

## Recognizing Our Calling and Identity in Christ

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Nursing is recognized as one of the most trusted professions for the care we provide to individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan. Learning to think like a nurse takes intense and rigorous training. We care for others based on evidence-based practice, critical thinking, and clinical judgment as we learn to work both independently and as part of a team. Our care for others also comes from a deeper place with the calling that led us to this profession, a desire to make a difference in the lives of others, and to reflect our faith in that calling.

For me – that calling came early in life watching my mother struggle with excruciating migraines, opioid dependency, and depression for her entire adult life. My mother’s physical and emotional struggles left a profound mark on my life as she cycled through times of crisis, pulling back from me and others emotionally before she was able to find solid ground again ... at least for a little while before the cycle repeated. It was not how she wanted to live. But it was the best she could do. Through her pain, she also prayed. I am grateful for both her pain and her prayers as each has played a large role in who I am today.

This calling has also reminded me of my own struggles to lean upon Jesus Christ. I’m still too independent. I’m a “fixer.” It is much easier for me to meet the needs of others than to take the rest I need for myself. My identity can often be found in what I do – not who I am in Christ. I also see those who are considered the fringe or outcasts of society. How does one person make a difference when the needs are so great? From other nurses I’ve spoken with about this, I know I’m not alone.

This week as we focus on recognition, let’s take a step back to recognize both our calling and our identity in Christ. Give yourself permission to take an honest look at all that has brought you to this place. Know that you are safe to be open, honest, and real with the One who created you. He loves you just as you are. And He has so much in store for you!

### **Hearing the Word**

Read Paul’s words found in Galatians 2:19-20 (The Passion Translation):

<sup>19</sup> “But because the Messiah lives in me, I’ve now died to the law’s dominion over me so that I can live for God.

<sup>20</sup> “My old identity has been co-crucified with Messiah and no longer lives; *for the nails of his cross crucified me with him*. And now the essence of this new life is no longer mine, for the Anointed One lives his life through me—*we live in union as one!* My new life is empowered by

the faith of the Son of God who loves me so much that he gave himself for me, and dispenses his life into mine!

### **Responding to the Word**

- What do we know about Paul's background before he came to faith in Jesus Christ? Philippians 3:4-6 (The Passion Translation) can also help provide some insight.
- How does it make you feel to see the transformation Paul describes in his new motives and reasons for living?
- How does Paul describe what it means for him to live by faith?
- What do you think it meant for Paul to recognize his life was no longer his own?

### **Application**

There are times when we can lose our sense of purpose and calling. Sometimes the experiences we had growing up leave wounds that never heal. Our "go to" responses when we feel stressed may overshadow what we know to be truth. There are times we also may feel alone and isolated. We question if we are making a difference.

We know nursing can be a demanding profession. There may have been times in the past when we've felt we each had to do more with less. And with COVID-19, we've seen the reality of this with a lack of staff and personal protective equipment. We've also seen and experienced how this virus has isolated us as well as our patients from each other and sources of strength and community that are needed.

Reminding each other of the truth of scripture and being present with each other through these times of uncertainty can provide support that's desperately needed. As you consider these verses Paul shared about his own life, how can we begin to apply this to our own lives and practice?

- How would you describe your calling? Why did you want to become a nurse? Taking some time to reflect and write your story down can be an encouragement when you experience difficult circumstances in the future.
- What emotions are you feeling right now in your practice? Be willing to take what you're feeling openly and honestly to the Lord in prayer. He understands where we are and wants us to be real with Him.
- How can we identify more with Christ as we move through what we're experiencing in our practice?

- What does it mean to us to be reminded that Jesus Christ loved us so much that He was willing to die for us? How can we remind ourselves of our identity in Him?
- How do we begin to recognize our purpose and identity in Christ through the challenges we face? What verse/verses speak encouragement to you? How might we encourage one another with this truth?

Christy Secor DNP, RN, CDWF is currently serving as the Interim Director of Nurses Christian Fellowship-USA in addition to her role as the Professional Ministries Director. She also teaches as an adjunct faculty member for Indiana Wesleyan University in their RN-BSN program and works with individuals and groups as a Certified Daring Way™ facilitator.

As Christy asked the Lord what her focus for ministry should be within NCF, God answered with the words “It’s about relationship.” Supporting and encouraging nurses to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ; their relationships with each other; and with the individuals, families and communities they serve has been her focus since she began this role in August 2018. It’s led to many wonderful conversations with nurses across the United States and to opportunities to be even more dependent on the Lord for the work He wants to do through NCF.