

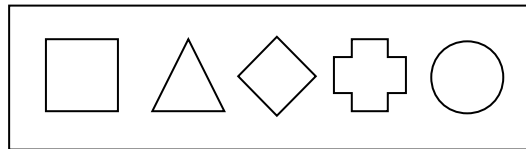
## God's Principles and Priorities on Time, Talent and Treasure

### Part 2. Talent: Using God's spiritual gifts, talents and abilities

#### The S.H.A.P.E of things to come

We are not only called to give of our financial resources - we are also called to give of our talents and abilities in supporting God's kingdom (Luke 10:2). How do we determine where, when and how God wants us to serve Him? Opportunity, need, calling, compulsion, guilt, availability, control are all "motivations" for serving – some right, some wrong. Dave Ralph, when he was pastor of WCON, submitted that each opportunity (vacancy) to serve is in a unique shape and, much like the child's hand-eye coordination game, He fits (calls) us into the areas that match our own S.H.A.P.E.:

S – Spiritual Gifts  
H – Heart (passion)  
A – Abilities  
P – Personality  
E – Experience



The primary equipping of the believer for service is through spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:12).

#### I. Spiritual Gifts

##### Gift Giving – The gift, the Giver, the goal

As we approach the topic of spiritual gifts, let us first examine the whole process of gift giving. Obviously, there has to be a **gift**. It is given by the **giver** to a **recipient**. There is usually a **reason** or occasion for giving the gift (i.e. birthday, wedding, etc.) and a **purpose** or intent for the gift in its **use** (i.e. a bike, a waffle iron, sweater. etc). In fact the surest sign of *true appreciation* for the gift is in the recipient's demonstrated use of it.

When a gift is given, the focus of attention is not on the giver - but on the *gift* and the *recipient*. In addition, many times the absence of a reason for the gift tends to produce a feeling of doubt, suspicion or hesitation in receiving the gift. The comfort level in receiving a gift is much higher when there is a defined, recognizable reason for the gift being given.

Before we examine the "gifts" we must first understand the Giver and examine the purpose or goal in giving gifts.

##### The Giver - The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the giver of all spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:11). Indeed, the Holy Spirit himself is a gift to us from Christ. It's always nice when we know the person who gives us a gift. So, let's take a look at some verses describing the "giver". The Holy Spirit:

John 16:7-15	Convicts the world of sin, righteousness, judgment Guides you in all truth Speaks only what He is told Seeks to bring glory [only] to Christ
John 14:15-17, I Corinth. 6:19-20	Dwells in the believer
John 14:25-26	Brings to mind Christ's teachings
Acts 1:4-8	Gives power to witness
Ephesians 1:13-14, Titus 3:4-7	Guarantees (as a deposit) our salvation/inheritance

## **God's Principles and Priorities on Time, Talent and Treasure**

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Acts 2:31-33, 38-39

Is a gift from God

#### **II. The Purpose - Unity in Diversity**

The Christian Church has been compared to many things in Scripture, literature and hymns - a ship, a mighty army, a bride, a family. Probably one of the most fitting comparison is found in I Corinthians 12:12-27. It likens the Church to the human body - the body of Christ - a complex arrangement of many different members designed to contribute to the well being of the whole.

#### **DIVERSITY**

*I Corinthians 12: 4-7, 11. What do these passages say about the distribution of gifts?*

Different GIFTS, different SERVICE, different WORKING but ONE SPIRIT, LORD and GOD. They are given for the common good [of what]. And they are distributed as the Spirit sees fit.

*I Corinthians 12: 12 - 14. The Body of Christ (and also the human body) is made of many parts - but we are all controlled by one Spirit. This is true for the Church universal as well as the local congregation.*

*What differences are readily apparent in the body? In the church?*

*I Corinthians 12: 15-16. Just because one body part is not like another - and determines it is no longer a part of the body because of that - it still does not cease to be a part of the body!*

*Why would some members feel inferior to others in the human body? In the Body of Christ?*

*I Corinthians 12:17-20. Here Paul points out how ridiculous it would be for the human body to be made up of the same body part - an eye or an ear. It would cease to function as a "body".*

*What would the Church be like if everyone was alike in talents, abilities, looks and ministries?*

*I Corinthians 12:21-24. All body parts are necessary - even the weaker or less honorable parts. Granted they are to be treated and cared for differently (special) - but all are necessary for the body to function properly.*

*I Corinthians 12:25-26. All parts of the body should have EQUAL concern for each other.*

*How does the human body suffer/rejoice with one part? How do we, as the Body of Christ, suffer and rejoice with other members?*

*I Corinthians 12:27. We are the Body of Christ! And each believer is a member/part.*