

Week FIVE

I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME

DAY ONE

I Am Special

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Matthew 10:29-31

Have you ever read the book *You Are Special* by Max Lucado? (If not, I highly recommend it—a must-read!) Wemmicksville is a land created by a woodcarver named Eli; he creates each Wemmick uniquely, with his or her own look and personality. The characters within the story give one another bright star stickers for outward beauty or success and accomplishment. They give gray dot stickers for those who they deem ugly or funny looking or if they fail at any task they attempt. Punchinello wants to so badly to fit in, to be decorated with stars and admired by all. But he wears a consistent plethora of dots; so many, in fact, that sometimes fellow Wemmicks gave him dots simply because he had so many dots! The more gray dots a Wemmick had, the more others believed it meant he or she was a bad person. After a while, Punchinello began to believe it as well.

One day, he met a Wemmick who was unlike anyone he had ever met. She had neither stars nor dots; not because nobody tried giving them to her. But because the stickers didn't stick. Punchinello wanted to know the

the trick—he didn't want to be known by others' marks—so he asked her how she did it. Her response is one we all would do well to remember: Every day, she went and spent time with her creator, Eli. So, Punchinello decided to visit Eli; and in that first visit, he learned four very important truths: Eli knew his name. Eli desired a relationship with him. He was special because Eli made him. And Eli doesn't make mistakes.

The stickers didn't stick to Punchinello's friend because she decided that what Eli thought of her was more important than what the other Wemmicks thought. In fact, Eli pointed out that the Wemmicks had no right to assign stars or dots because they were all Wemmicks, just like Punchinello, uniquely created by him. When Punchinello began to trust Eli's love for him, the dots began falling off.

In the same way, **our Creator knows our names, he desires a relationship with us, we are special to Him because He made us, and He doesn't make mistakes.** The more we trust in God's love for us, the less we care about the praise, or lack thereof, of our fellow "Wemmicks." In the midst of fear, insecurities, and loneliness, we can rest in the truth that we are invaluable to the Lord. Why are we special? Why do we matter? Because we are His and He deems us special.

Follow the SHINE Time devotional tool to dive deeper into today's scripture!

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Seek the Lord in prayer.

Highlight a characteristic of God.

Identify a truth about yourself or people.

Notice what the Holy Spirit is communicating to you.

Engage in the next action step. Think of a way to respond in obedience to what God has revealed to you today.