

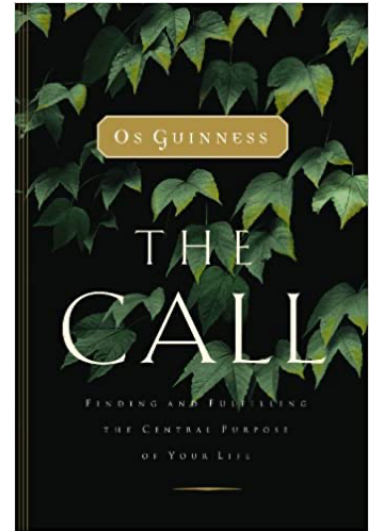
The Call – Study Guide

Book by Os Guinness

The Call continues to stand as a classic, reflective work on life's purpose. Best-selling author Os Guinness goes beyond our surface understanding of God's call and addresses the fact that God has a specific calling for our individual lives.

Why am I here? What is God's call in my life? How do I fit God's call with my own individuality? How should God's calling affect my career, my plans for the future, my concepts of success? Guinness now helps the reader discover answers to these questions, and more, through a corresponding workbook – perfect for individual or group study.

According to Guinness, "No idea short of God's call can ground and fulfill the truest human desire for purpose and fulfillment." With tens of thousands of readers to date, The Call is for all who desire a purposeful, intentional life of faith.



Introduction

1. After reading the introduction, what are your feelings and expectations about this book?
2. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why?
3. What is it you hope to get from this study? Write out your goals, individually and as a group, so you can review them when your study is over.
4. Take some time to pray and invite God into your study. Ask him what HE wants you to get out of this and add those things to your list. Ask him to speak to you and to give you open eyes, ears, mind, and heart to receive all that he has for you, in humility, as you move forward.

Chapter 1 – The Ultimate Why

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. What event, relationship, or situation has triggered a deep yearning for purpose and meaning in your own life?
3. Why do times of transition challenge our sense of personal meaning?
4. What does the author mean by “we have too much to live with and too little to live for”? How have you seen this evidenced in your own life and in the lives of people you know?
5. Why are modern theories – such as capitalism, politics, or psychology – not adequate in answering our deeper questions of purpose and meaning?
6. Why did you choose the career path you are on? Have you ever experienced “It just wasn’t me”? What did you do about it?
7. How would your life be different if you lived out your “calling” as explained by the author?
8. Read Genesis 1. Why did God create the world and human beings? What is different about the creation of humans and everything prior? For what purpose did God make man and woman?
9. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
10. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 2 – Seekers Sought

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How are “true seekers” different than “the spiritually unattached”? Which camp – if either – do you or your friends fall into and why?
3. Why is *disbelief* a necessary early component of the true seeker’s search?
4. Why does the author argue that most seekers turn quickly from the first two perspectives on seeking? What do these perspectives lack?
5. What are the core differences between the two perspectives of love? How do they each see desire? The means of the search?
6. How does C.S. Lewis’s story of coming to faith illustrate the *agape* perspective?
7. Have you had moments of being “surprised by joy” or have you ever felt God “closing in” on you? Describe what these incidents were like and how you responded.
8. Read Jeremiah 29:10-13. Who initiates the relationship between God and the exiled Israelites? What does God know about their future? Describe how the Israelites must have felt when they heard these words from God.
9. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
10. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 3 – The Haunting Question

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. What does Simone Weil mean by “We possess nothing in this world other than the power to say ‘I’”? How is this statement a powerful commentary on our world today?
3. What is the connection that Václav Havel sees between responsibility and human identity?
4. Many of today’s “self-styled answers” to our search for “biography” don’t answer our deepest yearnings for individual identity. Why is the “constrained to be” perspective inadequate? How have you experienced its limitations in your own life?
5. Another perspective is that we have the willpower or “courage to be” anything we want. How much of your identity have you tried to fashion yourself? How successful have you been? How have you determined what it is that you want?
6. A third modern perspective is that all is fated or “constituted to be”. What are some of the limitations of this view?
7. How does being “called to be” move beyond the shortcomings of the other perspectives?
8. How does God shape our individual identity when we respond to his call? What do you imagine your own life would be like if you responded to God’s call and grounded your identity in him?
9. Read Exodus 3. What is the significance of how God addresses Moses from the bush? How does God identify himself? What is Moses’ initial reaction to God’s call? What is God’s response? How, in this moment, was God shaping Moses’ identity?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 4 – Everyone, Everywhere, Everything

