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The Power to Be Free: Discovering Life in the Spirit of Christ

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DAY 1

THE QUEST

God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:27).

INDIANA JONES thrilled millions with his adventures across the Middle East in search of the lost ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant sat in the holy of holies, first in the wilderness Tabernacle and later in the Jerusalem Temple. Time and again, a deep-seated passion compelled Jones to make this quest to the far corners of the earth. He encountered great danger; he placed himself in harm's way on many occasions. Yet, through it all, he searched tirelessly for this ancient treasure. Indiana Jones personifies a man on a quest.

Millions of Christian believers have embarked on personal quests in recent years, each searching for the purpose of his or her life. They've gotten together in churches and homes across the land to read about and discover this purpose. They've talked about it, prayed about it, and reorganized their lives to fulfill it. That's a good thing; creatures of God discovering God's purposes for their lives will revolutionize not only individuals but entire communities of believers as well.

Perhaps we've been a bit more organized in this quest for purpose in recent days. The quest itself, however, is not new. People have been looking for and discovering God's purpose for their lives for as long as humanity has inhabited planet earth. What do you suppose prompted their search? What prompts your search? I assume, since you've picked up this dis-

covery book, you're interested in this quest. So, where does the quest originate?

This quest is not reserved for Christian believers, you know. People from every walk of life, from every generation, from every culture and language group and nationality make this

quest in their own unique ways. You read about this quest in the Bible verse at the beginning of this chapter. This verse comes from Paul's speech to the intellectuals on Mar's Hill in Athens. Mental gymnasts gathered daily to exercise their minds in various Olympic games for the brain.

NOTHING
BEATS AN
ADRENALINE
RUSH!

You'll find Paul's speech before this group in Acts 17:16-34. Take a minute and read it. Paul begins by recounting the various ways the Athenians sought God. He goes on to say—in our highlighted verse—God has placed clues

about himself throughout creation like colored eggs hidden at Easter. God promises that those who seek Him and reach out for Him will find Him. Paul then adds that it's a very small step from seeking God to finding Him. That's the goal of the quest—close personal relationship with God. Few Christian believers know much about the early Western Church father Augustine. However, most have heard his most famous comment about the quest, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, O God."

Augustine's right, you know. God hardwired humans with searching spirits that resist rest until they find the way back to God. It's like the homing instinct of migrating birds. It's the answer to the question I asked a few paragraphs back: "What do you suppose prompted the search?" It's not a "what" question but rather a "who" question. We find the answer in God. He prompted the search. He created us with a longing to seek Him. Once we seek and find Him, does the quest end? No

way! It's only beginning. You see, meeting God and entering into relationship with Him both satisfies and, at the same time, makes us increasingly hungry to know Him better. Augustine did not speak of a one-time conquest that frees us to embark on other adventures. He highlighted an adventure that consumes us for a lifetime.

It's true of you, isn't it? Haven't you already met God? Haven't you already spent time exploring God's purpose for your life? Yet, don't you hunger to experience more of this God who satisfies the deepest longings of your heart? That's because He made you that way.

God built us for discovery and adventure. A newborn discovers his or her hands and fingers. A toddler finds excitement and amazement with a new toy and the box it came in. A teenager goes automatically deaf every time his or her mother says, "Be careful." Grown-ups participate in all manner of extreme sports and spend large sums of money doing them. Why? Because God built us for discovery and adventure. Nothing beats an adrenaline rush!

Consequently, here we are—ready to begin a new chapter in our quest of discovery for a deeper walk with God. To know Him better, to understand Him more fully, to find the source of power that energizes us to live out God's purpose in our lives—that consumes us. The discoveries you make on this quest will change your life forever. They will connect you to a reality that reaches beyond this world and defies description.

These discoveries won't take you to a place you can mark on a map. They won't give you an experience you can adequately describe then file with last year's vacation photos. Discovery is not a possession you can put in your spiritual safety deposit box. I don't really know how to describe what you'll discover. You'll just have to experience it for yourself. Then you can describe it in your own words. But, I guarantee—God will amaze you!

I'm taking some things for granted as I lead you on this quest. You and I will need to be on the same page with these taken-for-granted things. Otherwise, *Houston, we have a problem.*

1. God purposefully created us; we didn't just crawl out of a sludgy marsh or morph from the animal cages at the zoo on our own.
2. God has a purpose for us living on planet earth.
3. God placed clues about himself throughout His creation.
4. God searched for us long before we ever got the idea to look for Him.
5. God wants to enter into daily personal relationship with us. This relationship involves communication on a two-way street.
6. The quest for God satisfies the deepest longing of our hearts, yet challenges us to get out our shovels and dig deeper at the same time.

If we're still on the same page with these basic beliefs, it's time to roll up our sleeves, empty the loose change from our pockets, cancel our appointments in front of the television set, and begin our quest of discovery. Expect to be amazed. There are many things in life I don't know or understand. But one thing I'm sure of: God will amaze you when you embark on a quest of discovery with Him!

DAY 1

Remember:

God hardwired you for a discovery quest.

[God] is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:27).