

CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

The Question That Started It All

Hybel's big question: "What is it that motivates people to work where they work, volunteer their time to the groups they serve, and donate money to the causes they support?" Or more simply put: "**Why do people do what they do?**" "In a given year it's estimated that American adults volunteer roughly 20 billion hours of their time. Why?"

Moses' Underlying Motivation

"I finally figured out the underlying motivation that fueled Moses' primary achievement in life - leading his people out of captivity and into the promised land."

Hybels tells the story of Moses in Exodus 2. Moses sees an Egyptian beating up a fellow Hebrew. "He just can't bear the terrible sights ... and suddenly, something inside him snaps." He grabs the Egyptian and fights with him to the death. "No doubt horrified by his capacity for violence, Moses buried the Egyptian in the sand and ran away."

The next day Moses saw two Hebrews fighting with each other. "It was obvious to Moses that his people were imploding. ... The appalling abuse and oppression and exploitation they had suffered under Egyptian rule had escalated to the level of total insanity ... *'That's it!'* he must have cried. *'I've absolutely had it! I just can't stand this anymore!'*"

Hybels relates this to Moses' burning bush experience. He thought as a kid that the sight of the bush must have scared Moses into obedience. Now he believes that "the burning bush was simply an attention-grabber to get Moses to slow down long enough" to hear that God cares about the same things Moses cared about. He saw the suffering of the Hebrews, too. And he wanted Moses to help him do something about it! "In your raw emotion," Hybels writes of God to Moses, "I see a man with tremendous capacity for activism - a man who refuses to stand by idly while his people are being so dreadfully mistreated. Your frustration can forge leadership mettle and fortitude in you, Moses, if you will let it."

That's All I Can Stand!

Hybels talks about Popeye - when the cartoon character got fed up with what was happening, he would yell "That's all I can stand, and I can't stand no more," down a can of spinach, and make things right in the world again.

"I believe the motivating reason why millions of people choose to do good in the

world around them is because there is something *wrong* in the world. In fact, there is something so wrong that they just can't *stand* it. ... As a result, they devote their vocational lives, their volunteer energies, and their hard-earned money to making sure it gets fixed."

What Puts the "Holy" in Holy Discontent

"Still today, what wrecks the heart of someone who loves God is often the very thing God wants to use to fire them up to do something that, under normal circumstances, they would never attempt to do. Whether you're a high-powered marketplace person, a stay-at-home mom, a full-time student, or something all together different, you ... can join God in making what is wrong in this world right! And it all starts with you finding your holy discontent; it begins with you determining what it is that you just can't stand."

There is plenty wrong with the world today. Even the Bible acknowledges that. If you look at everything that's wrong and don't see it from heaven's perspective, you'll get sucked into "and impossible, downward spiral of aggravation and anger." Instead of moving to positive action, you'll see the bleakness and simply become depressed.

But once you see the problems through your holy discontent - your "spiritual connection to the God who's working to fix everything - it's as if an enormous wave of positive energy gets released inside of you." You're driven to do something, in God's power, about the things that are wrong in the world. Hybels calls this view a "restoration perspective."

People who live from the energy of their holy discontent remember that *people* are the ones being restored. "You can't genuinely align yourself with God's priorities and then traipse around destroying the crown of his creation, his people. The God I know cares deeply about people, so if your area of dissatisfaction doesn't also reflect an abiding concern for the protection and development of *all* people, then your frustrated ranting and raving is probably more of a glorified gripe session than the by-product of a God-given holy discontent."

Finally, what about being content? We're supposed to be content regarding how much money we have, our circumstances, etc. But contentedness lived out in isolation can be lethal! The needs of the world should elicit a deep discontent inside of us when we see them going unmet.