

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Go Where? Do What? – Be You

May 2, 2022

I love Jesus! Ever since I became a Jesus follower, I have wanted to do big things for him to make his name great! But the gifts God has given me are not “up front.” They’re not obvious, like those of an artist or musician, but they are just as vital. I like to think of them as “show up” gifts. I am a woman of action, and I faithfully take God with me everywhere I go. I have learned in my life of following Jesus that using these gifts isn’t hard, nor is it difficult to do the small things he asks me to do in preparation for the bigger things.

I think the lesson from Acts about Ananias and the role he played in the life of Saul is a great example for me and you!

Acts 9:10

Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord!” he replied.

So Ananias was a believer, and he was obviously in a place where he could hear from God. Where is that place for you? Maybe you heard him loud and clear when he called you to follow him. But perhaps the sound of his voice has diminished over time. If so, chances are, it’s because your life has crowded out his voice.

This was not Ananias’s problem. He responded, “Yes, Lord.” I’ll bet it wasn’t the first time, because his response was immediate and confident. When you decide to practice hearing God’s voice—and it does take practice—you’ll get better at it. As you’re doing those small, daily things he’s asking from you, he’s preparing you for bigger things.

In fact, in our story, Ananias was on such familiar terms with God that he pushed back a little on his request.

Acts 11-14

¹¹ The Lord said, “Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. ¹² I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again.”

¹³ *“But Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I’ve heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! ¹⁴ And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name.”*

Ananias didn’t say he wouldn’t go, but he questioned the message in light of the facts he knew. It is important for us to discern the invitation, to make sure we’ve heard it right.

Acts 15-16

¹⁵ *But the Lord said, “Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.”*

So, we see that after Ananias confirmed what he heard from God, he went, trusting God with the outcome.

Ananias followed God’s instructions and laid his hands on Saul—the rest is history! What he did was no big deal. It didn’t take a lot of training or education, but Ananias easily could have said, “Lord, I’ve never laid hands on anyone before! I don’t really know if I can even find that street, and how will I know who Saul is?”

What would have happened if Ananias had not made a practice of hearing from God and responding to his call? We’ll never know. Saul, who became Paul, wrote a large portion of the Christian scriptures. The theology we have today is largely based on Paul’s exposition of Jesus’ life and teachings.

What might happen if you fail to discern the call God has for you? What is your God-given purpose that will take you on the life-changing adventure of following him? (Read the rest of Acts if you think the life of a Christ-follower is boring or without meaning!)

At CedarCreek, we love to say that God has a plan and a purpose for your life, but you have to show up! I promise you, you will never be sorry you spent time with Jesus!

Questions:

Will you commit to carving out space for God every day? Will you invite someone to hold you accountable to that commitment?

Next Steps:

We are all busy, but typically we will find time for the things that are important to us. Set a goal to spend time with God for 30 days, and commit to it. Tell your accountability partner. Better yet, get them to do it with you!

Set your alarm 5 minutes earlier than normal for 2 weeks and spend that time reading the LivingItOut.

Set your alarm for 10 minutes earlier in weeks 3 & 4 and engage in a study on the YouVersion Bible app.

Set an alarm to join morning prayer at 7:30am on the CedarCreek Instagram or Facebook pages.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for wanting to guide and direct my life in your love and grace. Help me in our noisy world to make space to hear your voice. Give me the desire and the courage to do the things you ask me to do for your kingdom and your glory. Give me wisdom when I'm not sure of the message and put people with wisdom in my life to help. In your beautiful name I pray, amen.

This post was written by Laurie White, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Little Things Mean A Lot! – Be You

May 3, 2022

Where are you right now? I'm not asking about your physical being—where are you in your relationship with God?

As Christians, we are all in different stages of our walk. There are some who are so far advanced in their relationships with Jesus, that we may feel like we could never even get close to that level. We could never pray like they pray, or serve as they serve, or show the type of brotherly love they display. There are others who are growing and strengthening their relationships with Christ, and we may wonder why we aren't growing ourselves. Then there are those who are new Christ followers. They are just starting to get their feet wet, trying to figure out where they should start or what God has planned for them.

These are the baby steps of our journey with God. We all had to learn to crawl before we could walk. And we all had to strengthen our balance by walking before we could run.

