



God Calling Samuel: Calling as a Process

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine knowing your purpose for living and the design for the rest of your life based on external or internal motivation. Further, you know the positive impact you will make on the community. This is, in essence, a calling. The phenomenon of calling has existed in antiquity and largely remains consistent in modern research.

This study used phenomenological research to understand Samuel's calling and the long-term impact of that calling on his life. The main questions explored the experience of Samuel's calling and the impact of this calling on Samuel's life. This study then applied the findings to modern relevance. Calling has implications for modern organizations in mentoring, leadership, followership, human resource development, self-management, recruitment, hiring, and retention.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

This section outlines the previous research into calling, including definitions, theories, and constructs. This section also includes brief overviews of 1 Samuel and phenomenology. Finally, the literature review section provides the foundation for a phenomenological research approach to Samuel's calling.

Calling

There are various callings revealed in the Bible. The Old Testament Hebrew word for calling is *qara*, which means “to call out” (Strong, 1890). The term is used numerous times throughout the Old Testament. It is associated with the calling of Bezalel in Exodus 13:1–5, the calling of the Israelites in 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 41:8, and Isaiah 43:10, and the calling of leaders, prophets, and judges used with Moses, Abraham, Gideon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Amos (Stevens, 1999). In the New Testament, God used a broader calling, the Greek word *klesis*. *Klesis* refers to the calling of salvation rather than a vocation or task (Hardy, 1990). Stevens described this as the “Christian vocation” or a calling to follow Christ (p. 83). This calling is threefold in that there is a call to discipleship, holiness, and work (Stevens, 1999). Hardy also built the idea of work or vocation as an addition to the calling to Christ. Hardy referenced the Puritan ideas by describing the vocational calling as the “particular” calling separate from the “general” calling that all have to follow Christ (p. 80). The particular calling is based on skills and spiritual giftings. 1 Corinthians 12:28–29 demonstrates a vocational calling for apostles, prophets, teachers, and healers. The Bible establishes a supernatural component to a calling. However, modern scholars have added a secular view to the concept of calling.

Although calling's history was traditionally associated with religious authors (Hardy, 1990), the modern view of calling has shifted to a secular approach (Adams, 2012). As a result, there have been many modern definitions of calling (Adams, 2012). Dik and Duffy (2009) argued that there are three essential elements of calling. These scholars defined calling as:

a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating

or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness, and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation. (Dik & Duffy, 2009, p. 427)

For this definition, calling contains an external summons, individual purpose, and prosocial obligation (Duffy & Dik, 2013). Bunderson and Thompson (2009) also found that calling contained a prosocial orientation and a sense of duty. Duffy et al. (2018) described definitions of calling, which include “an external caller or destiny, a sense of duty, and prosocial motives,” as part of the neoclassical perspectives of calling (p. 425).

The neoclassical definition of calling has resonated with previous research on calling. Wilson and Hollis-Brusky (2014) studied text related to lawyers and found that there was indeed a calling on Christian lawyers as demonstrated through an inward perception of law, as a duty to pursue social justice issues, and a duty to influence aspects of society toward Christian values. Haney-Loehlein et al. (2015) studied leaders and their calling. Haney-Loehlein et al. found that, at times, calling came from dreams, visions, or deliverance narratives, and calling was confirmed through prayer, a sense of God’s leading, and conviction. The calling resulted in a positive experience for either the individual or community or led to new career paths (Haney-Loehlein et al., 2015).

Modern definitions generally focus on the individual rather than the community with a “focus on an inner drive toward self-fulfillment or personal happiness” (Duffy & Dik, 2013, p. 429). Bellah et al. (1985) argued that calling is replaced with vocation or career as people become more individualistic. This is because calling connects people to the community, and as people become more individualistic, there is less involvement in the community (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 66).

Scholars added to calling research by distinguishing between perceived and lived calling (Duffy & Dik, 2013; Duffy, Bott et al., 2012a). These are viewed as two separate constructs, with perceived calling being the precedent of a lived calling (Duffy et al., 2018). Ziedelis (2019) and Afsar et al. (2019) studied perceived calling and lived calling and found that they were positively related to nurses’ work outcomes. Ehrhardt and Ensher (2021) found a relationship between a perceived calling and a lived calling that resulted in positive work outcomes and lower negative work outcomes. Thus, even though perceived calling and a lived calling are treated as separate constructs, there is a relationship between the two.

Calling research has moved beyond definitions to theory development. Duffy et al. (2018) created the work as calling theory, which states that calling is “an approach to work that reflects seeking a sense of overall purpose and meaning and is used to help others or contribute to the common good, motivated by an external or internal summons” (p. 426). The concept of calling has been researched related to “the prevalence of calling, career maturity, work outcomes, domain satisfaction, well-being, and the distinction of perceiving vs. living a calling” (Duffy & Dik, 2013, p. 429). Researchers have reduced calling into scales to be measured and quantified (Duffy et al., 2015). However, further research is needed in the qualitative realm as calling relates to the individual experience.

