

Helping Students Discover Their Calling **Theological Foundations for Strengths-Based Advising**

1. Our view of the individual:

We are people of infinite value and dignity.

- bearers of the image of God. (Gen. 1)
- fearfully and wonderfully made. (Ps. 139)
- God's work of art, a masterpiece. (Eph. 2:10)
- created for a purpose.

2. Our perspective on advising:

As we advise, we are

- looking to the interests of others. Phil. 2:4
- recognizing and appreciating differences in the body of Christ. Rom 12:4-5
- desiring to nurture our students' specific gifts and goals.
- encouraging development and application of their particular strengths.
- being a source of grace in their lives.
- helping them listen to their lives to discern their calling.
- expressing our wisdom, love, hospitality, conviction, humility.

Simon, C. et al (2003). *Mentoring for mission*. Eerdmans.

3. Our perspective on strengths:

- God creates with intelligent design and intention. He lovingly created us with a variety of strengths and abilities. These gifts are part of what will enable us to understand the purpose of our lives.
- Our Creator continuously works in our lives to form us into the persons we are intended to be. Understanding ourselves and developing our strengths is a lifelong endeavor.
- Our greatest joy and most meaningful life is experienced when we are doing what God has intended for us to do, becoming the persons He created us to be, and fulfilling the purposes He created us to accomplish.
- The process of knowing and doing God's will is not usually automatic, immediate, or easy. It requires listening carefully to our lives, surrendering our wills and the expectations of others, learning to hear and sense God's guidance with obedience to follow God's direction, exercising faith and courage when the future and the process are uncertain and unclear.

Anderson, E. C. & McDowell, S. (2001). *Towards a Theology of Strengths*. Paper presented at the National Conference on Identifying and Developing Students' Strengths, Eastern College.