

Week Thirty-two

YEAR ONE

Read

Isaiah 40–66
Collins, Chapter 19, “The Additions to the Book of Isaiah,” pages 197–208

Focus

The prophets studied in Collins’s chapters are full of poetic imagery. Reflect on how the imagery has contributed to Christian theology and worship.

YEAR TWO

Read

1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians
Powell, Chapter 13, “1 Corinthians” and Chapter 14, “2 Corinthians,”
pages 273–306

Focus

Review the opening essay of this unit (Week Thirty) to identify how passages from the Corinthians Letters were used to develop a theology of vocation. How does Powell’s discussion of Paul’s Corinthian Letters illuminate the theology of mission, ministry, and vocation?

YEAR THREE

Read

MacCulloch, Chapter 22, “Europe Re-enchanted or Disenchanted?”
817–65

Focus

This chapter laid out necessary components for setting the context of contemporary Anglo-American and European theology. Note what specific persons or ideas interest you, and how what you identify suggests about what gifts and passions you have.

YEAR FOUR

Read

Peace, Rose, and Mobley, “Part II: Viewing Home Anew” and “Part III:
Redrawing Our Maps,” pages 45–124

Focus

When someone crosses over to another culture and openly embraces the differences, upon returning the person sees home anew. Cultural dissonance sets in that requires redrawing of familiar boundaries. Which of the vignettes found in Parts II and III exemplified what de Beer described as “layers of self-protection and false identity”? Think about how their stories affect your sense of self.

**ALL YEARS****Respond**

Review these statements from this unit's opening essay by John de Beer:

When God calls a congregation, we speak of mission. When God calls an individual, we speak of vocation. It is the Reign of God, experienced on an individual level, that constitutes vocation, just as the Reign of God, experienced on a congregational level, constitutes its mission.

God equips each person for a unique role in the drama of salvation. A person finds meaning in life by discovering and playing his or her part in God's purpose for the world. Vocation is not chiefly an external duty or obligation, but the key to a life of abundant purpose and fulfillment.

Think through how your assigned reading supports and/or challenges the vocational development perspective contained in these statements.

Practice

The experiences a person has and how they are interpreted shape identity. Reinterpreting past experiences can uncover what a person most deeply wants. Reflecting theologically on selected experiences fosters new understandings in light of theological themes.

The discipline of theological reflection contributes to the formation of a person's vocation and how that call is lived out in everyday life. One of the elements of the discipline of theological reflection is the selection of incidents that begin the reflection process. While any experience can be used, selecting experiences of interest and energy enrich and focus theological reflection. Additionally, deeper reflection occurs when one chooses experiences that a person senses are about theological concerns, such as mission, vocation, gifts, and ministry.

Recall two or three past experiences that you believe might be about vocation or call. For example, the unexpected visit from an elderly neighbor described in Week Thirty likely holds much to be learned about vocation and ministry. Another would be how a person responded to someone in the grocery store who unexpectedly revealed her struggle with cancer.

Once you have recalled two or three experiences, choose one to describe in writing. Include sufficient detail to capture the experience. The description need not be more than a half page or so.

The description can initiate a reflection process using the worksheet for Individual Theological Reflection, located on page 233 in Part II of this guide. The method may also be used to start the reflection process in your EfM seminar. Whenever a theological reflection method is used to reflect on a particular theological theme, such as vocation or mission, the **exploring** questions can be adapted. For example, the "sin" question might be framed as "What inhibits or blocks responding to a call?" Or the redemption question asked as "What brings great joy in this world?" Another place where the theological reflection can be particularized is in the **applying** phase: "What implication does what you believe have for constructing a theology of vocation?"