1 Samuel

1 and 2 Samuel were originally written as one document called Samuel (Jones, 2001). However, the modern Bible divides the books into 1 and 2 Samuel, as ancient scrolls did not contain enough space to hold the entire Book of Samuel (Neely, 2014). The authorship of Samuel is unknown; however, there is some evidence to suggest the author. Antiquity and Jewish tradition commonly held that Samuel was the author of the Book of Samuel (Jones, 2001; MacArthur, 2005). Further, Talmud the Babylonian argued that Samuel was the author of 1 Samuel 1–24 with the additional chapters added by Nathan and Gad (Youngblood, 2017). However, others have argued for different authors as separate and unique units combined to create a holistic composition. Neely argued against Samuel as the author. Jones suggested a Deuteronomistic author and editor. Brettler (1997) argued for several authors across 1 Samuel chapters; however, Rendsburg (2002) disagreed, arguing for one author from the region of Ephraim. MacArthur argued that the author of 1 Samuel possibly used Samuel’s notes to write the Book of Samuel. Modern scholars lack consensus on the human author of 1 Samuel; however, ancient tradition submits Samuel as the author of Samuel 1–24. Nelly concluded that 1 Samuel was divinely inspired with authorship guided by the Holy Spirit, reconciling the lack of a specific, known human author. Nelly further argued that 1 Samuel is even written from “the Lord’s perspective,” and the “narrator recounted the history from God’s point of view” (p. 400).

The date of composition is also unknown. Neely (2014) and MacArthur (2005) argued for the date of writing between 931 and 722

B.C. This is because it was likely written after the division of the Kingdoms but before the fall of Israel, the Northern Kingdom. Auld (2019) argued for the date of writing in the Persian or Hellenistic periods. The exact date is unknown, but history and scholarship provided an applicable date range.

The genre of 1 Samuel is mainly a historical narrative with some prophecy and poetry genres added (Neely, 2014; Osbourne, 2006). 1 Samuel focused on three characters, Samuel, Saul, and David, with Samuel living between 1080 and 970 B.C. (Youngblood, 2017). 1 Samuel occurred after the judgeship of Samson and begins with Samuel's judgeship. The Book of Samuel spans about 150 years and outlines the transition from Israel's last judge to the first king (Neely, 2014; Youngblood, 2017). The Book of Samuel evolves to establish the themes of kingship and monarchy, including the Davidic covenant.

PHENOMENOLOGY

I will only briefly discuss phenomenological studies as I assume my fellow researchers thoroughly expand on this topic throughout the book. Phenomenology is the search for lived experiences and is the study of phenomena (Patton, 2015). The researcher seeks to understand the "meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon" (Patton, 2015, p. 573). Moustakas (1994) argued that to study a personal experience, there must be intentionality, which is the "internal experience of being conscious of something" (p. 28). Intentionality is informed by noesis and noema. Noesis is "perceiving, feeling, thinking, remembering, or being judged," and noema is the meaning of the event (Moustakas, 1994, p. 69). Ihde (1977) argued that noema is the phenomenon of the experience, and noesis is the experience. These tenants allow researchers to study the phenomenon and the internal impacts of the phenomenon on people.

The first step to phenomenological analysis is epoche. Epoche is a Greek term "meaning to refrain from judgment" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). In this stage, the researcher engages on a journey of identifying preconceived beliefs and biases in order to eliminate those barriers from genuinely understanding the phenomenon so that the evidence is experienced and not judged. The second step is phenomenological reduction, where data is bracketed for examination (Patton, 2015). The researcher isolates key phrases, interprets the meaning, relates the meaning to the

phenomenon, and applies definitions (Patton, 2015). The third step is imaginative variation, where the data is grouped and themed. The fourth and final step of phenomenological analysis is synthesizing texture and structure, where a synthesis of the phenomenon's meaning and essence are revealed. At its nature, phenomenology is retrospective in that it always seeks to explore the experiences of the past (Van Manen, 1990).

CALLING, SAMUEL, AND PHENOMENOLOGY

It could be comforting to arise every morning knowing your calling. There is no regret or stress over not living your role (Berg et al., 2010). This depicts living a calling (Berg et al., 2010). Previous research on calling has demonstrated an internal component of purpose or duty and an external component of a general transcendental or summoning. In many ways, these two unique components work in concert to create or impact a person's calling. Given the highly individualized experience of a calling, it is ambitious of researchers to explore the topic.

Samuel's life demonstrated a calling as 1 Samuel 3 captured the specific language used, "the Lord called Samuel" (1 Samuel 3:4, NASB). The concepts of calling directly impacted and intersected with Samuel's life from a young age to his death. Using 1 Samuel adds depth to the existing literature on calling as it establishes the eternal nature of calling.

