

WELCOME TO SERVE 4.0!

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever heard the phrase, “Saved to Serve?” One of the fundamental reasons why God saved us was to be of service to Him, His Church, and the world. In fact, this is where we are blessed beyond our imagination! It’s where we find our eternal purpose in life.

Proverbs 11:25 says that “he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.” Think of this truth in the context of serving. We refresh others by serving them, and the promise is that we will be refreshed ourselves. This is where we avoid burnout, by actively serving God!

Seems counter-intuitive, right? Well, it is, according to the worldly mindset.

The kingdom of God works differently than the kingdom of this world.

The kingdom of the world says to take care of yourself first, right? Yet, the kingdom of God says, “Give away your life (in service to others) and you will receive life” – eternal life, that is! The kingdom of God says, “Give and it shall be given unto you.” That promise is conditional, isn’t it? If you desire all that God has for you, then gladly give your life and resources away in service to God’s kingdom.

Week 4 comprises of four parts.

- * The first part provides insight into the statement that we are all uniquely shaped by God to serve Him.
- * The second part comprises two articles that provide a great teaching about serving.
- * The third part shows a partial list of NVC’s serve teams and a chart as well that should encourage you to decide and act on what your next step on your discipleship journey should be.
- * The fourth part is a conclusion to the Starting Point class.

Let’s dive in, shall we?

PART 1:

HOW YOU’RE UNIQUELY SHAPED BY GOD TO SERVE HIM

Back in the early 2,000’s Rick Warren came up with a brilliant acronym that churches all over the world have been utilizing since. The acronym is as follows:

Spiritual Gifts

(How has God gifted me?)

Hear
(What do I love to do?)

Abilities
(What natural talents do I have?)

Personality
(Where does my personality best suit me to serve?)

Experience
(What experiences have I had?)

In the words of JustPurpose.wordpress.com (the verbiage in parenthesis are contributions from Pastor Paul Bartelme):

Spiritual Gifts

*This refers to a set of special abilities that God has given you to share his love and serve others. Spiritual gifts are given to every believer **at conversion** by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts are NOT natural talents/abilities, Christian responsibilities, or the fruit of the Spirit. (Rather, they are supernatural endowments.)*

The Bible assures us that every believer has at least one gift (1 Cor. 7:7b). (It's very common that you will excel in a few and those would be related to one another.) The best way to discover your gifts is to serve. Eric Rees says, the more you serve God in ministry, the more clearly you will see your gifts. You must let God lead you to areas of service in your church or local body of believers. (If you're not sure where to serve, then try any ministry! A car cannot be steered in any direction unless you put your foot down on the accelerator, letting God take the wheel.)

When you use your spiritual gifts, people are edified, God is honored, and you are fulfilled. If you aren't involved in a local church, it is advisable that you find a Bible believing church and join them.

There are four passages from the Scriptures from which the gifts can be identified: Romans 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:8-28, 1 Peter 4:9-10, and Eph 4:11. From these passages, 20 spiritual gifts can be identified. These are: administration,

apostleship, discernment, encouragement, faith, giving, healing, helping (service), hospitality, interpretation, knowledge, leadership, mercy, miracles, pastoring, prophecy, teaching, tongues, and wisdom.

Heart

This refers to your passions. Your heart reflects your dreams and desires. This is not the same as your hobbies. Your passion refers to what drives you, what you deeply care about, the needs you desire to meet, and the cause you deeply wish to conquer. (What gets you out of bed in the morning? If money was no issue, what would you spend your time doing?)

To discover your passion, find the things that make you happy when you do them. Find the change you most desire to see in the world. What do you hate most about the world? You probably have the solution to that problem. Some issues that have been passions of people all over the world include; abortion, child abuse, women emancipation, spiritual apathy, divorce, leadership, etc.

Abilities

These refers to the things you are naturally good at. God has given each of us the ability to do some things well. Each of us have talents which are natural to us. God gave us those talents with our purpose in view. Note that this ability may also be acquired or learned. Rick Warren writes: "The abilities you do have are a strong indication of what God wants you to do with your life." (Some of us have athletic abilities while others have artistic abilities. Some have mechanical abilities while others have abilities in academia.)

