Classic: How to Discover Your Giftedness
with Darrell L. Bock and Bill Hendricks
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Welcome to the Table. We discuss issues of God and culture. I’m Darrell Bock, Executive Director of Cultural Engagement at the Hendricks Center. Our topic today is Giftedness, and my guest is Bill Hendricks who is Executive Director for Christian Leadership at the Hendricks Center. So you’ve got the whole Hendricks Center team today, Bill.

Bill Hendricks

The A Team.

Darrell Bock

We’re pleased to have you with us.

Bill Hendricks

It’s great to be here.

Darrell Bock

Our topic is giftedness, and most people will think that what that might mean we’re going to talk about spiritual gifts and I Corinthians and that kind of thing. But my guess is that’s sort of right and sort of not right; so sort us out.

Bill Hendricks

Let’s just start with the fact that whatever gifts we have, are always from God, and I personally wince when I hear people talk about spiritual gifts and natural gifts because that somehow creates a hierarchy in people’s minds. At the end of the day I think we’re talking about all the same stuff. That God has endowed human beings with actual abilities and strengths and motivations to accomplish things that he wants done. Every single person in the world has their own unique form of giftedness. But it would be fair to say that when we talk about giftedness we may be in more in a broader array of categories than people tend to think about when they think about the topic of spiritual gifts and the Bible.

Darrell Bock

Correct.
In the passages in the New Testament we have these lists of gifts, and none of these lists is identical, which should be our first clue that these lists are not exhaustive, they’re suggestive. It’s as if Paul’s saying we have a lot of kind of people in this church. We have some teachers, we have some leaders, we have some administrators, we have some givers, and then there’s this catch all for everybody else. Then we have just a lot of people that love to help. You still have to look inside an individual person to figure out how did they go about exercising the gift of administration. So when I use the term giftedness I’m using it in a somewhat technical way, and I guess the simple definition that I’d give is that giftedness is a set of unique core strengths and natural motivation that you instinctively use to do things that you find satisfying and productive. It’s not just about what you can do, it’s about what you’re born to do, and what you frankly love to do.

That’s an interesting way to think about it. I think most people just go through life and try and find what works if I can say it that way. There’s not much purpose or reflection.

A lot of trial and error.

Yeah.

Therefore, a lot of breakdown. Because people instinctively know what their gifts are, which sounds counterintuitive. Bill, you’re saying if God made me this way shouldn’t I just know what I’m supposed to do. The answer is actually not, because your giftedness is so natural and instinctive that when you’re using it you don’t think about using it – you just use it and it doesn’t seem remarkable. You’re liable to say anybody could do that, and you see other people using their gifts and you think that’s amazing. But you don’t see yourself using your gifts, and unless somebody from the outside holds up a mirror and says here’s what you’re doing, and celebrates it and says here’s the value of what you’re doing it proves a bit elusive.

Okay. That’s a little bit of an introduction. Why don’t you tell us about the book that you’ve recently written, and how in the world did you end up in the world of giftedness?
Bill Hendricks First of all, the book is called The Person Called You: Why You’re Here, Why You Matter and What You Should Do With Your Life, which is a fairly audacious title I admit.

Darrell Bock Yeah. Did they get that on the back slide?

Bill Hendricks So I’m at age 30 and my wife comes to me one day and says enough. I’ve put you through enough schooling, because she had already put me through a couple of master’s degrees. She said I want to stay home and have babies, you get out there and make some money. So in politics they call that calling the question; I had to make a decision.

Darrell Bock It sounds like calling the marriage to me.

Bill Hendricks Exactly. The problem is I didn’t know what I wanted to do, and people are saying to me Bill but you’re so bright. You went to Harvard, you got a couple of master’s degrees; you can do anything you want. I’m like that may be, but I don’t know what I want to do. It was about that time that somebody introduced me to a fellow who he said he’s got this really unique way of helping you think through that career issue. I was very skeptical because when I was in went through about a three – three-and-a-half-day workup of psychological profiles, personality inventories, interest inventories. I even did a word shock, inkblot test, I spent…

Darrell Bock You did a spiritual MRI.

