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You Are Extraordinary

In Christ, our human potential is boundless

by James McBride

Everybody knows about fingerprints. Of all earth's billions, no two people have the same pattern. Each of us is unique. But did you know that no two hearts are alike? Or stomachs, eyes, livers, nerves, blood vessels? Or brains?

You are, in fact, extraordinary!

On physical examination it is quite apparent that each of us in a very special way is a unique person. Even the shape of the liver differs from one person to another. So, too, its color, and how it reacts inside its special environment. And its size. The same is true in principle for every organ. This, in part, explains why medicine or surgery is a hit or miss affair - an art form!

Our brains, too, differ. The functions of this crowning and vital organ can be mapped out in rough on the cortex. Yet no neurosurgeon can have an accurate knowledge of a particular brain without careful and detailed pre-investigation using all manner of scans and psychological tests.

As one research neurologist, K.S. Lashley points out, "...individuals start life with brains differing enormously in structure." And, "its diversities within the species are of the same general character as are the differences between related species." As that successful and very human psalmist, King David of ancient Israel, exclaimed, "*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body, and knit them together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex. It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvellous...*" (Psalms 139:13,14).

But does such uniqueness have any practical significance?

Indeed, it does. Did you ever wonder why your partner feels pain or cold or heat more acutely (or less so) than you do? It's because of the striking variation in the sensitivity of our pain or other receptors. Some have little or no pain

sensation - a fact which might influence your choice of occupation!

Of ninety-seven prize fighters tested in New York, all but ten had a low pain sensitivity! And don't we wrapped-up office types marvel at those bare-chested hirsutes working happily in sub-zero cold?

Then there's color vision. "That curtain is green," you say. But your wife's perception is "blue." Who's right? Well - both, for we each see colors in a special way. Knowing about such differences might lead to more toleration within the family and on the job or golf course!

You are, indeed, extraordinary. But - so what?

Power-up Your Brain

The bottom line is that each of us has a very distinctive mind. We're each a unique "bundle of nerves" - in the Bible it is described as the "spirit in man" - that's capable of immense development, and whatever our age. The brain consists of a billion inter-connecting neurons mostly present from birth - the "most complicated machine in the entire universe". But the numbers decrease with age, for millions of cells die daily.

"No hope for me, then" you say? Not so, for your brain can grow whether you are seven or seventy. Whether we're young or old, neurologists now tell us that any learning activity actually increases the size and weight of the brain. And not from eating fish but from mental effort. Said wise King Solomon, "*An intelligent man is always open to new ideas. In fact, he looks for them*" (Proverbs 18:15). The successful human being is one who forever questions his views and looks constantly to improve himself or herself. Such are not stuck in a rut. Nor need you be! All of these factors imply that none of us need feel "a write-off". Simply because during our schooldays we were branded with a particular IQ we needn't feel inferior - not even to our boss.

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For you are talented in ways that are not inferior to his and are probably complementary. This applies, too, within family relationships!

That old - but ever new - book, the Bible, is a rich vein of practical business wisdom. So, grasp firmly what Paul said in his letter to the Roman Christians: “*God has given us the ability to do certain things well*” (Romans 12:6). Each of us - and that includes you - has an incredible potential for personal development. The mathematical genius Albert Einstein once reckoned that we use only .02% of our capacity! We each have a storehouse of unused talent in a combination that is unique to us. We each have, in business terms, our “unique selling points”.

So, accept yourself for what you are - a special blend of strengths and weaknesses. Like the employee who hid his talent (Matthew 25:25), the only failures are those who die without taking advantage of their inborn capabilities, and those who don't recognize and offset their weaknesses. Said Helen Keller, “I thank God for my handicaps, for through them I have found myself, my work, and my God.”

On the other hand - don't accept yourself as you are! Our present attainments are but a step along the way. Much of what we have learned is transient. Science is temporary, with new discoveries forever throwing out old concepts once held as sacrosanct. What we “knew” as children is probably no longer true. And what we learned about God in Sunday School or at mother's knee is just as likely not to be true! Didn't Jesus warn us about “*tradition*” (Mark 7:6-9)?

Man the Pinnacle

When God created mankind - yes, He did! - He noted that everything He had created was “*very good*”. Indeed, mankind was the very pinnacle of that creation. He said: “*Let us make man in our image after our likeness*” (Genesis 1:26). (The speaker, by the way, is the one who became Jesus Christ - Colossians 1:15-17.) Even though we are “*of dust from the ground*” yet we have the potential - through repentance and the subsequent indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God - to become a part of the divine Family. We can become truly “children of God” (Romans 8: 12-17).

God only has immortality - not man (I Timothy 6:16). We don't have dwelling within us some kind of immortal soul freshly dished out at our birth. We are not, as human beings, god-like. But we can - through Jesus Christ - become in God's image just as He originally planned!

You - who were made to become in the image of the divine - have an abundant array of undiscovered and unused talent. Use it in the service of God, of your local fellowship, of humanity - and of yourself.

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