Here is an important truth for you to understand. No matter where you are in your Christian faith journey, God has a plan for you. He loves us all equally, and he calls each of us into his service.

God calls each of us into some type of service to honor and glorify his name and to lead others to come to know him as well. Whether you're a new Christian, you've been serving God for a while, or you're a lifelong Christ-follower, we are called into this service. Many times, it is something small and simple. So small and simple, that to us, it may seem insignificant. But guess what? Little things mean a lot.

Luke 16:10

"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities."

It is easy for us to shrug off, or even despise small callings. It could be something as simple as checking on your neighbor, just to see how they are doing. We can find a million reasons to say not now.

Zechariah 4:10

“Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand.”

In his weekend message, Oregon Campus Pastor Andy Rectenwald’s bottom line was: “When God says GO, don’t say NO.” The small tasks we do in service to God can lead to something far greater than any of us could ever imagine. But it starts with us saying “yes” to whatever seemingly menial task we are given. Because to God, little things mean a lot.

Questions:

Are you being faithful when called to do small tasks for God?

Can God trust you with greater responsibility?

Next Steps:

Commit to serving God in whatever capacity he calls you into.

Ask yourself in what ways you may have recently been called into service and said “no.” Consider doing them now.

Keep tuning in to the rest of the *Be You* series for more insight into ways you can make a difference.

Prayer:

Almighty God, you are so wonderful to me, and I owe everything to you. Help me to recognize even the small tasks you call me to do for your honor and glory, and help me to carry them out faithfully. Father, I want to be one that you can trust with great responsibility. Help me to build a strong strength of character as a Christian, so when you say go, I won’t say no. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

This post was written by Ned Miller, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

The Voice of God is an Invitation – Be You

May 4, 2022

I don't dive into the world of kids very willingly. They're loud, stare at your food, and sneeze in your face. (A kid sneezed in my face just last week!) But as I continue on the adventure God has for me, it makes perfect sense that I've been on-boarded to serve in the students and kids ministry. Ten years ago, I would've said "no" and left it at that, but saying "no" tends to backfire when my argument only focuses on my wants and needs.

Not only have I served in both ministries over the past four weeks, but I also led the fifth and sixth-grade boys' small group discussion once. On my first day serving in elementary, I turned and saw my nephew, who I hadn't seen in over two years. A few minutes later, I saw his brother and sister. Saying "yes" to an invitation to serve sparked a conversation that I had prayed about quite a few times.

What would have happened if I hadn't served in that capacity? Chances are, I would've missed out on something wonderful. My ears and eyes wouldn't have experienced God's voice at church of all places.

Genesis 28:16

"Surely the Lord is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it!"

I can't count the times when I didn't realize God was in the mix. He invited me to participate, but I was reluctant to go because I wasn't taking the time to hear. What if Ananias ([Acts 9:10-12](#)) said "no" when God asked him to go to Saul? He would've missed out on becoming a pivotal part of Saul's story. However, his faith and willingness assured him that he heard God's invitation loud and clear.

It's difficult to hear and discern when noise is everywhere. The Bible points out [whispering spots](#) where people would go to talk and listen to God. They're quiet places to meditate on scripture. It's easy to get involved in an entire conversation with God by asking questions, discussing your feelings, and gathering God's truth.

Whispering spots allow me to hear God's voice ["in the hush of a midnight hour, or when I'm alone in my room, and I'm going under."](#) They offer me a better chance at hearing God's invitation for me, and for me to help others.

Questions:

Can you recall a time when you said “no” to God? How did it make you feel after some time had passed? What is preventing you from saying “yes”?

Next Steps:

Take the time to pray about the invitations you receive. Find yourself a whispering spot that brings you closer to hearing God. Study the Bible to gain a better understanding of scripture.

Prayer:

Dear God, I hope to give a slow yes instead of a fast no when an invitation has the makings of spiritual goodness. Allow me to hear your voice, and not my own or others, so that I can find the necessary truth to fully understand your invitation. Amen.

This post was written by Jaron Camp, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Accept the Invite from God – Be You

May 5, 2022

Last weekend, Oregon Campus Pastor Andy Rectenwald delivered a riveting message on one of the most amazing examples of how God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. God used Ananias of Damascus (not to be confused with the Ananias who died suddenly after lying to the Holy Spirit about money) to restore the sight of Saul of Tarsus, later known as Paul. Why would God use a basically unknown man to perform such an important act in the conversion of the Apostle Paul?