Bill Hendricks I call it the psychological equivalent of a proctology exam. The poked and prodded, and at the end of it I had a big stack of reports, and I’m sure they were all true and accurate. I still don’t know what to do with my life. But because of who it was that was recommending that I do this I at least said I’d meet the guy, and so I met him out at DFW Airport. In those days you could do that at the Admiral’s Club, and he sketch out the process that he was using, and it made a lot of intuitive sense. Then he asked me would you like to go through it, and I think at the time it cost $750 and I didn’t have $760. He said if the money part was taken care of would you do it?
I said sure, and I found out later he just – he was consulting for my friend in his business; he just wrote it off into the businesses fee. But it was really the best $750 that guy ever spent, because when I got the results of this analysis it was as if I had been stumbling around in the pitch black room, tumbling over furniture, running into walls, and somebody just reached over and flipped on the light switch. I suddenly went now I understand what it is I’m trying to do with my life, and I began to make choices on the basis of that ever since. I got into a lot of communication projects; writing ventures, publishing ventures, video, and the guy who had developed this process was trying to get a book written on the subject of giftedness.

He was having trouble getting his manuscripts published so he finally cried uncle and let me get in there and help him, and it was working on that project I just realized how taken I am with this whole phenomenon of human giftedness. So I reinvented my consulting practice around that, and that’s really what I’ve been doing for the last 20 years

Darrell Bock So you’re saying that giftedness is a combination of what you do well and what your passions are, which I think is interesting. I imagine the passion part of this is the part that oftentimes gets stuffed or shunted to the side, because people just want to – I’ve got to have a job, I’ve got to do something. Is that common?

Bill Hendricks Let me put a quarter twist on that. I actually never use the word passion. I found that passion is a bit of a red herring. Because some people are what I would call passionate people. They’re passionate about their work, they’re passionate about their family, they’re passionate about their faith, they’re passionate about their sports teams. They’re just passionate people. But I’d say the vast majority of people have a much narrower bandwidth emotionally. They don’t have high highs; they don't have low lows. I’ve had no end of men particularly call me up and say Bill I need to come see you.

Everybody tells me I need to follow my passion, but I don’t know what I’m passionate about. I don’t – I believe passion is an emotional response to something that engages you. It could be high, it could not. But everybody has this phenomenon of motivation, something that drives their behavior. Giftedness is really a combination of ability and motivation. You’ve got to have both. You can be motivated to sing in the opera, but the problem is you don’t have the ability. You sing in the shower...
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**Darrell Bock**  Don’t go there with me. [Laughter]

**Bill Hendricks**  Then conversely you can have an ability that’s actually quite profound and yet not have any motivation for it. But when you put those two together you get certainly what we might call spectacular performance, and there’s a – the person’s heart is in the task, because they love doing it.

**Darrell Bock**  There’s a satisfaction.

**Bill Hendricks**  There’s a satisfaction. The tell-tale sign that one’s giftedness is involved in an activity is that they enjoy that activity, they gain energy from it, and it doesn’t even seem like work to them.

**Darrell Bock**  So tell us a little bit about what the search for giftedness might involve? Let’s assume – put on your imaginary hat. I walked in and I’m 25; so we’ve gone into the time machine, and I say to you I have no idea what I want to do with my life. What happens from that moment? How do you help the person find themselves?

**Bill Hendricks**  We have to start by creating this honor’s manual as I like to call it. If you’re going to work on a sophisticated piece of machinery like a car or a computer you’d consult the honor’s manual first to find out what was this machine designed to do. What does it do best? What does it take to get it to do that? What are the pieces of equipment? Does it need around it to be most effective? Of course, the warning labels; whatever you do don’t do this with this piece of equipment. That’s essentially what we create for a person, and the process is interesting. It’s not a test or a personality inventory, it’s an interview. It’s a little bit akin to a coach looking at game film from an athlete’s performance in a sport, and looking at the different exercises that he’s doing in these different clips.

