to those around you?
 - Suggested Scripture: Luke 14:12-14, Luke 10:25-37
4. How do you follow Jesus as a *forgiver*—to forgive those who harm us and seek forgiveness when we harm others.
 - Suggested Scripture: Luke 7:36-50,
5. How do you follow Jesus as a *prophet*—to declare what is wrong with our communities and world, and call people back to right relationship through justice and mercy.
 - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 21:10-14
6. How do you follow Jesus as a *steward*—caring for God’s creation and the goods of the household.
 - Suggested Scripture: Matthew 25:14-29

Session 3. Called *as* We Are

Reflection: Callings Over Time

- How do you experience God’s callings at this age in your life?
- Have people share their insights on how God’s callings and their vocation emerged at different stages of their life, and how they are experiencing God’s calling today.

Session 4. Called *from* People, Places, or Situations

Reflection: Calling and Life Transitions

Think of one transition in your own life (like a graduation, wedding, birth of the first child, retirement, a divorce, death of a loved one, loss of job, etc.) or in your family's life (like a transition involving your parents, your children or grandchildren, your spouse, etc.).

After people have identified a story, ask them to reflect on their life transition using the following questions:

1. What were the emotions you were feeling—excitement, anticipation, pain, loss, grief?
2. Did you experience a sense of loss during this transition? What was the loss?
3. Did the transition involve forgiving and possibly reconciling with someone or forgiving yourself?
4. How do you integrate the transition into your life—addressing the loss and embracing a “new” time in your life?
5. How did you experience God in your transition? What was God calling you from? Where did this calling lead you?

Session 5. Called *for* Service and Work

Reflection: Work and Calling

- How can your employed work be a form of service?
- In what ways are you called to serve?
- For whom is your service to be given?

Reflection: Discerning What to Give Your Life To

When discerning what you can give your life for consider the three questions:

1. *Is what you are doing a source of joy?* (“Do you get a kick out of it?”) [Joy – is not feeling good about what you are doing; rather it is an interior conviction that what one is doing is good even if it does not make one happy or content.]
2. *Is it something that calls forth your gifts, engaging your abilities and talents, using them fully?* (“Are you any good at it?”)
3. *Is this role or work of genuine service to others and to the wider society?* (“Does anyone want you to do it?”)

Session 6. Called *through* Each Other

Reflection: Experiencing a Sense of Calling through Others

- Who has been instrumental in helping you discover God's calling for you? Who has been an agent of God's vocation for you? Identify one person and how old you were. (Think about family members, friends, colleagues, supervisors, the people we serve, and mentors.)
- What did the people in your life do for and with you to help you discover God's vocation?
- What is instrumental in your life right now? Who is currently an agent of God's vocation for you? What are they doing for and with you to help you discover God's vocation at this stage of your life?

Reflection: Being an Agent of God's Vocation for Others

- For whom have you been an agent of God's vocation? What did you do for and with these individuals? What was the experience like for you?
- How might others be called by God *through* you today?

Session 7. Called *in* Suffering

Reflection

- Share a story of a time that you felt called in a struggle, away from a difficult situation, towards something new, or for a deeper purpose than you first thought.
- What unexpected opportunities, deepened awareness, or surprising gifts did this painful experience ultimately hold for you?
- How did you hear God's call?
- What did you learn about your callings in times of suffering?