



Created to SERVE

THE CREEK

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Introduction

Welcome to **Created to Serve**, an interactive experience designed to help you discover **who God has created you to be** and **how He is inviting you to partner with Him**.

From the opening pages of Scripture to the closing vision of Revelation, God is at work restoring His creation and inviting His people to join Him. He could accomplish His purposes without us, but in His grace, He chooses to work through ordinary people of all ages and circumstances. Throughout history He has called shepherds and kings, fishermen and merchants, artists and administrators, women and men to participate in His kingdom.

But many of us find ourselves wondering, “How has God uniquely prepared me to participate in His work?” To answer that question, it’s important to understand that God gives each Christian an **identity**, a **calling**, and a **purpose**.

Your **identity** is “child of God” (John 1:12). You are God’s handiwork (Ephesians 2:8). **You were created to be loved by God.**

Your **calling** is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39). **You were created to love God and love others.**

Your **purpose** is “to do good works, which God prepared in advance” for you to do (Ephesians 2:10). **You were created to serve.**

Identity and calling are the same for all believers. But our purpose plays out differently. God created each of us to serve in unique and specific ways.

The Apostle Paul puts it this way:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-14

We each have a distinct role to play in the body of Christ (the church). Just as a body needs hands and feet and eyes and ears and a stomach and lungs and kidneys, so the church needs teachers and tech folks, diaper-changers and coffee-makers, evangelists and door holders, mechanics and business leaders, introverts and extroverts, nurses and foster parents, people who love to crunch numbers and people who love to arrange flowers. Paul writes,

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

ROMANS 12:4-5

People fill different roles for different purposes. And for the body to flourish, every part needs to be healthy and doing its job.

The Holy Spirit gives each believer a **spiritual gift** (see Romans 12:6 and 1 Corinthians 12:7). Spiritual gifts are not simply natural talents. They are gracious empowerments given by the Holy Spirit for the building up of God's people and the advancement of His mission. These gifts aren't for the individual's benefit, rather, "to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).

God invites us to collaborate with Him in the building of His kingdom and provides us with the gifts we need to do what He calls us to do. However, we sometimes desire to serve Him but struggle to identify the specific avenues of service He's inviting us into. Recognizing our gifts can be an important step in that process.

The Holy Spirit not only equips us through spiritual gifts, but He also equips us for service through our personalities, abilities, passions, relationships, and life experiences. Prayerfully reflecting on each of these areas may help us discern the unique ways God has prepared us to love and serve others. Often this process can even bring beauty to broken parts of our story, as we begin to understand that sometimes the darkest moments of our lives equip us to most effectively love and serve others in His name.

We've created this resource to help you reflect on how God has specifically created you to serve Him and His kingdom in our church, in our community, and in the wider world. In this guide, we will examine a variety of ways God prepares us for service:



OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM



OUR ABILITIES



OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS



OUR PREFERRED CONTEXTS



OUR PASSIONS AND CAUSES



OUR EXPERIENCES

**As you move through the following material, take your time.
Pray and reflect.**

Discovering how God has created you to serve is rarely a single moment of revelation. More often it is a lifelong process of prayer, faithful service, wise counsel, and attention to where God bears fruit through your life. This guide is not intended to give you all the answers, but to help you begin—or continue—that journey of discernment.

Each one of us is commanded to love God and love others. But we have the privilege of fulfilling that calling in a multitude of ways, both inside and outside the walls of The Creek.

May you discover how you are **Created
to Serve** and may you find great delight
in your place in the body, your role in the
kingdom, and your identity as the
Father's beloved.

PART ONE

Explore God's Character and Heart

Who Is the God I Am Created to Serve?

“The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.”

EXODUS 34:6-7

A.W. Tozer opens his book *The Knowledge of the Holy* this way: “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” On the last night of His life, Jesus prayed, **“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”** (John 17:3). Before we explore how God has uniquely created and shaped each of us, it is essential to begin with who He is.

Our understanding of God and our response to God are deeply connected. As we come to know His character, our love for Him grows. And as we love Him, we naturally desire to trust Him, obey Him, and join Him in His work in the world.

You were created to be loved by God, to love Him and others, and to respond to that love by serving Him and serving others in unique and specific ways. We are all created as God's image bearers, reflecting His character and heart in the world. Like panes of stained glass or pieces of a mosaic, each of us uniquely reflects His beauty, creativity, and goodness in different ways—and we make something beautiful when we join together.

As followers of Jesus, we are also being transformed into His image (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18). The more we behold Him, the more His character is reflected through us. As we discover the ways God has uniquely shaped us, we are not simply discovering what we can do—we are discovering how we can more fully reflect who He is.

Characteristics of God

There are many characteristics of our Heavenly Father, and all are true, important, and inherent to Him. Yet, in different seasons of life, we may find that certain aspects of His character especially capture our hearts and draw us closer to Him. This exercise is not about choosing the characteristics of God that describe us best. Rather, it is an opportunity to reflect on the aspects of His nature that God has used to shape us, encourage us, and form us into the people He created us to be.

