



Using What God

Gave You

Purpose Driven Life: Day 32



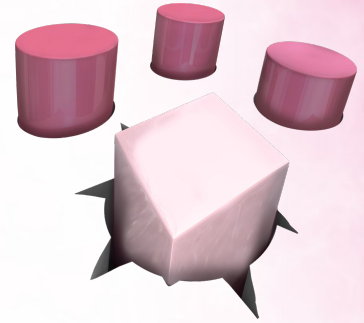


How Do We Discover our Shape?

1. Assessing your gifts and abilities
2. Consider your heart and your personality
3. Examine experiences and extract the lessons

Introduction

- God shaped us for a purpose, and He expects us to make the most of what has been given
- When we try to serve God in ways we are not shaped to serve, it is a waste of time, talent, and energy.
- The best use of our life is to serve God in the way He actually designed us.
 - To discover our shape, learn to accept and enjoy it, and then develop it to its fullest potential
- “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” - Ephesians 5:17
 - We should not let another day go by without trying to understand what God intends for us to be and do



Desires vs Calling

- Examples:
 - A person may desire to be a priest
 - lack the spiritual maturity to do so.
 - Some may wish to become monks or nuns because it is seen as holy and admired
 - lack the level of obedience and sacrifice
 - Others may desire to teach or lead spiritually
 - not everyone is called to it
- This exemplifies that desire alone does not define calling, and that's the reason it is important to discover our shape.

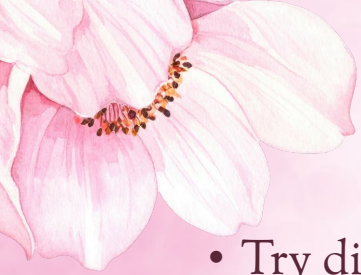


1. *Assessing Your Gifts and Abilities*

Through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. - Romans 12: 3

1. Take an honest look at what you can do.
 2. Make a list.
 3. Ask people you know for their truthful opinion.
 4. You can also ask yourself like,
 - What am I good at?
 - What comes naturally to me?
 - Where have I seen fruit in other people's confirmation?
- Spiritual gift tests and ability inventories can have some value, but they are limited.
 1. Standardized
 2. No definition of the spiritual gift given in the Bible
 3. As you grow spiritually, you may show characteristics of several gifts.





- Try different areas of service
- Until we involve ourselves in service, we are not going to know what we are good at.
- “You will never know what you’re good at until you try”
- Have dozens of hidden abilities and gifts we never discover because we never attempt them
- If something does not work out, don’t call it a failure- call it an experiment
 - Every attempt teaches you something
 - Learn where your strengths lie



2. Consider Your Heart and Personality

“
But let each one
examine his own work,
and then he will have
rejoicing in himself
alone, and not in
another. - Galatians 6:4
”

- Your heart (your passion, interests, and motivation) is a major part of your shape.
- God uses all types of people, and our personality is not a mistake.
- Serve best when you serve in a way that fits who you naturally are.
- Some questions you can ask yourself are
 - What do I really enjoy doing the most?
 - When do I feel most fully alive?
 - Do I prefer serving with a team or myself?



3. *Examine Experiences and Extract Lessons*

- Review your life and consider how your experiences have shaped you .
- Moses told the Israelites, “Know today that I do not speak with your children, who have not known and who have not seen the [a]chastening of the Lord your God, His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm—.” - Deuteronomy 11: 2
- Keep a spiritual journal as forgetting experiences are worthless.
- Sometimes hard to see God’s good purpose when in pain , failure or embarrassment
- When Jesus washed Peter’s feet, He said, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” - John 13:7
- Important to pause and reflect on how God worked in your life



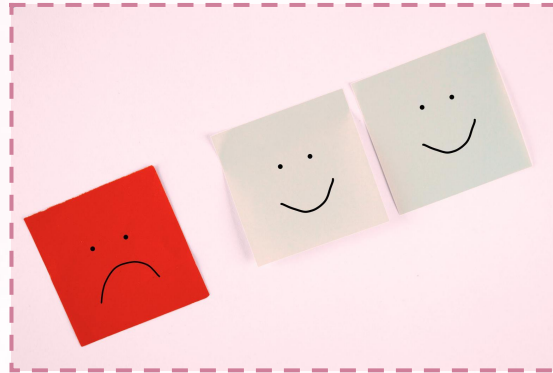
Accepting and Enjoying your Shape



- God knows what is best for us -> gratefully accept the way He has fashioned us.
- In our Orthodox faith
 - May be called to carry the cross, bend our will to God's will, and serve in a calling that we may not have wanted or liked initially
 - Through our Father of Confession and prayer, God has led us to serve in it.
- Recognize your limitations.
- Paul said , “We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you”. - 2 Corinthians 10:13
- Boundaries - specific area of service that God assigns to each of us.
- When we try to push beyond what God has shaped us for, we experience stress and frustration.



- Focus on using the shape God has given us
- Satan tries to steal the joy of service, either by making us compare ourselves to others or by pressuring us to meet other people's expectations.
 - Deadly and will distract from the service God intended
- You may be criticized by those who do not understand your shape for ministry.
- Important to avoid comparison, resist exaggerations, and seek only God's approval.