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Why had William Wilberforce been tempted to leave Parliament? Do you think he could have accomplished the “two great objects” of God’s calling if he had entered the ministry? Why or why not?
3. How is calling “becoming what we are not yet but are called by God to be? How do you feel this applies to your life?
4. What does *calling* mean as described in the New Testament?
5. What is the difference between the primary and secondary calling of the follower of Jesus? Why do you think it is such a challenge for us to keep these together and in their proper order?
6. In what ways have you been tempted into the “Catholic distortion” of calling – “elevating the spiritual at the expense of the secular”? What are some of the pitfalls of this line of thinking?
7. How would you approach your work if you saw it as “unto the Lord” and on par with “full-time Christian service”? How would this change your work habits, goals, and relationships?
8. Read Luke 18:9-14. Compare the approach to God of the Pharisee (an expert in Jewish religious law) and the tax collector (a civil servant of the ruling Romans). Why did the Pharisee think himself justified? In contrast, why did Jesus say it was the tax collector who was justified?
9. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
10. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 5 – By Him, To Him, For Him

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Explain the frustrations that Norah Watson has with her job. What in her father's career experience does she most desire for herself?
3. Studs Terkel found "most people... live somewhere between a grudging acceptance of their job and an active dislike of it." Where do you find yourself on this continuum – or are you closer to Norah's father? Why do you feel this way about your work?
4. How does the Protestant distortion of calling actually contradict its true purposes? Explain how this distortion confuses *calling* and *vocation*.
5. How has your understanding of *calling* and *vocation* been affected by the Protestant distortion?
6. What is the biblical view of work? How would this perspective change the way you see your career or job?
7. Why does a calling without a Caller become nothing more than work?
8. How can service for God potentially compete with the primary calling?
9. Read Exodus 35:30-36:2. Who does God call in this passage? How are they able to accomplish the task to which he calls them? How is this an example of the primary and secondary calling functioning properly?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 6 – Do What You Are

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Think back to your childhood. Do you recall times when you were in your element, when "the door opened and let the future in"? How did these activities affect later decisions about life and career?
3. How much of your identity has been shaped by what you do – instead of who you are? What would you be doing if you were to "do what you are"?
4. What are the practical implications of the notions of stewardship and that our gifts are "ours for others"?
5. What might become signs in our lives that we are becoming selfish about our giftedness?
6. Why should the corporate calling prescribed in Scripture take precedence over the individual calling?
7. What are the ordinary dangers of elevating the special calling over the ordinary calling?
8. How can we balance the desire to "do what you are" with the reality that we may not see our gifts fulfilled because of the world's fallenness?
9. Read 1 Corinthians 9:14-23. How was Paul's understanding of his calling informed by a sense of stewardship?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 7 – A Time to Stand

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. In describing the story of Thermopylae, Montaigne asserts that “there are triumphant defeats that rival victories.” How is this possible?
3. What is an example of a heroic sacrifice that you have found particularly stirring? Why do these stories inspire us so powerfully?
4. How does the nature of our global economy affect followers of Christ? What does the author see as the church’s greatest challenge in modern culture?
5. What has contributed to the thinking that faith should be kept to the “personal, the relational, the spiritual, and the simple”? Why does the author argue against this way of thinking?
6. Why should calling and the gospel be central to our response to these challenges?
7. What is your thinking about faith having the potential to change culture? Give examples of ways this can happen.
8. Are you in a position right now in which your taking a stand could make a difference? What is that position? What is holding you back?
9. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-8. In anticipation of his impending execution, what does Paul charge Timothy to do? Why did Paul have confidence that he was finishing well? Where did his assurance lie for the future?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 8 – Let God Be God