As you read this list, prayerfully consider:

Which aspects of God's character have especially captured your heart or shaped your walk with Him in this season?

Select up to five. There are no right or wrong answers, and your selections may change as God continues to shape you.

GOD'S GREATNESS

- ☐ **Eternal** – He has no beginning or end.
- ☐ **Sovereign** – He rules over all things.
- ☐ **All-Powerful** – Nothing is beyond His ability.
- ☐ **All-Knowing** – Nothing is hidden from Him.
- ☐ **Ever-Present** – He is always present with His people.
- ☐ **Transcendent** – He is above and beyond all creation.
- ☐ **Unchanging** – He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
- ☐ **Immanent** – He is near, present and actively involved.

GOD'S MAJESTY

- ☐ **Glorious** – His greatness, beauty, and worth to inspire worship.
- ☐ **Beautiful** – Everything about Him is perfectly good and worthy of delight.
- ☐ **Holy Jealous** – He passionately desires our wholehearted love and worship.
- ☐ **Wrathful against Evil** – He is perfectly opposed to sin and injustice.
- ☐ **Joyful** – He delights in His people and His purposes.
- ☐ **Good** – Everything He does is good.

☐ **Other:** _____

GOD'S LOVE

- ☐ **Loving** – His love is steadfast, sacrificial, and unconditional.
- ☐ **Gracious** – He gives blessings we do not deserve.
- ☐ **Merciful** – He withholds the judgement we deserve.
- ☐ **Compassionate** – He is tenderhearted toward those who suffer.
- ☐ **Patient** – He is slow to anger and longsuffering.
- ☐ **Peaceful** – He is the source of true peace.
- ☐ **Generous** – He delights to give good gifts.
- ☐ **Faithful** – He always keeps His promises.

GOD'S HOLINESS

- ☐ **Holy** – He is perfectly pure and set apart.
- ☐ **Perfect** – He is without flaw or defect.
- ☐ **Truthful** – He is completely trustworthy and cannot lie.
- ☐ **Wise** – He always knows and chooses what is best.
- ☐ **Just** – He is perfectly fair and judges rightly.
- ☐ **Righteous** – He always does what is morally right.

God's Heart for the World

In the busyness of our lives, it can be difficult to see beyond our own schedules, families, responsibilities, and experiences. But as followers of Jesus, we are invited to develop hearts that reflect God's own heart. Throughout Scripture, we see God's compassion, concern, and justice extended toward particular people and places in His world.

As you read this list, prayerfully consider:

What needs, people, or issues stir your heart because they reflect something God deeply cares about?

Read the list below and select up to five.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Widows and Those without Support | ☐ The Broken and Hurting |
| ☐ Orphans and Vulnerable Children | ☐ Children and Families |
| ☐ The Voiceless and Vulnerable | ☐ Future Generations |
| ☐ The Poor | ☐ Our Relationships |
| ☐ The Lonely | ☐ The Church and the Body of Christ |
| ☐ The Forgotten | ☐ Every Nation and People |
| ☐ The Foreigner and Stranger | ☐ Government and Leaders |
| ☐ The Lost and Far from God | ☐ Creation and Stewardship |
| ☐ People with Disabilities | ☐ Justice and Mercy |
| ☐ The Sick and Suffering | ☐ Reconciliation and Peace |
| ☐ The Weary and Overburdened | ☐ Spiritual Growth and Transformation |
| ☐ Other _____ | |

God often places within us a burden for the things that burden His heart. While we are not limited to serving only in these areas, the things that consistently stir our compassion can be clues to the ways God may be inviting us to participate in His work in the world.

Notice & Reflect

GOD'S HEART AND CHARACTER – WHO IS THE GOD I AM CREATED TO SERVE?

Before exploring more about who God has created you to be, take some time to reflect on what you've noticed in this section. Using your answers from the previous pages and the examples below, prayerfully complete the prompts that help you summarize your responses to this section.

EXAMPLES:

- ▶ I am drawn to God's compassion and generosity and I share His heart for
the weary & overburdened
- ▶ I am drawn to God's holiness & glory and I share His heart for
carrying for His creation
- ▶ I am drawn to God's nearness & peace and I share His heart for
widows and orphans

YOUR REFLECTIONS:

- ▶ I am drawn to God's _____ and I share His heart for

- ▶ I am drawn to God's _____ and I share His heart for

- ▶ I am drawn to God's _____ and I share His heart for

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS FROM THIS SECTION:

PART TWO

Explore Spiritual Gifts

How Has the Holy Sprit Uniquely Gifted Me?

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-5

God gives every believer spiritual gifts to serve others, strengthen the Church, and participate in His Kingdom. These gifts are not simply natural talents or learned skills. They are Spirit-given abilities through which we reflect the love, grace, and truth of Christ.

Spiritual gifts are not given for personal recognition or status. They are given for the good of others. Each believer is uniquely gifted, and every gift has an important place within the body of Christ.

As you move through this section, remember that discovering your spiritual gifts is not about finding the perfect label. It is about noticing the ways the Holy Spirit may already be working in and through you.

A NOTE ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

There are many resources and assessments available to help people explore their spiritual gifts. While these tools can be helpful, no inventory can replace the experience of prayerfully discerning your gifts with trusted believers in the presence of God. Spiritual gifts often become clearer as we serve, reflect on our experiences, and receive affirmation from others. You do not need to identify every gift with certainty today. In fact, it's less important to find the correct label for your spiritual gift and more important to recognize the kinds of things God has spiritually equipped you to do. Simply notice what resonates and remain open to what God may continue revealing over time.

Begin with Scripture & Prayer

Discerning your spiritual gifts begins with prayer and reflection on God's Word. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul reminds us that the Holy Spirit gives a variety of gifts, each unique and each intended to build up the body of Christ.

Before exploring the gifts listed in this section, take time to slowly read through 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 a couple of times. Ask the Spirit to open your heart and mind to see how He has uniquely equipped you. Circle or underline words or phrases that stand out to you.

Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Explore the Gifts

As you read through each description below and the reflection questions, mark the questions you would *consistently* answer with “yes”—not merely who you would like to be or what you have done once.

Pay particular attention to places where you have experienced:

- Joy while serving
- Fruitfulness in the lives of others
- Affirmation from trusted believers
- A recurring desire to contribute in a particular way

This guide is intended to serve as an introduction to spiritual gifts and is not exhaustive. Scripture mentions additional gifts that are not included here. We would love to have a conversation with you about how we understand the work of the Holy Spirit and help you continue discerning how He has gifted you.

APOSTLESHIP *Ephesians 4:11*

The ability to be sent into new, unfamiliar, or cross-cultural settings with the gospel, often beginning and strengthening new communities of faith.

- ☐ Do I feel drawn to share Jesus with people outside my usual circles?
- ☐ Do I adapt well to new cultures or environments for the sake of the gospel?
- ☐ Do I feel drawn to begin new ministries, groups, or expressions of faith where none currently exist?

WISDOM *1 Corinthians 12:8*

The ability to see situations from God’s perspective and offer guidance that helps others make wise and godly decisions.

- ☐ Do people often come to me for advice when facing decisions?
- ☐ When I read Scripture, do I see clear connections to everyday life?
- ☐ Have others affirmed that my input helps them see situations more clearly?

SERVICE *1 Peter 4:10-11*

The desire and ability to joyfully meet practical needs, often behind the scenes.

- ☐ Do I naturally notice tasks that need to be done and step in to help?
- ☐ Do I feel fulfilled serving in ways that others may not notice?
- ☐ Does helping others energize me more than leading or being up front?

ENCOURAGEMENT *Romans 12:7-8*

The ability to strengthen others through words or presence, offering hope, courage, and motivation.

- ☐ Do I enjoy speaking or writing words of encouragement to others?
- ☐ Do people tell me that my words came at just the right time?
- ☐ Do I find joy in helping others remain strong in their faith?

FAITH *1 Corinthians 12:9; 13:2*

The confidence to trust God deeply and inspire others to trust Him, even in difficult or uncertain circumstances.

- ☐ Do I find it natural to trust God when circumstances are uncertain?
- ☐ Do I pray bold prayers, expecting God to move?
- ☐ Do others say that my faith strengthens their own trust in God?

ADMINISTRATION *1 Corinthians 12:28*

The ability to organize details, resources, people, and tasks so that ministry goals can be accomplished effectively.

- ☐ Do I enjoy creating plans, systems, or schedules that keep things on track?
- ☐ Do I notice when important details have been overlooked and step in to help?
- ☐ Do people rely on me to bring order to projects or events?

LEADERSHIP *Romans 12:8*

The ability to guide and motivate people toward God's purposes with clarity, care, and faithfulness.

- ☐ Do I enjoy organizing and motivating people toward a shared goal?
- ☐ Do people naturally look to me for direction?
- ☐ Do I find joy in helping others succeed and grow?

PROPHECY *1 Corinthians 14:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21*

The ability to speak God's truth with courage and clarity in ways that encourage, challenge, strengthen, or guide others.

- ☐ Do I feel a strong desire to share truths from Scripture with others?
- ☐ Have people told me that my words helped draw them closer to God?
- ☐ Am I deeply concerned when God's people drift from the truth of His Word?

DISCERNMENT *1 Corinthians 12:4-10*

The ability to distinguish truth from error and recognize what is spiritually healthy, harmful, or consistent with the work of God.

- ☐ Do I often sense when something is not right spiritually?
- ☐ Do others seek my perspective when navigating difficult situations?
- ☐ Have I recognized harmful influences or concerns before others noticed them?

TEACHING *James 3:1*

The ability to explain God's Word and spiritual truth in ways that bring clarity, understanding, and practical application.

- ☐ Do I enjoy preparing lessons or explaining Scripture to others?
- ☐ Do people say that I make complex truths easier to understand?
- ☐ Do I feel energized when helping others learn and grow?

SHEPHERDING *Ephesians 4:11*

The ability to care for, guide, protect, and nurture others in their spiritual lives, much like a shepherd cares for a flock.

