



"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men." – Herman Melville

There is a line I like from Willowcreek Church outside of Chicago "*we are a part of everyone.*" Oh yes, we are. What part of "all" or "we" does not include you? If I have spiritual gifts then you have spiritual gifts. There is another quote I like "*the harsh reality of your choices is understanding that you and you alone are the only one who can change can't into won't.*" I will correlate that statement with spiritual gifts. My pastor chooses to use his gifts to preach. I, on the other, hand have (at times) refused to use my gifts as God intended. So many people sit and say "I *can't* use what I *don't* have." Yet, we all have spiritual gifts from God. What you're really saying you "*won't*" use what God gave you. Why? It's because we desire to be something God has not equipped us for.

Let's take a trip back in time to Genesis 3. The Serpent knew that Adam and Eve were not happy just being gardeners. Who knows what else God could have gifted these two with? That's part of the problem with people. We think that our job reflects who we are. Many Christians think the church reflects who they are. Adam and Eve couldn't look past gardening. They couldn't ask God for more. Why? It's because deep down they wanted what God has. To be their own God. So, they took matters in their own hand to be more like God. Yet, what they found out in a hurry is that they are not God.

To understand our Spiritual gifts is to understand who we are. How God made us. I was not made to be Tom Brady. I was not made to be The Pope. Like Adam and Eve, we need to get past wanting to be someone else. Instead, we should be asking God to show us more about ourselves. Before I believed in God, I was a shy man. In so many ways I was hollow. Since my conversion I can public speak, write, preach and a whole lot more. I am stunned at who I am now. If I spent time with my Ex, she would probably say that I'm a new person she does not know. God gave me that!

Ephesians 4:24 *“And to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

It's ok for a non-believer to not use their talents for God. They do not choose to believe. Yet, you chose to believe. Within that came your decision to follow Christ Jesus. In doing so, you made a bond with Jesus through the Holy Spirit. The Jesus' part of that bond is many things like sacrificing himself for our sins. It also includes Jesus giving us Spiritual gifts. Those gifts are to be used by God to further the kingdom; bless the world; and grow you as a person.

Ephesians 4:24 says *“and to put on a new self.”* What this all means is that you have been given purpose. All of who you are was made long ago. God knew what you would love, like, and thrive at in life. He knows! It's makes so much sense that Jesus gives each of us gifts of the Spirit that work in unison with how you are made. There was no mistake of nature? There was no random chance in a big bang. Your gifts were meant to be used by you and you alone. Those special gifts work in unison with your character and in unison with the body of Christ called the church.

As a Christian you are a new self. I have often pondered Mark 2:22 *“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the*

*wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.*" I get it now. A new person in Christ is new wine. They are to be used in a new (new wine skin) way. The Holy Spirit combined with the gifts you received from Jesus could not work in your old (way) body. You must be born anew. You have been given new gifts for the purposes of God. Now, what to do with them?

For the purposes of understanding, we need to walk towards knowing your gifts slowly. They need to be understood. People have used their gifts in the wrong way. Churches have used you in ways that don't highlight your gifts. I believe with all my heart that people walk away from church and even Christianity because they did not use their gifts properly. These gifts are your passion. They are how you are made. Nobody uses a bat to sweep the floor. You cannot be used the wrong way. With that said, you can't understand gifts without knowing what they do. How do you know what a light switch does until someone flicks it on for the first time? These gifts are to be used within the body of Christ; the community where you live; and the world around you. We need to understand that.

It's time to ponder: what makes you unique. Who are you? If we asked your dearest friend, what would they say about you? I want you to ponder yourself this week. It's best to pray to God. Ask him to reveal how he made you. Take a long walk. Look at other people along the way. How are they made? Are they doing what God designed them to do? Spiritual gifts should not be taken lightly. They are highlights of how you tick. They are hints as to what plans God may have instore for you. It's time to ponder and ask the right question. What was I made for?

Next week let's take a look at the body of Christ. What is your role within that body? How do your gifts fit in? Finally, I want to ask you. What if God gave you just 10% of your potential at your birth? What if? Is it possible there is more to ask for? More to pray for? What if,

what you see in the mirror, was only the tip of the iceberg? What if Adam and Eve had taken a single moment to ask those questions about themselves? Would they have gotten off track?

Happy hunting for “you” this week!