God does not waste abilities; he matches our calling with our capabilities! Below is a list of abilities. You must take your time to see what you are talented at. Ask your Christian friends too. Examples of such abilities include analyzing, coaching, consulting, cooking, designing, decorating, writing, speaking, repairing, planning, traveling, etc.

Personality

The Bible clearly shows that the people God used (had different types of personalities. Rick Warren writes: "Like stained glass, our different personalities reflect God's light in many colors and patterns. Your personality refers to your character and temperament. You must understand your temperament combinations for they account for how you relate with others and respond to opportunities. Whether you are introverted or extroverted, outgoing or reserved, self-expressive or self-controlled, cooperative or competitive, solo or team player etc. are factors that are determined by your personality all of which are keys to your design and thus, your purpose."

Experiences

You have been shaped by your experiences in life, most of which were beyond your control. God allowed them for his purpose of molding you. In determining your shape for serving God, you should examine at least six 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?*
- Vocational experiences: What jobs have you been most effective in and enjoyed 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?*

God intentionally allows you to go through painful experiences to equip you for ministry to others. The Bible says that “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.”

(There’s a famous saying, “God never wastes a hurt.” He will use your painful experiences not only for your good but also for others’ good.)

Your achievements also form part of your experience. Your experience is a major source of your passions.

Conclusion

The first and principal way to discover your purpose is to discover God. There is no shortcut; for the purpose of a thing can only be revealed by the maker (or inventor) of that thing. Your S.H.A.P.E will help you discover your purpose only if you are intimately connected to the God of Purpose!

PART 2:

TWO ARTICLES PROVIDING GREAT INSIGHT INTO SERVING

Article 1: "Why should I want to serve God?"

Answer: *The fact that we should serve God is obvious in Scripture (see Luke 4:8). Why we should want to serve God is a more difficult question. Every Christian asked might have a different reason for serving God; different people are motivated by different things. However, **the Bible does make clear that, when a person is in a real relationship with God, he will serve God (either informally or formally).** We should want to serve God because we know Him; an inherent part of knowing Him is a desire to serve Him.*

*It's always been God's intention to make us like His Son, Jesus (Romans 8:29). **When we look at Jesus' life, there's no denying that He was a servant.** Jesus' entire life was centered on serving God—by teaching, healing, and proclaiming the kingdom (Matthew 4:23). He came not "to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). Then, on the night of His arrest, Jesus washed the disciples' feet, leaving them with a final teaching to serve one another: "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (see John 13:12–17). So, if Jesus is all about serving, and God wants to make us like Him, then it's pretty obvious that we should be all about serving as well.*

***Genuine service cannot be separated from love. We can go through the motions of serving God, but if our hearts are not in it we're missing the point.** First Corinthians 13 makes it clear that, unless our service is rooted in love, it's meaningless. Serving God out of a sense of obligation or duty, apart from love for God, is not what He desires. Rather, serving God should be our natural, love-filled response to Him who loved us first (see 1 John 4:9–11).*

*The apostle Paul is a great example of how having a relationship with God through Christ results in a life of service. Prior to his conversion, Paul persecuted and killed believers, thinking he was serving God. But after he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, he immediately devoted the rest of his life to truly serving God by spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Acts 9:20). Paul describes this transformation in 1 Timothy 1:12–14: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." **Once Paul became aware of the love and grace that God had given him, his response was to serve God.***

The Bible offers several motivations for our service. We want to serve God because “we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken” (Hebrews 12:28), because our service supplies “the needs of the Lord’s people” (2 Corinthians 9:12), because our service proves our faith and causes others to praise God (2 Corinthians 9:13), and because God sees and rewards our labor of love (Hebrews 6:10). Each of these is a good reason to serve God.

*We can give away only what we’ve first received. The reason we can love and serve God is that He first loved and served us through Jesus Christ. **The more we are aware of and experience God’s love in our own lives, the more prone we are to respond in love by serving Him. If you want to want to serve God, the key is to get to know Him! Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal more of God to you (John 16:13). When we truly know God, who is love (1 John 4:8), our natural response is a desire to love and serve Him in return.***

Article 2: "Why is serving God important?"

