

A
Passionate
LIFE

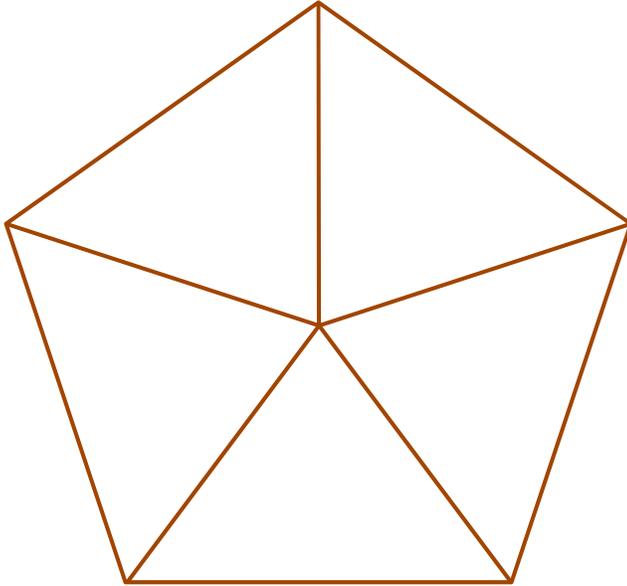
Devotional Guide
Week 5
Improving My Serve

A Passionate Life

DVD Notes

Your life is a _____ that tells God's story.

God has _____ You to serve.



My Spiritual Gift defines _____ more than what I do.

My Heart (Passion) are the things I care _____ about.

My Abilities are things God has made me _____ at doing.

My Personal Style is how I work with _____.

My Experiences impact my confidence and courage.

When I understand _____, I can understand better what God wants me _____.

Day 1 – Getting Into S.H.A.P.E.

I never realized that I wasn't particularly good at racquet sports until the day my PE Teacher had us pick up a badminton racquet. The concept seemed simple enough to me, and I've always been a pretty athletic kind of guy. Take the racquet and hit the shuttlecock over the net. What could be so difficult about that?

That turned out to be a great question. It took days of practice to be reasonably confident that the shuttlecock would go over the net. Tennis wasn't much better. I thought racquetball was actually going pretty well until I started playing with a friend who really knew how to play the game. When his serves were coming about an inch off the floor I realized that there may be some significant gaps in my skill level.

I never did get very good at racquet sports. You could speculate that I didn't have the talent necessary to develop the skills. You could certainly say that I lacked the interest to really get very good. If I had been willing to put in the time to develop my skills, I would probably have been pretty good. Alas, my badminton career never really got off the ground (insert charity laugh here.)

Just about anything we do in life takes some special mixture of interest, luck, divine gifting, and practice. Whether you're serving a tennis ball, or serving a five-course meal, a little bit of all of these things go into it. The biggest difference between people who give something a try once or twice before moving on and those who go pro is usually found not in the gifting and natural talent or luck, but in lots and lots of practice.

In this week's session, we're going to talk about improving your serve. Not your tennis serve, but your life serve. Just like everyone else, God has given you a unique set of passions, abilities, perspectives and experiences that He gave you to use in serving others. And just like most things in our lives, the more I understand and develop who God has made me to be, the deeper my passion will grow and the more significant my impact will be.

You Are the Book

We started this journey together by looking at what Jesus taught about the kingdom of God and how to live in it. Most of that time we've looked almost exclusively to the Bible as our primary source of information. This week we will continue to do that, but we're going to add another source of information; you. That's right, we're going to study you!

No, I'm not being cheeky. I'm actually following what God has explicitly told us in scripture. In the midst of his troubles, Job recognizes an important fact about God.

Read Job 10:8:

If God took the time to mold and shape you, what does that say about me?

You are a story of God's love and grace. Yes, you have a story, but more importantly, you are a story. Your personality, your experiences, your interests all originated from God's instigation. That means we can learn things about God and what His thoughts and plans are for you by looking at what He's already done in you.

Your hands shaped me and made me. Job 10:8

Yes, sin has done a nasty job of tangling that up in us. That's why we check everything from the more objective source of scripture. But if we fail to look at the other sources of information about God and what He's up to, we can miss a great deal of God's actions in the world.

The author Ellen White wrote:

As divine truth is revealed in Holy Writ, so it is reflected, as from a mirror, in the face of nature; and through His creation we become acquainted with the Creator. – Ellen White, The Signs of the Times

Since you and I are a part of that natural world, God's fingerprints can be traced in your life as well. That means that along the way, I'll give you a number of different questionnaires to fill out about yourself. They will help you look at who God has created you to be and the work He's been doing in your life.

Not Another Test

For several years, I taught a regular class on much of the material you'll be experiencing this week. I had one church member that I could never get to sign up for the class. Finally, I asked him directly why he refused to

sign up. He said, “You’re going to make me take a bunch of surveys and stuff. I hate those things!”

Over the years I’ve discovered he’s not alone. Quite a few people, it seems, have their reasons for why they don’t want to fill out what we often call a personal “Inventory.” Here are the top five I’ve heard. Maybe you’ve got one of these playing in your mind already.

These things are never accurate

This one is actually true, up to a point. Personal inventories of any kind depend on you answering a series of questions *to the best of your ability*. They are based on observation by the person with the best source of information on you, and that’s you. But you are also incredibly close to the subject, and that can make it hard to be objective.

If you don’t think the results are that accurate, that’s OK. Its only one viewpoint on your life. There may be another one that will resonate with you better. I have taken dozens of these things and found that all of them have their strengths and weaknesses. When I decide to have fun with them take the information I get for what it’s worth, they are a lot more enjoyable.

The questions they ask are confusing

This is also true, and there’s a reason for it. Most personal inventories ask questions that require you to differentiate. They take two things, put them side by side, and ask you to choose between them. Another way surveys differentiate is by using a scale to rank your opinion on. It can be very frustrating to have to choose between two things you like or to try and figure out how strongly you feel about one thing or another.

If you are one of those people that hates being forced into these kinds of choices, remember there is no pass or fail on these inventories. You can’t get it wrong. In fact, if you’re willing to, “lean into it” a bit and just go for it, the results usually come out much clearer. If you pick the middle answer on everything, you won’t learn much about yourself. Instead of overthinking each question, take your first gut reaction. It is usually more accurate than your second thoughts.

I don’t like being put in a box

Steve Martin used to do a comedy bit he called, “The Non-Conformists Oath.” He would have the crowd repeat several statements after him. The last one was always, “I promise not to repeat things other people say.” The crowd would usually get it somewhere in the middle of that

line. If you're a bit of a non-conformist, you might not like being defined into some category or another. I don't blame you.

If you'll give this experience a chance, I think you'll discover that by learning about the way God has shaped me, you can actually be set free to deal with the expectations of others and myself.

I took a spiritual gifts test once and it didn't help

In 1 Corinthians 12:1 Paul wrote, "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I don't want you to be ignorant." We're going to try and heed that counsel, but there's been a lot of ignorance on this topic in churches. Most of the problem seems to be that we've been asking the wrong questions. We've treated all the passages on Spiritual gifts as fragments of a conglomerated job posting

I hope the next few days will help clear up some of the confusion and ignorance we have encountered on the subject of spiritual gifts in the Bible. I think we have more to learn, but the material you'll encounter really helped me move beyond the frustration that often comes with spiritual gifts tests.

What previous experiences have you had with taking spiritual gifts inventories?

You're just trying to get me to do something for the church

You got me! Its true. That's exactly why I hope you'll discover where God has designed you to serve. But there's a lot more at stake than trying to figure out how to fill out a ministry list. God wants you involved in ministry in His church. If you're a follower, you serve. Everyone who is actively living a Kingdom of God life is serving.

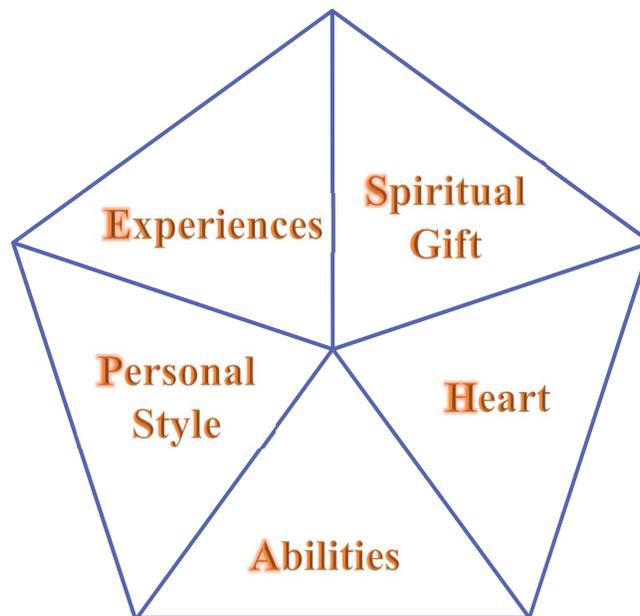
But if you're not serving, it means there is a piece missing in God's plan for reaching this community. If you're not contributing to the team, the team is missing a part of what it needs. You probably know this already, but you have plenty to do without adding church responsibilities to your plate. What you may not know is what you get out of being involved in using your gifts within God's family.