- ☐ Do I feel a strong responsibility for the spiritual well-being of others?
- ☐ Do people tend to feel safe, known, and cared for when they are with me?
- ☐ Do I naturally pray for and check in on others regularly?

KNOWLEDGE *1 Corinthians 12:8*

The ability to understand, remember, and communicate God's truth so that others can apply it to their lives.

- ☐ Do I enjoy studying the Bible and making connections across passages?
- ☐ Do people say that I help make Scripture easier to understand?
- ☐ Do I remember biblical details or truths that others find helpful?

MENTORING *1 Corinthians 11:1*

The ability to guide, encourage, teach, and walk alongside others in their spiritual growth over time. We see this modeled throughout the Gospels in the way Jesus invested in His disciples.

- ☐ Do I enjoy walking with others through long-term spiritual growth?
- ☐ Do I naturally invest in people one-on-one to encourage their faith?
- ☐ Do people see me as a trusted guide or mentor in their lives?

GIVING *Romans 12:8*

The ability to joyfully and generously share money, time, possessions, or other resources to bless others and support God's work.

- ☐ Do I enjoy giving resources to meet the needs of others?
- ☐ Do I find joy in blessing others, even when it requires sacrifice?
- ☐ Do I see generosity as an opportunity rather than an obligation?

MERCY *Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2*

The ability to show deep compassion, empathy, and care to people who are hurting, struggling, or in need.

- ☐ Do I feel deeply moved when I see others suffering?
- ☐ Do I find joy in being present with people in pain, even when their situation cannot be easily resolved?
- ☐ Do people often come to me for comfort or support?

HOSPITALITY *1 Peter 4:9–10*

The ability to create spaces where others feel welcomed, accepted, included, and cared for.

- ☐ Do I enjoy hosting and helping people feel at home?
- ☐ Do I view my home, table, or other spaces as tools for ministry?
- ☐ Do new people often feel comfortable and become connected quickly in my presence?

EVANGELISM *Matthew 28:18–20*

The ability to share the good news of Jesus clearly and naturally in ways that help others understand and respond in faith.

- ☐ Do I naturally begin spiritual conversations with others?
- ☐ Do people respond positively when I share my story of faith?
- ☐ Do I feel energized and joyful when someone takes a step toward Jesus?

Notice & Reflect

SPIRITUAL GIFTS — HOW HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT UNIQUELY GIFTED ME?

Before moving on, take a moment to notice what stood out to you.

Which gifts resonated with you most strongly?

Were there any gifts you recognized without hesitation?

Did anything surprise you?

Have other people affirmed any of these gifts in you?

Which gifts are you curious to explore further?

Review your responses and record what you notice here.

Spiritual gifts are often discovered and confirmed as we faithfully serve alongside others. Notice where the Holy Spirit may already be at work and remain open to His continued leadership.

Take a moment to pray before continuing:

God, thank You for giving gifts to every member of Your Church. Thank You for the ways Your Spirit is at work in me and in the people around me. Help me recognize the gifts You have entrusted to me and use them with humility, courage, and love. Give me opportunities to serve others, strengthen Your Church, and participate in Your Kingdom. Surround me with trusted believers who can help me discern and faithfully steward the ways You have gifted me. Amen.

Record any additional thoughts that you may have here:



PART THREE

Explore Passions & Causes

What Stirs My Heart?

Take delight in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

PSALM 37:4

Our passions often reveal where God is inviting us to join Him in His work. Our passions are the people and causes that consistently capture our attention, stir our compassion, or bring us joy when we serve.

As you move through the following sections, **pay attention to what draws your heart in this season of your life.** Don't worry about whether you have experience, training, or an opportunity to serve in these areas. This isn't about evaluating your resume; it's about noticing where God may be awakening desire, compassion, or curiosity.

As you read and reflect, ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice:

- What captures my attention?
- What consistently stirs my heart?
- Where do I come alive?
- Where might God be inviting me to participate in His work?

There are no right or wrong answers. Simply respond honestly, trusting that God often uses our passions to point us toward the ways He has uniquely created us to love and serve others.

Who Do I Naturally Love to Serve?

Read through the list below and check every group you feel naturally drawn toward **in this season of your life**. Don't think about your current role, experience, or qualifications. Simply ask:

- Which people energize me?
- Whose stories move my heart?
- Who do I naturally notice or make time for?
- Who do I hope experiences the love of Jesus?

I feel especially drawn to serve...

BY AGE:

- ☐ Infants & Babies
- ☐ Toddlers
- ☐ Preschool Children
- ☐ Elementary Children
- ☐ Jr. High Students
- ☐ High School Students
- ☐ College & Young Adults
- ☐ Young Married Adults
- ☐ Families
- ☐ Older Adults (60+)
- ☐ Other _____

BY COMMUNITY:

- ☐ Athletes
- ☐ Business Professionals
- ☐ Couples
- ☐ English Language Learners/International Neighbors
- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Singles
- ☐ Single Parents
- ☐ Musicians
- ☐ People Who Are Hurting
- ☐ People with Hearing Impairments
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Orphans
- ☐ Other _____

What Needs or Issues Stir My Heart?

