

DISCOVERING MY MINISTRY

Ephesians 4:11-12

Part 1

THE PURPOSE FOR THIS CLASS:

Ephesians 4:11-12 "God has given pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so the body of Christ may be built up." The Bible teaches that the pastors are the **ADMINISTERS** and the people are the **MINISTERS**. That's the whole strategy in relation to our structure. It's not my job to do the ministry. The Bible says that it's my job as a pastor and teacher to prepare God's people to do ministry.

THE PRINCIPLE UNDERGIRDING THIS CLASS:

MY MINISTRY IS DETERMINED BY MY MAKEUP. What God made me to **BE** determines what He intends for me to **DO**. I will understand the purpose I was created for when I understand the kind of person I am. This is the secret of knowing God's will for my life. God is consistent in His plan for each of our lives. He would not give us inborn talents and temperaments, spiritual gifts and all sorts of life experiences and then not use them. We believe by reviewing and studying these factors you'll discover the ministry God has for you, the unique way God intends for you to serve Him.

The two results for discovering ministry I've been shaped for are **FRUITFULNESS** and **FULLFILLMENT**. When you discover what God made you to be and then you begin to do what God made you to do, through what He made you to be, you're going to be fulfilled. Fulfillment comes from service, not from status or anything else. A lot of times people say, "I'm frustrated!" and I tell them, "You just need a ministry. You need an outlet."

THE FOCUS OF THIS CLASS

Our goal is to build people.

We're going to focus on five personal factors that have combined to shape the real you. By identifying the specific traits that you possess in each of these areas the ministry God has designed for you, I believe, is going to become crystal clear and I think you're going to get real excited about this class. This class could change your life.

We're going to look at Made for Ministry, what the Bible says about ministry, how God has shaped me for ministry, the process for discovering my ministry and Identifying my unique S.H.A.P.E.

Serving through Brown, Brown's vision for ministry, previewing the opportunities or the ministry menu, developing a heart to serve God, and then where do I go from here?

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What are **THE GOALS FOR THE CLASS**. Two basic goals:

1. That I will **DISCOVER** my unique design (S.H.A.P.E.) for ministry and commit to **DEVELOPING** and **USING** my God-given gifts and abilities in serving God and others through my church family.
2. That I will **SELECT** and begin **SERVING** in the ministry of my church that best **EXPRESSES** (and this is the key) what God made me to be.

We're going to talk about discovering your primary ministry and your secondary ministry. You ought to spend the maximum of your time in the ministry that best expresses who you are. But in addition to that, there are secondary ministries where you may not be as strongly gifted in, but you have a servant's heart and you're willing to help.

We're going to look at these things. We're going to start off with **WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT MINISTRY**.

WHAT IS MINISTRY?

The Greek word for ministry is the word "*diakonos*". What word do we get from that? Deacon. The word "deacon" simply means servant. The word "diakonos" means to serve.

"Ministry is using whatever God has given me to serve him and the needs of others." When we talk about finding your ministry we're saying what has God given me? That's where it starts. What He's given me He expects me to use in serving Him and the needs of others.

WE MINISTER IN THREE DIRECTIONS

1. **TO THE LORD**. We do it through worship. When we worship, we are actually ministering to God. We're using what God has given us to serve Him. **Acts 13:2**
2. **TO OTHER BELIEVERS**. **Hebrews 6:10** talks about ministering to other Christians.
3. **TO UNBELIEVERS**. **Matthew 5:13** talks about "*You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.*"

There are three types of ministry. There's ministry to the Lord. There is ministry to other believers. And there's ministry to unbelievers.

Likewise we minister to three areas of need. You're made of a spirit, a soul, and a body and we believe ministry involves those three things.

1. We minister to people's **PHYSICAL** needs. That's a legitimate ministry. God says in **Matthew 25:35, 36, 40**, "*I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink. I needed clothes and you clothed me, sick and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. Whenever you have done this to the least person, you did it to me.*" Jesus said, whenever you do something kind for another person in His name it's as if you're doing it directly for the Lord. There are legitimate

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ministries in our church that simply take care of people's physical needs -- hunger, clothing, food, things like that.

Matthew 10:42, *"If, as my representative, you give even a cup of cold water to a little child, you will surely be rewarded."*

2. To people's **EMOTIONAL** needs.

People have different kinds of emotional needs and the Bible says it takes different kinds of ministries. **I Thessalonians 5:14** *"Warn the idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with all."* We respond to different people in different ways. When you minister a word of counsel or encouragement or comfort, that is ministry.

3. To people's **SPIRITUAL** needs.

2 Corinthians 5:18, *"God reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."* Reconciliation is when you take two opposing parties and you bring them together. When a couple reconciles in a marriage, maybe they've been separated, they come back together. That's reconciliation. Two opposite parties. The Bible says it's our job as Christians, our ministry, to reconcile people with God. People who have been separated from God, we're to bring them together.

Colossians 1:28, 29 *"We proclaim Christ, counseling and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ."* There are spiritual needs that need to be ministered to.

What's **THE PURPOSE OF MINISTRY?**

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, *"There are different kinds of service to God, but it is the same Lord, we are serving. [underline "different kinds"] The Holy Spirit displays God's power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church. All of you together are the one body of Christ and each one of you is a separate and necessary part. "*

What is the purpose of ministry? Underline *"Each of us as a means of helping the entire church."* God wants to use me to **BUILD UP HIS BODY**. That's the purpose of ministry. God wants every one of you to be a body builder. A spiritual body builder.

THE PRIORITY OF MINISTRY

Why should I be interested? I think this is important right at the front because we're going to teach you how to discover your ministry but before that we're going to discover why even make the effort. Why do I even need to know this?

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Ten Foundational Truths. These are things the Bible teaches about ministry.

1. I'VE BEEN **CREATED** FOR MINISTRY.

Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." We were created in Christ Jesus to do good works. You were created for ministry. Most people don't know that. You were created for ministry, good works, that God prepared in advance for you to do. You were made for ministry. People say, "Why am I here on earth?" You're made for ministry.

2. I'VE BEEN **SAVED** FOR MINISTRY.

2 Timothy 1:9 (Living Bible) "It is He who saved us and chose us for his holy work, not because we deserved it but because that was his plan long before the world began." God planned that you would be saved and that you would begin to serve Him in ministry. The Bible teaches that every Christian is **saved to serve**. A non-serving Christian is a contradiction.

3. I'VE BEEN **CALLED** INTO MINISTRY.

Galatians 1:15, "God, in his grace, chose me even before I was born, and called me to serve him." Ephesians 4:1 "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."

1 Peter 2:9-10 "You have been chosen [circle "chosen"] by God himself. You are priests of the King. You are God's very own. All this so that you may show to others how God called you [circle "God called you"] out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were less than nothing, now you are God's own!" If you ever have a hard time with self esteem, look this verse up. Before you became a Christian you were a nobody, but now you're a somebody. Once you were less than nothing, now you are God's own.

You are called into ministry. 1 Peter 2:5 "You will serve as holy priests". Every Christian, the moment you became a Christian, you were called into ministry.

I am not who I think I am, I am not who you think I am, but I really am who God says I am! And God says that my primary identification is not that you're a man or a woman, not that you're a husband or a son, or a daughter or a mother, or a wife. God says that my primary identity is I am a **MINISTER** of Jesus Christ. If you'll let that sink into your life, it will flat out change your perspective on everything. I'm not who I think I am, I'm not who you think I am, I'm who God says I am. And God says I was created, I've been saved, and I've been called into ministry. I am a minister of Jesus Christ. We could just stop here and go home because that's one of the most profound truths you'll understand. When you became a Christian, you became a minister. It's clearly taught in Scripture. I was called, I was created, I was saved to minister.

"How many ministers do you have at Brown?" It should be about 1,400. I know what they mean but they're wrong. There's a difference between a minister and a pastor. If someone says, "How many pastors do you have?" or "How many full time staff members do you have?" that's one thing, but ministers? All of us are ministers. The Bible teaches that.

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4. I'VE BEEN **GIFTED** FOR MINISTRY

1 Peter 4:10 "God has given each of you some special abilities [circle "special abilities"] be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessing." We're going to talk tonight about how to discover your gifts.

5. I'VE BEEN **AUTHORIZED** FOR MINISTRY.

Jesus said, Matthew 28:18-19 "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples."

2 Corinthians 5:20 "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors." **An ambassador is someone who represents royalty or a throne or government. The Bible says you're an ambassador on the earth for Jesus Christ.** When someone comes up to you and says, "So you are minister of Jesus Christ, huh?" You say, "Yes, I am!" without any shame or lack of confidence. They say, "Who do you think you are, anyway?" You say, "I've been authorized by Jesus Christ." it's not because you deserve it. You don't. It's not because I deserve it. I don't deserve to be in the ministry. I don't deserve even to be a Christian. But it's all God's grace. I have been authorized and you have been authorized to minister to other people.

6. I'M **COMMANDED** TO MINISTER.

Jesus said, Matthew 20:28 "Your attitude must [circle "must"] be like my own, for I, the Messiah, did not come to be served, but to serve." Jesus said it's not an option. A non ministering Christian is not obeying God. He expect us to be like Jesus Christ. To Archippus Paul says, Colossians 4:17 "Take heed to the ministry you've received from the Lord and fulfill it." **Circle "fulfill"**. The secret of a fulfilled life is to find the ministry for which God made you and get right in the middle. You're going to find fulfillment there more than any other area of your life, because it's what God made you to be. He said, you lose your life to find it. I'm commanded to minister.

7. I'M TO BE **PREPARED** FOR MINISTRY.

Ephesians 4:11-12 "God gave pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry so that the Body of Christ may be built up." This verse scares me sometimes because the Bible teaches real clearly that I'm going to be evaluated as a pastor on how well I prepare you. That's why I said I take this class very seriously.

8. THE BODY OF CHRIST **NEEDS** MY MINISTRY.

1 Corinthians 12:27 "All of you together are the one body of Christ and each of you is a separate and necessary [circle separate and necessary] part of it." **When I don't fulfill the ministry God has given me, you get cheated. When you don't fulfill the ministry God has given you, I get cheated and other people get cheated. We're all a necessary part.**

What if your liver said to your body, "I don't want to serve this year. I need some time off." Have you ever heard your liver say, "I just want to be fed." You say, "I'm sorry, dear liver, but

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because you're part of the body of me, you've got to perform your function." Because, if the liver doesn't do it's part, the whole body gets cheated.

Many people are in a church hopper and shopper mode that they think the church exists for them. We exist to worship God and to serve Him by serving for Him.

- (Make correction) The body of Christ needs my ministry. **Ministry always follows function in the context of the church family.** It's meant to be through some local body because it's for the body of Christ.

Matthew 9:36-37 *"When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said, 'The harvest is great but the workers are few. Ask the Lord to send out workers into his harvest field.'" The harvest is truly plentiful. There are more people out there ready to receive Christ than we're ready to give it. The body of Christ needs my ministry.*

9. I AM **ACCOUNTABLE** FOR MINISTRY.

Romans 14:12 *"So then, each of us will give an account [circle "account"] of himself to God."* There are many, many parables in the New Testament -- like the parable of the talents (**Matthew 25:14-30**). God talks about how the man gave one man one talent, one five talents and one ten talents and came back a couple of years later and said, "What did you do with it?" The one who hadn't done anything with it, he said, "You're wicked and lazy!" If God has given me a talent, it is a sin not to use it. One day I'm going to stand before God and I'm going to give an account of the talents, the gifts and the abilities that He's given me. One day you are too. That's why I take this class very seriously because I want to help prepare you for the final exam. One day God's going to say to you, "What did you do with what you were given?" You're accountable for ministry.

God could have left it at that but He doesn't leave it on the negative.

10. I WILL BE **REWARDED** FOR MINISTRY.

Colossians 3:23-24 *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward." God says you're going to be rewarded in heaven on the basis of your ministry. **Matthew 25:23** "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your Master's happiness."*

The Bible teaches real clearly that I was created for ministry, I am saved for ministry, I was called for ministry, I've been authorized to minister, I'm commanded to minister, I'm gifted for ministry, I'm prepared for ministry by pastors and teachers, The body of Christ needs my ministry, I'm accountable for ministry and I will be rewarded in heaven on the basis of my ministry.

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THE PROCEDURE FOR DISCOVERING MY MINISTRY IS IN **ROMANS 12:1-8**

STEP 1. DEDICATE MY BODY. v. 1 *"I urge you to offer yourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God which is your spiritual worship."* You wouldn't be here, most likely, unless you'd already done that. You said, "Jesus Christ, I want to serve You. I dedicate myself. I don't understand it all, but I dedicate myself to be what You want me to be."

Once you've done that....

STEP 2. ELIMINATE COMPETING DISTRACTIONS. This is the step some of you need to take now. The reason why you haven't been able to be involved in ministry is because your life is filled up with everything else but ministry. In v. 2 it says, *"Don't conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* After the act of dedication, comes the act of elimination. I can't burn the candle at both ends. If you burn the candle at both ends you're not as bright as you think you are. If you're serious about serving God, you're going to have to cut some things out of your life. You can't keep adding and adding without taking things out. It may be less television or it may be something else. But if you put in the important things in life you're going to have to take something out that is less important.

