

Chapter 20

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING YOUR GIFTS 4 ***GIFTS, PASSION, TEMPERAMENT, TALENTS, SCHEDULE***

Introduction:

In this lesson we will look at how various aspects of our personality, our nature, and our lives will help to make a difference in the world in which we live. We have looked at our gifts. Now we will spend some time looking at our passion, temperaments, talents, skills and abilities and even our schedules.

We need to be willing to take an honest look at ourselves...who we are, what we do, how we really feel about things, how we think. These are all keys to who we are and what we are to do. God knows why He made us the way He did. He made us unique individuals. He's not mad at us, not out to make our lives miserable; but He does want to use us.

As we understand more about ourselves, we become freer to be all that God intended for us to be. We are no longer a square peg trying to fit into a round hole. No longer feeling, because of traditional religion, that we all have to be and act in the same way. Some to plant, some to water, some to bring in the harvest, but also some to preserve the harvest...and even those to teach how to plant for a new and bigger harvest.

- I. We can make a difference in the world we in which live. We each live in a world that is uniquely ours because of who we are, who we live with, who we live around, who we work with and how we approach all of these situations.
 - A. In this world in which we live, we can have motion without movement. That is when whoever wants to do whatever they like, wherever they desire, whenever possible, but are not really making a difference in their world; but not really hitting the target they are shooting for.
 - B. We can make a significant mark in the world in which we live. Our ministry ought to simply reflect who God has made us to be. Our life for Christ can make a difference when serving in harmony with our spiritual gifts, strong desires (passion), temperament, and talents.
- II. Let us review some definitions of Calling, Gifts, and Ministry; what they are and what they mean to us individually.
 - A. Our calling is basically who and what we are (are becoming). The idea of a call or calling implies that God has identified and chosen us individually for His divine purposes. It is not a matter of ambition or personal desire, but God's divine choosing. (Isaiah 43:1; John 15:16)
 - B. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given to all believers by the Holy Spirit. They are the tools we use to function in the place and purpose God has for us; thus they are sometimes

called “function gifts.” We each have our part in the body of Christ. As we become more Christ-like we may be able to function in more gifts. And as we are faithful, we may be given more. (Romans 12:3-5; Matthew 25:21-23)

- C. Our ministry is actually the job we do; the place where we function in the body of Christ and the world we in which live.

III. When we begin to know and understand ourselves better we will have some clues to who we are and how we might be used by God for His purpose.

- A. Am I an extrovert or an introvert?

1. Understanding the difference between being an extrovert or an introvert helps us to understand how we as individuals get our batteries re-charged.
2. Extroverts get their batteries re-charged by being with people. They need to be around people or they can get lonely and depressed.
3. Introverts get their batteries re-charged by spending time alone. They feel drained by a lot of social interaction.

- B. Am I a thinker or a feeler?

1. Understanding if we are a thinker or a feeler helps us to know how we approach dealing with situations and making decisions.
2. Thinkers are more concerned about objective facts. Their feelings and emotions are not as visible or evident in their decision making.
3. Feelers like to experience things. They are more subjective and want to explore their feelings about things.

- C. Am I more routine in my approach to living or do I like variety and spontaneity?

1. Being aware of this in our lives will help us to understand the way we prefer to look at tasks or jobs that need to be done.
2. Those that prefer routine enjoy the comfort of knowing what is expected and performing appropriately.
3. Those that prefer variety like the challenge of diversity.

- D. Am I a pioneer or a settler?

1. Some characteristics of a pioneer are that they are always looking forward and outward. They like new beginnings and can feel crowded and stifled by routine and sameness. They are soon ready to move on to new territory and see hardship and difficulties as challenges to be overcome, not misery to be endured. Pioneers can also become impatient with settlers.

2. Some characteristics of settlers are that they usually follow pioneers. Settlers like to see things develop after they have been established by the pioneers. They tend to enjoy the comforts of civilization and the security of routine. Settlers consolidate the gains made by pioneers and tend to think pioneers are just a little "Over the Top!"

