

For Week 5:

We have been looking at the concept of vocation or calling. Hopefully our reflections and discussion this week have started to broaden your understanding of “call.” Over the next several weeks, we will be mining this idea further to understand more about who we are called to be in Christ. We will be doing this through sharing our stories with one another. While several of us have already been through one such exercise, this time, we will be examining and sharing our stories through the lens of “call.”

One of the characteristics of various Biblical call stories is that people’s personalities do not change before and after the call. For example, Paul was a zealot before he met Jesus and he was still a zealot after he met Jesus. Likewise, Augustine of Hippo (345-430 C.E.) was an intellectual before his conversion and after his conversion:

“... Augustine had a formidable intellect, so it is not surprising that his quest for God took the form of an intellectual search for truth. While his writing is filled with passion, deep feeling, and spiritual depth, it is the sheer power of his mind to penetrate, analyze, and describe the character of his inner life that is so impressive ... Augustine’s personal obsession with finding truth led him through several philosophies popular in his day. But gradually, his mind led him away from the doctrines of the Manichees and Neoplatonists. He complained that the Manichean orators continually talked about truth, “although the truth was nowhere to be found in them.” Addressing God directly, as he does throughout the *Confessions*, Augustine exclaimed, “Truth, truth: how in my inmost being the very marrow of my mind sighed for you!” In the very next paragraph he acknowledges, “But my hunger and thirst were not even for the greatest of your works, but for you, my God, because you are Truth itself with whom there can be no change, no swerving from your course (James 1:17).”¹

We have also reflected on how David and Levi’s pre-call lives may have prepared them for their calls. With this continuity between pre- and post-call lives in mind, this week, we will reflect not only on our working lives but also on our lives as a whole and on how these relate to our lives in Christ. The following might help you to probe more deeply into who you are called to be in Christ:

- ◆ Of all the various kinds of work there are in the world, what led you to choose the work you chose? What interests, what strengths, what skills were necessary? (The questions from last week’s reflections might also be helpful here: What is/was the purpose of your working life? What is it like to be stuck in a dead end job?)
- ◆ Do those interests, strengths and skills show up in other areas of your life?
- ◆ What are the recurring themes in your life?
- ◆ How might these interests, strengths, skills, and themes be useful in the upbuilding of God’s Kingdom?

¹ *Companions in Christ (Participant’s Book)* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2006), p. 46.