

Serve/Reach

Part 2 – Lesson 1

Pathway to Discovery

OVERVIEW

This lesson enables members to explore the magnificent gifts and abilities God bestows upon each believer. It investigates how you can discover your particular gifts and talents for God's service. The lesson also explains some of the challenges believers can face when deciding to operate in their God-given purpose and gifts.

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the role prayer and meditation plays in discovering your spiritual gifts
- Describe the relationship between purpose, potential, and spiritual gifts
- Explain the relationship between the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts
- Identify and explain each element of the SHAPE concept
- Describe what steps you can take to solidify your commitment to living in purpose and employing your gifts

ACTIVITIES

- Prayer
- Reading of 1 Corinthians Chapter 12

DISCOVERING YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS

INTRODUCTION

In a previous lesson we discussed the topics of purpose and potential, which established that God has a plan for our lives and that he has given us power to make a difference in the lives of others. In this lesson, we will discuss how God equips us for service. The goal of this lesson is for you to discover how God has equipped YOU. In order to do so, there are several steps you can take during your journey of discovery.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Acknowledging God as our Father and the benevolent giver of life is essential in discovering God's plan for our lives. In humility and sincerity, we can ask him to reveal the gifts and talents he has instilled within us. We can connect our thoughts with God's thoughts regarding God's plan for service.

Through worship and prayer we open ourselves to the revelation of our gifts through the Holy Spirit.

MEDITATION AND INTROSPECTION

Meditating on how God can use us for his service can help us clarify our desire and commitment. It can also reveal our true motivation for wanting to discover our gifts (*Hebrews 4:12*).

STUDY

The Bible clearly defines spiritual gifts, along with their characteristics and purposes. Knowing the biblical teachings on gifts will help you understand God's standards in their application. God does not want us to be ignorant of the gifts he has given us, which the Holy Spirit uses for the glory of God (*1 Corinthians 12:1*).

"Call unto me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." (Jeremiah 33:3)

"For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." (1 Corinthians 2:11)

It is easier to discover your gift through ministry than to discover your ministry through your gift.

'Each man has his own gift, one has this gift, another has that.' (1 Corinthians 7:7b)

Activity

Reading of 1 Corinthians Chapter 12

10 Minutes

1 Corinthians chapter 12 is a preeminent passage regarding spiritual gifts. We will read it verse by verse, as it will put the study of spiritual gift within context.

DISCOVERY

In situations where we are not certain of our spiritual gifts, there are tools and processes available to assist us in discovering them. One such tool is the **S.H.A.P.E.** questionnaire, developed by author Erik Rees. S.H.A.P.E is an acronym for:

Spiritual Gifts

Heart

Abilities

Personality

Experiences

Spiritual Gifts: Identifying what God has supernaturally gifted you to do.

"...But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that." (1 Corinthians 7:7b)

Heart: Determining your passion and what you love to do.

"God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose..." (Revelation 17:7)

"For it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own chosen purpose! (Philippians 2:13)

Abilities: Identifying your natural talents and skills.

"There are different abilities to perform service..." (1 Corinthians 12:6)

Personality: Determining where your personality best suits you to serve.

“No one can really know what anyone else is thinking or what he is really like, except that person himself.” (1 Corinthians 2:11)

Experiences: Identifying the spiritual, painful, educational, and ministerial experiences you have had.

“There has been enough time for you to be teachers – BUT you still need to be taught...(you are) without any experience in the matter of right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:12-13)

A spiritual gift is a special ability, given by the Holy Spirit to every believer at their conversion, and is used to minister to others, thus building up the Body of Christ.

There are 10 truths regarding spiritual gifts:

1. Only believers have spiritual gifts. (1 Corinthians 2:14)
2. Every Christian has at least one gift. (1 Corinthians 7:7)
3. No one receives all the gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:27-30)
4. No single gift is given to everyone. (1 Corinthians 12:29-30)
5. You cannot earn or work for a spiritual gift. (Ephesians 4:7)
6. The Holy Spirit determines what gifts a person gets. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
7. Gifts are permanent. (Romans 11:29)
8. God requires the believers to develop the gifts. (1 Timothy 4:14)
9. It is a sin to waste God’s gifts. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2, Matthew 25:14-30)
10. The use of gifts glorifies God and grows the believer. (John 15:8)

Spiritual gifts serve a purpose:

1. They are not for your benefit, but for the benefit of others. (1 Peter 4:10, 1 Corinthians 12:7)
2. To produce maturity and stability in the church family. (Ephesians 4:11, 13-14)

Cautions regarding spiritual gifts:

1. Do not confuse gifts with natural talents.
 - a. Gifts are spiritual.
 - b. Talents are developed in the natural.
2. Do not confuse gifts with the Fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)
 - a. “Fruit” shows maturity.

- b. "Gifts" shows ministry.
- 3. Do not confuse gifts with Christian roles.
- 4. Be aware of "gift projection" tendency (expecting others to serve the way you do and have similar results).
- 5. Do not feel that your gift is superior to others. (Corinthians 12:21)
- 6. Realize that using gifts without love is worthless. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
- 7. Recognize that you have both a primary and secondary ministry within the church.
 - a. The primary ministry commitment is in the area where you are gifted.
 - b. The secondary ministry includes serving in any other area where you are needed.

Another way of discovering our gifts is the **S.T.A.R.T.** method:

The "S.T.A.R.T." Method of Discovering Your Gift

Study: Read books and find information on gifts.

Trial and Error: Experiment with different areas of service.

Analyze: Use the S.H.A.P.E. tool.

Rquest Responses from Others: As others what gifts they see in you.

Training: Take advantage of leadership training.

Regardless of what method you use to discover your gifts and to seek God's purpose for your life, it is a significant step towards spiritual growth.

TYPES OF GIFTS

There are four major categories of gifts found in the Bible. They are:

1. Gifts that communicate God's word (to believers and non-believers).
2. Gifts that educate God's people.
3. Gifts that demonstrate God's love.
4. Gifts that celebrate God's presence.

Bible passages that address these categories are:

1. Romans 12:6-8
2. 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-31
3. Ephesians 4:11-12
4. 1 Peter 4:9-11

All gifts are given to help the church fulfill its purpose.

GIFTS THAT COMMUNICATE GOD'S WORD

Preaching or Proclamation (Prophecy)

(1 Corinthians 14:3)

The ability to publicly communicate God's word in an inspired way that convinces non-believers and both challenges and comforts believers. The ability to persuasively declare God's will.

Evangelism

Acts 8:26-40

The ability to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to non-believers in a positive, non-threatening way. The ability to sense opportunities to share Christ and lead people to respond in faith.

Missions

1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Acts 13:2-3

The ability to adapt to a different culture in order to reach non-believers and help believers from that culture.

Apostle

Romans 15:20

The ability to start new churches and oversee their development.

GIFTS THAT EDUCATE GOD'S PEOPLE

Teaching

Ephesians 4:12-13

The ability to educate God's people by clearly explaining and applying the Bible in a way that causes them to learn. The ability to equip and train other believers for ministry.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

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Encouragement (Exhortation)

Acts 14:22

The ability to motivate God's people to apply and act on biblical principles, especially when they are discouraged or wavering in their faith. The ability to bring out the best in others and challenge them to develop their potential.

Wisdom

1 Corinthians 2:1, 6-16

The ability to understand God's perspective on life situations and share those insights in a simple, understandable way. The ability to explain what to do and how to do it.

Discernment

1 John 4:1-6

The ability to distinguish right from wrong, truth from error and give an immediate evaluation based on God's Word. The ability to discern whether the source of an experience is Satan, self, or God's Spirit.

Knowledge

Daniel 1:17

The ability to discover, collect, analyze, and organize information that is vital to individual believers or the entire church family. The ability to comprehend a large amount of information and provide it when needed for effective decision-making.