E. Am I a leader or a follower? A leader will be more an initiator; while a follower will be more a responder.

- IV. What is your passion? A strong desire (passion) often leads us to some compelling action. This strong desire (passion) is part of God's way of directing you to the place where you can best use your spiritual gifts.

What is your strong desire (passion)?

Carefully consider the following questions to identify and state your strong desire (passion). Assume that money, time, or abilities are not an issue.

1. What local, global, political, social or church issues cause a strong emotional stirring in you?

2. What kind or group of people do you feel most attracted to?

3. What is the area of need which is of ultimate importance to you?

4. If you could not fail, what would you do in order to make a difference?

5. In what areas of the church's ministry would you like to make an impact with your life and spiritual gifts?

6. In light of the above, I would say that I have a strong desire (passion) to.....

- V. A look at our temperaments can also help us to a better understanding of ourselves and how we look at and respond to different situations and needs in the world around us. They should not be used as way to get out of doing the things that need to be done, or to excuse irresponsible behavior, but to help us to know ourselves better and even to know those around us better.

| <u>TEMPERAMENT</u> | <u>WEAKNESSES</u> | <u>STRENGTHS</u> |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| CHOLERIC | Anger Sarcastic Domineering Proud Unemotional Crafty Self-sufficient Cruel | Determined Independent Optimistic Practical Decisive Productive Confident Leader |
| SANGUINE | Unstable Restless Egocentric Undisciplined Fearful Exaggerates Weak-willed Loud | Talkative Outgoing Enthusiastic Friendly Warm Carefree Compassionate Personable |
| PHLEGMATIC | Stingy Indecisive Spectator Selfish Unmotivated Fearful Compromising Cautious | Calm Dependable Easy-going Efficient Conservative Practical Stable Sympathetic |
| MELANCHOLY | Moody Negative Self-centered Unsociable | Gifted Analytical Sensitive Perfectionist |

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Impractical | Aesthetic |
| Rigid | Loyal |
| Revengeful | Idealistic |
| Theoretical | Self-Sacrificing |

A. **CHOLERIC:**

Emphasis: Make a difference in their world by overcoming opposition to accomplish results.

Biblical Models: Saul, Nehemiah, Peter, Paul

Desires: Authority, challenges, prestige, freedom, difficult assignments, variety, logical approaches, opportunity for advancement.

Characteristics: Result oriented, questions status quo, very independent, problem solver, critical thinker, determined, persistent, organized, logical, endless ideas, opinionated, decisive, manages trouble, confident, stable.

Areas of possible concern: Not sympathetic, emotionally immature, difficulty in trusting God and others, outbursts of anger, will not hesitate to break rules to succeed, difficulty in apologizing or in showing approval.

These people are the strong, self-willed drivers that make the free enterprise system work. They are organizers, practical, capable--extremely task-oriented. They come across as sure, self-confident, and determined. These people have given the world its generals, crusaders, and politicians. They can be cruel, sarcastic, and intolerant of others or be the selfless, dedicated champion of the down-trodden. Usually successful in what they undertake; they sometimes wear themselves out first.

To encourage these people, let them know that they are important for their own sake, not just for their accomplishments. Help them to discover the secret of "inner peace" in being, not doing. Help them to celebrate the "now;" to love and be loved, to touch and be touched.

B. **SANGUINE:**

Emphasis: Make a difference in their world by bringing others together to accomplish results.

Biblical models: Peter, John-Mark

Desires: Social recognition, popularity, freedom of speech, opportunities, to help and motivate people, freedom from control and details, acknowledgment of abilities.

Characteristics: Seeks people out, child-like spirit, innate optimism, tender and compassionate, articulate and verbal, cheerful and responsive, loves to please, makes a

good first impression, genuine love for people, entertaining, motivates others, desires to help others.

Areas of possible concern: Talks too much, seen as superficial/egotistical, too emotionally motivated, not enough objectivity, poor time management and control, needs more initiative and follow-through, lots of acquaintance, few close friends.

These people are warm, friendly, outgoing, energetic, optimistic, and fun to be around. They could sell a refrigerator to an Eskimo. Also make good preachers, actors, and after-dinner speakers. These people are the "life of the party," "now" people, happy-go-lucky; at least on the surface. They usually cover up any feelings of inadequacy or insecurity. Better at short dashes than long distance runs. Voted "most likely to succeed" in school, do not always though.