God often places a burden on our hearts for specific needs in the world. These burdens aren't meant to make us feel guilty about everything that's broken. Instead, they can help us recognize where God may be inviting us to join His work. You will probably notice that the cares of God's heart that most resonated with you on page 7 connect to the needs and issues that most stir your heart.

Read through the list below and check every cause or area of ministry that consistently captures your attention or stirs your compassion. Ask yourself:

- What problems do I long to see changed?
- What stories consistently move me?
- Where do I naturally want to invest my time, energy, or resources?
- What injustices or needs are difficult for me to ignore?

I feel especially drawn toward...

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Victims of Abuse & Domestic Violence | ☐ Divorce Recovery | ☐ Addiction Recovery |
| ☐ Relief & Disaster Response | ☐ Financial Stewardship | ☐ Sanctity of Life |
| ☐ At-Risk Children & Youth | ☐ Global Missions | ☐ Science & Technology |
| ☐ Business & Marketplace Ministry | ☐ Health & Wellness | ☐ Worship |
| ☐ Sexual Integrity & Identity | ☐ Homelessness | ☐ Hospitality |
| ☐ People Experiencing Poverty | ☐ Caring for the Sick | ☐ Marriage |
| ☐ Community Development | ☐ Human Trafficking | ☐ Families & Parenting |
| ☐ Disabilities & Accessibility | ☐ Justice & Advocacy | |
| ☐ Fellowship & Community Building | ☐ Church Planting | |
| ☐ Environmental Stewardship | ☐ Mental Health | |
| ☐ Equipping & Developing Leaders | ☐ Evangelism | |
| ☐ Ethics & Biblical Worldview | ☐ Education & Schools | |
| ☐ Racial Reconciliation & Unity | ☐ Politics & Public Policy | |
| ☐ Ministry Engagement (Helping People Find Places to Serve) | ☐ Refugees & Immigrants | |

Notice & Reflect

PASSIONS & CAUSES — WHAT STIRS MY HEART?

Before moving on, take a moment to notice what stood out to you.

Was there anything you found yourself checking without hesitation?

What, if anything, surprised you?

What are you curious to learn more about?

You don't need to have all the answers. Discernment often begins by simply noticing the patterns, desires, and questions God is bringing to your attention.

Review your responses and record what you notice here.

Take a moment to pray before continuing:

God, thank You for creating me with purpose. As I delight in You, continue to shape the desires of my heart so that they reflect Your heart. Help me notice the ways You have uniquely made me and the passions You are awakening within me. Give me wisdom as I continue this journey of discovery and the courage to follow You one step at a time. Amen.



PART FOUR

Explore Your Abilities

What Has God Equipped Me to Do?

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12

God has given each of us unique abilities. Some are natural strengths you've had for as long as you can remember. Others have been developed through school, work, hobbies, ministry, or life experiences. These abilities are one of the ways God equips you to love others and participate in His work.

Just as every part of the body has a purpose, every follower of Jesus has something meaningful to contribute. God doesn't expect us to have every ability. Instead, He invites us to faithfully steward the abilities He has entrusted to us for the good of others and His Kingdom.

What Abilities Has God Entrusted to Me?

As you move through this section, pay attention to the abilities you've been entrusted with in this season of your life. You don't need to be an expert or use these skills professionally. Simply notice the abilities that come naturally or have grown through practice and experience.

As you read and reflect, ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice:

- What do people naturally ask me to help with?
- What abilities have I developed through work, school, ministry, hobbies, or life experience?
- What tasks or skills come naturally to me?
- What kinds of work leave me feeling capable and confident?

COMMUNICATION & RELATIONSHIPS

- ☐ **Communicating** – Sharing ideas, information, or truth in ways others understand.
- ☐ **Encouraging** – Inspiring, supporting, and strengthening others.
- ☐ **Counseling** – Listening well and offering wise, compassionate guidance.
- ☐ **Coaching** – Training, equipping, and helping others grow.
- ☐ **Mentoring** – Investing in others through guidance and example.
- ☐ **Teaching** – Explaining ideas and helping others learn.
- ☐ **Interviewing** – Asking thoughtful questions to understand people more deeply.
- ☐ **Connecting** – Building relationships and bringing people together.
- ☐ **Welcoming & Hospitality** – Helping people feel seen, comfortable, and included.
- ☐ **Public Relations** – Handling concerns with care and courtesy.
- ☐ **Negotiating** – Helping people work towards agreement.
- ☐ **Influencing** – Positively shaping the thoughts or actions of others.
- ☐ **Motivating** – Inspiring others towards action or growth.
- ☐ **Writing** – Expressing ideas through written communication.
- ☐ **Editing** – Improving written content.
- ☐ **Researching** – Gathering information and learning.
- ☐ **Learning** – Enjoying the process of growing in knowledge.
- ☐ **Languages** – Reading, writing or speaking another language.

