

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Life of Paul - Part 7 Unless I Use It

DALE STEPHENSON

Introduction

We each have an assignment planned by God since eternity past. This calling may be latent, and yet our natural giftings and strengths can indicate the areas in which God has called us to serve. Paul was a highly gifted individual; his passion was changed by a divine encounter and he was redirected by God to become the most impactful Apostle of the early Church. What does it mean to be 'on assignment' and how do we discover the call of God on our lives?

Read Acts 20:24, Psalm 139:13-17, Ephesians 2:10, Matthew 25:14-29, 2 Timothy 1:6-7

Discuss

1. What are some of your strengths and talents? These may be attributes of which you are aware, or those observed by others.
2. Ephesians 2:10 states that we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works." Are there good works you feel passionate about that assist in bringing the good news to others? Share with the group.
3. "We all have an assignment." According to Psalm 139:13-17 and Ephesians 2:10, God's plans for us were written down before we were born. How do you relate to this proposition? Do you feel like you have a divine assignment?
4. "Our assignment is built upon our declared identity." Sometimes, like Gideon, we feel disqualified due to personal shortcomings or challenging circumstances. What are some common reasons people feel disqualified from serving God fully, including in leadership or public roles? Consider 2 Timothy 1:6-7. How can we overcome our hesitation?

(continued on next page)

5. Read Philippians 3:8. In one sense, our worldly achievements are worthless compared to the infinite value of knowing Christ. Nonetheless, our occupation and skills can be aligned to our calling. Do you think your skills, experiences and expertise align with what God has called you to do? Or do you think these need to be forsaken in order to pursue God's calling on your life?
6. Refer to Matthew 25:14-29, the parable of the talents. Each servant received a different number of 'talents' to invest when the master was away.
 - What was the return on investment from each of the servants?
 - Why was the master displeased with the servant who buried his talent?
 - What were the consequences for the servant who buried his talent?
 - How does this parable inform our talents and giftings, and God's calling on our lives?
7. For those who are unsure of their gifts or calling, how can these be discovered? What are some practical steps we can take to determine our calling?

Respond

Unless we use it, we may lose it. God saved us not just for relationship with Him, but also to realise our giftings, calling and purpose in His Kingdom. This may be as varied as a calling into Christian ministry, disciple making, leadership or business – all of which involve effort, courage and risk. It starts with obedience and surrender to the Lordship of Christ. Take a moment to reflect on God's calling on your life, and make a new commitment to it today. As in 2 Timothy 1:6-7, take time to pray with one another for the advancement of your calling. What is one step you can take this week to advance in this calling?