



DISCOVER YOUR

# S.H.A.P.E.



A Six-Session Video-Based Small Group Study for Saddleback Church



## DISCOVER YOUR S.H.A.P.E.

A Six-Session Video-Based Small Group Study for Saddleback Church

Edition 1.0

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## Foreword

*by Rick Warren*  
*Author of **The Purpose Driven® Life***

God has given every creature he made a special area of expertise to fulfill its purpose. For instance, some animals run, others hop, some swim, others burrow, and some fly. Each has a particular role to play based on the way they were shaped by God. This is equally true of you and every other human being. You were uniquely designed, wired, and “shaped” by God to do certain things. You are not an assembly-line product, mass produced without any thought. You are a custom-designed, one-of-a-kind, original masterpiece.

In my book, *The Purpose Driven® Life*, I introduced the concept of “S.H.A.P.E.,” a simple acronym I created more than twenty years ago to help people remember five factors God uses to prepare and equip us for our purpose in life. These five shaping tools are our **S**piritual gifts, **H**earth, **A**bilities, **P**ersonality, and **E**xperiences. You are shaped to serve God by serving others.

Now, in this wonderful study series, we take a more thorough, in-depth look at the implications and applications of S.H.A.P.E. Before architects design any new building, they first ask, “What will be its purpose? How will it be used?” The intended function always determines the form of the building. 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 contribution on Earth.

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. By identifying and understanding these factors, you can discover God's will for your life. I can guarantee that you are going to benefit in an incredible way from this focus on the discovery of your S.H.A.P.E.

Let us know what you are discovering and how you are using your S.H.A.P.E. We'd love to hear from you. Email your story to us at [shape@saddleback.com](mailto:shape@saddleback.com). I'm excited about how much you are going to grow!

*Pastor Rick*

Pastor Rick



# INTRODUCTION TO DISCOVER YOUR S.H.A.P.E.

Welcome to this small group study designed to help you discover your S.H.A.P.E.! One of the most important questions you can ask in life is, “What has God made me to do?”

According to the Bible, you have been uniquely made to make a special contribution to the world! The purpose of this study is to help you understand your individual makeup—the one-of-a-kind blend of elements that point to God’s calling for your life.

By the time you reach the end of this study, you’ll understand yourself better than ever before. Best of all, you’ll be able to use the insights you gain to make a meaningful impact at church, in your family and workplace, and in the world.

May God bless your journey of discovery over the next six weeks!

Saddleback Ministry Team

# UNDERSTANDING THIS STUDY

## *Study Guide Features*

Here is a brief explanation of the features in this study guide:



### **CHECKING IN**

You will open each meeting with an opportunity for everyone to check in with one another about how you are doing with the weekly assignments. Accountability is a key to success in this study!



### **KEY VERSE**

Each week you will find a key verse or Scripture passage for your group to read together. If someone in the group has a different translation, ask them to read it aloud so the group can get a bigger picture of the meaning of the passage.



### **VIDEO LESSON**

There is a 15-minute video lesson for the group to watch together each week. Fill in the blanks in the lesson outlines as you watch the video, and be sure to refer back to these outlines during your discussion time.



### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Each video segment is complemented by several questions for group discussion. Please don't feel pressured to discuss every single question. The material in this study is meant to be your servant, not your master. So there is no reason to rush through the answers.



Give everyone ample opportunity to share their thoughts. If you don't get through all of the discussion questions, that's okay.



## LIVING ON PURPOSE

In his book *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren identifies God's five purposes for our lives. They are worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism. We will focus on one or two of these five purposes in each lesson and discuss how they relate to the subject of the study. This section is very important, so please be sure to leave time for it.



## PRAYER DIRECTION

At the end of each session, you will find suggestions for your group prayer time. Praying together is one of the greatest privileges of small group life. Please don't take it for granted.



## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

This is where the rubber meets the road. We don't want to be just hearers of the Word. We also need to be doers of the Word (James 1:22). This section of the study explains the assignments we would like you to complete before your next meeting. These assignments are application exercises that will help you put into practice the truths you have discussed in the lesson.



## DIVING DEEPER

The material in this small group study is designed to complement the book *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life* by Erik Rees (Zondervan, 2006). While reading the book is not a required component of this study, this section will direct you to additional reading from the book for greater understanding of the topic.



## Tips for the Host

This study material is meant to be your servant, not your master. The point is not to race through these sessions, but to take time to let God work in your lives. Give people the freedom to speak, but don't insist on it or make it mandatory. Your group will enjoy deeper, more open sharing and discussion if people don't feel pressured to speak.

## PURPOSE CHAMPIONS

Unlike other small group studies, this study introduces additional roles for the small group. One of the core values of small groups is shared ownership. Everyone in the group is responsible for the success and care of the group.

One way shared ownership is encouraged is by designating purpose champions. Purpose champions are members who are passionate about one of the five purposes who then encourage other group members to fulfill that purpose. So if a group member seems to have a flair for fellowship, ask him or her to become the fellowship champion. If a group member is passionate about discipleship, ask that person to become the discipleship champion. Your group is highly encouraged to name champions for each of the five purposes.

You can learn more about purpose champions in Chapter 9 of *Leading Small Groups with Purpose* by Steve Gladen.



## DESIGNATING THE ROLE OF MINISTRY CHAMPION

As your group is forming and getting ready to begin this journey together, it's important to identify one person who will fill the role of ministry champion. Normally, a ministry champion helps the group find opportunities to serve together or coordinates meals and support for group members in crisis. For this particular study, the ministry

champion should work with everyone in the group, either collectively or one-on-one, to make sure everyone is on track with the study. This role does not require any professional skills, just a heart for the spiritual growth of others. The ministry champion's role is also to help each group member clarify their unique, God-given S.H.A.P.E., and begin to express it within the group

Before beginning the study, you'll want to talk together about who might fill the role of ministry champion for your group. You don't have to decide right away. Spend some time in prayer about it, and try to have a designated ministry champion by the third week of this study.

## **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MINISTRY CHAMPION**

For this study, the ministry champion should help every group member to do the following:

- Discover their God-given S.H.A.P.E.
- Define their unique kingdom purpose
- Develop their 90-day ministry action plan
- Determine great ways for the entire small group to serve God together

## *How to Use this Video Curriculum*

Follow these five simple steps for a successful small group meeting:

1. Open your group meeting by using the **Checking In** sections of your study guide.
2. Read the **Key Verse** together as a group.
3. Watch the **Video Lesson** together, and take notes in the outlines in this study guide.
4. Go over the **Discussion Questions, Living on Purpose, and Prayer Direction** sections with the group for each session.
5. Review the **Putting It into Practice** assignments and commit to doing them before your next meeting.





## SESSION 1

# ONLY YOU CAN BE YOU

## *Discovering What You Are Designed to Do*



### CHECKING IN

- If your group is new or you have new members, take a few minutes to let everyone introduce themselves and share how they came to be part of this group.
- What is the one thing you want God to do in your life as a result of this study?
- How would you define a life purpose, or a life contribution?



### KEY VERSE

*Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.*

**Galatians 6:4–5 (THE MESSAGE)**



### VIDEO LESSON

Watch the Session 1 video now, and fill in the blanks in the outline that follows. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.

## ONLY YOU CAN BE YOU

Your journey to discover your S.H.A.P.E. begins with an honest question: *Who am I?*

You have a specific purpose in life . . . a special assignment from God for you to fulfill for him on Earth.

*For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

**Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)**

What will be the \_\_\_\_\_ of my life?

## YOUR KINGDOM PURPOSE

This is your specific contribution to the body of Christ, within your generation, that causes you to totally \_\_\_\_\_ on God and authentically \_\_\_\_\_ his love toward others—all through the expression of your unique makeup.

Most people define their purpose in life by:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. What others \_\_\_\_\_ them
3. God's \_\_\_\_\_

Who God \_\_\_\_\_ determines  
what God \_\_\_\_\_ .

## S.H.A.P.E. Overview

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

**Psalm 139:13–16 (NLT)**

Each of the five letters in the word S.H.A.P.E. represents a specific characteristic of your life:

- S** \_\_\_\_\_ — What are my God-empowered abilities for serving him?
- H** \_\_\_\_\_ — What passions do I have?
- A** \_\_\_\_\_ — What do I naturally do better than others?
- P** \_\_\_\_\_ — How has God wired me to navigate life?
- E** \_\_\_\_\_ — Where have I been and What have I learned?



*It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.*

**Romans 15:20 (NIV)**

*For you have heard of my past . . . I persecuted the church with fanatical zeal and . . . did my best to destroy it. I was ahead of most of my contemporaries in the Jewish religion and had a [boundless] enthusiasm.*

**Galatians 1:13–14 (PHILLIPS)**

Only you can be you. If you don't live out your unique S.H.A.P.E., the body of Christ suffers.

