



## **Identify your Passion**

Passion is a God-given desire that compels us to make a difference in our world. Our passion may be a dream, vision, burden or call.

We care more about some things in life than others. For Sam, the vitality of local church is more important than the needs of the homeless. Joan spends her time addressing illiteracy among children, while her friend Esther is very involved working on health issues. We each have areas that concern us passionately.

What each of us considers most important are the people or causes for which we have greatest emotional energy. Is Sam, Joan or Esther wrong? Of course not. They are simply expressing themselves in the areas most important to them.

There is no right or wrong passion. God gives each of us passions in order to move us to address the various concerns of his heart. When we pursue our passion, or the concerns He places in our heart, we are focused and motivated. We feel alive, intense, and energetic.

Passion answers the “where” question. Even after years of ministry, we might wonder: “Where should I really be serving?” When people serve in areas where they lack passion, they lose their motivation. They get tired and talk about feeling burned out.

When we serve within our area of passion, our energy is intensified by our work. Serving according to your passion breathes purpose and power into your life and into the lives of those around you.

Passions are not always obvious. For some, discovering their passion takes a lifetime. Others simply may find confirmation of what they already know. In ministry we hear phrases like “I have a burden to...”, “I sense God’s call to...”, “I have a dream to ...”, “My vision is to...”, etc. Any or all of these may describe a passion.

A target group is usually not enough focus. Knowing that you want to serve the people in one group is important. But which types of people – elderly, hurting, blind, teen mothers? What kinds of service – starting a local church, reducing illiteracy among children, giving medical care to the elderly?

### **What causes an emotional response for you?**

The questions that follow will help you clarify your passion(s). It should be yours completely, not your spouse’s or co-workers’ passion. You should feel free to state any passion; nothing is too big, too small or impossible. Please seek to name the issues that have the strongest hold on your heart in order to identify your greatest area of passion.

The goal in this assessment is to identify in a word, concept or brief phrase what captures the essence of your personal, God-given passion.

The following statements are designed to help you clarify and focus your passion(s). Identifying passion is sometimes difficult because of its emotive nature. Some questions will be more helpful than others.

Assuming anything is possible, answer as many as you are able. Jot down the first thing that comes to your mind. Pray as you go.

1. **If I could make one difference in our world, I would...**
  
2. **If you were to mention my name to a group of my friends, they would say I am most passionate about...**
  
3. **If I could take on something and know I couldn't fail, I would...**
  
4. **At the end of my life, I'd love to be able to look back and know I'd done something about...**
  
5. **The burden God seems to have placed on my heart is...**
  
6. **As I look back over my life, I seem to have spent a great deal of time on or with...**
  
7. **The people I feel most drawn to help are:**

Infants	The elderly	AIDS victims	Disabled
Toddlers	Career Transition	Terminally ill	Blind
Grade school children	Other Transition	Hospitalized	Deaf
Middle school children	Engaged couples	Cancer Survivors	Medical Doctors
High school students	Working women	Law enforcement	Health care professionals
College students	Unemployed	Military personnel	Athletes
Young adults	Orphans	Prisoners	Lawyers
Singles	Teen moms	Indigent	Other:
New mothers	Abused women	Refugees	Professionals
Parents	Divorced	Homeless	Men
Single Parents	Widowed	Int'l Students	Catholics
Blended/step families	Prostitutes	Sailors/sportsmen	

**8. The issues or causes I feel strongly about are:**

Abortion	Injustice	Politics/government	Church
AIDS	Education	Hunger	Discipleship
The Arts	Addictions	Homelessness	Evangelism
Childcare	Homosexuality	Literacy	Missionary Outreach
Marriage Relations	Poverty	Racism	Others:
Family Relations	Economy	Disaster Relief	
Parenting	Technology	Violence	
Environment	Healthcare		

**9. The most rewarding experiences in my life's work and ministry are:**

My Most Rewarding Experiences:	What I Valued About Them:

**10. If you find you are coming up with a variety of responses, then consider where there may be continuity. For example:**

- Do you see any recurring themes?
- Does a particular age group keep coming up?
- Is there a need that keeps surfacing?
- Are you serving in similar roles in different situations?
- Do you notice any patterns?
- Can you list your concerns in order of importance to you?

**11. What hopes, desires, or goals have been consistent in your life?**

12. Based on my answers to the above questions, I sense I have a passion for (a calling to)...

### Gain Clues for the Future from your Unique Past

The following diagram is intended to help us reflect on our unique history, illustrating some of the forces that shape our personality.

Some of what happens to us is self-imposed. Other events that shape our history are completely out of our control. In the Gospel of John chapter 16, verse 33, Jesus alerted his disciples, “Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows”...

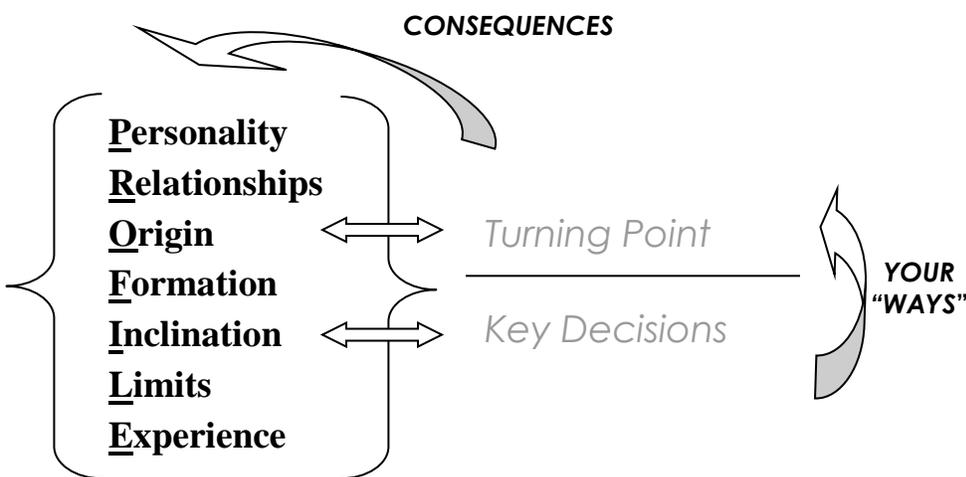
Let’s call “Turning Points” the events in our lives that are out of our control.

We are forced to interact with these events. For some it was a debilitating illness. For others it was the sudden loss of employment or opportunities that were missed.

Turning Points and the experiences of our lives continually shape us. We make “Key Decisions” at each turning point.

*The arrows in this diagram show how one thing affects another. Our P.R.O.F.I.L.E. is shaped by the events in our lives. Key decisions have consequences that in turn continue shaping who we become:*

### Forces that Shape Who You Are



1. It is also very helpful to try to remember your childhood dreams. What were some them?
  
2. What was your life like before major external shaping events?
  
3. Were you imaginative, playful... what were the situations that generated in you the greatest amount of self-confidence and peace?
  
4. Can you remember a day when you were at your very best? What were you doing? Where were you living? Who was around you?
  
5. As a teenager I was often the life of the party. Telling jokes, making people smile. In college I withdrew from jovial visibility. I neglected humor – only to realize years later how much I had missed it!
  
6. Can you remember something that you really enjoyed, such as a moment, an event, an activity? Something that stands as an important memory to you? Something that may not have generated any reward or attention from anyone else, but instead is precious to you alone?

*Ask God to bring these memories back. They might contain clues that will help shape your future.*