

WHO I AM MAKES ME BELONG, A PERSONALITY FOR MY VOCATION

Readings

- Isaiah 43:1 – 4 God the creator knows us by name
- Psalm 139: 1 – 16 I am fearfully and wonderfully made
- Philippians 1:3 – 11 God will complete His work among you
- Matthew 10:26 – 30 God has counted every hair on your head

Isaiah 43:1 – 4

43But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.

² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.

³ For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia* and Saba in exchange for you.

⁴ Because you are precious in my sight,
and honoured, and I love you,
I give people in return for you,
nations in exchange for your life.

Psalm 139

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.

¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.

³ You search out my path and my lying down,

and are acquainted with all my ways.

⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.

⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

¹¹ If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night',

¹² even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.

Philippians 1:3 - 11

3 I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first

day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart,* for all of you share in God's grace* with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless,¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Matthew 10:26 - 30

26 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known.²⁷ What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.²⁸ Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father.³⁰ And even the hairs of your head are all counted.

Introduction: Who am I?

One of the most fundamental questions in life is "who am I?" The Scriptures reflect some answers to this question: Isaiah says that God knows you, you are precious in God's sight. The psalmist says that you are fearfully and wonderfully made.

In our church journey we are exploring vocation, that each of us has something beautiful to do for God. Vocation means God's calling in our lives. Trevor Hudson says that "While call requires response and obedience, we will not be given a road map. We are given building blocks to see what can be done with them using for the task all our intelligence, creativity, sensitivity and love." In the past three weeks we have reflected on how spiritual gifts, passion, and abilities our building blocks to our call. We have said that each of us is SHAPED by God to be part of the picture:

S - spiritual gifts.

H - heart.

A - abilities.

P - personality

Today we reflect on how our Personality as one such building block. We ask the question “who am I?” and how does my personality equip me for God’s call in my life?

Who am I? A mud clod

The psalmist describes how God has created us, how God has knit together our inward parts, how God fashioned us in the secret depths of the earth. In Genesis we read that God took dust, dirt, mud and made a mud clod, a dirt man. From *adamah* (meaning “of mud”) we get *adam* which means a mud creature. The Genesis scriptures describe how God created a mud creature (an *adam*) from the mud; and then God breathed into the mud creature’s nostrils and the mud creature became a living being.

At the heart of being human is a paradox. We are mud creatures. We are fragile, vulnerable. We may present to the world a confident face, yet we are unsure, insecure, sensitive, easily offended or not sensitive enough.

Yet at the very same time we have been breathed into by the creator of the universe. **We are fearfully and wonderfully made** (Ps 137). God has redeemed us, God has called us by name (Is 43.1). God has named us, and God has breathed into us. This divine breath is the presence of Divine God flowing through us and through every human being. We are fragile and vulnerable. But we are also sacred and divine. We are sacred, divine, mud clods.

Who am I? A Divine being

The divine breath is flowing in us. We are divine beings. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. The divine being is flowing in the person next to you and the person next to them. We are standing on Holy Ground and God is in us and all around us. God is over there because God is always here.

There is more to it than that. The divine presence, which is within us, takes shape within us in incredibly unique ways. The way I express God’s presence in the world is different to how you express God’s presence in the world. We each offer God to the world in diverse ways.

Overcoming fear

The problem is that we never believe that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and that God loves us as we are. Grace is always too much for us, too overwhelming.

We are trapped by our fear. Jesus says why are you afraid? The hairs on your head are counted. God wants us to say yes to God's goodness in us. We are always saved by grace through faith – grace is God's extravagant love towards us, and faith is saying yes to the presence of God in our lives – believing that God could be that good for us.

We also fear that if we step out and be who we really are that the world will shun us, that what we offer may not be good enough. We must surrender our fear. It was for freedom that Christ has set us free (Romans). Stop looking at the situation with human eyes and try to see it from God's perspective – the God who says I have redeemed you I have called you by name – child you are mine says to us, “never fear”.