## **SIGNS OF BEING IN S.H.A.P.E.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ in your mind
2. \_\_\_\_\_ in your heart
3. \_\_\_\_\_ in your life

## **SYMPTOMS OF BEING OUT OF S.H.A.P.E.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ in your mind
2. \_\_\_\_\_ in your heart
3. \_\_\_\_\_ in your life

*“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”*

**John 10:10 (NLT)**



### Closing Thought

Jesus' desire for every one of his followers is that they live a vibrant and fulfilling life here and now! He wants you to live the abundant life—but you must do it through him. It's the key to discovering your kingdom purpose. God created you and knows the unique masterpiece you are.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Look back in your outline at the signs of being *In S.H.A.P.E.* and the symptoms of being *Out of S.H.A.P.E.* How do you see yourself right now? What hope, if any, are you feeling that this study will improve your S.H.A.P.E.?
2. What is your reaction to being told you are God's masterpiece? How does this concept stand to impact your future with God?
3. How does it make you feel to know you have a specific assignment from God to accomplish on Earth, and that it is for his glory?
4. In what way do you think your group could ultimately benefit from your personal understanding of your S.H.A.P.E.?





## LIVING ON PURPOSE

### FELLOWSHIP

Membership in God's family is a great place to begin the S.H.A.P.E. discovery process. Through your interaction with other believers, you'll see more clearly how God wants to use your life for his service. At this initial stage of your S.H.A.P.E. journey, it's a good idea to identify someone you trust as a spiritual partner to help you fine-tune your discoveries. Choose a companion within your group, or find someone in your life who you believe will be a good sounding board. Then, commit to meet with them regularly as you go through this material. In your first meeting with this partner, consider these questions:

1. Of the three things that tend to define people's lives, what would you say has characterized yours? Have you been a trend-follower? A people-pleaser? Or have you sought first the kingdom of God?
2. What work do you think needs to be done in your life now to make sure you are, at the end of the day, fully identified with God?



### PRAYER DIRECTION

Thank God for bringing you to this place where you are discovering who you are, who God has made you to be, and who you need to be in order to fulfill his specific design for you. Ask him to open your eyes and the eyes of your fellow group members to reveal the unique contribution he created each of you for.



## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

As you begin your S.H.A.P.E. discovery journey, take time to identify the one thing you want God to do in you and through you over the next six weeks. What is that one thing you believe God wants you to fulfill for him? Write it here and in your **S.H.A.P.E. Profile**<sup>1</sup> on page **19**.

Dear God,

Through this S.H.A.P.E. discovery series, I want you to

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Now commit this vision to God, and expect to see results as you study this material.

With your spiritual partner and/or with your group's ministry champion, share what's on your heart as an initial road marker for your journey. Keep the destination in mind!



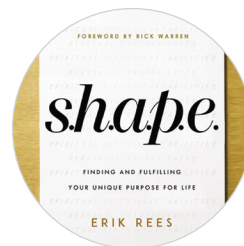
*The most important thing is that I complete my mission,  
the work that the Lord Jesus gave me . . .*

**Acts 20:24 (NCV)**



## DIVING DEEPER

For maximum understanding of the material in this lesson, read chapter 1, "Masterpiece," from the book *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*.



1. Each week, we'll ask you to transfer information from this section to your S.H.A.P.E. Profile, located in the back of this booklet following Session 6, on page 75.



## SESSION 2

# UNWRAPPING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS

## *God's Gifts Are the Key to Kingdom Purposes*



### CHECKING IN

- Tell the group the *one thing* you've identified as your goal for this study.
- Share a thought about what you learned in the first session.
- Talk about a gift you received that you considered perfect. What made it perfect in your eyes?



### KEY VERSE

*God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you.*

**1 Peter 4:10 (NLT)**



### VIDEO LESSON

Watch the Session 2 video now, and fill in the blanks in the outline in this guide. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.

## UNWRAPPING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

**Acts 1:8 (NLT)**

*Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.*

**1 Corinthians 12:1 (NIV)**

God's gifts are the key to the kingdom purpose he has set aside just for us.

In order to serve effectively, we need to understand the nature of spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are NOT the following:

1. Your spiritual gifts are NOT your personality traits; however, your personality can provide a natural vehicle for expressing your gifts.
2. Your spiritual gifts are NOT your natural talents.
3. Your spiritual gifts are NOT the same as the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5).

### WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

A spiritual gift is a God-given \_\_\_\_\_  
 given to \_\_\_\_\_ at conversion by the  
 Holy Spirit to \_\_\_\_\_ his love and \_\_\_\_\_  
 the body of Christ.

*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 (NLT)**

# SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12

- The word of wisdom
- The word of knowledge
- Faith
- Gifts of healing
- The power to work miracles
- Prophecy
- Discerning of spirits
- Speaking in tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

## EPHESIANS 4:11

- Apostleship
- Prophetic gifts
- Evangelism
- Pastoring
- Teaching

## ROMANS 12

- Preaching
- Serving
- Encouraging
- Generous giving
- Leadership
- Mercy



## WHY DOES GOD GIVE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

*A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.*

**1 Corinthians 12:7 (NLT)**

Spiritual gifts are not for you or about you. They are for the specific purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ the body of Christ—the Church.

## EVERY BELIEVER RECEIVES A SPIRITUAL GIFT

*Each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.*

**1 Corinthians 7:7b (NIV)**

God has given you a spiritual gift! If you're a believer, the Bible says you have the Spirit living in you. And if you have the Spirit living in you, then you have spiritual gifts to use for God's glory and the benefit of others.

The key to discovering your gifts is twofold:

1. Determine what gifts you think you may have.
2. Serve in various roles to see which ones bring the greatest fulfillment for you and the greatest results for God.

Allow Scripture to guide you to those gifts that are uniquely yours. Ask God to reveal how he wants you to use your gifts to accomplish his work in the world.

Many people discover their gifts as they minister to others. The more you serve, the more clearly you will see your gifts.

The ultimate goal is to use your gifts to love and bless others.

*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

**1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (NIV)**



Three common traps that keep us from living a life of love:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

God's Word says that all parts of the body are needed.

*The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you."  
The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." In fact,  
some of the parts that seem weakest and least important  
are really the most necessary.*

**1 Corinthians 12:21-22 (NLT)**

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Encourage everyone to be who God created them to be.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Gift rejection is often rooted in things like fear, shame, or hurt.

Don't wait to begin using your spiritual gifts until you understand all of the details. Your group is a great place to start!



### Closing Thought

The key is to serve in areas that best match your giftedness. Start as soon as possible. When you do this you'll experience greater fulfillment and see greater fruitfulness for God. You were made by God to serve others. *We are better together.*



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. While all spiritual gifts are given variously by God to be used for building up the body of Christ and for reaching the world with his message of hope, why do you think Paul tells us, in 1 Corinthians 13, that love is greater than these gifts?
2. Why is it important for us to learn to recognize our spiritual gifts? How is a spiritual gift different from a personality trait, a talent, or a characteristic? If you're not sure, this is a great opportunity to clarify your understanding with your group.
3. When serving, are you doing it to benefit others or yourself? Think of what you can do to avoid the traps of comparison, projection, and rejection. Which do you see yourself most easily falling into?
4. Do you already know your spiritual gifts? If so, share them with the group and how you've been using them in ministry.
5. Discuss how God might want to use your spiritual gifts to benefit the other members of your group. Is there a way you can serve one another?



## LIVING ON PURPOSE

### MINISTRY

The best way to discover your spiritual gifts is by serving the body of Christ.

1. If you are not currently involved in serving, where do you think you could begin?
2. Take a few minutes to discuss ideas for serving your church or small group. How might these areas of service help you discover your spiritual gifts? Here are a few examples to start your conversation:
  - Serving in children's or student ministry
  - Greeting people as they come to church
  - Answering questions at the Connection Center on the church patio
  - Helping clean up after church services
  - Organizing teams of volunteers
  - Leading worship by singing or playing a musical instrument
  - Folding and stuffing bulletins for weekend services
  - Taking meals to families in need
  - Helping out part time in the church office
  - Think of others that might fit your area of giftedness—be creative!





## PRAYER DIRECTION

Thank God for giving you spiritual gifts to unwrap over the course of this study. Ask him to reveal to each group member his or her unique area of giftedness through service to the body of Christ. Pray for one another to avoid and be kept from the traps of comparison, projection, and rejection.



## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

As you read the list of spiritual gifts and their definitions below, think back on your own serving experiences. Then check “yes” if you feel you have the gift, “maybe” if you feel you might have the gift, or “no” if you think you don’t have the gift. If you can, meet with your spiritual partner or your ministry champion this week to validate what you believe God is showing you.

