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Introduction

Discovering Your Unique Gifts and Vocation

God has uniquely gifted each of His children with His grace to achieve a specific purpose in this world. Unfortunately, many of His children never fulfill their destiny. Some do not because they never identify their heart motivations and giftings. Others discover their motivations and gifts but are not able to find roles and vocations which allow them to effectively release them. This book is designed to help you overcome these problems in your life.

There is no joy so complete as knowing who you are, who God has made you to be and what your basic giftings and drives are. To be effectively functioning in roles which allow you to adequately express your heart motivation and gifts is fulfillment almost beyond belief.

The most successful corporations of the twenty-first century are doing something unique. New employees are given a battery of personality and skill-level profiles to discover their temperament, talents, skills, and interests. With this information, the person is then fitted into the job best suited to meet his individual desires and gifts. For years I have marveled at this, realizing that these employees will perform to their greatest capacity when they work for such companies. They will be so glad to have found a niche in life for which they are perfectly suited and in which they are fulfilled that they will give one hundred and fifty percent and do so joyfully, while receiv-

ing a blessing in return. Wouldn't it be nice if the Church could do the same thing, if it, too, tested all newcomers and placed them in a position that most perfectly suited their personality, their dreams, their talents, and their maturity level?

Some churches have tried to do this by having newcomers just "hang around" for the first year or two until they soak up the church's spirit. Then they are slowly worked into a small ministry, then a larger and larger one. Companies would go broke if they just let people hang around for the first year. In addition, the most gifted employees would probably not stay, for they are men and woman of action and want to make a major contribution right from the beginning.

Other churches have let people begin working right from the first day in their churches, but they have said, "You must begin at the bot-

tom and work your way up.” If the person has already been a Christian for twenty years, they are wasting a lot of talent and forcing him to take several steps backward if he wants to be a part of their church ministry. Again, if businesses did that with talented personnel who transferred in from other cities, they would go broke.

I wonder what would happen to a church that put everyone to work immediately on the proper level of his gifting and maturity, and in the area of his heart motivation. Would it be right for us to anticipate explosive growth?

We have the solution for such progressive churches. In this book you will find a battery of a dozen different profiles that will examine everything from heart motivation to Bible knowledge to commitment level. After taking the dozen profiles and working with a consultant, you will be able to place the new attendee in the area of ministry in your church that is most perfectly suited to his skills. The church wins, the church member wins, and the kingdom of God wins—a triple win situation. Sounds like God to me! And the entire program can be administered by volunteers at almost no cost to the church. See Appendix B for instructions on getting this program operational in your church.

By the time an individual completes this book, he will have discovered which of five under-

lying motivations move his heart. He will have this confirmed by many other witnesses and discover a host of other things about his temperament, readiness level, skill level, dreams and aspirations. He will have discovered vocations, ministries and roles in which he can serve that would fulfill his unique call and giftings.

Individuals will be led one step closer to actual implementation of this discovery by beginning to operate in a role or several roles which “are them”. They will be given direction for additional training and mentoring which will further their development in these motivations and giftings, so their joy may be even further

enhanced as they become all that God has designed and destined them to be.

A final note: For clarity and simplicity, the pronoun “he” is used to refer to people of either gender. This should not be considered gender restrictive in any way,

for we know that in God’s grace, there is no male or female. Please do not take offense but recognize our motivation is pure.

May it be a time of joy and illumination and fulfillment as you travel the road set before you.

Mark & Patti Virkler

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“Out of the *Heart* Flows...”

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"Watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life."

(Proverbs 4:23)

All of us speak and act and choose vocations largely because of the springs of life that flow from our hearts. The following story of a home group meeting demonstrates this principle in many different ways. As you read through the story, you may notice how various heart motivations are expressed by the members of the group. You will see their hearts coming forth not only in the way they relate and minister to one another but also in the professions they have chosen in life.