Phenomenological research is a valuable tool when attempting to understand the phenomenon of calling, specifically Samuel's calling and how that calling impacted Samuel's life. As Van Manen (1990) argued, phenomenological research always explores an experience of the past. Therefore, phenomenological research helps explore an experience of the past in Israel's early history. Duffy and Dik (2013) argued that future research into calling should focus on longitudinal data, or how calling impacts a person over time. They further argued that calling research should explore how calling links to behaviors (Duffy & Dik, 2013). In this capacity, phenomenological research provides the experiences of Samuel's entire life as recorded in 1 Samuel, which meets the longitudinal design and will investigate how calling influenced Samuel's behaviors.

METHOD

This study sought to examine the phenomenon of calling. Therefore, this study used a phenomenological approach to examine calling. Previous scholars have outlined the future of the research on calling, suggesting that future research should include longitudinal studies to understand the impact of a person's calling over their lifetime (Duffy & Dik, 2013). This study examined Samuel's calling over his life to meet this research need. This section outlines the research questions, sampling, data source, and technique used to examine Samuel's calling and life.

Research Questions

The research questions guide the design of the study. This study aimed to understand the phenomenon of Samuel's calling and how calling impacted Samuel's life. Therefore, the research questions are below:

- Research Question 1 What was the experience of Samuel's calling?
- Research Question 2 How was Samuel's calling demonstrated in his life?

Sampling

The sample is specific because the sample is one case with a life's worth of data located in 1 Samuel 1–28. Therefore, purposeful sampling strategies were employed. Specifically, this study used an “exemplar of a phenomenon of interest” sampling strategy (Patton, 2015, p. 266). Patton described this sampling strategy as using one case to examine a phenomenon over time. The case which demonstrated a calling over a lifetime is the story of Samuel found in 1 Samuel 1–28. 1 Samuel 1–28 outlined Samuel's birth, life, death, and after-death appearance.

Data Source

This study is unique in that it seeks to understand the phenomenon of Samuel's calling. Traditional phenomenological studies use qualitative interviews of living subjects to explore the phenomenon. However, Samuel is not available for a structured interview to explore the topic of his calling (although Samuel does have a history of returning after death; see 1 Samuel 28). Therefore, this study examined the text related

to Samuel's life to understand the phenomenon of calling, specifically the text of 1 Samuel 1–28. The text as the source of data is applicable because tradition accounts Samuel as either the author or an inspirational source. Further, if Samuel was not the author, the genre of historical narrative accurately reports the events, including Samuel's actions, emotions, and thoughts. Therefore, examining 1 Samuel as the data source is relevant to examining the phenomenon.

Additionally, Neely (2014) argued that the author wrote 1 Samuel from God's perspective. In this sense, the text is written from both Samuel's and God's viewpoints. This provides two layers of experience in one text resulting in a richer capture of the phenomenon of calling. Thus, the phenomenon of calling is revealed through two separate experiences, the caller and the called.

The text's original language was Hebrew. The text has been subsequently translated to English using various translation methods. Jacobs (2004) recommended a formal equivalence translation for Bible study. Panou (2013) examined translation theories and found that the translated text duplicates the target text in form and content with formal equivalence translations. The New American Standard Bible often scores highly on the word-for-word translation scales, and the translators held to a strict formal equivalence theory (Culpeper, 1971; Macy, 2000; New American Standard Bible, 1999). Therefore, this study used the New American Standard Bible (NASB) as the data source to best capture Samuel's words.

Technique

Flood (2006) argued that phenomenology has a place as it relates to scripture. However, few studies use phenomenological research as applied to scripture. This is the first study using phenomenological research to investigate Samuel's calling; therefore, a unique technique was utilized using Biblical text. The text was treated as a transcript, similarly to the transcribed interviews found in traditional phenomenological studies.

This study bracketed the data in 1 Samuel 1–28. These are verses that are directly related to the research questions. The data was then themed to create theoretical constructs. Saldana (2016) recommended theming the data as a coding technique for phenomenological studies. Theming the data is flexible as it allows the researcher to use direct words or concepts, called the manifest level, and deeper, underlying concepts, called the latent level (Boyatzis, 1998). Theming the data creates unique themes of

the experience that are then integrated to generate larger superordinate themes. These superordinate themes were discovered using imaginative variation to explore the meaning of the theme. Finally, the essence or meaning of the phenomenon of calling is understood as all components of the analysis are united. Conclusions are drawn from this analysis of the text.

ANALYSIS

I analyzed the verses related to Samuel in 1 Samuel 1–28. To analyze the data, I used the coding method of theming the data outlined by Saldana (2016). Saldana argued that theming the data is most appropriate for transcribed statements and other participant-generated artifacts. Furthermore, theming the data applies to phenomenological studies (Saldana, 2016).