**Apostleship:** Launching and leading new ministry ventures that advance God’s purposes and expand his kingdom. The original Greek meaning of the word is “sent one” (literally, one sent with authority or as an ambassador). ☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Discernment:** Recognizing truth or error within a message, person, or event. ☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Encouragement:** Helping others live God-centered lives through inspiration, encouragement, counseling, and empowerment. ☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Evangelism:** Sharing the love of Christ with others in a way that draws them to respond by accepting God's free gift of eternal life.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Faith:** Stepping out in faith in order to see God's purposes accomplished, and trusting him to handle any and all obstacles along the way.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Giving:** Joyfully supporting and funding various kingdom initiatives through material contributions beyond the tithe.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Healing:** Healing and restoring to health, beyond traditional and natural means, those who are sick, hurting, and suffering.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Helping:** Assisting others in reaching goals that glorify God and strengthen the body of Christ. This aptitude is sometimes referred to as the gift of "helps" or "service."

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Hospitality:** Providing others with a warm and welcoming environment for fellowship.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Interpretation of Tongues:** Understanding, at a specific time, God's message when spoken by another person using a special language unknown to the others in attendance.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no



**Knowledge:** Receiving insight from God about a person or situation that otherwise could not have been known. ☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Leadership:** Casting vision, stimulating spiritual growth, applying strategies, and achieving success where God's purposes are concerned. ☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Mercy:** Ministering to those who suffer physically, emotionally, spiritually, or relationally. Their actions are characterized by love, care, compassion, and kindness toward others. ☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Miracles:** Performing supernatural acts that bring validity to God and his power. ☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Pastoring:** Taking spiritual responsibility for a group of believers and equipping them to live Christ-centered lives. Shepherding is another word used for this gift. ☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Prophecy:** Offering messages from God that comfort, encourage, guide, warn, or reveal sin in a way that leads to repentance and spiritual growth. The original Greek meaning of this word is “to speak forth the truth.” The gift of prophecy includes both “forth-telling” (preaching) and “foretelling” (revelation).

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Teaching:** Teaching sound doctrine in relevant ways, empowering people to gain a sound and mature spiritual education.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Tongues:** Communicating God’s message in a special language unknown to the speaker.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no

**Wisdom:** Making wise decisions and counseling others with sound advice, all in accordance with God’s will.

☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no



List the spiritual gifts you think you may have from the list above.

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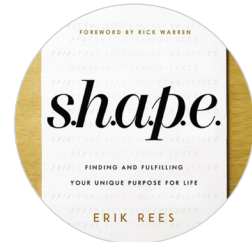
Think of a few ways you can start to use these gifts to serve others so you can clarify which ones you have.

**Reminder:** Be sure to transfer your personal list of gifts to your **S.H.A.P.E. Profile** on page **75**.



### DIVING DEEPER

For maximum understanding of the material in this lesson, read chapter 2, “Spiritual Gifts,” from the book *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*.







## SESSION 3

HEARING MY  
HEARTBEAT*Discovering the God-Given  
Desires of Your Heart*

## CHECKING IN

- What, if any, area of service did you discover or commit to this past week? Share the news with your group as an encouragement or as a prayer request.
- From your study of the New Testament list of spiritual gifts in last week's **Putting It into Practice** section (page 39), share one new thing you learned about spiritual gifts.
- Talk about something exciting that happened in your life this past week. What made it exciting for you?



## KEY VERSE

*As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart.*

**Proverbs 27:19 (NIV)**



## VIDEO LESSON

Watch the Session 3 video now, and fill in the blanks in the outline in this guide. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.

## HEARING MY HEARTBEAT

If you knew you had what it takes to impact someone's life in a way that brings glory to God, what would you want to do?

*Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

**Psalm 37:4 (NIV)**

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

**Colossians 3:23–24 (NIV)**

The ultimate contribution God has for you to make will align with the passions he has given you for his kingdom. Our hearts reflect our dreams and desires.

The key is to let God help you unlock your heart so it can start beating for him.

**Key #1:** \_\_\_\_\_ do I love to \_\_\_\_\_ ?

I see countless thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the Savior.

**— Dwight Moody<sup>1</sup>**

God wants you to serve the people he has placed in your life.

Define your \_\_\_\_\_ .

**Key #2:** What \_\_\_\_\_ do I love to \_\_\_\_\_ ?

---

<sup>1</sup> Dwight L. Moody, *Through the Bible with Today in the Word*, Bible.org (from a February 1, 1997 sermon), 6, <https://bible.org/node/13088>

*He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.*

**2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)**

God can use our weaknesses and failures, as well as our strengths and passions, as part of the masterpiece of ministry that he is creating. Your experiences can give you empathy to connect with others who might be going through something similar.

Because there are so many needs to be met, focus is the key. Here are several categories to consider:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Needs

You love helping people discover Christ and reach their full potential in him.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Needs

You use your resources to provide practical expressions of love, such as food, clothing, shelter, and other simple necessities.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Needs

You enjoy helping people develop authentic, Christ-centered relationships with others.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Needs

You find gratification by counseling, encouraging, and listening to others who are hurting.



- \_\_\_\_\_ Needs

You enjoy helping people learn and showing them how to live life to its fullest.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Needs

You enjoy training, coaching, and consulting others to help them overcome barriers, reach their goals, and maximize their personal or professional potential.

**Key #3:** What \_\_\_\_\_ would I love to \_\_\_\_\_ ?

If you take time to listen long enough, God will stir in your heart and direct you to a cause he has personally chosen for you.

### Closing Thought

Have fun discovering together how special God has made each of you. Use this time to affirm and help clarify things for each other.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kinds of things make your heart beat emotionally?  
Share with the group one or two chief desires of your heart.
2. Who do you think God wants you to reach? How can you identify your target audience?
3. Think about how God met you in difficult times in your life.  
How could you use those encounters to help someone else?  
How do you think God might use your gifts, abilities, personality, and experiences to reach your target audience?

We'll consider this idea more during the coming week, but what is your initial response to these questions?

4. How could your God-given passions benefit your group?  
Discuss some ideas.



## LIVING ON PURPOSE

### DISCIPLESHIP

It takes discipline to fine-tune our inner hearing so that we sense God's presence in our lives—and discipline is the deliberate choice that makes one a disciple.

1. Are there any activities you need to eliminate in order to help you hear God speak to your heart? Where can you adapt your schedule to make more time for listening to God?
2. How can you learn to recognize God's voice when you hear it, and how can this help you follow through on your own unique heartbeat for God?



## PRAYER DIRECTION

As you pray this week, start out as a group and then pair up for a more intimate time of conversation with God.

**Together:** Let God know how thankful you are for his inimitable mark on each life in the group. Ask him to reveal to each person in your group their unique heartbeat for service.

**In Pairs:** Admit those things that might be keeping your heart from truly beating for God and for what he has given you to do. Ask God to take you deeper into what he is revealing. What might he want you to let go of in order to be more effective in service? What do you need to embrace?





## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

To help discover your heartbeat for ministry, take time this week to record your answers to the questions offered as keys to unlocking your heart. Be ready to share some of the insights you gained in the next session:

1. Whom do you love to serve?
  - Whom am I most likely to profoundly influence for God?
  - What age range do I feel led to minister to?
  - What affinity group do I feel led to serve?
  - How could my particular gifts help them?
2. What needs do you love to meet?
  - What needs has God met in my life?
  - What category or categories of need am I drawn to meet?
  - ☐ Spiritual
  - ☐ Physical
  - ☐ Relational
  - ☐ Emotional
  - ☐ Educational
  - ☐ Vocational
3. Determine the causes you love to conquer by asking these questions:
  - What cause or issue makes my heart race?
  - Where could I make the greatest impact for God?

- If time or money weren't an issue, where would I donate my life?

Schedule time this week with your spiritual partner to talk about your answers and plan to report on at least one new finding at the next session. If greater clarity is needed on any point, consider touching base with your group's ministry champion.

**Reminder:** Be sure to transfer your answers from this section to your **S.H.A.P.E. Profile** on page 75.

### What Makes Your Heart Beat?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for the unborn      | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse/violence              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug abuse/recovery            | <input type="checkbox"/> Law and/or justice system   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcoholism                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational issues          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage/family issues         | <input type="checkbox"/> At-risk children            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy and/or politics      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christ-centered parenting      | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty/hunger                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Compulsive behavior issues  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial stewardship          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanctity of life            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deafness                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and/or fitness       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality and/or gender issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities and/or support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual apathy            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                    |  |

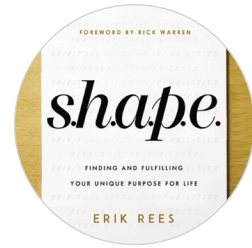






## DIVING DEEPER

For expanded understanding on any issues related to hearing your heartbeat, read chapter 3, “Heart,” in the book, *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*.