Language: _____ ☐ Read ☐ Write ☐ Speak

LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATION

- ☐ **Leading** – Providing vision and direction
- ☐ **Managing** – Overseeing people, projects, or processes.
- ☐ **Administrating** – Creating systems that help ministries function well.
- ☐ **Organizing** – Bringing order and structure.
- ☐ **Planning** – Preparing strategies, events, or projects.
- ☐ **Strategizing** – Thinking ahead and developing effective approaches.
- ☐ **Coordinating** – Bringing people and details together.
- ☐ **Facilitating** – Helping groups work well together.
- ☐ **Implementing** – Turning ideas into action.
- ☐ **Recruiting** – Inviting others to get involved.
- ☐ **Developing Others** – Helping people grow.
- ☐ **Forecasting** – Recognizing trends and future needs.
- ☐ **Analyzing** – Examining information carefully.
- ☐ **Evaluating** – Assessing ideas or results thoughtfully.
- ☐ **Critical Thinking & Problem Solving** – Working through challenges with wisdom.
- ☐ **Classifying & Record Keeping** – Organizing information for easy retrieval.
- ☐ **Finance & Budgeting** – Working confidently with numbers and money.
- ☐ **Resourcing** – Finding people, materials, or tools needed.

CREATIVE ARTS

- ☐ **Artistic Design** – Creating visual works.
- ☐ **Designing** – Conceptualizing new ideas or plans.
- ☐ **Visualizing** – Imagining creative possibilities.
- ☐ **Performing** – Using music, drama, dance, or speaking.
- ☐ **Decorating** – Beautifying spaces.
- ☐ **Composing** – Writing music or lyrics.
- ☐ **Photography** – Telling stories through images.
- ☐ **Media Production** – Creating audio, video, or digital content.

PRACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

- ☐ **Building** – Construction or assembling projects.
- ☐ **Engineering** – Designing technical solutions.
- ☐ **Repairing** – Fixing or restoring what is broken.
- ☐ **Operating Equipment** – Using machinery or tools.
- ☐ **Computer Programming** – Creating or maintaining software.
- ☐ **Technology & Digital Skills** – Using technology to solve problems.
- ☐ **Cooking or Meal Preparation** – Preparing food for others.
- ☐ **Landscaping & Gardening** – Caring for outdoor spaces.
- ☐ **Sewing, Quilting, Knitting, or Crafts** – Creating handmade items.
- ☐ **Scrapbooking** – Preserving memories creatively.
- ☐ **Athletics & Coaching** – Developing others through sports.
- ☐ **Traveling** – Enjoying opportunities to explore or serve.

PERSONAL STRENGTHS

- ☐ **Adapting** – Adjusting well to change.
- ☐ **Excelling** – Pursuing excellence.
- ☐ **Improving** – Making good things even better.
- ☐ **Persevering** – Remaining faithful until the work is complete.
- ☐ **Pioneering** – Starting new ideas or initiatives.
- ☐ **Competing** – Enjoying healthy challenge.
- ☐ **Serving** – Joyfully helping others.
- ☐ **Finding Great Value** – Stewarding resources wisely.
- ☐ **Recall** – Remembering names, faces, or details.

OTHER ABILITIES

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Notice & Reflect

ABILITIES — WHAT HAS GOD EQUIPPED ME TO DO?

Before moving on, take a moment to notice what stood out to you.

Were there any abilities you almost overlooked because they come so naturally?

Which abilities have grown through experience or practice?

Which abilities bring you the most joy when you use them?

You don't need to have everything figured out. Simply notice the ways God has been equipping you throughout your life.

Review your responses and record what you notice here.

Take a moment to pray before continuing:

God, thank You for the ways You have equipped me to serve others. Help me recognize the abilities You have entrusted to me and use them with humility, generosity, and joy. Continue shaping me so that my gifts, passions, abilities, and experiences reflect Your love and bring glory to You. Help me faithfully steward what You have entrusted to me for the good of others and Your Kingdom. Amen.

Record any additional thoughts that you may have here:



PART FIVE

Explore Your Preferred Contexts

Where Do I Flourish While Serving?

For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

God created each of us with a unique personality, temperament, and way of engaging the world. None of these are better or more spiritual than another. They simply help us understand the environments where we are most likely to thrive as we love and serve others.

As you complete this section, don't think about who you wish you were or who you think you should be. Instead, notice the patterns that are generally true of you. Understanding how God wired you can help you find serving opportunities that are both life-giving and sustainable.

Where Do I Flourish?

For each pair below, place a mark where you naturally fall most of the time.
There are no right or wrong answers.

As you read and reflect, ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice:

- Where do I naturally feel most energized?
- What environments help me do my best work?
- What patterns have been true of me over time?
- How has God uniquely wired me to relate to others and contribute?

WHEN I'M AT MY BEST...

Fill in the circle that represents where you land on the spectrum.

I RECHARGE BY...

Spending time with others

Spending time alone

I PREFER...

Structure and planning

Flexibility and spontaneity

I MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON...

Facts and logic

People and Relationships

I NATURALLY NOTICE...

