



serve

gifts.
abilities.
service.

CONTENTS:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Finding your "fit": Called to serve | PG. 1-2 |
| 2. Finding your "fit": Gifts & Abilities | PG. 3-7 |
| 3. Finding your fit: Putting it all together. | PG. 8-10 |



SECTION₁: "CALLED TO "SERVE"

1 Peter 4:10-11: "As each one has received a *special* gift ("grace"), employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

WHO:

We see in this passage above, that **every true believer** has received grace from God. Here, He calls them to employ that grace in a way that is unique to them. Each believer ought to trust God to demonstrate His grace through their unique, God-given personality, passions, purpose, and abilities. God's grace-gift shapes each of us to display His grace in a way that we couldn't do without Him, and the working of His Holy Spirit in us. There are ways that unbelievers can serve, but this is something different, ("special").

HOW:

1. **Rely on God to enable every act of service.** Every believer is to rely on God to enable this service. It's His grace given, it's His "many-faceted" grace on display, it's God who gives the words to say, and the strength to serve. If you serve without God's grace, miss the point, and could burn yourself out, or end up hurting others in the process.
2. **Serve "one-another".** There are as many unique ways to serve "one-another" within the church as there are unique individuals. God designed it that way. The church however isn't an arena to showcase "your gift", or feed your ego. Each believer is to employ God's grace in the way that God leads them to. "Finding your fit" within the ministry of the church is a never-ending process. The way in which you engage within the church may change somewhat throughout your life. It is helpful to regularly revisit the question: "Am I where God wants me to be, doing what He wants me to be doing?" If the way in which you believe you're "gifted" is an evidence of God's grace, then it should be lived out & validated to be for the collective good & the glory of God, by others within your local church family. Serving must be done in love for the good of others in the church (1 Cor. 12:6-7; 12:18-21; 12:25; 14:1; 14:40). "Finding your fit" often comes through considering: **1.** What you're passionate about **2.** What your abilities & strengths are **3.** What opportunities God has given you, and **4.** What others within the local church validate about your effectiveness. God's call to us is to pursue love (1 Corinthians 14:1). In doing so, we discover our best fit.

WHY:

Finally, this passage makes it clear that our motivation to put the grace we receive into action is so that God gets the glory that He deserves, as we experience His power and grace working in us, and through us because of Jesus.

THINK IT THROUGH:

Romans 12:9-13: Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

How is every believer to engage within the church?

Take some time to read, pray, & reread the above passage.

List as many ways as possible in which God wants you to engage in your local church.

Mark 10:42-45 42 Calling them to Himself, Jesus *said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles (*nations*) lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. 43 But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; 44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

What can we learn from Jesus in Mark 10:35-45 about serving?

Take some time to read, pray, & reread the above passage, and attempt to come up with a clear understanding of what James & John & we need to learn from Jesus.

For Further Study, check out all the New Testament verses about serving:

Matt. 4:11, 8:15, 20:28, 25:44, 27:55; **Mark** 1:13 & 31, 10:45, 15:41 **Luke** 4:39, 8:3, 10:40, 12:37, 17:8, 22:6-27;

John 12:2 & 26; **Acts** 6:2, 19:22; **Romans** 15:25; **2 Cor.** 3:3, 8:19-20; **1 Tim.** 3:10 & 13; **2 Tim.** 1:18;

Philemon 13; **Heb.** 6:10; **1 Peter** 1:12

SECTION₂: "GIFTS & ABILITIES"

SPIRITUAL "GIFTS" (lit. "things"): Unique ways in which God empowers a believer...

... To display His multi-faceted grace (Romans 12:3-6; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

... To demonstrate that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:1-4)

... To work for the good of other believers within the local church (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-11)

... To promote unity of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-27)

NATURAL GIFTS/ ABILITIES: The unique ways in which God creates every human being & orchestrates the circumstances of their lives.

God gives undeserved gifts to every human (Matt. 5:45) & especially likes to do this for those who believe in Him (James 1:16-18). He also gives natural abilities to all people for the good of societies, nations, and all of creation (Acts 17:28). Whether the ability to take a breath, to rule a nation well, or anything else, these abilities exist for the benefit of the creation, and for God's glory. All things should be done for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:30-31)! These things are not to be confused with the "Spiritual" gifts (*things*) that we should be aware of (1 Cor. 12:1-4).

WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

There are a variety of "Spiritual things" that exist for the common good of the Body of Christ, and we should not be unaware of them (1 Cor. 12:1). These are portions of God's great grace given to us, and flow from the gospel (Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:7). They vary according to the good pleasure of God (1 Cor. 12:11), through the working of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4-6).