We will refer back to this story many times throughout this book, asking you to examine and record what you discover within it.

always count on some “munchies” sitting out, just in case anyone didn’t have time for a good dinner. Tonight, there is a beautiful platter of fruit and cheese, and a punch bowl full of ice cold juice. Please...help yourself!

Welcome to our home group meeting! I am so glad you could come and observe with me and get to know some of my friends. Tonight we are meeting at Tom and Pamela’s home. Everyone always arrives early when the meeting is at their house. You always know that whatever time you arrive, you are welcomed, like they have been waiting just for you. Even if the house isn’t completely picked-up, Pam doesn’t get upset or embarrassed. She just makes you feel like one of the family. And besides, you can

As we walk by the kitchen, we see a scrumptious-looking German chocolate cake sitting on the counter. When Pam sees us drooling over it, she whispers that Paul’s birthday is this week and we’re having coffee and cake at the end of the meeting to surprise him.

Everyone seems to be here now, so let me introduce you to our group. Pam, you have already met. She says her job is “just a housewife” but it is obviously much more than that. She is clearly a “home-maker”. She teaches her three children at home, and they are the joy of

her life. Pam is married to Tom, the quiet man sitting beside her. He works for a computer company, building new programs to meet the specifications of their customers. He doesn't say much, but when he speaks, everyone listens.

On the other side of Pam is Sandy. She's a single mom who works as personal secretary to the president of a small but expanding company. She's only been a Christian about six months, but she is really growing.

Ellie is Sandy's neighbor. They met in the laundry room of their apartment building late one night and Ellie ended up leading Sandy to the Lord. Ellie has never been married, but she figures she still has plenty of time. She manages an exclusive women's clothing boutique in the mall. She has more repeat customers than any other shop because she always seems to have exactly what "her ladies" are looking for. She really is amazing. I went into her shop once to find something special for a wedding. We talked for a while, about the bridal party's colors and what my husband was wearing and what the reception was going to be like—you know, just casual chit-chat. She really seemed to care about what I was saying because she was looking at me closely the whole time. Then, all of a sudden, she said, "I have just the thing for you!" She walked over to a rack, pulled out a dress, and said, "This will be perfect." Well, I wasn't too sure because I had never worn that color before but when I put it on, she was right. It was perfect!

That's Paul over there. He went through a very sad divorce about a year ago. He seemed so sincere in his desire to reconcile but his wife just refused, even though she was a Christian, too. She claimed she was tired of trying to measure up to his impossible standards and couldn't live with the constant criticism. He insisted that he only made those comments

out of a desire to help her, but somehow they couldn't quite make it work. I think he is working as a reporter or journalist for the city news now, but he changes jobs quite a bit so it's kind of hard to keep up.

Andy is in charge of our meetings. I respect him and his wife Polly so much. They are solid, mature Christians who just naturally ended up in charge without pushing in or offending anyone. Andy is the CEO of an accounting firm and Polly has her own interior decorating business. She has a really beautiful voice, as you will hear soon because she leads worship.

Next to Polly is Alison. Now there is another amazing lady. She is president of our home-school support group, she leads the 4-H club her oldest children are in, she directs the church choir, and two Saturdays a month she does volunteer counseling at the crisis pregnancy center! Then, "in her spare time," she sells cosmetics so she can "make a contribution to the family"!

The man who gave you a big hug when we came in is Alison's husband, Ed. He's a great guy. He is always winning "Agent of the Month" awards at the real estate agency where he works. It's a good thing he is so good at his job because his boss has threatened to fire him more than once because of his "proselytizing".

Finally we have Tammy and Patrick. Tammy is a librarian in the public school. Frankly, she rather intimidates me—she's so smart! And, of course, Patrick is a doctor, so he's no dummy, either, but somehow he just doesn't make me as uncomfortable as Tammy does.

Well, that's our group. I'd better be quiet. Andy is starting the meeting...

After Paul opens in prayer, Polly leads us in worship. As usual, it is awesome. Most of us are on our knees in tears, just overcome by the

sense of God’s presence by the time Alison gives a beautiful prophetic word.