We are all different

Although the spirit of God, the divine breath is inside each one of us, it reveals itself uniquely in each one of our lives. Some of us are shy, others are outgoing. Some are particular with their attention to detail, others have a visionary perspective. These personality differences are there to fulfil God's purpose in our lives and God's purpose in the world: “For we are what he made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”

The essence of who we are is a work in progress. Day by day and moment by moment we must surrender to the grace of God, the spirit of God's presence in us so that God can continue to shape us and transform us.

Conclusion

Who are you? What makes you belong? On the one hand you are a mud clod. Fragile. On the other hand, you have been breathed into by the Creator of the universe, you have been fearfully and wonderfully made. The Divine breath is flowing in you and through you. Your greatest difference from me is your greatest gift to me.

May you come to see that you are a sacred creation of God.

May you come to know the divine breath flowing in you, through you and flowing through the person next to you and the person next to them.

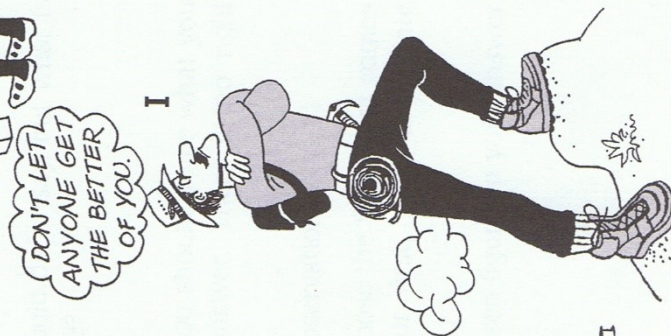
You are on holy Ground. May you come to see that God is here right now with us all the time.

May you come to see that you are wonderfully made, shaped in love for a work of love.