GIFTS THAT DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE

Service

Acts 6:1-7

The ability to recognize unmet needs in the church family, and take the initiative to provide practical assistance quickly, cheerfully, and without a need for recognition.

Mercy

Luke 10:30-37

The ability to detect hurt and empathize with those who are suffering in the church family. The ability to provide compassionate and cheerful support to those experiencing distress, crisis, or pain.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Hospitality

1 Peter 4:9-10

The ability to make others, especially strangers, feel warmly welcomed, accepted, and comfortable in the church family. The ability to coordinate factors that promote fellowship.

Pastoring (Shepherding)

1 Peter 5:2-4

The ability to care for the spiritual needs of a group of believers and equip them for ministry. The ability to nurture a small group in growth and assume responsibility for their welfare.

Giving

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

The ability to generously contribute material resources and/or money beyond the 10 percent tithe so that the Body may grow and be strengthened. The ability to earn and manage money so that it may be given to support the ministry of others.

GIFTS THAT CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE (Worship or Prayer-Related Gifts)

Music

Psalms 150

The ability to celebrate God's presence through music, either vocal or instrumental, and to lead the church family in worship.

Arts and Crafts

Exodus 31:3-11

The ability to build, maintain, or beautify the place of worship for God's glory. The ability to express worship through a variety of art forms.

Intercession

Colossians 1:9-12

The ability to pray for the needs of others in the church family over extended periods of time on a regular basis. The ability to persist in prayer and not be discouraged until the answer arrives.

Healing

James 5:14-16

The ability to pray in faith, specifically for people who need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing and see God answer.

The ability to sense when God is prompting you to pray this kind of prayer.

Miracles

Mark 11:23-24

The ability to pray in faith, specifically for God's supernatural intervention into an impossible situation and see God answer.

The ability to sense when God is prompting you to pray this kind of prayer.

Praying in the Spirit (Tongues and Interpretation)

1 Corinthians 14:13-15

The ability to pray in a language understood only by God or one who is given the gift of interpretation at that time.

HEART

HEART

Physically, we know the heart to be an internal organ in the body that pumps blood. Emotionally, we know the heart to be our constitution and disposition. The Bible uses the term "heart" to represent the center of your motivation, desires, and inclinations.

Your heart determines:

1. Why you say the things you do (Matthew 12:34).
2. Why you feel the way you do (Hebrews 4:12).
3. Why you act the way you do (Proverbs 4:23).

PASSION

Another term for "heartbeat" is the term "Passion", which can be defined as "a strong fondness, enthusiasm, or desire." Ironically, "passion" is also used to describe the narrative of Christ's sufferings as recorded in the Gospels.

YOUR UNIQUE "HEARTBEAT"

Physically, each person has a unique heartbeat that has a slightly different pattern. Similarly, God has given each of us a unique emotional heartbeat that races when we encounter activities, subjects, or circumstances that interest us. We instinctively feel deeply about some things and not about others.

This God-given motivation serves as an internal guidance system for our lives. It determines what your interests are, and what will bring you the most satisfaction and fulfillment. It also motivates you to pursue certain activities, subjects, and environment.

"Guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." (Proverbs 4:23)

"It is quite true to say that a man who sets his heart on becoming a church leader has a laudable ambition." (1 Timothy 3:1)

*"There are different abilities to perform service."
(1 Corinthians 12:6)*

ABILITIES

"I (God)...have given him skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts..." (Exodus 31:3)

The heart enables you to commit and persevere through some of the toughest challenges as you pursue your goals. In some situations, it can lead to courage and bravery. The heart also creates a pulse, and we must periodically take time to do a pulse check and assess where we are in relation to the pursuit of God's will for our lives.

WHY HAS GOD GIVEN EACH PERSON A UNIQUE HEARTBEAT?

God has a purpose in giving you your inborn interests. In fact, your emotional heartbeat reveals a very important key to understanding God's design and intention for your life.

