



"God is not interested so much in our ability, as our availability."

Author Unknown

In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's Body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of His Body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's Body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't.

Romans 12:4-5 (The Message)

Designed to *reach beyond*...

Each of our lives are defined in many ways. We all have desires that motivate us and experiences that shape us. We have individual personalities that determine how we interact with this world and natural abilities that help us to contribute. And as believers, we also have the Holy Spirit within, purposing to accomplish the will of God and empowering us to do so with supernatural gifts.

The brokenness of the human condition is exemplified by how all of these particulars tend to pull us in all sorts of directions. Wouldn't it be great to align these different facets of our makeup to serve God with purpose? How wonderful to make a difference and experience the value of who God created us to be, by cooperating with how we were made and moving the whole of us in one direction.

As Easy as One, Two, Three

Step One: Explore and Examine for Understanding

It is important to take the necessary time and effort involved in discovery. We need to explore what the Bible has to say about how we were designed. We need to examine ourselves with an open heart. Our histories, passions, personality traits, and talents exist for a reason. How God empowers us through the Holy Spirit is of utmost importance. Your openness to the Holy Spirit, your humility, and pursuing a deeper understanding will work towards fulfillment in the tasks that God has planned for you within His Kingdom.

Step Two: Develop a Profile that Captures the Heart of Your Design

The next step is to take what we have examined and learned and use it to develop a personal profile. We have developed a tool called "My D.E.S.I.G.N. for Service" to help us accomplish this task. This tool is nothing more than a way to capture a snapshot of key characteristics that come into play when considering ministry opportunities. It is a way for us to be good stewards of how God created us.

We will need to use caution here, however. A profile is meant to be an encouragement towards more fruitful ministry, not an excuse to avoid opportunities God gives. God can always use a willing heart and even an unwilling heart to accomplish His purposes. You will be amazed to see how God will use you in miraculous ways when He knows that He has a submitted servant. Especially one who is willing and able to risk reputation and personal comfort when prompted into action by the Holy Spirit.

Step Three: Look for Where God is Working and Join Him

When our mind, emotions, and will come together for the purposes of God, there is a sense of wholeness. Welcome to what it means to "reach beyond." This step is not about our purposing to please God with our own efforts. This is about submitting our will to where God is

leading. To follow Him with eyes wide open to that which is taking place around me. It is learning to ask questions about where God is directing within a certain situation.

We can learn of what God is doing by seeking His will through prayer, the study of His Word, and the counsel of godly leaders. As we obey the still small voice of the Spirit prompting action in our hearts, greater tasks will be revealed. As we are faithful to these tasks our faith will continue to grow.

“The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’”

Matthew 25:23 (New Living Translation)

My D.E.S.I.G.N. for Service

D = Desires

Desires can be meant in a good sense or a bad sense based on the object of our desires. For the sake of our purposes here, we are focusing on the desires of the Spirit. It is not bad for us to have personal desires. When praying in Gethsemane, Jesus asked, “may this cup be taken from me.” That was his desire. But Jesus went on to say that it wasn’t about His will but the Father’s will. When considering desires, it is important to submit our desires under His will. Desires not submitted can easily succumb to the flesh.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace...

Romans 8:5-6 (New International Version)

Some look at God's will as a point on a horizon, thus limiting themselves to one plan of action, one choice. To divert from this one point could mean the potential loss of all that God has planned for us. Being afraid to make the right decision in God's name may leave us with no decision at all. This lack of commitment could be the worst scenario of all.

Rather, God has provided many guiding principles that are meant to protect us. Within that protection, God has given us the freedom to pursue personal desires. Do not resist the idea that God can use you in areas that you desire to be used.

*Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the LORD
and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in Him and He will do this...*

Psalm 37:3-5 (New International Version)

E = Experiences

Each of us are shaped to some degree by the experiences of our lives. Many of these circumstances are outside of our control. God is able and ready to use these experiences, good or bad, to develop us and prepare us for works of service.

It is not hard to draw direction from good experiences and fond memories. But difficult hardships can often leave us bitter, scarred, and distracted from the potential good that can come from them. Forgiveness, prayer, and biblical counsel can help us heal. As we take our eyes off of our situation and seek God's perspective, our experiences can be used to the benefit of others. Don't let your experiences, no matter how humbling, exclude you from ministering to others. God's power through grace is given to the humble.

*You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me
to this position so I could save the lives of many people.*

Genesis 50:20 (New Living Translation)

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.

For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (New International Version)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (New International Version)

S = Spiritual Gifting

"Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant."

1 Corinthians 12:1 (New International Version)

What is a Spiritual Gift?

