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# **Understanding Our Spiritual Shape**

by  
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Serve and Equip  
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# Understanding Our Spiritual “Shape”

Pages 4-23 can also be found on pages 47-66 of the manual “Small Group Leadership Training Manual”  
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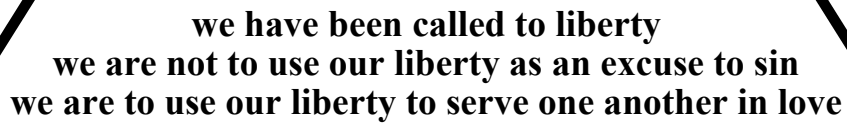
# **Learning to Understand our Spiritual “SHAPE”**

## **Galatians 5:13**

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

### **Understanding true liberty**

**true liberty is living as we should and not as we please  
(the freedom to do what is right)**



**we have been called to liberty  
we are not to use our liberty as an excuse to sin  
we are to use our liberty to serve one another in love**

**true liberty means we need to understand our “SHAPE”  
so that we can serve one another in love**



**S - spiritual gifts**

**H - heart**

**A - abilities**

**P - personality**

**E - experiences in life**

## **A. Understanding how spiritual gifts affect our ministry to one another**

### **1. Understanding the purpose of the sign gifts**

#### **sign gifts were to confirm the message of the apostles**

##### **Hebrews 2:3-4**

“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

##### **2 Corinthians 12:11-12**

“I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”

#### **sign gifts will be misused in the future**

##### **2 Thessalonians 2:8-9**

“And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.”

#### **sign gifts were needed to confirm the message of the resurrection**

##### **Acts 1:21-22**

“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”

#### **sign gifts were demonstrated by the men who wrote the New Testament**

##### **2 Peter 1:19-21**

“And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

#### **sign gifts include:**



**speaking in tongues - Acts 2:1-8, 11:15-17**  
**signs and wonders - Acts 5:12; Hebrews 2:3-4**

## 2. Understanding the purpose of the equipping gifts

### **equipping gifts are to equip the saints for ministry**

#### **Ephesians 4:11-13**

“And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

### **apostles and prophets provide our foundation**

#### **Ephesians 2:19-20**

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*.”

### **evangelists, pastors and teachers equip us to obey our Great Commission**

#### **Matthew 28:19-20**

“Go(ing) therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

### **evangelists, pastors and teachers equip us to obey our New Commandment**

#### **John 13:34-35**

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

### **in this commission and command, each Christian has three responsibilities:**

as we are going, we are to **preach the Gospel** - Mark 16:15

as we love one another, we are to **minister to one another** - Galatians 6:2

as we make disciples, we are to **teach the Word of God** - Matthew 28:20

<b>equipping gift</b>	<b>equip the saints to:</b>
<b>evangelists</b>	<b>preach the Gospel</b>
<b>pastors</b>	<b>minister to one another</b>
<b>teachers</b>	<b>teach the Word of God</b>

**3. Understanding the serving gifts listed in:  
Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1 -14:40; 1 Peter 4:7-11**

**the first seven gifts are listed in:**

**Romans 12:6-8**

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

**the gift of prophecy**

**Since the prophets gave us the completed written Word of God, the gift of prophecy does not speak about giving new revelation as that is clearly forbidden in Revelation 22:18-19. Instead, the one with the gift of prophecy is to prophesy what has already been written down in the Word of God. Key passages:**

**1 Corinthians 14:3**

“But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.”

**1 Peter 1:10**

“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you.”

**Jude 14-15**

“Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’”

**the gift of prophecy: to quote the Word of God to: edify, exhort and comfort; announce the grace which is provided in salvation; warn of judgment for ungodly deeds. The person with this gift will often quote the Scripture, without explaining it, as Peter did in his sermon in Acts 2.**

**the gift of ministry (serving)**

**The Christian who has the gift of serving will usually emphasize practical ways to help other Christians. This will involve many different kinds of ministry but the purpose will be to serve other Christians. Key passages:**

**1 Corinthians 16:15**

“I urge you, brethren -- you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints.”

### **Romans 16:1-2**

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”

### **Acts 6:1-2**

“Now in those days, when *the number* of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.’”

### **2 Corinthians 8:1-4**

“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.”

**the gift of serving: to serve the saints by: helping; serving; sharing; devoting our time to the ministry of the saints. The gift will often involve manual projects and short-term goals.**

### **the gift of teaching**

**The Christian who has the gift of teaching will tend to emphasize purity of doctrine and will emphasize the importance of much study in order to make certain that there is purity of doctrine. The concern of one who has this gift is for sound doctrine in all teaching and the application of that teaching so that it produces obedience and godly living. Key passages:**

### **1 Timothy 4:16**

“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”

### **Titus 2:7-8**

“In all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”

### **Titus 1:9**

“Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

**the gift of teaching: to spend much time in study so that there will be purity of doctrine in all teaching. This teaching will include both teaching those who want to learn and refuting those who contradict.**



### **the gift of exhorting**

**The Christian who has the gift of exhorting will tend to emphasize growth toward spiritual maturity so that the Word of God will not be blasphemed. He will urge others to pursue a course of conduct that is always prospective, looking toward the future. Key passages:**

#### **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10**

“But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more.”

#### **1 Timothy 6:1-2**

“Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.”

#### **Titus 2:15**

“Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”

#### **Titus 2:4-5**

“That they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

**the gift of exhorting: to encourage the saints to: love; good works; godly living by giving specific steps so that the Word of God will not be blasphemed.** The person with this gift will often encourage individuals to take small, specific steps that will help them to work toward spiritual development and goals.

### **comparing the three speaking gifts**

#### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

“All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

**the one who has the gift of teaching will emphasize:  
doctrine  
the one who has the gift of prophecy will emphasize:  
reproof  
the one who has the gift of exhorting will emphasize  
correction**

### **the gift of giving**

**The Christian who has the gift of giving tends to emphasize giving to needs that are often not recognized by others. Often, there will also be an emphasis on giving to missions so that the Word of God can be carried worldwide. Key passages:**

#### **Romans 12:8**

“He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

#### **Romans 1:11-12**

“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”

#### **Ephesians 4:28**

“Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”

#### **1 Thessalonians 2:8**

“So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.”

**the gift of giving: to give generously so that: faith may be strengthened; needs may be met; others may be able to minister because we have given of our own souls. The person with the gift of giving will often encourage other Christians to share in the ministry of giving so that his or her giving is multiplied.**

### **the gift of leading**

**The word translated “lead” means *to stand before or lead*. In order to lead effectively, God has given the person with this gift the ability to see what a church or other ministry needs to do to accomplish the work of God in the future. The Christian who has the gift of leading (ruling) tends to take a long-range view and make long-range plans so that the work of God can be completed smoothly and efficiently. Key passages:**

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:12**

“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.”

#### **Titus 3:8**

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.”

#### **Titus 3:14**

“And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”

**the gift of leading: to lead under the leadership of the Lord so that the good works of all will be profitable and fruitful. The person with this gift will often be given insight by the Lord to help that person see what a group needs to do to move forward and make progress in their ministry.**

**the gift of showing mercy**

**The Christian who has the gift of showing mercy tends to be more sensitive to the inner feelings of others and demonstrates loving concern to those who are in inner distress. The person with this gift is usually effective at offering comfort to those experiencing inner distress. Key passages:**

**Matthew 20:30-34**

“And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, ‘Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!’ Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!’ So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ They said to Him, ‘Lord, that our eyes may be opened.’ So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.”

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

**Romans 12:8**

“He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

**the gift of showing mercy: to feel such sympathy with the misery of another that it produces comfort and thankfulness for the opportunity to show mercy.**

In addition to the gifts listed in Romans 12, a number of other gifts that are not included in any of the previous groups are also given in 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Peter 4. These include:

### **the gift of word of wisdom**

The word that is translated “wisdom” in the New Testament is used most often to speak of the ability to understand God’s will and apply it obediently. The Christian who has this gift is able to apply the Word of God to situations that people face in life and to apply God’s Word to the problems and questions that people bring. Key passages:

#### **Acts 6:10**

“And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.”

