



A friend of mine who could never be accused of spending too much time at the gymnasium would often tell me, "I'm in shape. Round is a shape!" We'd laugh together as we realized that we could both use more exercise. So, what shape are you in?? I'm not asking about your physical conditioning. I'm referring to how you have been uniquely created by God to have a specific ministry that no one else can have. "Whenever God gives us an assignment, he always equips us with what we need to accomplish it. This custom combination of capabilities is called your SHAPE (p. 236).

- **S**piritual Gifts God has gifted you so that you can benefit others. We need each other!
- **H**eart You have natural interests, a passion or enthusiasm that motivates you.
- **A**bilities You have natural talents you were born with...to be used for God's glory.
- **P**ersonality You have a unique temperament, a way of expressing who God made you to be.
- **E**xperience Your life experiences have worked together to equip you for special purpose.

Rick Warren says, "Before God created you, he decided what role he wanted you to play on earth. He planned exactly how he wanted you to serve him, and then he shaped you for those tasks. You are the way you are because you were made for a specific ministry" (p. 234). Do you know what you were shaped for?

1. Unwrap your *Spiritual Gifts* (Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 1 Peter 4:10-11). Are there any of these gifts that seem to give you (and others) great joy when you use it? The best way to discover your spiritual gift is to try it!
2. Listen to you *Heart* (Deuteronomy 11:13, Colossians 3:23). What really motivates you? What is your passion?
3. Apply your *Abilities* (Exodus 31:1-6). Do you tend to make a distinction between the secular and the sacred? In other words, do you think your natural abilities are as "spiritual" as your spiritual gifts?
4. Use your *Personality*. "God made *introverts* and *extroverts*. He made people who love *routine* and those who love *variety*. He made some people "*thinkers*" and others "*feelers*" (p. 245). Peter and Paul had very different personalities and yet each was uniquely used by God. Do you compare yourself to others or rejoice in who God made you to be?
5. Employ your *Experiences* (Romans 8:28-29, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4). Your family, education, vocation, spiritual journey, ministry opportunities, and difficulties have "worked together" for your good so that you can minister more effectively to others. Relate a specific example to each other.
6. Warren concludes, "You will be most effective when you use your *spiritual gifts* and *abilities* in the area of your *heart's desire*, and in a way that best expresses your *personality* and *experiences*. The better the fit, the more successful you will be" (p. 248). If you could be doing anything at all, anywhere in the world, and have enough resources to do it, what would your passion be? What would bring joy to your heart and the heart of God? Could this be what you were shaped for?

"God has given each of you some special abilities, be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings." (1 Peter 4:10 Living Bible)