STEP 3. EVALUATE MY STRENGTHS. Romans 12:3 (Phillips translation) *"Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith God has given to you."* He says, be honest. Every one of us are a great mixture of some strengths and weaknesses. You have some things that you're very good at. You have some things that you're lousy at. So do I. With every strength comes a weakness. With every weakness comes a strength. The key is to find out, What am I good at? and have a sane estimation. Humility is not denying your strengths. Humility is being honest about your weaknesses. It's OK to say, "I'm good with my hands." Why? God made you to be that way. Some of you are good with words. Some of you are good with numbers. Some of you are good with people. Some of you are lousy with people, you're good with things. You're good with projects. God has made us different to fit us all together in the body of Christ. Evaluate your strengths.

STEP 4. COOPERATE WITH OTHER BELIEVERS. v. 4-5 *"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body and each member belongs to all the others."* Paul uses the analogy of the body and there are four very important implications that I want us to understand here from Paul's anatomy lesson. Also, read all of 1 Corinthians 12. There are four things these verses teach:

1. Every member is a minister in Christ's body.
2. Every member has a different function.
3. Every member's ministry is important.
4. Every member belongs to all the others.

1 Corinthians 12 *"Each of us is a part of one Body of Christ. The eye can never say to the hand, I don't need you. The head cannot say to the feet, I don't need you. And some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary. So God put the body together in*

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such a way that extra honor and care are given to those parts that might otherwise seem less important." We cooperate with other believers. Nobody is an island unto themselves. I need your ministry. You need the ministry of others around you.

STEP 5. ACTIVATE MY GIFTS. V. 6-8

Paul says, *"We have different gifts, according to the grace God has given us: prophesy, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing, leadership, showing mercy."* Those are just some of the spiritual gifts.

With that understanding under your belt of What is Ministry? let's begin to look at

DISCOVERING HOW GOD HAS SHAPED ME FOR MINISTRY.

Job 10:8a (Good News) *"Your hands formed me and shaped me."* Circle those two words. God formed you and shaped you, even before you were born. The Bible says in your mother's womb - - God has been molding and shaping you for ministry since you were born. God started uniquely shaping you even before you were born. Psalm 139 *"Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about Your workmanship is marvelous. You were there while I was being formed [circle "formed"]. You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe."*

Even before you were born, God knew that on this day you'd be sitting here in this classroom, studying this text. He knows every day of your life before you were even born.

1. I was **SHAPED** for a purpose. Not by accident but for a reason.
2. I am **UNIQUE**. There's nobody else like you in the world. If you don't do the ministry God has given you, nobody else is going to do it because God made you unique.
3. I am **WONDERFULLY COMPLEX**.

Romans 9:20-21 says *"What right do you have, a human being, to cross examine God? The pot has no right to say to the potter. Why did you make me this shape? A potter can do what he likes with the clay."* It says we should not be rebellious against God and say, "Why didn't you make me different? Why didn't you give me... the ability to read faster, or... the ability to speak better or taller, shorter, skinnier, fatter... whatever." God made us in a special way and the gifts and the abilities and the background He's given you have a specific design and intent.

We say that in ministry, function follows form. In architecture it's the exact opposite. In architecture they say form follows function. In other words, what you're going to do in the building determines how you should build the building. Forms follows function. You build the building to fit the function for it. But when it comes to human beings, to ministry, it's the exact opposite. Function follows form. What God made you to be determines the function you're to have.

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MINISTRY IS DETERMINED BY SEVERAL DIFFERENT FACTORS. 1 Corinthians

12:4-7 (Good News) *"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to everyone for their service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each one, for the good of all."* Underline "spiritual gifts" -- that's one factor. He says there are different "ways of serving" -- he's talking there about our temperament, our personality. There are "different abilities". And *"the Spirit's presence is shown in some way"* by different experiences and things we have in life.

We have an acrostic that we're going to study. We say **MY S.H.A.P.E. WILL DETERMINE MY MINISTRY**. What is my SHAPE? There are five factors that influence who you are. I've put them in an acrostic to make it easier because the Bible says God has shaped me for ministry.

What are the things that shaped me? Five things.

S - **SPIRITUAL GIFTS** - What am I gifted to do?

1 Corinthians 7:7 *"Each man has his own gift from God, one has this gift, another has that."* So the first question we're going to look at is "What am I gifted to do?"

H - **HEART** - What do I love to do?

Revelation 17:17 *"God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose."*

Philippians 2:13 *"For it is God who works in you, both inspiring the will and the deed, for this own chosen purpose."*

Isn't it true there are some things you love to do and there's just some things you hate to do? That's your heart. Where did you get that natural inclination? God put it in you. God wants your ministry to be a blessing, not a burden. So it's a legitimate question to ask yourself, "What do I love to do?" Why would God give you a ministry that He hasn't given you a heart for? When you look at your gifts and your heart, what do you like to do?

One of the things I've discovered after being in the pastorate a number of years is that people rarely succeed unless they're having fun doing it. Unless they're enjoying it. We're going to look at discovering, What is my heart beat? What shape is my heart?

What am I gifted to do? What do I love to do?

A - **ABILITIES** - What natural talents and skills do I have?

Natural talents, vocational skills. They're different from spiritual gifts. The Bible says 1 Corinthians 12:6 *"There are different abilities to perform service."*

Exodus 31:3 *"I (God) have given him skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts."* Those are vocational skills. God says He gives people abilities. 2 Corinthians 3:5 says *"our competence comes from God."*

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The third question to ask yourself is, What natural talent and skills do I have? What vocational skills have I learned? What natural talents have I been given by God?

P – **PERSONALITY** – Where does my personality best suit me to serve?

This is the fourth thing we're going to look at. We're all very different. We've all got different personalities, different blends of temperament. **1 Corinthians 2:11** *"No one can really know what anyone else is thinking or what he is really like, except that person himself."*

So we're going to ask ourselves, Where does my personality best suit me to serve?

If you are an introverted person I'd suggest you not get involved in the Greeters Ministry. That's going to put a lot of additional stress on your life. When you have an area that you may be gifted to do and a heart to do, but you don't have personality to do, it puts enormous stress on your life. God doesn't want you to have to do that.

E – **EXPERIENCES**

Your experiences help determine the direction you should be involved in ministry. There are four different kinds of experiences you want to look at when you're trying to discover your shape.

1. What **SPIRITUAL** experiences have I had?

This means times with the Lord. Maybe at a retreat or campground or at home, maybe as a young person, maybe a crisis you went through and that brought you closer to the Lord. **Hebrews 5:12-13** says *"There has been enough time for you to be teachers but you still need to be taught. You are without any experience in the matter of right and wrong."* Your experiences are going to have an influence. The amount of time you've been a Christian is going to influence what ministry you should be involved in.

2. What **PAINFUL** experiences have I had?

Many people overlook this but it's very, very important. Your painful experiences often determine your ministry. *"Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways."* **Proverbs 20:30**.

2 Corinthians 1:4 *"God helps us in our troubles, so we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God."* God often allows you to go through a painful experience and then heals you and comforts you in that experience so that He will give you the ministry of helping other people in that very same thing. Who can relate to somebody who's struggling with alcoholism better than somebody who's been an alcoholic? Who can better relate to somebody who's lost a child in miscarriage or stillbirth than somebody who's had a miscarriage or stillbirth.

God never wastes a painful experience. Even the painful experiences we bring on ourselves through dumb decisions and mistakes God wants to use in ministry.

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3. What **EDUCATIONAL** experiences have I had?

Proverbs 4:13 *"Always remember what you have learned. Your education is your life; guard it well."* (Good News) What have you learned? If you've learned certain skills like computers, maybe God wants to use that.

4. What **MINISTRY** experiences have I had?

What experiences have I already had? What opportunities have I already had? For some of you this will be a lot. For some of you this will be minimal. Some of you none at all.

2 Corinthians 9:13 *"Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel."* You've served already and you've proved yourself and you can see what God is doing in your life.

We believe that your ministry will be most effective and fulfilling when you are using your Gifts and Abilities in the area of Heart's Desire in a way that best expresses your Personality and Experience.

SUCCESS IS DOING WHAT GOD MADE ME TO DO!

An example of **HOW PAUL'S MINISTRY WAS "SHAPED"**. This isn't something I made up. It's all through scripture. I'm going to give just one example of a man who is mightily used in ministry and that was the apostle Paul.

If we look at Paul's Spiritual Gifts, his Heart, his Abilities, his Personality and his Experiences, how did God use those five things to make Paul effective in ministry?

What were PAUL'S **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**. 2 Timothy 1:11 tells us he had three. **He was a preacher, an apostle and a teacher**. We know those three for sure. He had at least those three spiritual gifts -- preaching, teaching, apostolic which is the gift of the ability to start new churches. He said he always build where no one else had built. He was a pioneer. He said, "I didn't build on anybody else's foundation."

What was his **HEART**? Paul tells us what his heart is. He writes it out in several verses, Romans 15:20 *"My constant ambition has been to preach the gospel where the name of Christ was previously unknown, and to avoid building on another man's foundation."* Galatians 2:8 *"For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles."* We see two things here. First, he said, "My heart is to **build from scratch**, to not go into areas where there are already churches, but go where there's no churches at all. That's one part of my heart. Second, it's to go to the **unchurched Gentiles**. I'm not going to go to the Jew who knows about God. I'm going to go to the Gentiles."

Then he says, Acts 20:24 *"Life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus."*

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What was Paul's **ABILITY**? In addition to his gifts, did he have any special vocational skills or natural talents? Yes, he did. Acts 18:2b-4 *"Paul went to see them, and stayed and worked with them, because he earned his living by making tents..."* (Paul was a tentmaker. That's why a lot of his letters are written very intently.)

"...He debated in the synagogues every Sabbath trying to convince both Jews and Gentiles."

This verse tells us **two different abilities** that Paul had. ***He had the ability to work with his hands.*** He made tents. Some of you are incredibly talented at crafts. Where do you think you got that ability? What do you think God wants to do with that? Not just make pretty things for your home. He wants to use that in ministry. Some of you are good at oil painting. Some of you are good at cooking. Some of you are good at fixing things. There's a place in ministry for that.

Then Paul also had the ability to debate. He was an ***incredible debater*** -- a brilliant mind, a genius. To have debated Paul would have been to take on a pro. He had that ability -- to think fast.

Then Paul's **PERSONALITY**. What was Paul's personality? Galatians 1:13-14 *"For you have heard of my past. I persecuted the church with fanatical zeal [underline "fanatical zeal"] I did my best [circle that] to destroy it. I was ahead of most of my contemporaries [he was a competitive person] in the Jewish religion and I had a boundless enthusiasm."* Those verses talk about Paul's personality. ***He said I was a zealous person, people thought I was fanatical. He said, I was ahead of everybody else. I was at the top of my field. I did my best. I had boundless enthusiasm.***

Would you say Paul was an introvert or an extrovert? No question! He's off the scale extrovert.

Paul's **EXPERIENCES**, let's look at these. What were his spiritual experiences. There were a number he tells us about. Watching Stephen be stoned was a profoundly spiritual experience that had an impact on his life. His conversion on the road to Damascus. The three years maturing in Arabia. The special vision he received from God. These are all spiritual experiences that shaped Paul's life.

How about painful experiences? Here are just few of his painful experiences. 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 *"I have been in prison more times, near death often, been whipped five times with 39 lashes by the Jews and three times by the Romans, once stoned. I've been in three shipwrecks and once spent 24 hours in the water. In my travels I've been in danger from floods, robbers, enemies, wild animals and false friends. I've serve long hours without sleep or food or shelter or even clothing."* Did Paul have any painful experiences? I'd say he had a few! Those helped shape his life.

Not only did he have painful external experiences, he said he had an internal one. 2 Corinthians 12:7 *"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these great revelations, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan, to torment me."* We have no idea what that was. I think God intentionally didn't tell us what Paul's thorn was so that everybody can relate to it. Some people think he had poor eyesight. Some people think he had epilepsy. Some people think it was his wife! We don't know what it was. But he had a thorn in his flesh. Some people think it was depression. There are lots of theories. But the fact is there was something in his life that

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was a handicap that kept him from serving God as fully as he wanted to. He said it was a thing that was really for his good and kept him from being puffed up with pride.

Then Paul's educational experiences. **Acts 22:3** *"I received my training at the feet of Gamaliel, and I was schooled in the strictest observance of our fathers' Law."* Gamaliel was the number one Jewish teacher in those days. It was like studying from the most important Bible scholar around. Paul said, "I was personally trained by the greatest Biblical scholar of that day."

His ministry experiences -- read the book of Acts. The book of Acts tells the full ministry experiences of Paul.

So you see how these things shaped his life. They are very clear. Tonight we're going to spend the rest of the time looking how these things have shaped you for ministry.

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MINISTRY DISCOVERY PROCESS

We've prepared and adapted several tools to help you discover and think through the five factors that make up who you are. You will complete these on your own as homework before you meet with a Ministry Guide.

First we're going to look at **UNWRAPPING YOUR GIFT**. That will give you an overview of spiritual gifts and help you identify which ones you may have been given by God.

The **MONITORING YOUR HEARTBEAT** will help you clarify what you really love to do.

APPLYING YOUR ABILITIES will help you appreciate the natural talents and vocational skills you have.

PLUGGING IN YOUR PERSONALITY will help you see how your God given temperament can best be used in ministry.

EXAMINING YOUR EXPERIENCES will help you review your history to discover how God has prepared you for a unique ministry that only you can fulfill.

