

✍ As an addendum to the teaching in 1st Corinthians 12 concerning Spiritual gifts I am going to speak more specifically about the real-time application of gifts in the Body Christ. Spiritual gifts are broader generalities of the specific places each of us fits in the framework of the Body of Christ. There is no complete list given to us, but if we add up all the gifts there are only 17 or 18 to choose from in the Bible. Does that mean that there are only 17 or 18 possible ministries for a body made of millions of people? There is more to it than just the gifts, our gifts are only part of what God intends to use as we work out our purposes in the Body of Christ. Gifts answer a "what" question for us: "What has God gifted me to do?" But there many other questions to be answered before we can truly fit where God has purposed us. Questions like: How will I minister, where will I minister, when will I minister and to whom will I minister are all very valid questions. It is when we start getting answers to more of those questions that can better realize all that God has planned for us.

1. One of the best ways that I have seen to begin answering those questions is by using an acrostic called "SHAPE."

- ✓ SHAPE: Spiritual gift; Heart; Abilities; Personality; and Experiences. God has gone to great lengths to demonstrate how uniquely He has made each one of us. None of us look the same; we unique fingerprints; unique heart rhythms; our DNA has no twin. Add to this, Spiritual gifts; hearts; abilities; personalities; and experiences and the message is clear we have each been uniquely designed for ministry that only we can fulfill; a unique shape that only we fit into for the sake of His Kingdom.
- ✓ Spiritual Gifts are grace gifts that are given to us at the point of salvation. The Spirit gives as He wishes but they are for other's benefit not ours. How that gift is used, where it is used, to what extent it is used is determined by the other letters in the acrostic.

2. The second area that determines our shape is the Heart. The Bible describes the heart as the source of our motivations.

- ✓ For this reason, we are to guard our hearts: Proverbs 4:23. Our hearts are the most real part of us: Proverbs 27:19. Our hearts determine why we say what we say, do what we do, and act how we act: Matthew 15:19. Our hearts reveal our passion, and it is from the heart that we serve God: Ephesians 6:6. What are you passionate about, enthusiastic about, what do you do for the sheer enjoyment of doing it? When we do what God has wired us to do, we will be good at it and we will love doing it, that's heart. Figure out what you love to do; what God has given you the heart to do and do it for His glory.

3. The third area that determines our shape is our Abilities.

- ✓ Abilities differ from gifts in that gifts were given by spiritual birth whereas abilities were given by natural birth. Both are God given: James 1:17. What are your abilities? What are you good at?, Math, music, athletics, mechanical, song, writing, making money, etc? Scripture is clear: whatever we do, we should do it all to the glory of God. God has a place where our special abilities can shine for His glory. Your abilities are a strong indicator of what God wants you to do for Him, whatever you're good at, you should be doing for your church.

4. The fourth area that determines our shape is our Personalities.

- ✓ There are introverts, extroverts, some like routine, others like variety, some are feelers and others are thinkers, God can use every personality type for His glory. Personality will affect how and where you use your Spiritual gifts. As an example, two people may have the same gift of evangelism but one is an introvert and ministers best one on one, and the other is an extrovert and loves to speak to crowds. We all minister best "in character," that is, within the limits of our personalities.

5. The final area that determines our shape is our Experiences.

- ✓ What was your family experience? What did you learn growing up? Educational experience: what were you favorite subjects? Vocational experience: What did, or do you actually do? Spiritual experience: How has God used you and ministered to you? Painful experiences: many ministries grow out of some of our deepest hurts Romans 8:28 What have been your worst experiences? They may be the places you are most equipped to help others.

Only you can be you! Nothing in your life is insignificant; all can be used by God for His work.