Each believer receives God's grace (Rom. 12:3), and the Holy Spirit shows up in various ways, and through various acts of service (1 Cor. 12:6-7). The constant is that He glorifies God's grace in every believer (1 Cor. 12:4-7). Remembering that this is all part of the outflow of God's grace, will help keep us from pride (Rom. 12:1-6). When the Holy Spirit does these spiritual things through us (1 Cor. 12:11), we have moments, (or opportunities) to recognize that God is Spirit, and that the battle we fight is in the spiritual realm (Eph. 6:12).

When the Holy Spirit shows up, the whole body should be built up, and left remembering that we have a great God. We call these gospel-driven and unique expressions of grace "Spiritual gifts".

There are also 2 unique sub-categories seen in scripture:

1. There are some instances in which God's grace shapes some people for a specific task of equipping the body, and He gives these people to the church to equip them for ministry with a shared goal of maturity (Eph. 4:11-13).
2. There are some instances in the New Testament where God's gracious movements through His Holy Spirit were for a "sign" to unbelieving Israel. These "signs" happened in places where God was bringing the gospel to new regions to establish churches. This was a sign that God was offering the blessing of the New Covenant to people from all nations, even though His own people did not receive Him (as a whole). The signs made it evident to all that this new thing that was happening (the church) truly was the work of God. (1 Cor. 14:21-22; Isaiah 28:5-16; Acts 2:1-6, 10:46, 19:6; Hebrews 2:4).

EXAMPLES OF HOW GOD'S GRACE UNIQUELY SHINES THROUGH INDIVIDUALS:

(Page 1)

Administration κυβέρνησις "A helmsman" -or- "to steer a ship"; (1 Corinthians 12:28)

Could be understood as the ability to help direct & organize in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that moves others graciously in the same direction.

Knowledge γνῶσις "comprehension of a matter" (1 Corinthians 12:8)

Could be understood as the ability to quickly accumulate & analyze information in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that helps make sense of complex problems graciously.

Mercy ἐλεάω "to help the afflicted" -or- "to show mercy to" (Romans 12:8)

Could be understood as the ability to show empathy toward others in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in an understanding & gracious way.

Wisdom σοφία "Discernment" (1 Corinthians 12:8)

Could be understood as the ability to apply spiritual knowledge correctly in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that accurately & graciously lives out biblical truths.

Wisdom σοφία "Discernment" (1 Corinthians 12:8)

Could be understood as the ability to apply spiritual knowledge correctly in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that accurately & graciously lives out biblical truths.

Equipping Apostle ἀπόστολος "Sent one" (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-12)

Equipping apostleship could be understood as the act of going to bring God's grace through the gospel to another location where there is no church. This would be done for the unity & good of the global church & the future local church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that overcomes barriers such as geography, culture, language...

*** Should not be understood in the same sense as the formal Apostles of Jesus who had personally witnessed the resurrection (Acts 1:21-26; been appointed directly & personally by Jesus (1 Cor. 15:5-9), & through whom God confirmed the gospel message with signs & wonders.*

(Acts 1:5-8, 2:43, 4:33, 5:12, 8:14, 32; 1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:20; Heb. 2:3-4).

EXAMPLES OF HOW GOD'S GRACE UNIQUELY SHINES THROUGH INDIVIDUALS:

(Page 2)

Giving μεταδίδωμι "To give a share of" **(Romans 12:8)**

Could be understood as the ability to be generous in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that is generous with time, talent, &/or treasure.

Equipping evangelist εὐαγγελιστής "to herald, or proclaim Good news" **(Ephesians 4:11-12)**

Could be understood as the ability to communicate the gospel to others in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way graciously equips others within the church to do the work of evangelism.

Leadership προΐστημι "to put before, or present...to lead, direct, or govern" **(Romans 12:8)**

Could be understood as the ability to discern & propose ideas regarding direction for the church in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way graciously helps others move forward in the same direction.

Equipping Prophet προφητεία "To say, to speak" **(Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:28; 14; Eph. 4:11-12)**

Could be understood as the ability to speak about things pertaining to the church in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way graciously helps the church understand what God has said, and what He is doing. This equips the church to stay on mission by helping others navigate cultural issues with biblical truth.

*** Should not be understood in the same sense as the formal Prophetic ministry of O.T. Prophets sent from God to Israel or nations, and whose ministry laid the foundation on which the church was built (Eph. 2:20)*

Languages ("tongues") γλῶσσαι "language, dialect, or speech" **(1 Cor. 12:10)**

Could be understood as the ability to speak in a language(s) previously unknown to the speaker. Unlike the other gifts, this one was designed to be a sign for unbelieving Israel (Isaiah 28:5-16; 1 Corinthians 14:20-22). This was a sign of judgment for rejecting their Messiah (Isaiah 28:5-16; Acts 2:1-36) that was repeated twice (Acts 10:46; 19:6) to demonstrate that God would offer New Covenant blessings ahead of time to people from all nations, even though Israel would be temporarily "cut off" (Romans 11). When the church misunderstands, misidentifies, misapplies or fakes this gift, the church is led into confusion and those who join the gathering think the church is crazy (1 Corinthians 14; esp. v. 6, 10, 13, 15, 20-23). This was a unique sign that was not intended to be used to edify the church, but was allowed as long as the language could be translated to validate that they were speaking a language that had meaning. (Isaiah 28; 1 Corinthians 14).