As we start this remember these things:

1. Have fun! These evaluations are not tests. There's no right or wrong answers. Don't get uptight about them. The purpose is just to show how you're a unique blend!
2. Each one is self-evaluating. Nobody is going to rate you. Nobody is going to judge you. We're interested in your feelings not other people. However it may be helpful to ask for additional input from those closest to you after you've filled out your own responses in these five areas.
3. The value of each of these tools will vary depending on your age, how long you've been a Christian, your background, your honesty, and how much time and serious thinking you're willing to invest in them. This class is just done in four hours but I hope you'll spend a lot of time thinking through this material, that you'll go home and spend several hours this week -- just block out some time -- to fill out these homework assignments. The time you put into it is going to help you clarify and get you ready for an interview.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

1 Corinthians 12:1 *"Now about spiritual gifts I do not want you to be ignorant."* Many people are ignorant about spiritual gifts. There's a lot of phoney baloney out there in the world about different things. We're going to talk about what they are, how you get them, when you get them and all that. But this is a condensed overview. We're going through this section very quickly.

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We're convinced that one of the primary ways you learn spiritual gifts is by getting involved in ministry. Many people try to figure out their gift and then get in ministry. We're saying that one of the ways is the exact opposite. As you get into ministry you'll find out what you're gifted at.

You're not going to discover your gift just by going through a list and understanding it. But we are going to give you an overview of what they are so that a year from now you'll have a much better understanding of what your spiritual gift is.

What is a spiritual gift? It is a special ability given by the Holy Spirit to every believer at their conversion to be used to minister to others and therefore build up the Body of Christ.

Notice: A spiritual gift is a special ability. It's different from a talent. It's given by the Holy Spirit to every believer. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift. You get it the moment you became a Christian. Many people don't know they have a gift but they do. You've got one. It may be hidden and you have to unwrap it. It's like when you were born physically you got a sense of physical senses: hear, touch, taste, smell, feel. As a baby you didn't know you had those things. Only as you matured, you figured out, "I have the ability to smell. I have the ability to hear..." You got them at birth but you didn't understand them until you matured. The same is true of spiritual gifts, when you're born again.

They are to be used to minister to others (not to build up yourself) and therefore to build up the body of Christ.

TEN TRUTHS about Spiritual Gifts:

1. Only **BELIEVERS** have spiritual gifts. I Corinthians 2:14
2. Every Christian has at least **ONE** gift. I Corinthians 7:7
3. No one receives **ALL** the gifts. I Corinthians 12:27-30 *Why? If someone received all the gifts, he'd have no need of anybody else. And God does not give any person all the gifts because He wants us to depend on each other. He wants us to need each other so no person can say, I'm an island unto myself; I don't need you, I don't need the church. No one has all the gifts.*
4. No single gift is given to **EVERYONE**. I Corinthians 12:29-30 Again, God wants variety. There's no gift that everybody has.
5. You can't **EARN OR WORK FOR** a spiritual gift. Ephesians 4:7 That's a contradiction in terms. A gift is a gift. It's something God gives, not that you've earned or worked for. It's like salvation, it's a gift.
6. The **Holy Spirit** decides what gifts I get. I Corinthians 12:11 You can't say, "I'd really like the gift of teaching... mercy... whatever." That's fine but the Bible says the Holy Spirit decides who gets what gifts. It's sovereignly given.
7. The gifts I'm given are **PERMANENT**. Romans 11:29 Once you've been given it, you've got it for life. He doesn't take them away. They're permanent.

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8. I am to **DEVELOP** the gifts God gives me. **I Timothy 4:14** When you're given a gift, they're given in seed form. But just like a muscle, the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets. As you use your spiritual gift, the more you use your spiritual gift, the stronger it will get. One of the gifts God has given me is the gift of encouragement and it comes out in my preaching. I like to encourage people. The more that I use it, the better that I get at it. It develops. I'm to develop the gifts God gives me.
9. It is a sin to **WASTE** the gifts God gave me. **I Corinthians 4:1-2; Matthew 25:14-30**
10. Using my gifts **GLORIFIES** God and **GROWS** me (helps me grow). We bear fruit and it glorifies God. **John 15:8**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS? There are two purposes.

1. **THEY ARE NOT FOR MY BENEFIT, BUT FOR OTHERS.** This is a very important truth. Spiritual gifts are not for my benefit but for others. **1 Peter 4:10** *"Each one of you, as a good manager [you're to manage God's gifts] of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others [underline "good of others"] the spiritual gift he has received from God."* **1 Corinthians 12:7** *"The Holy Spirit displays God's power through each of us as a means of helping the entire church."* Contrary to what some people teach and think when you get a gift it's not for your own benefit. It's not to bless you. The gift that God gives you is given to bless other people, to bless the church. It's to help the entire church. In fact, spiritual gifts outside of the church is an unbiblical use of a gift. God meant for them to be used through the church, to build up the body.
2. The second purpose is **TO PRODUCE MATURITY AND STABILITY IN OUR CHURCH FAMILY.** **Ephesians 4:11,12,13** *"It was he who gave gifts to men, to build up the Body of Christ so that we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and become mature. Then we shall no longer be children carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind."*

Probably most of you know at least one Christian who started out right for the Lord and then some cult came along, swept them off their feet and they went off into some crazy cult. Why? Because Christians around them were not using their spiritual gifts to help them grow and become stable. When you use your gift it produces maturity and stability in the church family.

CAUTIONS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. **Don't confuse gifts with natural talent.** Somebody might say, "I'm good at sales." Fine. That's a vocational skill. That's an ability but that's not a spiritual gift.
2. **Don't confuse gifts with the fruit of the Spirit.** The gifts of the Spirit are different from the fruit of the Spirit. ***The fruit of the Spirit shows my maturity; the gift show my ministry.*** This is very important. The fruit of the Spirit is listed in **Galatians 5:22-23**. They are love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Those nine qualities. They show your maturity.

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A person can have a spiritual gift and be spiritually immature. You get them the moment you become a Christian. When you become a Christian and you have a spiritual gift and you may be gifted as a teacher but you don't have the maturity to teach. You have to grow and develop. You need both the fruit and the gifts in your life.

3. **Don't confuse gifts with Christian roles.** For instance, shepherding or pastoring is a spiritual gift. It is the ability to care for the spiritual needs of other people. The gift of pastoring is different from the office or the role of being a pastor. I happen to have the role of being a pastor but I don't have the gift of pastoring. I have the gift of leadership and teaching and encouragement but I don't have the gift of pastoring. In fact, my wife does. My wife is a much better pastor or shepherd -- the ability to care for people on a one- on-one basis -- than I do. So you might have the gift of pastoring or shepherding even though you're not a "pastor". Don't confuse the two.

4. **Be aware of gift projection tendencies.** This is real common and it causes a lot of difficulty in the church -- expecting other people to serve in the way you do and have similar results. People with the gift of mercy expect everybody else to be just as merciful. People with the gift of prophecy -- they're the confronters. They come up and say "That's wrong!" and they expect everybody else to be just as confrontive. When you get a person with mercy and a person with prophecy in the same Bible Study group expect sparks because they're going to tend to project onto other people. People with the gift of administration expect everybody else to be organized. It's natural. So you've got to be careful not to project on other people. People with the gift of evangelism -- it seems like every plane they get onto somebody gets saved. They bring 3000 people to church. It's natural. They just have an ability to share Christ with other people. And it makes everybody else feel guilty! "How come I don't see that many people come to Christ?" There are different gifts and abilities and you should not project your gift onto somebody else.

5. **Don't feel that my gift makes me superior to others.** Because they're not superior/inferior. **1 Corinthians 12:21**

6. **Realize that using my gifts without love is worthless.** It's not by accident that the greatest chapter on love in the Bible -- **1 Corinthians 13** -- is sandwiched between **1 Corinthians 12**, which is on spiritual gifts, and **1 Corinthians 14**, which is on spiritual gifts. Right in the middle of the greatest passage on spiritual gifts, Paul stops and says, By the way, let's talk about love. Because if I have not love I'm like sounding brass and tinkling symbol. He said I could be the greatest teacher in the world, I could be the greatest preacher in the world, I could be the greatest administrator in the world, I could have the most mercy... but if I have not love it doesn't count a hill of beans. *"I may be able to speak the languages of men and even angels..."* I may be able to speak in tongues, I may have the gift of inspired preaching, I may have all knowledge, I may have all the faith to move mountains but if I have not love I'm nothing. It does no good.

7. Recognize that I have both a primary and secondary ministry in my church. How do you know the difference? My primary ministry commitment should be in the area where **I'M GIFTED**. That should determine what your primary ministry is. My secondary ministry includes serving in any other area of the Body where I'm **NEEDED**. **Titus 3:14** in the Living Bible says *"Our people must learn to help all who need their assistance that their lives would be fruitful."* Just because

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I'm not gifted in an area doesn't mean... Let's say I don't have the gift of mercy and I see somebody fall down. I can't say "It's not my gift to go help them." Just as you are gifted to be a minister in a primary area, God expects us to manifest all the gifts just as roles. In other words, some people have the gift of giving, the ability to make money and give it away. That's their gift. That does not excuse all the rest of us from giving. I don't have the gift of giving, but I'm called to give simply because I'm a Christian. All of us are called to teach in different situations or settings. All of us are called to be leaders in different settings and situations. All of us are called at times to give a word of encouragement. You say, "It's not my gift, therefore I never encourage anybody."

So the secondary ministries mean I'm just willing to serve, to help out when I'm needed. If I'm needed to set up chairs I can't say, "That's not my gift." I just go set up chairs because I'm a servant of Christ and Jesus said, "He that wants to be great learns to be a servant of all." If I'm asked to serve in a Sunday School I'll help out, not because I'm gifted there, but it's a secondary ministry -- it's not my primary role. But I'm willing to do that because of my maturity.

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR GIFT

You do that by getting started. You do five things. S-T-A-R-T. You start.

S - Study. I have a suggested book list that will help you discover your spiritual gifts.

T - Trial and Error. This is more important. The way you're going to discover your spiritual gifts is simply by getting out there and experimenting with different areas of service. Some of you will be a small group leader, a lay pastor. You'll start it and realize you're pretty good at it. People respond. You can care for people and you feel good. Others will say, "No, that's not me." We give people the right to start and stop 5, 10 ministries a year -- until you find your niche. That's how you're going to discover it. A year from now you're going to have a better handle on what your gifts are than simply sitting here, looking at them.

A - Analyze. We're going to analyze the different spiritual gifts and what they are. Use the "Unwrapping my gift" tool.

R - Request responses from others. You ask other people, "What gifts do you see in me?" After we've gone through this list, ask the people closest to you "What do you see in me?" Many times we're blind to areas we're really good at. Ask those closest to you. What do they affirm? If you have a gift, it's affirmed in you. That's why here at Brown, we don't elect any leaders. We never elect any leaders for ministries at Brown. Because elections don't tell who leaders are. If you're a leader it will just show up. Do you know how you know you're a leader? People follow you. You don't have to tell them. An old proverb: "He that thinketh he leadeth and have no one following him is only taking a walk." We never elect leaders here, they just rise to the top. If you're a leader, people are going to naturally follow you and we recognize that. It's a spiritual gift. If no one's following you, you're not a leader no matter how much you may claim it. The Sunday that I stand up and say, "I am the leader!", guess what? I'm not. You don't have to tell people. People just say, "I like the way that person is going. I want to get on board. I think God has His hand on that person's life."

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T - **Take Training**. You develop your spiritual gift through training.

There are three ways God wants you to use your gifts.

1. Through an ongoing ministry on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.
2. Through short term projects
3. Through spontaneous situations.

God will use your gift in all three situations like that.

Circle the sentence in your notes: It's easier to discover your gift through ministry than to discover your ministry through your gift.

UNWRAPPING MY GIFTS

The Bible does not lock us into tight restrictions as to the number of spiritual gifts, or even their definitions. The four major lists of gifts are found in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4, but there are other passages that mention or illustrate gifts not included in these lists. All the gifts are given to help the church fulfill its purposes. So we've categorized this list of gifts according to four purposes. In other words, we have four purposes in our church: Celebrate God's presence (Worship), Demonstrate God's love (Ministry), Educate God's people (Discipleship), and Communicate God's word (Evangelism). Everything we do at Brown fits under one of those four purposes. If that's true, and it is, that those are the four purposes of the church, then the gifts of the Spirit are given to help fulfill those purposes. So we've categorized what gifts help fulfill each purpose.

As you read through this list, check off your initial impression concerning yourself. Remember you can have many gifts.

LET'S FIRST LOOK AT GIFTS THAT COMMUNICATE GOD'S WORD. We've listed about 21 spiritual gifts. We believe that the gifts listed in the New Testament are exemplary not exhaustive. In other words, we don't believe that these are the only spiritual gifts there are. Why? In the first place, there is no single list that lists them all and there is a very casual approach to the listing. People have tried to group them in different ways but all of the groupings are man made. I read over 30 books on spiritual gifts in preparing for just this section. I didn't find one book that agreed with another book in the categorization of books. I couldn't find any book that agreed with exactly how many there were. All thirty books disagreed.

What does that say to me? It obviously means that this is not an exhaustive list. There are many gifts in scripture and there are some gifts that are just listed in a single sentence, some of them are listed in groups. We think that these are just examples, that there may be other spiritual gifts besides these. But at Brown we have listed these as gifts that we see as appropriate at church. We see these as appropriate in our ministry.

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GIFTS THAT COMMUNICATE GOD'S WORD both to believers and to unbelievers.

PREACHING. It's also called prophecy.

The ability to publicly communicate God's Word in an inspired way that convinces unbelievers and both challenges and comforts believers. The ability to persuasively declare God's will. People with this gift are obvious. It's a very public gift. **1 Corinthians 14:3** says prophecy does three things: **It builds up, it fires up and it holds up. It says it's for edification, exhortation and comfort.** If you'll follow my messages on Sunday morning you'll see that I try to balance those three. Some of my messages are edification messages -- they build up. Some of them are exhortation messages -- they fire up. Some of my messages are comfort messages -- they hold up. I think you need a balance in teaching.

When people who have this gift speak, God's blessing is obvious. They help us recognize what God's doing in the world and a real important thing: their life is consistent with their message. If you've got this gift, your life is consistent with it. Often times they're willing to stand alone for what's right. It doesn't bother them at all to just stand up and say, "This is the right thing to do whether anybody agrees or not.

EVANGELISM. **Acts 8:26-40** Evangelism is the ability to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ to unbelievers in a positive, non threatening way. The ability to sense opportunities to share Christ and lead people to respond with faith. People who have this gift are very sensitive about how the unchurched feel. They notice things. They notice how people feel at church -- unbelievers. They rarely overlook opportunities to share Christ. If you don't have this gift often there are opportunities around you that you totally miss. If you've got this gift you're always saying, "I could share Christ right now!" They have a knack for turning conversation to a spiritual side. They have a love for lost people and a desire to see them saved.

This gift can be used in many, many different ways. You may have the gift of evangelism and be introverted. It may scare you to death. It doesn't mean you'd go door to door or buttonholing people in the airport. You may have the gift of evangelism but your personality is introverted and so it's going to show up in different ways. Many of you have this gift you just don't know it. You have a real heart to share Christ with other people but you haven't learned to share in ways that are consistent with your personality.

MISSIONS. **1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Acts 13:2-3** The ability to adapt to a different culture in order to reach unbelievers and help believers from that culture.

1 Corinthians 9 talks about this. Paul obviously had this gift -- the missionary gift. He says, "*I become all things to all people, that I may in some way save some. When I'm with the Jew, I become like the Jew in order to reach the Jew. When I'm with those outside the Law, I become like those outside the law in order to reach them. I become all things to all men so that I may in some way save some.*"

This is the ability to adapt to culture, different cultures. Some people, if you took them to Japan and they had to eat sushi, they'd gag. They just don't have the ability to relate to other cultures.

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In **Acts 13**, Paul and Barnabas had this gift affirmed in them. The church said, You've got the ability -- the gift -- to deal with other cultures. And they sent them out.

You don't have to go overseas to exercise this gift. You don't become a missionary by crossing the sea. You become a missionary by seeing the cross. All around us. There are students from every nation. One of the things I hope we'll be able to start soon is an international student ministry. The leaders of the world come to America to study. It's much cheaper and much more effective to reach them while they're here than when they go back to their own country. Once they go back and they're in a position of leadership in their country, nine times out of ten, you're not going to reach them. Because they've already been inoculated with the gospel.

You have a strong desire to see the great commission fulfilled. Often people with this gift have a special heart for a certain group of people like Hispanics, Vietnamese, Chinese, a certain kind of people group.

APOSTLE. **Romans 15:20** The ability to start new churches and oversee their development.

Paul said his ambition was to not build on another man's foundation. Today most of the time we don't call these people apostles. We call them church planters. It's the ability to go out and just start a Body of Christ from scratch. Some of you may have this gift.

I'm pretty sure I have this gift-I may have this gift-I don't think I've got this one.

It's the ability to take risks, a willingness to try new things. The apostles in the body of Christ are God's entrepreneurs. They can make something out of nothing.

Those are gifts that communicate God's word to both believers and unbelievers. Now let's look at the second purpose of the church, **GIFTS THAT EDUCATE GOD'S PEOPLE.**

TEACHING. **Ephesians 4:12-13** The ability to educate God's people by clearly explaining and applying the Bible in a way that causes them to learn. The ability to equip and train other believers for ministry.

Have you ever been taught by somebody who didn't have the gift of teaching? It's obvious. When you're in a Sunday School class and you're being taught by somebody who doesn't have the gift of teaching, your mind is wandering in a million different directions. There's n way of holding your attention.

On the other hand, when a person has the gift of teaching, you're with them. Many of you have this gift, but it's in seed form and you just need to develop it. You don't realize it, but you have this gift. You're going to develop it by getting involved in some kind of ministry. This is a gift that you really have to develop.

One of the ways teachers teach is they are often very systematic about their teaching. They think in organized ways. They think in lists. Some of you think in lists. That might be a sign that you're a teacher.

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I'm pretty sure I have this gift-I may have this gift-I don't think I've got this one.

ENCOURAGEMENT. (Exhortation) Acts 14:22 Some translations call it exhortation.

The ability to motivate God's people to apply and act on Biblical principles, especially when they are discouraged or wavering in their faith. The ability to bring out the best in others and challenge them to develop their potential.

The difference between somebody who has the gift of encouragement and somebody who has the gift of teaching -- teachers typically focus on the content of the text -- the story itself -- and people with the gift of exhortation or encouragement focus on the principles of the text. They say, "These are the principles I see that can change your life."

They typically are very positive people, practical. If you have this gift you're skilled on the ability to make suggestions. Somebody asks you what you think they ought to do. You can say, "This is what I think you ought to do..." and then list them one- two-three. You go right to the point. They're inspirational; they're motivational, action oriented. People with the gift of encouragement often can visualize achievement for other people, bring out the best in others. These people are often great counselors.

Again, exhortation can be used in a public forum, as a teacher. You might have the role of teaching but not have the gift of teaching. You might have the gift of encouragement. Or it could be used on a one-on-one situation or as a lay pastor.

There are three gift that support teachers and encouragers. The teachers and encouragers are the ones who build up and educate God's people. The three gifts that support are Wisdom, Discernment and Knowledge

WISDOM I Corinthians 2:1, 6-16-- The ability to understand God's perspective on life's situations and share those insights in a simple understandable way. The ability to explain what to do and how to do it.

These people are those people say of them, "That person has insight!" Often these people have real insights into relationships. They say, "You see what's going on here..." And the other person says, "No, I don't know what's going on at all!" They say, "There's a hidden agenda here. This is what this person is feeling..."

One of the characteristics I've found in people who have the gift of wisdom is a desire to memorize scripture. They want to hide God's word in their heart to share it. They like to share God's word. People with wisdom are patient and understanding with people. They're very gentle with people. Wise people know how to be patient. They understand the ways of God. They're good mediators in a conflict because they can explain what's going on. They emphasize practical application.

DISCERNMENT I John 4:1-6-- Discernment is the ability to distinguish right from wrong, truth from error, and to give an immediate evaluation based on God's Word. The ability to discern whether the source of an experience is Satan, self, or God's Spirit.

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This gift is vastly needed in the church of God today. With so many false ideas on TV and movies and New Age stuff and cults and these kinds of things, the west coast is a circus for cults. You read any magazine and there's a lot of baloney that's being taught. Walter Martin is a person who had the gift of discernment, the ability to see quickly and could say, "That's wrong! It's off base."

This is the gift that protects the church from getting off into extremes. I am given books and tapes by people almost on a weekly basis wanting me to check them out. I have a discerning function because of certain things, or that it could be right because of certain things. Some of you have this gift but you're not able to use it because you don't have enough Bible under your belt yet to know what God has said. As you understand the word of God more and more as you study it more and more, this gift is going to blossom in your life. Many of you have this gift but you haven't been able to develop it yet because you don't have enough Bible content.

It's the ability to know truth from error, right from wrong, and the ability to say, "That's wrong!" or "That's right!"

Evaluate yourself there. One other support gift in the area of education is the gift of **KNOWLEDGE Daniel 1:17** -- These gifts wisdom, discernment, knowledge are often given in addition to, if you have teaching or encouragement. Knowledge is the ability to discover, collect, analyze, and organize information that is vital to individual believers or the entire church family. The ability to comprehend a large amount of information and provide it when needed for effective decisionmaking.

Examples: **Daniel 1:17** says, "*To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning.*" He gave it to them. It was a gift. The Bible is very strong in making decisions based on knowledge. When you read Proverbs it says, Get the facts! In a business decision, in a financial decision, in a church decision it says, Get the facts! Don't just depend on feelings.

These people are the researchers. If you've got this gift come see me immediately after the service. I'll put you to work as one of my research assistants in helping me find material for sermons. Some people love to go to the library. I could say, "I'm going to be teaching on 'Anger' next fall." They'll go to the library and look through Microfiche and Magazines and find all kinds of information, statistics, quotes on Anger and bring it back. I'm developing a research team of people. They love to read. They tell me they'd be glad to read books for me, underline, bring me research material. These people love to study, people with the gift of knowledge. In the information age this is absolutely vital. There are also people who like to organize. They don't mind doing data work.

Some of you, if you've got this ability, you could work as a church librarian, curriculum writer, data entry, church historian recorders. The Bible says "*Know well the condition of your flock.*" All that stuff we keep on computers is important information. Some of you have that gift in the area of knowledge.

I'm pretty sure I have this gift-I may have this gift-I don't think I've got this one.

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GIFTS THAT DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE

SERVICE Acts 6:1-7 -- The ability to recognize unmet needs in the church family, and take the initiative to provide practical assistance quickly, cheerfully, and without a need for recognition.

Underline the phrase "and take the initiative". The Bible has called all of us to serve. The Bible has called all of us to have a servant heart. But one of the ways you can know if you've got the gift... People with the gift of service, you don't have to tell them. If they see a need they immediately take charge and start doing it. If they walk in the room and chairs aren't set up, nobody has to ask, "Would you help set up the chairs?" They just immediately start setting them up. Or picking up papers, or helping move something, or setting up a table, or taking down a table. It may be manual help, it may be physical help, spiritual help. The motivation of the people with the gift of service is just "I want to be helpful." These people have no need and in fact they don't want to be, up front. They don't want to be on stage. They don't need the on stage strokes and don't like being on stage. It makes them nervous.

These seem to have spiritual antennae that are alert. When they see a need they immediately move into action and take the initiative. Often these people have a real high energy level. They're very practical people. They are efficient at physical tasks. They feel very fulfilled at assisting people who are in the more visible roles. These people are typically very unselfish. They're willing to do whatever it takes. They don't feel that anything is below them. They realize it's all God's work and whatever you do, you do it for the Lord. They're rarely arrogant people, these people with the servant gift. They're very practical. The church needs lots of people with the gift of service. It's a demonstration of God's love.

MERCY Luke 10:30-37 - The ability to detect hurt and empathize with those who are suffering in the church family. The ability to provide compassionate and cheerful support to those experiencing distress, crisis, or pain.

The best example of somebody with the gift of mercy would be the Good Samaritan. Remember the story. He just came, picked up the guy at the side of the road, took him to the local Holiday Inn, left his American Express Card, said, "Whatever it takes I'll pay for it and cover it."

These people have a great ability to empathatize. We have a ministry in the church that use a highly developed sense of mercy. For instance, we have **Condolence Ministry**.

These people that work in there right now have incredible mercy gifts. They'll get on the phone and somebody'll have a need and sometimes somebody'll start crying and they'll pray with them, encourage them. They know how to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. If you've got the gift of mercy, that would be a good thing.

Support groups are a good place for the direction of mercy. We would like to develop a sympathy card ministry where we're eventually going to have people read through the Brown News for all kinds of births, graduations, crises, hospital stays, deaths in families. And we're developing a series of cards. People will just come in and write a short note and say, "Just want you to know that we here at Brown are praying for you. ...We rejoice in your graduation.

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...Congratulations in your job promotion. ...We're sorry to hear about the death in your family." Just a word of encouragement, a word of comfort. All of the people in our pastoral care ministries need this particular gift. The gift of mercy.

HOSPITALITY I Peter 4:9-10 -- The ability to make others, especially strangers, feel warmly welcomed, accepted, and comfortable in the church family. The ability to coordinate factors that promote fellowship.

You can always tell somebody who's got the gift of hospitality. You feel immediately comfortable around them. There's a difference between entertaining and showing hospitality. A person could do entertaining in their home. You walk in and the whole time you feel like they're uptight. But somebody with the genuine gift of hospitality, you walk in and it really doesn't matter how the house looks, you feel comfortable. They have a way of putting you at ease. People with the gift of hospitality are often good conversationalists. They know how to bring out the best in other people. They know how to get other people talking about themselves. People with the gift of hospitality have a great concern for your comfort. Are you comfortable? Is everything OK? They're interested in that. They often use their homes as ministry tools. They love to provide meals for people, services for people. They're the first to sign up when we have a need for a fellowship activity, like a banquet or fellowship or anything. They just have the ability to provide, to prepare an atmosphere that everybody else can enjoy.

If you've got the gift of hospitality, you ought to immediately sign up to be a greeter. That's one thing you could do immediately. The greeters are the first line of defence at Brown. They are the first impression that the unchurched have before they ever get in the door. Their first impression is, "Who talked to me outside?" Some people out there have just got that ability -- "Hi, how you doing?" You relax them, they smile. Some people can say "Hi" and shake their hand and it's like a wet fish. They're greeting, but it's not doing anything for you.

But there are other people -- those with the gift of hospitality, they can say the exact same words and you think, "I like this place! I feel good here. I feel comfortable here." If you've got that gift we need you on the front line out there. I don't know of any more significant ministry than the greeters. You never get a second chance to make a first impression. People, long before they hear me or hear the music, are sizing up the whole thing, saying, "What kind of church is this?" If you can relax them, then the gospel can be communicated. But if they walk in uptight, then you can't get through to them.

