

Shaped for Significance

(Job 10:8, 9) "Your hands shaped me and made me... you moulded me like clay".

You are shaped for significance!

God himself (the creator of the universe) was personally involved in bringing you into existence.

Picture God as a skilled Sculptor - The Artist of artists, dreaming of you - what you could be, who you would become

Then he becomes a hands on, sleeves rolled up, sculptor - bringing that imagined inner vision into an outer, actual reality

God is not a distant overseer, a far off observer.

His very hands moulded you, sculpted you, lovingly formed you!

(Gen 1:26) You are significant because God has invested himself in you

You are precious to him - reflection & representation of God

(Ps 139:13-16) Psalmist writes: '... you knit me together in my mother's womb... fearfully and wonderfully made (distinguished/distinct/set apart & unique); your works are wonderful (extraordinary/ remarkable/ exceptional) ... woven together by God (elaborate embroidery, intricate, handcrafted, blend of a many of colours).

God is an exquisite Craftsman - knitting, sowing, weaving a beautiful design.

And that incredible design is you... e.g. expanded meaning

Not only are you significant, but also unique !

Complex: There is a richness and depth to you - many faceted, many layers

(Eph 2:10) For we are God's workmanship (poiema), created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

God the great Poet - You are a sonnet, your life and being is a fine balance of rhythm and rhyme - of beauty and meaning from the heart and mind of God himself

You are a living, breathing, walking, talking composition of God !

Spend a moment thinking about these things:

Understanding who you are is part of discovering your call and destiny

You are...

- Significant - no inconsequential people, no worthless people
- Unique - one off masterpieces (no mass production, no cheap reprints or repeats)
- Wonderfully complex - no plain people, no ordinary people - rich potential
- Beautiful and balanced - all your attributes are in harmony

S.H.A.P.E.

'Christians have a high sense of destiny, but a low sense of detail' - Ken Mcgreavy
How do we start to sketch in the detail?

'Acronym: S.H.A.P.E. = Spiritual Gifts • Heart • Abilities • Personality • Experience
What is my Shape?

(S) SPIRITUAL GIFTS

(1 Cor 7:7, 1 Cor 12:4-6) Each of us are Gifted. We are different but complimentary

Everybody has a responsibility to:

- Discover Gifts (1 Cor 14:1) '...eagerly desire/strive for' active not passive - try out
- Develop Gifts (1 Tim 4:14, 2 Tim 1:6) Don't neglect. Practice, fan, stir up.
- Deploy Gifts (1 Pet 4:10) 'Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms'.

Command not a request

Gifts often need fanning into flame - not lost but dormant.

When serving using your spiritual gifts, you will serve more effectively

[Gift mix Questionnaires] www.kodachrome.org/spiritgift/
www.elmertowns.com/spiritual_gifts_test
www.christianet.com/bible/spiritualgiftstest.htm

(H) HEART

God is at work in our hearts desire. Tension between:

(Jer 17:9) "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" and (Ps 37:4) "Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Tension is about a surrendered life

Pursuing God or Pushing him away - Delighting in God or Denying him.

If we delight in God he shapes our heart aspirations and motivations.

Our heart becomes an inner compass and indicator of God's plans for our life.

- What do you have a heart for?

My heart influences:

- What I say (Mt12:34) "...For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."
- What I have energy for (Pv4:23) "... guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life"
- What I think (Heb 4:12) "the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Heart Intentions: 7 Question (attached)

When serving using your passions, you will serve more enthusiastically.

Heart Indicators

1. In what areas are you more animated, enthusiastic about?
Are there things you do that invigorate you and energize you?
2. When you are alone, what do you dream and wonder about.
What areas stimulate your imagination?
3. What things have you done in life that gave you the most satisfaction and fulfillment.
Any themes?
4. What things can you lose yourself in or lose track of time doing?
5. In what areas of your life do you feel a sense of assurance and conviction of it's worthiness and significance?
6. What makes you mad and stirs up anger and resistance in you?
7. When abiding and delighting in God, what desires stir in your heart?

(A) ABILITIES

(Ex 31:6) "...I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you"

God gives us natural skills and abilities (distinct from spiritual gifts).

Given by God as part of his blessing upon us as individuals and communities.

- God given equipping (Heb 13:21) '...equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'
- Used to serve God (Deut 8:18) " But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today."
- Need development (Ecc 10:10) "If the axe is dull and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed but skill will bring success."

We need to sharpen and direct our natural skills to be effective in God's service.

When serving using your natural abilities, you will serve more competently

(P) PERSONALITY

(Ps 139) Uniqueness (1Cor 12:12) Unity in diversity not uniformity!

You are different for a reason

Character can change, personality is more fixed.

The same gifting will look different through differing personalities

- Aware of personality differences (Gen 25:27) " The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents."
- Accepting of differences (Eph 4:2) 'Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love'.
- Appreciative of differences (1Cor 12:27) "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

When serving in ways consistent with your personality style, you will serve with greater freedom

(E) Experience

Experience shapes and forms us - both positive and negative

Well handled experiences:

- Teach us to trust God (2Cor 1:9) “Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.”
- Build up my Character (Rm 5:3,4) “we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”
- Accomplish God’s purpose (Gen 50:20) ‘You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives’.

It’s helpful to:

- Remember, reflect and review our experiences.

Draw maximum learning potential from them.(Deut 11:2) ‘Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God’ -

- Value the experience of others (1 Cor 10:11) ‘These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come.’

When someone falls or triumphs ask why?

What factors and principles were at work?

- Share your experience openly and honestly to benefit others
- Don’t fear failure, it’s a prerequisite of success

When serving using your experience, you will serve with more understanding

Our SHAPE is Interrelated and Irrepressible.

- Interrelated: we are designed to work as part of a team. Find out where you fit.
- Irrepressible: Respect your shape and live in a way that gives it expression. It is consistent , fixed, and unlikely to vary greatly

(Matt 25), Parable of the Talents

God is looking for faithfulness not achievement, “well done good and faithful”