After a few moments of silence while we all digest what she said and get settled back in our chairs, Andy opens it up for a time of sharing. Ed starts it off.

“I just want to thank the Lord for saving me! I am so glad I’m a Christian, every day is an exciting adventure! I’m saved, healed, baptized, delivered, sanctified, and full of the Holy Ghost! Hallelujah!” Even though we have heard it before, his enthusiasm never ceases to bring a smile and “amen”. His joy is contagious and the whole group is suddenly more up-beat.

Ellie’s “Glory!” is louder than anyone else’s, and she just starts bubbling over. “Man, I know what you mean, Ed. I have had *the most fantastic* week! Well, every week is great when you know the Lord, but this has been extra special! First, I had a chance to lead one of my regular customers to the Lord! I

could tell she was feeling blue when she came in, so I sat her down at my little table, (you know, in the back?), poured her a cup of herbal tea and asked her what was troubling her. Well, I won’t tell you the whole story, but I was able to show her how much Jesus loved her and wanted to help and, before you knew it, she was saying the sinner’s prayer! Then, the very next day, my sister came to spend a few days with me. Usually she doesn’t want to hear about the Lord but this time she really listened! She hasn’t accepted Him yet, but I just know she’s close! Praise God!”

We are all very happy for Ellie, and eagerly join in when Patrick suggests that we pray for her customer and her sister right then.

After the prayer, Tom opens his Bible on his lap and says, “I have something I want to share. This week while I was studying the book of Hebrews, I discovered the most interesting thing. I was looking at the Greek tense of this word here in...” We all eagerly pull out our Bibles to follow along, knowing Tom’s insights are always “meaty” and helpful.

When he finishes, Polly picks up her guitar and begins to strum softly as she speaks. “You know, that goes right along with a song the Lord gave me this week in my prayer time. I wasn’t sure if I was supposed to share it tonight or not, but now I know He gave it to all of us.” Her clear, sweet voice rings out, the words of her song sealing the message of the verses Tom shared deep into our spirits.

“Sandy, are you troubled about something? Is there anything you want to share?” Pam asks after a moment. Sandy shakes her head but doesn’t look up.

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: **His joy is contagious**
: **and the whole group**
: **is suddenly more up-**
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“As I was praying about tonight’s meeting, I sensed that there would be someone here who had experienced a great disappointment this week,” Paul says. “Is that you, Sandy?”

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Suddenly the tears that have been shimmering in her eyes overflow. Impatiently Sandy wipes them away with her hand, obviously embarrassed by her emotion.

“Do you all remember a few weeks ago I asked you to pray about that promotion I wanted—my boss decided she needed a personal assistant if the company was to keep growing at the current rate?” Seeing several nods, Sandy goes on. “Well, today she introduced me to the kid she hired.”

“Oh, no! Sandy, I’m so sorry!” Pam cries as she reaches out to clasp Sandy’s hand. “I know how much you were counting on that job.”

Sandy barely seems to notice the interruption. Now that she has begun to speak, she can hardly talk fast enough to express her deep emotion.

“I have been with that company for fifteen years! I’ve been her executive secretary for thirteen years! I know as much about running that company as she does! I thought she liked me and was happy with my work! But now I see that I am just there to make her look good. I’m just part of the office equipment. She doesn’t care about me at all. And then she has the nerve to expect me to be happy that she has hired this—this—kid off the streets! He doesn’t know anything about our business and would you believe, she expects *me* to train him! I was so mad I wanted to punch out my monitor! I did throw a stapler across the room after they left my office but it hit the couch so she didn’t hear. How could she do this to me?”

Her tears have dried now, her hurt having given way to her anger. Tom quietly asks, “Do you know why your boss didn’t give you the job? Did she give you any reason?”

“Oh, yes,” Sandy says bitterly. “She said it’s because the new position will require lots of overtime and out-of-town trips. She claims she chose someone single and ‘unencumbered’ was the word I think she used. She said she didn’t want to ask me to take more time away from my kids.”