If the coach knows what they’re doing, they start to see little idiosyncrasies about how this person does whatever they do. In our case we go back in your life and we ask you to come up with activities that you’ve done that you’ve enjoyed doing and done well. Remember, enjoyment is the tell-tale sign that your giftedness is involved, and these are often very simple and mundane things even; like I learned to ride a bike or my brother and I built a treehouse in the backyard when I was seven or I took a history exam in eighth grade, and I just really go into this thing and this project.
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**Darrell Bock** Now that’s a strange person.

**Bill Hendricks** [Laughter] It takes all kinds to make a world.

**Darrell Bock** That’s exactly right.

**Bill Hendricks** I get the person then to tell me how did you go about doing this? Give me all the rich detail, and it’s that detail – and you get about eight stories, you got a lot of data now to analyze. You discover that there’s actually all these dots that connect among the stories, and the form a pattern of behavior that this person comes back to again and again and again. That pattern’s very predictive in terms of career success and satisfaction; so armed with that owner’s manual I’m in a position to say if this is what you’re wired to do, if this is what you’re born to do where out in the wide world of work are they paying people to do what you instinctively and naturally do, and frankly you’re going to do anyway. Why not get paid to do that if possible? That begins to suggest options that they can go and begin to explore.

**Darrell Bock** So I take it this is what happened with you as well; that someone sat down and took you through this kind of a process, and what did you discover about yourself? What was your – what did your giftedness turn out to be?

**Bill Hendricks** I am what we call an impactor, which means I want to collide with people and make some kind of impression or make some kind of a difference. Send them off on a whole different direction. If you think of a baseball bat colliding with a baseball and knocking it out of the park; that’s what I love to do. People never forget – I remember when Bill said this or did this or wrote this or whatever, and I’ve been doing that my whole life through. Whether it’s getting up in front of people or writing books or earlier years wrote music and so forth. This process that I’ve been using is a much more sophisticated way, almost a higher level to make a huge impact in somebody’s life.
Because when you show them this stuff it can literally transform the direction of their life, and I’ve seen that over and over and over. I estimate in the last 20 years that I’ve been doing this I personally worked with about 2000 people, and I could tell you story after story of people who once they figured out what that giftedness was, and started to make choices on the basis of it it’s amazing. Opportunities start to open up that they wouldn’t have thought about or considered, and of course I know that God’s work behind the scenes, because he wants you to get your giftedness in play. We go back to Genesis 1, the very first words that God said to human beings after he created them were be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and rule over it.

God wants to make this world flourish. He wants to bring life to it, and the means that he’s given us to make the world flourish is through the gifts that he’s given us, and everybody adds values a little differently. Some people are gifted the task of getting ore out of a mountain and turning it into metal. Somebody else is really gifted the task of shaping and designing that metal into an automobile. Somebody is gifted the task of laying out the highway it’s going to run on. Somebody else is gifted the task of getting the oil out of the ground and turning it into gasoline to drive it.

Somebody else gifted to the task of financing that, to educating all the workers to taking care of their bodies when they get sick, and to attend to their spiritual needs so that they really connect with God. So God’s given all these different gifts to us so that we would cause the world and its people to flourish. So God wants us to discover your gifts and get into paths that are fruitful for us.

**Darrell Bock**

You said that you are an impactor. What are some of the other categories of giftedness that we can be thinking about?

**Bill Hendricks**

In one sense there’s as many kinds of giftedness as there are human beings in the world. We serve an infinite God, and I like to say God is what – giftedness is what I call incarnational truth. My view is that when God designs a human being he takes some dimension of himself that he does in an infinite way and he fashions a human being to do that exact same thing only in a finite way. It’s a mystery to me, but for some reason we serve this God who delights in seeing himself in human form; so that when somebody does that thing that he’s put in them to do he delights in that because he sees a little picture of himself, and he’s the only person anywhere that’s worthy of his own delight.
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So in that sense theoretically God could design an infinite number of human beings. But just to give you some examples; some people they don’t want to make an impact, they want to build things and develop things. Somebody else wants to understand something to a very deep level. Somebody else it’s all about gaining response from people, and influencing their behavior. Then you have people that they can see potential, and then exploit that potential. They often end up as entrepreneurs. You have people that love to plan and produce often turn into great administrators because they can get the logistics and the operations functioning.

Then you have the creative types we tend to call realize the concept; they can get a vision in their mind and then bring about perhaps through a song or a movie or some other finished product. It’s just – it’s amazing to see people wake up to this unique thing that they have and how they go about doing it. I’ve never seen anybody break into tears over the results of their Myers Briggs test. But it’s not unusual for people when you – when I finally confront them with the analysis, and here’s what it really shows about you, they’ve lived that experience their whole life. But to have it named and celebrated, for many people it literally reforms their understanding of themselves in a very positive way.

**Darrell Bock**

It gives them a fresh way to focus on what it is that they could and should be doing.

**Bill Hendricks**

Exactly.

**Darrell Bock**

So here I am – now the next question that I guess is the natural one might go something like this. Does everybody have to go through this kind of inventory to figure out their giftedness or are there ways that you can get the ball rolling?

**Bill Hendricks**

I’ve often thought about that, because 1000 years ago how did people learn about their giftedness. I believe that before the fall here’s how it might have worked. You observe me doing something that’s right out of my gift, and you recognize that, and you say to me Bill that was pretty amazing what you just did. Did you see the value of that? I go I hadn’t noticed, but thanks for pointing that out. You look like you really enjoyed it; your heart was in it. I go that’s true, my heart really was in it. Then either you or I are in a position to say isn’t it a wonderful thing that God made me that way. With enough feedback like that from people around us we would each start to wake up to the thing that we offer, and have it celebrated.
Even after the fall I believe that the first way and the most common way that people discover their gifts is they get feedback from other people and the environment. Of course, much of that feedback is from parents, siblings, teachers, peers, and that’s okay to a point except that being fallen human beings oftentimes that feedback it’s couched in negative terms. I can name the very thing that’s true about you in terms of your gift, put a negative label on it like perfectionist, anal retentive.

**Darrell Bock**

Not exactly compliments.

**Bill Hendricks**

No, but there is a kind of person who wants to get things right.

**Darrell Bock**

Right. Exactly and pays attention to details, because details oftentimes do matter.

**Bill Hendricks**

So they live with this sense of shame, because they cannot not do that thing, but then they wonder maybe I’m doing something wrong.

**Darrell Bock**

So – and I take it that the other thing that’s involved in thinking about giftedness is thinking about the varieties of ways in which people can mix and match so that there’s not only the giftedness that you have, but when you’re in a work environment you’re working alongside other people as well who almost certainly don’t share the exact talents that you have. But who you need to mesh together with in order to make it work; so that’s another dimension of the equation.

**Bill Hendricks**

That’s the genius of the corporation and of frankly community in general, and it goes right back to the New Testament. We need all the gifts and it flows out through society as well. It takes all kinds to make a world, there’s all kinds of different work that needs to be done, and when you put those gifts together the whole is much greater than just the sum of the parts. You see that in corporations that do amazing things like build these jet airplanes or an iPad or whatever. Yes, giftedness is profoundly powerful when you organize it well and deploy it well.

**Darrell Bock**

So that giftedness that makes organizations works really has a whole lot to do with self.
Bill Hendricks: Has a whole to do with skill.

Darrell Bock: Yeah, because it – I’ve often heard CEOs say that besides representing the company that one of their major responsibilities is to make sure people are in the right chairs. I’ve often heard that figure a lot. What you’re trying to say is that you’re meshing together a variety of skills in a way that works effectively and efficiently for whoever it is that you’re working for.

Bill Hendricks: So some of my clients have been teams and organizations to help them figure that out.

Darrell Bock: That’s interesting. Let me go to another question that strikes me as we talk, and that is it’s all nice and good to be able to walk into an office and ask someone to help me find my giftedness. But that seems to be aimed at a certain kind of person and a certain kind of society who has a certain kind of freedom and opportunity to do something. What about the average guy out there and particularly the people who don’t live in a world as full of choice as some societies have?

Bill Hendricks: I get asked that question a lot. I think it’s basically the question Bill is giftedness just a luxury, and my answer is it’s not a luxury, it’s a reality. In other words, this is built into the nature of what it means to be a human being. The giftedness is there regardless of whether the environment favors its expression or not. So take the rice farm in North Korea that person has had no education probably, they’re working a fairly menial job, they may be starving; they still have a giftedness. It’s in there; nobody’s bothered to check out what it is. But, what’s fascinating is that giftedness is what we call irrepressible, which means you can’t keep it down.

It’s like in a swimming pool with a bunch of ping pong balls; you can try to keep them underwater, but sooner or later they’re going to pop up, and giftedness is like that. Even in oppressive situations giftedness will out itself, and so I think about tribes out in the jungle or nomadic groups in the desert or whatever. Over time people start to realize this person’s exceptionally good at farming; their crops always seem to yield more. Meanwhile this person over here is great at telling stories, and this lady over here is fantastic in cooking. This person here seems to have a knack for helping you process the questions you’re asking and just wise. So people will slowly, but surely, figure out what some of people’s gifts are.
Now, having said that I’d also point out that in our declaration of independence, the founders they said that there are three inalienable rights, which means they’re rights given by the creator. You can’t just do away with them, and they are obviously life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. So what they meant by the pursuit of happiness was to do life, to pursue life in the paths that you felt God was leading you to do. It’s inherent in order to pursue that you have to have freedom, and you will notice around the world throughout history where people have been given freedom to educate and then to exercise their gifts you have flourishing. Where those freedoms are not present you tend to end up with a automatons and people that in many ways are becoming less human.

**Darrell Bock**

Yeah, a less humane environment really.

**Bill Hendricks**

Absolutely. So not to get political about it, but I very much believe that wherever we can in this world we ought to be praying for and we ought to be working for people’s freedom. I guess one other factor on this Darrell is until about 75 years ago there really wasn’t a need in the world to figure out people’s giftedness. Because prior to that virtually all the work of the world was done on farms and factories, and in those economies one strong back is as good as another. You can just plug and play people. But with the rise of knowledge work you now discover that everybody adds value different. Knowledge work is great because it accesses more of our personhood, and it gives more expression or possibilities for expression of that giftedness.

Now, we’re still as I say only 75 years into what amounts to a grand experiment. We still don’t know very much about how to educate knowledge workers, how to position them for effectiveness, how to organize them and manage them, how to incentive them. We’ve just had endless experiments trying to figure this out as we go, and I think we’re making a little bit of progress. But it’s still very early in that transition, but it’s profound to think that the nature of work fundamentally changed back there. The locust of work moved from the land of the mind, and that effects the giftedness piece because we really have to think about how do you add value.
Darrell Bock: So you’ve got – and another way to articulate this, I’m interested to hear your reaction to this; is to say you had your core agriculture and survival skills – the core things of life that people used to do – what we would perhaps refer to today technically as manufacturing kinds of jobs and that kind of thing. Now you have whole other areas; you said knowledge work. But I’m immediately left to there are a whole group of services that people provide that aren’t manufacturing, they aren’t knowledge work, but they’re service work.

That’s different; there’s the whole realm, and certainly this is become big in our time, the whole realm of entertainment that where a lot of people reside and where the arts tend to get expressed for example. Arts aren’t technically speaking manufacturing, they’re not services in one sense, and so part of what I think you’re suggesting is that when you move from a basic subsistent level of life with where you either are growing things or designing things, manufacturing things to all these other characteristics and possibilities you open up the field for how giftedness can express itself.

Bill Hendricks: Absolutely, and this all goes back to Genesis 1; God wants the world to flourish. The world on its own just gives us natural resources. Humans have to do something to transform those resources into something valuable. But it’s a big world and every day we start to see just how much more God has built into the potential of this world to make it flourish. You actually saw that at the Tower of Babel in Genesis what is it 9?

Darrell Bock: Eleven.

Bill Hendricks: Eleven. [Laughter]

Darrell Bock: It’s back there.
Bill Hendricks: Yeah. But God says when these people build this tower, which is a fairly sophisticated project, at this rate there’s nothing these people aren’t going to be able to do, and he wasn’t ready for them to do all that he had in mind. So he confuses the languages and spreads them abroad. Ironically, what we’re seeing nowadays with this global economy is people working back together again, even internationally, and once again you see these amazing results and products out of that, and different kinds of work. It – to me it makes me think a lot about what would happen if as people did their work they brought God back into their work. It wasn’t just on the human strength, as impressive as that can be; but the whole way they did their work was directed toward this God who himself is a worker, and has given them this work, because in fact he wants the world to flourish. It would transform people’s mindset about what they’re doing.

Darrell Bock: So this brings in the faith and work dimension that ties into giftedness pretty effectively, and the interesting thing about that it seems to me is that I think when you talk to most people about faith and work they say we’re talking about how I can be a Christian at work or how I can do a evangelism at work; they think of it in terms of….

Bill Hendricks: It’s a platform.

Darrell Bock: Yeah. But really you’re talking about something much more basic, in some ways profound in terms of the way people go about actually seeing their work as their vocation. We tend to think of ministry and vocation as happening only…

Bill Hendricks: In the church.

Darrell Bock: In the church with the pastor or in the Sunday School or in children’s church or with the choir. That’s where I do ministry.

Bill Hendricks: Correct.

Darrell Bock: So ministry’s in the – confined to these four walls. Meanwhile the bulk of my week is kind of irrelevant.

Bill Hendricks: Correct.
Darrell Bock  
Or some people – I go and work so I can take care of my family and earn the money that I want to earn, and it ends up being directed either towards one’s self or towards the things that I really care about. That’s another way to think about it. But you’re really talking about something completely different, something far more as I said profound. Why don’t you talk about what the – what that difference is.

Bill Hendricks  
A lot of it has to do with God cares about the work itself; if your job – Dorothy Sayers says if your job is to make shoes then you need to make the best shoes you can possibly make and do it to the glory of God. Really, what God’s interested there is not just whether you’re a good person. It’s like how good are the shoes, because that’s indeed what the work is fundamentally about. Have you added value to this world in some way in your corner, whatever God’s put under your control have you made that more life giving. Have you made it flourish? Have you frankly treated it as though God himself were the steward over it, because in fact he’s put you in responsibility over that little piece of the world? It changes then the spirit with which you do your work, and not just about you and your needs, and so forth. But it’s about the work itself.

Darrell Bock  
So – and we’re back into Genesis 1 again, of course, where the exhortation – I call this creation mandate is to be fruitful and multiply, and manage the earth well or sometimes the metaphor is used – I think it’s a good one, of managing the garden. You – God placed us in a garden, the picture in Genesis 1 and 2, he placed us there as a – as part of the creation to manage and to manage well. That management involves not only how we relate to the material world that God has placed us in, but also how we relate to each other, alongside each other. So the core calling of a human being is to a service the creation and service people within the creation well.

