“DISCOVERING YOUR SHAPE FOR MINISTRY”

A Study Guide for “Community”

The Small Groups Ministry of Fellowship Bible Church

Name
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page .......................................................................................................................................................................... 1

Table of Contents .......................................................................................................................................................... 2

Community Group Calendar ........................................................................................................................................ 3

Group Covenant .......................................................................................................................................................... 4

Preface ........................................................................................................................................................................ 6

Introduction ................................................................................................................................................................. 7

**Session One:** “Who, Me? A Minister?”......................................................................................................................... 8

**Session Two:** “Who, Me? God’s SHAPED Me For Ministry?”.......................................................................................... 13

**Session Three:** “Who, Me? Gifted For Ministry?”......................................................................................................... 19

**Session Four:** “Who, Me? What Gifts?”....................................................................................................................... 24

**Session Five:** “Who, Me? A Lover?”........................................................................................................................... 32

**Session Six:** “Who, Me? A Heart For Ministry?”.......................................................................................................... 36

**Session Seven:** “Who, Me? Created With Abilities? And A Unique Personality?”.......................................................... 42

**Session Eight:** “Who, Me? Experienced In Ministry?”.................................................................................................... 51

**Session Nine:** “Who, Me? Yes, Me!”............................................................................................................................ 54

I Have A SHAPE For Ministry ........................................................................................................................................ 54

“Communion”............................................................................................................................................................... 57

My S.H.A.P.E. Profile .................................................................................................................................................. 60

“Prayer Concerns”....................................................................................................................................................... 62

My Community Group.................................................................................................................................................... 64
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date &amp; Place</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>Social/Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“Me? A Minister?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“God’s SHAPED Me For Ministry?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“Gifted For Ministry?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“What Gifts?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“Motivated By Love?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“A Heart For Ministry?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“Created With Abilities and A Unique Personality”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“Experienced In Ministry?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>______________</td>
<td>“I Have a S.H.A.P.E. for Ministry!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Communion”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT IS “COMMUNITY”?

WHO? .... a small group of people committed to one another who meet together regularly,

WHY? .... for the purpose of stimulating one another to the personal development of a distinctive, Christ-centered lifestyle ... thus discovering and growing in the possibilities of the abundant life in Christ.

HOW? .... we believe this lifestyle demands commitment to consistent, personal application of Biblical truths, intimate spiritual relationships and mutual accountability.

The PURPOSE of Community Groups is to produce growing Christians.

GROUP COVENANT

We will agree to the following ground rules for our Community Group:

- **Priority:** While we are in this Community Group, we will give the group meeting priority.

- **Preparation:** Meaningful preparation leads to enthusiastic participation. Your preparation is a ministry to the entire group.

- **Participation:** Everyone is given the right to their own opinion and “dumb questions” are respected. Dominating the discussion is discouraged.
Confidentiality: Anything that is said in the meeting is never repeated outside the meeting.

Support: Permission is given to call upon each other in time of need - even in the middle of the night.

Empty Chair: The group stays open to new people. When the group grows beyond the 12-16 range, it prayerfully and sensitively prepares to birth another group and/or spin-off a leadership team. This is absolutely necessary for the growth of individuals and the group.

Ministry Project: We will try to choose, plan and complete a ministry project to assist one another, our church or our community.

The unique purpose of our Community Group is ...

Our goals will be ...

My personal goal for life-change this session is ...

And I give you permission to ..

(1) ask
(2) encourage
(3) hold me accountable.

“Community” is more than a meeting ... it’s a MINISTRY!
Preface

I would like to say, “it was a joy to write this material for you, the people of Fellowship Bible.” However, much fine work has already been done on the concept of S.H.A.P.E by Rick Warren of Saddleback Valley Community Church. It is, therefore, far more accurate for me to simply say, “it was a joy to adapt these concepts for small group study.” But, WOW! What a joy it was. Just thinking about what you, the people of Fellowship, were going to do with these life changing, life empowering principles gave me chill bumps all over.

Fellowship, you have already demonstrated what Christ can do when people are empowered and released for ministry. Still, we have only begun to discover all that God has for us. This study on S.H.A.P.E will take you (Fellowship) to the next level of kingdom focused self-discovery and the resulting joy of experiencing God. I’m pumped about getting into S.H.A.P.E with you!!

Gary
January, 1998

“Now to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to the great many who made this project possible. Our regional pastors, Jim Hall, John Marquette, Dick Nelson, Lamar Steiger, Labron Tatum, who conceived of its great value for Fellowship. Russ Doran who was invaluable in his technical biblical support, editing and rewriting. Heidi Pope for skill and flexibility in typing the manuscript; Jan Stockdale for administrative support; Wanda Scoggin for creatively designing the cover and layout; and to all the others who proofed and evaluated the manuscript. You guys are the greatest!

Note: Most references, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New American Standard or the New International Version of the Bible. This study will be most helpful if done in either of those two translations.
Introduction

We all know what it is like to be “out of shape.” Too often we find ourselves out of breath with the least bit of exertion. Typically we resolve to “get back into shape.” Such resolutions are good, and we make them so we can get more out of life, so we can “enjoy playing the game,” so we can compete more effectively in the “race of life.”

Even more important than our physical shape, however, is our spiritual shape, because . . .

What God made me to BE (my shape) determines what God intends me to DO (my ministry).

Stated another way . . .

My ministry is determined by my makeup!!

As noted in the preface, the purpose of this study is to help you discover your S.H.A.P.E. But what is that? A beginning explanation will help launch us for this study.

S.H.A.P.E. is a Biblically based concept that will enable you to discover for yourself how God has fashioned you to be an intergal part of His eternal kingdom purposes. The five core dimensions of your SHAPE are . . .

S - Spiritual Gifts
H - Heart
A - Abilities
P - Personality
E - Experiences

This study will lead you to discover and reflect upon each area of S.H.A.P.E. as it applies to you personally. Prayerfully, at its conclusion, you will have a greater sense of God’s purpose for your life and your integral part in the shared ministry of Fellowship Bible. As you continue to abide in the Lord your gifts will be strengthened, your ministry will grow and so will you.

However, before exploring the details of your “SHAPE” let’s see what the Bible says about MINISTRY and YOU!
Session One

Who Me ... ? A Minister?

Want to know what a priest looks like? Take a look in the mirror. Are you surprised? It may not be what you expected, but God did not stutter when he called YOU to be His priest.

Yes, YOU! His priest! Don’t believe me? Just check it out!

STUDY

1. Read the following verses and answer the question, “to whom do we minister?”

   a. And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

      To the _________________ (Acts 13:2).

   b. God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them.

