A Potentially Wasted Talent?

“When God unfolds his plans in your life that you don’t understand, don’t ask why, ask what. What do you want me to take away from this, Lord? Trust that God will show you one day how it all fits together.” Uncommon Life: Daily Challenge by Tony Dungy (2011).

As part of her weekly devotions, Jennifer Linden recently came across this quote. It is a reference often made in study material for practicing believers.

While stated in a very general way, the quote highlights the real quandary Jennifer is currently facing. In her forties, the wife of a successful husband and mother of three children (one in college and two in high school), Jennifer is asking herself about what she should do that would best utilize her talent/interests as family life changes and her role particularly as a mother changes as well. The Dungy quote draws attention to the issues but provides little assistance in arriving at needed decisions.

Over coffee, Jennifer relays her thought process to you, “This seems to be an ideal time to consider how I should be thinking through refocusing my life goals. Wayne is well established in his company and, with the younger kids in high school, my commitments related to the private school all our kids have attended and youth sports are winding down. However, I don’t know how long this hiatus will last. Wayne is very upwardly mobile which may produce new opportunities for him and may likely involve us moving. I feel strongly about supporting him in his decisions. The kids require my time now but that will change in the next couple of years.”

As neighbors in a large city subdivision, you have known Jennifer and Wayne for several years. Both come from Christian families and have continued this commitment during their married life and with their children. You consider Jennifer as extraordinary in many ways. She is that person who is both compassionate and willing to help whenever a need arises. She is college educated and is thus well qualified to reinitiate her career. Before children, Jennifer worked full time and was successful in her job. Both she and Wayne agreed that having children would require that she be the one to suspend her career in favor of coordinating the upbringing of their children. Her willingness to support others is unique in her neighborhood as a good number of the couples are two-income families in which there are heavy time commitments associated with their work.

She continues, “If I had the choice to do this again, I would choose the same path. My commitment to my family is utmost to me. While raising kids has been often challenging, I would have it no other way. I am so proud of all three of them and how Wayne and I have
worked together to be the parents that our kids are proud of. I am sure they are as they have seen us actively involved in their lives throughout their upbringing. “

You respond, “Have you thought of what you would do? You could continue with your current church and community efforts or you could have a career for many years to come.”

Jennifer, “You are right. I have thought about several of the options I would consider over the upcoming years. What I haven’t done is to prayerfully think through this problem or, better stated, opportunity with help from the Lord. Our Bible study group has gone through numerous books with a Christian focus, like that of the Dungy book, which Wayne and I use for daily devotionals. Despite all this exposure, I have never directly researched the Bible.”

You reply, “Let’s do the same thing but with a little different twist. How about you and I separately search the scriptures for insight on your dilemma.”

Both you and Jennifer agree to meet next Friday for coffee. The agreed upon assumption is that your discussion of this issue must be solely based on Biblical verses and how they relate to Jennifer’s decision.

**ASSIGNMENT**

Prayerfully search the Bible for relevant scripture to help Jennifer. Make a list of the applicable verses. Based on this Biblical insight, what would you recommend as to how she should prayerfully examine her future?