

“Gifted by Design” Week 2

Introduction

We are spending these three weeks together considering the importance of spiritual gifts. Tonight we consider the purpose of gifts: Jesus gives us gifts for the purpose of using them to love and serve others. What this means is that the gifts

Jesus has given you are actually not for you; they are meant to be used for others to serve, encourage, comfort, and love them. As we all use our gifts for the sake of each other, the whole body of Christ is strengthened. As Paul puts it, *“From Jesus the whole body grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”* (Ephesians 4:16)

Last week we looked at how **God has shaped** us through the experiences of our lives. Tonight we’re going to look at how **God has used us to shape other people’s lives**. So rather than jumping straight to a list of spiritual gifts, we are going to step back and look at our lives more broadly and consider some of the ways God has already been using us to love and serve others. Reflecting on these experiences can help clarify our gifts and give us greater confidence in using those gifts in the future.

So tonight let’s consider together the question:

“God, how have you used me to help shape other people’s lives for good?”

Shaping Experiences

Spend 10-15 minutes writing down 7-10 experiences in your life where God used you to shape someone else's life in a positive way. This can be any experience that comes to mind, whether dramatic or simple. **You may want to consider categories such as these:** **1)** times when you helped an individual and times when you helped a group **2)** times when you helped through your words and times when you helped through your actions **3)** times when your help was very visible and times when it was behind-the-scenes **4)** recent times and times in the more distant past.

Some examples might be:

- You spoke a word of encouragement when someone needed it
- You were a safe and gentle presence when someone just needed to be heard
- You served in a behind-the-scenes way that was very needed even if it went unrecognized

These categories and examples are only there to spark your own thinking on this, so do not let them limit your thoughts, and don't feel the need to try to find examples in each category. You are simply trying to identify specific times when you tried to love and serve an individual or a group of people and it was a fruitful experience (because you believe they were blessed by your efforts and/or the experience was life giving for you).

List & briefly describe those shaping events below (in no particular order).



List & briefly describe those experiences below. (Continued)



Reflection on Your Experiences

Take 7-10 minutes to reflect on how God has used you *to shape other people's lives for good*.

- As you notice patterns in your experiences, what are some of the ways God tends to use you to love, serve, and encourage others?

- Are there certain kinds of people that you have tended to love and serve well (for example, do you see a pattern of helping leaders, or those who are going through painful times, or those who have relational conflicts, or those who need guidance, or those who need practical help, etc.)?

- When you consider serving and encouraging others, what ways comes most natural to you, and what ways bring you joy?

Group Sharing

Take 25-30 minutes to share in groups of 3 or 4. Before you share the following questions with your group, give yourselves 1 minute of silence to consider how you'd like to answer these questions.

- Share 3-4 of your key experiences with your group. Give yourself about 1 minute per experience. And then take a minute or two to share any patterns you see.

- Given your experiences, what are you passionate about when it comes to loving and serving others? How do you think you can be most helpful to others?

- After each person shares, allow time for the others in the group to speak into that person's life regarding how they've seen that person love and serve well. The others can answer questions such as these:
 - What would you affirm from what this person identified in themselves, and what would you add based on your experience of them?

 - How do you think are they gifted to love and serve well?

Homework

1. Now that you've reflected on your own life and received feedback from others, list a few of the unique ways you think God created you to love and serve others.

2. Work through the spiritual gifts list attached.

Identify your Spiritual Gifts

Several key Bible passages (*Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 1 Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:11*) give us the majority of our scriptural information on spiritual gifts. Not every single one of the gifts from those passages is listed below, and some gifts have been added that are not in those passages because they represent clear biblical values that certain people are particularly gifted in. All that to say, this is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Please review the spiritual gifts listed below and identify the gifts you've seen most expressed in your life (aim for between 1 and 4 gifts). If you have identified a gift in yourself that is not on this list or if you have a label for your gift that fits better than these labels, feel free to write that gift in the "Other" space at the bottom of the list.

Spiritual Gifts

Administration: The God-given passion and ability to understand what makes an organization function and the ability to plan, organize, and execute procedures that accomplish the goals of the ministry.

Apostleship: The God-given passion and ability to start and oversee the development of new churches or ministries (here we are distinguishing "apostleship" as a potential pioneering gift for all times from the role of apostle which was unique to the original leaders of the early church).

Craftsmanship: The God-given passion and ability to design and/or construct physical items to be used for ministry or practical use in people's lives.

Creativity: The God-given passion and ability to communicate the truth about God's world through a variety of creative art forms, such as writing, art, drama, music, etc.

Discernment: The God-given passion and ability to distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong.

Encouragement: The God-given passion and ability to present truth so as to strengthen, uplift, and comfort those who need to be encouraged or strengthened.

Evangelism: The God-given passion and ability to effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers so that they respond in faith and move toward discipleship.

Exhortation: The God-given passion and ability to speak straightforward truth in love, for the purpose of direction, discernment, correction, or accountability.

Spiritual Gifts (Continued)

Faith: The God-given passion and ability to act on God's promises with confidence and trust in God's ability to fulfill his purposes.

Giving/Generosity: The God-given passion and ability to contribute money and resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and generosity.

Hospitality: The God-given passion and ability to make visitors and strangers feel welcome, often through using one's home to entertain guests or helping new members integrate into a group.

Intercession/Prayer: The God-given passion and ability to consistently pray on behalf of and for others, often feeling a burden to do so with the faith that God answers prayer.

Knowledge/wisdom: The God-given passion and ability to speak God's truth into a concrete or particular circumstance in another person's life.

Leadership: The God-given passion and ability to lead and direct members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church through helping to cast vision and motivating people to work together in unity toward common goals.

Mercy: The God-given passion and ability to cheerfully and practically help those who are suffering or in need, having compassion that is moved to action.

Service/helps: The God-given passion and ability to volunteer to accomplish practical and necessary tasks which free up, support, and meet the needs of others often in a behind-the-scenes fashion.

Shepherding: The God-given passion and ability to nurture, care for, and guide people toward ongoing spiritual maturity and becoming more like Christ.

Teaching: The God-given passion and ability to understand and clearly explain and help apply the word of God causing greater Christ-likeness in the lives of others.

Other:

Other:

Identify your gifts below:

