

If you have you ever brought something home from the store in a box that says, "Assembly Required," then you know that few things are more frustrating in life than trying to accomplish something you are not equipped to accomplish. Let's see if you can relate to the man in this video...IKEA video... When you are required to do something you're not good at, bad things happen - and then you give up.

Here at Fellowship we often refer to our "Home Depot philosophy" – "You can do it – we can help." We say that because we believe that every believer is called to full-time ministry. It doesn't matter if you are a plumber, a teacher, an accountant or a homemaker, as a follower of Jesus ministry is not optional. The purpose of paid pastors is "the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry." You were called to "good works." But far too often churches operate more like an IKEA than a Home Depot. "Here are the instructions. We'll give you one tool, now go build a beautiful life, a life worth giving. And let us know if it's too hard for you because, for a fee, we'll build it for you!"

Let's review where we have been in this series. God created us in His image to express His nature and purpose. That's called glory. Jesus calls us to follow Him. That is a lifelong process. Today we explore how the Holy Spirit gives us gifts to be given away for the glory of God and the good of His people. **God created us, Jesus calls us and the Holy Spirit equips us to live a life worth giving.**

Last week we looked at a verse that says, "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works that God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." God wants to get something done on the earth so He created you with just the right personality and skills and experiences and gifts to do it. Before we will ever figure out what God calls us to do we need to consider how God made us.

"The first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know what it is – what it was intended to do and how it is meant to be used. After that has been discovered the temperance reformer may decide that the corkscrew was made for a bad purpose, and the communist may think the same about the cathedral. But such questions come later. The first thing is to understand the object before you: as long as you think the corkscrew was meant for opening tins or the cathedral for entertaining tourists you can say nothing to the purpose about them." C. S. Lewis

For the next two Sundays we are going to consider your divine design by exploring the four primary passages about spiritual gifts... 1 Pe. 4; Ro. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4. Today we will look at 1 Peter 4 and Romans 12 and then next week we will study 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4. I'm going to quickly highlight some of the obvious details in each passage.

1 Peter 4:10-11

God gives "each one" a gift. The word for "gift" is charisma. In the Bible this word does not mean a winsome personality but a manifestation of grace. If you have experienced the grace of God (and you must to be saved) then you have been given a manifestation of God's grace.

God gives us gifts for giving. God gives us these gifts to be used in service to others. That is why other people are better qualified to identify your gifts than you are. Your gifts were not given to you for you. Your gifts were given for others. That is why it is so important to be in a community where other people can observe your life, where trusted friends can speak into your life.

God requires us to be good stewards of His manifold grace. The word “manifold” means diverse or multifaceted. By my count there are 18 gifts mentioned in these four passages but Peter breaks them down into two broad categories: gifts of speaking and gifts of serving. These gifts form the foundation of the church. In Acts 6 the rapidly growing infant church faced a crisis – some Greek widows were being overlooked. The elders of the church did not want to abandon the ministry of the word (speaking function) so they appointed seven men with Greek names to handle the situation (serving function).

God is glorified when we exercise our gifts. The purpose of these gifts is clear, “so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” Whatever you accomplish in the name of Christ, God gets the credit.

Ro. 12:3-8

Romans 12 gives us insight into three of the most fundamental questions in life. Who am I? Where do I belong? What should I do? These questions are addressed in this passage.

God wants us to THINK... v. 3. Think about what? Think about who you are and how God made you. Don't think more highly than you ought to but think about yourself but think accurately about yourself. Healthy self-awareness is essential to a productive life. Here are 5 important questions that will help you drill down on your calling:

1. What is your personality type? These are usually very broad and usually broken down into four categories; (show chart comparing three approaches).

<u>DISC Test</u>	<u>Gary Smalley</u>	<u>Tim LaHaye</u>
D = dominance	Lion	Choleric
I = influence.	Otter	Sanguine
S = steadiness	Golden Retriever	Phlegmatic
C = conscientiousness	Beaver	Melancholy

MMPI (which you can take online) has 16 personality types. There are some things about my personality that I didn't ask for but will always be a challenge. At the same time, some of those very traits can be used by God to bless others. Example...quick to analyze and express my authoritative opinion. If I want your opinion, I'll give it to you. Even if you don't want my opinion I'll give it to you! Analyzing cultural trends in light of scripture and explaining them turns out to be very helpful in preaching.

Another way to get at your personality type is to ask, “Am I a thinker, a doer or a feeler? Our innermost being is made up of the mind, the will and the emotions. You experience

these aspects of your personality to differing degrees. I recently talked to a person who wasn't sure he could be a Christian because he is a thinker and the church he went to seemed to be full of feelers. He said something like, "I want to believe but I just don't feel anything." He's not a feeler he's a thinker.

2. What are your natural abilities? Your abilities are the map to God's will for your life. It points the direction. When you know what you're good at, then you are on the trail of what God wants you to do with your life.

3. What are your life experiences? God will use even the brokenness of our lives to position us for ministry. I recently talked to a lady who is a recovering alcoholic. But by the grace of God she has been sober for 26 years. Do you know what her ministry is? Helping others in AA.

4. What are your spiritual gifts? We'll talk more about how to discover what your gifts are next week.

5. What is God saying to you? Listen for His voice! "A calling is something you discover not something you choose. The word 'vocation' comes from the Latin word for voice. Discovering it involves very careful listening. People will sometimes speak about 'choosing their calling,' but a chosen calling is an oxymoron. The whole idea of a calling is taken from Scripture where time after time God calls someone to do His work. The whole idea of calling is that there is a Call-er and a call-ee." Ortberg, p. 60

Your personality, temperament, operating style and family of origin are unique to you. There is no one else like you. The call of God is **a God-given sense of "fit" affirmed by others and confirmed by experience when our gifts, skills, experience and personality meet with opportunity.** Take a fierce personal inventory. Observe the patterns in your past. Lay your life before God as a living sacrifice and let Him renew your mind about these things.

God wants us to think together. Seek the counsel of others...vv. 4-5. You belong to God's family. You are part of God's team. If you want to know how others see you - ask them. John Ortberg writes, "The Quakers have a tradition where, when faced with an important decision about calling, they gather a half dozen friends to serve as a 'clearness committee.' This committee gathers primarily to ask questions so as to discern God's calling more clearly." Ortberg, p. 62. Cultivate relationships with brothers and sisters in the Body whom you love and respect. Give them permission to speak into your life.

God wants us to get in the game...vv. 6-8. You have a role to play, a purpose on this planet. Life is too short to waste time doing things we were not designed to do. God designed us to excel in specific areas. When we try to fit everyone in the same mold, all we get is frustration, discouragement, mediocrity, and failure. God has given you unique abilities, and he wants you to use them for what he intended.

The best way to sharpen the focus of your calling is by serving others. This doesn't have

to be inside the walls of the church. Start where you are. Start where you work. Let me say something about the relationship between our calling and our work. Howard Hendricks used to say, "Your career is what you're paid to do. Your calling is what you're made to do." But these rarely match up. We live in a fallen world. Life is not the way it's supposed to be. So we may never get to the place where our gifts and our day-to-day work are matched perfectly. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve found work to be an expression of who they were. Work is now a blessing and a curse. So if you happen to have a job that fits your gifts you are blessed. We are fortunate to live in a country where we can even attempt to find a match between our gifts and our work. For most people in most societies work is simply a means of survival. I was recently struck by the words of Michelangelo during his painting of the Sistine Chapel. He said, "I am not in the right place – I am not a painter." He also wrote, "Having seen that the times are contrary to my art, I do not know if I have any hope of further salary." The apostle Paul was a tentmaker not because it was necessarily his calling but "apostle to the Gentiles" just didn't pay!

So follow Jesus and do everything to the glory of God. "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31. After all, it's His story.

Jennie Allen offers an important reminder, "We live in a time in church history where we have strategically justified obsessive amounts of self-focus. We have made life about our little stories rather than God's story. We have become a generation obsessed with understanding ourselves, as if that holds the answer for our restless, discontent souls. We have come to treat God as if he exists for us, rather than us existing for him. As if he is supposed to fit our plans, rather than our only plan being to know Him and to follow him." Jennie Allen, *Restless*, p. 28

God created you, Jesus calls you and the Holy Spirit equips you to live a life worth giving. Whatever you do today, do it to the glory of God.