



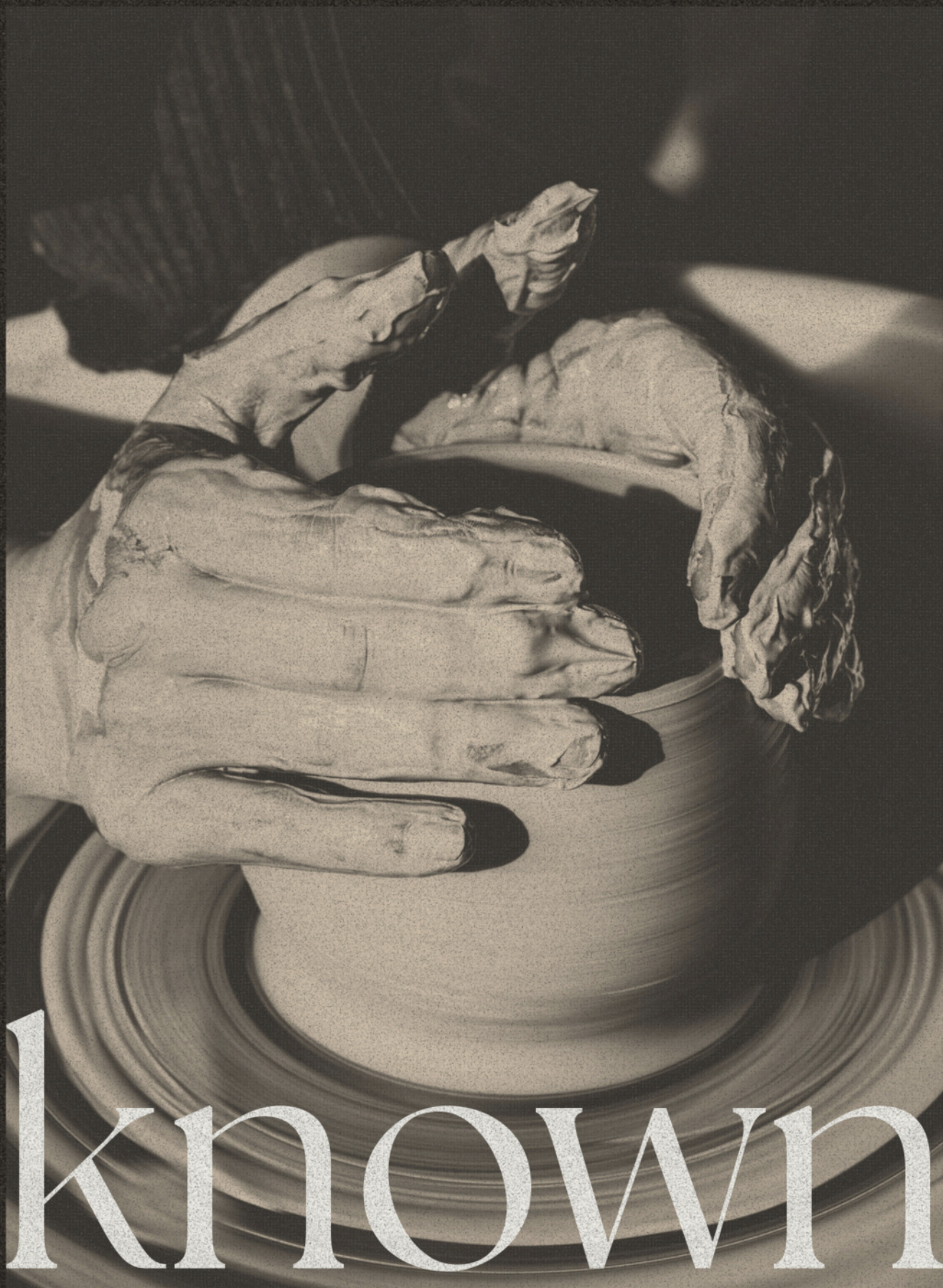
DEVOTIONAL
KNOWN
SET APART
APPOINTED

made for
a divine
purpose

JEREMIAH 1:5



CALL AND COMMITMENT 2026



known

PREPARED BY MAJOR LOUISE POND

Several years ago, I was sitting in my cottage at camp. It was evening and darkness was beginning to crowd in. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. I quickly ran to the door, opened it and a lady began talking very excitedly to me. She spoke as if she knew me in a personal manner. She inquired about my family, my role as Camp Director at that time, etc. I was puzzled, feeling as if I had never met this lady. As the conversation progressed, she indicated that we had met several years prior to the now re-acquaintance at camp. In spite of this I had not recognized her.

Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew you intimately I had divine plans for you before I gave you life, and I set you apart and chose you to be mine. You are my prophetic gift to the nations." (The Passion Translation)

How ironic! Unlike my lack of recognition that evening at camp this verse beautifully describes God's foreknowledge and sovereignty, indicating that God knew Jeremiah intimately and set him apart for a specific purpose before he was even formed in the womb.

A clarion call is heard by Jeremiah from God. And there's this sense of wonder as God articulates his experiential knowledge of him before sending him off to ministry at twenty years of age. It's kind of like a father giving his son a pep talk as he heads off to college. However, notice the timing of this profound knowledge! What is unique about this call is His explanation of the timing and his remarkable pre-birth knowledge of Jeremiah. "Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew you intimately."

The Hebrew verb yada translated "knew" in this verse means more than sheer intellectual knowledge. This is no small talk. What's your name? Where are you from? What's your job? What's your father's name? A common cultural question I am asked is, "Who do you belong to?" Yada is used to describe the most intimate of relationships. Before Jeremiah was conceived in his mother's womb, God was thinking about him in the most profoundly personal way.

I am intrigued by God's knowledge of me, particularly as I consider days, months, years before my parents conceived me. I am intrigued with God's knowledge of me as I live each day. Take the word "known". Study it. Think on it. Sit in wonder. Pray. Surrender. No matter how insignificant you may feel, its meaning is astounding.

You are truly known and loved by Him. Be encouraged!

Reflection questions

1. How does the phrase "Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew you intimately" impact your response to God's foreknowledge and sovereignty?
2. How can Jeremiah 1:5a inspire confidence in God's specific purpose for your life?

Prayer Prompts

- Express a prayer of gratitude for God's knowledge of you before your birth.
- Ask God to help you live confidently in who He has created you to be.
- Pray for contentment as you seek God's true purpose for your life.