I created themes from the applicable scripture verses. These themes focused on meaning or patterns. I examined the themes for similarities, differences, and relationships. I categorized these themes based on those relationships. I continued categorizing the themes from subordinate to superordinate to understand the holistic calling experience. Through each theme and categorization, I used imaginative variation to develop themes of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

From this analysis, I discovered five superordinate themes. The following tables outline the analytical process for developing the five themes, which will be addressed more thoroughly in the Discussion section. Table 3.1 outlines the theme that calling is a process.

Table 3.2 supports the theme that others influence an individual's calling.

Table 3.3 contains the information that offers two themes. One theme is that a person's purpose or meaning leads to action behaviors. The next theme is that a person's calling evolves over time and throughout their life.

Table 3.4 depicts the final theme, which proposes that calling can have negative emotional impacts.

Therefore, there are five superordinate themes which are:

- ST1 Calling is a process, beginning with foundational criteria moving to the calling experience and ending with the lived calling.
- ST2 Others influence an individual's calling.

Table 3.1 Thematic finding: calling is a process

<i>Superordinate theme</i>	<i>Emergent theme</i>	<i>Subtheme</i>	<i>Data support for subtheme</i>
Calling is a process	Foundational criteria for a calling	Established need or vacancy	2:12–17; 2:27–26, 3:1, 3:2, 3:11–14
		Background in field	1:28, 2:11, 2:18, 2:21, 2:26, 3:1, 3:7
	Experience of the call	External (divine) calling	3:4, 3:6, 3:8, 3:10
		Recipient's active response	3:4–5, 3:6, 3:8, 3:10, 3:16
		Discernment by self and others	3:8–9, 3:18
	A lived calling	Calling established	3:19, 2:26 vs. 3:19
Calling confirmed		3:20, 3:21, 4:1	
Calling continues		28:13	

Note All verses from 1 Samuel

Table 3.2 Thematic finding: others influence calling

<i>Superordinate theme</i>	<i>Emergent theme</i>	<i>Data support for theme</i>
Others influence calling	Family support	Chapter 1, 2:19
	Others hinder calling	3:5, 3:6

Note All verses from 1 Samuel

- ST3 An individual's calling results in meaning or purpose, which leads to action behaviors.
- ST4 A person's calling evolves over time.
- ST5 A person's calling can result in negative emotional outcomes.

Table 3.3 Thematic finding: purpose leads to action behaviors and calling evolves over time

<i>Superordinate theme</i>	<i>Emergent theme</i>	<i>Subtheme</i>	<i>Data supporting subtheme</i>	
Purpose leads to action behaviors	Samuel as Priest	Samuel and Sacrifices	7:9, 16:5	
		Samuel and Monuments	7:12, 7:17	
		Samuel represents/ leads	8:21, 10:17, 10:20–21, 15:32–33	
		Samuel as Prophet	Samuel speaks with/ for God	7:3, 8:6–9, 8:10–20, 8:22, 9:15–17, 10:18–19, 10:22, chapter 12, 15:1–3, 15:14, 15:16–19
			Samuel prays	7:5, 7:13, 8:6, 12:23
		Samuel as seerer	9:19–20, 9:25–27, 10:2–11, 19:20, 19:24	
	Samuel as Judge Samuel as Kingmaker	Samuel Judges Israel	7:6, 7:15–17, 8:1	
		Establishing Kings	chapter 10, 12:1, 15:1, chapter 16	
		Destruction of Kings	13:13–14, 15:22–23, 15:26–29, 28:16–19	
	Calling evolves over time		Kingdom Maker	10:25, 11:14

Note All verses from 1 Samuel

Table 3.4 Thematic finding: callings have negative impact

<i>Superordinate theme</i>	<i>Data supporting theme</i>
Calling can have negative emotional impacts	8:6 15:11 16:1

Note All verses from 1 Samuel

DISCUSSION

The final research step of phenomenological research is the synthesis of meaning and essence. Through the synthesis of meaning, there is an understanding of the experience as a whole (Moustakas, 1994). In relation to this phenomenological research, this includes examining the themes and their meanings to modern research.

Calling Is a Process

The first theme revealed in 1 Samuel is that calling is a process, beginning with foundational criteria moving to the calling experience and ending with the lived calling (ST1). There were two established foundational criteria for Samuel's calling: a demonstrative need or vacancy and a background or experience with the calling. 1 Samuel 3 begins with the spiritual vacancy, "word from the Lord was rare in those days" (1 Samuel 3:1, NASB). Eli's sons, as priests, were wicked, and Eli was old and unable to control their evil behavior. 1 Samuel 2:22–36 demonstrates that God intended to remove them from office. 1 Samuel 3:1 demonstrates that even though Eli was in office; there was a spiritual vacancy in that Eli abdicated his responsibility. Samuel also had experience with the function of the calling as Samuel grew up in the temple. The vacancy of a spiritual leader and Samuel's direct experience with the temple's functions made Samuel an appropriate candidate for God's calling to lead the Israelite people.

