

SHAPE: Who We Are in Christ

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

God has made each one of us in a unique way to accomplish what he has prepared for us to do. The apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, *“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 12:12) In the same way that different parts of a body serve different purposes, different parts of Christ’s body, the Church, have different functions. God created each one of us unique, with different backgrounds, personalities, and abilities. This acrostic helps us learn what “shape” we are, and how we fit in relation to others in the body of Christ.

Spiritual gifts:

Romans 12:6-8 “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 “For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.”

1 Corinthians 12:28-30 “And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”

Ephesians 4:11 “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers.”

Every believer has at least one spiritual gift given to them by God from the time they converted. Some of the different spiritual gifts can be found in the passages above, however, these lists aren’t extensive. If you have never thought about your spiritual gift, the best way to discover it is by simply serving wherever it is needed at Challenge or at church. You’ll get to know what you’re capable of that way, and it’s also helpful to get input from others about what you’re good at. You may think you have the gift of service, but have others tell you that you’re a very effective and gifted teacher. 1 Peter 4:10 says, *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”* In other words, whatever gift God gave you, **use it to serve others**. Spiritual gifts can also be developed. Even though God is the one who gave it to you, he wants you to steward it well and improve at it to the glory of God.

Heart:

Heart is about the passions that God has placed inside of you. It could be a passion to see justice done in the world, to see people who have never heard the gospel come to Christ, or to faithfully teach Scripture. What are some passions you currently have that you think God could use?

Abilities:

Abilities are different from spiritual gifts. Rather than a gift God gives you when you become a Christian, these are things that you have developed over the course of your life or are naturally good at. Some examples include sports, playing a musical instrument, learning languages, or doing math. God can use your abilities to connect you with certain people or to serve the church in ways that other people can't.

Personality:

Whether you're an introvert or extrovert, a feeler or a thinker, an internal processor or an external processor, God created your personality uniquely to do what he wants you to do. Psalm 139:13-14 says, "*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*" Certain personality types excel in different areas of ministry or different styles of ministry. For example, introverts will do evangelism differently from extroverts, and God uses both. Thinkers will teach differently from feelers, but both can teach well and connect with different kinds of people. What things define your personality? Can you think of how God would use that to reach others?

Experiences:

God uses things that have happened in our lives to shape us for ministry. God uses both the good and the bad things. For example, someone whose parents got divorced might develop a heart for having a biblical marriage one day because they see the pain that divorce causes. On the other hand, someone who developed a close bond with their sports team in high school may recognize the value of working with others towards a goal more than someone who did not participate in sports. What is one experience you have had that God has used to shape you for ministry?

What is your SHAPE?

Brainstorm some ways you could use your SHAPE for the kingdom:
