

“Gifted by Design” Week 1

Introduction

During these next three weeks our goal is to discover the unique ways God has gifted and called each one of us to love and serve others. Rather than simply trying to identify our spiritual gifts by looking at a list of gifts, it can be helpful to step back and look at our lives as a whole and ask some bigger questions about how God has worked in our lives and how he has prepared us for the work he has for us. So, tonight’s conversation is setting some general groundwork for the next two weeks when we will more specifically identify our unique gifts.

Scripture tells us that we are God’s “workmanship” (or work of art) created for good works that God has prepared for us (Ephesians 2:10). God is at work in the events of our lives shaping us into the people he wants us to be because he has certain good works that he has prepared for us. For example, Paul says that God “comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). We see there how God can work through painful experiences to prepare us to more fully love others who go through similar experiences. Likewise, God is at work in all the events and details of our lives, weaving them together to shape us into the people he wants us to be so that we can love and serve others in our unique ways.

Because of this, it is important to examine your life. It is important to step back and reflect on your life experiences and ask the question:

“God, what experiences have you given me, and how does that help me discern who you are shaping me to be and how you are calling me to love and serve others?”

Shaping Experiences

Spend 20 minutes writing down 7-12 formative experiences in your life that God has used to shape you into the person you are today. These can be any kind of meaningful event or experience that has shaped you. Some examples might be:

- a certain person who has impacted you in a meaningful way
- a particular book that has shaped you or had an influence on you
- a time where you felt particularly alive and free
- a time where you exceeded your own expectations or accomplished something meaningful
- a time of failure, tragedy, or pain that God used to teach you something important
- an important decision you made at a crossroads time in your life
- *etc.*

These formational moments don't all have to be positive or happy in themselves, but they are things God used to shape you into the person you are today. Don't worry about your list being in any particular order, you're simply brainstorming and identifying experiences that have shaped your life in some way.

List & briefly describe those experiences below.



List & briefly describe those experiences below. (Continued)



Reflection on Your Experiences

Take 10-15 minutes to reflect on how God has used these events to shape you and prepare you for *the ways he wants you to love and serve others*.

- As you look at your experiences, are there any key patterns or themes that emerge?
- Given the experiences God has taken you through, are there certain kinds of people God has uniquely prepared you to love and serve?
- Given the experiences God has taken you through, are there any particular passions or burdens he has placed within your heart that help you see where you are called to love and serve?
- Given the experiences God has taken you through, what are some unique qualities/gifts/skills you have to offer other people?