PASTORING ("Shepherding") I Peter 5:2-4 -- The ability to care for the spiritual needs of a group of believers and equip them for ministry. The ability to nurture a small group in spiritual growth and assume responsibility for their welfare.

The word "pastor" in Greek literally means "to lead and to feed". It means to care for. Pastors in **Acts 20** are told to protect the flock. They are to give their lives for the flock. They are to equip. In our church we have approximately 140 trained lay pastors. Some of those pastors have the gift of pastoring and some of them do not. Those who have the gift of pastoring feel very fulfilled in their ministry because they're out there caring, sharing. They love to call their small groups.

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They enjoy caring for people. Some of you have that gift in seed form. Many of you ought to be lay pastors. It's something you need to develop as you grow and become a stronger Christian.

GIVING II Corinthians 8:1-7 -- The ability to generously contribute material resources and/or money beyond the 10% tithe so that the body may grow and be strengthened. The ability to earn and manage money so that it may be given to support the ministries of others.

These people love to give. Have you ever been around a person with the gift of giving? You never have to tell them that giving is a part of the Christian life. It's automatic. They're always giving away.

Typically, people with the gift of giving are the happiest people around. I love to be around them. They're happy, joyful, cheerful. Often they're very successful in business. Some people have the ability that everything they touch turns to gold. And then they just give it away. They make a lot of money, and they give a lot of money. God has given them the ability to make large amounts of money to give to the church, to finance the kingdom.

Some of you have this gift. You're just not in the financial situation to do it right yet. But in your heart you would love to give large sums of money for God's work.

GIFTS THAT CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE

These are the worship gifts or the prayer-related gifts.

MUSIC Psalm 150 -- It's very clear in scripture that music is a spiritual gift. He talks about it in the Temple worship. God gifted certain musicians to play instruments, certain musicians to sing. The ability to celebrate presence through music, either vocal or instrumental, and to lead the church family in worship. It's obvious if you've got that gift.

Check yourself off on that one.

ARTS AND CRAFTS Exodus 31:3-11 -- Did you know that this is a spiritual gift? In Exodus 31:3-11 "*...to make artistic designs to work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work with wood and engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship. He gifted two men to teach these skills to others.*" Some people are gifted to work with their hands. Others are gifted by God to teach other people how to do it. The ability to build, maintain, or beautify the place of worship for God's glory. The ability to express worship through a variety of art forms.

When we get into building a church building and someone asks, "Why do we need a church building?" I want to say, "You're signed up with setting up for the next six months." Anybody who'd say we don't need a building has never served in the set up/take down ministry. This morning both of the elevators were broken so everyone of those chairs had to be brought down the stairs by hand and carried out by hand and somebody had to do that. The church is not a building, that's true. But every family needs a house. The church is not the building but it is a family and a family needs a house. The church is a body and everybody needs clothing and a building is the clothing. God has gifted people with the gift of arts and crafts.

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FOUR PRAYER-RELATED GIFTS

INTERCESSION **Colossians 1:9-12** -- the ability to pray for the needs of others in the church family over extended periods of time on a regular basis. The ability to persist in prayer and not be discouraged until the answer arrives.

This is not just praying. These are people who keep praying and praying until the answer shows up. They have the ability to go long hours. Paul had the gift of intercession. He says repeatedly, "I'm always praying for you, day and night."

If you have this gift, the gift of intercession, see me immediately because I will enlist you in my prayer team that prays for me during the service. You see me walk out during each service. I come in and make announcements and greet everybody and then I walk out during the music. I can hear everything that's going on because I'm in a room nearby and I keep the door open so I can hear it all. I have a chair to sit down in and I prepare myself by praying that entire time. I'm praying for the service. I'm praying for the musicians, I'm praying for the singers, I'm praying the entire time the service is going on. I also have prayer warriors who are sitting there going over prayer requests of the church, praying for the services and maintaining a spirit of prayer while the service is going on. If you've got that gift get involved.

HEALING **James 5:14-16** -- the ability to pray in faith specifically for people who need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing and see God answer. The ability to sense when God is prompting you to pray this kind of prayer.

We need these kinds of people in our prayer ministry. When I'm sick, I want somebody with this kind of gift praying that I'll get well. When I'm sick, I want somebody who has a hot line to God and doesn't just say, "Lord, if it be Your will." I want it to be God's will!

Not everybody gets healed every time we pray. Because God is sovereign. The Bible says to pray for the desires of your heart. These people have the ability to pray for people intently and without getting discouraged in it. If you've got that ability we need you to be involved in the prayer ministry.

MIRACLES **Mark 11:23-24** is also a prayer gift. The ability to pray in faith specifically for God's supernatural intervention into an impossible situation and see God answer. The ability to sense when God is prompting you to pray this kind of prayer.

These are gifts that are expressed through prayer.

PRAYING WITH MY SPIRIT -- sometimes called tongues, interpretation of tongues. **1 Corinthians 14:13-15** talks about praying with my spirit. That's the ability to pray in a language understood only by God or by one who is given the gift of interpretation at that time.

Notice the box "Why we don't allow this in our services". This is definitely a gift. The Bible teaches that this is a spiritual gift. In some churches they actually practice this gift in the service.

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In a charismatic church this gift is manifested in their church. We would not allow this at Brown church. As a pastor I would not allow the use of this gift in a public worship service for four reasons. This gift caused such a problem in the Corinthian church, Paul had to write an entire chapter -- 1 Corinthians 14 on guidelines. This was one gift that was being abused. Obviously it is a legitimate gift. It's the ability to pray in a language understood only by God or one who's given the gift of interpretation at that time. Paul saw the problems and gave them some guidelines.

1. **It is for personal edification, not for the whole church.** 1 Corinthians 14:4 *"He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who preaches edifies the whole church."* This gift is different from every other gift. We said the purpose of every other gift was to edify the church. Yet Paul says here that he who speaks in a tongue edifies himself. But he who preaches edifies the church. The point here is that since this gift is designated for personal edification, I believe that Scripture teaches it should be used for time alone with God. If you want to speak in tongues in your quiet time and God's given you that gift, God bless you. But it's not a gift that's for the whole church. If somebody starts speaking in tongues in the church, who does that edify? Nobody. It just draws attention to that person. That's what Paul says in **1 Corinthians 14:4**.

2. **We are to focus on building others up, not ourselves.** **1 Corinthians 14:9, 12** Paul says, *"Unless you speak intelligible words you will just be speaking into the air. Try to excel in the gifts that build up the church."* That's why we would not allow this gift in the service because it doesn't build up the church. It's for personal edification not for edification of the church, so we're not to focus on it in our public, corporate worship.

3. **It confuses unbelievers in the service.** **1 Corinthians 14:23** It will blow people's mind. Notice what Paul says, *"If some unbelievers come in, will they not say you are out of your mind?"* It not only confuses unbelievers, it freaks out a bunch of Christians too who are not familiar with this gift. He says it confuses unbelievers so it should not be used where there are unbelievers present. That's why if somebody starts speaking in tongues in our service I would feel with absolute confidence of God to say, "You're out of order."

4. **Ideally it is not meant to be used in the worship service.** **1 Corinthians 14:19-20** *"In the church [underline this] I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brothers, stop thinking like children!"* He's saying, I'd rather say five words in a worship service that you could understand -- "Jesus loves you. Praise God! -- That's more important than ten thousand words in a tongue. That's the relationship that Paul says. He says it's not meant to be used in the worship service because it doesn't help anybody other than the person who is speaking in tongues.

Notice **1 Corinthians 14:32-33** *"The gift of speaking God's message should be under the speaker's control, because God does not want us to be in disorder, but in harmony and peace."* What is this saying? Just like every other gift, this gift is under the control of the person who's doing it. If somebody comes and says, "I just couldn't help myself when I spoke in tongues." Then I say, "Then it wasn't from God." The Bible says that the gift of speaking God's message should be under the speaker's control. He's talking here about tongues. God doesn't want us to be in disorder but peace. So anyone who interrupts the service with tongues is out of order. That means they're out of God's will.

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Let's look at **GIFTS THAT SUPPORT ALL FOUR PURPOSES**

There are some gifts that support all four purposes of the church.

LEADERSHIP Hebrews 13:7, 17 -- The ability to clarify and communicate the purpose and direction, the vision, of a ministry in a way that attracts others to get involved. The ability to motivate others by example to work together in accomplishing a ministry goal.

As I've said already, the test of leadership is real simple: Is anybody following you? If you've got this gift people will naturally gravitate to you. People with the gift of leadership are typically goal oriented. They are long term people. They're not just short term -- let's work on the crisis today. Management works on short term. Leadership works on long term. Management works on control. Leadership works on change. You could summarize leadership in one word. Leadership is influence. It is the ability to influence, clarify and communicate the purpose of the church. Some of you have the gift of leadership in seed form. As you grow and develop at Brown you're naturally going to become a respected and valued leader in the church just because people are going to respond to your direction and to your understanding of the direction of the church.

ADMINISTRATION I Corinthians 14:40 -- Also called the gift of organization. That is the ability to recognize the gifts of others and recruit them to ministry. The ability to organize and manage people, resources, and time for effective ministry. The ability to coordinate many details and execute the plans of leadership.

The Greek word for administration is literally the word for "to steer a ship." It's to guide, to pilot. Administration is the gift of management, while leadership is the gift of influencing. How do you know if you've got this gift? One of the ways is that you have the ability to balance several balls at the same time. Some people can only work on one thing at a time. But if you've got this gift you can juggle several things at one time. People recognize that. You're always looking for more efficient ways. How can I do this better? What's the more efficient way to do it? Typically people with this gift know how to delegate. They know how to get other people involved. They don't try to do it all themselves. They like to get other people involved. People with this gift can work with the details in a thing without losing the big picture. If you don't have this gift, when you get into the details, you lose the big picture. But these people see it. They just have the ability to be organized.

FAITH Romans 4:18-21 -- The gift of faith is the ability to trust God for what cannot be seen and to act on God's promise, regardless of what the circumstances indicate. The willingness to risk failure in pursuit of a God-given vision, expecting God to handle the obstacles.

How do you know if you've got the gift of faith? You love to take risks. It doesn't threaten you to go out on a limb. I love going out on a limb. I have the gift of faith. It's very strong in my life. Never be afraid to go out on a limb because that's where the fruit is.

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Another thing about the gift of faith is you have the ability to persevere. I just don't know how to give up. You keep on keeping on. An oak tree is just a little nut that refused to give its ground. People with the gift of faith just don't know how to give up. They don't know how to quit. They just keep on keeping on. They are positive in spite of problems. They trust God for the impossible. They have big dreams. They take big risks, big vision. They have the ability to believe God that other people just are hesitant about.

God calls us all to have faith but some people have the gift of faith. We're all to have faith, but some people have the gift of faith to believe God in greater amounts than others. It just doesn't bother them -- they don't lose a night's sleep going into a nine million dollar building project! To me it's just a few extra zeros!

We've gone through this very quickly and some of you say, "I still don't know my gift!" That's not the purpose of doing this right now. The purpose was just to identify what they are. A year from now you're going to have a better understanding what your gift is than today. Because you learn it through trial and error in getting out and seeing it affirmed from other people.

We've just covered the "S" of SHAPE. We've got four more things to cover: Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences. I want you to review this list. Talk to a couple of people if you can, asking, "Which of these do you think are in evidence in my life in seed form?" Maybe they're not fully developed.

After you've got a general idea -- you're not sure but you think you have these certain gifts -- list the spiritual gifts you're most certain you have in order. "The one I feel the best about ..." Write that down as number one.

We talked about that everyone is called into ministry if you're a Christian. We began to talk about beginning to identify your unique SHAPE.

S - Spiritual gifts. That's the first thing you look at.

H - Heart. What is your heart? It's what you love to do. It's your basic motivational pattern. What motivates me? What gets me excited? That's your heart.

A - Abilities. What are my vocational skills that I've learned and what are my natural talents that God has given me?

P - Personality. We all have unique personalities and temperaments and God doesn't waste personality. He's given you a unique personality and that is one of the five factors you want to look at in determining what God wants you to do with your life. We're not just talking about ministry, we're talking about knowing God's will. By looking at what God made you to be, you understand what God has made you to do.

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E - Experiences. God has given you educational experiences, spiritual experiences, painful experiences. These are all things that God has used in our lives that teach us and mold us and shape us into the vessel He intends for us to be.

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We've looked at Spiritual Gifts. We're going to start talking about **MONITORING MY HEARTBEAT**. Just because you're gifted in an area that doesn't mean you're going to be fulfilled in just using that gift. There are many other factors. There are four other factors you want to look at besides your spiritual gift to determine your ministry.

I talk to people all the time that say, "I'm using my gift but I just don't get any thrill out of it. I'm just not fulfilled." That's because you have to look at not only your spiritual gift or gifts (you have at least one and most of you have many) but you also have to look at your Heart, your Abilities, your Personality, and your Experiences. When you get all five of those in a match, when it comes into sync with a ministry, then you're going to find fruitfulness and fulfillment.

What do we talk about when we talk about heart? A heart is used three different ways in the dictionary.

It's the organ that pumps your blood

It's your emotional constitution or your disposition.

It's the vital or driving impulse. Like people say "The heart of that ministry is..." or "The heart of that organization is ..."

The Bible uses the heart to represent the center of your motivations, desires and inclinations. This is all through the book of Psalms and many other places. It talks about "*Serve God with all your heart...*" "*Love God with all your heart*" "*Give him your heart.*" We talk about accepting Jesus Christ into our heart.

