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Your S.P.E.C.I.A.L. Design

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

Your S.P.E.C.I.A.L. Design

God has created each one of us for a unique mission and he has equipped us with the exact abilities and talents to accomplish that mission. In the Old Testament we read,

“Before I formed you in your mother’s womb I chose you. Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). The most powerful, wise, and loving being in the entire universe personally shaped us. God set us apart for a special purpose while we were still in our mother’s womb.

The acrostic **SPECIAL** can help us to remember the the talents and abilities God has given each one of us. Your **SPECIAL** design includes:

Spiritual Gifts

“Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the varied grace of God.” — 1 Peter 4:10

At the time that we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit gives each of us one or more spiritual gifts. It is the Holy Spirit who determines which gift or gifts we receive. These spiritual gifts are different from the natural abilities a person already possesses at the time of their spiritual birth. These gifts equip us for special service within the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit has spiritually gifted *you* for a unique role and mission.

Often times our strengths and special gifts are identified and confirmed by others. We can’t always see them because they are a normal part of our lives, but the fact is, *each one of us* is gifted.

What spiritual gifts can you identify in your life? Are you using these gifts to serve others in the body of Christ and to make a deposit in the Bank of Heaven?

Personality Traits

“When the time came for Rebekah to give birth, there were twins in her womb... When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the open fields, but Jacob was an even-tempered man, living in tents.” — Genesis 25:24, 27

We are born with different personalities. These personal qualities affect how we think, what we value, and what we do. For example, some people are naturally aggressive while others are passive. Some like adventure and variety while others prefer stability and routine. Some are reserved while others are out-going. There are many more traits that are blended into various personality combinations. While you were still in your mother's womb, God designed a personality for you that is perfectly suited for his plan for your life. While the world may value certain personality types more than others, God has designed each and every person with their own personality, and he can use those personalities in a powerful way.

What are the personal qualities that God has included in your temperament? In what ways do you see the Holy Spirit using the strengths *and* weaknesses of your personality?

Extraordinary Background

“The steps of a person are ordained by the Lord—so how can anyone understand his own way?” — Proverbs 20:24

The experiences of our lives have a profound impact on the kind of people we become. Our family roots, our educational opportunities, our vocational history, the friendships and acquaintances we've made, and the major life events that we've experienced all combine to give us a totally unique background. God orchestrates the events and circumstances of our lives so we will have the knowledge, relationships, and experiences necessary to fulfill our individual missions in life.

What are the major events, experiences, and relationships in your past that have influenced the way you are today? How is God using your past circumstances, positive and negative, to transform your life and accomplish his purposes?

Central Motivation

“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead, with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” — Philippians 3:13-14

There are many different motivations that drive us. However, in each person there are one or two primary drives that exceed all the others. These central motivations provide the emotional heartbeat for each person. We've all encountered people who appear to be tireless when they are involved in activities that satisfy this motivational thrust. A central motivation is a God-given drive that he built into you. It's what makes you, you!

Think about that for a moment. What excites you, or inspires you, or stimulates you to get involved in something? Your central motivation includes your abilities, your interests, the circumstances in which you are most productive, the relationships that bring out the best in you, and what kind of end result brings you the most joy. All of these factors fit together to give us a motivational pattern. As we discern what our motivation is, each one of us needs to focus that drive toward God's eternal purposes. Without the proper focus your central motivation can quickly propel you toward perishable pursuits that are not part of God's plan for you.

What is *your* central motivation? Are you using your drive to pursue perishable or imperishable things?

Inherited Abilities

"Every skilled person among you is to come and make all that the Lord has commanded:" — Exodus 35:10

Different people have different inherited abilities. These natural abilities enable us to do certain things well. For example, some people are athletic, some are musical, some are artistic, and some are mechanical. Some people have an aptitude for working with numbers, while others are better with words. Some have natural people skills while others have a knack for training animals. The abilities that you have were not randomly assigned. God has given you inherited abilities so you can better serve him and his kingdom.

What are your natural abilities? How is God using your abilities to accomplish his purposes?

Approved Adversity

“My brothers and sisters, consider it nothing but joy when you fall into all sorts of trials, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything.” — James 1:2-4

Do you find it hard to believe that God was instrumental in putting you in your circumstances? What about the things that you have always disliked about how you are made? Did God also permit those apparent imperfections for a reason?

“Now as Jesus was passing by, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who committed the sin that caused him to be born blind, this man or his parents?’ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but he was born blind so that the acts of God may be revealed through what happens to him.” — John 9:1-3

We are not mutant creations. God has intentionally made each one of us for a special purpose! However, that doesn’t mean that all things will be easy. Adversity is one of the tools used by God to shape us into usable vessels. Adversity plays a major role in the kind of person we become. While we bring some adversity upon ourselves through disobedience, God uses even that to mold us.

“And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” — Romans 8:28

Sometimes God allows trials into our lives to build our character and enable us to minister to others who face similar difficulties. God’s approved adversity increases in direct proportion to the size and significance of the mission for which he is preparing you.

What are the painful, difficult situations or hardships that have impacted you up to this point in your life? How is God using this adversity to develop you as a person and to minister to others?

Lifelong Mission

“For we are his creative work, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we can do them.” — Ephesians 2:10

God has given you a special design because he has assigned you a special mission. The good works that God planned for you to do also make you different from everybody else. There are certain things that God has chosen you to do and he has custom designed you so you can do them better than anyone else. God wants you to participate in the plan that he has crafted for your life, but it's up to you as to whether or not you will do them.

Have you identified your special mission? What special things do you see God accomplishing through you?

These are the various facets of your **SPECIAL** design. You are totally unique. There is no one like you. And that didn't happen by chance; it happened by the ingenious design of our Creator.