God empowers us as believers by the transforming and sustaining nature of His grace. This power is manifested by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. It is also manifested within the universal Body of Christ through spiritual gifts. As the Spirit lives within us, the power of the Spirit is released to accomplish service to the Body that supersedes our own natural ability. Combined with our submission, a work is released that brings glory to God. These gifts are not meant to be used for our own purposes.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (New International Version)

Types of Gifts

Spiritual gifts serve many purposes within the body of Christ. There are gifts used to equip God's people. Other gifts are used to explain God's truth. Some enable God's work while others establish God's authority. Each purpose serves to build the body of Christ.

Equipping Gifts - Apostleship/Missionary, Prophecy, Evangelism, Pastor/Shepherding

Explaining Gifts - Prophecy, Teaching, Encouragement/Exhortation, Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge

Enabling Gifts - Serving, Helps, Leadership, Administration, Giving, Showing Mercy, Discerning of Spirits, Faith, Hospitality, Craftmanship/Design, Creative Communication, Intercession

Establishing Gifts - Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Miracles, Healing

Emboldening Gifts - Faith, Martyrdom

Who has them?

God has given each believer at least one gift. *1 Peter 4:10*

How are gifts given?

The Holy Spirit gives the gifts. *1 Corinthians 12:7,11*

What is their purpose?

To equip believers. *Ephesians 4:11-12*

To edify the church. *Ephesians 4:12, 16*

To establish believers. *Romans 1:11*

To encourage believers. *Romans 1:12*

For effectiveness in the church. *1 Corinthians 12:7*

To enlarge the church. *Ephesians 4:16*

To exalt Jesus Christ. *1 Peter 4:11*

How will I find out what my gifts are?

As you examine each gift, ask yourself the following questions:

What gifts do you desire to see operating in you?

What gifts bring you the most joy as you think or do them?

What gifts are affirmed within you?

What gifts are confirmed by others?

A word about confirmation and affirmation. Affirmation comes from within, a confident declaration of what God is doing. But sometimes we are wrong. We may be misreading things or blinded by our own pride. This is where confirmation comes in. What God reveals to the individual He also will reveal to others. This confirmation can help us build further confidence or reveal to us that our instincts may be wrong.

Exploring The Gifts

- **Administration**

The ability to see the mission, vision and strategies of a ministry and mobilize people and resources to accomplish them.

References: 1 Cor. 12:28, Acts 6:1-7, Ex. 18:13-26

- **Apostleship/Missionary**

One commissioned and sent out into the world as an ambassador and messenger of the gospel, who will also organize and strengthen the newly converted.

References: 1 Cor. 12:28-29, Eph. 4:11-12, Romans 1:5, Acts 13:2-3

- **Craftsmanship/Design**

The skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts that are used to design, construct and/or teach others in building items used in ministry.

Reference: Ex. 31:3,35:31-35

- **Creative Communication**

The divine empowerment to motivate worship and communicate the message of Christ through the arts.

References: 1 Cor. 14:26, Palms 150:3-5

- **Discernment**

The ability to separate and clearly distinguish truth and error, good and evil.

References: 1 Cor. 12:10, Acts 5:1-4, Matt. 16:21-23

- **Encouragement/Exhortation**

Able to come alongside another as a friend or helper to console or comfort, encourage or strengthen, and inspire.

References: Roman 12:8, Acts 11:22-24, Acts 15:30-32

- **Evangelism**

Ability to lead others into a personal relationship with Jesus by sharing the gospel wherever and whenever there is an opportunity.

References: Eph. 4:11, Acts 8:26-40, Luke 19:1-10

- **Faith**

Seeing the character and promises of God as reality and acting in harmony with them.

References: 1 Cor. 12:9,13:2, Hebrews 11:1, Romans 4:18-21

- **Giving**

The ability to give, share, or communicate to others what God has entrusted to them.

References: Romans 12:8, Luke 21:1-4

- **Healing**

The conviction to pray, touch, or speak words in order to bring spiritual, emotional or physical healing in harmony with God's sovereign act.

References: 1 Cor. 12:9,28,&30, Acts 3:1-16, John 9:1-7

- **Helps**

The God-given desire to serve others by doing the practical and necessary tasks that support, encourage or assist the accomplishment of ministry.

References: 1 Cor. 12:28, Romans 12:7, Acts 6:1-4, Romans 16:1-2

- **Hospitality**

Able to love others by providing food, shelter, and relationship.

References: 1 Peter 4:9-10, Acts 16:14-15, Hebrews 13:2

- **Intercession**

The enablement to consistently pray on behalf of others when prompted to do so from God.

References: Romans 8:26-27, John 17:9-26, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Col. 4:12-13

- **Interpretation**

The divine ability to communicate to the rest of the body what was spoken in an unknown language.

References: 1 Cor. 12:10,14:5,26-28

- **Knowledge**

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit to understand situations and circumstances and speak to them in a way that ministers to others through the bringing of answers, understanding and healing.