A Passionate Life

In their book, *A Passionate Life*, Breen and Kallistad write, “God has abundant grace to pour out on us, but we have to stand where the downpour is.” It is through my gifting that the experience of God’s grace becomes real in my life. I think that’s why both Peter and Paul called them the graces. When Peter says each one of us has been given a gift, the Greek word there is literally translated “grace.” There’s something about how God has made me that is central to my experience of both receiving and of giving grace in my life.

The Shape of Things

The story of God’s grace comes through the intersection of five different aspects of my life. We’ll call it your SHAPE and we’ll use a pentagon as the shape to remember it by. My SHAPE is made up of my Spiritual gift, my Heart (what I’m passionate about), my Abilities, my Personal Style, and my Experiences.



What Paul and the rest of scripture tells us about “spiritual gifts” encompasses all these areas. Taken together, they reveal the unique fit I have in the body of Christ. Much of the confusion over spiritual gifts in the church has come from mixing up all these things under the heading Spiritual Gift.

Spiritual Gifts

We'll discover that what Paul meant when he talked about my Spiritual Gift focuses on the how he has wired me to look at the world. Its more about who I am than about what I'll do. Remember the semi-circle? You and I are human beings, not human doings. If our approach to spiritual gifts is primarily about getting you to do something, there's a problem.

Heart

There are things you care about more deeply than others. The things you aren't as passionate about may still be good things. You just don't have the drive to engage with them as much as something else. You were made that way.

Abilities

You have certain talents and abilities. Some you seemed to be born with, and others you've developed over time. Your capacity to do that was given to you by God and the fact that you can do some things really well, while others have other abilities and talents means your abilities are also a part of who God has made you to be.

Personal Style

The way you interact with people also plays a vital role in the SHAPE God has given you. We've already looked at how being an introvert or an extrovert affects how we rest. That factor, and others will also affect how we serve.

Experiences

Knowing what you know about the learning circle, this one shouldn't surprise you. Since God can take even the negative experiences of our lives and turn them into positive outcomes, our experiences become a vital part of who we are becoming.

Are you ready to crack open the book that is your life? Just remember that inside those pages, you are going to discover an amazing story of grace.

Ponder This

What sometimes makes you hesitant to respond to God's call to a particular ministry?

What does "Standing right under buckets of God's grace" mean to you?

Day 2 – Bringing things Into Focus

My first church was a small group of enthusiastic people who really loved their church. It was a nearly new church plant that was trying to figure out how to accomplish the mission of reaching out to young adults. One of the significant problems they were facing is that 95% of the church members were over 50. There was one other person under the age of 30 when we started.

The other problem was that the church had become used to acting like a small group. Everybody did everything together and there were a couple of people, just because they were a little pushy at times, took care of business. I thought the best thing we could do would be to learn more about Spiritual Gifts.

It was the first afternoon of our seminar and we made it all the way to completing the Spiritual Gifts inventory that you'll be filling out tomorrow. As people began to get their results, it was obvious that one of the women wasn't liking what she saw. She was the matriarch of our little group and a woman of forceful opinions.

As we went around the circle sharing what we'd discovered, we inched closer and closer to Rose. Finally, it was her turn. "Well, I'm supposed to

be a prophet or perceiver, whatever that is. But I think this test is wrong. I don't want to be a prophet." It was hard for those of us who knew what the motivation of perceiver really meant not to laugh. Rose was thinking in terms of the job she would have to do, while the test was measuring qualities of how she related to life. We could all see instantly that she was a perceiver, but she couldn't.

Setting the Record straight

There has been much confusion over spiritual gifts in the church. What do these things mean and what am I supposed to do with them? Many of the concerns we looked at yesterday grow out of the confusion that people have experienced in dealing with Spiritual Gifts.

Confusion over spiritual gifts is nothing new. Believers in Corinth apparently had quite a bit of confusion in Paul's day. He starts out 1 Corinthians 12 by identifying some ignorance on the topic. Then he goes on to offer a three part division in what often gets lumped together under the title Spiritual Gifts.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-6:

What are the three categories Paul uses to explain Spiritual Gifts?

I think it's more than coincidence that there are 3 different places where Paul teaches directly about spiritual gifts. In fact, even the language he uses in different places matches to language he uses in each one of these three categories.

Paul says, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit." In Romans 12:6 Paul writes, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." In both places Paul uses the Greek word, "Charis" which means "grace."

Next he says, "There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord." In Ephesians 4:12 he writes that the gifts he has just listed in verse 11 are given, "to prepare God's people for works of service." In both places he uses the Greek word, "Diakonia" which means "Service."

And last he says, there are different kinds of workings, but the same God...” He goes on in 1 Corinthians 12:7 to list these workings of the Spirit. In verse 11 he makes a point that all of these are the work of the same Spirit. The word he uses in both places is the Greek word “Energema” which means “output or product.”

In the chart below, fill in what you’ve just learned. It may help to summarize the information.

| | Romans 12:4-6 | Ephesians 4:11-12 | 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Greek Word | | | |
| English translation | | | |

Paul has a three-part division in his teaching about spiritual gifts and there is a very good reason for it. Not all the gifts that Paul talks about are given to individuals. Take, for example, the list in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

The gifts that Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 are pretty exciting. They all share a common element. When you see any one of them in action, you’ll probably say, “Wow, you don’t see that every day.” When someone is healed from illness and we don’t know how it happened, we call it a miracle. Sometimes they are so supernatural they even make some people uncomfortable.

They make other people Christian superstars. Some preachers who do faith healings take the idea that they have been given the gift of healings and turn that into massive rallies where they make millions in donations. There’s one big problem. Paul clearly indicates that these are not the gifts that Peter talked about each person receiving.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:24-25:

Who is Paul focusing on when he talks about the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12?

When the Holy Spirit moves in miraculous ways, the most important thing to remember is that it is the Holy Spirit who should get the credit. Faith healers and those who make a sign of speaking in tongues misunderstand this passage. These gifts aren't given to individual believers as something some people can do and not others. These gifts are things the Holy Spirit does through whomever He chooses and whenever it is needed. The focus of these gifts is on convincing the world that God is real.

So all the phenomenal workings of the Holy Spirit are gifts to the world that come through our lives, but they aren't my spiritual gift. What about the second category Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 12:5; "There are different kinds of service..."

In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul lists five gifts and gives the purpose these gifts are intended for.

In Ephesians 4:12, what does Paul say these gifts are supposed to do?

In this gift list, Paul is primarily concerned with how the church functions together to accomplish the tasks that God needs done. He lists five roles that have a specific objective. These are roles God has given the church tasked with helping everyone in the church discover their SHAPE and serve from their own unique role.

When I meet people who aren't really involved in church, I have a lot of fun listening to them introduce me to their friends and family. They inevitably get hung up on what they should call me. They know I'm not a priest, so "Father" doesn't sound quite right. Sometimes they'll settle on Preacher, or Reverend. Many times, I end up with the title Minister. Usually I'll rescue them after a few moments and let them know they can call me whatever they like as long as they don't call me late for dinner!

What should my title be in light of what Paul writes here? "Minister" is an accurate title, but leads to confusion because of what people are not saying, rather than by what they are saying. Paul clearly intends that all people in God's family will be ministers. Everybody is supposed to

minister God's grace to others. My specific role is actually that of Pastor-Teacher. As a pastor, I'm an equipper. As a member, we're all ministers.

That means these aren't individual gifts either. These are definitely gifts, but the recipient of the gift is actually the Church as a whole, not the individual believer. In fact, Paul is saying in Ephesians that you are a gift to the church. The role you play is a gift that blesses others in a unique way. This is also from God, but it's not your personal Spiritual gift.

That leaves the Gift list in Romans 12:4-6. In the book of Romans, Paul is teaching the believers in Rome about grace and the law. He makes a strong case for the idea that it is an act of grace that saves us and not the keeping of the law. Romans 12 is where Paul starts moving into personal application. "Therefore," Paul says, "Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice..." Since you have been saved by this incredible grace, stop trying to prove you are better than others. Instead, live a sacrificial life of service. Take who God made you to be and offer that to God by serving others with your life.

This is where the gifts Paul talks about in Romans 12 come in.

Read Romans 12:6-8:

Who is Paul focused on when he lists the gifts in this passage?

If Paul is trying to describe how each one of us should be living our lives in relationship to others, his focus is very much on the individual. This list of gifts is focused in on who I am as a person. How will my life impact the rest of the body of Christ because of who God has made me to be? They describe the different unique view points that various believers have within the body.