The Bible makes very clear that God designed your heart, but you make the choice to use it for good or evil, for selfish purposes or for service. You may:

1. Have selfish ambition in your heart (James 3:14)
2. Serve and do the will of God from your heart (1 Samuel 12:20, Ephesians 6:6)

By letting your heartbeat motivate you, you can do God's will and serve God's purpose.

ABILITIES

The third letter of the S.H.A.P.E. acronym represents "Abilities", which means competence in an activity or occupation because of one's skill, training, or other qualification. It also means having the power or capacity to do or act.

Many congregants have the ability to serve God in several ways, but choose not to do so. They find reasons not to be involved. The most common excuse people give for not getting involved in ministry is, "I don't have any abilities to offer." Nothing is further from the truth. The key is matching your abilities with the right ministry!

MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT ABILITIES (SKILLS AND TALENTS)

Within our culture, there are millions of people with multiple skills and talents. Some use those talents and achieve great success and notoriety. We often admire the skills and talents of others and sometimes wish we had them for ourselves. However, there is

sometimes confusion regarding how people acquire skills and talents, which has led to misconceptions and myths. Here are 5 prominent myths:

1. People are not born with skills – all skills must be learned by experience. This is not true. There are a number of skills that seem to be inborn and develop very early in infancy. When people say, “She just seems to have a natural talent for it”, it is probably true.
2. Those skills, which must be learned, are earned primarily in the classroom. Actually, some of your most basic skills were learned at home, “in the street”, or somewhere outside the classroom.
3. If you have certain abilities, you will be very aware that you have them. Not true. You are probably using a number of talents or skills that you are not aware of. You need some process to identify them.
4. Skills that you use at work are only usable in that environment. I could not use them in ministry. This is a fallacy. Many workplace skills and talents are transferrable for ministry.
5. Most people only have a few abilities. The truth is that many national studies have proven that the average person possesses from five hundred to seven hundred different skills.

ABILITIES

Activity

Specialized Abilities (Pre-Work)

20 Minutes

Below is a list of 26 specialized abilities. Identify the abilities you believe you have by marking a “X” in the left column. Remember that you have many abilities – some you are aware of and some you are not. Think through the list of abilities and list the ones you have, even if you are not sure.

Note that this is a pre-work activity. You will take a more comprehensive survey (questionnaire) regarding gift and abilities at a later time.

ABILITIES

"X"	ABILITY	DESCRIPTION
	Entertaining	Performing, acting, dancing, speaking
	Recruiting	Enlisting and motivating people towards involvement
	Interviewing	Discovering what others really like
	Researching	Reading, gathering information, collecting data
	Artistic	Conceptualizing, picturing, drawing, painting, photographing, renderings
	Graphics	Layouts, designs, visual displays, banners
	Evaluating	Analyzing data, drawing conclusions
	Planning	Strategizing, designing and organizing programs and events
	Managing	Supervising people to accomplishing a task or event and coordinating the details involved
	Counseling	Listening, encouraging and guiding with sensitivity
	Teaching	Explaining, training, demonstrating, tutoring
	Writing	Writing articles, lettering, authoring
	Editing	Proofreading, rewriting
	Promoting	Advertising, promoting events and activities
	Repairing	Fixing, restoring, maintaining
	Feeding	Creating meals for large and small groups, catering
	Recall Ability	Remembering, recalling names and faces
	Mechanical	Operating equipment, tools, or machinery
	Resourcefulness	Searching and finding inexpensive materials or needed resources
	Counting	Working with numbers, data, or money
	Classifying	Systemizing and filing books, data, records, and materials for easy retrieval
	Public Relations	Handling complaints and unhappy customers with care and courtesy
	Welcoming	Conveying warmth, developing rapport, making others comfortable
	Composing	Writing music or lyrics
	Landscaping	Gardening and planting
	Decorating	Beautifying a setting for a special event

PERSONALITY

PERSONALITY

Assessing your personality will help you see how your God-given temperament can best be used in ministry. The word "Personality" can be defined as the sum total of your physical, mental, emotional, and social characteristics of an individual. It is also the organized pattern of your behavioral characteristics. People are often recognized and remembered by their personalities.