#### **James 3:13**

“Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.”

#### **1 Corinthians 2:13**

“These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

#### **Colossians 1:28**

“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

**the gift of the word of wisdom: to share the wisdom of God by showing godly wisdom in living and by applying spiritual wisdom to life so that Christians can make progress in their growth to spiritual maturity.**

### **the gift of the word of knowledge**

The word that is translated “knowledge” in the New Testament means *to know through inquiry and investigation*. The Christian who has this gift is able to understand through study the meaning of the text and related passages so that he can in turn explain the Word of God and make it clear to others. Key passages:

#### **1 Corinthians 2:9-10**

“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”

#### **1 Corinthians 2:13-14**

“These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”

## **Colossians 2:3**

“In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

**the gift of the word of knowledge: the ability to discover through study the full meaning of the text, context, words, phrases, related passages and truths and then help provide that understanding to others**

## **the gift of faith**

**The gift of faith is different than saving faith and speaks of the ability to trust God in difficult and demanding ways. This faith is strong in spite of overwhelming obstacles and human impossibilities. This gift is primarily exercised through prayer to God in asking God and trusting God to do what is beyond His normal provision. Key passages:**

### **Matthew 17:20**

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.’”

### **Hebrews 11:1**

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

### **James 5:16-18**

“Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”

**the gift of faith: the ability to trust God in difficult and demanding ways in spite of overwhelming obstacles and human impossibilities. It is exercised through prayer to God as a person asks and trusts God to do what is beyond His normal provision. The person with this gift is the kind of person who makes the ministries of others effective through fervent prayer and the assurance that God is able to and will do the impossible.**

## **the gift of discerning of spirits**

**Because young and immature Christians often cannot discern between the true and the false, God has given this particular gift to certain Christians to give them the ability to discern what is not in agreement with Scripture and actually has its source from Satan, the father of lies. Key passages:**

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### **John 8:44**

“You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

### **Hebrews 5:13-14**

“For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

### **Acts 20:19-21**

“Serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

### **1 Corinthians 14:29**

“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.”

**the gift of discerning of spirits: the special ability to recognize those ideas, philosophies and teachings which are not in agreement with Scripture but have their source in Satan, the father of lies, and correct those false teachings with the Word of God.**

### **the gift of helps**

**The gift of helps is similar to the gift of serving in that it speaks of helping and serving others. However, it is different in the sense that the word translated “helps” means *to take the burden off someone and place it on oneself*. It has the special thought of helping the poor, weak and needy. Key passages:**

### **Acts 20:35**

“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.””

### **1 Thessalonians 5:14**

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”

### **Philippians 2:25**

“Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need.”

### **1 Corinthians 16:15**

“I urge you, brethren -- you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints.”

**the gift of helps: the special ability to help other Christians, especially the poor, weak and needy, by taking the burden off someone and placing that burden on oneself.**

#### **the gift of administration**

**The word that is translated “administration” comes from the same root word as the word for the pilot of a ship. It has the thought of one who steers the ship and guides it to the harbor. The gift of administration speaks of those who have been given the special ability to make wise decisions and to mobilize, motivate and direct others toward an objective. Key passages:**

##### **Acts 27:11**

“Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.”

##### **Acts 8:4**

“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.”

##### **2 Timothy 4:11-12**

“Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.”

**the gift of administration: the ability to make wise decisions and to mobilize, motivate, direct others, and delegate responsibilities to help a group of Christians accomplish a purpose, fulfill objectives, and reach the goals that they have been led of the Lord to establish.** It may be helpful to distinguish between the gift of leading and the gift of administration. The person with the gift of leading is the person who can make long-range plans and lead a group toward those goals. The person with the gift of administration organizes all of the details and delegates the responsibilities to various individuals to help the group reach those goals.