## SESSION 4

# DISCOVERING MY NATURAL ABILITIES

## *Clarifying Your God-Given Strengths*



### CHECKING IN

- Did you consider the questions about your heartbeat for ministry from last week's "Putting It into Practice" section? Take a few moments to offer a new insight you gained.
- Here at the halfway point of this study, how is your perspective changing? Is God giving you a clearer picture of your unique life purpose?
- Spend a minute or two sharing at least one thing for which you have a natural aptitude.



### KEY VERSE

*"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

**Matthew 25:23 (NIV)**



### VIDEO LESSON

Watch the Session 4 video now, and fill in the blanks in the outline in this guide. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.

## DISCOVERING MY NATURAL ABILITIES

When you discover your natural abilities, you unlock potential for serving others.

Natural abilities are a collection of strengths God wants you to use to fulfill your unique kingdom purpose.

God doesn't waste abilities. He matches your calling and your capabilities.

### WHERE DO YOU NATURALLY EXCEL?

Your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are there to show off God's greatness.

*The LORD has given them special skills as jewelers, designers, weavers . . . They excel in all the crafts needed for the work.*

**Exodus 35:35 (NLT)**

God has given you special \_\_\_\_\_ to excel in certain areas for his purposes.

*Whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men . . . It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

**Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)**

Reevaluate the abilities God has given you in light of his eternal purposes and the life situation in which you have been placed. It could open the door to a ministry more fulfilling than you ever imagined!

We often can find opportunities to put our abilities into action for the benefit of others in the simplest moments throughout the day.

You'll find a list of **Fifty Natural Abilities** on page 50. The goal is for you to embrace the things you *love* to do, not just the things you *can* do.

One day, each of us will have to give an account to God for what we did with the talents he gave us. So make the choice now to use what he's given you.

*So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

**Romans 14:12 (NIV)**

## PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Jesus told the story about a man who gave money to three of his servants before leaving on a journey. The first two put his money to work and gained a profit. But a third, fearing his boss, buried the money. When the boss returned, he rewarded the two who had increased his estate, praising them for being good and faithful. But the third wasn't as fortunate. His boss ordered:

*"Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver. To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away."*

**Matthew 25:28-29 (NLT)**



Life is too short to settle for doing less than \_\_\_\_\_ for God.

If we hold back the natural abilities God gave us at birth, or if we use those abilities for purposes that don't include God, they will not be used to their full potential.

### Closing Thought

Do you know the abilities you were born with? Do you know the things you love doing? Start figuring out ways to express those abilities in your everyday life. Grab hold of your natural abilities, and aim high for God's glory!

The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.

— Michelangelo



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What characterizes an activity you love to do? Offer one or two top qualifications.
2. Think about the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30. Why does it matter that we make the most of our abilities now? What could be the harm in putting them off or neglecting them?

3. Share with the group something you know you do well, but that you no longer do at all. Why did you stop doing it? Is there a way you could include it again in your lifestyle? Ask the group to pray for you to find that answer.
4. How could your natural abilities benefit your group? Share one way you think God could use something you know you do well.



## LIVING ON PURPOSE

### MINISTRY

One of the best places to discover both what you love to do and what you do well is through ministry. In many ways, ministry can be a better “school” than your college major or your job, because in ministry you are working selflessly just for the sake of serving others.

1. How do you think ministry can help you hear your heartbeat more distinctly? How might ministry also develop your unique abilities?
2. If you are not involved in a life-changing ministry by now, explore some options this week. Visit [saddleback.com/ministry](https://saddleback.com/ministry) to explore ministry opportunities at your Saddleback campus.



### PRAYER DIRECTION

Thank God for the fact that he has given each of you natural talents and abilities. Ask God to help you see more clearly how he wants you to use them. If you’re already using them, ask him what more he has for you. Don’t miss God’s best for your life!





## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Set aside time this week to consider those things you naturally do well.

Use the list on pages **50** and **52** to help you recognize what God has gifted you to do. After you mark it, make note of the top five you most excel at and love doing.

**Love It:** You can't imagine life without these activities. They make your day complete. Given a choice, you would do these things full-time. These abilities are the way you will meet the needs of the people group you identified in the last chapter. They can be (but don't have to be) part of your job. Your 9-to-5 life may be just tent-making, as it was for the apostle Paul. If you are unsatisfied by what you do full-time, finding what you love to do most could become what you do full-time.

**Like It:** You may enjoy these abilities and activities, but you don't need to do them on a regular basis in order to feel satisfied. Your attitude toward them is, "I can take it or leave it." For example, you may enjoy coaching or teaching, but these things don't satisfy you like the things you really love.

**Live without It:** These abilities and activities leave you feeling slightly deflated and disappointed compared to what you love doing. When faced with the prospect of having to do these things, your immediate response is to think about not doing them. When you have to carry out these responsibilities on a frequent basis, you feel drained. You may be able to adequately perform these tasks, but you have little or no desire to do them.

## FIFTY NATURAL ABILITIES

ABILITY	LOVE IT	LIKE IT	LIVE WITHOUT IT
1. Adapting: The ability to adjust, change, alter, modify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Administering: The ability to govern, run, rule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Analyzing: The ability to examine, investigate, probe, evaluate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Building: The ability to construct, make, assemble	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Coaching: The ability to prepare, instruct, train, equip, develop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Communicating: The ability to share, convey, impart	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Computing: The ability to add, estimate, total, calculate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Connecting: The ability to link, involve, relate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Consulting: The ability to advise, discuss, confer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Cooking: The ability to prepare, serve, feed, or cater	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Coordinating: The ability to organize, match, harmonize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Counseling: The ability to guide, advise, support, listen, or care for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Competing: The ability to contend, win, battle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Decorating: The ability to beautify, enhance, adorn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Designing: The ability to draw, create, picture, outline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Developing: The ability to expand, grow, advance, increase	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Directing: The ability to aim, oversee, manage, supervise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Editing: The ability to correct, amend, alter, improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Encouraging: The ability to cheer, inspire, support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



ABILITY	LOVE IT	LIKE IT	LIVE WITHOUT IT
20. Engineering: The ability to construct, design, plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Facilitating: The ability to help, aid, assist, make possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Forecasting: The ability to predict, calculate, see trends, patterns, and themes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Implementing: The ability to apply, execute, make happen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Improving: The ability to better, enhance, further, enrich	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Influencing: The ability to effect, sway, shape, change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Landscaping: The ability to garden, plant, improve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Leading: The ability to pave the way, direct, excel, win	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Learning: The ability to study, gather, understand, improve, expand self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Managing: The ability to run, handle, oversee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30. Mentoring: The ability to advise, guide, teach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Motivating: The ability to provoke, induce, prompt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Negotiating: The ability to discuss, consult, settle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Operating: The ability to run mechanical or technical things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. Organizing: The ability to simplify, arrange, fix, classify, coordinate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. Performing: The ability to sing, speak, play an instrument, act out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. Pioneering: The ability to bring about something new, ground-breaking, original	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. Planning: The ability to arrange, map out, prepare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. Promoting: The ability to sell, sponsor, endorse, showcase	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. Recruiting: The ability to draft, enlist, hire, engage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ABILITY	LOVE IT	LIKE IT	LIVE WITHOUT IT
40. Repairing: The ability to fix, mend, restore, heal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. Researching: The ability to seek, gather, examine, study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. Resourcing: The ability to furnish, provide, deliver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. Serving: The ability to help, assist, fulfill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. Strategizing: The ability to think ahead, calculate, scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. Teaching: The ability to explain, demonstrate, tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. Translating: The ability to interpret, decode, explain, speak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
47. Traveling: The ability to journey, visit, explore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
48. Visualizing: The ability to picture, imagine, envision, dream, conceptualize	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
49. Welcoming: The ability to entertain, greet, embrace, make comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
50. Writing: The ability to compose, create, record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



List below your top five natural abilities.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Reminder:** Be sure to transfer these to your **S.H.A.P.E. Profile** on page **75**.

How can you use these abilities to serve others this coming week? As you complete this list, note whether or not you are currently using that ability and if so, where.

Now, review the list and ask yourself, “Where have I lost focus? Where do I need to sharpen my focus?, Where do I think God wants to stretch me?”

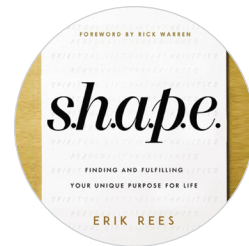
For added insight, share this list with your spiritual partner or with your group’s ministry champion.

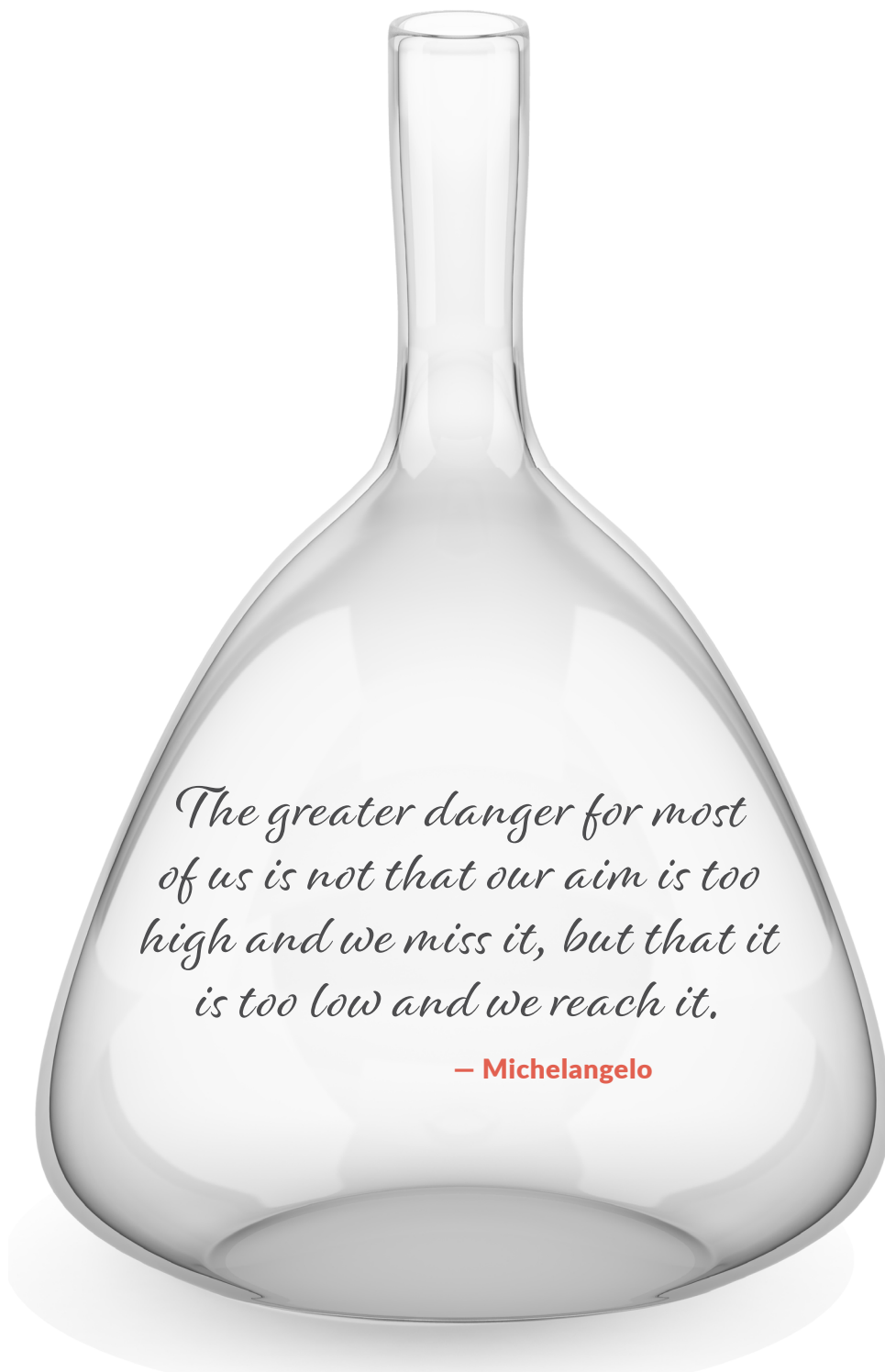
Now, have a brainstorming session with God. How might he want to use the talents and abilities he has given you? Write down what he is revealing to you.



### **DIVING DEEPER**

Explore your natural abilities in greater depth by reading chapter 4, “Abilities,” in the book, *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*.





*The greater danger for most  
of us is not that our aim is too  
high and we miss it, but that it  
is too low and we reach it.*

**— Michelangelo**



## SESSION 5

# RECOGNIZING MY PERSONALITY

## *God Loves Variety*



### CHECKING IN

- What did you learn through the review of your natural abilities? Did the additional list help you recognize more possibilities? Share one new insight with the group.
- Were you able to meet with your spiritual partner? How did that connection help expand or affirm what God is showing you?
- Now that your group has been together a few weeks, take a few minutes to affirm in each person something that has blessed the group.



### KEY VERSE

*God works through different people in different ways,  
but it is the same God who achieves his purpose through  
them all.*

**1 Corinthians 12:6 (PHILLIPS)**



### VIDEO LESSON

Watch the Session 5 video now, and fill in the blanks in the outline in this guide. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.



## RECOGNIZING MY PERSONALITY

God loves variety. There are no “wrong” or “right” temperaments. God wants to use them all. God doesn’t measure people the way most of us do.

*The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*

**1 Samuel 16:7b (NIV)**

The world places value on external things like prestige, position, and wealth. God places the highest value on less obvious aspects of our lives.

The personality you have is God’s \_\_\_\_\_ to you. He created it and gave it to you to use for his glory.

**Personality:** The complex of characteristics that distinguishes an individual.

**—Webster’s Dictionary**

Your personality takes center stage in all areas of your life!

## IDEAS ABOUT PERSONALITY TRAITS

An indisputable truth is that God has instilled a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in each one of us.

Your kingdom purpose is all about people, so it is important to discover how you relate to those around you. Because you’ll encounter many serving opportunities throughout your life, understanding how you react to various situations will help you make the best choices.

## HOW DO I RELATE TO OTHERS?

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW DO I RESPOND TO OPPORTUNITIES?

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

### Closing Thought

The key is to determine how you best relate to others and respond to serving opportunities.

*God works through different people in different ways,  
but it is the same God who achieves his purposes  
through them all.*

**1 Corinthians 12:6 (PHILLIPS)**





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you think discovering the way God has wired your unique personality will help you fulfill your kingdom purpose?
2. If you had the opportunity to choose the ideal situation that would enable you to make the greatest difference for God, what would it look like? Respond to that question by thinking back over recent life opportunities. Which one brought the greatest sense of fulfillment and purpose?
3. Why do we tend to think of certain personality traits as “wrong” or “right”? How have you seen your personality up to now? Had it occurred to you before this lesson that God has a divine use for your personality—that he intentionally made you the way you are? Share one or two key thoughts with the group.
4. What difference does it make for you to know that God intentionally made you the way you are, whether you are outgoing or reserved, self-expressive or self-controlled, cooperative or competitive? Others may see one trait as preferred, but God made all traits specifically for his deliberate use.
5. How can our personalities bless others in our small group? Take a moment or two to affirm a characteristic in each group member.



## LIVING ON PURPOSE

### WORSHIP

More than any other quality, our personalities are the filters through which we worship God.

1. What role does your personality play in the way you express worship to God?
2. How is the full surrender of your personality for his use an expression of worship to God? Share with the group a memory of a time God used you simply because you're you! How was God glorified through this example?
3. How is our cooperation with God, in allowing his Spirit to infuse and use us as he made us, an act of worship? Think about steps you can take to make sure you are worshipping God in this way on a regular basis.



### PRAYER DIRECTION

Thank God for the personalities he has given each of you. Ask him to help you see where a trait needs to be submitted to the power of his Spirit for change, and ask him to show you how to be yourself for his sake. Ask for the power that only comes through a surrendered life of worship.





## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Take time this week to evaluate your personality tendencies based on the questions posed during this session. If possible, review your findings with your spiritual partner, or with someone who knows you well, for added insight. Determine how you will use your unique personality traits in ministry. And remember, no answer is right or wrong, better or worse. We're all different, just as God made us! And we are made for his purpose.

## HOW DO I RELATE TO OTHERS?

Circle the words below that BEST describe how you relate to others. You can circle the "X" in the middle if your personality tends to include both traits:

Outgoing \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Reserved

Self-expressive \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Self-controlled

Cooperative \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Competitive

## HOW DO I RESPOND TO OPPORTUNITIES?

Circle the words below that BEST describe how you respond to serving opportunities. You can circle the “X” in the middle if you tend to embrace opportunities that include both traits:

High Risk \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Low Risk

People Driven \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Project Driven

Follow \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Lead

Team \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Solo

Routine \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Variety

**Reminder:** Be sure to transfer your results to your **S.H.A.P.E. Profile** on page 75.



### DIVING DEEPER

Learn more about your natural abilities in chapter 5, “Personality,” from the book *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*.





## SESSION 6

# UNDERSTANDING MY EXPERIENCES

## *God Uses Our Experiences for His Glory*



### CHECKING IN

- What did you learn through the review of your personality tendencies? Did the additional list help you recognize more possibilities? If possible, share one new insight with the group.
- Tell the group one new lesson you've learned about your God-given personality, or share a story about how God has used you already to impact others' lives.
- As you head in to this last session, briefly share what this series has meant to you so far and how you think it will impact your future.



