

REFLECTION EXERCISES

Complete this exercise to reflect on your life and scripture to help identify your calling.

1. Read, reflect on, and imaginatively meditate on:

Exodus 3 (The burning bush)

Exodus 18 (Moses and Jethro)

Exodus 32 (The golden calf and “blot me out”)

Write 2-3 pages on this topic: Reflect on the evolution of Moses’ call as well as his resistance to call. Look at your own life – which experiences or feelings or reactions of Moses do you most identify with?

2. Set some time aside to think back over your life, your experiences from childhood to present.

Then, identify three different instances of “personal bests” — things you look back to as highlights of something that was most “you” in some capacity or another. It may have been a noticed thing or a hidden thing, but you would look back and say, “This is me, I did this well.”

The category is not important.

3. List three people, living or dead, whom you admire.

Talk about what gift or gifts it is in them that makes you feel drawn to them.

4. Set aside some silent space. When you have reached a place of quiet, begin to think about what your gifts are.

Pay attention to the images that pass across your mind. Write them down, think about their meaning and fantasize about what you would do if you could do anything in the world you chose. Watch yourself doing what you most love to do and name the talents essential for that fantasy to become real. See whether you can discover some of those talents with yourself. Write about those things that seem to predominate, and your feelings about them.

5. Have two different people who know you well answer the following questions about you.

If you were to identify what you see to be the top three gifts or abilities in this person that strike you as making them truly “them,” central to the uniqueness of who they are, what would those be?

What are the particular ways that you see this person impact others around them? What kinds of effects do they have on people or their environment because of their presence?

If you had to say what this person’s “passion” is, what they care most deeply about (based on how you know them), what would you say?

6. Read the story of Gideon in Judges 6-7.

Focus on 7:1-8. The Lord sent away 22,000 soldiers (and then another 10,000) and left Gideon with only a handful of soldiers to fulfill God’s call.

Briefly, what kinds of feelings do you think Gideon had?

Then: what is the equivalent in your own life to those thousands of soldiers God “sent away”?

Put another way: Where do you currently feel most stripped of the things in which you would normally place a certain amount of confidence or security?

7. Read Exodus 5:10-14.

Like the Hebrew people in Exodus, what areas of your life do you feel or have felt oppressed? Name your inner and outer slave drivers.

8. In Cry Pain, Cry Hope (page 82), Elizabeth O’Connor says, “We need to be delivered from all that binds and keeps the real self from breaking into music and becoming joy to the world.”

Are there parts of your “real self” not currently being expressed that are somehow locked up or bound? What are those, and what is it that’s binding them?

Did you receive blessings (affirmations) in your childhood? Is there a blessing you need now in order to be set free?

What calls have you struggled with in your life? Have these calls been partially determined by your family history, your social class, your gender?

In what context are you most easily yourself? Where is it most difficult?

What is God's liberating word to you as you struggle to be your true self?

9. What kinds of things are you doing when you have the strongest sense of God's working in and through you?

What gives you joy?

Is there an issue facing your neighborhood, city, or the world where you think, "someone needs to do something about that!"

How has God spoken to you about your calling?

Have you received prophetic words from people who don't know you? If so, how were the words related to your calling?

10. Elizabeth O'Connor (and others) suggest that the four "marks of calling" are these:

It is simple

It is impossible

It is strangely persistent (it does not ravage, but it does not go away)

It is not an ego trip (no one in scripture "leapt up" to respond to their call)

How do you identify with these marks of calling?