set apart

PREPARED BY MAJOR ANTHONY BARNES

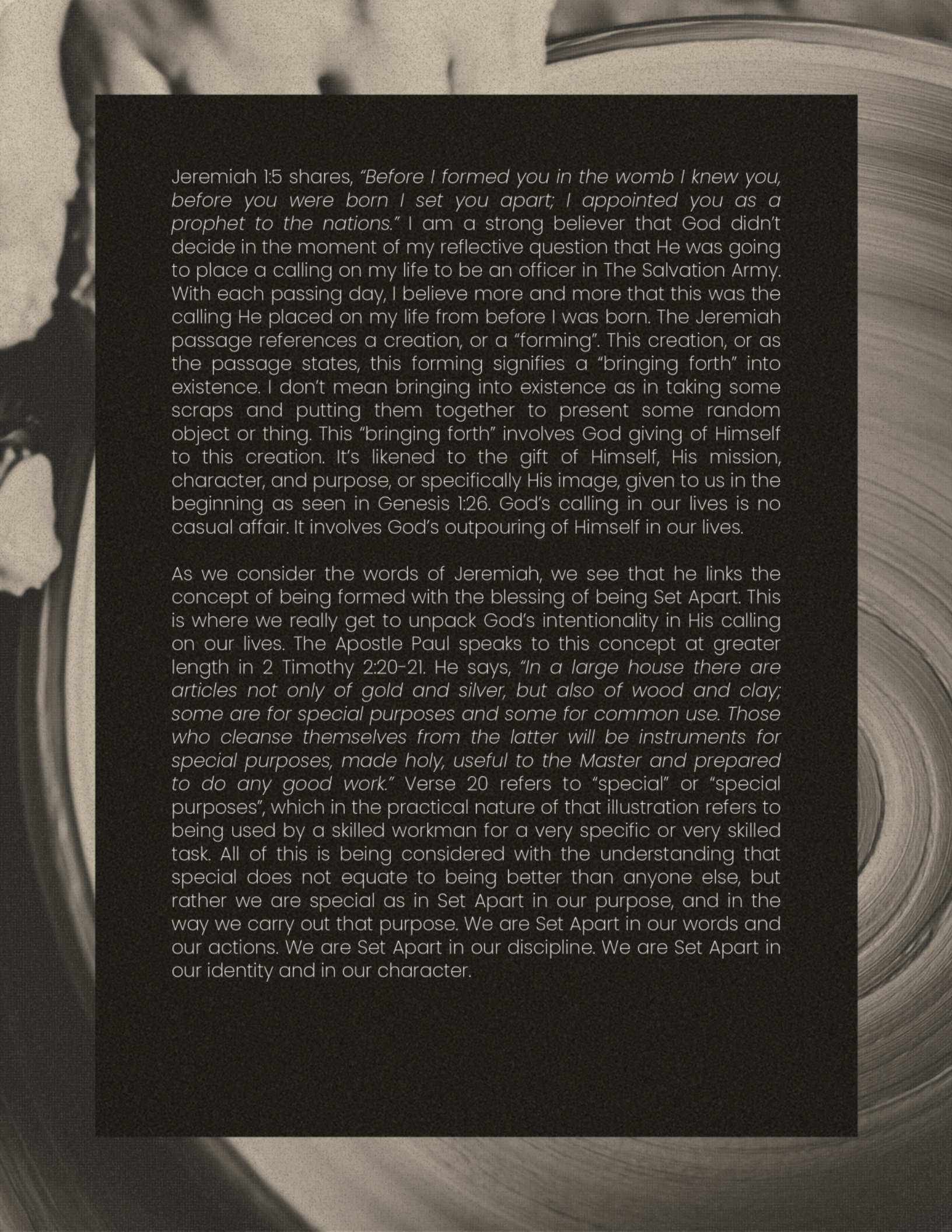
Jeremiah 1:5

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

It was the beginning of 2005. The officer led the congregation in a round of testimonies and prayer requests, as he normally does on Sunday mornings. People responded as they normally do on Sunday mornings. The family with a single mother and three children arrived late as usual. Not much was unique in relation to any other Sunday morning, except me.

As I listened to the testimonies and prayer requests of the congregation, something came over me. Deep down in my soul, I felt a sentiment of deep concern. I began to feel what seemed like a profound pulse of energy and, at the same time, extreme fear. I looked to my right to see my wife listening intently to the testimonies and prayer requests in the room.

One after another, members of the congregation rose to speak their part. I was overwhelmed with sorrow for these people and their requests. However, what was more profound than the pain in their requests was the hope they exhibited for the rescuing power of Jesus Christ. Immediately, pressure rose in my chest and tears began gathering at the lids of my eyes. *"What could I do for these people?"*, I thought. Moments later, my wife looked over at me and saw me weeping. There was an indescribable feeling that came over me. I excused myself and walked out of the chapel. My wife escorted me and could not understand why I was so emotional, nor was I very helpful in clarifying the situation that I myself did not really understand. Moments later, the officer joined us in the hallway and I described to him what had happened. He spoke into my ear in a soft voice, *"You have a pastor's heart."* Those words glued themselves to my mind and heart. I have heard the lessons, and read the stories, but I would never have thought I would be part of such a tradition of God's people. God spoke to me. It took me a while to grasp, or even accept it, but He...Called...Me.



Jeremiah 1:5 shares, *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."* I am a strong believer that God didn't decide in the moment of my reflective question that He was going to place a calling on my life to be an officer in The Salvation Army. With each passing day, I believe more and more that this was the calling He placed on my life from before I was born. The Jeremiah passage references a creation, or a "forming". This creation, or as the passage states, this forming signifies a "bringing forth" into existence. I don't mean bringing into existence as in taking some scraps and putting them together to present some random object or thing. This "bringing forth" involves God giving of Himself to this creation. It's likened to the gift of Himself, His mission, character, and purpose, or specifically His image, given to us in the beginning as seen in Genesis 1:26. God's calling in our lives is no casual affair. It involves God's outpouring of Himself in our lives.

As we consider the words of Jeremiah, we see that he links the concept of being formed with the blessing of being Set Apart. This is where we really get to unpack God's intentionality in His calling on our lives. The Apostle Paul speaks to this concept at greater length in 2 Timothy 2:20-21. He says, *"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."* Verse 20 refers to "special" or "special purposes", which in the practical nature of that illustration refers to being used by a skilled workman for a very specific or very skilled task. All of this is being considered with the understanding that special does not equate to being better than anyone else, but rather we are special as in Set Apart in our purpose, and in the way we carry out that purpose. We are Set Apart in our words and our actions. We are Set Apart in our discipline. We are Set Apart in our identity and in our character.

There's a chorus in our songbook that speaks specifically to this concept of turning ourselves fully over to God for His use, and I reference it because it's a perfect illustration. The words assert:

*"All my days and all my hours,
All my will and all my powers,
All the passion of my soul,
Not a fragment but the whole.
Shall be thine, dear Lord,
Shall be thine, dear Lord."*

The end of verse 20, in the Timothy passage, reminds us that as we recognize our calling to special purposes, we also abandon the converse of being simply for common use. Where the term "Special Purposes" speaks to how God applies us, the term "Common Use" speaks to how the world would otherwise exploit us. This is why we are encouraged, *"Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."* Verse 21 reminds us that we have a part to play in responding to the call; the participatory nature in answering the call of God on our lives. This is when Paul lets us know where our natural ability stops, and the supernatural God steps in. You see, we don't have the ability to make ourselves Holy; we don't have the ability to sanctify ourselves. At best, we are partners in this process, but scripture teaches us in so many instances that the ability to be made Holy is attributed to the Holy Spirit.

Through the Holy Spirit, the mission, character, identity, and purpose of God is realized in us. As scripture teaches us, through the Holy Spirit, *"what we learned from Christ is kept secure in our hearts and minds"*. Through the Holy Spirit, we are strengthened *"to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ"*. Through the Holy Spirit, *"we are filled to the measure of all the fullness of God"*. Through the Holy Spirit, *"God is able to accomplish immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine according to the power – of the Holy Spirit – that resides within us"*. Through the Holy Spirit, we are Set Apart, and empowered, and *"useful to the Master... prepared to do any good work"*.

BUT we must possess the desire for that to take place in our lives.

Our part is not over when we say, "Yes, Lord, I will follow your will for my life. "We must put into constant, unending practice, the very things that drew us closer and draw us closer to God in the first place. Then we must look to God—with expectation—for the Holy Spirit to empower us. So much so, that we can approach the throne of Grace daily asking:

*"Spirit of the Living God
Fall Afresh On Me
Break Me, Melt Me, Mold Me, Fill Me
Spirit Of The Living God
Fall Afresh On Me."*

When His ability to utilize us intersects with our desire to serve Him, we *"will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."*

