

Discernment Quotes

What if we were to... assume that God is the author of our longings, visions, and dreams?... when we can change our prayer from “What do you want OF me?” to “What do you want FOR me?” we are open to the gifts God wishes to bestow on us.

(Maggie Pike The Power of Discernment)

...we confuse education, training or achievement with the notion of gift and place our self worth on the type of work we do, the degrees we have earned (or not earned), our position. Sometimes gifts are buried within us, unused, waiting to be discovered and called forth. Sometimes, however, gifts seem to be given quite unexpectedly, in order to meet particular circumstances—like suddenly knowing what to say when feeling inadequate and unable to speak. Some gifts are quite dramatic, but most are amazingly simple—like being able to listen or being able to offer support to another person in time of crisis. Some gifts stay with us a long time, others change as our lives change. Gifts, in whatever form they are given to us are the substance of ministry. They begin with God’s first gift to us all, the gift of ourselves.

(Sr. Patricia Heaney, OLVM, “Wind and Water”)

I hope you come to find that which gives life a deep meaning for you. Something worth living for—maybe even worth dying for. Something that energizes you, enthuses you, and enables you to keep moving ahead. I can’t tell you what it might be—that’s for you to find, to choose, to love. I can just encourage you to start looking, and support you in the search.

(Sr. Ita Ford, Mayknoll Missionary murdered in El Salvador 1980)

DISCERN means to separate; to distinguish between; to sift... there’s the old image of panning for gold. Remember the old Westerns where the settlers waded in the streams using a pan with a built-in sieve to separate the useless from the precious gold nuggets?... And what about the images we all have from TV, if not from experience, of people painstakingly sifting through rubble after a fire or a tornado in order to separate what is still of value?

(Sr. Bernice Kuper, Sisters of Providence)

Discernment of God's will is the act of distinguishing between options while consciously calling on God for assistance. Discernment is something that involves the concrete circumstances of daily life... presumes that we'll get an answer. God touches us personally... discernment... involves a relationship with God, with the world around us, with the people around us, and ultimately with ourselves.

(What's Your Decision? Michael Sparough, SJ, Jim Manney, Tim Hipskind, SJ)

...Maybe that means that the voice we should listen to most as we choose... is the voice of our own gladness. What can we do that makes us gladdest, what can we do that leaves us with the strongest sense of sailing true north and of peace, which is much of what gladness is? I believe that if it is a thing that makes us truly glad, then it is a good thing and it is our thing and it is the calling voice that we were made to answer with our lives...

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. **(Frederick Buechner)**

Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. **(Let Your Life Speak by Parker Palmer)**

We ask to know the will of God without guessing that God's will is written into our very beings. We perceive that will when we discern our gifts. Our obedience and surrender to God are in large part our obedience and surrender to our gifts.

Why? Because our gifts carry us out into the world and make us participants in life. The uncovering of them is one of the most important tasks confronting any one of us.

When we talk about being true to ourselves, being the persons we are intended to be, we are talking about gifts. We cannot be ourselves unless we are true to our gifts.

(“The Eighth Day of Creation” by Elizabeth O'Connor)