

PA4-What Are Your Gifts?

We are all different! Even identical twins have unique characteristics. The earth is populated by 7 billion different personalities. Each of us have unique gifts – some of us are leaders, some of us are athletes, some of us are musicians, some of us are artists, some of us have a green thumb, some of us care for others, some of us feed the hungry, some of us heal the sick – but all of us have unique gifts from our Creator! Once you discover your gifts you'll see yourself differently! Yes, I said once you discover, because for many of us that day never comes. Without encouragement many of us will never try to use our gifts and therefore will never discover we have these gifts.

Let me share my story. As the firstborn son I found myself in a leadership position. My birth order helped me discover one of my gifts. I also had a gift with numbers and fortunately my teachers helped develop that gift. In a strange twist the emphasis of my mathematical gifts meant my language gifts went undeveloped! Like many of my gifts, my language gifts lay dormant for years. When I developed a love for reading I discovered I had a true gift for language. Not all our gifts are obvious. It is only when we step out of our comfort zone that we uncover hidden treasures – God-given gifts that have never been explored and developed. Gifts can also be hidden when we blindly believe what others tell us about ourselves. Although I struggled learning a foreign language and writing an acceptable English composition in high school, I did have the gift of language. For me high school was not the season for that gift to be revealed. Years after high school I began reading popular novels. It started with historical novels, then action novels, then business and “how to” books, and finally motivational authors. My language skills today would amaze my high school English composition teacher!

My language skills are not the only gift that remained dormant for decades. It was many years before I discovered I had the gift of service. Moving across country to a new city I was looking for a place to be “connected “. I volunteered to be a mentor to men being released from prison. Stepping out of my comfort zone exposed a gift that I had. It also exposed a gift I had received from many in my life. Volunteering to be a mentor reminded me of

the many mentors in my life. Until then I was clueless about the impact of a mentor on another person. As I was being trained to be a mentor I was able to recount the many men in my life who offered me encouragement, wisdom, knowledge and insight. It started with my grandfather who had the gift of encouragement. In high school it was a basketball coach who overlooked my lack of talent but saw my passion and gave me a chance to be on the team! In my first job it was a senior engineer who took me under his wing. In my first sales job it was a seasoned sales manager who offered insight and encouragement. These men and many more like them had helped to mold and shape me into the man I am today. Becoming a mentor gave me new insight into the men who had mentored me.

There are many questions for **your Personal Reflection**.

What gifts are dormant in your life? How can developing those gifts give you insight into your purpose? Who are the significant influencers in your life? Who do you turn to for encouragement? Who offers you sage advice? Who is helping you discover your gifts?

Hopefully you are fortunate enough to have people in your life who can offer you the encouragement, wisdom and insight to uncover your unique gifts. If you don't have these people then now is the time to seek out people who do have the gift of encouragement, wisdom and insight, and invite them to help you uncover and develop your God-given gifts!

Uncovering your gifts requires you to:

- Engage your self-awareness
- Be open to the feedback from those close to you
- Take the risk of stepping into uncharted territory
- Trust that He who gave you these gifts will bless your efforts to nurture the gifts.

Verses:

Philippians 1:6 “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Personal Reflection: What gifts are dormant in your life? How can developing those gifts give insight into your purpose? Who are the significant influencers in your life? Who do you turn to for encouragement? Who offers you sage advice? Who is helping you discover your gifts?

Group Discussion:

Are we willing to encourage each other as we seek our gifts?

Has anyone been blessed with a close friend who has helped them develop dormant gifts?

Please share that experience with the group.