The calling process has modern applicability. The foundational criteria of an established need and experience in the field make rational sense. People are not called to needless work. Previous researchers have studied populations of counseling psychologists, physicians, nurses, leaders, educators, and other relevant vocations as it relates to calling (Bott et al., 2017; Duffy, Foley et al., 2012b; Haney-Loehlein et al., 2015; Raatikainen, 1997; Rawat & Nadavulakere, 2015). Work exists because there is a need. Further, these fields are continually growing, demonstrating the continual opportunity or filling a vacancy. Experience or a background in the field is also a foundational criterion as a person most likely has knowledge about the calling they must undertake. Haney-Loehlein et al. (2015) found that a person's past experience does shape their calling.

The foundational criteria have applicability for individuals as modern recipients of a calling should examine the need and their knowledge of the field when perceiving a calling. This reflection on need and experience within specific fields would be most relevant during transitional times (Levinson, 1975). For example, there are times in early adult development when adults must select a plan for life and career (Levinson, 1975). Further, there are later periods when adults question their careers, past choices, or commitments and present a desire to explore new possibilities (Levinson, 1975). During these transitional times, individuals should reflect on the components of the calling process, being the need and the knowledge or experience in the field, as a part of their decision-making process to follow their calling. This could be a reflective matrix designed to encapsulate the vacancy and the knowledge to determine future participation.

The second step in the process of calling is the calling experience. This step includes the external or divine calling, the recipient's active response, and the discernment by self and others. 1 Samuel 3 depicts each of these components in Samuel's calling. God provided the divine calling by calling Samuel four times. Each time, Samuel actively responded and sought out the source of the call. Samuel did not recognize the calling at first. Therefore, Eli provided discernment by instructing Samuel. At first, Eli misunderstood this calling but eventually instructed Samuel to respond with "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:4–9, NASB). The self-discernment occurred later in the passage by confirming Samuel's message from God (1 Samuel 3:18, NASB).

The second step in the calling process also relates to modern research. Researchers have debated the source of the calling, being external or internal (Dik & Duffy, 2009; Duffy et al., 2018). Samuel demonstrated an external summons, which is divine or supernatural. To process and internalize the calling requires a response from the recipient. As was the case with Samuel, it was a continual active response throughout his life. Individuals can also seek the input of others to discern their calling and seek guidance. The mentorship relationship demonstrates potential in this area.

Mentorship as a dyadic relationship is influential in the area of calling. Eli mentored Samuel through training and by providing discernment during the calling (Oboh, 2020). Modern organizations can utilize formal mentorship programs to capitalize on and mold an individual's calling.

Ehrhardt and Ensher (2021) found that a mentor can strengthen the relationship between a perceived and lived calling. Further, mentors provide discernment during the mentorship process (LeBlanc et al., 2019). A formal mentorship program may benefit organizations by developing an individual's calling. This is especially salient as the data demonstrates that a calling can be both negatively and positively impacted. Eli hindered Samuel's calling multiple times by providing poor guidance. Formal mentorship programs supported by the organization can promote the connection between the profession or role and calling.

The third step in the calling process relates to the lived calling. Modern definitions largely focus on calling as an event; however, this study argues that calling is a process. This most closely aligns with research on a perceived calling and a lived calling (Berg et al., 2010). The established calling, the confirmed calling, and the continued calling demonstrate three components of the lived calling suggesting that a person's calling is not associated with two separate constructs of perceived and lived calling. This study found that calling is a process. This is important because a process can evolve, change, and progress while a past event remains stagnant. This could explain why individuals feel regret and stress over not living a calling, as found by Berg et al. (2010), because those individuals are still engaged in the calling process.

Calling as a process also applies to recruiting, hiring, and retention. The foundational criteria of a calling process relate to modern recruiting practices for organizations. In the fields where calling saturates the workers' experience, organizations should tailor their recruiting practices to capitalize on this aspect. Job openings or recruitment fairs often focus on the need (job vacancy) and the experience required, as supported in the foundational criteria. Adding an additional component of calling during recruitment may attract individuals who are engaged in the calling process for that field. The main focus does not need to be on calling but acknowledging this influence on certain career fields during recruiting may solicit the type of person who will be positively influenced by the calling process throughout their career, resulting in the recruitment of candidates with high career commitment or organizational commitment.

