

SESSION 2: GIFTED TO SERVE // You are Unique!

To GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED...

At this point in your life, you probably have some event or story that has special significance for you, that has played a powerful role in shaping who you are. **Share that event or story with your group.** *The focus of this opening discussion should center on how the various events of our lives have a profound impact on who we are and what we do in life.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Our first lesson began by taking a look at **Ephesians 2:8-10**. Based on this passage, **what is the relationship between “salvation by grace through faith” and “good works” in the Christian’s life?** *This question reestablishes the point made in Lesson 1 that our relationship with God is established purely on the basis of His mercy and love; “good works” flow out of that relationship.*
- 2) Notice the word “workmanship” in v. 10 (ESV). In Greek, the word *poi, hma* refers specifically to that which is divinely created.¹ If any in your group have different translations of the Bible, **how do they translate that word here?** *Examples: “masterpiece” (New Living Translation), “creation” (Holman Christian Standard Bible), “handiwork” (Today’s New International Version)*

What pictures come to mind as you think of “workmanship” (or any other translations of this word)? *Perhaps a carpenter building a bookcase, or a sculptor carving a statue, or an author writing a book...etc.*

- 3) Imagine God as a master craftsman and you as the unique work of art He created. God began His divine, creative work in you at the moment of conception, and He continues to shape you even today.

What natural abilities did He put in your DNA? *Answers will vary. Allow time for sharing.*

How did He continue to shape you through your parents and your childhood experiences?

Through your education and on-the-job trainings?

Through your life experiences?

Be sensitive to those who did not have good experiences in childhood or beyond. God sometimes crafts us through the challenges, even tragedies, that we experience, even when those experiences are overwhelmingly negative.

¹ It is interesting that the only other place in the Bible where this word is used is Romans 1:20, “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in **the things that have been made.**” (emphasis mine) Here, the emphasis also seems to be on the fact that God exerts special care and influence on mankind.



- 4) Many of God's gifts are given to everyone He has created, regardless of their relationship to Him (examples: food, shelter, health, fair weather, success). But we are His *workmanship* through the many gifts He gives to make us *unique*. We only need to look around to see that God obviously likes variety! God clearly explains in Scripture why He gives us these gifts.

What reasons does he give in these passages? *Each passage builds on the others. Refer to as many as you can.*

1 Peter 4:10 - *Serve one another. Wwhen we use God's gifts in service, we are being "stewards of God's varied grace."*

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 *For the common good. The "manifestation of the spirit" in v. 7 is the gifts/service/activities in v.4-6.*

Ephesians 4:11-12

- 5) Our unique individual gifts are not given to us for our own enjoyment or personal advancement. Their primary purpose is for serving others. When we think of our gifts as "mine," we are sometimes tempted to use them in selfish ways. What selfish uses might be tempting? *A few examples could be: to gain people's attention, praise or approval; to gain fame or money; to control or influence other people; to draw attention to ourselves.*

- 6) Most of scriptures' teaching on our unique gifts occurs in St. Paul's letters, and it occurs in discussions about practical life in the church. What do these passages tell us about use of our gifts in the church? *Each passage builds on the others. Refer to as many as you can.*

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 *The Holy Spirit di1stributes ("apportions") the gifts as he wishes and he empowers them*

1 Corinthians 12:14-20 *Other people's gifts are not better than ours. Your gift is as important and needed as anyone else's.*

1 Corinthians 12:21-26 *Be careful not to think of other people's gifts as less important or less needed than yours. There should be "no division in the body."*

Romans 12:4-8 - *We're all different in the body (the church), so let's USE our gifts and use them well.*

OPTIONAL WORKSHEET — "SHARING MY GIFTS"

This is a good place to share a gifts-inventory worksheet, if your church is prepared to not only record, but also follow up on the gifts people offer.

CLOSING IN PRAYER

Thank God for the unique way He has created and shaped each of you.

Ask for His direction in how best to use your unique gifts in service.

Continue to serve one another by praying for each other's needs.