Answering God's call on our lives, especially the sacred Call to Officership, is not a passive act of only waiting for the Holy Spirit to set us apart. It is an active surrender, a daily choice to draw near to Him through prayer, through the Word, and through the continual shaping of our hearts after His own. As we do, the promise is sure: the Holy Spirit empowers us to be His prophets to the nations and His witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

It has been twenty-one years since I first heard God's call, and in my seventeen years of Officership, I have walked a path both humbling and holy. I have dedicated children and united couples in marriage; I have celebrated lives well lived and sat in sorrow with those who grieve. I have prayed with the broken, listened to the weary, and simply been present where words would not suffice. Every one of those moments has reminded me that being set apart is not about position, it's about posture. It's about allowing God to use every part of who we are to reveal His love to the world.

My prayer for you is that you would listen closely for His voice, and as He calls, you would answer with your whole heart. Step into the life He has prepared for you. Be Set Apart, and set yourself apart, for His purpose. For there is no greater joy, no deeper fulfillment, than living fully surrendered to the One who knew you, formed you, and called you before you ever took your first breath.

Reflection Questions

- How does Jeremiah 1:5 inspire you to trust God's plan for your life?
- What areas of your life need to be surrendered to fully live out being set apart?
- How does being "set apart" shape your understanding of your identity and purpose?
- What obstacles make it difficult for you to live as someone set apart?
- How can you overcome these challenges and remain faithful to your calling?
- How can you encourage others to embrace their unique calling?



appointed

PREPARED BY COMMISSIONER ROSALIE PEDDLE (R)

Has the Spirit of Fear been knocking at the door of your heart or your mind or your emotions?

Jeremiah 1:5

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Such a powerful verse! This verse speaks to the truth that God had a specific plan for Jeremiah's life. God knew all about him and had a purpose for his life. He was being shaped in his mother's womb for a specific purpose: God's calling—a prophet to the nations. I love how God used the words, "I have appointed you," emphasizing that Jeremiah was chosen and set apart for a specific mission even before he was born.

We connect the word 'Appointed' in The Salvation Army with the commissioning of newly commissioned Officers as they are 'appointed' to their first Corps & Community ministries somewhere throughout the country. It is an exciting moment to hear these words... "Lieutenant.... you are 'Appointed to.....!'"

As I did a further study of this word 'Appointed' in Scripture there appears to be an aura of sacredness and holiness wrapped around it. A fresh glimpse of the word 'Appointed' is rather eye opening.

Reflect on Jeremiah 1:5 one more time. Close your eyes and imagine God is speaking to you. What would be your be initial reaction?

Jeremiah 1:5

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Has the Spirit of Fear been knocking at the door of your heart or your mind or your emotions?

Take a few moments to reflect on Paul's testimony in 2 Timothy 1:11. Now take a few minutes and focus on Jesus words to his disciples in John 15:16. Did the word 'Appointed' strengthen the significance of their calling?

"And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles." (2 Timothy 1:11)

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you." (John 15:16)
Look at Jeremiah's reaction. Fear played havoc with Jeremiah's thoughts and emotions when God laid out His calling to mission and ministry. His fear was stemmed by a profound fear of inadequacies. He had every excuse ready when God called him to be a prophet – The task is too demanding! The time is not right! People won't listen to the truth! Too young and inexperienced to be a leader!

Has the Spirit of Fear been knocking at the door of your heart or your mind or your emotions?

We are not called to serve God in our own strength but rather in the power of the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 4:6 says, *"Not by might or by power, but by my Spirit"*.

It is definitely life changing when we embrace the fact that God not only has chosen us for his divine purpose but has appointed us to be fully engaged in His mission in the world. Does embracing this 'appointed' reality infuse our mind, hearts and souls with an energy and enthusiasm helping us to rise above any fear or doubt? Yes! Yes! Yes! For with this Holy Spirit fire alive in our hearts we can experience, what I call, an OUTRAGEOUS COURAGE.

Outrageous Courage has always been, not just words, but an action that resonates in my heart deeply. I have never been a courageous, risk-taking person but rather a shy, unassuming introvert. For certain, some people wonder how in the world did I get into the shoes I am filling today! I don't blame them because most days I am shocked myself. All I can say is that I am living proof of how God places his hand upon ordinary people and empowers them with a holy boldness and an outrageous courage transforming them into something extraordinary. Every day as I face new challenges, I take a deep breath, place myself in God's hands, rest fully in his Spirit and watch God do things that I could have never dreamt or imagined. It has taken hard work and discipline for my life to be developed and formed into the firm, unshakeable and impactful influence it is today.

Has the Spirit of Fear been knocking at the door of your heart or your mind or your emotions?

Read and meditate on the words of Isaiah 41:10 and Isaiah 43:1-2.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.*

*When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.*

*For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;*

Repeat the words found in this familiar song:

*I'll go in the strength of the Lord
To work He appoints me to do;
In joy which His smile doth afford
My soul shall her vigor renew.
His wisdom shall guard me from harm,
His power my sufficiency prove;
I'll trust His omnipotent arm,
And prove His unchangeable love.*

I cannot count the times over the years when appointments have come, or I have been asked to do something beyond my comfort zone that with great fear and trepidation I have said to God out loud, "I can't do that!" To which He always quickly responds "No Rosalie, you can't, but I can!" Outrageous Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid; Outrageous Courage means you don't let fear stop you because you've chosen to make God your firm foundation. I love to call this UNSHAKABLE CONFIDENCE. Once this Unshakable Confidence fortifies our mind and our hearts we stand strong in our calling and our faith.

Unshakable Confidence and Outrageous courage need to go hand in hand with each other. For most of us, confidence is a problem. We don't see ourselves as worthy enough, bright enough, or qualified enough to impact others' lives. This is where we must identify with Christ. It isn't about our qualifications. It's all about Him! He has chosen us, He has appointed us. It doesn't matter how educated or how prosperous we are. It does matter, however, how submitted we are to Him. Some of the most influential people that have impacted my life were humble, quiet, uneducated and selfless. They displayed love, kindness, gentleness, patience and joy. Their beauty came from within. Their character had been reshaped by the transforming power of Jesus and by spending time with Jesus.

In the mornings as I begin my day, I pray for this God-grounded Unshakable confidence that will push me beyond who I am to who God wants me to be as his presence lives in me.

Has the Spirit of Fear been knocking at the door of your heart or your mind or your emotions?

Psalm 27:1 *"The Lord is my light and salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid."*

Read and meditate on Romans 8:31-39

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We can have God confidence because we believe in the greatness of God, His strength, His integrity, His sovereign power to do what needs to be done. Unshakable Confidence in God empowers us, engages us and strengthens us. When we allow Christ to dwell in our hearts, the Holy Spirit's beauty and influence will transform and empower us, which in turn leads to a powerful influence and impact on those around us.

Has the Spirit of Fear been knocking at the door of your heart or your mind or your emotions? What is Your Response?

Pray these words or sing them out loud with Outrageous Courage
and Unshakeable Confidence.

*I just wanna speak the name of Jesus
Over every heart and every mind
'Cause I know there is peace within Your presence
I speak Jesus*

*I just wanna speak the name of Jesus
'Til every dark addiction starts to break
Declaring there is hope and there is freedom
I speak Jesus*

*'Cause Your name is power
Your name is healing
Your name is life
Break every stronghold
Shine through the shadows
Burn like a fire*

*I just wanna speak the name of Jesus
Over fear and all anxiety
To every soul held captive by depression
I speak Jesus*

*'Cause Your name is power
Your name is healing
Your name is life
Break every stronghold
Shine through the shadows
Burn like a fire*

*Shout Jesus from the mountains
Jesus in the streets
Jesus in the darkness, over every enemy
Jesus for my family
I speak the holy name
Jesus, oh (oh)*