

How many of you have ever been called worthless or thought of yourself as worthless? Maybe you grew up and you thought of your self as worthless.

Let me be honest, growing up I struggled with this. Now don't get me wrong, My mom, she always told me that I was special. I she didn't mean like Special Ed kind of way. She would always tell me that God made me for a special purpose. My grandmother did as well. But that was not enough. Honestly I did not do well in school. It was not until I got into College that I discovered I have a mild form of dyslexia. So school was not easy for me. I was smart but I didn't do well. So consequently, I had teachers and counselors that didn't encourage me instead they told me things like you will never succeed. As well, My parents got divorced when I was 13, but honestly that did not come from out of the blue. My home life was not the most stable situation. I was the youngest of 2 and my brother was 5 yrs older than me and if you know what it is like to have an older sibling. He was not the most encouraging person to me :) So I grew up thinking I was pretty useless, and worthless. How many of you can relate?

Satan can neutralize you by deceiving you into believing that you have nothing to offer God and His church. One of the ways He does this is by getting you to compare yourself with others. When you come up short, you get discouraged and conclude that you have nothing to give. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Well today I want to encourage and challenge each of us to think differently. I want us to realize God has made us with incredible value a purpose. Turn to the book of Ephesians chapter 2

*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. - Ephesians 2:10*

Look at the person next to you and tell them *"Your a piece of work."*

God has given you unique abilities, talents, and gifts. This bundle of talents is the thing God has given you that makes you who you are and sets you apart from other people.

If you think your talents are simply for you to make a lot of money, retire, and die, you've missed the point of your life. God gave you talents to benefit others, not yourself. And God gave other people talents that benefit you.

We're all a part of the body of Christ, and each part matters. There are no insignificant people in the family of God. You are shaped to serve God, and he is testing you to see how you are going to use the talents he gave you.

Whether you are a musician or an accountant, a teacher or a cook, God gave you those abilities to serve others. Today's verse says, *"Each of you should use*

*whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms"- 1 Peter 4:10.*

You are a manager of the gifts God has given to you. They may be great or small in your eyes, but they matter to God. *"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful"* - 1 Corinthians 4:2. When God made you, he made an investment in you, and he expects a return on that investment.

Are you using what He's given you for the benefit of others to make the world a better place? Or are you just using those talents to benefit yourself?

When God gives you a talent, he expects you to use it. It's like a muscle. If you use it, it will grow. If you don't, you'll lose it. If you have a talent but are afraid to use it, or if you get lazy and don't use it to benefit others, you're going to lose it. Like the parable of the ten talents in **Luke 19**, if you don't use what God has given you, he will take it away and give it to someone else who will.

But if you use your talents wisely, God will give you more. If you use your time wisely, God will give you more time. If you use your energy wisely, God will give you more energy. If you use your influence wisely, God will increase your influence. God will bless your level of faithfulness.

**"God wants to use you to make a difference in His world."  
Rick Warren**

Why Serve?

God made each of us - on purpose, for such a time as this. Right here, right now. YOU! Yes, YOU! The Bible says: *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*  
- Ephesians 2:10

- **Every member of God's family is a minister.**

The words servant and minister are synonyms, as are service and ministry. If you are a Christian, you are a minister, and when you are serving, you are ministering.

- Once you are saved, God intends to work through you for His goals.

And God has a ministry for you in the church.

Ministry can happen inside or outside the four walls of the church. Your call to salvation included your call to service. A "non-serving Christian" is a contradiction in terms. Anytime you use your abilities to help others, you are fulfilling your calling.

One reason why you need to be connected to a church family is to fulfill your calling to serve other believers in practical ways. Your service is part of God's plan for the Church. Each of us has a role

to play, and every role is important.

There is no small service to God; it all matters. *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others...”* **Matthew 20:28**

**For Christians, service is not optional**, something to be tacked onto our schedules if we can spare the time. Serving and giving sum up one of God’s main purposes for your life.

It is not enough to keep learning more and more. We must act on what we know and practice what we claim to believe.

Study without service leads to stagnation.

- Serving is the opposite of our natural inclination. As we mature in Christ, the focus of our lives should increasingly shift to living a life of service. God wants you to learn to love and serve others unselfishly.

What is my shape to serve?

### **S.H.A.P.E.**

1. Each of us has a particular role to play based on the way we are SHAPED by God.
2. Before God created you, He decided what role He wanted you to play on earth. He planned exactly how He wanted you to serve Him, and then He SHAPED you for those tasks. You are the way you are because you were made for a specific ministry. The Bible says, “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which He prepared in advance for us to do”. - Ephesians 2:10
3. God never wastes anything. He would not give you abilities, interests, talents, gifts, personality, and life experiences unless He intended to use them for His glory.
4. Whenever God gives us an assignment, He always equips us with what we need to accomplish it. This unique combination of capabilities is called your SHAPE:
  - Spiritual Gifts
    1. The Bible says, *“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another...”* **1 Peter 4:10**
    2. The Greek word for “gift” in this verse is charisma, defined as “a divine spiritual endowment...a free gift.” So, this is not something we can learn; in fact, the command is not to try to deserve it, but to use it.
    3. This kind of gift is a possession, something already given to each one of us by God
    4. Three main passages in scripture provide insights about the categories of gifts. These groupings of gifts and related passages are in **Romans 12:6-8, I Corinthians 12:7-10, and Ephesians 4:7, 11-13.**
  - Heart
    1. The Bible uses the term heart to describe the bundle of desires, hopes, interests, ambitions, dreams, and affections you have.
    2. Your heart represents the source of all your motivations - what you love to do and what you care about most.
    3. Another word for heart is passion. There are certain causes that you will be