Developing Your Gifts

- Once we discover our gifts, we have to
 - Cultivate our abilities
 - Keep our heart aflame
 - Grow our character and personality
 - Broaden our experience so that we will become more effective in our service
- Avoid the habit of choosing only the service that is easy or that we personally prefer
- Serve where we are needed and where God has given us an ability.
- “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” - Philippians 4:13
- If we don’t use the abilities God gave us, we risk losing them.
- Ex: Parable of the Talents
 - “So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents”- Matthew 25:28



Conclusion



In heaven we are going to serve God forever. Right now, we can prepare for that eternal service by practicing on earth.



Thank You



The Purpose Driven Life

Day 33: How Real
Servants Act



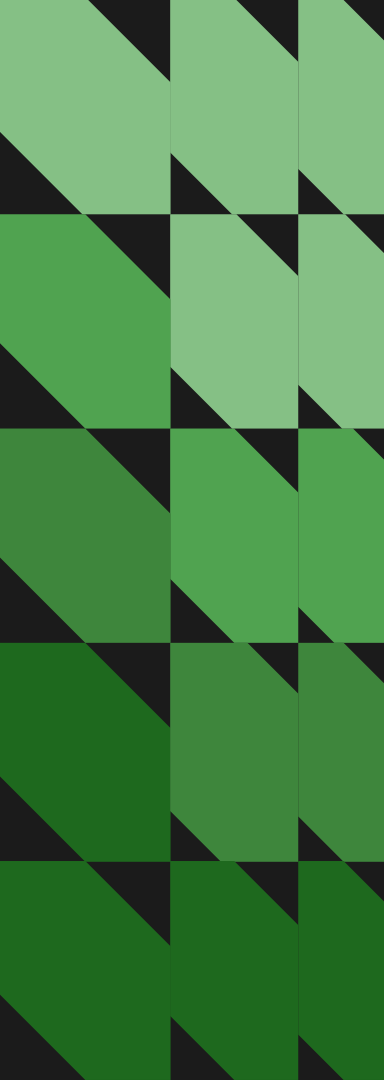


The Definition of Greatness

The world's definition: power, possessions, prestige, and position

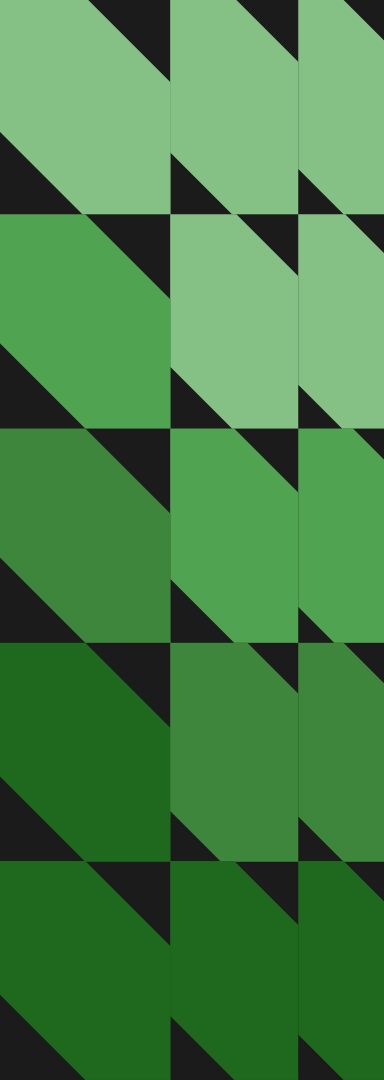
Christ's definition: our service

- God determines our greatness by how we serve others, not by how others serve us. We should strive not to be leaders, and not even "servant-leaders," but rather as a servant, as He called us to be.
- "Whoever wants to be great must become a servant."
– Mark 10:43



How to be a Good Servant

- While knowing your capabilities is important in serving God, having the heart of a servant is a higher priority.
- "Your shape reveals your ministry, but your servant's heart will reveal your maturity."
- *Primary ministry*- area designed for your shape/capacity
- *Secondary service*- service wherever you're need at the moment, even if it does not fall under your primary ministry



How to be a Good Servant

- God often tests our hearts by asking us to serve in ways we're not shaped.
- Even when not officially being a servant, you must possess a servant's heart
- "You can tell what they are by what they do"
- Matthew 7:16



A Servant's Availability to Serve

- Real servants make themselves available to serve
 - They do what's needed, even when it's inconvenient.
- "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."
 - 2 Timothy 2:4



A Servant's Attention to Needs

- Real servants pay attention to needs.
 - They possess sensitivity and spontaneity, responding quickly, as great opportunities to serve never last long.
- "Whenever we have the opportunity, we have to do what is good for everyone, especially for the family of believers."
– Galatians 6:10
- Do even the little tasks as if they were great, as God is watching.



A Servant's Commitment and Dedication

- Real servants do the best with what they have. They do every task with equal dedication.
- God expects you to do what you can, with what you have, wherever you are. Your work does not have to be perfect for God to use and bless it.
- "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart"
- Colossians 3:23
- Jesus specialized in menial tasks, such, as washing His disciples' feet. Small tasks often show a big heart.



A Servant's Faith and Humility

- Real servants are faithful to their ministry and maintain a low profile. They are trustworthy and dependent, yet they do not promote or call attention to themselves.
- We should avoid "eyeservice," serving in order to impress people with how spiritual we are.
 - We should imitate Joseph's humility, and avoid the Pharisees' hubris.
- "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."
- Matthew 6:1



THANK YOU

"And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward." - Matthew 10:42

