

“Discover Your SHAPE for Serving God”
Unearthing Your Spiritual Gifts
Ephesians 4:8-15

- I. Today, we’re beginning a new series called “Discover Your SHAPE for Serving God.”
 - a. I’m very excited about this because it will be a series that deals specifically with how God put you together so that you can be of great service for the Kingdom.
 - b. We’ve talked about being planned for God’s pleasure.
 - i. We’ve talked about being created to become like Christ.
 - ii. For the next several weeks, we want to talk about being SHAPed for serving God.
 - c. That’s the way the Bible puts it. Look at Colossians 3:23-24 with me.
 - i. According this, you were created to serve God.
 - ii. Especially clear in verse 24: “It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”
- II. You were SHAPed to serve God.
 - a. God created every creature on this planet with a unique set of gifts, qualities and expertise.
 - i. The Psalms (Psalm 139:) say that we were knit together in our mother’s womb in a unique and mysterious way by God himself.
 - ii. “You are a unique, one of a kind masterpiece.” – Rick Warren.
 - iii. You are a wonderfully complex creation of God.
 - b. To talk about that complexity, we will use the acronym SHAPE.
 - i. Your SHAPE is the unique, complex, significant way you are put together by God.
 - ii. All for the purpose of serve God and bringing glory to God’s name.
 - c. SHAPE is ...
 - i. Spiritual gifts.
 - ii. Heart.
 - iii. Abilities.
 - iv. Personality.
 - v. Experience.
 - d. Your SHAPE is a gift from God.
 - i. You don’t own your gifts.
 - ii. You don’t choose your gifts.
 - iii. You don’t benefit from your gifts.
 - e. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
 - i. The Chinese church welcomes new believers with these words, “Jesus now has a new pair of eyes to see with, new ears to listen with, new hands to help with, and a new heart to love others with.”
 - ii. Your SHAPE is what God uses – you serve others through your SHAPE.
- III. So, as we examine your SHAPE, let’s remind ourselves that God gives everyone spiritual gifts.

- a. In Romans, in Corinthians it makes it clear that God gives every one of us spiritual gifts.
 - i. These are special abilities that are given especially (exclusively) to believers – they’re for the church.
 - ii. But, you don’t earn them and you don’t deserve them – that’s why they’re called gifts.
 - iii. Even though all of us have gifts, none of us has all of the gifts.
 - b. Also, in places like Roman and Corinthians, we learn that your spiritual gifts are a benefit to others.
 - i. In this morning’s reading, Ephesians 4: 12, it says, “So that the body of Christ may be built up.”
 - ii. Your SHAPE is for the edification (the strengthening, the building) of the body of Christ.
 - iii. Maturity and the fullness of Christ (it says in verse 13) are found when we use our gifts properly.
 - c. It works this way so that we all benefit.
 - i. If others don’t use their gifts, you get cheated.
 - ii. If you don’t use your gifts, the whole body suffers.
- IV. I hope now you see why your spiritual gifts are so important. The health of the entire body of Christ depends on you and your gifts.
- a. So, what are your spiritual gifts? Let’s look at some of them.
 - b. Two prominent lists of the gifts are found in the New Testament: Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-30.
 - i. In Romans we find Paul talking about these gifts.
 1. Prophecy.
 2. Service.
 3. Teaching.
 4. Encouragement.
 5. Giving.
 6. Leadership.
 7. Mercy.
 - ii. In 1 Corinthians we hear Paul talking about these gifts.
 1. Wisdom.
 2. Knowledge.
 3. Healing.
 4. Miracles.
 5. Prophecy.
 6. Discernment of Spirits.
 7. Tongues.
 8. Interpretation.
 - iii. Taken together we have these 14 things:
 1. Prophecy.
 2. Knowledge.
 3. Service.
 4. Teaching.
 5. Healing.