      To _________________ (Hebrews 6:10).

   c. “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

      To the _________________ (Matthew 5:14-16)
2. In what areas of need do we minister?
   a. To people’s ___________________ needs.  
      *Matt. 10:42; 25:35, 36, 40*
   b. To people’s ___________________ needs.  
      *Ro. 12:15; 1 Thess 5:14*
   c. To people’s ___________________ needs.  
      *Colossians 1:28, 29*

3. Ministry and Me

You may be thinking, “The above observations on ministry are interesting, but what do they have to do with me?” Read the following verses and answer that very important question for yourself.

a. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”  
   *Ephesians 2:10.*
   I’VE BEEN ___________________ FOR MINISTRY!!

b. “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”  
   *2 Corinthians 5:18*
   I’VE BEEN ___________________ FOR MINISTRY!!

c. “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”  
   *1 Peter 2:9*
   I’VE BEEN ___________________ FOR MINISTRY!!

d. “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”  
   *1 Peter 4:10*
   I’VE BEEN ___________________ FOR MINISTRY!!

e. “Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”  
   *John 20:21*
   I’VE BEEN ___________________ FOR MINISTRY!!
f. “Your attitude **MUST** be like my own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve …” Matthew 20:28 (LB)

**I AM ___________________ TO MINISTER!!**

g. “So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.” Ro. 14:12

**I AM ___________________ FOR MY MINISTRY!!**

h. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

Colossians 3:23, 24

**I WILL BE ___________________ FOR MY MINISTRY!!**

---

**PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. Based on the verses above I have been saved to (check one) …

☐ a. Sit it out

☐ b. Soak it up

☐ c. Serve

2. Take a moment to reflect and record a few notes about this study.

a. What are your initial FEELINGS about yourself and ministry? (Positive / Negative)? Why?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

b. What is your history of service?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
c. What kind of experiences have you had? (Positive / Negative)? Explain.

Ministry is obviously a big part of God’s game plan for the Christian. The very thought may take your breath away. But what if you were uniquely designed to play a special and important part ... would you be open to discover your SHAPE for ministry? Leading you to make that discovery is the purpose of this study.

**GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Share with the group some of the people that through the years have made a significant contribution in helping you grow as a Christian.

2. If we don’t fulfill the ministry that God has given us, how does this effect the rest of the Christian family (the church)?

3. What are the barriers to ministry that people often face?

4. In your opinion, are these barriers more real or imagined?
5. How would you respond to the following statements?

“The church doesn’t exist for you, you exist for the church!”

“The church doesn’t exist for you, the church exists for the world.”
(John 13:34-35)

6. If you had absolute confidence you could get “in SHAPE” to contribute to “winning the game” for Christ would you be excited about moving forward? Explain how this might change you.

“For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory ... therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, ...”

2 Corinthians 3:9; 4:1

“Why didn’t anyone tell me I was supposed to do ministry?”

Ron Martindale
Bank of Bentonville
Session Two

Who Me? God’s Shaped Me for Ministry?

You and I are certainly God’s creation. Inside and out we have God’s fingerprints all over us. God has been molding and shaping you and me for ministry since we were born. In fact, God started uniquely shaping us even before we were born. No one ever had a more knowledgeable personal trainer to get them in S.H.A.P.E.!

This lesson will give us an overview of the entire S.H.A.P.E. concept.

1. Read Psalm 139:1-16. What observations would you make about God and yourself in light of the assertions of this passage.

Verses 1-4:

Verses 5-6:

Verses 7-10:

Verses 11-12:

Verses 13-14:

Verses 15-16:
As (God) begins to share life with us, we really are astonished to discover how well He already knows all about us. He, and only He, is totally familiar with all the intimate intricacies of my genetic makeup. He understands all the unique characteristics which have been inherited from my parents and grandparents. He knows my distinctive and special personality. Because of such incredible insight He understands my behavior far better than any human being.

—W. Phillip Keller

2. Read the apostle Paul’s comments in Ephesians 2:10 and answer the questions that follow

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

a. Who is God’s workmanship? (Hint: First person, singular)

b. Why were YOU created?

c. What works were you created to do?

d. How do you know what works God has prepared for you?
3. Re-read Psalm 139:13-16. In light of these verses respond to the statement:

“What God made me to BE ... determines what God intends me to DO.”

It is obvious that the unique manner in which God has SHAPED you will determine your fulfillment and fruitfulness in His ministry purposes for you. Your make-up determines your ministry. Unfortunately we have often tried to put square pegs in round holes. The SHAPES didn’t match.

4. It is time to give some Biblical support for this “S.H.A.P.E” we have been talking about. Read the following verses and fill in the acrostic.

a. “… Each man has his own (spiritual) gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.” 1 Corinthians 7:7b

S ______________________

b. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases..“ Proverbs 21:1
“For it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will (heart) and the deed, for his own chosen purpose!” Phil. 2:13 (NEB)

H _______________________

PEOPLE SUCCEED WHEN THEY ARE HAVING FUN.

c. “There are different abilities to perform service …”I Cor. 12:6
“I (God) … have given (them) skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts …”  Exodus 31:3
“God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.” Rom.12:6  (LB)

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

P ______________________

e. “At a time when you should be teaching others, you need teachers yourselves to repeat to you the ABC’s of God’s revelation to men . . . “Solid food” is only for the adult, that is, for the man who has developed by experience his power to discriminate between what is good and what is evil.” Hebrews 5:12, 14 (Phillips)

E ______________________

Your ministry will be most effective and fulfilling when you are using your GIFTS and ABILITIES in the area of your HEART’S DESIRE and in a way that best expresses your PERSONALITY and EXPERIENCE! - Rick Warren, Pastor

SUCCESS IS DOING WHAT GOD CREATED ME TO DO!

❖ PERSONAL APPLICATION

You have studied the S.H.A.P.E. concept . . . and now . . . how about you? In the weeks to come we will look at each aspect of your S.H.A.P.E., but why not begin to “prime the pump.” Jot down a few observations about yourself . . . keeping Paul’s encouragement in mind. “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” - Romans 12:3-5
__________________________’s Ministry “SHePMe”
(Your name)

**Spiritual gifts (What am I gifted to do?):**

- 
- 
- 

**Heart (What do I love to do?):**

- 
- 
- 

**Abilities (What talents and skills do I have?):**

- 
- 
- 

**Personality (What is my unique style?):**

- 
- 
- 

**Experiences (How have life’s experiences shaped me?):**

- 
- 
- 

It is just a beginning. Remember, you’re a SHAPELY saint in God’s eyes!! Why not pause and quietly re-read the cover of this study guide ... give thanks!
1. In architecture, “form follows function.” What does this mean? Would this also be true in ministry as it relates to our study of S.H.A.P.E.? Give examples.

2. Team up with the person in your group that you know least about and share your initial observations about your S.H.A.P.E.

3. Team up with the person you know best (other than your spouse) and get some feedback about your preliminary S.H.A.P.E. observations.

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah 1:5

Shirley Jacobson’s flare for making delicious cookies has been a big hit each Sunday morning as she shares her goodies with the Ministry Teams serving in the Children’s Theater.
SESSION THREE
Who Me? Gifted for Ministry?

“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.” 1 Corinthians 12:1

Everyone loves to receive gifts. Who could imagine going to Grandma’s and Grandpa’s house for Christmas and then not unwrapping the gifts we received … just letting them collect dust in the attic year after year. I’m sure it would be a disappointment to our grandparents and a greater loss for ourselves.

Unfortunately, that’s exactly what most (yes, most) Christians do with their God-given spiritual gifts, and the whole body of Christ suffers loss with them.

Fellowship, in the next three sessions (3,4,5) we will have the exciting experience of unwrapping our spiritual gifts. In this session we will discover the Who, What, When, Where and Why of spiritual gifts . . . their PURPOSE and FUNCTION.

STUDY


1. Why did Paul feel the need to make the Corinthians more knowledgeable about spiritual gifts? (12:1,4-6)

2. In discovering your own S.H.A.P.E., what principles might be drawn from (v. 4)
3. The Spirit obviously brings great diversity to the body, but who gets the gifts and for what purpose (12:7)? To reinforce your understanding of the purpose of spiritual gifts, read the verses and record your answers below.

a. “Each one (of you), as a good manager of God’s different gifts, must use for the good of others, the spiritual gift he has received from God.” 1 Peter 4:10 (GN)

“The Holy Spirit displays God’s power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church.” 1 Cor. 12:7 (LB)

**Spiritual gifts are not for my benefit, but _____________.**

b. “He gave gifts to men . . . to prepare God’s people for works of service . . . until we all reach unity in the faith . . . and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Eph. 4:8,12-13

**Spiritual gifts produce _______________ and _______________ in our church family.**

4. Turn back to 1 Cor. 12. Who decides who will receive what gifts (v. 11)?
**The Gifted: (Read 12:12-31)**

5. What do all Christians share in common regardless of their gifts, social status, or S.H.A.P.E.? (vv. 12-13)

6. Why do you think some Christians feel inferior in the body of Christ? (vv. 14-20)

7. Who put the body together, and what criteria was used? (v. 18)

8. What does verse 18 suggest to us about comparison, competition, judging, etc.?
   a. How does verse 18 encourage you?
   b. Do you think God loves someone more or less based on the specific gifts that He gives to that person? Explain.
9. How does Paul seek to stop the development of an attitude of superiority within the church? (vv. 21-25)

a. Can you give an example of how your church seeks to undermine a spirit of superiority in the body?

10. What is Paul’s purpose in this discussion? (vv. 25-27)

In the biblical language of the New Testament the word translated “gift” in verse four is “CHARISMA.” It means “to show favor; an undeserved benefit.” In the NT it is used only of gifts and graces imparted from God. Therefore, we don’t earn them or have a part in determining what gifts we receive. The gifts we have is a sovereign choice of God for us. This should help us feel special, responsible and sober about what we have . . . and remove any sense of competition between believers.

**PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. As you discover your spiritual gifts, and later your S.H.A.P.E., what attitudes should you avoid? 
   Toward yourself?

   Toward others?
GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In light of this study, what meaning would you give to the following terms:
   a. Gift elevation-
   b. Gift rejection-
   c. Gift projection-
   d. Gift manipulation-
   e. Gift counterfeit-

2. Why is it important to remember that we don’t all manifest the same gifts? (vv. 29, 30)

3. What kind of dynamic is created when we realize no one person has all the gifts needed for the building up of the body?

4. Give an example of how the principles studied could positively effect the ministry and relationships in your small group.

5. What new perspective do you have on your place in the body of Christ?

6. Case study: Sarah and Beth have both just “graduated” from a lifestyle evangelism training class. Beth is spiritually gifted as an evangelist, Sarah is not. A year later Beth has led several people to Christ while Sarah, though faithful in her witnessing, has not. When asked why she was such an effective evangelist, Beth replies, “I just love the Lord with all my heart.”
   
a. Discuss the rationale, reality, and consequences of Beth’s statement.
   b. What other observations would you make?
Session Four
Who, me . . .? What Gifts?

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” 1 Corinthians 12:7

You have been introduced to the purpose and use of spiritual gifts. Now it’s time to look at the gifts themselves. Before we begin unwrapping the gifts, however, let’s take a review quiz.

[*REVIEW: The Bible and Spiritual Gifts*]

**A Spiritual Gift:** A *special ability, given by the Holy Spirit to every believer at their conversion, to be used to minister to others, and therefore extend and deepen the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth.*

**PRINCIPLES TO PONDER**

1. Only _____________ have spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 2:14
2. Every Christian has at least _________________ gift. 1 Cor. 7:7
3. The _________________ decides what gifts I get. 1 Cor. 12:11
4. No one receives _________________ the gifts. 1 Cor. 12:27-30
5. No single gift is given to _________________. 1 Cor. 12:29-30
6. You can’t ________________ a spiritual gift. Eph. 4:7
7. The gifts I’m given are _________________. Rom. 11:29
8. I am to _________________ the gifts God gives me. 1 Tim. 4:14 (they are given in seed form; they are like muscles)
9. It’s a sin _________________ the gift God gave me. 1 Cor. 4:1-2 & Matt. 25:14-30
10. Using my gifts ____________ God. John 15:8
Identifying The Spiritual Gifts: On the chart below list the gifts you find mentioned in each passage. A few gifts are mentioned twice; you only need to write them the first time mentioned.

Directions:
As you read each Scripture passage, identify the gift mentioned and write that spiritual gift in the space provided.

I Corinthians 12:8-10
For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. NASB

I Corinthians 12:28
And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, the gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. NASB

Romans 12:6-8
And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortations; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. NASB

Ephesians 4:11
And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers. NASB
I Peter 4:9-10

Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. NASB

Exodus 31:3

And I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship. NASB

I Timothy 2:1-2

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. NASB

Psalm 150:3-5

Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals. NASB

1 Corinthians 14:26

What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, ...Let all things be done for edification. NASB

2. Is it possible that there can be other gifts that are not mentioned in Scripture?

__________________________________________________________________________________

3. Can you think of other gifts that seem to be implied in Scripture?

__________________________________________________________________________________

4. Could there be gifts that are no longer active?

__________________________________________________________________________________
The answers to questions 2-4 above are ultimately found in God’s mysterious will. However, the fact that every list of spiritual gifts is different at least suggests the Holy Spirit had no desire to give us an exhaustive listing. It is likely that these lists are illustrative, not exhaustive.

**PERSONAL APPLICATION**

Now let’s begin unwrapping your gifts. We’ve divided this list of gifts into five categories: Serving gifts, Speaking gifts, Sign gifts, Support gifts and Other Possible gifts. As you begin reading through the descriptions below simply check off your initial impressions concerning yourself. Remember, you have at least one and perhaps several spiritual gifts.

**SERVING GIFTS**

**ADMINISTRATION (Organization) 1 Corinthians 14:40**
The supernatural ability to organize and manage people, resources, and time for effective ministry. The ability to coordinate many details in a purposeful and strategic manner, thus executing the plans of leadership.
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

**DISCERNMENT (1 Corinthians 12:10)**
The supernatural ability to distinguish right from wrong, truth from error, and to give an immediate evaluation based on God’s truth. The ability to discern whether the source of a person’s motives (or an experience) is from Satan, self, or God’s Spirit.
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

**FAITH (1 Corinthians 12:9; 13:2)**
The supernatural ability to trust God for what cannot be seen and to act on God’s promises, regardless of what the circumstances indicate. The willingness to risk failure in pursuit of a God-given vision, expecting God to handle the obstacles.
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

**GIVING (Romans 12:8)**
The supernatural ability to generously and cheerfully contribute material resources and/or money so that the Body may grow and be strengthened. The supernatural ability to earn and manage money so it may be given to support the ministry of others.
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.
HELPS (Service) 1 Corinthians 12:28
The supernatural 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. The propensity to invest your own talents, time and energy in helping someone else accomplish the purposes of Christ, thus helping others increase the effectiveness of their own ministry and “S.H.A.P.E.”

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

HOSPITALITY (1 Peter 4:9-10)
The supernatural ability to make others feel warmly welcomed, accepted, and comfortable. The supernatural ability to coordinate social factors that promote fellowship.

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

LEADERSHIP (Romans 12:8)
The supernatural ability to clarify and communicate the purpose and direction (“vision”) of a ministry in a way that attracts others to get involved. The supernatural ability to recognize the “S.H.A.P.E.” of others and involve them in effective accomplishment of ministry. The supernatural ability to motivate others by example to work together in accomplishing a ministry goal.

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

MERCY (Romans 12:8)
The supernatural ability to detect physical, mental and emotional pain and empathize with those who are suffering, whether in or outside of the church family. The supernatural ability to provide compassionate and cheerful support to those experiencing distress, crisis, or pain.

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

SPEAKING GIFTS

EXHORTATION (Encouragement) (Ro. 12:8)
The supernatural ability to motivate God’s people to apply and act on biblical principles, especially when they are discouraged or wavering in their faith. The supernatural ability to bring out the best in others (by encouragement or rebuke) and challenge them to develop their potential.

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

KNOWLEDGE (1 Corinthians 12:8)
The supernatural ability to discover, collect, analyze, organize and communicate 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.

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

PROPHECY (Preaching) (1 Cor. 14:3, 24, 25)
The supernatural ability to publicly communicate God’s Word in an inspired way that convinces unbelievers and both challenges and comforts believers. The ability to persuasively declare God’s will.

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.
TEACHING (1 Corinthians 14:26)

The supernatural ability to educate God’s people by clearly explaining and applying the Bible in a way that brings understanding and enlightenment. The ability to equip and train other believers for ministry.
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

WISDOM (1 Corinthians 2:6-16;12:8)

The supernatural ability to understand how God’s Word relates to life’s experiences and to communicate God’s perspective on specific life situations in a simple and understandable way.
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

SIGN GIFTS

HEALING (Acts 5:14-16)

The supernatural ability, at the prompting and through the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring about in specific instances physical, emotional or spiritual healing. In the biblical pattern, healings were attendant to ministry and were a validation of the person, their ministry and the truth proclaimed.
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

INTERPRETATIONS OF TONGUES (1 Cor. 12:10, 30)

The supernatural ability to interpret or fully explain in the common language of those present what was spoken by another exercising their spiritual gift of tongues.
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

KINDS OF TONGUES (Acts 2:4-21;10:46)

The supernatural ability to speak in a language unknown to the speaker that declares the mighty deeds of God, gives thanks to and blesses God, but which may be discernable to a person familiar with that language. (1 Cor. 12:10, 28,30; 14:14-17, 22)
- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

- Why We Do Not Practice This Gift in Our Services:

This gift caused such a problem in the Corinthian church, Paul had to write an entire chapter (1 Cor. 14) of guidelines.

1. It is for personal edification, not for the whole church. “He who speaks in tongue edifies himself, but he who preaches edifies the church.” 1 Cor. 14:4

2. We are to focus on building up others, not ourselves. “Unless you speak intelligible words . . . you will just be speaking into the air . . . try to excel in the gifts that build up the church.” 1 Cor. 14:9 & 12

3. It confuses unbelievers in the service. “. . . if some unbelievers come in, will they not say you are out of you mind?” 1 Cor. 14:23

4. Ideally, it is not meant to be used in the worship service. “In the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brothers, stop thinking like children! 1 Cor. 14:19-20
“The gift of speaking God’s message should be under the speaker’s control, because God has not called us to be disorderly, but peaceful.” 1 Cor. 14:32-33 (TEV)

MIRACLES (Acts 5:12-14; Acts 14:3)
The supernatural ability, at the prompting and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to effect acts, events or conditions outside the realm of natural causes and effects, yet which are readily discernible through the natural senses. According to the biblical patterns, miracles are attendant to ministry and are a validation of the person, their ministry and the truth proclaimed.

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

SUPPORT GIFTS (Gifted Ministers)

APOSTLE (Missionary) (Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 1:11)
One who has been called out and set apart by the Holy Spirit and through the church sent out to preach the gospel, proclaim the word of God, teaching, exhorting and strengthening the souls of those who respond to their message. It is a multi-gifted person whose ministry is to exercise the gifts given in establishing new churches. (Acts 13:2-5, 14:3, 21-23; Romans 15:20)

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

EVANGELIST (Ephesians 4:11; Acts 8:26-40)
A gifted person equipped for a special ministry primarily to unbelievers to communicate the Good News of Jesus in a positive, non-threatening way. (Note: Philip, who was one of “the seven” original deacons, is the only named evangelist (Acts 21:8) although Paul told Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist”. The only other use of the term is in Ephesians. It literally means “one who preaches the good news”, which was also an important task of apostles as they went out “to preach the gospel” and establish churches. It appears that as a specific term, it developed late in the recorded New Testament period.)

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

PASTOR/TEACHER (Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:17-32)
(Note: The grammar in Ephesians indicates that these two terms focus on ministry aspects of one person.) This is that person in a local church who ministry is to “shepherd the flock,” or show great care and concern for the overall well being of the members, and “to teach”, or to clearly explain with relevant application the truths of Scripture. The overall goal of the pastor/teacher is to equip the saints for ministry. This requires multiple gifts, but different ones will have different combinations of gifts, so the effectiveness of their ministry in the several areas will not be the same.

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.

PROPHET (Prophetess)
(1 Cor. 12:28, 14:3, 29-33; Acts 21:9; Eph. 4:11)
One whose ministry focus is to edify, exhort and console primarily believers from the word of God. (Note: Prophets are also to pass judgment on what has been preached by other prophets, yet each remains humble and submissive to the other prophets.)

- I’m pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don’t think I have this one.
OTHER POSSIBLE GIFTS

CRAFTSMANSHIP/ CREATIVE COMMUNICATION
(Exodus 31:3-5)
The supernatural 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.
- I'm pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don't think I have this one.

INTERCESSION (Colossians 1:9-12)
The supernatural 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.
- I'm pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don't think I have this one.

MUSIC (1 Corinthians 14:26; Eph. 5:18-19)
The supernatural ability to celebrate God's presence through music, either vocal or instrumental, and to participate in leading the church family in worship.
- I'm pretty sure I have this gift.
- I may have this gift.
- I don't think I have this one.
GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Take time sharing as a group your initial observations about your spiritual gifting. Get some feedback and give a little also. Consider breaking up into smaller “buzz groups” of two or three so everyone can have an opportunity to share.

2. Clarify any questions you have about specific spiritual gifts.

3. Discuss your thoughts and experience of the following “Insight.”

IT’S EASIER TO DISCOVER YOUR GIFTS THROUGH MINISTRY INVOLVEMENT THAN TO DISCOVER YOUR MINISTRY THROUGH GIFTS INVESTIGATION.

Turn to the back (p. 60) and on MY SHAPE PROFILE, list the spiritual gifts you believe you have been given. As you go through the rest of these lessons, record your discoveries so your SHAPE will become more clear.
SESSION 5
WHO ME ...? A LOVER ...?

Have you ever had someone question your motives? Motive is important in whatever we do. Whenever our motives are wrong we can quickly be led astray . . . lose our focus and our effectiveness.

Hopefully you are excited about your new-found spiritual gifts; hopefully growing in your expectancy of great things to come. But be careful that your motive and focus doesn’t settle on the gift itself . . . and how good it makes you feel because you have received something so valuable from the Holy Spirit.

Some of the Corinthians had become boastful and proud of their self-perceived status in exercising their gifts. Others felt left out or put down because they didn’t receive the attention that some did. The result was jealousy and division (1 Corinthians 12:22-25). Paul’s exhortation is not so much to make them aware of all the gifts, but how to use the gifts.

What is the secret to keeping the proper focus and pure motives? What is the governing force for effective use of your gifts? Let’s find the answers.

 STUDY

In preparation read 1 Corinthians 12 and 13.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:31. How does this verse serve as a transition between the two chapters?

2. In 13:1-3, what essential ingredient gives effectiveness to the gifts?

3. How does this ingredient in the exercise of any and all gifts relate to the purpose of the gifts? (Refer to 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11 and Ephesians 4:14-16).
4. All the words Paul uses in verses 4-7 describe an action rather than simply being nouns. Why? Who is the object of all these activities?

5. In verse 13, it reads that of faith, hope and love, the greatest is love. What makes love the greatest? (consider verses 8-10)

6. Read Galatians 5:22-23. List the qualities named there. “But the fruit of the Spirit is …”

   a. In your opinion what is the connection between Galatians 5:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 13?

   b. (Hint) 1 Corinthians 13:2 says, “Without love I am nothing.” Where does such love come from?

7. Read John 15:1-8. What light do these verses shed on the issue of “bearing fruit”?
Walking by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16) and being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:15-21) really describe a lifestyle, not occasional activities we try to work into our busy schedules. John 15 tells us what Jesus Himself had to say about our lifestyle and the power to live it. Over and over He uses the term “abide.” That word means to “remain” or “stay”. Literally, it is often used in the sense to “live, dwell or lodge” somewhere. And so, figuratively as here in John 15, it is used of someone who does not leave the realm or sphere in which he finds himself … and that sphere is the very life of Christ.

8. In your own words how would you explain the relationship between 1) Abiding in Christ, (2) Manifesting the fruit of the Spirit and (3) Exercising the gifts of the Spirit.

a. What healthy examples of this inter-dependence have you seen? Explain.

Abiding in Jesus results in the fruit of the Spirit being formed in our life (“love” being supreme). These fruit, often called “the Graces of the Spirit” then become the context out of which we exercise our spiritual gifts. Therefore, the development of the graces should govern the exercise of the gifts (“graces before gifts”). In this way the body is unified and built up in love.

**PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. If any gift is not exercised in love, as a fruit of the Spirit and as a “manifestation of the Spirit,” then it cannot have as great an impact on building up the church since it is a work of the flesh. What caution do you need to take to insure you are “in the Spirit” and not “in the flesh?” What part might prayer play in this? (John 15:7)
2. What do you struggle with the most as you seek to abide in Christ and His love? Is this a part of a battle we all are fighting (Galatians 5:13-17)? Which of the characteristics of love from 1 Corinthians 13 do you struggle with the most . . . would most like to see developed in your life?

3. How does your gift, exercised in love for building up the body and for unity, become a witness to the world? (John 13:35 and 17:21)

**GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Share with the group an instance when someone in using their special gift built you up, comforted you, exhorted you, came to your aid, etc. How did you feel? How did that affect your relationship with that person?

2. In Galatians 5:22-23, the word “fruit” of the Spirit is singular, not plural. It is not “fruits” of the Spirit. How does that affect your understanding of the list that follows? Why do you think Paul listed “self-control” last? What do you think of the statement, “All the fruit of the Spirit flows out of love?”

3. Do you think there might be some relationship between “bearing much fruit” in John 15 and “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5? Is it possible to have one without the other?

“By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.” John 15:8
SESSION 6
Who Me . . . ? A Heart for Ministry?