To encourage these people, give them a chance to "take off their mask." Help them to feel accepted for who they are, not for their jokes. Help them to get in touch with their feelings and their "spiritual resources." Ask them to share their dreams and don't let them cop-out when the going gets tough.

C. PHLEGMATIC:

Emphasis: Make a difference in their world by co-operating with others to carry out the task.

Biblical models: Abraham, Ruth

Desires: Status quo, time to adjust, appreciation, work patterns, identification with the group, areas of specialization, limited territory.

Characteristics: Likes daily routine, shows loyalty, capable and efficient, team player, good listener, accurate and neat, dislikes confrontation, internalize pressure, dry sense of humor, predictable, natural peacemaker, kindhearted.

Areas of possible concern: Tendency to be slow and lazy, stubborn, stingy, reluctant to get involved, uses witty ability to tease others that annoy them, indecisive.

These people are easy-going, likeable, dependable, ever cautious, conservative and practical. The original "nice" guy. They never get upset or excited, never rock the boat, avoid conflict at all costs; even at the expense of their own rights. These people have promoted diplomats, civil servants, social workers, teachers, spectators, and spouses to be strong-willed leaders. They can be invaluable as peacemakers. They are extremely loyal, going the "second mile" without complaint. But they can be stepped on by others to the extent that their own self-esteem is diminished.

To encourage these people, encourage them to take a chance, to take a stand on issues and to take the initiative on things. Give them a lot of positive feedback and reinforcement when they do step out. Call them to face up to their own responsibility for their lives and for their spiritual potential as people.

D. **MELANCHOLY:**

Emphasis: They desire to work with existing circumstances and people to promote quality.

Biblical models: Moses, Solomon, John

Desires: Security, no sudden changes, exact job descriptions, personal attention, controlled atmosphere, status quo.

Characteristics: Know their limitations, sensitive, does not waste words, creative, genius prone, perfectionist, loyal, exceptional analytical abilities, aesthetic, strong need to be loved, moody, feelings dominate, enjoys the fine arts, faithful friend, but does not make friends easily.

Areas of possible concern: Preoccupied with self analysis, easily offended or insulted, arrogant and judgmental, extended periods of moodiness, antagonistic, suspicious/pessimistic.

These people are imaginative, creative, sensitive, and artistic. They are real lovers of beauty, solitude, and perfection. Usually quiet, gentle, and withdrawn people. They can experience extreme emotional highs and lows; either effervescent and exuberant or moody, touchy and depressed. These people have given the world most of its artists, composers, writers, thinkers, inventors, theoreticians, saints, and sinners. They are intensely loyal to friends and deeply hurt when friendships turn sour.

To encourage these people, help them to realize their great gifts and strengths. Acceptance of their ups and downs without dwelling on them can be important. They may need help to claim the spiritual stability of an ever-constant God. Let them celebrate their God-given capacity to feel deeply.

VI. Some additional thoughts on personal development that we can consider as we look at knowing ourselves better.

- A. Our schedule or the use of our time can be very important in the development of gifts. Our time is something we all have. We tend to guard it carefully as we should. We should be willing to challenge ourselves in the use of our time but at the same time be careful not to over extend ourselves. *"Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."* Ephesians 5:15-16.
- B. Because we are made in the image of God we all have some natural talents. There are of course variations and degrees. Because they do come from God some confuse natural talent with spiritual gifts; even calling them gifts. Unbelievers have talent also, but only believers have spiritual gifts. Both natural talents and spiritual gifts vary in degree and kind. They can be developed. They are given by and ought to be used under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Skills and abilities can be learned and acquired. I do not believe

that God wastes our experiences; the things we learn, if we offer them to God to be used.
(Colossians 3:17, 23-24)

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

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1. Why do you think it is important to know yourself better as you begin to function in the gifts God gives you?
2. Is there a danger of thinking everyone should think, act and do as we do? What can we do to become more appreciative of other people and their gifts?