Bill Hendricks  
Right.

Darrell Bock  
I can do that in all kinds of places and all kinds of ways.
Bill Hendricks: That’s right and I can’t stress – here I’m preaching to the choir. We talk about this stuff all the time. But I can’t stress enough for our audience how widespread is the view that work is a curse or at best a necessary evil, and that the real work of God takes place within a church context. I was on a cohort for a university online talking about giftedness, and I remember there was this woman from somewhere in Africa and at the question and answer time she said Mr. Hendricks let me see if I follow you here. I thought I heard you say that I could exercise my spiritual gifts outside the church. I said, that’s in essence what I said. There was a pause and she said I’ve never thought of that before; I’ll have to reflect on that.

I just realize in that moment that she had just had this assumption about the nature of work and the nature of church work, and the two weren’t to be confused. It’s like – it’s as if God has put all this grace into us through his gifts, but we stay in the toolbox. We don’t get out there and use it. It’s like we’re keeping all the goodies for ourselves and our churches, and meanwhile there’s a world that’s starving for people who have a real purpose in life, and also committed to doing the best work they know how to do.

Darrell Bock: The interesting thing about this is full of ironies, because when you do that you create a divided world, you create a divided self, you also I think create a world in which the life – relevant life is confined to this sacred space that we’ve created and we’ve got this secular world out here. Actually what we’ve done, this is where the irony is, what we’ve done is we have created the world that a secularist wants us to create in the sense of there’s the everyday world out here that’s not sacred, and then there’s this sacred space which everyone can create in their own world, and let’s keep it tight and sacred.

Bill Hendricks: Yeah, and separate.
Darrell Bock: That’s right and separate. Yet, I think what scripture is calling for us to say is everywhere God has his sacred people becomes sacred space, and they have the opportunity to live in a way that reflects the way God made them. His giftedness, his presence, and his sense of equipping us to serve one another and to work well together. Granted this has all been tainted by what happens in the fall, but still in terms of the design and the intent that’s the way that things are supposed to seen. So that when we move into our jobs and we do what God has called us to do, I often use this illustration a lot: I say think about what it takes for you to have your Wheaties in the morning. All the steps of what it takes and really…

Bill Hendricks: All the different people.

Darrell Bock: All the different – and if you really think that through you realize this is happening at all kinds of levels. It’s from the person who grows the grain to the box that it goes in to the wrapper.

Bill Hendricks: All the transportation.

Darrell Bock: Yeah, that’s a whole other level the transportation.

Bill Hendricks: All the financing.

Darrell Bock: What it took for the truck to be able to go from place A to place B.

Bill Hendricks: Oil and gas, transportation.

Darrell Bock: Exactly. The making of the roads, it’s – it can be mind blowing.

Bill Hendricks: The education of the workers.

Darrell Bock: Exactly, right.

Bill Hendricks: The medical care for the workers.

Darrell Bock: What it takes to get that Wheaties, that little box of Wheaties in that bowl in front of you.

Bill Hendricks: Pretty profound.
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**Darrell Bock**

Myriads of people, myriads of skills.

**Bill Hendricks**

I was in New York last week so there’s a city of – what is New York now 10 million people, I don’t know. It’s millions of people, and every day food gets to those people and I just think that is an amazing thing that many people in such close proximity their basic needs are met. The water, the food, the – transportation, let’s not…. But when we Christians tend to read our Bibles it’s almost like we put a set of glasses on that limit us to seeing and interpreting so many of the text within this really narrow context. For instance, if you go to the New Testament and Paul says something like therefore be tender hearted, forgiving one another as Christ has forgiven you. We tend to think that means somebody in church I do that with, and we don’t tend to think that also includes the coworker that you’re next to at work, the customer that his hacked off or hasn’t paid or whatever. We spiritualize these passages and therefore narrow them instead of saying this is for all of our life; we take that into all of our life.