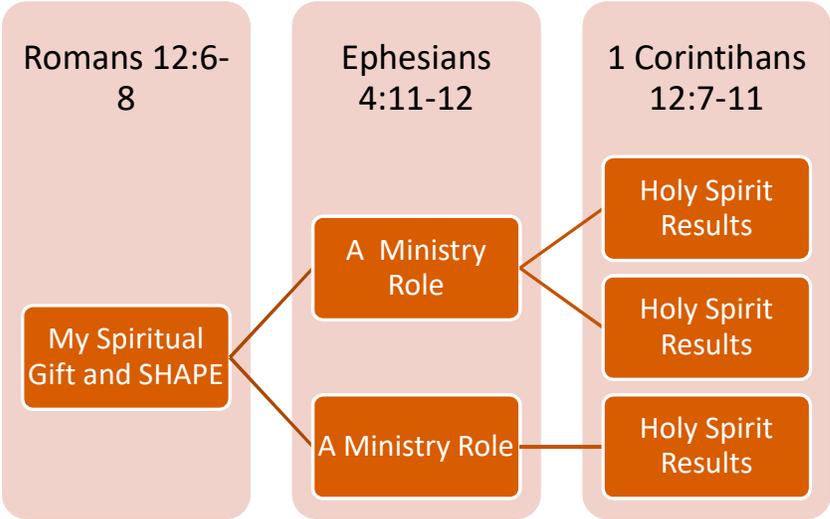
Let's look at the chart one more time and add in the two new pieces of information you just discovered.

| | Romans 12:4-6 | Ephesians 4:11-12 | 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Greek Word | | | |
| English translation | | | |
| Focal point | | | |

What we really need when we're looking at Paul's teaching on Spiritual gifts are a pair of tri-focal lenses. The furthest point of focus is in 1 Corinthians 12 where Paul is focused on what the world will see as the Holy Spirit works in His people. The middle point of focus is on the church and the various roles it needs to function. The nearest point of focus is in Romans 12 where Paul is focused directly on who I am as an individual.

Pulling it together

Let's step back and look at everything together. The following chart might help put everything into context.



God has given each one of us a Spiritual Gift. It colors the way I look at the world and molds how I relate to different situations. My gifting is who God has made me to be. Because living in His Kingdom is a life of

servant leadership, I have a vital role to play in what God is doing. In fact, I will likely operate in more than one role, or ministry, over time. Some of you already do more than one ministry at the same time. My ministry is what God has me doing at any given point. And when I am expressing who I am because of the Holy Spirit through a role the Holy Spirit has called me to fill, the Holy Spirit will produce results that glorify God. People will stand back and say, “Wow. You don’t see that every day.”

Ponder This

How is this approach to Spiritual Gifts different than what you’ve heard before? How is it the same?

Have you ever experienced a miracle? If so, how did it affect you? If not, would you like to?

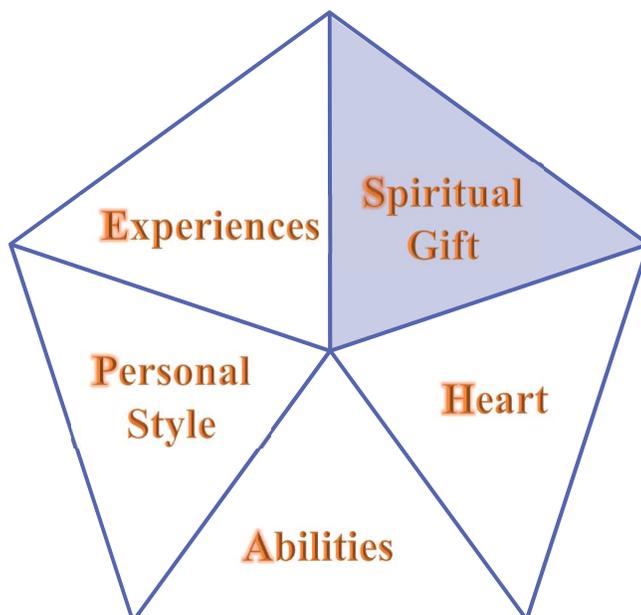
Day 3 – My Spiritual Gift

You have a gift. Perhaps you've been fortunate enough to hear someone say that to you at a significant point in your life. During college, a friend and I were in the performance hall of Walla Walla University. It was empty and we were taking advantage of the space to work on a song I'd been writing to sing at my wedding. I had the lyrics and she was helping me with the music. Unbeknownst to us, the choral director for the University had slipped in. When we stopped for a moment, she interrupted us, and in her typically forceful way said, "Why aren't you in Cantori!?" (The elite choral group at the University).

I stuttered out some excuse about not having enough time (which was mostly true.) But hearing someone who recognizes vocal talent express her appreciation, even in that rather backhanded way, was affirming. I already knew I loved to sing and I'd had many people tell me they appreciated my singing, but that felt really good!

You Have a Gift

You have a gift. And if you've never had anyone tell you that before, then let me make sure you don't go one second longer without hearing that you are someone special and unique. You have a gift. I can say that because someone who knows you far more intimately than I ever will said so.



Read 1 Peter 4:10:

Who has received a gift? What are these gifts and expression of?

Just pause for a moment right now and say this out loud to yourself. Say, "I have been given a gift. I am gifted." My friend, you are a personal recipient of grace; not just the universal grace that flows through life, not even just the salvation grace that reconnects you with the Life-giver, but of a personal grace that is completely unique to you.

You are the only you that has lived or ever will live in this world. When you consider the statistics of that statement, that makes you an exceedingly rare treasure. You are absolutely one of a kind. No one else will be you. And if God took the time to create that level of infinite diversity, I think we can safely say that He wants you to be the best you that you can be. There aren't any others out there. That is incredible news is it not? But do you believe that it is true?

Here's an easy way to tell how deep the truth of your unique identity has penetrated your soul. Think about your day to day life for a moment. As you think about what you do and don't do, what you have and don't have, how many times does the word, "should," crop up. "I really should..." or "I know I shouldn't, but..." Most of the "shoulds" in our lives are moments where we're attempting to live off of God's script for someone else instead of from the gifting He has given us.

God doesn't expect you to be someone you are not. If He went to all that trouble to make you the only one like you out of billions and He has a purpose for each one of us, He really doesn't need you trying to be somebody else. Your Spiritual Gift is the foundation that God builds the rest of your unique SHAPE on. It's the glasses you view the world through.

Identifying Your Gifting

It's time to discover the gift God has given you.

Turn to the Spiritual Gifts Inventory on page 31 and follow the instructions. Once you have completed it, write down your primary and secondary gifting below.

Primary Gift: _____

Secondary Gift: _____

Before you go further, how do you feel about what you've discovered? Were the results as you expected or were they a surprise?

When I first took this inventory, I said, "Now that makes sense." You already know that Rose from the previous story didn't feel that way at all. Let's take some time and dig in a bit more to what each of these seven gifts are really talking about. Even though it is tempting to just look at your gifts, I would encourage you to learn about all the gifts. You'll be amazed at how much more patient with others you can be when you know a bit more about why they act the way they do.

We'll talk about each of the seven in the same order Paul mentions them in Romans 12:4-6. I'll give you some basic characteristics and some Biblical examples of people who demonstrated that gifting. I'll also give you some of the problem areas that people with each gift may struggle with. Sin is a parasite. It attaches itself to good things God has placed in our lives and begins to twist and pervert them. That means even my weaknesses can point me toward God's work in my life as well as showing me areas I can expect some future Kairos moments in.

I'll also share with you a basic need for each gifting. That basic need is a crucial aspect of maintaining healthy expressions of my gift as well as the key to healing some of the problem areas I may discover. Remember, my gifting is a description of why I do the things I do, not a listing of tasks. They are essentially motivations that drive us and lenses we filter the world through.

As you read through the following gift descriptions, circle things that surprise you, impact you powerfully, or raise questions in your mind

My Motivation

Perceivers (Prophets)

Your Bible probably calls this one “prophesying.” The name “Perceiver” helps in untangling the difference between a motivation and a role.

Characteristics:

- Need to express themselves
- Form quick impressions of people
- Are alert to dishonesty
- Have a strong desire for justice
- Are open about their own faults
- Participate wholeheartedly
- Are loyal to truth rather than people
- Are willing to suffer for what is right
- Are persuasive in defining truth

Potential Problems

- May expose without restoring
- May jump to conclusions
- May react harshly to sinners
- May be unforgiving at times
- May condemn themselves
- May be impetuous
- May cut off people who fail
- May lack tactfulness in rebuke
- May dwell on the negative

Basic Need

The most basic need of a perceiver is to maintain a clear conscience. This allows them to speak the truth boldly when necessary instead of holding back.

Biblical Perceivers

- John the Baptist (Luke 3:2-20, 7:18-29)
- Ananias (Acts 9:10-17, 22:12-16)
- Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1-52)

Servers

Servers are those faithful souls behind the scenes who make everything happen and don't often get much credit. They are attracted to roles where they can meet tangible needs.