Amen

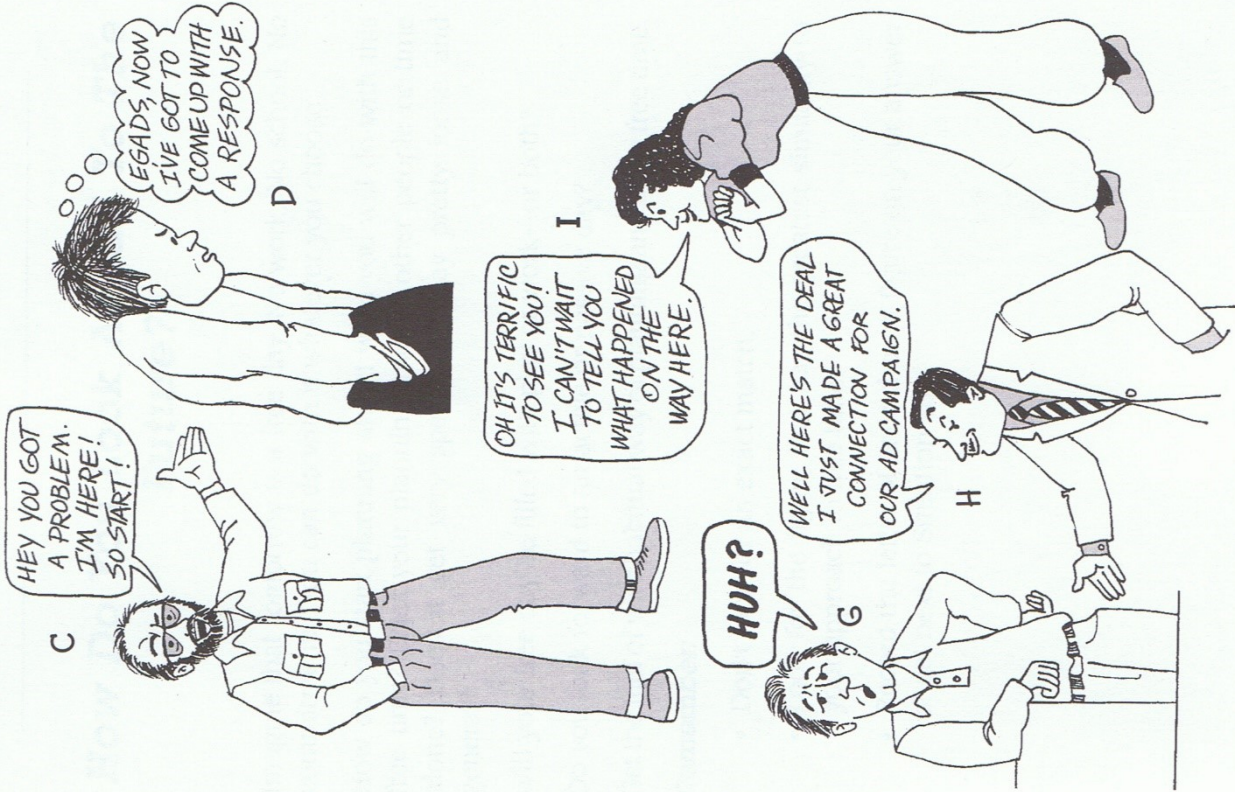
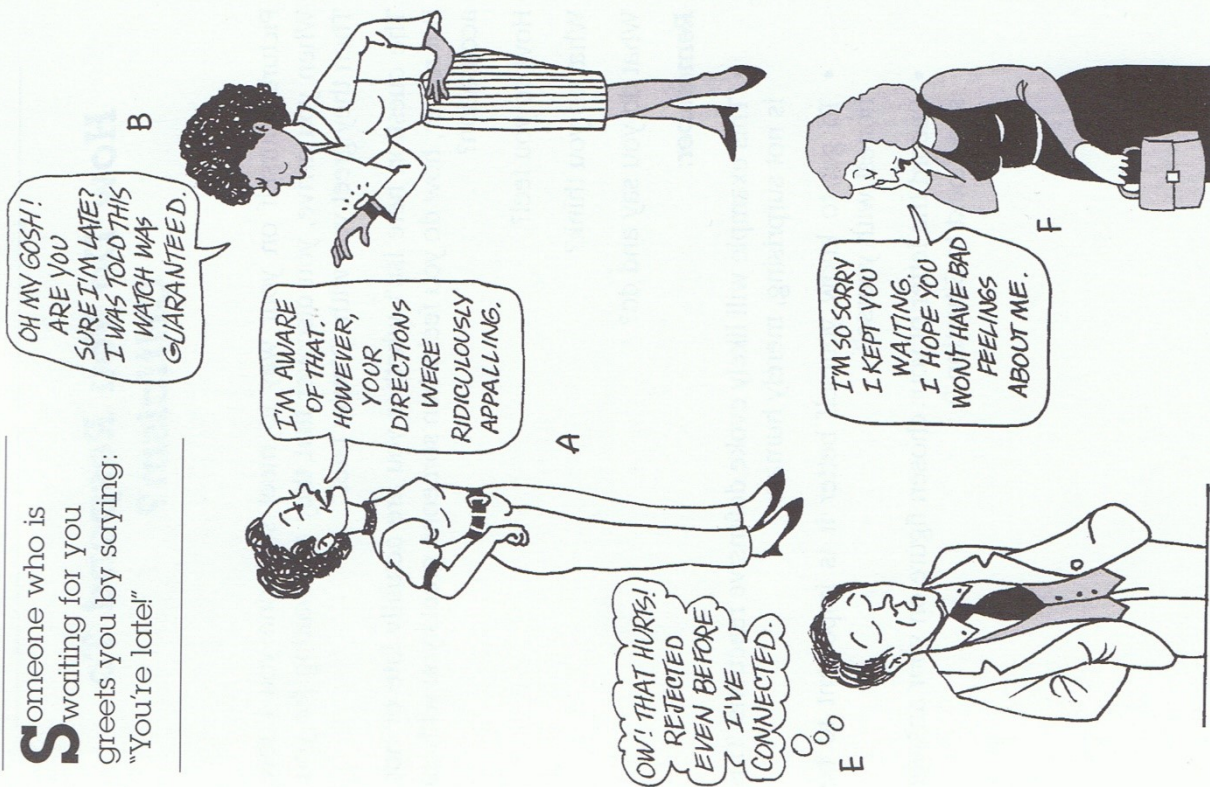
SITUATION 1

