

SERMON *Finding Out What God Has Created You To Do* October 19, 2014

I Peter 2:5, 4:10-11

For six weeks now, my message to you has been the same: **GOD HAS CREATED YOU AS A UNIQUE, ONE-OF-A-KIND PERSON TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL THAT HE HAS MADE NO ONE ELSE BUT YOU TO DO.** And that the most important thing in your life is to find and fulfill this unique calling of God.

God has a grand vision somewhere with your name on it. And when you find it, you will say, “This is what I was born to do!” Real fulfillment is not found in self-gratification; it is found in doing God’s bidding for your life. Ephesians 2:10 says, “You are God’s workmanship...created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”

What you are is a gift from God; what you do is your gift to God. Most of us have more potential than we think we have. Jesus Himself took a band of nameless nobodies and changed the world.

I think of Carly Fiorina. As a young woman, she got a job as a secretary at Hewlett-Packard. Her supervisor saw her potential and promoted her to be office manager. Others saw her potential and gave her even more responsibility. To make a long story short, in time she became the CEO of Hewlett-Packard. Under her leadership as CEO, the company produced 11 new patents a day and added \$45 billion dollars in revenue. Carly is a Christian. Today she is the Chairman of Good 360, the world’s largest philanthropic organization. Good 360 distributes other companies’ overstocked items to charities around the world. Carly sees this as her calling from God.

In today’s scripture, the Apostle Peter is addressing all Christians when he writes, *You...are...to be a holy priesthood...As every one of you has received a gift, even so minister to one another.* And in Ephesians 4:11-12, the Apostle Paul says, *God called some to be...pastors...to equip all God’s people for ministry.* In other words, God calls every Christian to be a minister of Jesus Christ.

But somewhere in Christian history, the idea arose that only certain individuals experience God’s call and become His ministers—and they are to be addressed as *Reverend*. This is HERESY. The words *clergy* and *Reverend* aren’t even found in the Bible.

You don’t have to be ordained or go to seminary to be a Christian minister.

Christ Himself has commissioned you. In fact, Jesus Himself was never ordained and never went to seminary. You may not be called to be a pastor, but all Christ followers are called to be His ministers. God has designed you to serve Him in a unique way. He has created and shaped you for a particular purpose.

The purpose of your life is not to get the best job you can so that you can retire early and then do nothing. It is discovering God’s unique calling in your life and doing it!

In the end, at the Final Judgment, you will only be asked TWO QUESTIONS. The first question will be: HOW DID YOU RESPOND TO JESUS CHRIST? The second question will be: DID YOU FULFILL THE UNIQUE PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD CREATED YOU?

For six Sundays now we have been examining the different ways God reveals what He has designed you to do for Him. I call them the FIVE INDICATORS OF GOD'S UNIQUE CALLING IN YOUR LIFE...

Your SPIRITUAL GIFTS are the first indicator of God's special purpose in your life.

Spiritual gifts are not natural abilities or talents you're born with. You can't learn or earn them by any effort of your own. Spiritual gifts are special abilities that God gives Christians to do His work in the world. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift, but no one has them all. That's why we need each other and the church to fulfill the global mission Christ has given us.

Every spiritual gift is important. The Apostle Paul compares the different gifts of the members of a church to the different parts of the human body, each of which is vital to the proper functioning of the whole body.

Suppose you were just one BIG EYEBALL and nothing else. You could see all the needs around you, but you couldn't do anything about them. Every spiritual gift is important.

The Bible lists more than 20 spiritual gifts. Among these are teaching, encouragement, faith, administration, craftsmanship, hospitality, giving, wisdom, leadership, helping, and caring for others. I Timothy 4:14 says, *Do not neglect the spiritual gift that is within you.*

Turn now to the sheet "Discovering Your Unique Shape for Serving God and Others." Read the paragraph that begins with the words SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Now write in the blank space provided which spiritual gifts you think God has given you. You will not turn in this sheet. This exercise is just between you and God.

Your PERSONAL INTERESTS are the second indicator of God's unique calling in your life.