Basic Characteristics

- Likes freeing others to achieve
- Disregard their weariness
- Have difficulty saying "NO"
- Are alert to likes and dislikes
- Need approval
- Like short range projects
- Puts extra touches to jobs
- Meets needs quickly

Potential Problems

- May give unsolicited help
- May let helping others be too important
- May work beyond physical limits
- May neglect God-given priorities
- May get angry when others overlook needs
- May resent not being appreciated
- May be frustrated by time limits
- May interfere with God's discipline

Basic Need

Servers need to practice time management. Their attention to the needs of others can cause them to forget personal priorities and give up time needed for other things.

Biblical Servers

- Martha (John 11:1-40)
- Stephen (Acts 6:1-15, 7:1-60)
- Jacob (Genesis 25-30)

Teachers

Teachers are the thinkers and researchers among us. They dig deep into subjects and look for facts and evidence.

Basic Characteristics

- Need to validate information
- Check out other teachers for truth
- Rely on established resources
- Present truth systematically
- Gather many facts
- Require thoroughness
- Are uneasy with subjective truth
- Are loyal to accepted authorities
- Clarify misunderstandings

Potential Problems

- May become proud of knowledge
- May despise lack of credentials
- May depend on human reasoning
- May edge out faith with reason
- May put their mind above the Spirit
- May not see practical applications
- May show off research skills
- May argue over minor points
- May take teachings to extremes

Basic Need

Teachers need to practice time in God's presence. Relying too much on head knowledge can deaden the heart to hearing God's voice.

Biblical Teachers

- Luke (Luke and Acts)
- Thomas (John 20:24-28)
- Aquilla and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-3,24-28)

Exhorters (Encouragers)

Exhorters are those who understand how to get from here to there. They appreciate the journey and will make you feel better just being around them..

Basic Characteristics

- Are committed to spiritual growth
- Are able to see root problems
- Can see steps of action
- Raise hope for solutions
- Turn problems into benefits
- Desire to be “transparent”
- Gain insight through experience
- Have an urgency to act on clear steps
- Desire to share face to face

Potential Problems

- May keep others waiting for them
- May look to themselves for solutions
- May be proud of visible results
- May start projects prematurely
- May treat others as “projects”
- May use others’ problems as illustrations
- May present truth out of balance
- May set unrealistic goals
- May give up on uncooperative people

Basic Need

Exhorters need to be in touch with God’s plan on a regular basis. It keeps them from heading their own direction and forgetting that God is in charge.

Biblical Exhorters

- Barnabus (Acts 4:36, 11:22-26)
- Titus - (2 Cor 8:6-23, 12:18)
- Aaron - (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers)

Givers

Givers see potential in things others see as waste. They enjoy knowing they were a part of making big projects become a reality.

Basic Characteristics

- Are able to see resources
- Invest themselves with their gifts
- Desire to give high quality gifts
- Hope their gift answers prayers
- Desire to give secretly
- Are concerned that their giving will corrupt
- Exercise personal thriftiness
- Use their gifts to multiply giving
- Confirm amount to give with counsel

Potential Problems

- May hoard resources for self
- May use gifts to control people
- May force others toward a higher living standard
- May feel guilty about personal assets
- May reject pressure appeals too quickly
- May give too sparingly to family
- May give to projects rather than people
- May cause people to look to them rather than God
- May wait too long to give

Basic Need

Givers need to practice ownership because it gives them freedom to respond to God's direction

Biblical Givers

- Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42)
- Cornelius (Acts 10:1-31)
- Solomon (1 Kings 1-11)

Administrators

These are the organizers of the bunch. They see the big picture and know how to get everyone excited to accomplish a goal.

Basic Characteristics

- Are able to visualize final results
- Need loyalty in associates
- Have the ability to delegate
- Can withstand negative reactions to tasks
- Can make jobs look easy
- Are very alert to details
- Can complete tasks quickly
- Are able to be decisive
- See cleanup as a part of the project

Potential Problems

- May see people only as resources
- May build loyalty with favoritism
- May use delegation to avoid work
- May be unresponsive to constructive criticism
- May put projects ahead of people
- May overlook a worker's more serious faults
- May fail to explain things or praise others

Basic Need

If you are an Administrator, you may not like this basic need very much. Administrators need to have some difficulty or suffering in their lives. Without it, they become insensitive to the struggles of others.

Biblical Administrators

- Nehemiah - (Nehemiah 1-7)
- Joseph (Genesis 30-40)
- Deborah (Judges 4-5)

Compassion People

As the name suggests, these are the warm hearts of the church. Where there is hurting and struggle, there is a compassion person there to give a hug and sit a spell.

Basic Characteristics

- Are deeply committed to friends
- Have a need for deep friendships
- Can empathize with hurting people
- Make decisions based on who and what will cause the least hurt
- Are deeply sensitive to loved ones
- Attract people in distress
- Desire to remove hurts
- Measure acceptance by closeness
- Are attracted to Perceivers

Potential Problems

- May take up battles not their own
- May become possessive
- May tolerate evil too long
- May fail to be firm
- May lean on emotion more than reason
- May mislead the opposite sex
- May become bitter toward God due to the suffering He allows
- May fail to show deference to others' needs
- May cut off insensitive people

Basic Need

Compassion people need to maintain moral freedom. That means maintain healthy emotional and physical boundaries. Moral freedom allows Compassion people to draw close to those who are hurting without developing improper relationships

Biblical Compassion People

- Ruth (Ruth)
- Joseph, Jesus Father (Luke 2:4-51)

Parable of the Potluck

Isn't it amazing how much diversity there can be in just seven spiritual gifts? And we haven't even talked about our Heart, Abilities, Personal Style, and Experiences. God takes each of these perspectives on the

world and weaves them together in an incredible dance of unity when we are willing to listen to Him.

Each of these gifts is more about how I respond to things around me than it is about a task I am going to do. It can be easy to confuse the two, as my wife's motivation demonstrates. My wife's spiritual gifting is Teacher. She also happens to have the role of teaching an Adult Sabbath School and she is also a teacher by profession. So is she a teacher because she has that spiritual gift? Not at all actually. There are many teachers who don't have the spiritual gift of teaching. In fact, if my wife had a job teaching 1st graders, she would hate it. Her motivation would actually get in the way.

Here's why. People with the motivation of teaching love to think and research. They like to wrestle with hard concepts and embrace theories and ideas. 1st grade teachers wipe a lot of noses and spend a great deal of time explaining basic ideas over and over. Their greatest qualifications are patience and compassion. So most effective younger grade teachers are actually gifted as compassion people. My wife teaches the older grades because they can actually think intelligently.

Here's a little parable about one event that shows the interaction between all seven different Motivations. Once upon a time, seven friends got together for a haystack potluck. As it happens, each one of them had a different motivational gift. They had each contributed what was needed for excellent haystacks (including Fritos and vege-chili if I'm not mistaken). The table was set and almost all the food set out.

Five of the friends were chatting as they waited for the final preparations to be completed. You can guess who was in the kitchen finishing things up. Ms. Server was putting the last few items into serving dishes and Ms. Compassion Person was with her because she felt bad that no one else was helping Ms. Server out.

Finally everything was ready and the two ladies carried the serving dishes toward the table. Unfortunately, Ms. Server did not notice an extension cord that was strung across her path. Her foot caught the cord and down she went, sending lettuce everywhere. A collective gasp went up from the group and then everyone exploded into action.

Ms. Compassion person dropped the food she was carrying to see if Ms. Server was alright. As soon as it was obvious that the only thing Ms. Server had damaged was her pride, Ms. Exhorter told her not to worry

about a thing. “These kinds of things can happen to anybody.” She said. “And besides, I never really liked lettuce on my haystacks anyway. “

Ms. Administrator immediately pointed out that there was a mess to clean up and asked Ms Giver to see if any of the lettuce was salvageable. She told Ms teacher to find a broom and Ms. Perceiver to see if there were more serving dishes in the kitchen. Ms Perceiver didn’t hear Ms Administrator because she was busy pointing out that nobody should have put that cord there in the first place. It was an obvious tripping hazard.

Ms. Teacher did hear Ms Administrator, but decided against getting a broom and went for a vacuum instead because it would work better to clean up the mess. Ms. Giver had already decided that someone should run out to the store to get some fresh lettuce and convinced Ms. Compassion Person to come with her under the pretense that she wanted company when in fact she could see that Ms. Server would much prefer to have just a little bit of space at that moment.

In short order, new lettuce was procured, the old cleaned up and the cord removed to prevent future disasters from occurring. All seven friends sat down and finally got to enjoy their haystacks.

Different motivational gifts naturally see different things and respond in their own unique way. When I understand my Spiritual Gift, I am better equipped to approach any activity or ministry in the church from my own unique perspective. When we bring all of them to the table, it becomes a feast of unity.

Find your Gifting on the chart below. How have you been involved in meeting those needs within the body in the past? How might you be even more effective in meeting those needs in the future?