*** Used in 47 verses in the N.T. (16) of which refer to the physical organ. (31) of which refer to languages*

EXAMPLES OF HOW GOD'S GRACE UNIQUELY SHINES THROUGH INDIVIDUALS:

(Page 3)

Interpretation of Languages ("tongues") ἐρμηνεία γλῶσσαι "to translate a language"

(1 Cor. 12:10)

Could be understood as the ability to translate languages in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift was used to ensure that gatherings of the church were edifying to all when multiple languages (at most 2 or 3) were used. If everyone could not understand in their own language, they could not be edified, and there was no way to validate if these were actual languages from the Holy Spirit, or not.

Helps ἀντίλημψις "To grasp, take up a matter, to master" **(1 Corinthians 12:28)**

Could be understood as the ability to understand what's needed for a task, moment, or relationship and offer that help in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that is fitting for the need of the moment.

Service διακονία "To wait tables/ to serve" - or - "to provide for" **(Rom. 12:7; 1 Peter 4:11)**

Could be understood as the ability to get things done in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that accomplishes task that need to be accomplished to ensure that the body is cared for.

**Those gifted in this way do well to gather into a team that works together to get these things done. This team is referred to as The Deacons (lit. "The Servants").*

Healing ἰαμα "To remedy" - or - "medicine" **(1 Corinthians 12:9, 28)**

Could be understood as the ability to remedy with medicine in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that demonstrates care & prayer for other's illnesses & seeks to recommend remedies. With Proverbs in view, this could include the healing of godly words & relationships as well.

**This gift of healing should not be confused with the signs, wonders, & miracles (Heb. 2:4) that God demonstrated through the Apostles (12 + untimely born Paul) to validate the ministry & gospel message that they were bringing to the nations.*

Effecting of Miracles ἐνέργημα δύναμις lit. "The doing of mighty deeds" **(1 Cor. 12:10, 28)**

Could be understood as any way in which God's mighty power is on display for the unity & good of the church & which shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This could refer to the temporal gift to validate the ministry & message of the Apostles (Heb. 2:4), or it could be any time that God works in powerful ways through a believer as they seek to love others within the church family.

**This gift of healing should not be confused with the signs, wonders, & miracles (Heb. 2:4) that God demonstrated through the Apostles (12 + untimely born Paul) to validate the gospel message that they were bringing to the nations.*

EXAMPLES OF HOW GOD'S GRACE UNIQUELY SHINES THROUGH INDIVIDUALS:

(Page 4)

Faith πίστις "trust, belief, conviction..." (1 Cor. 12:8-9)

Could be understood as quickness to trust God's will and act on it in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that encourages faith & obedience in others.

Encouragement παράκλησις "to call to, encourage, or comfort." (Romans 12:8)

Could be understood as the ability to come along others & call them to what God has stored in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that brings comfort and encouragement.

Equipping Shepherd/ Teacher: (Ephesians 4:11-13)

These 2 gifts appear to be combined in the original language. It is possible however, that Paul did not intend to combine them into one. For the sake of this document, they will be treated in combination (*in other words, not that God gave some people who are shepherds & some people who are teachers, but that God gave some people who are both shepherds & teachers*)*.

ποιμήν "to shepherd or herd"

Could be understood as the ability to keep people connected & together in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that equips the church to do the work of keeping one another connected.

διδάσκαλος "to teach, instruct, or impart information"

Could be understood as the ability to explain things in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that equips the church to do the work of understanding God's Word & God's will.

If these two are intended to be combined (*see above), then this could be understood as the ability to both functions (shepherding & teaching) in a way that employs God's grace for the unity & good of the church and shows Jesus as the Lord/Head of the Church. This gift will be demonstrated when an individual pursues love in a way that equips the church to stay connected & growing.

PRAYING THROUGH THE SPIRITUAL '*GIFTS*':

Read & pray through the previous list of examples of how God's grace uniquely shines through individuals, and write down any ways you can think of in which God may have shown His grace through you.