Philippians 2:13 says that God puts in our hearts His purposes for us. Another way to know what God has designed you to do is to identify your interests--the things that you enjoy and give you fulfillment. Listen to your heart.

God will give you energy and enthusiasm for what He wants you to do. It may be a passion for a cause (like world hunger or the pollution of our planet) or a passion for a particular people (like migrants or the homeless) or a passion for a certain ministry or program in the church or community. There is no thing and

no person God does not care about deeply, so He gives each of us a part of His heart for some part of His work and creation.

80% of what you do for God should be in the area of your passion and calling.

If not, you will burn out. I say 80% because there will be times when you will need to step up and fill a gap in a ministry that no one else is filling.

Turn to your sheet again and read the paragraph that begins with the word HEART. Now write down those causes, people, or ways of serving that God has given you a passion for.

Your NATURAL ABILITIES are the third indicator of God's unique calling in your life. These are different from your spiritual gifts. They are innate talents that you're born with. Natural talents are another way God shapes you to serve Him in a certain way.

God gives each of us different talents and natural abilities. Some people think they don't have any talents, but God doesn't create any no-talent people.

Scientific studies have shown that the average person has around 500 innate abilities.

Turn to your sheet again now and read the paragraph that begins with the word ABILITIES. Now write down the innate abilities and job skills you have.

Your PERSONALITY is the fourth indicator of God's unique calling in your life.

All of us have unique personalities. Your personality is reflected in how you do things and how you relate to other people; it's what you're really like. It's what makes you YOU! A mother of identical twins--that have the same genetic makeup--will tell you that the twins have different personalities.

God has wired each of us uniquely. God made you the way you are for a reason. He gives you a personality that will fit the way that He wants you to serve Him.

There are four gospels in the New Testament of the Bible—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Why did there have to be four gospels? Does God stutter? No, I don't think so. Each of the four gospels gives us a unique look at the life and teachings of Jesus through the eyes of a unique personality that enriches our understanding of Christ.

Trying to serve God in a way that is inconsistent with your God-given personality is like trying to throw a ball with your left hand if you're right-handed, or vice versa. You can do it but not very well, and it's very frustrating.

To discover God's unique calling in your life, you must find a way of serving God and others that suits your personality. Extroverts, outgoing

individuals who draw energy from others, should be serving God by working with people in some way. On the other hand, an introvert with the gift of administration might help plan Vacation Bible School or a mission trip but not necessarily lead or take part in it.

Turn to your sheet again and read the paragraph that begins with the word PERSONALITY. Now write down how you believe your personality best suits you to serve God and others.

Your LIFE EXPERIENCES are the fifth indicator of God's unique calling in your life. I mean all kinds of life experiences—education, jobs, successes, failures, relationships, volunteering, and so on. Romans 8:28, my favorite Bible verse, reads, *In all things God is working for His good purposes for those who love him.*

This doesn't mean that God causes everything that happens in your life—He doesn't! It does mean that God can work redemptively in every situation and use it to shape you for His purposes. God can use your struggles to help others going through the same thing. In fact, a crisis in your life can become the very ministry God will use to help other people.

On your sheet read the paragraph that begins with the word EXPERIENCES. Now write down what experiences you've had that God could use to help others...

Now take the sheet you were given that says POSSIBLE WAYS OF SERVING GOD AND OTHERS at the top, and put an "X" by those ways of serving you feel God might be leading you toward. In completing this page, you're not signing up to do anything. You're just indicating some ways of serving you think God may have shaped you for. When you have finished, mail this sheet to the church or put it in the box on the pastor's office door. Your responses will not be distributed publicly. They will only be shared confidentially with a few others as needed.

No matter how old you are God has a unique purpose for your life. His calling can change at different stages of your life. It is my continuing prayer that you will find and fulfill the special calling the living Lord has been preparing you for before you were born.

DISCOVERING YOUR UNIQUE SHAPE FOR SERVING GOD

SPIRITUAL GIFTS - What has God gifted you to do? God gives every Christian special abilities (like leadership, faith, wisdom, encouragement, evangelism, teaching, giving, helping, praying, hospitality, mercy, and caring) to do His work in the world.