“You don’t believe that is the real reason?” asks Andy.

“No. She just doesn’t want me working that closely with her. I’m just not good enough. No matter how hard I work, it’s never going to be good enough for her. You know, I haven’t

felt this awful since I was made understudy to the lead in our ballet recital in eighth grade. I had worked so hard to learn the part and the teacher said I was really good—so good I should be ready to take over if anything happened to our ‘star’. And, of course, I couldn’t have an important part, just in case I had to leave it to take the lead. So all my hard work just earned me the part of a bush! And now all my hard work at the office just makes me part of the scenery again. Good old Sandy, ready to step in if the important people can’t deliver.”

“Gee, Sandy, I think you’re looking at this all wrong,” Ellie asserts. “Being part of management is harder than being the secretary. There would have been a lot of extra work and responsibility. And your boss said there would be traveling and weekend work. Would you really have wanted to try to find a sitter for your kids that often? I think you have a terrific job. I think I’d be really happy in your place.”

“Ellie’s right,” Paul states. “You are lucky to have a boss who understands what’s important to you. Your children *are* more important than your job, aren’t they?”

“Of course, but that’s not the point. She—”

Paul interrupts before Sandy can finish. “No, not ‘she’. And I think that is the point. What would you have done if you *had* gotten the job? Turn it down? Try to do an even greater juggling act than you are now between your job, children, and church? Your boss isn’t the problem. Your attitude is. You are blessed but it isn’t enough for you. I think you should just get over this anger and self-pity and thank your boss for her consideration.”

As Sandy’s face turns red, Pam intervenes. “The thing is, Sandy, we can’t do anything about your boss except pray for her, and you can continue to do your best work for her. She is not the one who is here. You are. And if you

plan to keep working for her, somehow you will have to put this anger behind you. You can't go to work Monday with all this hurt and bitterness inside you. It will come out somehow and you could find yourself without any job. Do you think you can forgive her?"

"I know it's the right thing to do," Sandy agrees, "but I just can't stop these feelings. I am hurt and angry. She wronged me. How can I just pretend everything is okay?"

"That's where you're confused," Tammy chimes in. "You think that forgiveness is an emotion, but it isn't. Forgiveness is an act of the will. If you truly want to forgive, just make the decision to do so. The emotions will follow."

Ed excitedly pulls a piece of paper out of his notebook and begins writing while he speaks. "Oh! That reminds me! I got this great tape on forgiveness from Chuck Swindoll a few weeks ago. I have listened to it three or four times, and every time I listen I am able to forgive someone else who hurt me. I have really been released by this teaching. Let me just make a note to drop it over to your house tomorrow. I'm sure it will help you, too."

"Thanks, Ed," Sandy says quietly. "That sounds like it would be helpful."

"Frankly," Patrick speaks up, "I'm concerned about Sandy's relating this situation to the ballet incident. It seems to me that there is some deep healing that she needs to receive for past hurts before she will be able to completely move beyond these current wounds."

"Excuse me if I am overstepping, Andy," Alison says, "but it seems to me that what we all need

to do right now is quiet down and find out what the Lord wants to say to Sandy through us. How about if we all just ask God for a word or picture or something that will help out our sister?"

We all quietly seek the Lord in our own hearts for a few minutes. Andy breaks the silence.

"Has anyone received anything that they want to share?"

We all carefully avoid each other's eyes, not wanting to commit to speaking "as the oracles of God." Finally, Polly hesitantly says, "I have no idea what this means,

and it may not mean anything, but I saw you running and running. You were being chased by some kind of big cat, like a tiger or leopard or something—I can't think of the name—and you were almost exhausted. You were so afraid and this big...mountain lion...no, that's not it...anyhow, it was almost catching you. What is it called?"

"A puma? A panther?" Tammy suggests.

"A jaguar," Pam states quietly but firmly.