- passionate about, while there are other causes that do not stir you.
4. Repeatedly the Bible says to Serve the Lord with all your heart - **Deuteronomy 11:13, 1 Samuel 12:20, Romans 1:9, Ephesians 6:6.**
  5. God wants you to use your natural interest to serve Him and others. Listening for inner promptings can point to the ministry God intends for you to have.
  6. Heart is about what you love to do-what God gave you a heart to do-and then doing it for His glory.
    - Abilities
      1. Your abilities are the natural talents you were born with and the learned talents you have developed as you've grown.
      2. All of our abilities come from God. God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well
      3. Studies have revealed that the average person possesses from 500 to 700 different skills and abilities.
      4. Every ability can be used for God's glory at different times and in different places in different ways.
      5. *Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ. Hebrews 13:20a,21a.* To discover God's will for your life, you should seriously examine what you are good at doing.
      6. God will never ask you to dedicate your life to a task you have no talent for. On the other hand, the abilities you do have are a strong indication of what God wants you to do with your life.
      7. God doesn't waste abilities; He matches our calling and our capabilities.
    - Personality
      1. According to Psalm 139, each of us is truly unique. There never has been and never will be anybody exactly like you.
      2. God made introverts and extroverts. He made people who love routine and those who love variety. He made some people thinkers and some people feelers. Some people work better when given an individual assignment while others work better with a team.
      3. The Bible gives us plenty of proof that God uses all types of personalities. There is no right or wrong temperament for ministry. I **Corinthians 12:6** tells us that the church is made up of different personalities: God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves His purpose through them all.
      4. Your personality will affect how and where you use your gifts and abilities.
      5. When you are forced to minister in a manner that is "out of character" for your temperament, it creates tension and discomfort, requires extra effort and energy, and produces less than the best results.
    - Experience
      1. You have been SHAPED by your experiences in life, both the good and the bad, most of which were beyond your control. God allowed them both to mold you in your time and for accomplishing His kingdom purposes in eternity. **Romans 8:28.** *And we know that in all things God works for*

- the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*
2. Only shared experiences can help others. When you prayerfully share your life experiences you are using your life the way God intended by connecting with others, both Christians and pre-Christians! The Bible says, He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. **2 Corinthians 1:4**, *who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*
  3. People are always more encouraged when we share how God's grace helped us in our weakness than when we brag about our strengths.
  4. The purpose of sharing our life experiences is to point others to our awesome God, not our particular set of circumstances. In the process we will connect with another who is loved by God, remember what God has done in our lives and understand our God in a deeper way.
  5. In determining your SHAPE for serving God, you should examine at least seven kinds of experiences from your past.
    - Family Experiences: What did you learn growing up in your family?
    - Educational Experiences: What were your favorite subjects in school?
    - Work Experiences: What jobs have you been most effective in and enjoyed the most?
    - Spiritual Experiences: What have been your most meaningful times with God?
    - Ministry Experiences: How have you served God in the past?
    - Painful Experiences: What problems, hurts, thorns, and trials have you learned from?
    - Joyful Experiences
  6. You have been SHAPED by your experiences. Your experiences are an excellent source of wisdom when it comes to finding your ministry.
  7. God intentionally allows you to go through painful experiences to equip you for ministry to others.

### Invitation:

Serving others is a spiritual discipline which can be defined as action motivated by love.

**1 John 3:18** says, *Let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.*

Sincere affection is shown, not through what we say, but through what we do. It's true: actions speak louder than words.

The ultimate expression of love was shown when God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross. The Bible says, *Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ*

*died for us.* - Romans 5:7-8

Although we didn't deserve salvation, Jesus took the punishment for all of our wrongdoing – past, present, and future – so we could escape eternity in hell and live with him forever. Jesus showed us by his example that a life of service is a life of sacrifice: *The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.* - Matthew 20:28

Being a servant requires laying down your pride and taking up humility. It demands your time and frequently involves your money or possessions. However, these things amount to nothing when you consider what Jesus did. John 15:13 says, *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

You and I may not be called to give our lives for someone, but we are called to give ourselves to serving them. Our job is to love with the love God has given us. Jesus said in John 13:34-35, *Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.*

Your acts of service provide outward evidence of your inward love for God.

Love prompted the King of Kings to humble Himself and wash the disciples' dirty feet. Love led our Lord to the cross. Love is what we need to serve others.