CONSIDERING GOD-GIVEN DESIRES:

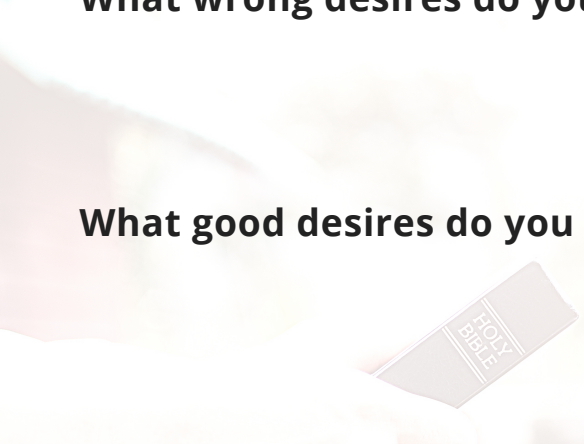
Psalms 37:4 says that when we delight ourselves in the Lord, He gives us desires in our hearts.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says "trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding, In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Galatians 5:16 shows us that if we walk by the (*Holy*) Spirit, we will not carry out the desires (*impulses*) of our flesh.

What wrong desires do you need to ask God to remove from you?

What good desires do you believe that God has put in you?



"THE BEST ADVICE THAT I CAN GIVE YOU IS DO THE NEXT THING. YOUR JOB ISN'T TO FIGURE IT ALL OUT NOW, BUT TO TAKE THE STEP GOD HAS LAID BEFORE YOU TODAY. HE KNOWS WHERE THE PATH IS LEADING, AND YOU CAN TRUST HIM TO GET YOU THERE. BUT DON'T EXPECT HIM TO SHOW YOU THE FINAL DESTINATION AT THE BEGINNING... GOD HASN'T YET PREPARED YOU FOR THE FINAL DESTINATION, ONLY FOR THE NEXT STEP. IN HIS MERCY, GOD REVEALS HIS WILL ONE STEP AT A TIME SO THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS THE NEXT THING. THE REALITY IS, THAT IF YOU ARE PUTTING YOUR TRUST IN GOD AND OBEDIENTLY FOLLOWING HIM, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET IT WRONG. RATHER THAN FEARING THAT YOU'RE GOING TO MISS GOD'S WILL, PURSUE HIM. IT'S WHEN YOU TAKE YOUR EYES OFF OF JESUS THAT YOU LOSE SIGHT OF THE PATH HE'S CALLED YOU TO. BUT IF YOU SEEK GOD AND PURSUE AN UNDERSTANDING OF HOW HE HAS UNIQUELY GIFTED YOU, YOU WILL FIND THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT CALLING..."

As you put this all together, the goal isn't to figure everything out when it comes to life and serving God. The goal is to discern your next step, and to begin discerning how God wants to use you. In order to do this, it's helpful to consider what John Ward calls your 'sweet spot'... "the intersection of our passions, abilities, and opportunities, all within the sphere of what others have affirmed in us." It may be helpful to revisit this on a yearly basis, or every few years.

CONSIDERING THE WHOLE PICTURE:

**WHAT AM I
PASSIONATE ABOUT?**

**WHAT OPPORTUNITIES
DOES GOD KEEP BRINGING
ACROSS MY PATH?**

**WHAT ABILITIES,
STRENGTHS, OR GIFTS
HAS GOD GIVEN ME?**

**ASK OTHERS FROM YOUR
CHURCH WHAT THEY
THINK YOU'RE
PASSIONATE ABOUT.**

**ASK OTHERS FROM YOUR
CHURCH WHAT THEY THINK
WHAT MINISTRY SETTINGS
THEY THINK YOU'D DO
WELL IN.**

**ASK OTHERS FROM YOUR
CHURCH WHAT THEY
THINK WHAT ABILITIES,
STRENGTHS, OR GIFTS
HAS GOD GIVEN YOU.**

ARE THERE MINISTRIES THAT SEEM LIKE A GOOD FIT?

Consider your passions, and abilities, and consider whether there's an opportunity that lines up. Sometimes people serve because there's a need, and they find out later that their passion for that ministry grows. Sometimes people serve for a while, and discover that God is burdening them with something else. Remember the importance others affirming things within us. List any ministries that may be a possibility
(Kids; Tech. Ministry; Administration; Care Ministries; Life Groups; Music Ministry; Men's/ Women's/ Youth Ministry; Building Maintenance; Fellowship Events; Connect Team; Greeters; Community Engagement...)

TRY SOME OUT:

Consider trying some out before you commit. Check out any ministry for a few times & engage in some conversations with the ministry leader to see how it fits.

ARE THERE IDEAS YOU HAVE THAT DON'T SEEM TO FIT?

There are many valuable ways in which many serve that don't line up with a formal ministry. If you have ideas for something that isn't a current ministry, consider sharing this with the leadership. There may be others with shared passion & abilities that we can connect to begin something new. Also, it's very important to realize that there is a lot of ministry that happens outside of the formal ministry teams. There is much prayer, care, giving, encouragement... that happens informally. All ministry is valuable, we simply have some formal ministry teams to facilitate teamwork as we seek to know God & follow Jesus together.