As the color drains from Sandy's face, Paul's head jerks up and he fixes her with a stern look. "It's a car, isn't it?"

Sandy covers her face with her hands and begins sobbing again. "I was so sure I was going to get that promotion! I worked hard for it! I deserved it! I prayed for it and you all agreed with me! I believed God was going to give me the desire of my heart! It would have meant a big raise! So, in faith, I took most of my savings out of the bank and made a down payment on a gorgeous Jaguar. You know my old car was

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falling apart! I needed a new car! And why shouldn't I have the best? I'm a child of the King, right? At least that's what the guy on the radio always says. But if I don't have the new job and the raise, there's no way I can make the payments. I'm so afraid I'm going to lose everything I've worked for since my divorce! What am I going to do?"

Pam's arm has come around Sandy's shoulders and she is comforting her as though she were one of her children. Paul starts to speak, but the look Pam sends him stops the words before they leave his mouth. Everyone sits quietly for a moment, wondering what to say. Finally, Patrick puts into words what we're all feeling.

"Sandy, I want you to know that you are not alone in this situation. Not only do you have the Lord on your side, but you also have all of us. Right?" As he looks around the room, some nod and others murmur their assent. "There must be something we can do. I feel like there are so many parts to this mess, I hardly know where to begin. Anybody have any ideas?"

"Well, obviously a major part of Sandy's fear is because of finances. Let's start on that," Tom says. "Pam and I will stop over to your apartment sometime this weekend and help you go over your budget. I've read quite a bit about getting out of debt, so maybe I'll be able to help you see some places you could cut back."

"Later," Tammy inserts, "when you're feeling better, you and I have to have a serious talk about theology and radio preachers."

"In the meantime," Patrick offers, "how about if I go with you to the auto dealership and the bank and see what we can work out with them? Unfortunately, women still sometimes are taken advantage of in the business world. It's amazing how titles like 'doctor' tend to make some people a little more careful with their ethics."

Andy leans forward, elbows on his knees, and addresses Sandy. "I am really glad this all came out tonight, Sandy. I would hate to think of you carrying these burdens alone. As Patrick said, we are all here for you, and we are going to help you as much as we can. Ed, don't forget to get that tape to her as soon as possible, okay?"

"You got it, Andy. Don't you worry, Sandy," Ed declares. "It's all going to work out. You'll see."

"After you've had a chance to listen to the tape and you think you understand the message," Andy continues, "I think it would be wise for you to call Patrick and take him up on his offer to pray with you for healing of those hurts. Will you do that, Sandy?"

Sandy nods her head and smiles shyly at Patrick.

"Anytime you're ready, Sandy," he says gently. "Just let me know."

"Do you want Tom and Pam to take a look at your budget?" Andy asks. "I know they could be a big help if you're willing."

"I don't know," Sandy says hesitantly. "I've imposed on you so much already."

"Don't be silly, dear," Pam corrects her. "We love you and are happy to help. Just let us know when it would be convenient for you."

"And I think that next week we'll begin a series on some basic doctrine," Andy concludes. "Sometimes we forget that we all come from different theological backgrounds. Let's start at the very foundation, all right? I want you all to do some thinking and research this week about salvation—what it is, how we receive it, what it truly means. Come next week prepared to present your findings and defend your beliefs! Let's close in prayer. Polly, would you, please?"

Polly offers a beautiful prayer for Sandy and for all of us. Before we can disburse, Pam announces Paul's upcoming birthday and leads us in a rousing chorus of "Happy Birthday". Laughing and talking, we adjourn to the dining room to sample some of that yummy-looking cake.

doing the activity for God, the excitement is the same.

For example, I love to research, write, and teach just about anything. Whether it is a course on hearing God's voice or on learning how to "doctor yourself" so you can live in health or on how to be a successful businessman, my heart overflows with excitement

because I love discovering, learning, organizing, and calling into being insight and understanding in a fashion that is unique to me. I have the heart of a teacher. I LOVE to research and teach!