What spiritual gifts has God given you? _____

HEART – What do you love to do? God will give you a passionate concern for a particular issue or cause (like world hunger, the environment, alcoholism or drug addiction) or people group (like the poor, the elderly, immigrants, single parents, nursing home residents) or a need or ministry in the church (like homebound members or children’s and youth ministries).

What do you have a great concern and passion for? _____

ABILITIES – What talents and skills do you have? – God gives you natural abilities, job skills and knowledge with which you can serve Him and others.

What abilities, skills, or knowledge do you have? _____

PERSONALITY – Where and how does your personality best suit you to serve? God gives you a unique personal style with which to serve him. You may be an introvert or an extravert, people-oriented or task-oriented, more analytical or feeling. An extravert can be a good church greeter; analytical people are often good planners.

How does your personality best suit you to serve others? _____

EXPERIENCES – How has God used your life experiences to shape you for service? The Bible says that God works in every life experience to shape us for His purposes. A widow ministers best to another widow; a cancer survivor, to a cancer patient.

Which of your life experiences can God use to help others? _____

POSSIBLE WAYS OF SERVING GOD AND OTHERS

The way you serve God and others will be most effective and fulfilling when you are using your GIFTS and ABILITIES in an area that you are PASSIONATE about in a way that fits your PERSONALITY and LIFE EXPERIENCES. **Below MARK (X) those ways of serving that you feel God may be leading/shaping you for.** This is NOT a commitment, just an expression of interest.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> WORKING WITH PRESCHOOLERS | <input type="checkbox"/> WORKING WITH A MINISTRY TEAM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WORKING WITH CHILDREN | <input type="checkbox"/> WORKING WITH SMALL GROUPS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WORKING WITH YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS | <input type="checkbox"/> CHURCH GREETER/USHER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WORKING WITH ADULTS/SENIOR ADULTS | <input type="checkbox"/> HELPING WITH MISSION PROJECTS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PROVIDING CHILDCARE | <input type="checkbox"/> PLANNING MISSION TRIPS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MINISTRY TO THE BEREAVED | <input type="checkbox"/> CONTACTING CHURCH VISITORS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HELPING NEW MEMBERS | <input type="checkbox"/> CHURCH RECREATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPING, GARDENING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHURCH PUBLICITY/PUBLICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> FINANCE, ACCOUNTING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ARTS AND CRAFTS (_____) | <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIATION, COUNSELING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DRIVING CHURCH BUS | <input type="checkbox"/> CHURCH OFFICE WORK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AWANA | <input type="checkbox"/> CLEANING (OUT AND UP) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CARD AND LETTER WRITING | <input type="checkbox"/> FOOD SERVICE AND HOSPITALITY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SEWING, QUILTING | <input type="checkbox"/> REACHING OUT TO THE UNCHURCHED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION | <input type="checkbox"/> PARISH NURSING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HELPING WITH A BIBLE STUDY | <input type="checkbox"/> PRAYER GROUP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHURCH LIBRARY & MEDIA CENTER | <input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOUND AND VIDEO EQUIPMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> POWERPOINT, COMPUTER SKILLS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SINGING IN A CHOIR OR ENSEMBLE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLAY MUSICAL INSTRUMENT (_____) | <input type="checkbox"/> HANDBELL CHOIR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXERCISE CLASSES | <input type="checkbox"/> SOLOIST |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL | <input type="checkbox"/> SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DANCE OR DRAMA | <input type="checkbox"/> VISITING SHUT-INS OR HOSPITALIZED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY | <input type="checkbox"/> PARKING, TRAFFIC CONTROL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLANNING RETREATS | <input type="checkbox"/> HOST HOME BIBLE STUDY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WORSHIP PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> TUTORING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNION FOR THE HOMEBOUND | <input type="checkbox"/> TEACHING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MEN'S MINISTRIES | <input type="checkbox"/> WOMEN'S MINISTRIES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MARRIAGE AND PARENT ENRICHMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PREPARING A MEAL FOR SOMEONE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH | <input type="checkbox"/> PERSONNEL SUPPORT/SUPERVISION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEOGRAPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (_____) |