We're talking here about having Christ as the center of our motivations, our desires and our inclinations.

My heart determines three things:

It determines why I say the things I do. The Bible says "*The mouth speaks what the heart is full of.*" When people say, "I don't know where that came from when I said that!" It came from your heart. The Bible says what we speak is what's in our heart.

The Bible also says it determines why I feel the way I do. "*The Word of God examines the thoughts and motives of the heart.*" The Bible says the motives are in your heart. It's not talking about the organ, but the seat of your motivations, your desires, your motives.

It also determines why I act the way I do. "*Guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*"

What this teaches us is that my heart is the real me. Physiologically each of us has a unique heartbeat. Each person has a slightly different pattern. Likewise God has given each of us a unique emotional heartbeat that races when we encounter activities, subjects or circumstances that interest us. We instinctively feel deeply about some things and not about others. Have you found that true? Those of you who are married, have you found that your heart beats for some things that spouse's heart does not beat for? It's just a fact of life. Just as we all have a different physiological heartbeat, we love to do different things.

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This God given motivation serves as an internal guidance system for our lives. It determines what your interests are, and what will bring you the most satisfaction and fulfillment. It also motivates you to pursue certain activities, subjects, and environments.

Why has God given each person a unique heartbeat?

Revelation 17:17 *"God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose."* Circle the last three words. One of the ways that you know what God's purpose is for your life is you look at "What do I like to do?" Many people think, "If I like to do it, it must not be God's will." God's will must be something that's miserable. If I really enjoy it, if I really desire it, it couldn't be God's will; in fact, it must be sin.

The fact of the matter is, God says He puts a desire in your heart to do certain things in order to accomplish His purpose. God has a purpose in giving you your inborn interests. In fact, your emotional heartbeat reveals a very important key to understanding God's design and intention for your life. The Bible makes very clear that your heart was designed by God, but you make the choice to use it for good or evil, for selfish purposes or for service.

In other words, you may have a *"selfish ambition in your heart."* James 3:14. Or you may *"Serve the Lord with all your heart."* 1 Samuel 12:20 or you may *"Do the will of God from your heart."* Ephesians 6:6.

The point here is that God gives us motivations and we're going to look at about sixteen of them tonight. They are all neutral, amoral. But they can be used for good or for bad. For instance, one motivation is the desire to acquire. Some people have an ability and a desire to accumulate. No matter what they do, they accumulate things. That can be used either positively or negatively. It can be used as a vice or a virtue, a sin or a tool for ministry.

So what I'm saying is that the basic motivation of your heart is neither good nor bad. It's good because God gave it to you, but you can use it in a good way or a bad way. How can I do God's will and serve God's purpose? By letting my heartbeat motivate me for ministry. And that's a choice.

"It's quite true that a man who sets his heart on becoming a church leader has a laudable ambition." This says it's ok to want to be a leader. You don't have to be embarrassed about saying, "I'd like to be a leader in my church. I'd like to be a leader at Brown." That's not something you need to be embarrassed about. God says that's a good goal, a worthy ambition to say, "I'm going to set my heart on being a leader in a church of God."

Let's talk about **TAKING A SPIRITUAL EKG.**

If you are like most people, you have never taken time to sort out and identify the things you are good at and motivated to accomplish. As a result, it is unlikely that you use these talents as completely or effectively as you could. The key to understanding your heartbeat is to look at your past accomplishments. The exercise I'm going to explain to you tonight, you're going to do as homework. It is something I've adapted from the book "Finding a Job You Can Love" by

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Ralph Mattson and Arthur Miller. I highly recommend. They are a couple of Christian counselors who deal in career guidance.

STEP 1: LIST AND DESCRIBE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE CHILDHOOD.

I've given you examples.

I put on plays for the neighborhood kids with costumes, props, etc. We transformed the shed in the back of our house into a fairyland with lighting effects, decorations and princesses.

I started a kool-aid stand in the fourth grade and expanded it into three different stands. It was fun and I made money.

I had a job as a printer's assistant and developed a method of cutting stereotypes which was faster and more accurate.

I ran for president and won sometimes when I was in school.

I have always liked to build things. Before I got married, I completely rebuilt the little apartment I was living in.

I successfully led protest marches against toxic wastes in my hometown and got local tv coverage. (I threw this one in from personal experience.)

I set a goal to read fifteen books over the summer and I did.

You're going to fill this in at home. "My highlights of things I did well and enjoyed doing during my grade school years." The more you find the better. Then "... As a Teenager" and "... In College or Early 20's" and "... In My Thirtysomething Years" and complete it all the way up to the present. The more you can list the better -- get another sheet of paper.

Let me explain how to do this then I will tell you why this is a very important exercise.

What are you going to include?

1. I want you to think through your life starting back to what are the earliest things you remember doing. Accomplishments at home, school, work. They ought to have been things you enjoyed doing, not things you didn't enjoy doing. Things you enjoyed doing and things you believe you did well. I'm not asking if other people thought you did them well or not; but things you believe you did well.

Give specific details about what you did. Forget about what other people think about it. Remember you're recalling things you enjoyed doing and did well -- actual accomplishments, not just pleasant experiences.

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For instance: Bad example -- I had a great vacation in Canada. Good example -- I took some stunning photos during my vacation. That was an accomplishment. I enjoyed doing it and I think I did it pretty good.

Go back and write out your life history of accomplishments. From this list you're going to go back and discover your heart, your abilities, some personality and some experiences. We're going to use this to discover the other four things in the five factors of shape. Recall things you enjoyed doing and did well.

2. You don't have to cover every area of your life, just focus on what you feel are the highlights of things you've done. It could be things at school, in your marriage, at home, things at work, honors, awards and how you got them. Those kinds of things.

Spend some time writing out your personal history of accomplishments -- things I did well and things I enjoyed doing. All different types.

STEP 2: DISCOVER THE MOTIVATED DIRECTION OF YOUR HEART.

By examining your achievements for a common motivational thread. You might find a key phrase repeated. See if you can match one of the "heartbeats" listed below as samples. Remember, all of these are God-given motivations. They are only sinful when used selfishly. Every one of these can be used effectively in ministry. Don't be embarrassed to identify a basic heartbeat that doesn't seem spiritual. Of the sixteen I've listed here, almost everyone of them can be identified in the ministry of one of the twelve apostles.

Look first at the example. You should be able to support your choice with examples from your achievements. For instance a person might say, I feel the basic motivation God put in my heart is to acquire/possess. My history demonstrates this: I purchased my first car at age 16. I've collected a collection of rare stamps (Some people are just collectors). I've built up a large cash reserve. I've acquired options on three properties. Those are very different things but do you see what in common between those four things? They collected. They acquired something.

These are fifteen examples. You might think of something else.

I love to ...

DESIGN AND DEVELOP -- I love to make something out of nothing. I enjoy getting something started from scratch.

PIONEER -- I love to test out and try new concepts. I am not afraid to risk failure. Some of you don't like new stuff. You like it to be five years old before you have to deal with it.

ORGANIZE -- I love to bring order out of chaos. I enjoy organizing something that is already started. You can always tell an organizer. You go home and look in their closet. All of the clothes are on the hanger the same way and sometimes even color coordinated. All the shoes are in the right order.

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OPERATE AND MAINTAIN -- Some of you love to efficiently maintain some things that is already organized.

Notice the three different people here: First the Pioneers. They're the people who start something. Then the Organizers. They're the people who come along and take something that's already started and get it organized. Then the Operators/Maintainers come along and take something that's already organized and they maintain it efficiently. Three different kinds of people needed for the project.

SERVE OR HELP -- I love to assist others in their responsibility. I enjoy helping others succeed. You say, "I don't have a big need for me to get the credit but I like helping others succeed."

ACQUIRE AND POSSESS -- I love to shop, collect, or obtain things. I enjoy getting the highest quality for the best price.

EXCEL -- I love to be the best and make my team the best. I enjoy setting and attaining the highest standard.

INFLUENCE -- I love to convert people to my way of thinking. I enjoy shaping the attitudes and behaviors of others.

PERFORM -- I love to be on stage and receive the attention of others. I enjoy being in the limelight. Some of you might say that doesn't sound too spiritual. But it's actually a neutral thing. It can be used for the Lord in terms of drama, music, speaking -- all different ways. It can be used for God or used for yourself.

IMPROVE -- I love to make things better. I enjoy taking something that someone else has designed or started and improve it.

REPAIR -- I love to fix what is broken or change what is out of date.

LEAD AND BE IN CHARGE -- I love to lead the way, oversee and supervise. I enjoy determining how things will be done. Some of you like to lead and some don't.

PERSEVERE -- I love to see things to completion. I enjoy persisting at something until it is finished. Some of you, your basic motivation in life is you just don't know how to quit. Good or bad you keep on keeping on until the job is done.

FOLLOW THE RULES -- I love to operate by policies and procedures. Some people don't enjoy operating in a very fluid environment. That's fine. We're all made differently. Some people enjoy operating when it's clearly spelled out what's expected and what's not expected. They operate good with parameters. I enjoy meeting the expectations of an organization or boss.

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PREVAIL -- I love to fight for what is right and oppose what is wrong. I enjoy overcoming injustice. Some people have a knack to be crusaders. They have an ability and a desire... They always have a cause. Once one thing is settled, they get another cause.

As we've looked through that, maybe you've seen one that applies more to you than others or maybe a couple. The basic motivation of my life is influence. When I look back over all the things I've done as a little kid growing up and I wrote these things out the basic motivation of my life... I've often been in leadership positions but my motivation is not to be a leader. Frankly, if I can influence people without being the leader, I don't want to be the leader. But I want to see people's lives changed. I like to influence behavior. That's a basic motivation of my life. If you take me out of a situation where I can't influence people, I am miserable. I may be using my gifts in that area, but if my gifts aren't being used to influence people, it doesn't work. So the other things I do, I do for the purpose of influencing.

Kay has often said, "It's a good thing you're a believer." I could influence people the wrong way, if my heart wasn't right. One time when I was in high school I lead six or eight hundred kids to cut school one day. I got them to cut school and march downtown. We marched on the courthouse. Even before I gave my life to Christ, I was influencing. It was a pattern God had put in my life.

Did you find the basic motivational pattern direction of your heart in the list? if so, write it on your profile. You might want to spend a little more time on this.

You need to bring these pages with you when you come in for your personal ministry interview with a Ministry Guide. We're going to match this with the ministries in the church. Under heart there are four questions: What I have a heart for. Select from a list of terms: I love to...." I would put down, "I love to influence." and "I love to design and develop." A lot of these are going to apply to you -- five, six, seven. But what are the top two. Write them down. Last ask yourself the other questions: Who do I love to work with the most? What age group or types of people? Some people love to work with kids. Other people hate working with children. They want to work with adults. Some people's heart is with junior high students.

You may be gifted as a teacher, but if your heart is with children, and you're asked to teach an adult class you're going to be miserable. It's more than your gift, you've got a heart, too. You may say "I'm gifted at organization, but my heart is with overseas ministries." You need to be organizing things like mission trips not organizing an office. You may say, "My gift is leadership" and anyplace you're put in leadership, you'd probably do a good job if you're gifted as a leader. But you say, "My heart is really for homeless children" or "My heart is really for people in the military."

Your heart is different from your gift. So you want to write down who you like to work with the most. What age or type of people.

There are basically three types of hearts. Some people prefer working with people. Some prefer working with things. Some prefer working with information. Some people don't like to work with people; they like to work with things -- with their hands. Other people don't like to work

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with things but facts and figures and words and information and data. God made us all different. We're all important. It's all a part of the Body of Christ.

The third question, What church issues, ministries or possible needs excite you and concern you the most? Think about it and write it down. Your Guide will be asking you about it.

If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you attempt to do for God with your life? That's blue sky thinking. If there was no way you could fail, you had all the money and all the time, what would you attempt for God? Write that down. Because Brown is the place where dreams come true. You never know. That's an indication of your heart.

That's the second thing -- Understanding Your Heart. The Bible says *"What ever you do, do it with all your heart as unto the Lord and not as unto men."*

Now go on to Abilities. **APPLYING MY ABILITIES.**

I'd like to start by reading you a story called "The Animal School".

"The animals had a school. The curriculum consisted of running, climbing, flying and swimming. All the animals took all the subjects. The duck was good at swimming and fair in flying, but he was terrible in running. So he was made to drop the swimming class and stay after school to practice running. He kept this up until he was only average at swimming but average was acceptable. The others, including the teacher, were no longer threatened by the duck's swimming abilities so everyone felt more comfortable, except the duck.

The eagle was considered to be a problem student. For instance, in climbing class, he could beat all the others to the top of the tree but he insisted on using his own method of getting there. He had to be severely disciplined and finally, because of his non cooperation in swimming, he was expelled for insubordination.

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running, but obviously he was inadequate in other areas. Because of so much make up work in swimming, he had a nervous breakdown and had to drop out of school.

The turtle was a failure in most every course offered. His shell was considered to be the leading cause of his failure so it was removed. This did help his running a bit but sadly he became the first causality when he was stepped on by the horse.

Here's the summation. The faculty was disappointed but, all in all, it was a good school in humility. There were no real successes. None seemed to measure up to the others, but they did concentrate on their weak points and some progress was made."

You get the point? Everybody doesn't fit the same mold. At Brown, we don't zero in on what you're not good at. We want to zero in on what you're good at. One of the things we say over and over is, "Everybody Is a `10' in some area." If you're in a ministry where it's not working out -- and how do you know it's not working out? You're under stress. Stress is an indication of it because you're not enjoying it like you ought to. Everybody is a "10" in some area. If you're not making it in a certain ministry, doesn't mean you're the wrong person; it means it's the wrong job.