Which of these mottoes best expresses your core motivation or underlying attitude about life?



SITUATION 9

Someone who is waiting for you greets you by saying: "You're late!"

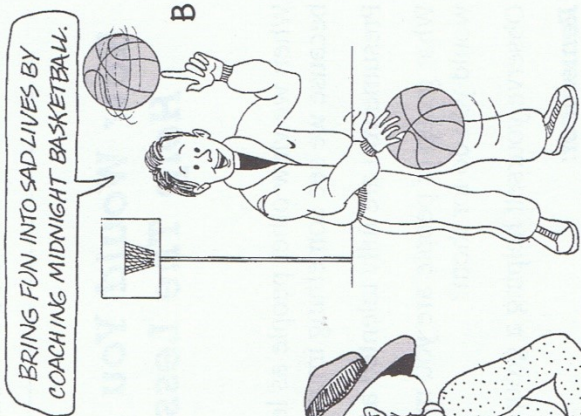


SITUATION 11

What's your preferred way to help the less fortunate?



A ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING FOR BATTERED WOMEN TO STAND ON THEIR OWN.

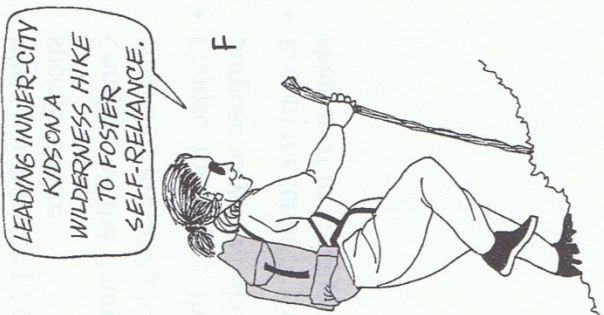


B BRING FUN INTO SAD LIVES BY COACHING MIDNIGHT BASKETBALL.