### KEY VERSE

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV84)**



### VIDEO LESSON

Watch the Session 6 video now, and fill in the blanks in the outline in this guide. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.



## UNDERSTANDING MY EXPERIENCES

There is purpose in your \_\_\_\_\_ .

*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

**Romans 8:28 (NLT)**

If you truly embrace Romans 8:28, you will realize that God takes all of our experiences—the good and the bad—and uses them for his glory.

### JOSEPH—GENESIS 37 THROUGH 50

- Betrayed by his brothers
- Rose to become the second most powerful man in Egypt
- Sold into slavery
- Saved millions of lives
- Thrown into prison
- Never forgot that God was in control

*[Joseph said,] “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”*

**Genesis 50:20 (NIV)**

As God lovingly crafts the masterpiece of our lives, he uses every \_\_\_\_\_ to complete the finished product.

Consider the events of your life that have helped S.H.A.P.E. the person you are today:

- Childhood joys and sorrows
- The pain and thrill of adolescence
- The struggle and accomplishment of adulthood

## THE GALLERY OF YOUR LIFE

The possibilities for your life achievements and experiences to become action steps for God are almost limitless. God's delight and pride in you is not based on what this world celebrates.

Think of your experiences in these five general areas:

### POSITIVE PORTRAITS

1. \_\_\_\_\_ — An award
2. \_\_\_\_\_ — A pattern  
of achievement
3. \_\_\_\_\_ — A godly  
marriage or friendship that comforts or challenges you
4. \_\_\_\_\_ — Academic  
degrees or training certificates, or ongoing development in areas of  
special interest
5. \_\_\_\_\_ — A history of  
success in sharing your faith or leading Christians to deeper insight;  
your own acceptance of Christ and spiritual growth



## PAINFUL PORTRAITS

God wants to use your painful experiences to minister to others as well—times when your pain threshold was tested and your endurance was stretched to the breaking point.

- Divorce
- Abuse
- Death
- Alcoholism
- Cancer
- Depression
- Job loss
- Bankruptcy
- Eating disorders
- Miscarriages
- Suicide
- Abortion
- Affairs

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV84)**

Examine the moments of your life and think about how you could help others who are suffering.

How could your \_\_\_\_\_ become a \_\_\_\_\_ for Christ?

*Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that.*

**Galatians 6:5 (THE MESSAGE)**

## TAKE A TEST DRIVE

Challenge everyone in your group to commit to taking a 90-day test drive. It's during this trip you will start to refine your S.H.A.P.E. and begin to define your kingdom purpose.

Experiment with various ministry opportunities. Not sure how to start? Try Saddleback's Ministry Fit Quiz at [saddleback.com/ministryquiz](https://saddleback.com/ministryquiz). Start slow and start small, but make sure you START! Don't wait for perfect conditions—God blesses a moving target.

Four great places to use your S.H.A.P.E. and start serving during your test drive:

1. Use your S.H.A.P.E. to make deposits of love in your \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Use your S.H.A.P.E. to serve others at \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Use your S.H.A.P.E. to volunteer at your \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Use your S.H.A.P.E. to bless your \_\_\_\_\_.

### Closing Thought

You now have the opportunity to continue what God has started as you run the next leg of your race with him.

*Run your race to win. To win the contest you must deny yourselves many things that would keep you from doing your best. An athlete goes to all this trouble just to win a blue ribbon or a silver cup, but we do it for a heavenly reward that never disappears. So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I fight to win.*

**1 Corinthians 9:24–26 (TLB)**



## THE FINAL GOAL

*“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”*

**Matthew 25:21 (NIV)**



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share with your group a few positive portraits from your past and how they could provide a platform to serve others.
2. Discuss how your salvation experience could be a springboard for ministry. How might God want to use your testimony to reach others?
3. Share a few of your painful portraits along with your thoughts on how they could become a catalyst for Christ. Think about whom, in particular, these events might help you reach, either in ministry or evangelism.
4. Share with your group where you will start your ninety-day test drive—at home, work, church, or in your small group?
5. What have you learned as a result of this series that has helped settle any questions about God’s purpose in your life? What do you plan to do as a result of these lessons?

Let your next group gathering be a celebration of S.H.A.P.E. Use that time to share additional insights God has given you as a result of this series and to share your S.H.A.P.E. Profiles.



## LIVING ON PURPOSE

### EVANGELISM

No matter how painful your past, God can use that pain as a catalyst for serving others.

1. Plan to take time for a longer visit to God's art gallery soon, and perhaps on a semi-annual basis as a means of life review.
  - Carefully study what God shows you.
  - Record in a notebook what he is revealing to you, what he taught you, and how you think he can use this lesson for the future.
  - Use this time for focused conversation with God, asking him to reveal his heart to you.
  - Ask him for breakthrough vision, and then plan to use what he shows you to reach others for Christ with your life.
2. Determine in your heart to have a personal retreat with God at least once a year to review your S.H.A.P.E., and then meet with your group or your spiritual partner to assess how effectively it is being used in reaching the lost for Christ.
3. Think back on Dwight Moody's example of seeing others as "thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the Savior." Recognize that the overriding purpose of your S.H.A.P.E. is to serve God by serving others.





## PRAYER DIRECTION

Thank God for this series, and for showing you the many reasons he has for making each of you exactly who you are. Pray for one another's needs, asking God to reveal to you through whatever circumstance you are experiencing right now, a way he can use it for service, either now or in the future. Acknowledge it as part of your S.H.A.P.E.



## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

What are some of the portraits from the gallery of your life that you feel God can use?

### THREE POSITIVE PORTRAITS

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### THREE PAINFUL PORTRAITS

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**Reminder:** Be sure to complete your **S.H.A.P.E. Profile** by transferring these answers over to page **75**.

Whatever you do before you complete this series, make sure you've begun to put some of its steps into practice in your life. You are God's masterpiece, but just like those popular makeover shows, the new look is only temporary if you don't continue to apply its lessons daily. Where have you begun to use your S.H.A.P.E. on a regular basis? Remember, God blesses a moving target!

This week, and from now on, be sure you are using your S.H.A.P.E. in these four life arenas:

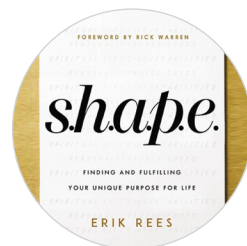
1. In your home, through regular deposits of love
2. In the workplace, by serving others
3. At church as a volunteer
4. In your small group as God determines the need

May God clarify, simplify, and illuminate the purpose for which he has uniquely shaped you as you walk with him every day of your life. Let the journey begin!



### DIVING DEEPER

Expand your understanding regarding the value of your past experiences by reading chapter 6, “Experiences,” in the book *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*.



## My S.H.A.P.E. Profile

Dear God:

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS: WHAT I'M GIFTED TO DO

- The spiritual gifts I believe God has given me are:

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- I feel I could use these gifts in the following ways to serve others:

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## HEART: WHAT I HAVE A PASSION FOR

- Whom I love to serve:

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- The needs I love to meet in another person's life:

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- The cause I feel God wants me to help conquer for him:

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## ABILITIES: WHERE I NATURALLY EXCEL

- My top abilities are:

## PERSONALITY: HOW GOD HAS WIRED ME

I tend to relate to others by being:

Outgoing \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Reserved

Self-expressive \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Self-controlled

Cooperative \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Competitive

I tend to respond to opportunities that are:

High Risk \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Low Risk

People Driven \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Project Driven

Follow \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Lead

Team \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Solo

Routine \_\_\_\_\_ × \_\_\_\_\_ Variety



## EXPERIENCES: WHERE I HAVE BEEN

- My positive experiences include:

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- Areas in which I feel I could help another person include:

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- My painful experiences include:

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- Areas God has helped me through that I feel I could help another person through:

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**Conclusion:** Based on my S.H.A.P.E. Profile, I think I should explore the following ideas for ministry:

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# RESOURCES

## *Books and Studies*

### GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE

One of the best ways to get a richer understanding of Scripture is by diving deep into a single chapter. Join Pastor Tom Holladay as he walks verse by verse through some of the greatest chapters in the Bible. These studies will help you see spiritual truths in new ways and will equip you to live out these truths in your life. *The Great Chapters of the Bible* series currently consists of *Ephesians 1*, *Romans 8*, *John 15*, *Philippians 4*, and *2 Corinthians 4*. You can expect new Great Chapter studies soon! Available at [Saddleback.com/watch](http://Saddleback.com/watch) and for purchase at [Pastors.com](http://Pastors.com).



