

Inspirational Nuggets

(Archived posts from www.discipleshipcenter.org)

CHRISTIAN SERVICE:

In January, 1995, according to Gary Thomas in an article in *Moody* magazine, J. Robert Ashcroft had fewer than 48 hours to live, but he was holding on to life, hoping to see his son, John Ashcroft, sworn into the U.S. Senate the following day. As family and friends gathered in Washington (DC) for a small reception, J. Robert Ashcroft asked his son to play the piano while everyone sang, "We Are Standing On Holy Ground."

After the song, the frail old man spoke some powerful words: "John, I want you to know that even Washington can be holy ground. Wherever you hear the voice of God, that ground is sanctified. It's a place where God can call you to the highest and best."

Wherever we are in our vocation, if Jesus is Lord of our lives, and we will hear His voice, that place is a holy place of service for Him.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE -

Our physical shape can have quite an influence on the things we are able to do well. Former Buckeye Greg Oden had the right "shape," at 7 feet tall, to play center for the basketball team. My wife, Sharon, who has a shorter "shape," would not fare well as a center on a basketball team - but would find it a lot easier to interact with babies on the church nursery floor than Greg would.

Just as a person's physical shape influences what that person can do well, so a Christian's spiritual S.H.A.P.E. has a mighty effect on how well he/she can function in particular areas of Christian Service. Pastor and author Rick Warren suggests that each one of us has a God-given S.H.A.P.E. that can determine our best avenues for serving God, helping us feel joy and fulfillment as we serve.

S.H.A.P.E. means that God has given each of us . . .

Spiritual Gifts - special capabilities given by the Holy Spirit, to every Christian, for the purpose of helping others.

Heart - God has implanted in our hearts certain things that we love to do.

Abilities - talents we have that allow us to accomplish certain tasks.

Personality - introverted or extroverted, a "thinker" or a "feeler," comfortable with routine or variety.

Experiences - God has molded us over the years based on family, spiritual, educational, painful, and ministry experiences.

With the thought that each of us has our own God-given S.H.A.P.E., I feel like echoing the words of the Psalmist: "I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made . . ." (Psalm 139:14).

What does your God-given S.H.A.P.E. look like?

CHRISTIAN SERVICE:

God can take your *past* and turn it into a vital part of your CHRISTIAN SERVICE in the *present*. That's what we want to highlight in this "nugget."

I have mentioned before that we can serve God more effectively if we discover our God-given **S.H.A.P.E.** (Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences):

As you can see the "E" in S.H.A.P.E. stands for "*experiences*." The person you are now has been largely shaped by your experiences. According to the book *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren, these can be

....*Spiritual* experiences (meaningful decisions for God; meaningful times with God)

....*Family* experiences (what you learned growing up in your family)

....*Educational* experiences (what you learned at school)

....*Vocational* experiences (what you learned through the jobs you've had)

....*Ministry* experiences (how you have served God in the past)

....*Painful* experiences (trials, hurts, and problems that have taught you something)

As you may know, my wife had breast cancer in 2004, it was a very difficult time. The surgeries, uncertainties, treatments, and various other struggles added up to what we could call a *painful* experience. But God has turned that into an experience that we have used to encourage others who are struggling with breast cancer. We pray for them, ask them how they are doing, and try to share with them what we learned in the process of overcoming cancer.

Would you allow God to take the various experiences of your past, and use them to make you more effective in Christian service?

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