

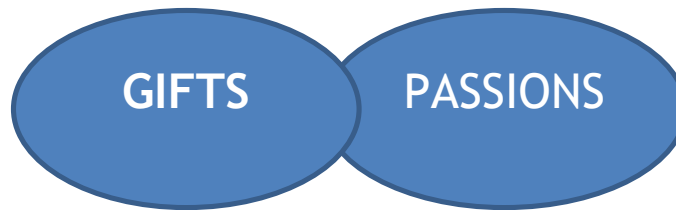
PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

LESSON 2-1: GIFTS AND PASSIONS

WELCOME & PRAYER

KICK OFF QUESTIONS

Are you passionate about your work? Why? Why not? What is one thing you could do to more fully engage your passions?



SCRIPTURES

We want to help you ask and, more importantly, answer: What is God's purpose for my life? To understand this question, in Lesson 2-1, we will explore your gifts, talents and passions - who and how God created you. Gifts, talents and passions are not only valuable to God, but they are extremely valuable in your work and business. If what you do for a living is not aligned with your gifts, talents and passions, work can be painful and testing. Please read the Commentaries at the end on "Gifts" and "Passions" by Rick Ifland (these are preliminary excerpts from his upcoming book on "Purpose"). Please read the following scriptures:

- Exodus 28:3, 31:6, 36:4
- 1 Chronicles 28:21
- Acts 18:3 (Acts 18:1-4)
- 1 Peter 4:10-11

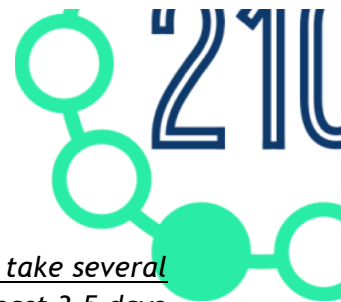
BIG PICTURE

- To better understand your specific gifts, talents and passions.
- When you operate consistent with your gifts, talents and passions, you will have more satisfaction and purpose in life, including your work and business.

Consider comparing vocational gifts with the following passages concerning spiritual gifts:

- Romans 12:4-8
- 1 Corinthians 12
- Ephesians 4:11-16





GIFTS AND TALENTS - “One Word” Exercise

Please note, although this exercise does not require significant time, it may take several days to complete. Thus, please read this section and begin this exercise at least 3-5 days before your group’s meeting.

Email at least 10-15 friends, family and/or co-workers with the following question (rephrase as appropriate, but the email must seek “one word” that best describes you:

“I’m working on a personal growth issue in my 210 Group (a business mentoring project). We are seeking to understand our gifts and talents more clearly. I’d like to ask you to take a few minutes today and think about “one word” that you would use to best describe me, and please email it to me by _____. We will be using this in a personal growth exercise, so your response is greatly appreciated!”

Record the responses here:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Choose 3-5 of these “words” that are unique, or that you may not have expected, and go back to that responding person and ask them “why” they selected that word. Please summarize their explanation below.

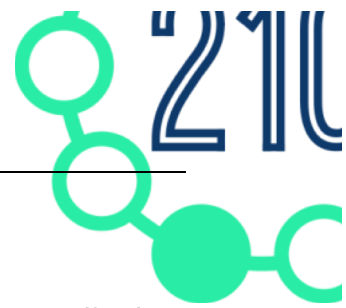
	One Word	Explanation
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____

PASSIONS - “20-10” EXERCISE

Please note, this exercise may take some time of personal reflection. Thus, please read this section and begin this exercise several days before your group’s meeting.

Suppose you woke up tomorrow and received two phone calls. The first phone call tells you that you have inherited \$20 million, no strings attached. The second tells you that you have an incurable and terminal disease, and you have no more than 10 years to live. What would you do differently, and, in particular, what would you stop doing?





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- (Gifts) What “one word” for your gifts and talents was unique or unexpected? What did you learn about yourself from this exercise?
- (Passions) If you inherited \$20 million, no strings attached, what would you do differently? What would you stop doing?
- Under what circumstances do you best operate in your gifts or talents? Give an example?
- How do you balance, on one hand, providing for your family in the midst of a job/position you may not enjoy, and, on the other hand, using your gift and talents and engaging your passions?
- What have you discovered about your gifts and talents?
- What have you discovered about your passions?

WEEKLY APPLICATION

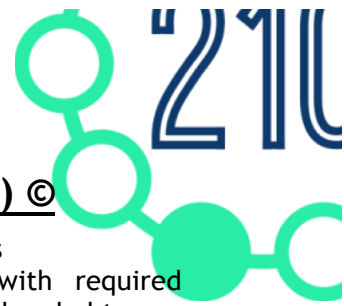
- What is one way you can put this new knowledge to work?
- Over the coming 2 weeks, write down ways in which you find that you ARE and ARE NOT operating in your gifts, skills or passions.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- “*The Purpose Driven Life*”, Rick Warren
- Simon Sinek: Start with Why” Ted Talk - https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action
- Exodus Chapters 26, 28, 35 and 66
- DISC: <https://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/>
- Myers-Briggs: <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test>





GIFTS (Excerpt from upcoming book by Rick Ifland) ©

The first thing to note about a gift is that it is a gift. That may appear to be obvious on the surface, but many "gifts" are actually transactions, a negotiation with required outcomes. Fail to achieve the desired outcome and the gift is rescinded. Your gift, handed to you from a loving God, is a true gift. It is not a transaction. There are no strings attached. There are no requirements to perform. There are no check-ups to see if the gifts are being used or not. There is no rescinding of the gift if it is not used appropriately. A gift is simply given because the Giver wants to give it. What you do with it is up to you.