### GOD ENCOUNTERS: VOLUME 1 — FOUR LESSONS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Every miracle Jesus performed, and nearly every conversation Jesus had in Scripture, was the result of an unexpected meeting or experience. In this first volume of *God Encounters*, we'll look at four life-changing encounters people had with Jesus. We'll find ourselves in their stories and see what lessons we can learn as we apply the truth to our lives. Available at [Saddleback.com/watch](http://Saddleback.com/watch) and for purchase at [Pastors.com](http://Pastors.com).



## Podcasts

### DAILY HOPE RADIO

*Daily Hope* is a half-hour Bible teaching program in which Pastor Rick shares a meaningful and applicable message from Scripture to encourage, equip, and train people to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.



### DRIVETIME DEVOTIONS

In *Drivetime Devotions*, Pastor Tom Holladay teaches us God's Word and how to put it into practice. Episodes are designed to be listened to once per day, five days a week. In this way, you can miss two days each week and still stay on schedule. We believe it's better to study small sections of God's Word each day instead of a larger section once a week. Studying the Bible is like eating—you'll be healthier if you eat small amounts each day rather than one big meal a week!



### DOABLE DISCIPLESHIP

*Doable Discipleship* is a Saddleback Church podcast and YouTube show designed to help you deepen your friendship with God through informative conversations and doable next steps. Join the Saddleback Spiritual Growth Team as they navigate through a wide array of topics, from worldview, to the parables of Jesus, to race and the gospel, and much more. New episodes release every Tuesday on YouTube or your favorite podcasting app.



## THE WELL

*The Well* is a Saddleback Church podcast and YouTube show designed to fill your life with God's abundant life through guided prayer and reflection on Scripture. This latest podcast from the Saddleback Spiritual Growth Team offers you a chance to have your own personal weekly retreat. These short episodes allow you to pause, relax, and refocus on God's Word and the work he is doing in you.



# HELP FOR HOSTS

Congratulations! As the host of your small group, you have responded to the call to help shepherd Jesus' flock. Few other tasks in the family of God surpass the contribution you will be making. As you prepare to facilitate your group, whether it is for one session or for the entire series, here are a few thoughts to keep in mind.

Remember, you are not alone. God knows everything about you, and he knew you would be asked to facilitate your group. You may not feel ready; this is a common feeling all good hosts have! God promises, *"I will never leave you; I will never abandon you"* (Hebrews 13:5 NCV). Whether you are facilitating for one evening, several weeks, or a lifetime, you will be blessed as you serve.

- 1. Don't try to do it alone.** Pray right now for God to help you build a healthy team. If you can enlist a co-host to help you shepherd the group, you will find your experience much richer. This is your chance to involve as many people as you can in building a healthy group. All you have to do is to ask people to help. You'll be surprised at the response.
- 2. Be friendly and be yourself.** God wants to use your unique gifts and temperament. Be sure to greet people at the door with a big smile—this can set the mood for the whole gathering. Remember, they are taking as big of a step by showing up for this study as you are hosting a small group! Don't try to do things exactly like another host; do them in a way that fits you. Admit when you don't have an answer and apologize when you make a mistake. Your group will love you for it, and you'll sleep better at night.



3. **Prepare for your meeting ahead of time.** Review the session and write down your responses to each question. Pay special attention to the Putting It into Practice section that focuses on applying what you have learned in each lesson. This section will also help your group live what the Bible teaches, not just talk about it.
4. **Pray for your group members by name.** Before your group arrives, take a few moments and pray for each member by name. Ask God to use your time together to touch the heart of each person in your group. Expect God to lead you to whomever he wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way. If you listen, God will surely lead.
5. **When you ask a question, be patient.** Someone will eventually respond. Sometimes people need a moment or two of silence to think about the question. If silence doesn't bother you, it won't bother anyone else. After someone responds, affirm the response with a simple, "Thanks," or, "Great answer." Then ask, "How about somebody else?" or, "Would someone who hasn't shared like to add anything?" Be sensitive to new people or reluctant members who aren't ready to say, pray, or do anything. If you give them a safe setting, they will blossom over time. If someone in your group is a wallflower who sits silently through every session, consider talking to that person privately and encouraging them to participate. Let them know how important they are to you—that they are loved and appreciated, and that the group would value their input. Remember, still water often runs deep.
6. **Provide transitions between questions.** Ask if anyone would like to read the paragraph or Bible passage. Don't call on anyone, but ask for a volunteer, and then be patient until someone begins. Be sure to thank the person who reads aloud.

7. **Break into smaller groups occasionally.** With a greater opportunity to talk in a small circle, people will connect more with the study, apply more quickly what they're learning, and ultimately get more out of their small group experience. A small circle also encourages a quiet person to participate and tends to minimize the effects of a more vocal or dominant member.
8. **Small circles are also helpful during prayer time.** People who are unaccustomed to praying aloud will feel more comfortable trying it with just two or three others. Also, prayer requests won't take as much time, so circles will have more time to actually pray. When you gather back with the whole group, you can have one person from each circle briefly update everyone on the prayer requests from their subgroups. The other great aspect of subgrouping is that it fosters leadership development. As you ask people in the group to facilitate discussion or to lead a prayer circle, it gives them a small leadership step that can build their confidence.
9. **Rotate facilitators occasionally.** You may be perfectly capable of hosting each time, but you will help others grow in their faith and gifts if you give them opportunities to host the group.
10. **One final challenge (for new or first-time hosts).** Before your first opportunity to lead, look up each of the six passages listed below. Read each one as a devotional exercise to help prepare you with a shepherd's heart. Trust us on this one. If you do this, you will be more than ready for your first meeting.



*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

**Matthew 9:36–38 (NIV)**

*“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.”*

**John 10:14–15 (NIV)**

*Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

**1 Peter 5:2–4 (NIV)**

*Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.*

**Philippians 2:1–5 (NIV)**

*Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

**Hebrews 10:23–25 (NIV)**

*But we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us . . . For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.*

**1 Thessalonians 2:7–8, 11–12 (NIV84)**





## Frequently Asked Questions

### HOW LONG WILL THIS GROUP MEET?

*Discover Your S.H.A.P.E.* is six sessions long. We encourage your group to add a seventh session for a celebration. In your final session, each group member may decide if he or she desires to continue on for another study. At that time, you may also want to do some informal evaluation, discuss your group guidelines, and decide which study you want to do next.

### WHO IS THE HOST?

The host is the person who coordinates and facilitates your group meetings. In addition to a host, we encourage you to select one or more group members to lead your group discussions. Several other responsibilities can be rotated, including refreshments, prayer requests, worship, or keeping up with those who miss a meeting. Shared ownership in the group helps everyone grow.

### WHERE DO WE FIND NEW GROUP MEMBERS?

Recruiting new members can be a challenge for groups, especially new groups with just a few people, or existing groups that lose a few people along the way. We encourage you to use the **Circles of Life** diagram on page **91** of this study guide to brainstorm a list of people from your workplace, church, school, neighborhood, family, and so on. Then pray for the people on each member's list. Allow each member to invite several people from their list. Some groups fear that newcomers will interrupt the intimacy that members have built over time. However, groups that welcome newcomers generally gain strength with the infusion of "new blood." Remember, the next person you add just might become a friend for eternity. Logistically, groups find different ways to add members. Some groups remain permanently

open, while others choose to open periodically, such as at the beginning or end of a study. If your group becomes too large for easy, face-to-face conversations, you can subgroup, forming a second discussion group in another room.

## HOW DO WE HANDLE THE CHILDCARE NEEDS IN OUR GROUP?

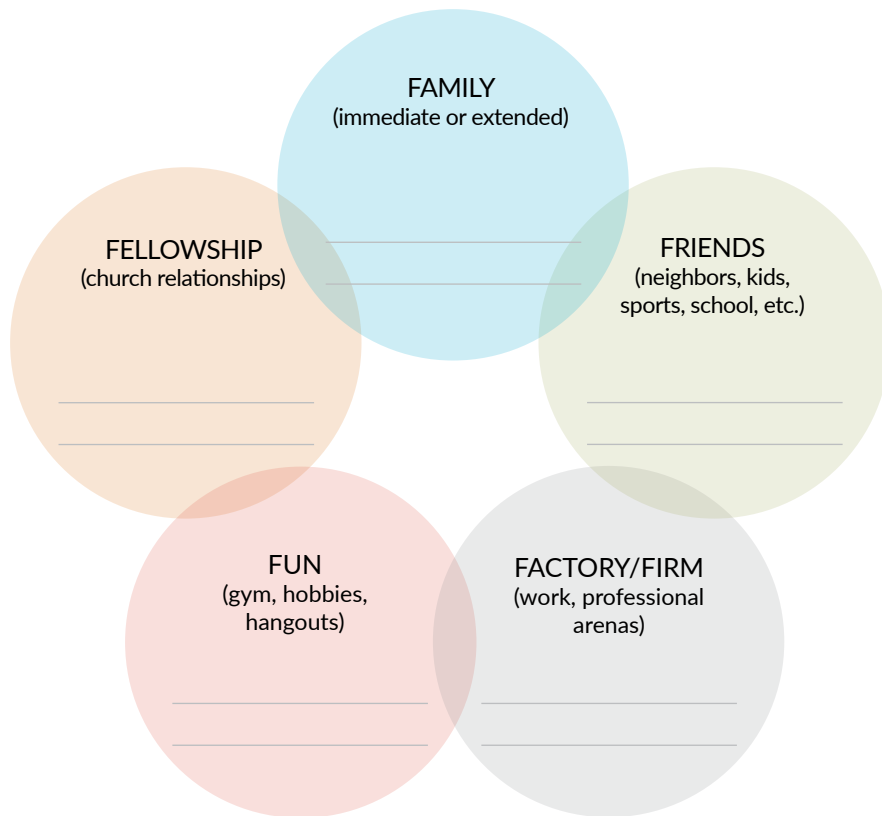
Childcare needs must be handled very carefully. This is a sensitive issue. We suggest you seek creative solutions as a group. One common solution is to have the adults meet in the living room and share the cost of a babysitter (or two) who can be with the kids in another part of the house. Another popular option is to have one supervised home for the kids and a second home (close by) for the adults. If desired, the adults could rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson for the kids. This last option is great with school-age kids and can be a huge blessing to families.



