

# 11.3 Finding Your MISSION

We are  
**CHILDREN**  
of **GOD.**



Have you ever been told, “You can do anything you set your mind to,” or “You can be whatever you want to be as long as you work harder than anyone else,” or “You can have anything you want as long as you want it bad enough”? Lies. It’s not true. They are nice ideas, but they are not true.

It wouldn’t have mattered how hard Mother Teresa had worked at it or wanted it, she was never going to play basketball in the NBA. She lacked a number of abilities necessary to make that happen. And what a waste it would have been if instead of pursuing her God-given mission, Mother Teresa had been a basketball player.

Once again we discover the huge gulf between the ways of the world and the vision God has for your life. The world says life is about doing what you want, and that doing what you want will make you happy. God says he has the ultimate plan for your life, and following that plan is what will make you happy.

The thing is, God knows you better than anyone else. He knows you better than you know yourself. He designed you, and he designed you with a specific mission in mind. You were designed on purpose and for a purpose.

Albert Einstein wrote, “Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.” If you are going to discover your mission, we first need to discover your genius. What are you uniquely designed to contribute?

If you bought a car and you wanted to discover how to bring the best out of it and achieve optimum performance, whom would you talk to about that? You could go online and read Internet articles. You could go down to the dealership and speak to the mechanic who specializes in that particular car. But the best person to speak to would be the person who designed and built the car.

In the same way, if you want to discover your mission, your genius, and how to bring the best out of yourself, the person to talk to is the one who designed and built you: *God*.

God speaks to us in lots of ways, but there are three ordinary voices that he uses to speak to us every day.

The first ordinary voice of God is: legitimate needs.

If you don’t eat, you will die. Who created you with this need to eat? God.

If you don't breathe you will die even quicker. God has created you with legitimate needs. You have these legitimate needs in all four aspects of the human being: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. Physically you have legitimate needs for food, sleep, exercise, clothing, shelter, and many other things. Emotionally you have legitimate needs for opportunities to love and be loved. Intellectually you have legitimate needs to learn new things and stimulate and expand your thinking. Spiritually you have legitimate needs for silence, solitude, Scriptures, and sacraments.

The world says you will be most fully alive when you get what you want, but it's not true. In your lifetime you will encounter hundreds of people who are obsessed with getting what they want, but getting what they want won't make them happy. The reason is profoundly simple: You never can get enough of what you don't really need.

God has given you these legitimate needs. They are clues about how to live life to the fullest.

The second ordinary voice of God is: talents and abilities.

You have a unique blend of talents and abilities that are perfectly suited to carry out whatever mission God has assigned to you on this earth. There are two types: universal and unique. Universal talents are those that we all have. For example, we all have the ability to make a difference in other people's lives. Unique talents are those that everyone does not have. For example, the ability to paint like Van Gogh, write a symphony like Mozart, or be the best basketball player in the world.

The world is obsessed with unique talent, but when you consider the ability to make a difference in other people's lives alongside the ability to throw a great fastball, the baseball thing seems trivial. The reason it seems trivial is because it is. The world takes the trivial and makes it important, and takes the important and makes it trivial.

God has given you a unique blend of talents and abilities, and your talents and abilities are vocational. What does that mean? Well, they hold clues about your mission, your genius, your vocation, and the best way for you to live.

The third ordinary voice of God is: deepest desire.

Deep in your heart you have desires for good things, and God has placed those desires in your heart to guide you to the life he envisioned for you.

At lunchtime I often have a desire for chocolate doughnuts. But the desire for doughnuts is not a deep desire; in fact it is a fairly shallow

## WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP *with the* POOR?

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desire. God wants us to get beyond our shallow desires, which are often selfish or pointless, and uncover the deepest desires of our hearts.

When I am the-best-version-of-myself, I say no to the doughnuts and I have a salad for lunch instead. To the world this is a simple choice between doughnuts and a salad. But as we grow spiritually, God shows us that there are many layers and dimensions to every decision.

On one level, yes, it's just a choice between doughnuts and a salad. On another level it's a choice between doughnuts and being healthy. That's a different perspective. On another level it's a choice between doughnuts and being alive and healthy enough to walk my daughter down the aisle when she gets married . . . to be alive to see her life unfold . . . and meet the person she will spend her life with . . . and meet my grandchildren. . . .

When we embrace God and his way of life, he reveals many dimensions of everyday life that we have never seen or thought about before. God is speaking to you through your deepest desires. Seek out your deepest desires for good things and have the courage to pursue them.

The most common preface to any sentence in the Bible is "God said . . ." God said to Adam, Noah, Moses, and Abraham. God spoke to everyone. It isn't that he has stopped speaking, but that humanity has stopped listening. God speaks to us in so many ways—through prayer, the Scriptures, the sacraments; through the life, teachings, and history of the Church; through other people, events, and circumstances.

You have been designed by God for a specific mission. This is what John Henry Newman wrote, "God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me, which he has not committed to another. I have my mission." God has assigned a mission to you. If you don't fulfill your mission it will go undone. The world is a mess because too many people have abandoned their God-given mission.

Find your mission. It will change your life in the most wonderful ways . . . forever!

# Who was JOHN HENRY NEWMAN?

**JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801–1890)** was one of the central religious figures in England in the nineteenth century. A respected academic, he was originally a priest in the Church of England and a leader in the Oxford Movement. This was an influential group of Anglicans who wanted to return the Church of England to many Catholic beliefs and practices. In 1845 Newman left the Church of England and was received in the Roman Catholic Church, where he was eventually appointed as cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. Unlike most saints, his feast day is not the day of his death, but rather the day of his conversion to Catholicism, September 19.

 How can Mary help you find and live out your mission?





**1. WHO DO YOU KNOW WHO HAS FOUND AND FOLLOWED THEIR MISSION IN LIFE?**

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**2. HAVE YOU EVER ASKED GOD WHAT MISSION HE HAS FOR YOU?**

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**3. HOW DO YOU THINK WHAT YOU WANT FOR YOURSELF IS DIFFERENT FROM WHAT GOD WANTS FOR YOU?**

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PSALM 40

I call upon thee, O Lord; make haste to me!  
Give ear to my voice, when I call to thee!

<sup>2</sup> Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee,  
and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice!

<sup>3</sup> Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord,  
keep watch over the door of my lips!

<sup>4</sup> Incline not my heart to any evil,  
to busy myself with wicked deeds  
in company with men who work iniquity;  
and let me not eat of their dainties!

<sup>5</sup> Let a good man strike or rebuke me in kindness,  
but let the oil of the wicked never anoint my head;  
for my prayer is continually against their wicked deeds.

<sup>6</sup> When they are given over to those who shall condemn them,  
then they shall learn that the word of the Lord is true.

<sup>7</sup> As a rock which one cleaves and shatters on the land,  
so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of Sheol.

<sup>8</sup> But my eyes are toward thee, O Lord God;  
in thee I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless!

<sup>9</sup> Keep me from the trap which they have laid for me,  
and from the snares of evildoers!

<sup>10</sup> Let the wicked together fall  
into their own nets, while I escape.