“God helps us in our troubles, so we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4)

EXPERIENCES

Personalities affect how you relate to others. For example, a person can be outgoing or reserved, expressive or controlled, cooperative or competitive. Each of us have a personality and people who know us well can often describe ours.

Ministries and the people within them are diverse. Your personality can be an important element in effectual service.

EXPERIENCES

Examining your experiences will help you review your history to discover how God has prepared you for a unique ministry that only you can fulfill. Experiences, good or bad, can be used to the glory of God. Your experiences have a purpose. The things you experience in your life can be of help to others. Whether joyful or painful, your experiences can be a bridge to someone who is searching for answers, and can lead to lasting relationships.

ASSESSING YOUR S.H.A.P.E.

S.H.A.P.E. provides a good pathway to discovering our purpose and motivating us for Christian service. In addition, a questionnaire or survey derived from the S.H.A.P.E. method of evaluation is an excellent tool in helping you solidify your calling. Participating in the survey will be beneficial.

Activity

S.H.A.P.E. SURVEY

This activity is a homework assignment. Please prayerfully complete the survey and bring it to the next class. The survey will be used for one-on-one discussion at a later time.

SUMMARY

God has equipped each believer for His purpose. Within each of us are the tools to impact our families and our communities for Christ. Through spiritual gifts, the supernatural can happen.

Serve/Reach

Part 2 – Lesson 2

Growth and Development

OVERVIEW

This lesson emphasizes spiritual growth and the need to be diligent in learning. It discusses personal accountability in keeping with God's plan for our development.

OBJECTIVES

- Describe some disciplines we should develop in preparing ourselves for service
- Explain why we must be accountable to God regarding the use of our gifts

ACTIVITIES

- Develop a list of disciplines you need to develop and employ to fulfil your God-given purpose
- Pair with another class member and discuss accountability and its relation to spiritual gifts

INTRODUCTION

Every Christian should desire to grow spiritually. Spiritual growth and maturity enables us to be of more service to God. In the Grow Track, we learned that maintaining disciplines in prayer, meditation, and Bible reading (study) is essential to growth. Through spiritual maturity, we have a greater understanding of the gifts of the Spirit and how important it is to employ them.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6)

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

Prayer and meditation is an integral part of spiritual maturity. We must pray for God to reveal our spiritual gifts. Making quiet time for ourselves (meditating) allows us to hear God and reflect on God's revelation. It enables us to learn how we can employ our gifts for God's glory and the edification of church (1 Corinthians 14:12).

STUDY

We must study not only what the Bible says about spiritual gifts, but also how the gifts are applied. Knowing what the Bible says can not only broaden your understanding, but also eliminates confusion.

"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1)

FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF OTHERS

Within the Body of Christ there are many faithful and mature Christians who employ their gifts for God's glory and to the service of others. They serve as examples for us to follow. From them and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can learn what it takes to grow develop within our gifts.

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice..." (Philippians 4:9)

MENTORING

Establishing a mentoring relationship with a person who operates with gifts similar to yours can aid in your development. Not only can you learn from their experiences, but they can offer advice and help you be accountable to your calling.

ACCOUNTABILITY

God expects us to put the gifts He has bestowed upon us to good use. Not doing so is not only being disobedient, but also causes you to not

*"...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required..."
(Luke 12:48)*

*"So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God."
(Romans 14:12)*

live in God's purpose and to your spiritual potential. He expects a return on His investment in you. There are examples of people in the Bible who did not use their gifts and talents, and reaped the consequences. Jesus also used parables to illustrate accountability.

Activity

Discipline and Accountability

(10 Minutes)

In groups of two or more people:

1. Discuss the disciplines that will help you develop and employ your gifts.
2. Discuss the role of accountability in employing your spiritual gifts and steps you can take to maintain accountability.

SUMMARY

The Christian life is one of continuous growth and development. Prayer, meditation, and reading the Bible is essential to knowing and fulfilling our purpose.