The second thing to note is that a gift provides freedom. Or, at least it should. Freely given, freely received. God uses imperfect people who don't feel equipped to do his work. He equips them with gifts to be used for others. At this base level, there is total freedom to use your gift. Total freedom.

The third thing to notice about your gift is that it won't change or be taken away. It is irrevocable, not to be withdrawn. As previously stated, Romans 11:29 makes a promise to us: "for God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn." Not only does God tell you that you are not an accident, He's also telling you, again in no uncertain terms, that your gifts are not an accident, either. He didn't make a mistake when He made you, and He didn't make a mistake when he equipped you with your specific gift(s).

I could go on and on but you get the point. Your gifts are your gifts. They aren't somebody else's. They won't change. They won't be added to just because you want to be like somebody else. They aren't a transaction that requires performance in order to remain your gifts. They're simple gifts, free to use... and free to abuse.

A quick glance back at recent history will show that World War II produced some incredible leaders: Winston Churchill. Franklin Roosevelt. Adolph Hitler. Yep. All three were given the same gift of leadership, a gift that was manifest in very different ways. So, too, it is with us. I suppose the real challenge is the burden of what to do with such a gift. If you are uniquely created and specially equipped, then why? Why were you made this way? What are you going to do about being made so special? Are you going to bury your gift and pretend it's not there or, worse yet, hope for another gift instead of the one you have been given? Are you going to use your gift for your own consumption? Are you going to use your gift to abuse others and further yourself? Or are you going to use your gift to better the lives of others and further His Kingdom? The outcome is in your hands and is carried out by the daily choices you make.

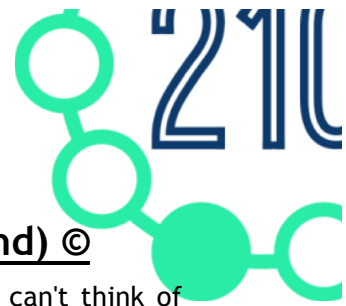
God made a specific promise to the world when he created you. Do you have any idea what it might be? First, it's good news for everybody. Second, it's a never to be repeated promise. Third, it's yours to keep it forever. Fourth, it won't change over time. Still puzzled?

The promise can be found in Ephesians 2:10 which states, "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago." Put your name inside this paraphrased verse; "_____, you are a masterpiece, a one-of-a-kind, never to be duplicated person who has a unique set of tasks to complete during your lifetime that nobody else can do. If you listen to Me, I'll show you what those tasks are, and here's the best part: they will always involve the gifts I freely gave to you, they will be perfectly consistent with your healthy passions, and I will be there every step of the way..."

You are a masterpiece, a one-of-a-kind, never to be duplicated person specifically crafted for the very tasks put before you at this important time. If that does not yet get you excited about the future, nothing will.

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PASSIONS (Excerpt from upcoming book by Rick Ifland) ©

Passion is partially identified when you lose track of time and partially when you can't think of anything else you'd rather be doing. Passion is when duty and obligation yield to appropriate love and desire. We need to spend the time to better understand and fully embrace the healthy desires that God places inside of us.

Psalm 37:4-6 says "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and He will help you. He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun." Your passions matter to God. Your impact on the world matters to God. Your innocence will radiate as a witness in a dark world. Your pursuit of justice will be so counter-intuitive that the world will have to notice. When you delight in the Lord, your desires will begin to look like His, and He will them grant them to you.

In Psalm 25:12 the psalmist states, "Who fears the Lord? God will instruct that person in the way chosen for him." It doesn't say that God might instruct us along our path. It says God will instruct us in the way He chooses for us. In Philippians 2:12 it says, "God is working in you, to help you want to do and to be able to do what pleases him." Your desires are yours, but they were placed inside of you by a loving God who has written those desires in your heart. When combined with your gifts, you have an incredible combination to offer to the world.

If God has given you the desires to do what He has created for you to do, then the alignment is perfect: do what is written on your heart because that is what you were created to do. I know of no better news than to follow your passions and to know that by following them you are doing exactly what a loving God wants you to do.

You really are part of an unstoppable story with a great ending. Dallas Willard says, "You are not just a self; you are a soul... made by God, for God, to need God, and to run on God. NOT made to be self-sufficient." He is your energy source. Tap into Him.

Key indicators of passion are when you lose track of time, when you have a propensity to dream big dreams and don't mind skipping meals or losing sleep in the pursuit of the dream. Not just passion about any old thing. Not just any longings. Not the misplaced passions that corrupt or diminish anybody or anything made in God's image. Instead, I'm thinking of "whatever is true... whatever is pure... whatever is worthy of praise..." (Philippians 4:8). What will you do with your gifts and passions that will arouse your human desire for sheer goodness, for the glory of God? It might be something entirely new. It might be a renewed commitment to something already on your plate. Good things and pure longings arouse human desire for the glory of God. Dream. Dream big. Now dream bigger.

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