6. Encouragement.
7. Prophecy.
8. Giving.
9. Leadership.
10. Miracles.
11. Mercy.
12. Discernment of Spirits.
13. Tongues.
14. Interpretation.
15. Apostles.

- iv. There are others mentioned in other place, but let's look briefly at these.
- V. Keep in mind as we walk through these that you have at least one of these gifts. (and that person sitting next to you)
- a. These aren't natural abilities (we'll talk about them later); these are gifts of the Spirit.
 - b. Prophecy.
 - i. In every generation there are people who look at the circumstances of our world and forecast a future that, without repentance, will bring us to disaster.
 - ii. And there are those people who by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit speak to us about the culmination of History – what God is doing to bring history and time to close.
 - c. Knowledge: having knowledge of circumstances or situations that you couldn't have without the work of the Spirit.
 - d. Service: distinguished from what we usually think of by an ultimate degree. The kind of service that marks people as extreme examples of humility and dedication.
 - e. Teaching: the ability inspire and cut through the heart and insert God and God's teachings into peoples lives so that they are changed. More than information, but transformation.
 - f. Healing: sometimes physical, sometimes emotional, sometimes spiritual, sometimes all three.
 - g. Encouragement (Helps in 1 Corinthians): a sensitivity to a burden for encouraging others in their walks with the Lord.
 - h. Leadership: guiding others with authority to the preferred future that God has in store. Visionaries.
 - i. Miracles: God still is in the business of signs and wonders. Miracles aren't always dramatic and aren't always noticed, but they happen just the same.
 - j. Mercy: a spirit of forgiveness and favor that far exceeds our human ability to offer kindness and goodness to others.
 - k. Discernment: Sensitivity to the activity and influence of spiritual forces in the lives of God's people.
 - l. Tongues: the Bible speaks of unique gifts of language, earthly and heavenly, through which God works.
 - m. Interpretation: and if there are tongues, there should be someone to interpret so that the message gets carried to God's people.

- n. Apostleship: the gift of leading and guiding the church. Differs from leadership by its unique focus on guiding and growing the flock.
- VI. So which of these are yours?
 - a. Don't be overly humble.
 - i. Remember humility isn't thinking of yourself less, its thinking of God more.
 - ii. When you affirm your spiritual gifts, you are affirming God's goodness, wisdom and power.
 - iii. So go ahead ... which of these gifts are yours?
 - b. Do me a favor ... ask someone else what your gifts are.
 - i. God speaks through other people, too.
 - ii. Often they see gifts in you that you don't see in yourself.
- VII. Now, a couple of things to think about. Guard against ...
 - a. Gift-envy: This happens when we compare our gifts with others' gifts.
 - i. It makes us feel dissatisfied with what God gave us.
 - ii. We become jealous and resentful toward others and ultimately resentful toward God.
 - b. Gift-projection: This happens when we expect everyone else to have our gifts.
 - i. Not everyone has our calling. Not everyone has our passion.
 - ii. We do what we are SHAPed to do.
 - iii. We let others do what they are SHAPed to do.
- VIII. How do you uncover your gifts if you're unsure?
 - a. Ask others for their opinion.
 - i. If you think you're gifted as a teacher and no one else agrees, guess what?
 - b. Ask yourself: where have I seen fruit in my life that's been confirmed by others?
 - c. Experiment: start serving, experiment with different ministries, and you'll uncover your gifts.
 - d. Summary.
 - i. Who will you speak to about their assessment of your gifts? Write down a name. Can you commit to calling them this week?
 - ii. Make a list of the ministries you've been involved in. Cross of the ones that didn't bear fruit. Circle the ones that did. Pray over those.
 - iii. What ministry don't you have any experience in? Are you ready to experiment? Where will you start? Write down one opportunity that you will start with and do it.
- IX. Now you've got a pretty good plan to uncover your gifts.
 - a. Now you have to work the plan.
 - b. God will bless this! He promises.

Next week: Hearing with your Heart.