The second step in discovering your S.H.A.P.E. for ministry is to have a “Heart” check-up. The Bible says your heart expresses the very core of your being. No doubt! People are passionate. However, the direction and intensity of our passion depends on that to which we have given our heart. The Christian who has given his heart to Christ can trust on the Lord to birth in him a unique passion . . . a longing or desire to make a difference. This passion is God-given (planted in you before birth) and is in harmony with your natural likes and dislikes. He has uniquely designed us to serve in ways that we find motivating, fulfilling and fruitful. Let’s see if we can discover that vein of gold that runs through your heart.

STUDY

In preparation read Psalm 139:1-16

1. Perhaps a good place to start evaluating our heart is to first consider the Maker of our heart. Let’s review passages we studied in session two and answer these questions.


   b. Read Ephesians 2:10. Was there a plan in God’s mind for your S.H.A.P.E. When did He put us in His plan? (see Eph.1:4; Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15,16)
In Psalms 139:14 David gives thanks to God for he realizes he is “fearfully and wonderfully made, wonderful are Thy works.” The word “wonderful” relates to God’s works. His “wonders” are the very acts He Himself has done. Consider the two passages above and how they relate to God’s creating us as individuals. Now contrast Psalm 78:11, “And they forgot His deeds, and His miracles [or wonderful works] that He had shown them.” Throughout the Old Testament the wonders, the wonderful works of God, are acts that are miraculous and outside the realm of natural occurrences, and are performed by Him to demonstrate His power and love for His people ... and so He did when He created you.

2. Read each of the following passages and write at least one truth concerning the heart from each one.

1 Chron. 28:9

__________________________________________________________________________

1 Sam. 16:7

__________________________________________________________________________

Psalm 139:23

__________________________________________________________________________

Prov. 4:23

__________________________________________________________________________

Matthew 12:34

__________________________________________________________________________
Heb. 4:12

3. Does the heart have a natural inclination of its own? What is it for the pre-Christian? (Jer. 17:9) For the Christian? (Rom. 6:17)

4. Carefully read these passages that deal with God and His relationship to His people. What parallels do you see between the passages? What promises are there? What conditions are associated with the promises?

   a. Proverbs 3:5-6:

   b. Psalms 37:3-5:

There is a mysterious faculty in every person’s innermost being which Scripture often calls the “heart.” The pre-Christian is frequently deceived by the condition and desire of the heart (even though God knows its true condition). However, when God established a personal relationship with an individual, the heart becomes responsive to God’s desires, and finds itself growing in harmony with God’s plan for involvement in good works.
PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Let’s do a HEART ASSESSMENT … there are no right or wrong answers. Just relax and have fun with it.
   
a. If you could wave a magic wand and know that you couldn’t fail, what would you do?

b. The people I like to help most are:
   Age?
   Type?
   Condition?

c. The issues I care about most are: (complete).

d. At the end of my life I would like to look back and know that I made a difference by … (complete).

2. Stay on the treadmill. We are about to get a reading on your “heart.”
   
a. Describe briefly four or five positive experiences you have had in the course of growing up. These are things you did well and enjoyed doing.
Grade school years: ________________________________

As a teenager: ________________________________

Early adulthood (20’s): ________________________________

“Thirty something” to the present: ________________________________

b. What common themes do you see?
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

3. One five-thousand dollar a day consultant suggests that you can get an insightful reading on your innermost desires (heart) if you can recall your most fulfilling activities during your fifth grade year (before life got hormonally complicated).

a. Think back to when you were in the fifth grade. (Long way for some of us, huh?). Visualize yourself out on the playground.

____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

4. Based on my observations and reflections, I sense I have a heart for:
(complete)
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Psalms 18:19 says that God “rescued me, because He delighted in me.” How does knowing that God, who was personally responsible for your very being and who personally delights in you, affects your self-worth? If He delights in you, do you delight in yourself? What’s the condition of your heart?

2. Regardless of what gift(s) He may have given you, how does knowing that God has a specific purpose for you affect your heart’s desire to serve? (scare? excite? paralyze? motivate? other?)

3. What vision or expectation do you have to develop your gift(s) and minister in the building up of the church? (Will you have a local impact? Regional impact? International impact? - See Rom. 12:3)

4. What might you do to help someone find their “niche” in ministry?

Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider what great things He has done for you.”

1 Samuel 12:24

Turn to the back (p. 60) and on “My SHAPE Profile” make a concise statement concerning what you want your heart to be, even though you may not quite be there yet.
SESSION SEVEN

Who Me...? Created with Abilities...? . . . and a Unique Personality?

That’s right ... abilities! . . . and personality! . . . and now you’re discovering
the S.H.A.P.E. God created you to be. You have an idea about your spiritual
gifts (sessions 3-5); your heart checked out (session 6). Now in this session
we are going to pick up the pace, exploring two more elements of S.H.A.P.E.:
ABILITIES AND PERSONALITY. Let’s get moving …

STUDY

Abilities: Throughout Scripture, God’s people have manifested various
abilities. Read the verses below and record the abilities and/or vocations sug-
gested.

Genesis 13:2 (Abram)-

Exodus 17:9,13 (Joshua)-

Judges 4:4 (Deborah)-

Ruth 4:13 (Ruth)-

1 Samuel 16:11-12 (David)-

Nehemiah 1:11 (Nehemiah)-
Amos 7:14 (Amos)

Luke 5:27 (Matthew)

Colossians 4:14 (Luke)

Acts 16:14 (Lydia)

Mark 1:16-20 (Peter, Andrew, James, John)

God has always loved to choose His people “right off the streets.” He used the abilities of many to carry on His work, and the vocations of many located them at the right place at the right time to be used.

**PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. What is your current vocation?

2. What other jobs or skills have you experienced with satisfaction?
3. Review the list below and CIRCLE the activities you have experienced with satisfaction.

**Artistic:** to conceptualize, picture, draw, paint, photograph, or make rendering

**Classifying:** to systematize and file books, data, records and materials so they can be retrieved easily

**Composing:** to write music or lyrics

**Counseling:** to listen, encourage and guide with sensitivity

**Counting:** to work with numbers, data or money

**Decorating:** to beautify a setting for a special event

**Editing:** to proofread or rewrite

**Entertaining:** to perform, act, dance, speak, magic

**Evaluating:** to analyze data and draw conclusions

**Feeding:** to create meals for large or small groups

**Graphics:** to lay out, design, create visual displays or banners

**Interviewing:** to discover what others are really like

**Landscaping:** to do gardening and work with plants

**Managing:** to supervise people to accomplish a task or event and coordinate the details involved

**Mechanical operating:** to operate equipment, tools or machinery

**Planning:** to strategize, design and organize programs and events

**Promoting:** to advertise or promote events and activities

**Public Relations:** to handle complaints and unhappy customers with care and courtesy

**Recall:** to remember or recall names and faces

**Recording and Reproducing:** to type, copy, file, etc.

**Recruiting:** to enlist and motivate people to get involved

**Repairing:** to fix, restore, maintain
**Researching:** to read, gather information, collect data

**Resourceful:** to search out and find inexpensive materials or resources needed

**Serving:** ability to assist and help others

**Teaching:** to explain, train, demonstrate, tutor

**Welcome:** to convey warmth, develop rapport, making others feel comfortable

**Writing:** to write articles, letters, books

**Others:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athletic</th>
<th>Missions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical knowledge</td>
<td>Musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Team Player</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I feel my most valuable personal asset is …

5. How has God used your abilities and skills to help others?

Recognizing the relationship between your natural abilities, skills and the ministry God has prepared for you is important to discovering your overall S.H.A.P.E. . . . now let’s get a reading on what “style” your ministry will take.
STUDY

Personality: In preparation read 1 Cor. 12:14-26 (Review Ps. 139:1-16)

1. Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”

What does it suggest about each person having a unique personality? (If you are not sure, consider the “Insight” below).

The verse doesn’t mean “train up a child as you see him.” Rather, “if you want your training to be meaningful and wise, be observant and discover your child’s way, and adapt your training accordingly.” Strengthening this idea is the word way. This Hebrew term literally means “road” or “path.” Metaphorically, it is “a characteristic.” Therefore, the thought is, “according to his characteristic, his manner.” In Proverbs 22:6, the word way is used in the same sense: “Train up a child in keeping with his characteristics.” And his characteristics are distinct and set. There is a bent already established within every child God places in our care. Each is not, in fact, a pliable lump of clay but has been bent, prescribed according to a predetermined pattern … Whatever the case, they’re all individuals. They weren’t created on the assembly line. They were handcrafted, individually, by God …

- Charles Swindoll

PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. To see how your personality is related to your fulfillment and fruitfulness in ministry, follow the steps of the exercise below.

   a. In the space below, write your name:
b. Now write your name with your opposite hand:


c. What happened!? When you tried to do something that was not natural to you, did you . . .

* feel uncomfortable?
* take extra time and effort?
* still do a lousy job at it!?  

Seeing the person God created you to be is essential to your effectiveness and fulfillment in service. Like a sculpture, God has fashioned you to show forth His glory in the most natural way. Let’s explore further what His “way” with you is.

2. There are many helpful (and complex) personality inventories. A simple assessment, however, will help in revealing your S.H.A.P.E. for ministry.

**Directions For Personality Survey:**

In each box below, circle every word or phrase that describes a consistent character trait of yours. Total the number circled in each box.

*(Note: This test is only meant to stimulate initial thinking about YOU as a unique personality. For further information on personality types and tests, see The Two Sides of Love by Gary Smalley and John Trent, page 176).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Takes Charge</th>
<th>Bold</th>
<th>Self-reliant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>Assertive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision maker</td>
<td>Firm</td>
<td>Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>Goal driven</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoys challenges</td>
<td>Adventurous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Let’s do it now!”

Total: ________
Deliberate  Discerning  Controlled
Detailed    Reserved    Analytical
Predictable Inquisitive Practical
Precise Orderly Persistent
Factual Scheduled

“How was it done in the past?”
Total: ________

Takes risks Fun-loving Visionary
Likes variety Motivator Enjoys change
Energetic Creative Very verbal
Group oriented Promoter Mixes easily
Avoids details Optimistic

“Trust me! It’ll work out!”
Total: ________

Loyal Adaptable Non-demanding
Sympathetic Even keel Thoughtful
Avoids conflict Nurturing Enjoys routine
Patient Dislikes change Tolerant
Deep relationships Good listener

“Let’s keep things the way they are.”
Total: ________

3. What does all this mean? Well, the four letters at the top of each section stand for four basic personality types (represented by four of Jesus’s disciples: Paul, Thomas, Simon Peter, John). In fact, everyone is a combination of all four types, but most of us have a set of traits that are more dominant. What was your most dominant trait? Compare with the summary below.
Paul, as a dogmatic, domineering, driving, demanding doer, is a good example of the ‘P’ personality. Before he was controlled by the Spirit he was persecuting Christians (Acts 22:4, 20) and afterwards was being persecuted (1 Corinthians 1:8,9). “Without the control of the Spirit, he was out to destroy people and churches. Under the control of the Spirit, he was able to help people, start new churches, and write most of the New Testament. It was the same type personality that helped him move onward and upward in both causes.”

Thomas is the ‘T’ personality who wants to get all the facts and analyze them before making any decisions. These people are very detailed and are seldom wrong because they are so careful. “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nail, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” There can never be too many supporting facts; one is not enough. But the Lord did not put Thomas down, He gave him the opportunity to analyze the data and then make his decision (John 20:24-28).

John is a good example of the quiet, unassuming, supportive personality of the ‘J’. He refers to himself as “the other disciple” in his gospel and focuses all the glory, honor, and praise on Jesus and the other disciples. He was the only disciple not to die a martyr’s death. Maybe he was so nice, quiet and unassuming that he was banished to Patmos instead of being put to death. But he wasn’t perfect, for a careful reading of the gospels reveals that while Peter denied the Master openly three times, John stood by in silence.

Simon Peter is the typical ‘S’ type personality – impetuous, quick to speak and act then realizing he had erred. Think of his boast about being willing to die for the Lord then denying Him three times (Matthew 26:74, 75). But when the Spirit filled all the disciples at Pentecost, it was Peter who rose to speak boldly before the multitudes (Acts 2). Just because you have failed in a situation does not mean you are a failure as a person. This personality type does not usually do well at detail, and note that Peter even dictated one of the two short letters that we have in the New Testament. (1 Peter 5:12)

Note: These Biblical character insights have been adapted from Positive Personality Profiles by Dr. Robert Rohm. The letter designations were a special adaptation for this study.
1. Huddle Time:
   Get into groups of three and each one share the results of your observations and assessments about your abilities. Be prepared to give feedback to your fellow group members based on your growing relationship with them.

2. Still in groups of three, two of you share with the third group member your impressions of his/her predominant personality. Is there agreement? Manage your time so everyone gets to share in the exercise.

You are really beginning to get into S.H.A.P.E. Keep up the good work. Next session we will wrap up your S.H.A.P.E. by evaluating your experiences.