How My Gifts Fit in Ministry

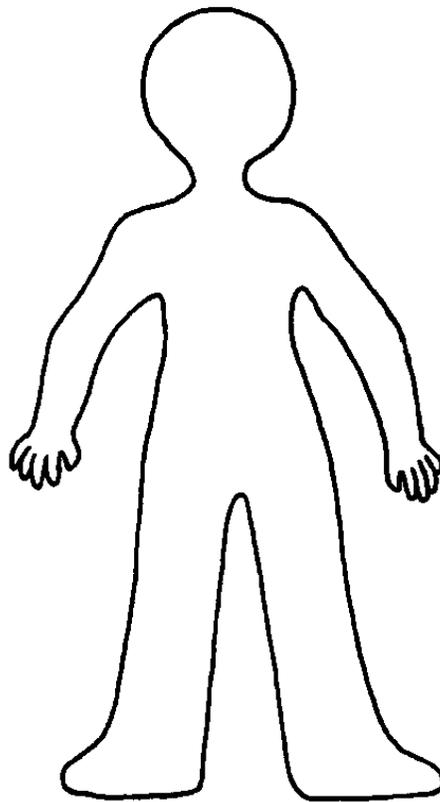
Different Spiritual Gifts meet different needs in the body

| Gift | Definition | Needs Met | What it Does |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Perceiver | Declares the will of God | Spiritual | Keeps us centered on spiritual principles |
| Server | Renders practical service | Practical | Keeps the work of ministry moving |
| Teacher | Researches and teaches the Bible | Mental | Keeps us studying & learning |
| Exhorter | Encourages personal progress | Psychological | Keeps us applying spiritual truths |
| Giver | Shares material assistance | Material | Keeps specific needs provided for |
| Administrator | Gives leadership & direction | Functional | Keeps us organized and increases our vision |
| Compassion | Provides personal & emotional support | Emotional | Keeps us in right attitudes & relationship |

A Passionate Life

Ponder this

If each of the seven Motivational gifts were a body part, where would they be located. Draw in your answers on the body below?



Spiritual Gifts Inventory

Instructions:

1. Read each statement and circle the response that most accurately describes you to the right.
2. Answer each line for both the Characteristics and the Problem areas of each gift.
3. Write the number you circled on each line in the far-right column labeled "Points"
4. When you have answered all the lines for each gift, add up the numbers in the "Points" column and write it in the "Total" box.
5. Complete these steps for each gift on the following pages until you reach the Scoring page

Sample:

| Perceiving: | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Mostly | Always | Points |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Characteristics: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Quickly and accurately identify good and evil and hate evil? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Encourage repentance that produces good fruit? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Grieve deeply over the sins of others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Have strong opinions and convictions? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Have strict personal standards? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Have only a few or no close friendships? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Total | | | | | | | 16 |
| | | | | | | | |
| Problem Areas: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Tend to be judgmental and blunt? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Forget to praise partial progress due to goal consciousness? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Get pushy trying to move others to mature spiritually? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | | 7 |

| Perceiving: | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Mostly | Always | Points |
|---|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Characteristics: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Quickly and accurately identify good and evil and hate evil? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Encourage repentance that produces good fruit? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Grieve deeply over the sins of others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Have strong opinions and convictions? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Have strict personal standards? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Have only a few or no close friendships? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| See everything as either black or white; no gray or indefinite areas? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Believe that the acceptance of difficulties will produce repentance? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Speak frankly and not often mince words? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Desire to be obedient to God at all costs? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Problem Areas: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Tend to be judgmental and blunt? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Forget to praise partial progress due to goal consciousness? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Get pushy trying to move others to mature spiritually? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Become intolerant of opinions and views that differ from your own? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Struggle with self-image problems? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |

| Serving: | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Mostly | Always | Points |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Easily recognize practical needs and act quickly to meet them? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Stick with a project until it's completed? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Enjoy working on immediate goals rather than long-range goals? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Show love for others in deeds and actions more than words? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Prefer not to lead others or projects? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Prefer doing a job to delegating it? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Especially enjoy manual projects, jobs, and functions? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Keep everything in meticulous order? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Have a hard time saying no to requests for help? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Find your greatest joy in doing something that is helpful? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Serving Problem Areas: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Become critical of others who do not help out with obvious problems? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Neglect your own family's needs by being too busy helping others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Become pushy or interfering in your eagerness to help? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Find it hard to accept being served by others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Get hurt when unappreciated? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |

| Teaching: | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Mostly | Always | Points |
|---|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Present truth in a logical, systematic way? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Love to study and do research? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Get upset when scripture is used out of context? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Solve problems by starting with scriptural principles? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Have only a select circle of friends? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Check out the source of knowledge of others who teach? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Validate truth by checking out the facts? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Feel concerned that truth be established in every situation? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Emphasize facts and the accuracy of words? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Have strong convictions and opinions based on investigation of facts? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Teaching Problem Areas: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Tend to neglect the practical application of truth? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Hesitate to accept the viewpoints of others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Tend to develop pride in intellectual ability? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Tend to be legalistic and dogmatic? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Become easily sidetracked by new interests? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |

| Exhorting: | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Mostly | Always | Points |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Love to encourage others to live victoriously? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Prefer to apply truth rather than research it? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Focus on working with people? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Find truth in experience then validate it with scripture? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Need a "sounding board" for bouncing off ideas and thoughts? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| View trials as opportunities for personal growth? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Prefer systems of information that have practical application | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Love to prescribe precise steps of actions to aid personal growth? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Encourage others to develop in their personal ministries? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Desire to clear up problems with others quickly? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Exhorter Problem Areas: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Tend to interrupt others in your eagerness to give opinions or advice? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Use scripture out of context in order to make a point? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Become "cut and dried" in prescribing steps of action? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Become domineering in your opinion? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Become overly self-confident? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |

A Passionate Life

| Giving: | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Mostly | Always | Points |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Love to give without others knowing about it? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Intercede for needs and the salvation of souls? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Give to support and bless others or to advance a ministry? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Quickly volunteer to help when a need is seen? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Have natural and effective business ability? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| View hospitality as an opportunity to give? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Feel delighted when your gift is an answer to a specific prayer? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Want your gifts to be of high quality and craftsmanship? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Handle finances with wisdom and frugality? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Give only by the leading of the Holy Spirit? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Giver Problem Areas: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Try to control how contributions are used? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Tend to pressure others to give? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Upset family and friends with unpredictable patterns of giving? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Tend to spoil your own children or those of relatives? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Use financial giving to get out of other responsibilities? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |

| Administrating: | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Mostly | Always | Points |
|---|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Like to organize things for which you are responsible? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Assume responsibility if no specific leadership exists? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Especially enjoy working on long-range goals and projects? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Enjoy delegating tasks and supervising people? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Let others get the credit in order to get the job done? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Avoid or not enjoy doing routine tasks? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Prefer to be under authority in order to have authority? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Express ideas and organization in ways that communicate clearly? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Easily facilitate resources and people to accomplish tasks or goals? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Find your greatest fulfillment and joy in working to accomplish goals? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Administrator Problem Areas: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Become upset when others do not share the same vision or goals? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Develop outer callousness due to being a target for criticism? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Regress into "using" people to accomplish your own goals? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Tend to drive yourself and neglect personal and family needs? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Neglect routine home responsibilities due to intense interest in your "job" | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |

| Compassion: | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Mostly | Always | Points |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Have a tremendous capacity to show love? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Find yourself attracted to people who are hurting or in distress? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Avoid conflicts and confrontations? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Find you are ruled by the heart rather than the head? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Intercede for the hurts and problems of others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Take care with words and actions to avoid hurting others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Always look for the good in people? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Take action to remove hurts and relieve distress in others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Love opportunities to give preference or place to others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Love to do thoughtful things for others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Compassion Problem Areas: Do you... | | | | | | | |
| Tend to be indecisive? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Often take up another person's offense? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Become easily hurt by others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Empathize too much with the suffering of others? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Find the opposite sex often misinterpreting you caring nature for affection? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Total | | | | | | | |

SCORING

Instructions

1. Look back at the page for each gift and copy the total score for each gift's Characteristics to the table below on the left.
2. Do the same for each gift's Problem Areas to the table below on the right
3. Circle the High score in each table.

Please Note:

The high score in the Characteristics table is your Primary gift. The second highest score is your Secondary gift. If two scores are tied, look at the Problem Area scores for those gifts.

Whichever gift has the higher problem area score is your primary gift.

Characteristic scores and Problem area scores may not match. You may have a high score on a gifts characteristic score and a low score for its problem area score or vis versa.