References: 1 Cor. 12:8, Mark 2:6-8, John 1:45-50

- **Leadership**

Guiding others by moving first towards the mission of the local Body while serving as protector, guardian and manager of the process.

References: Romans 12:8, Hebrews 13:17, Luke 22:25-26

- **Martyrdom**

Proclaiming faith in Christ while facing impending death.

References: Acts 7:54-60

- **Mercy**

Extending compassion through helping or bringing help to one afflicted or seeking aid so that they may experience God.

References: Romans 12:8, Matt. 5:7

- **Miracles**

Able to be used by God to intervene in certain situations supernaturally in a way that brings glory to God.

References: 1 Cor. 12:10,28-29, John 2:1-11, Luke 5:1-11

- **Prophecy**

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit that brings light to others for understanding, correction, repentance and edification.

References: Romans 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:10,28,&13:2, 2 Peter 1:19-21

- **Service**

To attend to the needs of others.

References: Romans 12:6-8

- **Pastoring/Shepherding**

Providing for the welfare of believers through guidance, protection, care and nurture as they grow toward spiritual maturity.

References: Eph. 4:11-12, 1 Peter 5:1-4, John 10:1-18, 1 Peter 5:1-2

- **Teaching**

The ability through instruction to successfully help others to learn and apply Christian truth and duty to their lives.

References: Romans 12:7, 1 Cor. 12:28-29, Acts 18:4-28, 2 Timothy 2:2

- **Tongues**

A moving within to speak in a language unknown to the speaker for the purpose of worship, prayer and/or to deliver a message to the Body.

References: 1 Cor. 12:10,28-30,13:1&14:1-33, Acts 2:1-11

- **Wisdom**

Believers who are endowed with spiritual insight into godly truths and are able to apply that understanding to a specific situation in order to make right decisions and humbly choose proper courses of action.

References: 1 Cor. 12:8, James 3:13-18, 1 Cor. 2:3-14

I = Individual Traits

Traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics of a person. Traits are a readiness to think or act in a similar fashion in response to a variety of different stimuli or situations. Allport and Odbert (1936, cited in Funder, 2001) found 17,953 words to describe the way people are psychologically different from each other (e.g. shy, trustworthy, laconic, phlegmatic, kind, conscientious, anxious, etc.). Each opportunity to serve in God's kingdom and mission favor certain personality traits over others - if we truly have been designed for a purpose.

Many have tried to synthesize these traits into fewer categories. Popular analysis tools include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Five-Factor Model (OCEAN), DiSC Personal Profile System (PPS), the Biblical Personal Profiles (BPP), and the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA) to name a few. We should be careful not to put too much weight in these tests. They can, however, point us into directions of service opportunities. Taking into consideration our personalities can help to focus in on ministries within the church. A sample of such a test is found on page 65. More complete tests are available online.

G = Growth Level

Maturity in your walk also helps to determine how you may serve the body of Christ. When a person has not yet received Christ as Savior, their spirit is dead and their spiritual gifts are non-existent. But when a person is born of the Spirit and their spirit is now alive, they can still be led by the flesh. Being led by the flesh can hurt the body of Christ more than help in certain roles and situations. Each person should humbly and honestly examine the condition of their

walk as they offer themselves in service. No believer should exclude themselves from service to the Lord.

Being young does not automatically exclude you from service, either. Many young persons have served the Lord admirably and have been commended for doing so.

Sanctification means to be set apart. Set apart from the world and set apart for serving God. As we continue to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, we find ourselves more faithful, resulting in God entrusting more to us in terms of how we can serve Him.

N = Natural Abilities

Each of us have been wired with certain talents and abilities. These are God-given abilities that have been woven into us while we were still in our mother's womb. Whereas spiritual gifts present themselves upon our new birth in Christ, our natural abilities are present at birth. If discovered, they have the potential to produce extraordinary results with relatively little effort.

Abilities were created by God and therefore should be used for His glory. It is the feedback of others that helps us to recognize these talents inside of us. Too often with this recognition we find ourselves taking great pride for how we were created. Even worse, we may look down on others for how

What natural abilities should someone possess in order to excel in these jobs?

Accountant • Actor • Agriculturalist • Architect • Artist • Automotive Mechanic • Baker • Bookkeeper • Carpenter • Chef • Chemist • Childcare Worker • Civil Engineer • Coach • Computer Hardware Technician • Computer Software Engineer • Computer Support Specialist • Cost Estimator • Court Reporter • Dancer • Database Administrator • Dentist • Designer • Desktop Publisher • Disc Jockey • Doctor • Drafter • Economist • Electrical Engineer • Electrician • Engineering Technician • Entomologist • Environmental Scientist • Farmer • Financial Analyst • Firefighter • Fundraiser • Human Resources Director • Judge • Landscape Architect • Lawyer • Librarian • Loan Officer • Musician • Nurse • Paralegal • Pharmacist • Photographer • Physicist • Pilot • Police Officer • Politician • Professional Athlete • Psychologist • Real Estate Agent • Recreation and Fitness Worker • Recreational Therapist • Reporter • Scientist • Secretary • Social Worker • Statistician • Surveyor • Systems Analyst • Teacher • Urban Planner • Veterinarian • Webmaster • Writer • Zookeeper

they were created.