#### **the gift of hospitality**

**The gift of hospitality is the special gift of being able to make people feel comfortable and at home both in the church and in the home. Christians with this gift are especially effective at making others feel comfortable. Key passages:**

##### **1 Peter 4:8-9**

“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’ *Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*”

### **Romans 12:13**

“Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”

### **Hebrews 13:2**

“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels.”

### **Acts 16:15**

“And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us.”

**the gift of hospitality: the ability to make people feel comfortable and at home so that there will be the opportunity to have an effective ministry to them.**

## **commandments and gifts**

Actually, each Christian is commanded to do each of the things that have been mentioned in these spiritual gifts. Obedience will cause us to do each of these things as we have opportunity. However, the gifts we have been given allow us to be able to minister in a way beyond that of most Christians. They also cause us to see needs other Christians do not see. In addition, we can exercise our spiritual gifts for an extended period at any one time.

There are two attitudes that we must avoid in order to be effective in the use of our spiritual gifts. First, we must not be proud because we have been given those gifts. Second, we must not be critical of other Christians because they do not see the same needs we see. We see those needs because we have been given spiritual gifts to meet those needs. The fact that we see those needs gives us the opportunity to exercise our spiritual gifts without being critical of others.

## **understanding how we use our gifts**

### **1 Peter 4:10-11**

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

**We are to use our gifts to serve one another so that  
God will be glorified!**



## Equipping Gifts and Serving Gifts

As we look at the gifts we have listed from the various passages, we see that there are three equipping gifts for today and a whole variety of serving gifts. The spiritual leaders who have been given the equipping gifts are to equip each Christian to use his or her gifts to serve the Lord. We may have several serving gifts. Let's look at these gifts in a diagram form and see the wide variety of possible combinations of gifts we may have.

	Evangelists	Pastors	Teachers
<b>Prophecy</b>			
<b>Ministry (Serving)</b>			
<b>Teaching</b>			
<b>Exhorting</b>			
<b>Giving</b>			
<b>Leading</b>			
<b>Showing Mercy</b>			
<b>Word of Wisdom</b>			
<b>Word of Knowledge</b>			
<b>Faith</b>			
<b>Discerning of Spirits</b>			
<b>Helps</b>			
<b>Administration</b>			
<b>Hospitality</b>			

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## **Questions to ask myself about how to help the group learn to use their spiritual gifts to minister to one another in a way that glorifies God**

### **1. Questions regarding the sign gifts**

- a. Am I learning to explain why the sign gifts were important to confirm the message of the apostles?
- b. Am I learning to explain why sign gifts will be misused in the future?

### **2. Questions regarding the equipping gifts**

- a. Am I learning to explain why apostles and prophets form our foundation?
- b. Am I learning to explain how evangelists, pastors and teachers equip us to obey our Great Commission?
- c. Am I learning to explain how evangelists, pastors and teachers equip us to obey our New Commandment?
- d. Am I learning to explain what evangelists equip us to do?
- e. Am I learning to explain what pastors equip us to do?
- f. Am I learning to explain what teachers equip us to do?

### **3. Questions regarding the serving gifts**

- a. Am I learning to explain each of the serving gifts?
- b. Am I discovering what serving gifts the Holy Spirit has given me?
- c. Am I learning how to help other Christians discover their spiritual gifts?
- d. Am I learning how to help other Christians use their spiritual gifts to serve other Christians?
- e. Am I showing other Christians how to use their spiritual gifts to glorify God by the way that I exercise my spiritual gifts?
- f. Am I learning how to help the group function as a body as we exercise our spiritual gifts?
- g. Am I learning how to help the group learn how to use their spiritual gifts to reach out to those who are not yet Christians?

## **B. Understanding how our “heart” affects our ministry to one another**

**every growing Christian has a heart (passion) for some ministry**

**the example of Epaphras who had a passion to help the Christians in Colosse  
Colossians 4:12-13**

“Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.”

**the example of Epaphroditus who had a passion for service to Paul  
Philippians 2:30**

“Because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.”

**the example of Paul who had a passion for those who had never heard  
Romans 15:20-21**

“And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written: ‘To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.’”