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Why would the nature of the Jew’s understanding of God be “cruel” to someone who doesn’t believe in this God? Why would Jesus’ sweetness be “terrible”?
3. How is calling central to the transaction that takes place at Sinai?
4. What are the two dimensions of God’s call? Do you tend to respond to only one dimension or another? What is the result?
5. How did the disciples respond to Jesus’ call to follow him? Why is it hard for us to obey blindly?
6. In what ways does our modern world challenge God’s authority? In what areas of your life do you feel the strain between God and the world?
7. How are calling and obedience key elements of restoring the authority of faith over the world?
8. What does it mean to you to “let God be God”?
9. Read Matthew 4:18-22. What does Jesus say to Peter and Andrew that compels them to immediately leave all they have? How is this illustrative of both the primary and secondary calling? What does the immediate response of the disciples say of the authority of Jesus?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 9 – The Audience of One

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. The story of Andrew Carnegie illustrates our desire for approval. Carnegie's hometown in Scotland was his most important audience. Who is your primary audience? How has this need for approval affected your goals and life decisions?
3. What does it mean to live life before "the heart of God"? What do you find challenging about this notion? Freeing?
4. How has being "other directed" affected society as a whole? Leadership? The Church?
5. What has contributed to the shift of being "other directed" in modern society?
6. What are the implications of the Audience of One for your life's greatest challenges? Failure and criticism?
7. Read Matthew 6:1-4. Why does Jesus require that our good deeds be done in secret?
8. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
9. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 10 – Our Utmost for His Highest Still

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How would you describe Pascal's encounter with God as recorded in his "Memorial"? What about this encounter do you think inspired Pascal's greatest achievements?
3. How have mistrust and the modern celebrity contributed to the demise of heroism?
4. Who are your heroes and why?
5. How does responding to God's call draw out the very best?
6. Practically speaking, what does imitating Christ look like for you, the twenty-first-century believer?
7. Define *excellence* from a Christian perspective.
8. Read Matthew 25:14-30. How does the lord distribute the talents? How does he reward the faithful servants? What do you make of the unfaithful servant's reason for burying the talent? What does this passage say about our responsibilities over what God has given each of us?
9. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
10. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 11 – Where the Buck Stops, There I Stand

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Why would Picasso, an avowed atheist, go into a church to pledge his undying love? How do all promises cry for an eternal reference point?
3. Why is “responsibility” alone insufficient for rectifying the current moral crisis? Have you experienced or witnessed some of the weaknesses of modern responsibility?
4. What is the difference between being “responsible *for*” something and “responsible *to*” someone?
5. How does the author describe the relationship between calling, responsibility, and obedience?
6. How does having an Audience of One guard you against irresponsibility – especially when no one else is around?
7. Read Matthew 25:31-46. On what does Christ base his judgment? Why are those who are judged surprised? How does this passage relate to the chapter you’ve just read?
8. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
9. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 12 – People of the Call

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. What does it take for a community to pull off a feat like the one Le Chambon accomplished in World War II?
3. Why do you think praise of their actions made the Chambonnais uncomfortable?
4. How has community been weakened in the modern world? What has been your experience of community, in the past and in the present?
5. How have voluntary associations and parachurch organizations, while greatly beneficial to society, undermined the corporate nature of the church? How might this be corrected?
6. How is the church an integral part of our response to Jesus’ call?
7. What does the corporate calling say of the modern trend of “church-hopping”?
8. Why is it so difficult for us to grasp and fulfill this corporate aspect of calling?
9. Do you think it is possible to fulfill your individual call separate from the corporate call? How so?
10. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-27. How does Paul account for the diversity of gifts and ministries within the community of Christ? Why does he use the image of the body to describe how everyone is to relate to each other?
11. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
12. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 13 – Followers of the Way

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. What is the difference between *corporate* and *institutional* in terms of faith?
3. Why is there a tendency for faith to become ordinary and routine? How can we guard against this deterioration?
4. Are the charges made against the Christian faith harsh and unwarranted or a fair assessment of its history? Why or why not?
5. Do you find dropping the term *Christianity* and using terms like *follower of Jesus* instead of *Christian* only a matter of semantics or is it a helpful distinction? Why?
6. What does “homesickness of nostalgia” mean? What has triggered these moments of longing for you?
7. How is the follower of Jesus on life’s journey a *wayfarer* and not a *wanderer*?
8. What is the danger in forgetting that life is an unfinished journey? How have you traveled thus far on your journey?
9. Read John 14:1-6. How do Jesus’ words of comfort to his disciples relate to the journey of life? Describe what you imagine the final destination – heaven – will be like?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 14 – There but for the Grace of God Goes God

