

WOODLANDS CHURCH

March 19th 2017. Kingdom: Calling

Discussion notes Galatians 1 & 2

We are called as followers of Jesus to 'Seek first the Kingdom of God'. For all of us, that is our highest 'calling' and has implications for so many of the other things that we seek, including our relationships, careers, and location. Though we may genuinely want to put God first, we may have all kinds of questions about how to use our gifts, and what to do with our preferences. The apostle Paul's life offers profound insights into what it means to be guided by the Holy Spirit in 'Kingdom Calling'

1. Paul's testimony about his calling here complements other narratives, e.g. Acts 9, 13, and 16, Romans 15; 14-30. How was Paul 'called' (1:15)? In what ways was Paul's call unusual? Have you ever had a time in your life when you felt 'called'?
2. How important is it for a sense of call to be validated and discerned by others (1:16)? How important was the role of Barnabas in the validation of Paul's calling? What do the wider texts tell us of the role of other Christians in the release of Paul's ministry?
3. Paul had a strong sense of who he was, whatever his occupation. How much does occupation define us, how much is occupation a vehicle for a deeper calling?
4. What were Paul's values and teaching about relationships and location? (e.g. 1 Corinthians 6 & 7). How much is marriage or singleness a 'calling'? Should we seek calling to a location, a city or nation, or is the whole world our 'parish' to quote John Wesley ('the world is my parish').
5. Often people associate 'calling' with a specific Christian ministry, to be a pastor or a missionary. Paul doesn't necessarily advocate changing occupation when 'called' but rather remaining in roles (1 Corinthians 7:17-24). What does it mean to be living out a calling in the light of this?

Sometimes we look for guidance about things that are essentially 'temporary' where scripture offers guidance on things that are eternal, the making of our soul. How much should guidance be focused about who we are becoming rather than what we are doing, and what are the tensions between seeking first the Kingdom in both those dimensions?