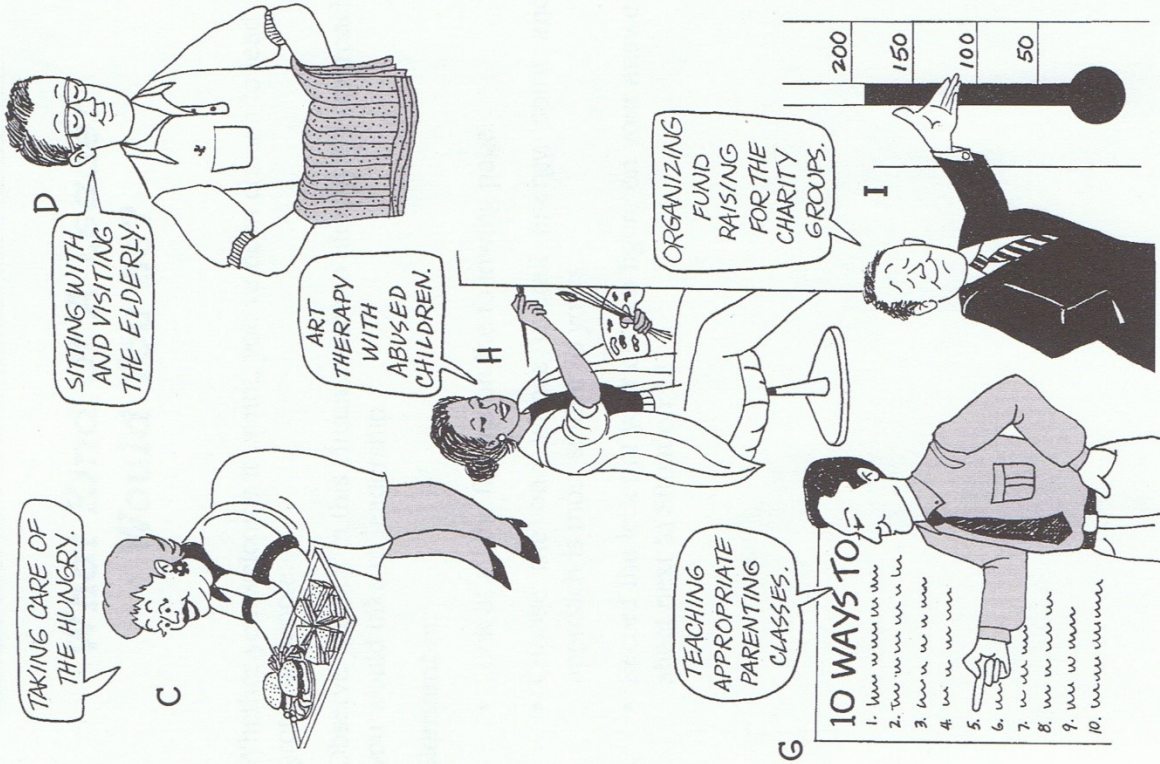


E TUTORING THE ILLITERATE.

Aa Bb
Cc Dd



F LEADING INNER-CITY KIDS ON A WILDERNESS HIKE TO FOSTER SELF-RELIANCE.



C TAKING CARE OF THE HUNGRY.

D SITTING WITH AND VISITING THE ELDERLY.

H ART THERAPY WITH ABUSED CHILDREN.

G TEACHING APPROPRIATE PARENTING CLASSES.

- 10 WAYS TO**
1. *www*
 2. *www*
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I ORGANIZING FUND RAISING FOR THE CHARITY GROUPS.



Personality and spirituality

The stable characteristics that describe a person and make them different to others is what we call Personality. You have heard of Myers-Briggs? Myers-Briggs is a tool to help determine personality patterns or traits. We appreciate that the uniqueness of people disallows a process of “boxing”, however being able to understand each other through a tool such as Myers-Briggs is though to improve relationships.

While Myers-Briggs is said to explore the outward expression of personality traits, the Enneagram describes the inner motivations that give rise to personality traits. The enneagram is helpful in spiritual direction as a map of exploring a deepening spirituality.

Here a very brief outline is offered to inspire your own further reading.

Overview of the Enneagram (based on Margaret Frings Keyes)

One—Perfection vs Resentment

Life Script “I’m right. I’m hardworking”

Shadow Issue—Wrath

Resisting—Open Anger

Addicted to—perfection

Overcomes with—fornbearance

Defence mechanism—reaction formation

Talk style—preach and teach

Extreme Psychological Issue—Compulsive Personality

Two—Helpfulness vs Manipulation

Life Script “I’m helpful”

Shadow Issue—Pride

Resisting—Own Needs

Addicted to—

Overcomes with—humility & proper self esteem

Defence mechanism—repression

Talk style—help and advice

Extreme Psychological Issue—Hysteria

Three—Achievement vs Emphasis on Image

Life Script “I’m successful”

Shadow Issue—Deceit

Resisting—Failure

Addicted to—efficiency

Overcomes with—hope

Defence mechanism—identification

Talk style—self-promotion

Extreme Psychological Issue—Work-A-Holic

Four—Excellence vs Moody Nostalgia

Life Script “I’m unique”