Details and what is

Possibilities and what could be

I USUALLY FOCUS MORE ON...

Completing the task

Caring for the people

MY PACE IS GENERALLY...

Steady and deliberate

Fast-paced and energetic

WHEN SERVING, I PREFER...

Serving behind the scenes

Being visible and interactive

I ENJOY SERVING...

Independently

As part of a team

I TEND TO...

Follow established systems

Pioneer something new

I USUALLY PREFER...

Routine and predictability

Variety and change

Words That Describe Me

Check any words that accurately describe how God has wired you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Bold | ☐ Careful |
| ☐ Compassionate | ☐ Results-Focused |
| ☐ Gentle | ☐ Big-Picture-Thinker |
| ☐ Humble | ☐ Detail-Oriented |
| ☐ Visionary | ☐ Hospitable |
| ☐ Organized | ☐ Decisive |
| ☐ Flexible | ☐ Open-Minded |
| ☐ Loyal | ☐ Steadfast |
| ☐ Persuasive | ☐ Creative |
| ☐ Thoughtful | ☐ Reserved |
| ☐ Curious | ☐ Outgoing |
| ☐ Patient | ☐ Empathetic |
| ☐ Enthusiastic | ☐ Meek |
| ☐ Calm | ☐ Adaptable |
| ☐ Responsive | ☐ Earnest |

☐ Other: _____

Roles: What Do I Naturally Love to Do?

God not only gives us spiritual gifts and abilities, He also gives us a heart for certain kinds of work. Some people love creating something new, while others find joy in organizing, encouraging, repairing, teaching, leading, or serving behind the scenes. These preferences often reveal how God has uniquely shaped us to participate in His work.

Read through the list below and check every role that you genuinely **enjoy** fulfilling. Don't think about whether you're the most skilled person for the job, or whether it's something you're currently doing.

Instead, ask yourself

- What kinds of responsibilities give me energy?
- What roles do I naturally step into without being asked?
- When serving others, what parts of the work bring me the most joy?
- What would I gladly do, even if no one noticed or thanked me?

CHECK EVERY ROLE YOU ENJOY

- ☐ **Design / Develop** – I enjoy creating something from nothing and getting new ideas started.
- ☐ **Pioneer** – I enjoy exploring new ideas, trying new approaches, and taking risks.
- ☐ **Organize** – I enjoy bringing order to chaos and creating systems that work.
- ☐ **Serve / Help** – I enjoy supporting others and helping them succeed.
- ☐ **Resource** – I enjoy finding, collecting, or obtaining resources and maximizing value.
- ☐ **Excel** – I enjoy pursuing excellence and helping others achieve their best.
- ☐ **Influence** – I enjoy persuading others and shaping attitudes or behaviors.
- ☐ **Perform** – I enjoy communicating in front of others and being in the spotlight.
- ☐ **Improve** – I enjoy making good things even better.
- ☐ **Repair** – I enjoy fixing problems, restoring what is broken, or updating what is outdated.
- ☐ **Lead** – I enjoy providing direction, making decisions, and leading others.
- ☐ **Prevail** – I enjoy standing up for what is right and addressing injustice.
- ☐ **Persevere** – I enjoy seeing projects through to completion, even when they are difficult.
- ☐ **Follow the Rules** – I enjoy working within established policies, procedures, and expectations.
- ☐ **Operate / Maintain** – I enjoy keeping things running smoothly and maintaining what has already been built.
- ☐ **Other:** _____

Notice & Reflect

PREFERRED CONTEXTS — WHERE DO I FLOURISH WHILE SERVING?

Before moving on, take a moment to notice what stood out to you.

Which preferences felt most obvious?

Did anything surprise you?

Are there serving environments where you consistently feel energized?

Are there environments that tend to drain you?

Remember, no personality style is more spiritual than another. God delights in using people with different temperaments, perspectives, and strengths to accomplish His purposes.

Review your responses and record what you notice here.

Take a moment to pray before continuing:

God, thank You for creating me uniquely. Help me embrace the way You have wired me instead of comparing myself to others. Continue to reveal the places, people, and opportunities where I can serve with joy, faithfulness, and love. Use every part of who I am to reflect Your heart and build up Your Church. Amen.

Record any additional thoughts that you may have here:



PART SIX

Explore Your Experiences

How Has God Been Shaping My Story?

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

God is continually at work in your life. Every season—whether joyful, ordinary, or difficult—has helped shape who you are today. The people you’ve met, the places you’ve lived, the work you’ve done, and the challenges you’ve faced have all become part of your story.

As you reflect on your experiences, don’t focus on creating a complete history of your life. Instead, focus on the moments, relationships, and seasons that have had the greatest impact. You may begin to notice patterns of God’s faithfulness and the ways He has been preparing and forming you all along.

Remember that God doesn’t just work through our successes—He often shapes us most deeply through ordinary moments, unexpected detours, and seasons we never would have chosen.

What Experiences Has God Used to Shape Me?

Reflect on each of the following areas and write down the experiences that have been most meaningful in your life. You don't need to list everything—simply note the experiences that immediately come to mind.