**the example of Stephanas who had a passion for serving the saints  
1 Corinthians 16:15**

“I urge you, brethren -- you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints...”

**our heart or passion is the ministry that really gets us excited**

**some have a passion to help Christians grow to maturity**

**some have a passion to serve the needs of another Christian**

**some have a passion to plant churches in new areas**

**some have a passion to serve the saints**

**What ministry really gets you excited?**

## **C. Understanding how our abilities affect our ministry to one another**

**some of us have been given abilities to speak**

**Acts 14:12**

“And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.”

**some of us have been given abilities to play musical instruments**

**1 Chronicles 16:5-6**

“Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, *then* Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly *blew* the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God.”

**some of us have been given abilities to lead singing**

**1 Chronicles 6:31-32**

“Now these are the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest. They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order.”

**some of us have been given abilities to write**

**Romans 16:22**

“I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord.”

**some of us have been given abilities to be people helpers**

**Romans 16:1-2**

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”

**our abilities are given to us by God to serve one another**

**1 Peter 4:11**

“If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

**God gave us the abilities that we each have**

**God gave us those abilities to serve each other**

**God gave us those abilities to glorify Him**

## **D. Understanding how our personalities affect our ministry to one another**

### **some of us are impulsive like Peter**

**John 13:8-9**

“Peter said to Him, ‘You shall never wash my feet!’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.’ Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!’”

### **some of us see things negatively like Thomas**

**John 11:16**

“Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

### **some of us let others speak for us like James and John**

**Matthew 20:20-21**

“Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.’”

### **some of us focus on people and others focus on the ministry**

**Acts 15:37-38**

“Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.”

### **some of us worry about doing everything properly**

**Luke 10:39-42**

“And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’ And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.’”

## **key principles for building a group with different personalities**

**learn to accept one another - Romans 14:1-3**

**learn to listen to one another - James 1:19-20**

**learn to have faith in one another - Romans 1:12**

**learn to consider the interests of others - Philippians 2:1-4**

## **E. Understanding how our life experiences affect our ministry to one another**

### **some of us have spent time in jail**

**Acts 16:23-25**

“And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

### **some of us have experienced years of physical problems**

**John 9:1-3**

“Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’”

### **some of us have experienced years of rejection**

**Matthew 9:10-11**

“Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’”

### **some of us have spent years helping others**

**Acts 9:36**

“At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.”

### **some of us have spent years following the law**

**Acts 21:20-21**

“And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs.’”

## **key principles for building a group who have had different life experiences**

**learn to deal with your prejudices - James 2:1-13**

**learn to minister to people in their homes - Acts 2:46**

**learn to minister from your own suffering - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

**learn to develop strong friendships in the group - John 15:12-17**

## **Questions to ask myself about how to help the group understand their SHAPE**

### **1. Questions regarding our heart**

- a. What is my personal passion (heart) for ministry?
- b. If I do not know my passion, what kind of a ministry really gets me excited?
- c. Am I learning to recognize what kinds of ministry get others excited?
- d. Am I learning to encourage each member of the group to discover the ministry that really excites them?
- e. Am I learning to lead the group to help each other learn Biblical principles which will help each one develop in the ministry that excites them?

### **2. Questions regarding our abilities**

- a. Am I learning to use my God-given abilities more effectively?
- b. Am I encouraging the group to develop their God-given abilities?
- c. Am I showing by example how we can use our abilities to serve each other?
- d. Am I showing by example how we can use our abilities to glorify God?

### **3. Questions regarding our personalities**

- a. Am I learning how to help the group accept one another?
- b. Am I learning how to help the group really listen to each other?
- c. Am I learning how to help the group really trust and have faith in each other?
- d. Am I learning how to help the group really take an interest in the concerns of others?

### **4. Questions regarding our different life experiences**

- a. Am I learning how to help the group deal with their prejudices?
- b. Am I learning to show the group how to minister to each other in their homes by visiting other group members in their homes and inviting them to my home?
- c. Am I learning to share Biblical principles that I have learned from my own life experiences?
- d. Are we learning to develop lasting friendships in the group?