*For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive?
And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*

1 Corinthians 4:7 (New International Version)

Dangers to Look Out For

Gifts Expressed in the Flesh vs. the Spirit

Any believer is at risk of being carnal. Therefore each gift can be used to promote the flesh. This can lead to harmful outcomes for the individual as well as the Body of Christ as a whole. The gift of administration can focus on goals over people. The gift of encouragement may become blindly optimistic when confrontation is appropriate. The gift of evangelism might use guilt or a dated approach when the Spirit is wanting more. The gift of giving might be used to attach personal agenda to donation. Those with the gift of helps might struggle to say no. The gift of knowledge may lead to pride. All in all, each gift has the potential of becoming poisoned fruit when not submitted to God.

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

1 Corinthians 1:7 (New International Version)

...for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?

1 Corinthians 3:3 (New Living Translation)

Using God's Design to Accomplish Personal Goals

Using God's design instilled in us for personal gain is not a comfortable notion for believers. This is because most of us find ourselves in this position more than we want to admit. We have all been taught that we should find out what we are good at and then use those

capacities to pursue our dreams. We will go into debt to develop our gifts so as to make those dreams a reality. Only to find out later that that same debt keeps us from serving God with our whole person. Many have missed out on the fulfillment which comes from living their purpose out before God. We ought to train up the next generation to seek God's will first, and then hone their gifts to accomplish His purposes.

Taking Credit for How God Made You

God gave us gifts to benefit others in the Body of Christ, not ourselves. It is the Holy Spirit who gives these gifts - so how is it that we should try to take credit? The power for life change is grace. Grace is jeopardized by our pride. *1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:12*

Using Tests in a Way That Limits Our Usefulness

Out of Christian duty and responsibility before God, it is important to submit to whatever gift the Spirit wants to use in us. We should never avoid the Holy Spirit's promptings because they don't line up with our gifting. God can give us any gift that benefits His will in the moment. We fail to recognize this potential when we become too locked in to how we tested. Then instead of our gifts increasing our usefulness to God, they hold us back.

Allowing Gifts to Divide Us

The early Corinthian church struggled over this issue. Gifts apparently got in the way of love and unity. God gave us these gifts with unity as an emphasis. They help us to attain and preserve unity for the common good. All this so that we might become one body with Jesus as the head. Less focus should be given to the types or timing of the gifts and more to the purposes of gifts in general - unity. *Ephesians 4:3-7,13; Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:7,28*

Bringing it all home...

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

*There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father,
Who is over all and in all and living through all.*

*However, He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ.
That is why the Scriptures say,*

*“When He ascended to the heights,
He led a crowd of captives
and gave gifts to His people.”*

*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the Church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists,
and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do His work
and build up the church, the Body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in
our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the
full and complete standard of Christ.*

*Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by
every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so
clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way
more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the Church. He makes the whole
body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts
grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

Ephesians 4:1-8,11-15 (New Living Translation)

A Community of Grace with a Process of Growth

At the very beginning of this course, we talked about being a community of grace. We described this grace in terms of unmerited favor in the form of power - this power being able to save us and to set us apart for service.

As you read the passages out of Ephesians 4, you will see that a community of grace consists of being united in the Spirit. It is marked with humility, gentleness and patience born of love for one another. It requires effort on our part to live out our calling, pursue unity and bind ourselves with peace.

Discussions on spiritual gifts should always have love, not legalism as their central aim. Allowing the fruit of the Spirit to bring us into unity so that we as a Body are able to attain the full

measure that God has for us. God has determined these gifts to build up the Church, the Body of Christ.

Some of the equipping gifts will position us through unity to grow in our faith and knowledge of Jesus into maturity. We begin to lose that tendency to misinterpret what God is trying to teach us. As we grow, we are less likely to get caught up in something that doctrinally sounds right, but is damaging to us and the Body.

As each of us grow in our design, we help others grow. This is how God intends to grow the Body of Christ. He perfectly designs us and fits us together, but it is our responsibility to submit to that. Understanding this passage is the key to understanding how to become healthy and loving as a Body.

This helps us to move ever closer to the mission of this local Body of Believers:

“To lead people into loving and life-changing relationships with God and each other.”



My Next Step

- Fill out “My Design For Service” tool. (pg.63-64)
- Seek personal direction and affirmation from within by the Holy Spirit and without by those who can help confirm your giftings.
- Select ministry possibilities.
- Shadow a ministry you are interested in.

Personal Notes