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How does Dean Jocelin justify pushing ahead with the spire against reasonable caution? What do you think of the man and his reasoning?
3. What is the distinction between chosenness and conceit? How does the focus shift when calling slips into conceit?
4. Can you think of a time in your life when you drifted into conceit over an ability or sense of purpose you had? What was the outcome?
5. What happens when pride in calling shifts from the individual to the group? Why would this be dangerous in a group, especially a nation?
6. The author suggests that debased calling could prove to be the greatest problem among the megachurches of today. What do you think about this assertion and why?
7. Why has pride traditionally been viewed as the worst sin? Consider its impact on your life and relationships.
8. What gifts or accomplishments do you have that might tempt you into conceit? How can you guard against pride?
9. Read 1 Samuel 9:15-21, 13:1-14. What was Saul’s initial reaction to God’s calling him as king? Two years into his reign, why would offering a burnt sacrifice without Samuel cause Saul to lose favor with the Lord? How does he justify his actions to Samuel? What are the characteristics of the one who will replace Saul as king?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 15 – What Is That to You?

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Why can giftedness become burdensome? How can we alleviate this?
3. In Shaffer's play about the life of Mozart, what aspects of Mozart's talent are particularly galling to Salieri? Why does he lash out at God?
4. With his great talent and duty to God, why do you think Mozart fell into despair?
5. What areas of society do you see as having been distorted by "the revenge of failure"? Why does envy in particular have the power to corrupt democracy?
6. Why do you think envy is second only to pride in the traditional understanding of sins?
7. How and why are those responding to God's call vulnerable to envy?
8. Why is envy ultimately profane and resentment of God? Think of a time when you were envious. How did that experience affect your relationship with God?
9. In what areas of your life have you been tempted to envy others? What are antidotes to envy?
10. Read Galatians 5:16-26. What kinds of company does envy keep? What happens to those who practice the works of the flesh, such as envy? What are the fruits of following Jesus?
11. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
12. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 16 – More, More, Faster, Faster

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How does prosperity, a byproduct of calling, become corrosive to calling?
3. Why does the author assert that money is a spiritual issue? What indications have you seen or experience that this is true or not true?
4. Modern society has become dominated by money. How does this relate to the fact that we have a softer view of avarice (or greed)?
5. How is what we sell and do not sell an indicator of our societal values? Where do you think we stand and why?
6. What have your attitudes been toward money and possessions?
7. How do people try to replace love and relationships with possessions and commodities? To what degree have you done so in your own life?
8. How does calling effectively deflate the power of Mammon?
9. Read Mark 10:17-31. What is significant about the commandments Jesus leaves out (see Exodus 20:1-17)? What is the "one thing you lack"? Why does he command the young man to sell everything? Do you think he intends this command for everyone with wealth? How are the rich to enter the kingdom of God?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 17 – Combating the Noonday Demon

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. “Dollars damn me,” wrote Herman Melville to his friend Nathaniel Hawthorne. How does Melville’s comment describe his feelings about his life’s work?
3. Have you ever felt such boredom and lethargy about your life and work? How did you combat it?
4. Why is the “noonday demon” a particularly apt description of sloth?
5. At what times in our lives do we tend to be tempted by this sin?
6. How does loss in faith in God lead to loss of faith in everything? How has this been true in your life?
7. How has modern sloth contributed to the rise of violence and vandalism in our culture?
8. Why does responding to the call of God squelch sloth? On a day-to-day basis, what does this look like?
9. Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-17. Where does Solomon search to find meaning in his life? What is distinctly missing in his search? Why do you think Solomon – a man who had been given great wisdom, wealth and power – decides it is all vanity and meaningless?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 18 – A World with Windows

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How has Western philosophy and science produced a “sleep of death” and “a world without windows”?
3. How does the author define *secularization*?
4. What impact has secularization had on believers and the church today? How much has this ordinary reality shaped your own faith experience? Give examples.
5. How does the Jesus’ call open up a “world with windows” to those who follow him? How much is the supernatural part of your reality?
6. What does Jesus mean when he tells Nicodemus that “no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again”?
7. What lessons can we learn from Jesus’ exercise of spiritual discipline?
8. Why is the discipline of solitude particularly vital to following Jesus? Which other disciplines are also essential to sustain calling?
9. How do the disciplines strengthen the spiritual reality in our lives?
10. Read 2 Kings 6:8-23. Compare the “ordinary reality” that the servant first sees with the “supernatural reality” that the Lord opens up to him. Which is the greater reality and why? What is the meaning of the Syrian’s blindness?
11. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
12. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 19 – Locked Out and Staying There

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How did Abraham Kuyper live a life of being “locked out of the church”?
3. What do you find beguiling about a privatized faith (as described by the author) in today’s society? How does privatization of faith run counter to the calling of Jesus?
4. How can followers of Jesus effectively demonstrate the totality of Christ’s Lordship in their public life?
5. What evidence have you seen of faith being politicized? What effect has it had on society? How have you fallen into this tendency?
6. How can the followers of Jesus be politically active without politicizing the church?
7. In which area of society would you find it especially tempting to build a “pillar” (i.e., business, education, media, etc.)? Why?
8. What do you find challenging about being “salt” and “light”?
9. How does calling challenge privatization, politicization, and pillarization?
10. Read Matthew 5:13-16. What are the qualities of these substances – “salt” and “light”? In what circumstances are these qualities activated? What does this mean for how we are to be?
11. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
12. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 20 – A Focused Life

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. Aside from his character flaws, how was Magellan able to accomplish one of the greatest discoveries of his time? What do you consider to be his most difficult obstacle along the way? Why?
3. How have the proliferation of choices in life affected you, for good or ill?
4. How does responding to the call of Christ expose the idolatry of choice in our culture?
5. In the constant mobility of modern life, from where do you draw meaning and a sense of continuity? How can calling help you do so?
6. Why is calling essential to being focused – and not fanatical – in the modern world?
7. How successful have you been at achieving your goals? What are the kinds of things that hinder or overwhelm you?
8. Read Philippians 3:3-14. What is the goal Paul has in sight? Why does he say his previous achievements are rubbish? What strikes you about how Paul describes his faith in Christ?
9. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
10. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 21 – Dreamers of the Day

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How do you feel about T.E. Lawrence’s statement, “the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dreams with open eyes, to make it possible”?
3. What is the difference between daydreamers and “dreamers of the day”? Why would dreamers of the day be dangerous?
4. How can calling fuel an enduring vision?
5. Why is progressivism particularly tempting today for those with visionary faith? What is the danger?
6. The author mentions several calling “look-alikes”. Which do you see most frequently? Who tends to be drawn to this deception? Which look-alike lures you the most? Why?
7. Read the final paragraph beginning, “Every man is made to reach out beyond his grasp.” What strikes you in Oswald Chambers’ comments about his call?
8. What is the vision of your youth that you may need to recapture?
9. Read Nehemiah 1:1-4, 2:1-20. How was Nehemiah a dreamer of his day?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 22 – Patches of Godlight

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How has modernity distanced us from the “splendor of the ordinary”?
3. What is your attitude toward commonplace work? What impact has your attitude had on those who perform this work?
4. The author says that as modern people, we tend to do things for “instrumental reasons” rather than for their intrinsic value. Do you find this is true for yourself? Why is this contempt for the menial ultimately limited and dissatisfying? What is at the heart of doing things only for instrumental reasons?
5. How does having an Audience of One transform the most menial tasks?
6. What does calling say about being average, mediocre, or an amateur?
7. What tasks do you do for the sheer pleasure, with no consideration of the return?
8. Why is “drudgery a touchstone of character”?
9. Read John 13:1-17. Why are the disciples’ feet dirty? What attitude is behind Peter’s initial refusal to allow Jesus to wash his feet? What does Jesus mean by “a servant is not greater than his master”?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 23 – Let All Your Thinks Be Thanks

