



Session 3

THE S.H.A.P.E. OF A DISCIPLE

I. REVIEW OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A DISCIPLE (Session 1)

- **A call or appointment** JOHN 15:16
- **Renunciation** MARK 8:34
- **Cross-bearing** MARK 8:34
- **A deep, growing, and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ** JOHN 15:4-5
- **Life-long spiritual formation** PHILIPPIANS 3:12
- **Multiplication** MATTHEW 28:19-20
- **Authorization/Empowerment** MATTHEW 10:1
- **Humble service** JOHN 13:14
- **Integration** (discipleship as a way of life, 24/7) ACTS 24:14
- **Obedience rooted in love** JOHN 15:12

2. THE S.H.A.P.E. OF A DISCIPLE

- **Spiritual gifts** (Greek: grace = *charis*; gift = *charisma*; gifts = *charismata*)
Spiritual gifts are the grace of God the Holy Spirit at work in particular Christians, empowering us for ministry in the church.
 - Spiritual gifts are not talents, abilities, or skills, but Spirit-driven bents or aptitudes for ministry
 - Spiritual gifts are not spiritual fruit, the attitudes with which Christians use their gifts (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - All Christians have one or more gifts.
 - Gifts have an impact on both the church and the world it serves.
 - As the Holy Spirit gifts individuals within a given body, the whole body receives all that it needs to carry on its ministries (1 Corinthians 1:7).
 - The purpose of spiritual gifts is to build, equip, unify, and mature the church
 - Personal spiritual gifts may vary in emphasis and distribution depending on the time of one's life and the needs of the church.
 - The four New Testament spiritual gift lists (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4:7-13; 1 Peter 4: 7-11) identify the following 21 spiritual gifts: apostle; prophecy; evangelist; pastor-teacher; teacher; encouragement; wisdom;



knowledge; serving; helps; leadership; administration; giving; mercy; discernment; faith; hospitality; tongues; interpretation; miracles; and healing.

- Biblical example: Timothy (2 Timothy 4:5) and Mark (2 Timothy 4:11)

○ **H**heart

- **Heart refers to the servant's passion for specific servant ministries.** It further captures the proper motivation and purpose for the servant's ministry.
- On the importance of the servant's passion, see Romans 12:11 and 2 Timothy 1:6.
- On paying attention to motivation and purpose, see Galatians 4:18.

○ **A**ilities

- **Abilities are the talents and skills by which our spiritual gifts are implemented.** They include such hands-on skills as music, carpentry, listening, organization, and communication.
- A person with the spiritual gift of knowledge, for instance, may also have the skill of doing research, a valuable skill for gaining and organizing even more knowledge.
- Biblical example of an ability: Paul's speaking ability in Acts 17:22-29

○ **P**ersonality

- **Personality is how God has made us in relation to ourselves and to others.** Our personality signals the appropriateness of a ministry by how it fits who we are.
- Among the personality characteristics shaping the Christian disciple are how introverted or extroverted we are; whether we communicate mostly on the level of thought or feeling; how creative or innovative we are or how practical and down to earth; and how we do at multi-tasking.
- Biblical example of personality shaping a disciple's serving: Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:24-26; Romans 16:3)

○ **E**xperiences

- **Experiences are past challenges and joys that have shaped us for ministry.** In many ways our experiences equip us for particular kinds of service. God teaches and shapes us through the experiences of our lives.
- Examples of experiences that shape discipleship: sickness; recovery; loss; depression; divorce; military service; work experience
- The Bible on being shaped by experience: Romans 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

1. What three words best describe me right now as a serving disciple of Jesus Christ?
2. Why do I do most of what I do? What's my primary motivation?
3. Who is a model for me when I think about being a disciple?