Calling as a process applies to hiring through the calling experience being the external influence, active response, and the discernment of self or others. The job vacancy serves as the external call. A person sees this external influence and undergoes an active response by either applying for the position or not. The data shows that as an external influence,

the calling process for Samuel was repeated, requiring a response in each instance. One possible reason for this repeated calling was barriers to communication between Samuel and Eli. Some barriers to effective communication are environmental or personal and can include the frame of reference, competition, selective listening, message filtering, status differences, time pressures, communication overload, and others (Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014). One or more of these barriers may have contributed to Samuel and Eli's communication. Several strategies to improve communication are following up, controlling information flow, information richness through face-to-face contact, timing, and repetition. God employed repetition and other strategies throughout Samuel's life to improve communication. These communication strategies are also useful in hiring as new employees must rely on repetition to learn new policies and follow up with managers. Similarly, organizations must control information flow, provide rich communication, and be timely when communicating with eligible and new employees. Since calling is a communication, barriers should be reduced with eligible and new followers.

Calling as a process also impacts retention through the lived calling. Modern workplaces should design the organizational culture in such a way to support the lived calling. The data demonstrates that the lived calling is a continual construct and an integral component of the worker. Since the lived calling can be long-term, organizations need to support the lived calling in a way that reduces stress and regret (Berg et al., 2010). One method is organizational culture, which can strengthen a worker's lived calling and increase retention. Schein (1992) argued that leaders could shape organizational culture through embedding and reinforcing mechanisms, each of which can be leveraged to shape a culture that supports the calling process. Some embedding mechanisms to encourage a calling culture are for the leader to pay attention to and measure the calling of the members and the organization, respond to a crisis with calling as a high value, role model the calling process through the calling experience and the lived calling, reward a member's calling, and recruit and retain workers who are called to the profession. These leaders' behaviors will subtly impact the culture of the organization and strengthen a calling culture. Schein (1992) also presented reinforcing mechanisms that impact an organization's culture. These additional strategies support the embedding mechanisms. Some reinforcing mechanisms are to design and

structure the organization in a way that supports a calling message; organize systems and procedures such as policies, reports, forms, and tasks that communicate the importance of calling; write an organizational philosophy such as a mission or values statement that acknowledges the calling of the members and the organization; and create stories and legends around the calling process, which include the calling process of the leader or members. Shaping organizational culture to be a calling culture should result in positive outcomes for members resulting in greater retention. Future research is needed to understand these outcomes.

This research finding that calling is a process is important in that it aligns with some modern definitions of calling. For example, Dik and Duffy (2009) defined calling as an external summons to meaningful work with a prosocial attachment (p. 427). This definition aligns with the calling process, but the calling process contains more details on the foundation, experience, and lived calling.

Other's Influence Can Impact Calling

Another study finding is that others can influence an individual's calling (ST2). Samuel's mother, Hannah, and Samuel's mentor, Eli, both played a role in Samuel's calling. Hannah dedicated Samuel to God's work at the temple, providing the background experience for Samuel. Eli instructed Samuel on how to respond to God's calling. Oboh (2020) argued that Eli acted as a mentor to Samuel in two ways. First, Eli provided mentorship through training at the temple, as demonstrated through Samuel's duties outlined in the passage. Second, Eli mentored Samuel through the calling process as Samuel continued to return to Eli for guidance. Eli discerned the voice of God and was able to provide Samuel with direction on the response. Eli's role as mentor influenced Samuel's background and response to the calling. In Eli's case, God called Samuel multiple times because Eli instructed Samuel to return to bed after hearing God's voice. However, it is unknown the intensity of the impact of their influence on Samuel's calling.

The fact that others influence calling is an important finding in that calling is traditionally approached as an individual construct occurring within and for the individual. However, this study suggests that calling contains a social element or relates to group theory. Practically, the prosocial component of calling found by previous researchers may open the individual construct of calling to others as the prosocial component

impacts others (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Dik & Duffy, 2009; Duffy & Dik, 2013). Additionally, the mentorship relationship impacts an individual's calling showing that a calling possibly demonstrates a relational design. This finding further supports the recommendation of a formal mentorship program. As an outside influence, mentors can impact an individual's unique calling (Ehrhardt & Ensher, 2021; LeBlanc et al., 2019). However, this finding is more robust, suggesting that this outside influence of calling reaches beyond the mentorship relationship. Leaders, peers, and others may impact an individual's calling in both a positive and negative way. Therefore, organizations should be proactive in designing a formal mentorship program to increase the chances of positive influence and decrease the chances of negative influence. The benefit of a formal mentorship program is that the program can be suitably tailored to fit the organizational need. For example, organizations can control the voluntariness, time commitments, topics, focus, structure, mentorship pairs, and more in order to obtain the best possible outcomes for that organization. Including calling as a focus and influencing calling over time could result in beneficial consequences for both the organization and the members. The relational process through mentorship can guide a career and provide discernment on future outcomes. Further research is necessary to understand the relationship of a person's individual calling with others.

