

## Abilities and Skills

It has been well-said that God does not waste any part of our lives (even though we may try to). That means that every day of our life, including every skill we develop, has been orchestrated by God to be used in His service once we become a Christian.

However, we have probably decided, early in life, one of three things about our abilities:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Each of those conclusions misses the truth about you: **God made you with a purpose in mind.**

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Psalms 139:13-16

### Abilities and Skills Explained

Abilities are gifts of God’s general \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus said that God makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. God has uniquely shaped each person who has ever been born with natural-born abilities or aptitudes. You were born with a genetic predisposition to being good at some things and enjoying those things more than others.

Skills are shaped by our life \_\_\_\_\_. As we take lessons, go to classes, play a sport, get training, or practice some physical or mental exercise, we are developing them. Importantly, they can be but do not have to be related to our natural abilities.

These questions may help you see the difference between the two in your own life:

1. What are the things you do more easily than most other people? What are things that you learn to do quickly? (for example, building, fixing, relating, cooking, operating, and so on)

2. What kinds of special training or education do you have? (for example, certifications, degrees, music lessons, organized sports, apprenticeships, clubs or societies, and so on)

Why do we worry about our natural abilities and skills? Because we don't have time or energy to make everyone an expert at everything. Think about your own schedule:

You have 168 hours in a week. How much time do you spend each week . . .

- At work/commute \_\_\_\_\_ (average American: 60 hours)
- Sleeping/napping \_\_\_\_\_ (average American: 54 hours)
- Eating/cooking \_\_\_\_\_ (average American: 21 hours)
- Cleaning/hygiene \_\_\_\_\_ (average American: 10 hours)
- Errands/chores \_\_\_\_\_ (average American: 10 hours)

How much time do you have left each week? \_\_\_\_\_ hours (average American: 13 hours)

The purpose of SHAPE is to help us prioritize and maximize those hours. Our "spare" time is more effective when we focus on those things (tasks, ministries) that God has designed us to do, that we are good at, and that we enjoy doing.

We have a very simple assessment for you to take that will help you think about different types of tasks and projects and how you see yourself doing them. As with everything in SHAPE, be honest. You're not trying to impress anyone with a long list of skills!

## Where Do I Go from Here?

Exactly what you do with your abilities depends on your \_\_\_\_\_ (your raw talents) and \_\_\_\_\_ (what you accomplish with those talents). So how do we focus?

- Vocation:
- Avocation:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ and study God's \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. Take a \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Do different \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. \_\_\_\_\_.
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ with someone.
  6. \_\_\_\_\_. Look in the library or on the Internet.
  7. Develop some \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ opportunities that do and don't fit you.
  8. Be \_\_\_\_\_.

All 8 are things you can do here at First Baptist Church. But like everything else that happens at church and in your personal spiritual life, you get out of it what you put into it. The difference between someone who is a naturally gifted singer and someone who is a star singer is preparation and training and practice. Let's say that you discovered that you have the spiritual gift of teaching. Do you want to become a teacher? Do you want to become a *better* teacher? Do you want to be the *best* teacher God created you to be? The difference between those three takes time and effort, and you only have so much of either. Your SHAPE should help you learn how to focus. As a church, we cannot let you be satisfied with being an "okay" Christian. Consider the parable of the talents:

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money . . .

Matthew 25

You know what happens next! What kind of steward will you be of your abilities?

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)