Characteristics

| Scoring | Total |
|----------------------|-------|
| Perceiver | |
| Server | |
| Teacher | |
| Exhorter | |
| Giver | |
| Administrator | |
| Compassion Person | |

Problem Areas

| Scoring | Total |
|----------------------|-------|
| Perceiver | |
| Server | |
| Teacher | |
| Exhorter | |
| Giver | |
| Administrator | |
| Compassion Person | |

Day 4 – My Heart and Abilities

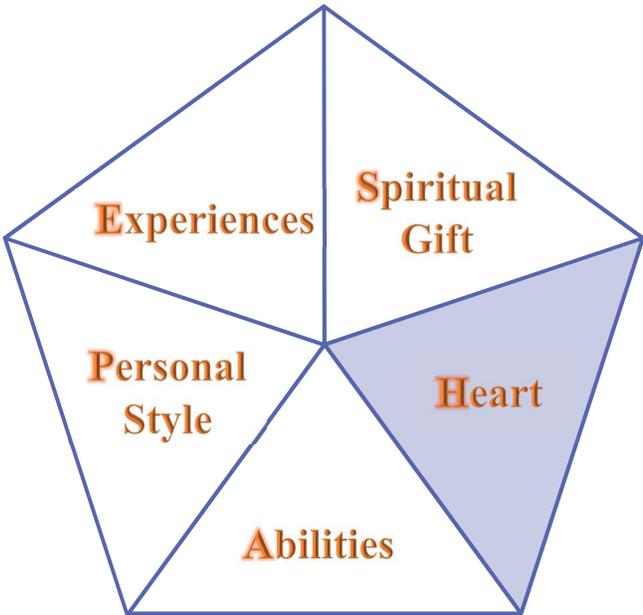
Everyone loves a good story. Drama and suspense can take us to the edge of our seats. Every so often I have the privilege of being the camp pastor for a week at summer camp. I’ve done that for various ages, and my favorite, by far, are junior campers. They’re full of life and excited about everything, and they love a good story.

One of the primary duties a camp pastor has at summer camp is to do a talk at the morning and evening meetings. One year, for Junior Camp as it happened, I decided to tell a continuing story that would have different installments each night. The story I told them had lots of action and suspense. Every night I would build the drama and suspense until we were right at the cliffhanger, then I would say, “If you want to find out what happens, you’ll have to come back tomorrow night.

The kids would scream and groan. They would beg me to finish the story. Some of them threatened me with violence if I didn’t tell them what happened. But I held firm because I could guarantee that the next night, when I stood up to continue the story, I wouldn’t have to fight them to quiet down and give me their attention. They would be all ears!

Put Some Heart into It

Your Shape for ministry begins with your spiritual gift, but it doesn’t end there. Along with your own perspective on the world, God has put a fire



in your heart about something. He's also given you unique talents and abilities to use when you get involved in serving.

My gift causes me to focus on some things more than others because that's the way God made me. I can tell you it helped our marriage when I understood why my wife kept challenging the facts and sources of my stories. "Do you know that to be true?" she would ask. At first I thought she assumed I was a liar. When I discovered her motivation was as a teacher, it all made sense. She just naturally looks for the footnotes. As an Exhorter, I rather naturally love a good story that makes a helpful point, no matter what the source was.

On top of that motivation God builds a heart for certain things within me. What causes one kid to collect thousands of winter coats for the homeless while another kid is equally passionate about appreciating police officers? My Heart for certain things grows out of my motivation and tends to focus it in more specific directions. It's an overarching desire to make a difference in some way.

When you find yourself using words like "dream" or "burden" you know you're talking about something that's in your heart. It grabs your attention and makes you want to make a difference.

As Paul was on one of his missionary journeys (pursuing his passion of reaching the Gentiles), word came that there was a famine in Jerusalem and the believers there were struggling. Paul immediately began to raise funds to help the church in Jerusalem. I'm sure many of the churches helped, but the church in Corinth really got on board.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:2:

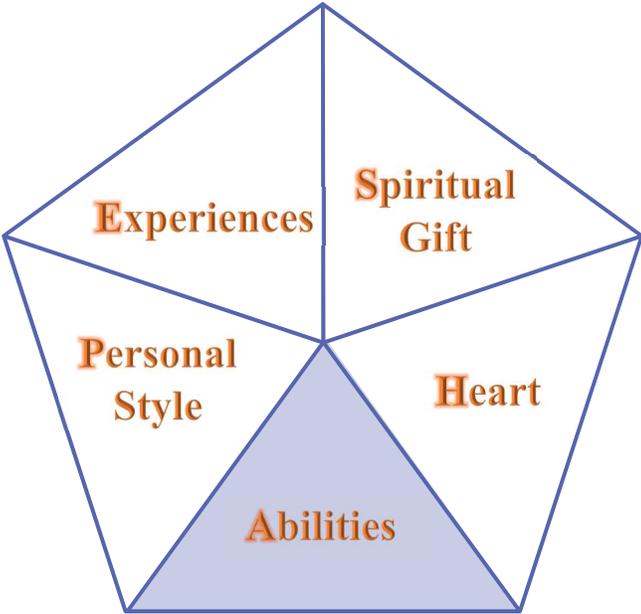
What did Paul say was the result of the enthusiasm the Corinthians had for helping the Jerusalem believers?

People with a heart for something encourage others to get involved. The truth is, none of us can care equally about everything. There are some things that I will connect with on a deeper level. That passion will get focused on a group of people, as with the Corinthians, or on a particular

cause, or even on a particular role or function. Whatever it is, God placed it there to focus your gift into a meaningful direction.

Using My Talents

To your Heart He adds specific Abilities; things you can do better than others. You will likely not be the only one who can do something, or even the best in the world at whatever it is you do, but if you are better than most at it, it's a special ability God gave to you for use in His service.



If you've ever wondered what the relationship between a talent and your spiritual gift might be, they are related, but they aren't the same thing. Like every other aspect of your SHAPE, they are a gift from God.

Read Exodus 31:1-6:

What were the talents and abilities God provided and what were they to be used for?

So, what are you particularly good at? Do you twirl a baton like no other? Cook an incredible lasagna? Your ability to do whatever your "thing" is

comes from your Creator. Michael Phelps can swim like a fish because God gave him that ability.

That doesn't discount all the practice and skill building that goes into developing a talent. I spent years attempting to play the piano, but I could never seem to get both hands working together. I thought my troubles resulted from some sort of coordination problem. So, when a friend suggested I should play the guitar, I was doubtful.

I happened to start playing the guitar at the summer camp where I was staffing. We played at least twice a day for 20-30 minutes each time. Midway through the summer I discovered my problems with the piano had never been a lack of coordination. I did have an aversion to practicing, so I never developed the skills on the piano that extra time on the guitar began to develop.

My abilities are God-given gifts that I get to participate in developing. Along with the heart God gives me from some things more than others, my abilities help narrow down the nearly infinite range of possibilities to the kinds of activities where I can make a unique contribution. Because they grow out of who you are, the best way to identify them is to take a look at your own story.

For the rest of your time today, I invite you to work through the following process. It will guide you through the process of identifying the passions and abilities God has already developed in your life. Who knows, you may even discover some you didn't know you had!

Listening to My Story

Step 1

Take a trip down memory lane. Think about your whole life, starting in childhood. Recall times when you did something well and enjoyed doing it. Write down one-line descriptions of those moments.

- Remember to be specific.
- Focus on accomplishments, not milestones (getting married or graduating).
- Focus on specific actions (I was good at Monopoly", not generalities ("I loved to play sports").

Sample Youth One-line Summary: Helped make living in the dorms better for freshmen and sophomores.

One-Liners of Your Sweet Spot Experiences

Childhood:

Youth:

Adult:

Step 2

Pick at least three of those events that feel significant to you and expand them on the form provided.

- Don't forget to be specific and stick with actions and not generalities.

Sample:

Summary:

Helped make living in the dorms better for freshmen and sophomores.

Details of how you went about doing it:

I initiated group meetings at our dorm to find out student needs. I appointed dorm captains for each of the four floors and organized groups to address the various needs for the underclassmen. Coping with college life and getting around was tough for them, so I coordinated two of the captains to provide ongoing orientation to the campus. I put the other two in charge of the monthly all-dorm meeting facilitation. I would watch over all the activity of the dorm and have weekly meetings with the four captains to help and keep them on track. I would assign people special tasks as the need came up.

What felt most satisfying to you?

We were able to improve the dorm experience students had in their first year of college.

My STORY Summary #1

Summary:

Details of how you went about doing it:

What felt most satisfying to you?

My STORY Summary #2

Summary:

Details of how you went about doing it:

What felt most satisfying to you?

My STORY Summary #3

Summary:

Details of how you went about doing it:

What felt most satisfying to you?

Step 3

For each story you just wrote, do the following:

- Underline the main verbs (the actions you took).
- Then put a box around all the main nouns (things, people, or events).
- Transfer your discoveries to the STORY Chart.

My STORY Chart

| | |
|--|--|
| Strengths: (List the underlined verbs and actions from your stories) | |
| Topics: (List the boxed nouns and subjects from your stories) | |
| Optimal Conditions: (Describe what gets your energy started and keeps you going in your stories) | |
| Relationships: (In your own words describe what role and relationship to others you take on in your stories) | |
| Yes! (Describe what themes you see in “What felt most satisfying to you?”) | |

Step 4

Reflect on your Strengths and Topics for a few minutes and fill out the rest of your STORY Chart.

Ponder This

The Passions God has placed in your life are the items listed in the “Yes!” box on your story chart. These are the things that you have repeatedly come back to throughout your life. They matter to you because God has placed those things on your heart.