As you read and reflect, ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice:

- What experiences have shaped who I am today?
- Where have I experienced the greatest growth?
- What lessons have stayed with me?
- How might God use these experiences to love and serve others?

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

What moments have shaped your relationship with God?

Examples: Baptism, coming to faith, serving in ministry, mission trips, retreats, significant answered prayers, or meaningful seasons of spiritual growth.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

What learning experiences have helped shape you?

Examples: School, college, certifications, trade training, apprenticeships, mentors, conferences, or books that changed your perspective.

WORK & VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

What work experiences have influenced your skills, perspective, or character?

Examples: Careers, military service, volunteer leadership, entrepreneurship, stay-at-home parenting, significant projects, career changes, or retirement.

MINISTRY EXPERIENCES

Where have you experienced serving God and others?

Examples: Children's ministry, student ministry, worship, hospitality, prayer, missions, mentoring, leading a group, outreach, or behind-the-scenes service.

CROSS-CULTURAL & LIFE EXPERIENCES

What experiences have broadened your perspective or deepened your understanding of others?

Examples: Travel, living in another community or country, foster care or adoption, cross-cultural friendships, caring for aging parents, raising children, or major life transitions.

DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES

What challenges has God met you in?

Examples: Grief, illness, loss, financial hardship, divorce, infertility, addiction or recovery, mental health struggles, caring for a loved one, disappointment, or seasons of waiting.

Notice & Reflect

EXPERIENCES — HOW HAS GOD BEEN SHAPING MY STORY

Before moving on, take a moment to notice what stood out to you.

Which experiences have shaped you the most?

Where have you seen God grow or sustain you?

Are there patterns or themes you hadn't noticed before?

How might God use your story to encourage or serve someone else?

Remember, God is still at work in your life. Every season has become part of the story He is writing, and He can use every chapter to reveal His faithfulness and love.

Review your responses and record what you notice here.

Take a few moments to talk with God about what you've noticed. Thank Him for His faithfulness in every season of your life and ask Him to continue revealing how He has been shaping you through your experiences. Invite Him to show you how your story can be used to love, encourage, and serve others.

Discover the Bigger Picture

What seems to be consistently emerging?

You've spent time noticing how God has been shaping you through your gifts, passions, abilities, preferred contexts, and experiences.

Now step back and look at the whole picture.

Don't try to figure everything out. Simply notice the themes that continue to emerge.

How Am I Created to Serve?

Look back at the items you recorded at the end of each section of this workbook. Below, write or sketch at least two standouts from each section.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS *page 15*

Which gifts seemed to surface most often?

PASSIONS & CAUSES *page 20*

Who or what consistently stirs my heart?

ABILITIES *page 25*

What strengths or skills do I naturally bring?

PREFERRED CONTEXTS *page 31*

Where do I come alive while serving?

EXPERIENCES *page 36*

What parts of my story seem especially significant?

PATTERNS I'M NOTICING

Now look back over what you've noticed and reflect on this experience as a whole.

- *What words keep repeating?*
- *What themes show up in more than one section?*
- *Where do I sense joy?*
- *Where have others affirmed me?*
- *What feels life-giving?*

OTHER THINGS I KNOW ABOUT MYSELF

What else about who I am is standing out?

Examples: Relationships, family, health, availability, stage of life, education, dreams, responsibilities, practical implications.

LINGERING QUESTIONS

What am I curious to explore?

Continuing the Conversation

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

Discernment is rarely a journey we take alone. As you continue listening for God's leading, invite others to help you notice, encourage, and discern the ways He may be calling you to serve.

REFLECT WITH SOMEONE

- Share what you've discovered with someone you trust.
- Process your reflections with your Life Group.
- Invite a Formation & Outreach Team member to join your Life Group for a conversation about serving.
- Meet one-on-one with a member of the Formation & Outreach team to ask questions and process your reflections.

Email groups@thecreek.org
to schedule a time to meet 1:1 or have
a team member visit your life group.

EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES

Take one step toward serving, and continue noticing where God gives you joy, fruitfulness, and opportunities to bless others.



*Scan to explore
opportunities to serve at
The Creek, locally and
globally.*

KEEP LISTENING

Discernment is an ongoing process. As you pray, serve, and walk alongside others, continue asking:
Where is God inviting me to love and serve others in this season?

A FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Keep paying attention. God is still shaping you, and He will continue revealing new ways to love and serve others throughout every season of your life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Created to Serve was inspired by the faithful work of many who have helped Christians discern their gifts, calling, and place in the body of Christ. We are especially grateful to Erik Rees, whose SHAPE framework and the book *SHAPE: Finding and Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life* provided inspiration for much of the reflection and discernment process found in these pages. Portions of this guide were adapted from concepts developed in his work and have been thoughtfully expanded and reimagined for the unique ministry context of The Creek.

Our prayer is that this guide would help you listen more attentively to His Spirit, discover the ways He has shaped you, and take your next faithful step in loving and serving others.

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THE CREEK
CONNECTING PEOPLE TO JESUS