

THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF A CALL

EPHESIANS 2:8-10 – ERIC SIMPSON – AUGUST 5, 2018

resilience = growing stronger as you grow older

What do I hear God saying about the direction of my life and its contribution?

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

"If you want to identify me, ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I think I am living for, in detail, and ask me what I think is keeping me from living fully the thing I want to live for. Between these two answers you can determine the identity of any person. The better answer he has, the more of a person he is."
– Thomas Merton

Biblical calls are...

➤ **God-initiated**

➤ **Unpredictable**

About the time we whisper, "there's no way" ...be prepared for Him to make a way.

➤ **Filled with impossible odds**

When the *impossible* becomes *possible*, He gets all the glory.

➤ **Affirmed by those who know you well**

"As I do what I do, does the world around me become a bit better of a place? Are people encouraged by my presence? Does an institution or business become a better place to work because of my contribution? Do I add something to the human equation in my home, at my job, in my neighborhood, in my church?" – Gordon Macdonald

"You come to life when you're doing that..."

"You're at your best when you..."

"You seem so natural when you..."

Community contribution vs. *Ephesians 2:10* purpose

THINKING *DECADES VS. DAYS*

20's: preoccupied with clarifying identity, can no longer get away with irresponsibility & unsocial behavior

- What do I want to do with my life?
- What parts of me and my life need correction?
- Where can I find a few friends who will welcome me as I am?
- Around what person/conviction will I organize my life?

30's: longer-range responsibilities accumulate, personal freedom compromised as more commitments are made

- How do I prioritize the demands being made on my life?
- Who are the people I will walk through life with?
- What does my spiritual life look like?
- I thought I'd be over "that" by now, why am I not a better person?

40's: expectation is that I am solid, handle bumps & bruises of life with an unshakable courage, complexities of life further accelerate

- Why do some people seem to be doing better than I am?
- Why am I often disappointed with myself and others?
- Why do I face so many uncertainties?
- How can I make a greater contribution?
- What would it take to do what I've always wanted to do?

50's: time for sober thinking, a sense that time is running out and I must come to terms with my life

- How do I deal with my failures and successes?
- How do I adjust to my ever-changing physical body?
- What's marriage and family life look like now that the kids are gone?
- What do I do with my doubts and fears?
- Will I have enough money for the retirement years?

60's: what is yet to be accomplished and do I have enough time to do all the things I dreamed I'd do

- When do I stop doing the things that have always defined me?
- Why do I feel ignored by a large part of the younger population?
- Are the things I've believed in capable of taking me to the end?
- Is there really life after death?
- What have I done that will outlive me?

70's & 80's: the journey of letting go

- Does anyone realize, or even care, who I once was?
- How much of my life can I still control?
- Why this anger and irritability?
- Is there any place for me to contribute, to make a difference?
- Is God really there for me?
- When I die, how will it happen?
- Heaven? What's it like?

"One of the saddest experiences is to awaken at old age and discover that one has been using only a small part of self." – Gordon Macdonald