Compare your “Yes!” to the list on page 52 and list the top 2-3 here.

Some of your abilities are listed in the “Strengths” box in your story chart. These are things you have developed over time. When you have been able to use those abilities, you have enjoyed the experience. They are a gift from God. The more you can utilize those as you serve Him, the more passion and joy you’ll find growing in your life.

Compare your “Strengths” to the list on page 53 and list out the top 3-5 here.

My Passions List

- Design and Develop** – I love to make something out of nothing. I enjoy getting something started from scratch.
- Pioneer** – I love to test and try out new concepts. I am not afraid to risk failure. I really like to be the first to blaze a new trail.
- Organize** – I love to bring order out of chaos. I enjoy organizing something that is already started.
- Operate and maintain** – I love to efficiently maintain something that is already started.
- Serve or help** – I love to assist others in their responsibility. I enjoy helping others succeed.
- Acquire and possess** – I love to shop, collect, or obtain things. I enjoy getting the highest quality for the best price.
- Excel** – I love to be the best and make my team the best. I enjoy setting and attaining the highest standards.
- Influence** – I love to convert people to my way of thinking. I enjoy shaping the attitudes and behaviors of others.
- Perform** – I love to be on stage and receive the attention of others. I enjoy being in the limelight.
- Improve** – I love to make things better. I enjoy taking something that someone else has designed or started and improve it.
- Repair** – I love to fix what is broken or change what is out of date.
- Lead and be in charge** – I love to lead the way, oversee and supervise. I enjoy determining how things will be done.
- Persevere** – I love to see things to completion. I enjoy persisting at something until it is finished.
- Follow the rules** – I love to operate by policies and procedures. I enjoy meeting the expectations of an organization or boss.
- Prevail** – I love to fight for what is right and oppose what is wrong. I enjoy overcoming injustice.

Specialized Abilities List

(Not a comprehensive list)

- Entertaining Ability: to perform, act, dance, speak, perform magic.
- Recruiting ability: to enlist and motivate people to get involved.
- Interviewing ability: to discover what others are really like.
- Researching ability: to read, gather information, and collect data.
- Artistic ability: to conceptualize, picture, draw, paint, photograph or make renderings.
- Graphics ability: to lay out, design, create visual displays or banners.
- Evaluating ability: to analyze data and raw conclusions.
- Planning ability: to strategize, design and organize programs and events.
- Managing ability: to supervise people to accomplish a task or event and coordinate the details involved.
- Counseling ability: to listen, encourage and guide with sensitivity.
- Teaching ability: to explain, train, demonstrate, tutor.
- Writing ability: to write articles, letters, books.
- Editing ability - to proofread or rewrite.
- Promoting ability: to advertise or promote events and activities.
- Repairing ability: to fix, restore, maintain.
- Feeding ability: to create meals for large or small groups.
- Recall ability: to remember or recall names or faces.
- Mechanical operating ability: to operate equipment, tools or machinery.
- Resourceful ability: to search out and find inexpensive materials or resources needed.
- Counting ability: to work with numbers, data or money.
- Classifying ability: to systematize and file books, data, records and materials so they can be retrieved easily.
- Public relations ability: to handle complaints and unhappy customers with care and courtesy.
- Welcoming ability: to convey warmth, develop rapport, making others feel comfortable.

A Passionate Life

- Composing ability: to write music or lyrics.
- Landscaping ability: to do gardening and working with plants.
- Decorating ability: to beautify a setting for special events.

Day 5 – Your Personal Style and Experiences

Did you know that pigs are an excellent indicator of personality? At least drawing a picture of one is. To take the Pig Personality Profile follow these steps exactly.

Step 1 – In the space below, draw a picture of a pig.

Step 2 – Turn the page to get your results (this won't work if you didn't draw a pig first.)

How to Interpret the Pig Personality Profile

If your pig is drawn:

- Toward the top of the paper, you are a positive, optimistic person
- Toward the middle of the paper, you are a realist
- Toward the bottom of the paper, you are a pessimist and have a tendency to be negative

If your pig is:

- Facing left, you are traditional, friendly, and good at remembering dates, including birthdays
- Facing forward (or angled forward), you are direct, enjoy playing “the devil’s advocate,” and neither fear nor avoid discussions
- Facing right, you are innovative and active but do not have a strong sense of family, and you are not good at remembering dates.

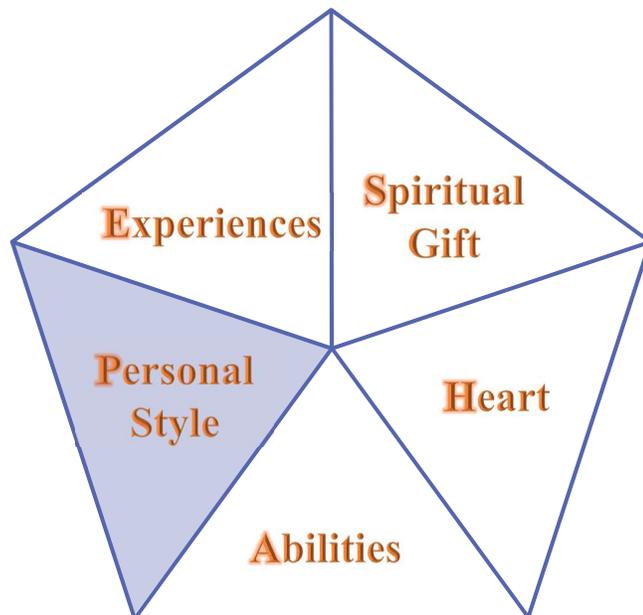
If your pig is drawn:

- With many details, you are analytical, cautious, and distrustful
- With few details, you are emotional and naïve, care little for details, and are a risk taker
- With four legs showing, you are secure and stubborn, and you stick to your ideals
- With less than four legs, you are insecure or are going through a period of major change
- With large ears, you are a good listener. The larger the ears, the better listener you are
- With a long tail, you have an active life. The longer the tail, the better it is.

Actually, this particular activity has no validity whatsoever. The only thing it’s good for is a laugh; a laugh you probably needed right about now. All this introspection can get a little heavy and a little joy can help us step back and appreciate the beauty of what God has done in your life.

Discovering my Personal Style

Today we are going to use animals to examine the fourth part of your SHAPE for service. Your Personal Style is another unique component of how God has shaped and molded you into your own unique work of art.



Your Personal Style identifies how you interact with people when you are engaged in accomplishing some task. Remember the last time you had to work as a team with others? Someone probably took charge, someone else kept asking for more clarity on the task assigned. Someone else was always telling stories. And someone else again calmed everyone down when tempers got heated.

In groups, we tend to take on different roles as we approach a task. All of them are important, but we tend to default to a particular role in most situations. When we understand the role we play when we're at our most comfortable, we can then look for ministry roles that allow us to function in that way as we work with others.

A Passionate Life

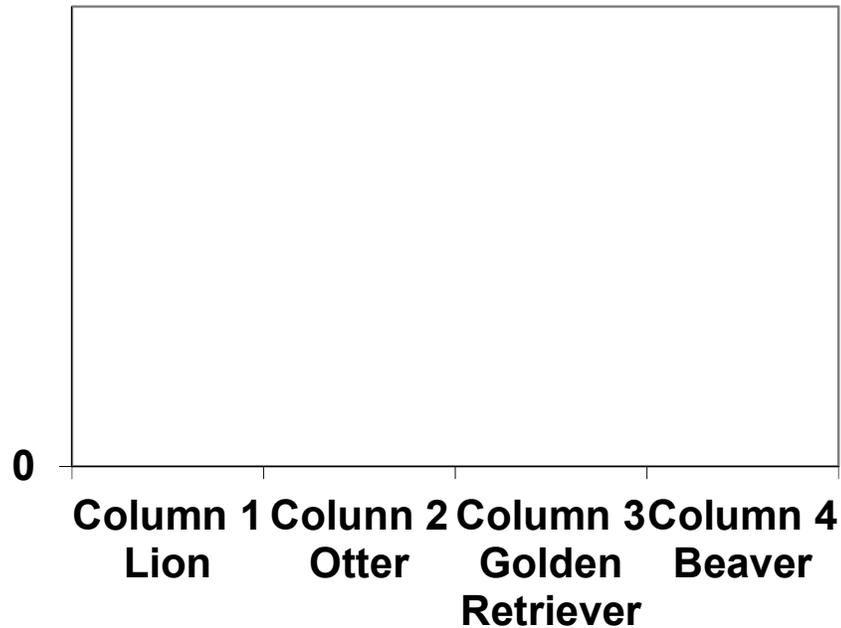
Now it's time for a real assignment. We're going to use some of the information you identified in your STORY Chart from yesterday.