Some people love caring for people, whether they

work as a home cell leader, loving those in their home, or as a nurse, loving people back to health. Some enjoy accounting, whether it is doing the church books or working for H & R Block. That's just what their hearts love to do.

We believe it is important for you to discover what it is that your heart really loves to do and then do that with all your heart as unto the Lord. You may have heard the phrase "that gets her juices flowing." Well, what makes your juices flow? That is what we want to discover in this book. We will also help you discover various vocations which can be an excellent outworking of your heart motivations as you minister unto the Lord both within and outside the established church.

One person defined success as "doing what you love and being paid for it." I accept this as one aspect of success. If we are doing what we love, the overflow of excitement and passion from our hearts is felt and observed by all who are near us.

Well, what do you think of my friends? Quite a group, aren't they? We're all so different, and yet we get along so well. And it seems like any problem one of us faces, someone in the group has the answer to.

We'll be coming back to this meeting throughout the text. You'll get to know the **heart motivations** of each individual, and why they say the things they say and do the things they do. And along the way, hopefully you'll find out more about yourself, as well!

Out of the Heart Flows...

The careful observer of life will discover that God has placed some deep underlying motivations and desires within each individual. These deep desires, if followed, will lead each person into the fulfillment of his destiny, especially if he asks God to empower and guide his heart flow. These heart motivations will be expressed whether he is working on a task within the structured church or outside it. When one discovers the kind of work that excites his heart, he has discovered one or several of the basic underlying heart motivations which flow from within his heart. Whether in "church" or in "the world," as long as you see that you are

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The Heart Adds...

“The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds persuasiveness to his lips.”

(Proverbs 16:23)

When one speaks with persuasiveness, it is a clear indication that his “heart juices” are flowing. A persuasive speaker speaks directly into your heart. His words come from his heart and enter deeply into the listener’s. They come from life and from the spirit, and they minister life and they minister to the spirit.

On the other hand, a person who is stuck in the wrong job finds it hard to work up a passion or excitement or conviction for what he is doing. His heart just isn’t in it.

So when we try to discover the vocation for our lives, we must first examine what are the drives and motivations and desires God has placed within our hearts. Once we discover the heart motivations God has given us, we may then find a number of vocations which will become excellent outworkings of these basic instinctive drives. When a person loves his work, life is a song. For the one who hates his work, life is a drudgery. Make it your passion to make your life a song!

God Moves Upon Our Hearts

Of course God moves in our hearts. Even before we are saved, God is there speaking and showing us things. For example,

“The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

(Proverbs 21:1)

God even spoke into wicked kings' hearts:

“I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream and it made me fearful...”

(Daniel 4:4-5)

The remainder of Daniel 4 shows that it was *God Who was giving this dream* to this very wicked king. Indeed, God speaks to us all and moves upon us all, even before we acknowledge Him. He is Lord of *all*, even those who have not yet recognized Him.

Even false prophets seem to be able to receive correct revelation from God, as is exemplified by Balaam, a prophet who was not of Israel (Num 22:5) and yet received a word which appears to have been God speaking (Num. 22: 12).

God’s Spirit Gifts Us with Skill in Craftsmanship

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When one speaks with persuasiveness, it is a clear indication that his “heart juices” are flowing

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“And I [God] have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, and understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in

silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones, for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship.”

(Exodus 31:3-5)

We see that our basic underlying giftedness and heart motivations flow into **all areas** of life, not just those we might want to consider “spiritual”. And they are flowing even before we have committed our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. God considers the **whole** earth His (Ps. 24:1), and all jobs and vocations as being done unto Him (Col. 3:23-24). God does not recognize the sacred/secular split that we often assume. Our division of life into so many fractured, unconnected parts is an outworking of Greek philosophy. The Hebrews saw life as an integrated whole. God sees life as an integrated whole.

In this book we are going to seek an integrated understanding of how our life’s motivations have been there from birth and apply to everything we touch and everything we are. May life once again become an exciting experience for you as you walk with God.