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. What experiences have you had that have evoked deep gratitude for someone or something? How did you express your thanks? Which things in life do you tend to take for granted and why?
3. How is having a sense of gratitude evidence of our indebtedness to God?
4. Why is gratitude a casualty of modernity's rejection of God? How has this been expressed in society?
5. What part did you play in what you have? What is your response to this?
6. How is calling also evidence of God's grace in our lives?
7. Why does a sense of gratitude produce grace toward others?
8. How can and do you express your gratitude to God?
9. Read Luke 7:36-50. How would you describe the woman's gift? Why does Jesus tell the parable of the debtors? What is telling in the way Simon has treated his guest? Why do you think the woman was so extravagant toward Jesus? What does that say about how we should respond to the cross?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 24 – Everybody's Fools

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How did one sudden and uncharacteristic act change the life of Francis of Assisi and shape his calling?
3. What lies at the heart of being a "fool for Christ"?
4. What does Dietrich Bonhoeffer mean in asserting, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die"? What kind of death is he talking about?
5. Why is holy folly unavoidably central to the call of Jesus?
6. What do you make of the author's suggestion that some trends, such as a desire to be relevant to the unchurched, can be capitulation to the world's culture?
7. How are we as foolbearers to respond to injury and/or insult? Why is this so radical?
8. What does it mean to you personally to be a fool for Christ?
9. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. How does the message of the cross turn the wisdom of the world upside down?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you've just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 25 – The Hour Has Come

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. What has been your experience with timing in achieving your goals? Have you ever had a “crossing the Rubicon” moment? Explain.
3. “Spirit of the Times,” “the rustle of God’s robe,” “Chance, Fortune, Luck, Destiny, Fate, Providence.” Why did Disraeli, Bismarck, and Churchill use these images to describe the nature of timeliness?
4. In trying to understand Jesus, why is it important to examine his claims within the context of his sense of calling?
5. What was so radical and transcendent about Jesus’ calling from God?
6. How did Jesus convey a sense of timing in his life and teaching?
7. How do you understand timing and Jesus’ expectation that we choose to act decisively and obediently at certain times? What does this mean for how you live and pursue your calling?
8. The author cites four aspects of calling that help followers of Christ read our times. Which do you find particularly helpful or challenging? Why?
9. Read Matthew 25:1-13. How does a sense of timeliness figure into this parable? What does the bridegroom’s response to the foolish virgins tell us of timeliness? How are we to know the hour the Son of Man comes?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Chapter 26 – Last Call

1. What stuck out to you from this chapter? What did you agree with and disagree with and why? Could you relate to the stories and information being presented? What feelings did it evoke in you?
2. How would you describe Moltke’s state of mind in his final hour of life? How was he able to face the “hard bit of road ahead”?
3. Why does living as if you have already arrived short-circuit growth and purposeful living?
4. What characteristics mark people you know who have lived purposeful lives beyond their careers?
5. What are the effects of a “retirement” mentality on our society?
6. What is the difference between being *called* and being *driven*?
7. In what ways does calling transcend this life? What does this mean to you, here and now?
8. What kind of life would you have to live so that you could respond to your final call as Mr. Valiant-for-Truth in *Pilgrim’s Progress* did to his?
9. Read John 17:1-5. How does Jesus’ sense of timing inform his prayer? His understanding of who he is and his sense of calling? On what basis does he ask the Father to glorify him?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topics presented in this chapter? What questions do you still have?
11. Where would you like to grow (personally and as a group) in relation to what you’ve just read and discussed? Take some time to pray and ask God to help you in this, and brainstorm as a group about how you can take action and hold each other accountable in the process.

Conclusion

1. What stuck out to you most from this study? What have you learned about God that you did not know before? What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about others?
2. Take some time to review your goals from the beginning of your study. What goals have you accomplished, what are you still working on, and what do you need help with?
3. What questions do you still have after completing this study?
4. Finally, so what? What are you going to do with what you've studied, learned, and discussed? Be specific.
5. Now spend some time in prayer, asking God to awaken his purposes within you concerning this study. Consider whether you need to spend time in repentance, in a time of commitment and commissioning, or in a time of surrender. Add this to your prayer time as the Holy Spirit guides you.