Acts 9:13-14

¹³ “But Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I’ve heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! ¹⁴ And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name.”

Ananias was a devout man, so why would he hesitate to answer a request from the Lord? It was widely known that Saul of Tarsus was going to Damascus to arrest Christ-followers and bring them back to Jerusalem for persecution. Ananias, like many others, was afraid of Saul, so it’s understandable why he would pause. You might be able to relate, as fear can cause us to pause when God asks something of us. Ananias must have thought, “Wait, what?!”

Pastor Andy said Ananias was prepared to hear the invite, but he needed to discern it. He had to understand who the invitation was coming from, what it meant, and then plan to carry it out.

Acts 9:15-18

¹⁵ But the Lord said, “Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.”

¹⁷ So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Instantly something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized.

Verse 15 brings us to our bottom line: ***If God says go, don't say no.*** God told Ananias that Saul had converted and was going to serve the Lord, so Ananias did what was requested without further hesitation. He did not let his own fear or the horrible things he knew about Saul cloud his judgment.

We can all take away a lesson from Ananias: It may be necessary to put our own preconceived notions and potential fears aside—and take a step of faith—to accept God's invitation. If God can use an ordinary man like Ananias as part of a great faith story, he can also use you and me.

Questions:

Are you aware of the invitation God has placed before you? Have you accepted it yet? If not, what is stopping you?

Next Steps:

Listen for what God is calling you to. Accept the invite, with a faith like Ananias, and share God's love with the lost, confused, and hurting people of this world.

Prayer:

Dear Father in Heaven, I am open to the invitation you have for my life. Please use me in any way that you can. Grant me discernment so I may see the plans you have for me. And help me to overcome my own fears, so that I may accept the invitations you put before me and carry out your will to help others know and love you. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Jenn Macke, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Don't Miss Out – Be You

May 6, 2022

The Bible is peppered with stories about people whom God invited to join him in his story of redemption:

- God told Noah to build an ark on dry land.
- He told Abraham to leave his country and family and go to an unknown land. Later, he told Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son on an altar.
- God told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to release his people from slavery.
- He told Mary that she was to be the mother of the Son of God.

All of these heroes of the faith had a choice. They could have said, “Yes, Lord!” or they could have said, “No, thank you!” and moved on with their lives. But they all said “yes,” and today, we are still reading about their faithfulness.

Last weekend, we read the story of Ananias. Throughout this week, we dove into his story and have seen how his act of obedience led to Saul's baptism. Saul, later Paul, became one of the greatest preachers of the Gospel that the world has ever known.

Ananias was nervous—he knew Saul's reputation. Yet, he also knew that God was faithful, and when God issues a call, it's best to obey. What if Ananias had said “No, I'm too afraid of this man”? Would Paul have gone on to become such a great preacher of the Gospel?

I believe he would have, eventually. After all, God had a great plan for Paul's life. He didn't need Ananias, but he invited Ananias into the adventure. Ananias could have said “no,” but we wouldn't be reading about him today. He would have watched as someone else followed God's call. He would have known that this miracle, that someone else was experiencing, could have been his. However, he did obey, and we read this proclamation from Paul in the book of Acts.

Acts 22:11-12

¹¹ "I was blinded by the intense light and had to be led by the hand to Damascus by my companions. ¹² A man named Ananias lived there. He was a godly man, deeply devoted to the law, and well regarded by all the Jews of Damascus. ¹³ He came and stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight.' And that very moment I could see him!"

When God invites us on an adventure, we always have a choice. When we choose to say no, we are not thwarting God's ultimate plans, but we are bowing out of his story, watching from the sidelines, as it unfolds around us.

Questions:

What is God asking you to do today? We have a new summer semester of [Groups](#) coming up. Should you join one? Have you been through [GrowthTrack](#)? Have you tried serving or giving?

Next Steps:

Spend some time today in prayer asking God to reveal where he is inviting you to join into his adventure. Choose to say, "Yes, Lord!" and do it!

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for inviting me into your story. Thank you for giving me the choice to be part of your grand adventure. Give me courage to listen to your prompting and say "Yes, Lord" when I hear you calling. Amen.

This post was written by Julie Mabus, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.