Our Hearts Form Our Experiences in Life

“...as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”
(Proverbs 23:7)

If we think in our hearts that we are powerless and unable to stand against the enemy, we become weak and powerless and hide ourselves in fear.

If we think in our hearts that God’s might and power are joined to us, His Church, and that we have the commission and authority to disciple nations, then we become lion-hearted and fearless and people of powerful action.

If we think in our hearts in terms of compassion and forgiveness, then we become compassionate and forgiving. If we think in our hearts

of law and judgment, then we become judges by the law.

Your life and vocation are not disconnected from the springs within your heart. Rather, they are intricately connected. That is why we are cautioned to

“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”

(Proverbs 4:23)

Defining the Heart

On several occasions Patti and I have prayerfully examined all 1400 verses in the Bible which relate to heart and spirit. We have devised the following working definition for the heart:

“The heart is one’s deep, underlying attitudes, underlying motivations, and underlying character traits.”

Therefore, when we talk of your heart motivations influencing your behavior and stimulating your choice of vocation, we are speaking of the attitudes, motivations, and character traits within which guide you in each and every decision you make.

Extensive biblical support for the above definition of the heart can be found in other texts by the same authors. A few verses which you could prayerfully consider as Scriptural examples of this definition include: 1 Kings 21:5; Job 21:4; Psalms 34:18; 51:10,12; 142:3; Proverbs 11:13; 15:13; 16:2; 17:27; Matthew 26:41; Luke 9:54-56; Acts 18:25; Romans 12:11; Philippians 1:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 3:4.

The Desire for One’s Vocation

The call to your vocation has probably been within your heart from birth. God says of Jeremiah, “while you were in your mother’s womb I called you...”

If you had a fiery drive for leadership and to impose your values on others, as Paul did, you will probably find it was there both before and after conversion. The apostle Paul was a dynamic leader before his Damascus Road conversion and after it. His basic heart motivation for truth and fervency for God and desire to spread what he believed to others did not change after the Damascus Road. The message he shared changed, but his basic heart motivations remained the same.

Likewise, you may discover that you were operating in your heart motivation even before your salvation experience. However, it is also possible that God would enliven other parts within you at salvation, sharpening, clarifying, and possibly even changing certain things, as He gives you a new heart and a new spirit.

Several strong characteristics awoke within my spirit at salvation. A passion to share with others emerged, convincing me that I could no longer remain an introvert and share the gospel as I felt compelled to do. So I began to “put on” Christ, especially those aspects of Christ which I was lacking, such as the heart of an evangelist and the compassion of a pastor. I began evangelizing and shepherding within months of my conversion experience. My spirit was called out of its stupor and into a fullness of life at the point of salvation. I become more alive than I had ever been before.

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Paul, you will notice, began as a prophet/teacher (Acts 13:1) and later in his life was called an apostle (Gal. 1:1). In the same way, you may find God nurturing gift after gift in your life as you mature into your divinely-ordained destiny. That has been my experience.

I recall a man in Ohio who came after a seminar and told me that in college his heart’s desire had been to be a professional photographer. He was good at it, having many pictures published in national magazines. However, once married, he became fearful about his abil-

ity to support himself and a family through photography, so he took a job in a factory. Now, many years and six children later, he hated his life and hated his job and saw no way out. He was not living his destiny. I suggested he begin

again doing photography part-time and see what it could grow into. He didn’t feel he could because he needed to spend his extra time with his children. I suggested he take his children with him. He didn’t feel he could because they would distract him. He had built a prison in his mind, convincing him that he could not fulfill the dream and desires of his heart, and he lived in misery, while doing a job that was not God’s choice for him but was determined by a spirit of fear.

May this not happen to you. May God show mercy on this poor man’s soul. The unfortunate reality is that many have compromised their destiny because of the same kind of fear. Let us learn to discover creative ways to finance our lives so we can fulfill our God-given destinies.