

## “TALENT”

What does it mean to be pure in heart? I want you to know that God is more interested in the direction of your heart than the sins that you commit. He's more interested in your attitude than your actions. He's more interested in why you do what you do than what you actually do. And He's interested in WHY YOU DON'T do what He wants you to do. That's also an interest I'm starting to have with my own son. “Why can't you stop drawing on the wall? Why won't you drink water? Why are you drinking my entire soda? Why can't you just...stop?”

Anyways... We ALL have the opportunity, no matter who we are, to be pure in heart, walk with God in our lives, and use everything that He's given to us for His glory. That really means every single person in this room. No matter what has happened in the past. We all can live in God's will for us.

Here is an example for you: God says that David was a man after His own heart. David committed adultery, murdered the girl's (Bathsheba) husband, and one time, while David was running from King Saul, he acted as if he were mentally insane, started scratching stuff, drooling down his beard and what not. We know that David was NOT a madman. But during those times he was losing focus on God, being deceitful, and finding any and every way to get out of his bad circumstances that HE created. His life was in too many different character compartments. But, God still used him to the fullest. God still said that he was good in His book. His heart was with God. He had a deep desire to follow God's will and do “everything” God wanted him to do.

We all mess up and do stupid things, but if our life can become whole and focused on God's heart we will be ok. He will use us to our greatest capacity, and it's not too late to change that today.

We have to understand that we are integrated together. Everything we do affects everyone else. Even though our actions – whether good or bad – are probably not fully out in the open. It's cool that we all have different thoughts, interests, we don't look the same, act the same, breathe the same, and the best thing is that we are all very important to the Kingdom of God.

Today is about how we need to turn our hearts to God to live more fulfilling lives and to use what He's given us, our **S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual Gifts, Heart (Passions), Abilities, Personal Behavior and Experiences)** and our talents for God, whether in ministry in church or in the community. Where is your heart when it comes to using your talents and gifts for church? If you want to know God's will for your life, you've got to look at what's in your heart.

Think about what you're good at. Do you think "Kingdom first" when you think about your talents, your house, your time, your finances? Are you seeking God first? Are you Kingdom minded? I've definitely been falling short of being "Kingdom minded" in everything I do. It's sad when you lose focus. And many of us, including myself, get very Kingdom minded only on Sunday mornings.

I've been blessed to consistently be able to use my gifts for the church and surrounding communities. One thing I clicked with early in life is using my gifts for God's people.

The gifts I feel strongly about are that I'm good at getting people together, creating events for people to have fun with, entertaining, and creating safe spaces. I've gotten to bless others with creating services, Strings & Beans, throwing parties for people, doing weddings, and other endeavors around town. It has been awesome.

So now, just for fun.... shout out some things that you are bad at? And for many of us that are way easier than saying the things you are good at.

I definitely know what I'm bad at and something I'll probably not have God's heart for...and that is.... Math. There is no way I could do Pastor Rick Whitlow's job. No one would get paid on time. I would forget to pay the church bill, and we would be using natural light today. If I were better at math my teaching would actually be 40 minutes long today. My math is so bad that if I were in charge this church would be called Crescenta Valley Three-square church.

One day you'll stand before God and He'll ask, "What did you do in you life and your church with what I gave you? Where was your heart? What was your focus when you were on earth?" I want to reiterate today that CVCHURCH is a purpose driven church, which means we are all

supposed to be striving to live in our purpose. **Purpose driven means that we function in the 5 purposes of the church (Ministry, Fellowship, Discipleship, Worship, and Evangelism), which was given to us by Jesus Christ.** And each of us is important to at least one purpose of the church. However, many of us aren't involved in anything because our hearts are in the wrong place, and we don't fully understand how important we are to God, the community, and this church.

**In 1 Peter 4:10, “God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.”**

Now, in that context, Peter was specifically talking about spiritual gifts like prophecy and healing, but the general idea of blessing others also carries over to talents. God doesn't give us anything just for our own benefit. But, hearts of stone can keep us in our own box.

Today I have 3 points to make about how important you are to the church and to people in your lives. It just may be that your heart is holding you back.

## **I. Focus on the fact that God understands you**

Some of us only see bad things about ourselves. We are painfully aware of our faults, or at least we continue to find ourselves in relational tension created by our faults. We can't explain it, but we know it's there. But, some of us don't see anything wrong with ourselves either. That might be even scarier. I wonder how many things I'm unaware of that negatively affect others. A couple of years ago I was told that I was a “gnarly” eater; that I rushed when I ate and that it was hard to watch sometimes. I didn't know I was bothering someone else's meal. That's something I've had to give to God about. God understands our good and our bad and both can be used.

Proverbs 3:5 says: **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding”**

Side note: Some people have interesting talents that only God understands. However, it might be needed for this church or for your personal relationships, so trust in God that He will put you in the right place to use your talents.

## **II. Know you are unique and important**

God made us all different. That's great, because together, all of us make up the Kingdom. **In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul compares the body of Christ to a human body: Each of us is unique, but together we make the body complete. And Christ is the head of the body (Ephesians 5:23), so everything we do points back to Him.** He directs it all!

In other words, God wants you to use your unique role in the body of Christ to glorify Him. Therefore, if God made you an amazing singer, sing for Him. If your talent is a little less conventional—maybe you're good with hair and makeup or producing a TV show—then find a way to translate that into a job for a God-honoring company or ministry. Use your God-given abilities to reach those who don't know Him—and give Him the credit for your talents.

There are some people here with great talents that I've enjoyed witnessing. Dave Urrutia with his gardening talent, Bob Church, Aaron and Elden Hancock are geniuses with power and doing hard tasks with the scissor lift, Christina White is one of the best cooks I've ever met and serves with an open heart for so many people. They made a choice to turn their hearts to God in those areas; many of us have been blessed by them and might not even know it.

## **III. Realize you make an impact and have influence**

Are you being faithful with what God has given you today? Not a future version of you. Not when you hit the lottery. Not when you get that number one hit song. Not after you go on that dream vacation. What are you giving Him today? What happens when you underestimate it? Your pride gets in the way of your service. Humility helps guide you and understand that you have an impact. When you underestimate yourself you might not step up to serve. You might not talk to someone that is hurting. You might not make a change at this church that you see. There are many high quality people in this church. It would be amazing to see what your impact can do to this community.

Closing:

Every area in our lives needs to be treated with the same intensity, the same heart. We need to follow God's heart in our marriages, in our careers, in our parenting, in our ministries, in our relationship with church and with our talents.

- **How are you using your gifts and talents in your current ministry, or are you in a ministry at all?**
- **What is the dream you believe God has given you? How do you think God can use your abilities and experiences to help you accomplish that dream?**

We are going to play a couple of songs, and I want you to write on a notecard about what sins or things that are holding you back from turning your heart to God. It doesn't have to be just about talents, either. It can be about your life. No matter what you're going through, you can leave it at the altar today. I pray that many of you can turn to live a life of integrity and obedience in all aspects of your life. And as you become closer to God, I pray that you can use that to further His Kingdom even more.

Here is a prayer that you can pray during this time.

**Psalm 51:10-12**

**<sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God.**

**Renew a loyal spirit within me.**

**<sup>11</sup>Do not banish me from Your presence,  
and don't take Your Holy Spirit from me.**

**<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
and make me willing to obey You.**

Amen