**Darrell Bock**

There’s a series of passages that drop in my head when you say this. There’s a passage in Galatians 6 which says do good to all, especially to those of the faith or – I’m going to have some fun with the good Samaritan. Jesus didn’t tell the good Samaritan story and say first check out and see if they’re a member of your local church and then help them. He said go and be a neighbor, that kind of thing; and in telling the story about the Samaritan he’s also making the opposite – and an opposite pointer, another point and that is neighbors may come in surprising packages, and packages that may surprise you.

In fact, when he describes the Samaritan as a good neighbor, and he ask the lawyer who he’s telling the parable to who proved to be the neighbor to the one who fell among the thieves. The guy is so traumatized by the example he doesn’t say this is some Samaritan. He says the one who showed mercy; he can’t even say it. So there’s this idea of how we serve other people made in the image of God and a caring that extends without boundaries in such a way that we show who we are. The third passage is in my head is a very famous passage. It’s the passage in Jeremiah where the call is to exiles – Jewish exiles who are in Babylon, not exactly the most friendly and spiritual place in the history of mankind. The exhortation is serve the city.
Bill Hendricks  
Right. Seek the peace of the city.

Darrell Bock  
Seek the peace the city. So they’re told to live their everyday lives in such a way that their life is a testimony to the power, presence and effectiveness and goodness and grace and kindness of God.

Bill Hendricks  
Praise God here and there, and I’d say on an increasing basis, but it’s slow. You will see individuals who are in positions of leadership and companies and businesses and so forth who are really catching that vision, and they’re literally creating their business into a model of how you do that in very practical ways. Whether it’s by – how they grow food in a real green way, and this is happening a lot overseas where – through micro loans and so forth you get a group of people and they need work. You bring them together, you provide some means, and you start to see the giftedness show up. So you build up that business into something that then is a resource for the community, and it’s exciting to me to see what have traditionally been called lay people. Not the paid professionals, but people in every day work catch a vision for how they could use the systems that God has put under their control to actually bring that flourishing about.

Darrell Bock  
It’s interesting the managers and businesses who get this, who come out of a Christian background and think about how do I make my work my vocation; how do I see it as ministry? Will say things to me like I view the people that I manage as my flock. They’ll take what is traditionally church language and church attitudes and church pictures of shepherding and caring and protecting and providing – all those kinds of things, and they’ll move it over into their job, and they’ll say that’s how I view my people. I don’t view my people as chess people – pieces to move on a board in order that…

Bill Hendricks  
Right commodities.

Darrell Bock  
Yeah, commodities, but I really am thinking about how to care and develop them as people as they do what they do – interact with them in such a way that it’s effective.
I believe every manager is in a position to literally effect the spiritual – the soul I would say of people that work for them. You think how could they do that? Because how you set up the work and how you oversee the work and how you reward the work; all of that effects the person’s outlook on life. If they hate their work, they take that home and it poisons the whole home. Whereas if you set up the work to be, again life giving, so you feel like I belong here, I can express the best of who I am, I can make a contribution. Now that work means somethings they take that home and it permeates their how community.

So there’s a sense in which there’s also a soul of the corporation that gets created as a result.

That’s right. Exactly. A company can affect its community, frankly it can affect a whole region, it can affect a whole nation.

So this area has fascinated me ever since I’ve gotten into it, and the myriads of ways in which it works. But the core thing is when people understand that what they do matters, and most jobs that people have do matter in one way or another. They do contribute to the cycle; they allow me to eat my Wheaties every day. I get my food every day or the clothes on my back or whatever. They do perform a real service, and when people see that contribution and they’re doing it out of a skillset that God’s been giving them then their life is more…

It makes sense.

That’s right, life makes sense. So we thank you for coming in and being a part of this and discussing…

Thanks. Thanks for having me.

Glad to do it, and we’re glad you could be with us on the Table and we look forward to seeing you back again this with…

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