

HOW TO DISCOVER OUR GIFTS

Much of the work of the Church is done by a few super-talented people aided by a small group of one or two talented people committed to the Lord and His cause. Thoughtful consideration of the following will increase the work force:

1. Everybody has received something from the Lord. The following passages speak of the gifts distributed to believers: 1 Cor. 7:7, 1 Cor. 12:18, Rom. 12:6.

2. General principles:

a. When we work, it is for Him. He sees and rewards every good work. Col. 3:23-24.

b. The Lord will give us the strength necessary to accomplish all that is in His will for us to do. Phi. 4:13.

c. Take the step that you can. Start with the little things. The secret to success is to find a need and fill it. Both God and mankind love self-starters! Luke 16:1-11, 19:17, Matt. 10:42.

d. Give it your full attention and energy. Eccl. 9:10.

e. Keep it up! Gal. 6:9.

f. Remember that you are not in competition with anyone else! 2 Cor. 10:12.

3. A technique for discovering your gifts:

a. Explore the possibilities. Look at the lists of gifts (Rom. 12:4-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, Eph. 4:8-16, 1 Pet. 4:10-11) for any that you might have. These are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather illustrative. Look for natural counterparts for the supernatural ones. Look at your record. What do you do well...what do you enjoy doing, what talents have you discovered, and what talents have others recognized in you?

b. Experiment with as many as possible. One does not know until one tries. Many talents may lie hidden within us. It is often as valuable to find what you cannot do, as to find what you can do.

c. Examine your feelings. It is better to enjoy what you are doing for the Lord if you possibly can. There may be times when the Lord will bid

you do what you are reluctant to do (as was Moses, Gideon, Peter and others), but it would appear generally that He would have us do those things we enjoy doing, and that we do well.

d. Evaluate your effectiveness. Before giving up, see if what you are experiencing is a failure or a growing pain.

e. Be alert to the reinforcement of the Body. Brothers and Sisters in Christ will generally see and encourage progress and the development of talents in the Lord's work.

f. Seek counsel and advice from those close to you who know you well...parents, mates, siblings, teachers, friends.

g. Pray continually and extensively about your work, your particular mission, seeking the Lord's guidance and help.

h. Trust the Lord to place you correctly. He has had a long track record of placing people where they should be for His best use (for a fuller treatment see Peter Wagner's "Your Church Can Grow").

4. Adopt a daily procedure:

a. Rising each day, remember that this is a "day which the Lord has made", a special gift in trust for the Lord's work.

b. Begin each day with a prayer which dedicates the day to Him from whom all blessings flow; a prayer in which we ask the Lord to lead us to people we can serve, and to open doors where our abilities can benefit the Kingdom.

c. In the course of the day look for opportunities to serve Christ, fully expecting to be given such opportunities.

d. We need to remind ourselves that we cannot see the end from the beginning. We do not have to see how a particular deed, or opportunity for service will be used by the Lord. Every completed task will not lead to results of a positive nature that we can see immediately. Much effort may fall fruitlessly by the wayside, as it did for Christ. The process of influencing someone is often like a patchwork quilt where we just put in our piece and under God's guidance it fits with the pieces placed there by others until the task is completed.

e. Remember, we work for the Lord; no matter if others see or do not see, as we labor to please Him.

f. While God has promised His word will not return to Him void, we know that our efforts do not always bear fruit. The Lord told us how it is. We sow and water, but He gives the increase.

g. At day's end, look back to see what the Lord has done through you. Thank Him for letting you be a channel through which His work has been done. Ask Him to do more, to make tomorrow a better work day in His vineyard.

h. Keep in mind that with the Lord availability is more important than ability. If we are richly talented but unavailable, we are of not use to the Lord. If we are available, the Lord can make up for whatever we lack!

Carl Mitchell