

When You Feel Unqualified

As Presented by Lisa Bishop

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Day One

Have you ever felt unqualified? That sinking feeling like you just do not measure up? Recently a friend was sharing how she had been experiencing anxiety in her job. She went from being an individual contributor to being promoted to VP and leading a team of people. Even though God had clearly opened this career door and called her into this position, her new role had induced a case of imposter syndrome.

If you have ever felt like you didn't deserve a raise, that you are not smart or qualified enough to succeed at an assignment, or that you fooled everyone when you landed a new job or position, you too have experienced imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome is when you doubt your competency and ability to do your job. It's the feeling that you don't deserve to be in the position you are in because you are not qualified. If you have ever felt this way you are not alone. This type of self-doubt affects millions of people across various demographics and job types. Imposter syndrome messes with your identity because of the fear of inadequacy and sinking feeling of being found out to not have "what it takes."

When I think about imposter syndrome it reminds me of Moses. In Exodus chapter 3 we read the familiar story of God revealing himself to Moses in a burning bush. This was the beginning of God's call on Moses's life to be the one who would bring redemption to God's people and lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. In Exodus 3:11 we see Moses grappling with his version of imposter syndrome when in response to God's assignment he says, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" To which God responds, "I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12a). Regardless of God's continued reassurance that he will be with Moses, equipping him and leading him every step of the way, Moses's fear and doubt induces an endless list of rebuttals as to why he is not qualified for the position God is calling him to.

- "What if they don't believe me or listen to me?" (Exodus 4:1a).
- "Pardon your servant Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue" (Exodus 4:10).
- "Pardon Your servant Lord, please send someone else" (Exodus 4:13).

When God invites you into a new opportunity you might be tempted to let imposter syndrome cause you to shrink back and like Moses, say "Who am I?" Know that God isn't surprised by your imposter syndrome, he just asks you to say, "Yes!" God was not sending Moses in his own strength but by the power of the Lord. God is not sending you in your own strength but inviting you to trust in and rely on him.

When God calls you into something, remember it is ultimately for his glory. You can trust him as he calls you to partner with him.

Day Two

Are you living a transformed life in Jesus Christ?

The other day I was at my mom's house. We got into a bit of a disagreement about something. We didn't see eye to eye. She asked if we could talk to which I obliged but I am sorry to say that I became a bit impatient in the conversation. I reacted from my flesh and not in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. I'm guessing you can relate.

Galatians 5:22-23 says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

The Holy Spirit kindly convicted me that I was not bearing much fruit in my response to my mom. He kindly and gently reminded me what it looks like to live from my identity in Christ. You and I are made in God's image and his number one priority as followers of Jesus is to make us more like him. To radically transform us into his likeness. It reminds me of growing up as a kid, I looked a lot like my dad. People would always comment on how much I resembled my father. We had a lot of the same features; people knew I was my dad's daughter. As a son or daughter of Jesus, you are meant to look like him, which means that when people see you and interact with you, they will encounter Jesus in your words, attitudes, behavior and responses.

I certainly did not take the opportunity to reflect Jesus with my mom. There will be times that you and I will miss the mark in our interactions with people because transformation is a process. A process of becoming who you already are in Christ. The important thing to consider is this. Are you making it your aim to grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus?

An increase of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life is evidence of spiritual growth and maturity. Where old patterns of reacting will be broken and an increase of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control will flow from you.

I am a work in progress and so are you. God knows that and he wants to help you as you grow in reflecting him. Remember what Romans 8:26 says, "The Spirit helps us in our weakness."

What fruit of the Spirit is God inviting you to grow in? Take a look at the past few interactions you have had with people in your life. What flesh response does the Holy Spirit want to transform into a fruit response? Confess where you are falling short and ask God for help as you become more like him.

Day Three

Are you living in fear today or are you living by faith?

It can be so easy to let anxiety, worry, and fear overwhelm you when life is hard and your circumstances look bleak. Whether it's a job loss or negative performance review, you've been blindsided by a breakup, your kids are wayward, or your marriage is on the brinks--there is no end to the list of concerns that can consume you on a daily basis and it can be easy to slip into worry and fear of the future.

I read a quote the other day that stood out to me. It said, "The antidote of fear is the presence of God." The definition of antidote is, "an agent that counteracts a poison." If you think about it, fear is a poison. It aims to pollute your mind, cloud your vision, and destroy your hope. To cancel out fear, remember that as a follower of Jesus, you cohabitate with God! He is omnipresent which means his presence is everywhere. He never leaves you, He is always with you, Jesus is always by your side. The problem is when we fret, we forget.

When your mind gets caught in the hamster wheel of worry it will take intentionality to turn your thoughts to God and remember his presence.

It reminds me of Psalm 23. The Psalmist in his deep distress declares, "Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me" (Psalm 23:4 NLT). Sometimes we just want the difficulties in life to go away. I've got some bad news for you. It doesn't. But the good news is that we have hope in the darkness and his name is Jesus!

In the midst of darkness, the Psalmist remembers the presence of God and it is a reminder and encouragement for you to do the same. I know that you do not always feel God's presence so that can cause you to doubt his nearness. But this is where you can't allow your feelings to inform your faith, but instead determine to focus on what is true. Snap yourself out of your distress and direct your attention to the prescription for peace found in Philippians 4:6-7:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

When you feel distress trying to take up residence in your mind, instead of giving into fear, fight back with prayer. Don't let anxiety win. Start praising God. Thank him that he is near. Thank him for his peace and presence. One of my favorite worship songs is, "Raise a Hallelujah." I crank it up when I need a reminder to praise in the midst of the darkness. Let these lyrics be your anthem in the worries of life.

"I raise a hallelujah, with everything inside of me
I raise a hallelujah, I will watch the darkness flee
I raise a hallelujah, my weapon is a melody.
I raise a hallelujah, fear you lost your hold on me!"

Day Four

Has anyone ever said something hurtful about you that you had a hard time shaking loose? I want to talk about lies others have spoken about you or over you that have negatively impacted how you see yourself.

When I was growing up there was a saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." You've probably heard it. I don't know who made that little jingle up but it couldn't be farther from the truth. Often, healing from painful words that have been hurled at you can be a much harder process than mending from a physical injury. Because words hurt. They wound. And if you are not careful you can internalize them and they will become part of your identity.

I will never forget coming back from summer break and entering into my second year of middle school. As if middle school was not brutal enough, living through the awkward phases and just having an overall feeling of insecurity, what one of the 8th grade boys said to me stuck with me for a long time. He looked across the cafeteria and shouted, "Hey, Bishop, you actually kind of look good this year." Needless to say, I was mortified. I am not certain of the full intention of his words but this is what I heard when his words thundered across the room, "Hey Lisa, you were really ugly and unattractive last year but this year you're not so bad." Let's just say that is not something an already self-conscious 8th grade girl wants to hear. I still remember his words 40 years later like it was yesterday. Thankfully they no longer have an impact on me, but they did for years. I internalized his view of me and allowed them to feed into my insecurity and inform my identity. Ugly. Not chosen. Overlooked. Undesirable. I know it may seem silly now, but the reality is, words sting. And if you are not fully grounded in your identity in Jesus, people's careless words can stick to you like glue and you will start believing they are true.

What hateful, harsh, or harming words have been spoken over you and into your life? Maybe they were reckless words released from a parent, teacher, boss, spouse, or friend. What has someone said to you that you have consciously or unconsciously taken in as truth? What lies have you let settle in that have

impacted the way you see yourself and are not in alignment with what God says about you? It takes intentionality to name the lies and rehearse the truth. And the truth is you are made in God's image as Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

And Psalm 139:13-14: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful." The bigger picture here is knowing who God is and he does not make mistakes. What words need healing from Jesus? Bring them to the cross, release them to Jesus, rebuke them and rehearse what is true. Release. Rebuke. Rehearse. Thank God for who he is and how he has made you.

Day Five

It's easy to try to get our identity from all the wrong places rather than from the very of truth of God. And when it comes to identity, we can get hyper-focused on ourselves when we were created to fix our eyes on Jesus.

During my quiet time I found myself meditating on a familiar passage in 1 Peter. As a bit of background, the apostle Peter is writing this letter to God's elect. Strangers in the world (those who look out of place to the world because they do not follow its customs) who God chose before creation for "obedience to Jesus Christ." In other words, Peter is penning this letter to believers like you and me. Men and women who have been born again. Those called to a living hope in Jesus and to be a living hope displaying Jesus to a corrupt world that denies Him with its evil practices. Much like the world we are living in today.

Peter is essentially saying, "don't follow the world, obey the Word and set yourself apart." And that is where we come to 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

As I read this passage these words came to mind, "It's not about you." Let me explain. While it is absolutely essential that you are confident in your identity in Christ, the reason that God has set you apart and made you holy is to reveal his glory.

You are chosen, holy and fully possessed by God in order that you proclaim the name of Jesus with your life. And if you are not living from your identity in him, people around you will miss out on experiencing Jesus in you. You are the Imago Dei. You reveal Christ to a world in desperate need of hope.

It's not about you. It's about Jesus.

What if you lived out your calling as an ambassador for Christ. Sharing your testimony of how God called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, displaying hope to your neighbors, coworkers, kids, and the cashier at the grocery store.

This does not mean you will live a perfect life but a credible life as one following after the heart of God. How will you stand firm in your identity in him and declaring his praise to those around you?