Purpose Leads to Action Behaviors

The third finding in this study is that an individual's calling results in meaning or purpose, which leads to action behaviors (ST3). God called Samuel to be a prophet, priest, judge, and kingmaker. Samuel demonstrated behaviors aligned with these roles and his purpose. For further information on the specific behaviors, please see Table 3.3. 1 Samuel 3–28 is filled with action verbs such as “Samuel spoke” (1 Samuel 7:3, 8:10, NASB), “Samuel judged” (1 Samuel 7:6, 7:15, NASB), “Samuel prayed” (1 Samuel 8:6, NASB), “Samuel...poured”/anointed (1 Samuel 10:1; 16:12, NASB), and others. This indicates that living a calling requires action. This builds on the theme that calling is a process adding that calling requires action. Thus, ST3 answers research question 2 in that Samuel demonstrated his calling through action based on his role. Purpose leads to action behaviors applies to modern organizations through goal setting, motivation, and organizational philosophies.

Calling as a lived experience found in this phenomenological study often treats calling as an ambiguous or amorphous substance. However, this is not always so, as is indicated by the author's capture of the lived experience of 1 Samuel 3. In this way, the author transformed Samuel's experience into the written word, the non-physical into the physical. So too, can modern organizations capture the worker's lived experience in a way to channel this amorphous power of calling. Many motivation theories are designed around producing desired behaviors of employees by using the external to impact the internal. Equity theory, job design theory, expectancy theory, operant conditioning theory, and others are all designed to control the external in order to influence motivation (for more information, see Adams, 1965; Hackman et al., 1975; Porter & Lawler, 1968; Skinner, 1965; Vroom, 1964). Goal-setting theory is one such motivation theory that applies to calling.

Once an individual engages in the calling process, ST1 demonstrated a level of discernment necessary. This discernment could come from others, as seen with Hannah and Eli with Samuel. Organizations and leaders can be the source of discernment through goal setting. This helps the follower by harnessing the calling into measurable outcomes via written goals. Mentors and leaders can help discern the calling and craft goals to help followers obtain their calling. Through a goal as achieving an end state, the follower's purpose or meaning leads to action behaviors (Locke, 1996). Calling communicated through goals helps the individual develop a plan, direct attention, regulate effort, and increase persistence (Locke, 1996). Doran (1981) argued that the most effective goals are SMART or specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. The writing of documents to establish future outcomes was also observed by Samuel when he wrote the establishing documents for the Israeli government. Leaders can help discern and design an individual's calling into written measurable and achievable outcomes through goal setting.

External motivation theories are valuable to leaders because it provides a method to influence a worker's behaviors. However, motivation is powerful when the locus of causality is internal. Intrinsic motivation does not require external forces or specially crafted motivation theories. Intrinsic motivation occurs within the worker. This is similar to the calling process in that the calling occurs within the individual. Although others may influence motivation, the motivation remains uniquely with the individual, and so too is the same for calling. The relationship between intrinsic motivation and calling needs further exploration; however, there

appears to be a relationship between the two constructs. Motivation influences followers' behaviors. Calling results in purpose, which leads to action behaviors. Therefore, organizations could focus on calling as an internal motivation to guide follower behaviors. In this way, no external reward, punishment, design, or structure is necessary to motivate the follower, but rather the leader should create an environment that activates and allows the calling that already exists within the follower. As long as the follower's calling and the organizational mission are aligned, this results in beneficial follower behavior with little effort required by the leader or organization. Future research should explore the relationship between motivation and calling.

Organizational philosophies are another component to purpose leading to action behaviors. This was briefly mentioned in ST1 in shaping organizational culture; however, it deserves further consideration as it relates to purpose and action behaviors. Organizational philosophies are espoused values or perhaps deeper underlying assumptions. These philosophies are often the entire purpose of the creation of an organization. It is important to articulate this purpose through value or mission statements, mottos, and other tangible methods. Individuals who experience a calling will likely seek an outlet and matrix to engage in that calling. An organization will attract these individuals through aligned philosophies. Ideally, the organization and its members will have the same calling defined by the mission statement and other philosophies promoting person-organization fit or even person-vocation fit (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). Alignment in person-organization and person-vocation fit has benefits such as increased job satisfaction, increased organizational commitment, and decreased stress (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). Duffy et al. (2019) argued that organizational support might help a follower fit within the organization. Philosophy statements that include the organization's calling may attract members who are similarly called and increase fit.

Calling Evolves Over Time

The fourth finding in this study is that a person's calling evolves over time (ST4). Samuel began his calling as a prophet, priest, and judge. Toward the end of Samuel's life, Samuel added the role of kingmaker and kingdom builder. Israel did not have a king but was rather led by spiritual leaders. Samuel began his calling by fulfilling this role until the people requested a king, and God granted their request. Samuel anointed

two kings and established the foundational documents that created the monarchy. Samuel's calling evolved to incorporate this new structure. Samuel's calling changed over his lifetime to meet the needs of God and the Israelite people.