Shadow Issue—Envy

Resisting—Commonplace

Addicted to—elitism

Overcomes with—contentment

Defence mechanism—introjections/sublimation

Talk style—sad stories

Extreme Psychological Issue—Depression

Five—Knowledge vs Withdrawal

Life Script “I’m perceptive”

Shadow Issue—Acquisitiveness

Resisting—Emptiness

Addicted to—knowledge

Overcomes with—detachment

Defence mechanism—isolation/
compartmentalisation

Talk style—dissertations

Extreme Psychological Issue—Avoidant
Personality

Six—Security vs Fear & Doubt

Life Script “I’m loyal”

Shadow Issue—Cowardice/Reckless Courage

Resisting—Deviance

Addicted to—security

Overcomes with—faith

Defence mechanism—projection

Talk style—group thought

Extreme Psychological Issue—Paranoid
Personality

Seven—Easy Optimism vs Uneasy Activity
Life Script “I see the bright side”
Shadow Issue—Gluttony
Resisting—Pain
Addicted to—idealism
Overcomes with—moderation/balance
Defence mechanism—rationalisation
Talk style—anecdotes
Extreme Psychological Issue—Narcissistic
Personality

Eight—Self-Defined Justice vs Arrogance
Life Script “I’m Powerful”
Shadow Issue—Lust
Resisting—Weakness
Addicted to—arrogance/vengeance
Overcomes with—trustfulness
Defence mechanism—denial
Talk style—imperatives, commands
Extreme Psychological Issue—Sociopath

Nine—Non-Aggression vs Indecision & Indolence
Life Script “I’m easy going”
Shadow Issue—Laziness
Resisting—Conflict
Addicted to—indecision
Overcomes with—active love
Defence mechanism—obsessive thought
Talk style—epic tales
Extreme Psychological Issue—Passive Aggressive
Personality

Recommended web sites

<http://www.enneagraminstitute.com/> - where it is possible to take the RHETI test online.

Also, lots of information by the authors Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson.

<http://www.enneagram.com/> - is the site of well-known Enneagram author, Helen Palmer.

Recommended books

Renee Baron & Elizabeth Wagele, *The Enneagram Made Easy*, (HarperCollins, 1994)

Richard Rohr & Andreas Ebert, *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective*, (Crossroad, 2009)

Richard Rohr, Andreas Ebert et al, *Experiencing the Enneagram*, (Crossroad, 1992)

Other recommended titles

Kathleen Hurley & Theodore Dobson, *What’s my Type?*(HarperSanFrancisco, 1991)

Michael Hampson, *Head versus Heart & Our Gut Reactions*(O Books, 2005)

Simon Parke, *The Enneagram: A Private Session With the World’s Greatest Psychologist*(Lion, 2008)

Don Richard Riso, *Personality Types: using the Enneagram for self-discovery* (Houghton Mifflin, 1987)

Don Richard Riso, *Understanding the Enneagram* (Houghton Mifflin, 1990)

Jerome Wagner, *The Enneagram Spectrum* (Metamorphous, 1996)

Hannah Nathans, *The Enneagram at work: towards personal mastery & social intelligence* (Cyan, 2004)

Helen Palmer, *The Enneagram*, (Harper & Row, 1975)

Who I am makes me Belong

A Personality for my Vocation

Made and Known

Read Psalm 139: 1 – 16

- What knowledge is too wonderful for the psalmist (verse 6)? Do you agree?

- Have you ever wished that you could escape from God? Why?

- What do verses 13 – 16 say about how well God knows you?

Named and Protected

Read Isaiah 43: 1 - 4 and Matthew 10: 26 - 30

- Put your name in the place of Jacob and Israel in Isaiah 43:1. What does this say about God's love for you?

- What promise does God give you in Isaiah 43: 2 - 4?

- What assurance does Jesus give you in Matthew 10: 29 - 31?

Under Construction

Read Philippians 1: 3 - 11

- What "good work" has God begun in you, as a member of the Church?

- Rewrite verses 9 - 11 them as a prayer to say daily for yourself