1. Think back over the experiences you wrote about in your STORY. Focus particularly on the optimal conditions and relationships sections
2. Look at the Personal Style Inventory below and circle the words in each column that described you best when you were in those experiences.

| <u>Column 1</u> | <u>Column 2</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Likes authority | Enthusiastic |
| Confident | Visionary |
| Firm | Energetic |
| Enjoys challenges | Promoter |
| Problem solver | Mixes easily |
| Bold | Fun-loving |
| Goal-driven | Spontaneous |
| Strong-willed | Creative/new ideas |
| Self-reliant | Optimistic |
| Persistent | Infectious laughter |
| Takes charge | Takes Risks |
| Determined | Motivator |
| Enterprising | Very verbal |
| Competitive | Friendly |
| Productive | Enjoys popularity |
| Purposeful | Likes variety |
| Adventurous | Enjoys change |
| Independent | Group-oriented |
| Controlling | Initiator |
| Action-oriented | Inspirational |
| | |
| Number Circled: __ | Number Circled: __ |
| x2: __ | x2: __ |
| | |

| <u>Column 3</u> | <u>Column 4</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Sensitive feelings | Enjoys instructions |
| Calm | Consistent |
| Non-demanding | Reserved |
| Avoids confrontations | Practical |
| Enjoys routine | Factual |
| Warm and relational | Perfectionistic |
| Adaptable | Detailed |
| Thoughtful | Inquisitive |
| Patient | Persistent |
| Good listener | Sensitive |
| Loyal | Accurate |
| Even-keeled | Controlled |
| Gives in | Predictable |
| Indecisive | Orderly |
| Dislikes change | Conscientious |
| Dry humor | Discerning |
| Sympathetic | Analytical |
| Nurturing | Precise |
| Tolerant | Scheduled |
| Peacemaker | Deliberate |
| | |
| Number Circled: __ | Number Circled: __ |
| x2: __ | x2: __ |
| | |

3. Add up the number of words you circled in each column and total it at the bottom
4. Multiply that number by 2
5. Chart each column on the following graph



You'll notice an animal listed under each column. That's just a simple way to get a picture of how each personal style relates when they are acting under optimal conditions. Pay particular attention to the animal you scored the highest on. I think you'll get the picture.

Lion

Lions like to lead. They are good at making decisions and is very goal-oriented. They enjoy challenges, difficult assignments, and opportunity for advancement. Because lions are thinking of the goal, they can step on people to reach it. Lions can be very aggressive and competitive. They must learn not to be too bossy or to take charge in others' affairs.

Paul is a great biblical example of a lion. He was goal-oriented, strong and direct, but he didn't always understand that his directness could be hurtful.

Otter

Otters are very social creatures. They love people. They enjoy being popular and influencing and motivating others. Otters can sometimes be hurt when people do not like them. They usually have lots of friends, but not necessarily deep relationships. They love to goof off. (They are notorious for messy rooms.) Otters like to hurry and finish jobs, which means that the job may not get done as well as it should

Peter is a classic Biblical example of an Otter. He was a people person, but could talk too much and stick his foot in his mouth.

Golden Retriever

Golden Retrievers make great friends. They are loyal and prefer stability over lots of change. They need security and can be very sensitive. They build deep relationships, but usually only a couple of close friends. Golden Retrievers want to be loved by everyone and need to feel appreciated. They work best in a limited situation with a steady work pattern.

Abraham is a good Biblical example of a Golden Retriever. He was accommodating and calm in challenging circumstances. But sometimes he went too far in his accommodations (Sure, you can take my wife!) and struggled with decisive action.

Beaver

Beavers are organized. They think that there is a right way to do everything and they want to do it exactly that way. Beaver personalities are very creative. They desire to solve everything. They desire to take their time and do it right. Beavers do not like sudden changes, and they can develop some pretty unrealistic expectations of themselves and others.

Ezra was probably a beaver. After the Israelites returned from exile, he taught them about the law and established order and discipline among the returnees.

Which animal are you? Do you feel this is accurate?

Understanding My Experiences

The last piece of my SHAPE is Experience. In many ways, this entire small group study has led you to look at your experiences. The idea of Kairos moments depends on examining our experiences and learning from them. As we accumulate more and more experience, it has a profound impact on the rest of our SHAPE.

Since we've already been talking about our experiences, we spend much more time on them other than to recognize again that even our negative experiences are things God would love to use as you discover where and how you will serve.

Perhaps you've heard the story of a young man who felt certain he was called to be a cartoonist. Since childhood he had loved drawing and would spend hours making his funny little characters. He tried to get his doodles published, but was told repeatedly they weren't good enough. He began pouring out his frustrations and disappointments in the only way he knew how; in his cartoons. And it was that cartoon with its collection of sadly funny children and dog that became the comic strip Peanuts.

Would Charles M. Schulz have ever created Peanuts without the struggle and disappointment he'd experienced? It's unlikely. And because he offered those experiences to the world, millions of people were encouraged and found a good laugh even in the disappointments in life. God wants to use your hurts as well as your successes, if you'll let Him.

Finding My Role

Think back, (perhaps way back) to your grade school years. Try to picture the kids in your class. Can you see them? Probably not all of them, but some you can see as clear as crystal. Now think about how you remember those kids. What were they "known for?" There was Tom. He was the jock. There was Jimmy. He was the class clown. And Tina, she was the popular girl. Amanda was the smart one who always got the best scores. There was Gerry. He was the class nerd.

When you think about it, most of the kids had their own role to play in the social structure of the class. Nobody sat down and assigned these jobs to them. They just kind of grew out of who they were. That's not so different from the middle-distance focus of our tri-focal view of spiritual gifts. The list of gifts in Ephesians is describing the role each of us play in the family of God. Thankfully, "Nerd" is not on the list!

What was your “role” in school? What is something you were proud of, or was that role a negative experience? Did you choose that role or did the rest of the class just start treating you that way?

If you started out this week with the idea I was going help you figure out what ministry you are supposed to be doing in the church, I hope you aren’t feeling let down. My SHAPE is a description of who I am and who I am becoming in Christ. The ministry role I take on should be something that flows out of that SHAPE. If you take on a ministry that doesn’t utilize the best of who you are, you may be very successful at it, but it will drain your passion.

My wife, Robin, has often helped me conduct spiritual gifts seminars, so I think she will be OK if I use her as an example. Here is a partial SHAPE Profile.

Spiritual Gift – Teacher
That means she looks at the world through a filter of discovering truth and checking things out for accuracy.

Heart – Helping others discover new ideas.
She lives for that “Aha!” moment when the eyes light up.

Ability - Developing open-ended questions and understanding small group dynamics

Personal Style – Beaver
She is careful and develops detailed outlines and lists. She makes sure she is well prepared for whatever she does.

Experiences – In college she was part of a small group that had a powerful impact on her spiritual growth.

That’s a little window into who Robin is, but it isn’t a ministry, yet. Years ago, someone approached her with the request (it was more of an order, really) that she join me in the ministry of greeting at the door for the little church we were assigned to while in seminary. She politely declined and

was informed that where my name was on the schedule, her name was assumed to be as well. She never did join the greeting team.

In that same church, during a discussion on spiritual gifts, she was informed that a pastor's wife should be expected to have all the gifts and do whatever was needed in the church. You can imagine how that discussion went.

So what ministry is Robin called to in the church? She has served in several different roles over the years, but the role that she loves the most is leading an adult small group. And when you ask the people who have the privilege of being in her class or group, you can immediately tell she's doing what God SHAPED her for. People often report understanding things in a way they had never before (Words of Knowledge) and were challenged to grow in their walk with God (Words of Wisdom.)

Ponder This

What ministry role is God calling you to fill in the church family? If you are already serving, how well does your current role fit your SHAPE?

A Closing Word

There is a day coming that drives my thinking. I don't think about it every day, but it's always there. It's the day Jesus returns. That will be an incredible day, won't it? I look forward to being a little taller (I always wanted to hit 6 feet), a lot thinner (like I used to be) and I want my all my hair back. Even more than all that, I look forward to a world where people listen to each other with grace, they strive to achieve without pride, and they risk great things without fear of loss. I want to live with people who will love others without reserve.

Most of all, I want to see Jesus. He has done so much for me and changed my life in so many ways. I want to try and express just how much I appreciate that and how much I've come to love Him. I suspect my attempts will be utterly inadequate, but I want to try anyway. And when they fail, I want to throw my arms around Him in a giant bear hug.

Those are the things that keep me looking forward to that day when Jesus returns to claim those who He has called by name. But I am increasingly captivated by the idea that, through Christ, I get a head start on the Kingdom life that will be ours in full when I get to Heaven. No matter how imperfect it may be, I get to experience a little bit of the kingdom that is to come right here in the midst of a messed-up world.

In fact, I can play a part in making that reality happen wherever I'm at. That is the extraordinary truth of a passionate life. When you and I choose to live like we're saved, the Kingdom of God gets a little more real. That's the real power of a church community.

I have been blessed by the opportunity to share this journey with you. I pray that as you continue to explore a life following Jesus your joy and passion will grow.

Special Thanks

- To my wife for being a life partner who challenges me toward seeking more. She has been my sounding board.
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- To my own church family for being the place where my Kingdom life is strengthened and challenged every week.