## *Circles of Life*

### DISCOVER WHO YOU CAN CONNECT IN COMMUNITY

Use this chart to help carry out one of the values in the Small Group Guidelines, to “Welcome Newcomers.”



Follow this simple three-step process:

1. List one to two people in each circle.
2. Prayerfully select one person or couple from your list and tell your group about them.
3. Give them a call and invite them to your next meeting. Over fifty percent of those invited to a small group say, “Yes!”

## *Small Group Guidelines*

It's a good idea for every group to put words to their shared values, expectations, and commitments. Such guidelines will help you avoid unspoken agendas and unmet expectations. We recommend you discuss your guidelines during your meeting in order to lay the foundation for a healthy group experience. Feel free to modify anything that does not work for your group.

We agree to the following values:

### **CLEAR PURPOSE**

To grow healthy spiritual lives by building a healthy small group community

### **GROUP ATTENDANCE**

To give priority to the group meeting (call if I am absent or late)

### **SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

To create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved (no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes)

### **BE CONFIDENTIAL**

To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

To avoid gossip and to immediately resolve any concerns by following the principles of Matthew 18:15–17



## SPIRITUAL HEALTH

To give group members permission to speak into my life and help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God

## LIMIT OUR FREEDOM

To limit our freedom by not serving or consuming alcohol during small group meetings or events so as to avoid causing a weaker brother or sister to stumble (1 Corinthians 8:1–13; Romans 14:19–21)

## WELCOME NEWCOMERS

To invite friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers

## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

To get to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly

Other \_\_\_\_\_

We have also discussed and agree on the following items:

CHILDCARE \_\_\_\_\_

STARTING TIME \_\_\_\_\_

ENDING TIME \_\_\_\_\_

If you haven't already done so, take a few minutes to fill out the **Small Group Calendar** on page **95**.

# Our Prayers and Praise

This is a place where you can write each other’s requests for prayer. You can also make a note when God answers a prayer. Pray for each other’s requests. If you’re new to group prayer, it’s okay to pray silently or to pray by using just one sentence:

“God, please help \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.”

DATE	PERSON	PRAYER REQUEST	PRAISE REPORT



## Small Group Calendar

Healthy groups share responsibilities and group ownership. It might take some time for this to develop. Shared ownership ensures that responsibility for the group doesn't fall to one person. Use the calendar to keep track of social events, mission projects, birthdays, or days off. Complete this calendar at your first or second meeting. Planning ahead will increase attendance and shared ownership.

DATE	LESSON	LOCATION	FACILITATOR	SNACK OR MEAL
	SESSION 1			
	SESSION 2			
	SESSION 3			
	SESSION 4			
	SESSION 5			
	SESSION 6			

# ANSWER KEY

## SESSION 1

### ONLY YOU CAN BE YOU

“What will be the CONTRIBUTION of my life?”

This is your specific contribution to the body of Christ, within your generation, that causes you to totally DEPEND on God and authentically DISPLAY his love toward others—all through the expression of your unique makeup.

Most people define their purpose in life by:

1. TRENDS
2. What others TELL them
3. God’s TRUTH
  - Who God MADE YOU TO BE determines what God INTENDS FOR YOU TO DO.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS — “What am I gifted to do?”

HEART — “What passions do I have?”

ABILITIES — “What do I naturally do better than others?”

PERSONALITY — “How has God wired me to navigate life?”

EXPERIENCES — “Where have I been?” and “What have I learned?”

Signs of Being In S.H.A.P.E.

1. FOCUS in your mind
2. FULFILLMENT in your heart
3. FRUITFULNESS in your life

Signs of Being Out of S.H.A.P.E.

1. FRUSTRATION in your mind
2. FATIGUE in your heart
3. FEAR in your life

## SESSION 2

### UNWRAPPING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A spiritual gift is a God-given SPECIAL ABILITY given to EVERY BELIEVER at conversion, by the Holy Spirit to SHARE his love and STRENGTHEN the body of Christ.

Spiritual gifts . . . are for the specific purpose of BLESSING the body of Christ—the Church.

1. COMPARISON
2. PROJECTION
3. REJECTION

## SESSION 3

### HEARING MY HEARTBEAT

**Key #1:** WHO do I love to SERVE?

Define your TARGET.

**Key #2:** What NEEDS do I love to MEET?

- SPIRITUAL Needs
- PHYSICAL Needs
- RELATIONAL Needs
- EMOTIONAL Needs
- EDUCATIONAL Needs
- VOCATIONAL Needs

**Key #3:** What CAUSES would I love to CONQUER?



## SESSION 4

### DISCOVERING MY NATURAL ABILITIES

Your **STRENGTHS** and **TALENTS** are there to show off God's greatness.

God has also given you special **ABILITIES** to excel in certain areas for him.

Life is too short to settle for doing less than **OUR BEST** for God.

## SESSION 5

### RECOGNIZING MY PERSONALITY

The personality you have is God's **GIFT** to you. He created it and gave it to you to use for his glory.

An indisputable truth is that God has instilled a **UNIQUE PERSONALITY** in each one of us.

**How Do I Relate to Others?**

**OUTGOING** \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ **RESERVED**

**SELF-EXPRESSIVE** \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ **SELF-CONTROLLED**

**COOPERATIVE** \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ **COMPETITIVE**

**How Do I Respond to Opportunities?**

**HIGH RISK** \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ **LOW RISK**

**PEOPLE DRIVEN** \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ **PROJECT DRIVEN**

**FOLLOW** \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ **LEAD**

**TEAM** \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ **SOLO**

**ROUTINE** \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ **VARIETY**

## SESSION 6

### UNDERSTANDING MY EXPERIENCES

There is purpose in your **PAST**.

As God lovingly crafts the masterpiece of our lives, he uses every **EXPERIENCE** to complete the finished product.

1. **PERSONAL EXPERIENCES** — An award
2. **VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES** — A pattern of achievement
3. **RELATIONAL EXPERIENCES** — A godly marriage or a friendship that comforts or challenges you
4. **EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES** — Academic degrees or training certificates, or ongoing development in areas of special interest
5. **SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES** — A history of success in sharing your faith or leading Christians to deeper insight; your own acceptance of Christ and spiritual growth

How could your **CRISIS** become a **CATALYST** for Christ?

Challenge everyone in your group to commit to taking a 90-day test drive.

1. Use your S.H.A.P.E. to make deposits of love in your **HOME**.
2. Use your S.H.A.P.E. to serve others at **WORK**.
3. Use your S.H.A.P.E. to volunteer at your **CHURCH**.
4. Use your S.H.A.P.E. to bless your **SMALL GROUP**.



# KEY VERSES

One of the most effective ways to drive deeply into our lives the principles we are learning in this series is to memorize key scriptures. For many, memorization is a new concept or one that has been difficult in the past.

We encourage you to stretch yourself and try to memorize these key verses. If possible, memorize them as a group and make them part of your group time. You may cut these apart and carry them in your wallet.

*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

**Psalm 119:11 (NIV)**

**SESSION 1**

*Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.*

**Galatians 6:4-5 (THE MESSAGE)**

**SESSION 2**

*God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you.*

**1 Peter 4:10 (NLT)**

**SESSION 3**

*As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person.*

**Proverbs 27:19 (NLT)**

**SESSION 4**

*"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*

**Matthew 25:23 (NIV)**

**SESSION 5**

*God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purpose through them all.*

**1 Corinthians 12:6 (PHILLIPS)**

**SESSION 6**

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV84)**