***

“And to one (Jesus) gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability. . . . Mt. 25:15

Turn to the back (p. 60) and on “My SHAPE Profile” make a concise statement concerning what personality and abilities you have that equip you for a special ministry.
SESSION 8
Who me…? Experienced in Ministry …?

“Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.”
Philippians 1: 12

A recent advertisement says, “No one does it better than you!” And when it comes to ministry you can hear a hearty “Amen” from God in heaven.
Perhaps you draw back and say, “but I’m not qualified.” But, in fact, you are qualified. You have been prepared in the “school of hard knocks” … and His grace. Let’s check out the Scriptures …

❖ STUDY

1. Read Hebrews 4:15-16. What was God’s purpose in having Jesus experience all the kinds of temptations we face?

2. How is Christ a model in preparing us to minister to others?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4. How does God involve Himself in our trials and bring comfort to us?

4. What is the relationship between our ability to comfort others in their time of need and God’s comfort of us during trials?

God Doesn’t Waste Pain … or Experiences
1. To get a grip on how your EXPERIENCES have S.H.A.P.E.D. you, pray for discernment and record your reflections under the following categories.
   a. "My Spiritual Experiences" (Memorable decisions and time with God)
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   b. "My Painful Experiences" (Memorable hurts, trials and lessons learned)
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   c. "My Educational Experiences" (Favorite subjects, seminars, etc.)
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   d. "My Ministry Experiences" (How I have served in the past)
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

2. When you have been “stretched to the limit,” what kind of things would bring you comfort?
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

3. How do you respond to others who are experiencing situations that you have experienced previously? Are you drawn to them or do you want to avoid them? Explain.
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
4. Write a prayer to the Lord about his using your experiences to help others.

   ________________________________________________________________
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   ❖ GROUP DISCUSSION

   Huddle Time

   1. Share insights from your experiences as to how God was present and comforted you enabling you to comfort someone else.

   2. How does this reflection on past experiences prepare you for future challenges in life?

   3. Make a concise statement on your Profile of the major relevant experiences that helped SHAPE you for ministry. Consider writing experiences you would like to have.

   “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.”

   Galatians 6:9
SESSION NINE
WHO ME . . . ? YES ME!
“I HAVE A S.H.A.P.E. FOR MINISTRY”
“For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.
1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

Well, our goal to discover our S.H.A.P.E. for ministry is almost complete … but we can't stop yet. Let’s drop in on one of Jesus’ last conversations with Peter.

STUDY

Read John 21:15-25

1. What basic question did Jesus ask Peter three times? (15,16,17)

2. Do you see any significance in Jesus asking Peter three times? (Matt. 26:75)

3. What basic charge did Jesus give Peter three times? (15,16,17)

4. In light of John 10:14-15 how might Peter have understood Jesus’ charge, “Take care of my sheep”?

5. Peter (for once) apparently felt uncomfortable being the center of attention and wanted to shift the attention to John. What lessons can we learn from Jesus’ response to him? (21:20-22)

The record of final conversations is important and powerful. Here Jesus wants to communicate to you and me (using Peter) that He will never give up on us. Even if we deny Him, He will call us back to love and service. He also wants us to assume responsibility for the unique ministry He has SHAPED us for ... “YOU FOLLOW ME.”

**PERSONAL APPLICATION**

1. If Jesus asked you the same question He asked Peter three times (do you love me) how would you respond? (some, lots, at times, what about him, etc)

2. Knowing that the Lord forgives past failures in service, what in your past do you need to give up to Him so you can move on?

3. How might the fear of competition or comparison keep you from effectively using your gifts for ministry?
4. If we are responsible to the Lord alone for the ministry He gave each of us, how does Jesus’ charge, “You Follow Me,” apply to you and the ministry He gave you?

5. Reflecting on the opening passage from 1 Thess. 2, who will be part of your glory and joy when He returns? What fruit of your ministry brings you joy now?

6. Over the course of this SHAPE study where have you been most enlightened? Where have you seen the most progress?

**GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Discuss the implications of the statement:

   “It’s easier to discover your gifts through ministry than to discover your ministry through your gifts.”

2. As we come and prepare to share in the Lord’s Supper, meditate on this very relevant quote from J.I. Packer in his book, “Knowing God.”

   Knowing God is a relationship calculated to thrill a man’s heart. What happens is that the Almighty Creator, the Lord of Hosts, the great God before whom the nations are as a drop in the bucket, comes to him and begins to talk to him, through the words of scripture... He comes to realize as he listens that God is actually opening His heart to him, making friends with him, and enlisting him a colleague ... It is a staggering thing, but it is true — the relationship in which sinful human beings know God is one in which God, so to speak, takes them on His staff, to be henceforth His fellow-workers (1 Cor 3:9) and personal friends.
“A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION”
Suggested Order of Service
Session Ten

I. The Bread
1. Select Scriptures to be read.
2. Prayer of gratitude for the broken body of our Lord.
3. Break bread and pass the elements.
4. Read 1 Corinthians 11:24
   “… and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’” (NIV)

II. The Wine
1. Select Scriptures to be read.
2. Prayer of gratitude for the shed blood of our Savior.
3. Pass the cup.
4. Read 1 Corinthians 11:25
   “In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’” (NIV)

III. The Affirmation (optional: select from these or others)
1. Benediction
2. Group Conversational Prayer
3. Responsive Reading
4. Hymn or chorus
He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by his scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him (Is. 53:3-6).

Jesus therefore said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:53, 54).

And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots; and sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there. And they put up above His head the charge against Him which read, “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left. And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagg- ing their heads, and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him, and saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself” (Matthew 27:33-42).

And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:26-29).

And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SA-BACHTHANI?” Which is translated, “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAS THOU FORSAKEN ME?” And when some of the bystanders heard
it, they began saying, “Behold, He is calling for Elijah.” And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, “Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down.” And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:33-39).

And when the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” And in the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:33, 34).

Therefore whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world (1 Corinthians 11:27-32).

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread (1 Cor. 10:16, 17).
“MY S.H.A.P.E. PROFILE”

1. Let’s pull it all together. God has invested His life in you, what SHAPE for ministry are you beginning to see in yourself?

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

My top three spiritual gifts are . . .

1. ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________

**HEART**

My heart’s desires are . . .

1. ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________

**ABILITIES**

My most valuable personal assets are . . .

1. ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________
PERSONALITY
I see my style in ministry being . . .

1. ______________________________________

2. ______________________________________

3. ______________________________________

EXPERIENCES
I believe my most helpful experiences for ministry are . . .

1. ______________________________________

2. ______________________________________

3. ______________________________________

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6
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