

FOREWORD

In the years I've been a pastor, I have found calling to be the topic people want to explore and talk about almost more than any other. Whoever we are, and whatever stage of life we're in, we find there are so many questions, puzzles and potential pitfalls to do with our calling. What am I meant to be doing? How do I know? What if I can't hear God telling me what to do? How can I be sure I'm not missing something? If I'm in my calling, why is it so painful and difficult at times? I thought I knew my calling, so why is it not slotting into place by now?

And conversations around calling are more complex and necessary today than ever. Complex because of the many options and choices available, and because we inhabit a rapidly changing world which can make us less certain and sure-footed. Necessary because our world is crying out for people who will live with selfless purpose and conviction, capable of carrying God's goodness and transformation to the people around us.

God has a purpose for every human being, and this purpose is discoverable. Nothing is more important than for us to discern and do it. The apostle Paul indicates this expectation when he writes, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them' (Ephesians 2:10, ESV). Or, more punchily, 'do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is' (Ephesians 5:17, ESV).

Jonny is great at helping people figure out their calling, and grapple with all the questions and emotions that come with it. His advice is never directive or restrictive: he simply comes alongside as a companion, always curious, gently probing, reassuring and encouraging. I myself have been on the receiving end of his counsel and wisdom, and my conversations with him have led me into greater clarity and courage in my own calling, sometimes leading

me to major moves, other times minor tweaks.

In *Called*, Jonny gives us the principles and guidance we desperately need in order to make some of the most important decisions in our lives. He shows us how to approach our calling through the illustrative stories of biblical characters, as well as his own experience. He conveys calling as important yet not intense. Ultimately, because we are rooted in God's love for us (the topic of Jonny's previous book), calling is an adventure to explore without pressure or fear of getting it wrong.

Discovering how I am called by God – 'according to his purpose' (Romans 8:28) – has been the most joyous and freeing experience of my life. My prayer for all who read this book is that, as well as each knowing our own personal calling, we will better help others discover and sustain theirs, and together we will be better equipped to serve the purposes of God in our lifetime.

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