

Nurses Christian Fellowship National Nurses Month Celebration 2022

Hope in the Darkness

Week Four: Hope in Our Calling

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Men and women enter the profession of nursing for many reasons. For some, the role of nurse represents job security and good pay. It's an opportunity to grow as a leader and as an advocate for others. For nurses of faith, we often draw strength and purpose from the word *calling*. The use of our hands, minds, feet, and voice in the healing and care of others, as well as the education of our next generation of nurses, is done for the honor and glory of God.

Over the long months of the pandemic, many nurses and faculty have questioned their calling as nurses ... and for good reason. The deaths of more than one million Americans who have often been isolated



from their loved ones; inadequate staffing in units stretched thin; shortages of supplies and medications; the divisiveness within the profession; and the challenges of preparing students in both face-to-face and virtual learning environments have led many nurses to leave the profession. *Calling* has become a word triggering feelings of anger, loss, shame, and weariness. It's led to a loss of purpose and identity. How do we address our calling?

Hearing the Word

As I have prayed and searched for answers in the Scriptures for the questions I face in my own life, Paul's prayer for the Ephesians has been a source of light and hope for me. Read Ephesians 1:15-23 once...twice...three times. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through these words.

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians includes these words:

... ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,
may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,
¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened,

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that you may know *what is the hope to which he has called you*,
what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,
¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe,
according to the working of his great might...

Ephesians 1:17-19 (ESV)

Responding to the Word

Paul wrote these verses for the people of the church in Ephesus, but they are also written for us. As someone very important in my life shared with me, "This is our story, too." These verses are for you. They are for me.

- What words stand out to you? Look for words or phrases that are repeated.
- What words or phrases have significant meaning as you read? It may help to underline or highlight what stands out to you.
- Look for themes in this prayer. Words we see repeated can lead us to these themes.
- Who is the source of strength Paul refers to again and again? In what ways is this strength manifested?
- What does Paul say is our calling? (vs. 18)

Application

I say this with all gentleness, sincerity, and a lifetime of doing to please others and to please God--our calling is not in what we do. It is in who Jesus Christ is. Our hope exists in Jesus Christ because of his sacrifice. Our future rests in eternity with him where we will know him fully and be fully known. I long to be known by someone in this way: a relationship with no pretenses, no expectations, no disappointments. This is a hope that also promises no tears, no pain, and no sting of death.

- What is a place in your life where you need more wisdom? (vs. 17) Be willing to ask God into this space.
- In what areas do you desire to know more about God? (vs. 17) Remember God desires relationship. Spend time talking with God and time just listening to him on a regular basis.
- What steps should you take to bring enlightenment to your heart? (vs. 18)
- How do you define the basis for your identity? Is it based on what you do or in Jesus Christ? Ask God to reveal areas where you are wounded, broken, or need healing.
- Ask yourself where you place your hope. Is it in people or things that are temporary or ones that have eternal implications? Acknowledge with God the challenges and difficulties you are facing. Pray and ask him to give you his perspective in these situations. Consider asking another believer in your life to help hold you accountable in this process.

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As a new grad, I had my nursing career planned out with five-year goals, ten-year goals, and beyond. Let's just say, however, that life did not go as I had planned. I have been and remain blessed beyond measure, even as I continue to experience life's uncertainties. Because I have more direction now in whom and where I place my hope, I know I will always do ministry—whether that's leading and supporting professional nurses through Nurses Christian Fellowship or caring for and supporting my husband who has been diagnosed with multiple dementias. My identity in Jesus Christ does not change. My hope remains steadfast. My identity is grounded in him. This been the source for undeniable peace. Experience the hope to which we have been called!



Dr. Christy Secor is the national Professional Ministries Director for Nurses Christian Fellowship USA as well as a Certified Daring Way™ Facilitator. She promotes living with courage, presence, wholeheartedness, and growing in deeper intimacy in our relationships with God. Christy supports more than 40 professional nurse groups, develops webinars and resources, and provides prayer support that encourages deeper connection with God, our colleagues, and the individuals and communities we serve.

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