

## MONDAY MANNA

6 April 2020

### LESSONS FROM A FELLOW NAMED BEZALEL

By Rick Boxx

Over the years, I have spoken to many businesspeople who mistakenly believe they must leave the marketplace and become missionaries or pastors to do work that would please God. The Bible, however, tells a different story. In an interesting individual named Bezalel, we find an excellent illustration of how God views the intersection of vocation and faith.

He is introduced in Exodus 35:30, where we read, *"Then Moses said to the Israelites, 'See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel ..., and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills.'"* Bezalel was the first person in the Scriptures to be described as being filled with the Spirit of God. Interestingly, he was not a priest or a prophet. He held no official "religious" role. Instead, he was a craftsman.

But God was not calling Bezalel to serve on his own. The Lord knew the work He was calling him to accomplish inside the tabernacle, furnishings that would be dedicated to the worship of God, was going to require more people. Someone able to teach others was needed – Bezalel was appointed to lead the way. *"And He has given both Bezalel and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others"* (Exodus 35:34).

As we read more about Bezalel, we discover he was not only a craftsman and a teacher, but also a *generalist*. He was skilled in many different crafts, while others were called to specific tasks, such as being engravers or designers. *"God has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers"* (Exodus 35:35). Being a generalist gave Bezalel the capability for being a good teacher for the specialists.

God had given Moses, the leader of the Israelites, intricate designs for how He wanted His tabernacle created. As Bezalel co-laboured with God, he and others working with him produced excellent results. The outcome was a tabernacle that not only met God's specifications, but also displayed His vision. The excellence of Bezalel's craftsmanship moved the people's hearts to extreme generosity.

We read in Exodus 36:6 that Moses said, *"No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary.' And so, the people were restrained from bringing more, because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work."* Imagine leading an important initiative that inspires such enthusiastic support that you have to say, "Stop! We do not need any more. We have more than enough!"

This example of Bezalel is from thousands of years ago, but it clearly shows how God desires for us to partner with Him in His work, whether in constructing a building, growing a business, pioneering a new product or service, or any other project you could conceive. We don't have to become missionaries or pastors to do so.

Consider: God called Bezalel to be a craftsman, giving him the ability to do it very well. God has a vocational calling for you – as is true for every one of His followers. If God has blessed you with excellent skills, He might also give you the ability to teach those skills to others. I would encourage you to pray and ask God if He is calling you to *teach* as well as to *do*. Considering your past experiences and skills, are you a generalist or a specialist? To best allocate your time, it helps to know. By combining God's design and your excellent work, you might be amazed at the generous response from others!

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**Postal Address:**

PO Box 8168,  
Woolloongabba, QLD, 4102

ABN: 42 005 622 515

**Office Address:**

Suite CBMC,  
Sung Do Lawyers,  
14 Annerley Road,  
Woolloongabba, QLD 4102

**Email:**

admin@cbmcaustralia.com.au

**Phone:**

07 3172 9365

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### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

Have you been told – or have you believed – that to engage in work that pleases God, you would have to become a "professional Christian," being paid to perform some overtly religious role such as a missionary, a pastor, or another vocation directly affiliated with a church or Christian organisation? Where do you think this idea came from?

Do you believe a follower of Jesus Christ working in a so-called "secular job," such as being a banker, a physician, schoolteacher, entrepreneur or engineer, can be just as important to God as jobs that have specifically spiritual objectives? Why or why not?

Try to imagine how Bezalel, a man with wonderfully diverse skills in craftsmanship, must have felt when he was singled out to lead the very complex task of constructing the tabernacle for the Israelites to worship God. What do you think his initial thoughts might have been? Do you think he regarded this as a "holy calling"?

How do you perceive your current job in terms of God's calling on your life? Do you believe this is what He has called you to do – at least for now? Or do you believe He might be wanting you to make a vocational change, even if it means a very different career? Explain your answer.

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:*

Proverbs 14:23, 18:9; 22:29

1 Corinthians 3:9

Ephesians 2:10

Colossians 3:17,23-24