The progression of an individual's calling supports the concept of calling as a process. An individual may be called and attempt to live that calling; however, that calling may change or evolve over a lifetime. A calling could change based on the need of the community or other community-oriented elements. Individuals should not perceive calling as a snapshot in time but rather as a continuation or mission for a lifetime.

The time element also gives organizations greater access to the calling experience. Human resource development is a way to develop followers over time. Organizations use training, coaching, mentoring, education, performance management, and other techniques to develop their workforce. Since calling evolves over time, organizations can apply human resource development strategies to impact this calling over the entire career of the follower. The organization can also provide resources via training or education that is interesting or pertinent to the follower's calling to develop that follower and their calling further. Future research should explore the factors that may change or modify a person's calling.

Calling Results in Negative Emotional Outcomes

The fifth finding in this study is that a person's calling can result in negative emotional outcomes (ST5). Previous research has outlined the positive impacts of a calling on work-related and personal outcomes (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Rawat & Nadavulakere, 2015). There has also been research on the negative outcomes of calling (Wilson & Britt, 2021). 1 Samuel depicts Samuel as furious, displeased, and mournful at different points when acting on his calling (see Table 3.4). This range indicates that calling results in complex internal consequences for the individual.

Followers should engage in self-management or mindfulness practices in order to mitigate negative emotional outcomes. Further, organizations could potentially reduce negative emotional outcomes by emphasizing successes instead of failures. Although it is important to examine failures in order to determine needed corrections, it is also important to analyze success for future duplication. However, negative emotional outcomes could benefit the follower. For example, the data shows that Samuel's

negative emotions lead to behaviors such as praying or appointing a new king. These behaviors benefited Samuel and others. In these cases, followers and organizations can use the negative emotional outcomes to benefit themselves and the organization. This is supported by Skinner (1965), who argued that followers change future behavior to avoid negative consequences, such as negative emotional outcomes, through avoidance or escape learning. Future research should examine the impact of calling on the negative outcomes of calling recipients.

Research questions 1 and 2 asked about the calling experience. The five findings of this study answer these questions by demonstrating that calling is a process that results in action behaviors and evolves over time with potential influence from others and can lead to negative emotional outcomes. These findings have modern applicability in aiding recipients of calling to better understand the phenomenon of calling. This study also illuminates a previously unexplored area of Samuel's calling using phenomenological research. As a result, this study provides areas for future research.

The five findings of this study draw forth the meaning behind the phenomenon and reveal future areas of study. The concept of calling as a process should be examined by researchers to determine validity and reliability. This study provides a foundation for future exploration of the concept of calling as a continual process evolving over a lifetime.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

The strength of this study is the external or supernatural component of calling. This provided a rich experience for understanding the phenomenon of calling. A limitation of this study is the use of phenomenological research in that phenomenological research makes certain assumptions, including that there is an essence to a lived experience (Patton, 2015, p. 116). In this case, this study assumed an essence or meaning to the phenomenon of calling. Further, phenomenological research requires epoche or the researcher's unbiased view related to the topic. I feel called to my vocation; therefore, eliminating all bias is complex. An additional limitation is the recommendations of using calling to impact modern organizations are likely most salient for certain careers or professions. The research indicates that some vocations experience calling more significantly than other jobs. Therefore, the application of these recommendations is likely most effective in specific vocational

fields. Perhaps this is the difference in how people describe their vocation versus their job. Another limitation is the lack of data in terms of the quantity of personal accounts of calling. However, this is a limitation of most qualitative research from a quantitative view. The final limitation is the use of a translated text. To fully understand the meaning of the themes, the researcher should investigate the original text. However, this study attempted to mitigate this limitation and used the New American Standard Bible translation, which provided a close likeness to the original text.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of calling has a rich history in literature. Ancient authors wrote about divine calling in the Samuel narrative and other Biblical chapters. Modern researchers have studied calling and have made several scholastic findings regarding calling. However, a gap existed in research regarding phenomenological studies on calling related to Biblical foundations. This chapter, and more largely this book, has addressed that gap in the research. Using a unique approach to phenomenological research, this study found that calling is a process involving foundational criteria, the calling experience, and the lived calling. Others influence a person's calling, and a person's calling evolves over time. Further, an individual's calling results in meaning, which leads to action behaviors. However, a calling is not always framed positively, as a person's calling can result in negative emotional outcomes. These findings suggest areas for future research. The themes are related to modern organizations in several ways, including examining the vacancy and the knowledge of the field, mentorship, communication, shaping organizational culture, goal setting, motivation, organizational philosophies, human resource development, recruiting, hiring, and retention.

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