



*Your Vocational Credo: Practical Steps to Discover Your Unique Purpose*

Available October 2015

\$16, 192 pages, paperback  
978-0-8308-4319-0

## What Are You All About?

In the movie *Cider House Rules*, Arthur Rose, the orchard boss, has a confrontation with his underlings who are threatening to overwhelm his authority. Angrily he yells, “What are you all about? ‘Cause I’m about apples. What are you about?” In their violent world the question was important. His pointed clarity forced the crew to focus on that one motivation that would guide their future behavior and possibly their survival. Although I think Arthur missed the point in some ways, his ability to exact that kind of focus, first from himself and then from his crew, was inspiring and thought provoking. He was a strong leader who caused his men to dig deep for that which was relevant in the moment. The scene reminded me of a conversation I had long ago with a mentor who pressed me to answer a few questions about my voice, which I was struggling to discover: What keeps you awake at night? What brings you to tears? What makes you angry?

My mentor may as well have asked me the color of a C chord on my guitar. The question barely made sense. At the time I knew I was not equipped to answer her questions by myself. I wanted help, which she wisely would not offer. She wanted me to ruminate on the questions and struggle for my own answers, no matter how long it took me. These life-defining questions were meant to cause me to carefully consider the thrust of my education and how I would spend my future. I needed to discover what made my own heart beat. Each of us has a heart meant to beat in symphony with the Holy Spirit. Although I knew that from sermons I had heard, I still could not put my finger on what that was for me. As I began to consider my gifts, talents and the tools I had acquired, I realized that I had to approach this journey as a spiritual practice. Self-examination, reflection and reverence would be my traveling buddies. I thought, *Good, I’ve got six months before school starts. I can get this done.* I knew neither how deep I would have to dig nor how long it would take to get there. Before I knew it, six months turned into six years. So there is no better time than the present to begin the journey.

Vocation is something that we would do whether or not there is a paycheck. It is a passion that exudes from our soul and transcends any particular job or career we may find ourselves in. Vocation brings joy in the midst of tedium and normal. It is simple and profound, hidden and obvious, natural and spiritual. I define *vocation* as “a creative, significant work expressed with deep joy as an offering of love to God, self and others that meets the needs of the world in a meaningful way.”

Reflect on these questions and make a few notes in response:

- What do you think your vocation might be in light of my definition?
- What keeps you awake at night?



# BOOK EXCERPT

- What brings you to tears?
- What makes you angry?
- What would you be compelled to do even if there was no paycheck associated with it?

– Taken from chapter one, “Why Vocation Matters”



## The Right Companion for the Vocational Journey

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