Answer: *Is it necessary to serve God? What is the purpose of changing our priorities to accomplish tasks that God could do better without us? Peter addresses the importance of serving God in 1 Peter 4:10-11: “**Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.** If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.” **Peter makes it clear that we have received our gifts from God for two purposes— to serve others and to bring praise to God. Serving isn’t about us receiving attention or glory; it is for Him to receive glory.***

*How does God receive glory when we serve? **The transforming power of Jesus Christ is on display in the lives of those who have traded selfishness for selflessness.** Peter says believers should recognize that we are speaking and serving directly on behalf of God to others, while He gives the ability and strength for us to do so. And when we direct glory towards Him instead of accepting it for ourselves, we stand out from the crowd of those who glorify only themselves. And that difference in our lives causes people to examine the life-changing nature of a relationship with Jesus Christ. It validates our faith in front of others.*

*Romans 12:1-2 says, “**Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**” Paul’s point is that for those who have been saved by the blood of Jesus, it only makes sense to honor*

Him. Giving ourselves to God is our spiritual act of worship (the Greek word for “spiritual” can also be translated “reasonable”). It’s only reasonable that we would serve the God who has provided the greatest service of all: salvation from sin and self and eternal life with Him in heaven.

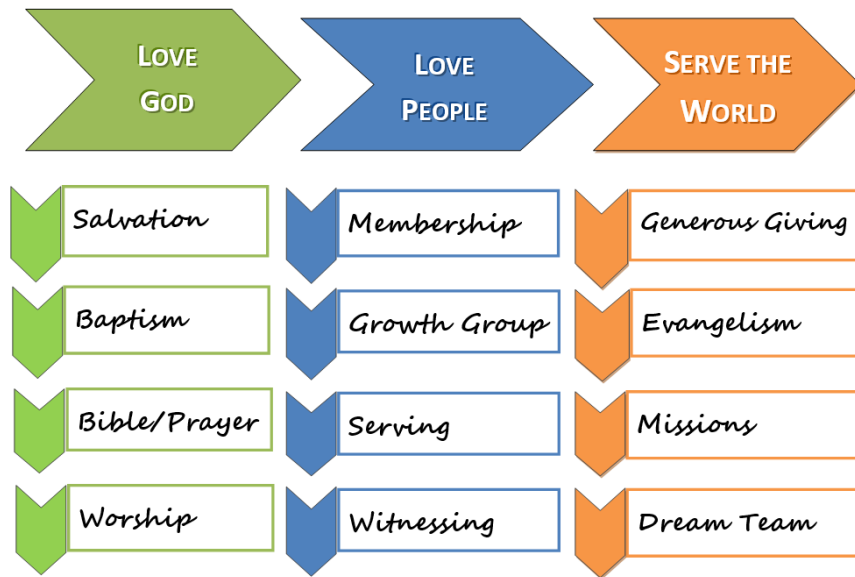
(Source: GotQuestions.org)

PART 3:

A LIST OF SERVE TEAMS IN NVC AND A CHART THAT SHOWS YOUR NEXT STEP

1. Usher Ministry
2. Greeter Ministry
3. Audio/Video Ministry
4. Custodial/Janitorial
5. Hostess/Hospitality Ministry
6. Worship Ministry
7. Preaching Ministry
8. Small Group Ministry - “Growth Groups”
9. Men’s Ministry
10. Women’s Ministry
11. Youth Ministry – “Ignite”
12. Kid’s Ministry – “Kid Zone”
13. Administration
14. Marketing/Sales
15. _____
16. _____

What's YOUR Next Step?



PART 4:

IN CONCLUSION

“Congratulations on completing the Starting Point membership class! My and Danica’s hope is that you were supernaturally refreshed and blessed with the material. We also hope that it answered any and all questions and concerns you may have had. If not, don’t hesitate to reach out.

“There was a promise that I made in the first class that I would like to mention again. Regarding your discipleship journey: To those who are devoted to the vision and mission of NVC, we are with you every step of the way. Not only are we with you, but I can say with confidence that the entire NVC family is with you too.

“That said, welcome to the family!”

In Him and by His grace,

Pastor Paul