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1 Corinthians 12:6 *"There are different abilities to preform service."* Exodus 31:3 *"I (God) have given him skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts."* Circle those three things -- skill, ability, knowledge. When we talk about the "A" in shape we're talking about skill, ability, and knowledge.

One of the most common excuses people give for not getting involved in ministry is, "I just don't have any abilities to offer." Nothing could be further from the truth. The key is matching your abilities with the right ministry. There's a "laundry list" of 3,00-4,000 different abilities. Studies have been shown when you take an average person and sit down with them and go through a list like that the average person has between 500-600 different abilities. They just don't know it. You're good at a lot of stuff. You just take it for granted.

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FIVE MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ABILITIES

- 1. MYTH: People aren't born with skills. All skills must be learned by experience.** This simply is not true. There are a number of skills which seem to be inborn and develop very early in infancy. When people say, "He just seems to have a natural talent for it", it's probably true. You have some skills that you're just good at. When I look at Michael Jordan -- that guy was built to be a basketball player. It was a natural skill.
- 2. MYTH: Those skills which must be learned, are learned primarily in the classroom.** Actually some of your most basic skills were learned at home, "in the street", or somewhere outside the classroom.
- 3. MYTH: If you have certain abilities, you will be very aware that you have them.** Again, that is not true. You're probably using a number of talents or skills that you are not even aware of. You need some process of skill identification.
- 4. MYTH: Skills that I use at work are only usable in that environment. I couldn't use them in ministry.** Hopefully, by the end of this class, you'll see the fallacy of that idea. Be creative.
- 5. MYTH: Most people only have a few abilities.** The truth is that many national studies have proven that the average person possesses from five hundred to seven hundred different skills.

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR MOTIVATED ABILITIES

After you've filled out these pages, look over your list of accomplishments again and circle the verbs that denote actions performed while you were doing each achievement. Now compare those to the list below and check those abilities you feel you have.

I've listed as an example **26 SPECIALIZED ABILITIES**. I want you to go through this list and check the ones you think you have. Then narrow it down to the top two or three. Select your strongest skill, your second strongest skill and your third strongest skill. We're going to pass over this because of time limitation, but go home and look this over.

Go back to the Personal Profile Sheet where it says "My Abilities" and notice there are four questions there. This is the two pages -- the Profile that you're going to fill out after you've done these five different exercises. We gave you an exercise for Spiritual Gift, for Heart, and now I've shown you one for Abilities. Where it says "Abilities" there are four questions. Write down "My Current Vocation". What do you do right now? Write down your current vocation. You may never have realized but God wants you to offer your vocational skills to help your church family.

Just this week: We have several men who are computer experts, that's their job, they've been coming in helping us with computers at the office. We've had people who have purchasing ability. We've had people who have graphics ability, management, mechanics, law. Obviously, when we build the building, if you've got any construction abilities. Those kinds of things. Mechanical abilities.

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"Other Jobs or Skills I Have Experience In" -- you can fill that in.

Number three, "I Feel Like I Have These Specialized Abilities". Write in one or two things from that list. This list you're going to go home and review, write in from that list "I think I've got these..."

Number four, "I've Taught a Class on..." It could be anything. Childbirth, safety, communication, media.

PLUGGING-IN YOUR PERSONALITY

In the box below, write your name. In the box below that, write your name with your opposite hand. How does it look? Can you read it? What happened? When you tried to do something that was not natural to you three things were true.

1. You felt uncomfortable.
2. It took extra time and effort.
3. You still did a lousy job.

The same things are true when we try to minister in areas that are not suited to our personality. You're going to feel uncomfortable, it's going to take extra time and effort, and you're still going to do a lousy job at it.

So the fourth factor you've got to look at is your personality. That's very important. God has wired your temperament in a unique way. This factor is very important to matching you to the right ministry. It's obvious that God has not used a cookie cutter to stamp out people in a process of uniformity. He loves variety -- just look around. And there is no right or wrong temperament. We need opposites to balance the church.

A good example of this is two people who have the gift of administration, organization. They're good organizers -- that's their spiritual gift. They're both motivated to work with teenagers. So they have the same gift and they have the same heart. But one of them is an introvert and one of them is an extrovert. That's going to be an important factor too, in finding a ministry that helps fit them. If you mix up the job description between an introvert and extrovert they're both going to be miserable. It's a factor.

Some people do not experience ministry satisfaction because what they're doing is inconsistent with their temperament or personality. We're expecting thinkers to be feelers, we're expecting feelers to be thinkers and extroverts to be introverts and people who like variety to be in a routine ministry and people who like routine to be in a variety ministry. Things like that.

It's like when you're working wood -- sometimes you have to work around the knot. You've got to sand with the grain. In your life you have an ingrained set pattern. There are many fine personality tests. In fact, in preparation for this class, I studied over twenty different personality tests. I read books and tests and studied. They're all very good, but for the purpose of your ministry profile, we want to just consider five different aspects of your personality. You need to

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understand these aspects and you need to let the Ministry Guide understand when you have your interview.

To what degree are you on these scales? Put an "X" -- "3" being extreme on either end, "2" kind of in the middle, "1" being mild.

EXTROVERTED - INTROVERTED. Let me explain what that means. Introverted - Extroverted means where do I get my energy? What turns me on? What drains me? If you are recharged by being with people, you're an extrovert. If being with people drains you, you're an introvert. What really recharges me? If being alone recharges me, then you need to put yourself on the scale toward introvert. If being with people is what recharges me -- you can't stand to be alone -- then you need to be on the scale toward extrovert. Mark yourself on that scale.

Number two, the second scale between **THINKER - FEELER** deals with How do you make decisions? Typically. If you're a Thinker, you tend to make decisions based on objective facts -- "Give me the facts and I'll make the decision." If you're a Feeler, you tend to make decisions based on intuition -- "My gut feeling is do this..." A Feeler does not mean you never think, and a Thinker does not mean you never feel. We're all a combination of both. But you have a preference. You have a preference: "I'm going to get all the facts in order first, then I'm going to make the decision" or "I just feel this is the right thing to do." Typically, a Feeler and a Thinker are married to each other. Mark yourself there. If you're more toward the Thinker, put an "X" on that side of the scale somewhere. If you're more subjective and make decisions based on emotions, feelings, intuition put an X on that side of the scale.

The third area is, What kind of tasks do you prefer? Routine or Variety. If you like Routine, you like tasks that are predictable. You like tasks that are pretty much the same thing. You don't like new things. You like getting into a routine, getting up, doing the same thing over and over. "I feel it's more effective, more efficient, I'm not wasting time stopping and making decisions, I know what to do and I do it in a fairly routine manner." Some of you don't like that at all. It bores you. "I like variety. I like something new all the time. I like the unpredictable. I like every day to be different." These are neither right nor wrong, it's just that God makes us differently and we need balance. We need people who like routine and we need people who like variety. This is very important that you understand this because some ministries are very routine and some ministries are very unpredictable. A routine ministry would be like teaching a Sunday School class -- prepare for the same time every week, teach every week... A unpredictable ministry might be Helping Hands, which goes from one crisis to the next. It's different. So mark yourself whether you like routine more or variety more.

The next one -- **SELF CONTROLLED AND SELF EXPRESSIVE** -- Do you tend to express yourself openly? You're outgoing in expressing the way you feel, the way you think? Or do you tend to be more controlled? Some people are more controlled, they like to be in control of the situation. They like to be in control of their moods, of what they say, of their reactions. Other people say, "I'm me! I tend to let it all hang out! I say what's on my mind and be very expressive and very open." One way or the other, evaluate yourself there.

The last one is on how you relate to other people. Everybody tends to relate at one end or the other -- either **COOPERATIVE OR COMPETITIVE**. Some people are born competitors. It's not fun unless there's competition. It's not fun unless there's a goal and somebody else is trying

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to reach it, too. It's just not fun. Other people say, "I hate competition. I don't like to compete against anybody. I like to cooperate. I like us all to do the same thing, at the same time, in the same way." They are neither right nor wrong. You have a personality that tends to be more cooperative or more competitive.

Mark those down. If you want to do some in-depth study in this let me recommend two books: Please Understand Me, by David Keirse (he explains the Miers-Briggs Temperament test), and another by Florence Littower, Personality Plus, is a good, popular temperament book.

You're going to take what you've written down there and go back and write it on your personality profile.

EXAMINING MY EXPERIENCES

Romans 8:28, *"And we know that in all [Circle "all"] things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* It doesn't say all things are good. It says that *"in all things God works"* even in the bad things *"God works for the good of those who love him."* That means God never wastes an experience. It means that even the bad experiences you bring on yourself God never wastes a hurt. Philippians 1:12, Paul says *"Now, I want you to know, brothers, what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel."* He said all these things, everybody else thought were bad, actually have turned out for good. He's in jail when he's writing this.

One of the most overlooked factors in determining ministry God has for me is my past experience, particularly my hurts and problems I've overcome with God's help. Since our greatest life messages come out of our weaknesses, not our strengths, we should pay close attention to what we've learned in the "school of hard knocks." God never wastes a hurt! He wants you to be open to ministering to people who are going through what you've already been through!

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 *"God wonderfully comforts and strengthens us in our hardships and trials. And why does he do this? So that when others are troubled, needing our sympathy and encouragement, we can pass on to them the same help and comfort God has given us!"*

The Bible says God actually allows you to go through difficult situations and circumstances and problems and trials and difficulties. He comforts you and teaches you in those situations so that you can turn around and have a ministry to the very people who are going through situations you've been through. Who can relate better to someone who's had an alcohol problem than somebody who's been an alcoholic? Who can better relate to someone who's going through a divorce, than someone who's been divorced. Who can better relate to someone who's lost a husband or wife in a death, than someone who's lost a husband or wife? All of these experiences, God wants us to look at.

On your ministry profile, you're going to record these experiences. First your spiritual experiences. Meaningful decision times with God. Think through your life. When have you felt closest to God? Write that down on your ministry profile. Write down the times with God that

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have meant the most to you. Maybe when you were baptized, when you committed your life to Christ, a devotional time with your family, or experience or conference or revival or seminar that was life changing. Write down your spiritual experiences.

Next, write down your painful experiences. Problems, hurts, trials that have taught you. You can't be effective in ministry unless you're willing to talk about these things. But once you're honest with them you realize that everybody's hurting somewhere. The experiences you've gone through, God wants to use in your life to help other people.

Then your educational experiences. Write down where you went to school, what were your favorite subjects. That's often an important thing to know. What did you really like in school? Write those things down.

Number four, write down your ministry experiences. How have you served in the past? What did you do in the past in church services? For some of you that's going to be nothing, because you've never served before. Some of you have one or two things. Some of you may have a long list of fifteen, twenty years of service.

These are things that are very important that you'll want to look at when we look at what has God made me to be?

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WE BELIEVE ABOUT MINISTRY

Salvation in Jesus Christ automatically includes a call to ministry. Every believer is created, saved, called, gifted, authorized, and commanded to minister.

We believe ministry is the heart of the Christian life, that function follows form in ministry. How God made me determines what He intends for me to do. God has uniquely shaped each individual for a specific ministry.

We believe God has given all His children gifts that can be developed and used in ministry. Everyone is a "10" in some area. Everyone has something to offer. Developing and using your gifts is an act of good stewardship and of worship.

We believe you discover your gift through ministry, instead of discovering your ministry by identifying your gifts. In other words, as you start serving, you're going to find what you're gifted at doing.

The evidence of the right match between my shape and my ministry is fruitfulness and fulfillment.

Membership and maturity are prerequisites to ministry. Therefore we require class attendance and commitment to these two areas before serving through Brown.

Many of you have taken the old membership class before we revised it. It's completely revised -- Membership 101 -- in January of this year. It's a brand new class for the 1990's, completely revised. If you've already taken the old membership class, then you don't need to go take the new membership class -- all four hours again. You need to take the update. The update is I teach the new membership class to people who are already members in an hour and a half. I cover four hours worth of material in an hour and a half.

What WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE BODY OF CHRIST

God intends for ministry to be performed through the context of the local church. Membership includes a commitment to ministry. That's what membership means. It means I'm going to commit to ministry.

The Holy Spirit has provided our church body with all the spiritually gifted people needed to do everything He wants us to do. We believe our task is to discover, enlist, train, and support these people in ministry.

We believe that the church is to operate on the basis of spiritual gifts, rather than elected offices. We don't ever elect people to ministries. The Bible teaches, "*A man's gift makes room for him.*" We believe that the church is a body, not a business, an organism, not an organization. Therefore we streamline the structure in order to maximize ministry and minimize maintenance. We don't bury ministries under a bunch of procedures.

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We believe the mobilization of every member as a minister is the key to balanced growth of the church.

We believe that the greater good of the whole body must always take priority over the needs of any single ministry. There is no place for turfism in God's family. In other words, we often have on a typical Saturday, events sponsored by 5,6,7 different ministries. We don't say, "All of you have to cancel just for the sake of Lay Pastors," or "All of you have to cancel just for the sake of women's ministry." We just realize that in a church our size, nobody can be at everything, yet somebody attends something. So we offer lots of opportunities without any competition.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE ROLE OF PASTORS AT BROWN

We believe the equipping of the members for ministry is the number one priority of the pastoral staff. The people are the ministers and the pastors are the administrators. (Ephesians 4)

The objective of the Ministry Development Center (a department in our church) is to mobilize an army of ministers who are maximizing their unique gifts, heart, abilities, personality and experiences in a meaningful place of service through our church.

We believe every member deserves personal assistance in discovering a meaningful place of service. We value the individual more than the ministry. That's why we're having personal interviews with every person. Do you remember how we used to do it? In the last session of the membership class, we used to pass out a list of 269 ways to get involved and people were overwhelmed. There was no forethought as to "What are you good at?" and "What has God gifted you and prepared you to do?"

We believe those involved in ministry are entitled to competent leadership from the staff. Therefore every ministry is assigned a staff supervisor who is committed to the success of that ministry. I personally judge our staff. I evaluate them. Not on what they do, but on how successful they make the people in our church, how much they involve them. I evaluate them not on what they do but how well the people work in the ministry do. The ministries in our church have outgrown every one of the staff members. The church is much bigger than us. You are the ministry. You are a minister of Christ.

Each staff supervisor is to provide training, encouragement, guidance, feedback and resources to the ministers under his or her care. That's what S.A.L.T. is. The purpose of Brown Advanced Leadership Training is to provide training, encouragement, guidance, feedback, and resources to the ministries under his or her care.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

We believe we become what we are committed to. Therefore we encourage growth in commitment to Christ and His Church.

We believe everything rises or falls on leadership. No ministry can exceed the commitment of those leading it.

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We believe one mark of a maturing church is that the standards for leadership are raised every year. When we first started out, to be a leader at Brown all you had to do was be a warm body and breathe. It was like "Please! Help!" But now there are standards of leadership and they are increasing every year.

We believe there must be periodic reviews of all ministries. We do what is inspected, not just what is expected. Best intentions are not enough.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT TRAINING

Every leader is a learner. The moment you stop learning, you stop leading. We always give monthly training.

We emphasize on the job training more than pre-service training. We learn best by doing. We delegate to develop people. A lot of churches, before you can start any ministry, you've got to go through about 52 weeks of some class. At Brown, you go through this class, you're in. Why? Because if somebody wants to go through 52 weeks of study before they ever start a ministry, they're just a professional student. They don't really want to minister; they just want to learn. We say, "Get involved in ministry and then we'll teach you on the job." You don't even know the questions, until you're on the job.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE DIVERSITY OF MINISTRY

We have unity without uniformity. We believe diversity in ministries simply illustrates the unique giftedness of individuals.

Any member who has completed Class 301 may start a new ministry with the assistance of the Ministry Development Center. If you've got an idea, great! In response to René's notice in the bulletin several weeks ago about needing someone to make meals to go into her freezer for people in need: "My mother accepted the call to serve. She asked another lady (over 80 also) over today to help her cook about half a dozen main dishes, cakes and pies. Next time she does it she plans to ask more of the Golden Ladies over to help her. When senior adults can no longer get around like they used to and find their area of service limited, they feel useless. I know this ministry of cooking at home will give my mother a continual sense of significance in the life of God's church. Thank you for giving her the opportunity. She always has been an example of servanthood to others. By the way, she will be 80 on March 14th. This proves you're never too old to serve God and others." Isn't that great?

We believe every ministry must fill one or more of the basic purposes of the church or we don't do it.

We believe ministries have life cycles. If a ministry isn't meeting a need anymore, we will give it a decent burial. We kill it. There are no sacred cows at Brown. We have a saying on our staff: Sacred cows make great hamburger! Some churches have half a dozen programs that are dead. They just need to bury them and be done with it! The most expensive thing to do is to keep a corpse from stinking.

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We believe that most ministries require one year commitment but we allow people to change ministries gracefully, without guilt. We don't lock people in permanently.

Only official ministries of Brown, under staff supervision are given publicity space in the bulletin. You would not believe how many people want to use our bulletin. When they realize they've got an audience of 5000 people approximately on a week end, people call me and say, "Would you mind inserting this in for our organization or our problem or" If we did that we'd have a telephone book every week because we have a captive audience. And I can't tell you how many para-church organizations call and say, "Can we use your mailing list?" I say No. We're not going to do it. As shepherds of our church we're not going to allow people in our church to be bombarded with all outside stuff. Only official ministries of Brown under staff supervision are given publicity in the bulletin.

We believe your primary ministry commitment should be in the area where you're gifted. Your secondary ministry includes serving in any other area of the body where you are needed.

We believe you're not ready for ministry until you are willing to serve anywhere.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT PERFORMANCE

We expect excellence in ministry, not perfection. Excellence is doing your best. God deserves our best.

We encourage creativity and innovation in ministry, which assumes mistakes will be made. No mistakes means you're not growing or trying anything new. We have no failures in ministry at Brown, only experiments that didn't work. I told my staff "I want you guys making at least two good mistake a week." If you're not making a mistake you're not trying anything new. You're not growing, you're not developing. If they make the same mistake they're in big trouble. Because that means they're not learning, either. But new mistakes are great. That means they're trying. They're developing. People come in all the time and say, "I want to start a ministry." I say, Great! Go for it! try it! Six months down the road, it's dead. That's ok. It just means it was the wrong timing, wrong person, or God didn't want us to do it at this point. Fine. It's a learning experience. Everybody's a 10. You just have to find the right area.

We believe that a failed project does not mean a failed person. There are no wrong people, only right people in the wrong ministry. Dean Payne who started the video tape ministry just did it on his own. He told me, he sends his mother in her late 80's a tape every week of the service. She lives in Portland. And she got a group of little blue haired ladies together. They sit around in a circle and she plays the tape for them every week and they discuss it. About a month ago, she went to a local pastor and said, "I've got five ladies in my group who've accepted Christ. They need somebody to baptize them." Here's a lady in her 80's. Isn't that incredible! God can use anybody and He uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways.

That's the philosophy of ministry that we believe here at Brown. If you're committing to serve in the Core, this is what you're committing to.

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The next several pages explain what we call **PREVIEWING THE OPPORTUNITIES**. These are just examples of the different ministries and their categories in the church. On the patio, we have the Wall of Ministry. These are explained in detail in this book.

Some of you are already involved in some ministry, so you need to ask yourself some questions about that ministry now that we're looking at these things. "Is this really the primary ministry that I'm shaped for?" or "Is it simply a secondary ministry that I'm going to continue serving in simply because I have a heart to serve and I'm willing to help?" It may be that where you're serving right now is not your primary ministry. That's ok. You may want to continue serving in that area just as a secondary ministry.

How do you know if it's your primary ministry? Does it utilize my spiritual gifts? Does it reflect my heart? Does it allow my personality to show through as who I am? Does it utilize my abilities? Does it capitalize on the experiences I've been given? These kind of things.

Ask yourself, "Is my ministry being affirmed?" Is it being affirmed by other people, by co-workers, by the leadership? Am I being fruitful? Am I seeing results? Am I being fulfilled in the ministry? Those are the kind of things you ask.

Now we come to **DEVELOPING A HEART TO SERVE**. I want to talk about the ministry covenant. What we've talked about for the last three and a half hours is really very dangerous. Because James 4:17 says this, *"Anyone who knows to do good and then doesn't do it sins."* Now you're responsible. You could have gotten away with it before you came to this class -- "I didn't know I was supposed to minister! And I didn't know God had shaped me for ministry." But you're on the hook now. Now that you know it, the Bible says God is going to hold you accountable. Someday He's going to say, "What did you do with what I gave you? What did you do with the gifts, the personality, the heart, the abilities and the experiences I gave you -- how I shaped you for ministry -- What did you do with it? Did you just use it on yourself to make money? Did you use it on yourself to have fun? Or did you use it for building the kingdom of God?" One day God's going to ask you that. What you want (and why this class is here) is to be able to stand before God someday and have Him say, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant. You were faithful in little now you can be faithful in much."*

So we come to the time of commitment. **MY MINISTRY COVENANT**. Read the covenant with me. Just as we have a membership covenant in the membership class, we have the maturity covenant for spiritual growth in the maturity class -- 201 -- the ministry covenant is the covenant for those who move into the Core of ministry at Brown.

"Having committed myself to membership and the habits essential for spiritual maturity, and agreeing with Brown's Ministry statement, I commit to...

Discover my unique shape for ministry and serve in the area that best expresses what God made me to be.

Prepare for ministry by participating in S.A.L.T. and C.L.A.S.S. -- two training organizations.

Demonstrate a servant's heart by serving in secondary ministries as the Body needs me.

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Cooperate with other ministries and place the greater good of the whole Body over the needs of my ministry.

If you're ready to make this commitment I want you to go ahead and sign your name on it and date it. On the back, print your name and address. Turn these in. I will sign them. We're going to laminate them and send them back to you.

It says, "This certifies that [blank] is a commissioned minister of Jesus Christ through the Brown Valley Community Church and is entrusted with the related responsibilities and privileges."

There are two great enemies of ministry. There are two things that are going to keep people from making this commitment. One, is fear. "Maybe I can't do it." The Bible says *"He that is in me is greater than he that is in the world"* and *"He who began a good work in you will bring it unto completion in the day of Jesus Christ"* and *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* God never asks you to do what He doesn't give you the power to do. He'll give you the power to do what He's called you to do.

The other enemy of ministry is secular values. We can get so busy in other things we don't have time for ministry. When somebody says "I don't have time for ministry," I say, "You're too busy." How can you have 168 hours a week and not find at least some time, a few hours a week, for something that is more important than anything else and something that's going to outlast everything else.

I was reading in the book of Ezra and it's interesting that the people were captive in Babylon for 70 years and when Ezra got permission to go back and rebuild the temple he said, "Let's go! After 70 years we can finally go back and rebuild the temple. Let's all go back and build this ministry." Even though they were in a foreign country, he had a hard time finding people who would go with him. Why? They were so involved in their business interest in Babylon they couldn't go back to build the temple.

Sometimes that's true today. Some people are so involved in other things they don't have time for anything else.

It's fear and it's secular values that are going to keep you from doing this.

What we're talking about is so important. God uses ordinary people. The history of Brown church is He takes very ordinary people and does extraordinary things through them. I don't know a more exciting time to be alive. I don't know a more exciting place to serve the Lord than Brown Church. If I did, I'd be there. I want to make my life count.

I think that God has placed us at a strategic place in time in a strategic part of America to influence, not only Orange County, but California and the entire nation. The way Orange County goes, the way southern California goes. And the way southern California goes, is the way California goes. And the way California goes, is the way America goes. Because California sets the trend, right or wrong. Good or bad, we set the fads. It's either occultism, new age or it's the Jesus movement. The way America goes is the way the world goes. We're in a very strategic

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place and God has put His hand on this church. I don't apologize in saying that maybe the most important thing you do with your life is get involved in ministry at Brown Church. It is certain to outlast anything you ever do in your job. It is certainly going to outlast anything you ever do in your family. The Bible says the kingdom of God is going to last forever. The church is going to last forever.

We are more than a church at Brown. We're a movement. We're a movement of ministry. And there are churches all over America that are modeling after this church. Over 11,000 pastors in America have come and studied this church. They're watching us. And they're watching you. What we're doing is going back to the New Testament that says, The ministry belongs in the hands of the people, not in the hands of the professionals. My goal since I started Brown is to give the ministry away. When I started this church, I did everything in it. I set it up, I took it down, I printed the bulletin, I preached the sermon, I led the music, I did everything except count the offering. I've never done that. I've never seen the books in ten years. I don't get near the finances. I want to be above reproach.

Yet, as the church has grown, I've given the ministry away. Other staff members, other people. Now we have over 1000 people serving in the Core at Brown. I keep this card inside my desk drawer. It says "Great people are ready to help me in the right time in the right way, people I don't even know yet. I promise I'll never give up because I don't have the help, but I will trust God to provide. *"Commit your way to the Lord, Trust Him to help you do it and He will."* God has the resources to help you that you have not even considered. There are multiplied thousands of persons with all sorts of talents and skills and concerns and contacts that God can bring into your life in order to fulfill His plans. So open your eyes and see the faces of people around you. Open your ears to hear what they're saying. Today, tomorrow, next week, you'll meet someone, someone who is just the person you need and that right person will come along to fill the right place at just the right time and you will marvel knowing that God has arranged it so beautifully."

I've kept that in my drawer for about ten years and when I was very discouraged, when there were very few people helping out, I used to pull this out and read it. I want to say tonight, You are an answer to that prayer, after ten years of praying. God wants to use you in ways that you have not even imagined. I want to say that if God would show you where you're going to be five years from now, it would blow your mind at how much an impact He's going to make with your life. It doesn't take great ability. It takes great availability. When we're available... If you get available and say, "God, use me in ministry anyway You see fit," He will wear you out. If you had told me fifteen years ago that I would be pastoring a church, much less one of the largest churches in America, I would have said, "You're crazy!" That is about as far from my mind as I could have. I had a plan to go into politics. That's the last thing on my mind now. You are in for some exciting days ahead as we commit ourselves to ministry and to become part of the Core here at Brown.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I thank You for these folks. I look out on their faces. I see people that I love with all my heart. I see people that You have worked in, You've brought here to Brown

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for very different reasons. I see people with such incredible potential. The energy in this room alone could shake America, could send a revival that all the forces of hell couldn't stop. May each of us say, "Here am I, send me. Here am I, Lord. Use me. I'm willing to take time -- make time in my schedule to do what's important." As we consider this commitment of ministry to You we realize that it's scary but You never call us to do what You don't equip us and anoint us and empower us to do. Help us grow. Help us discover our gifts and who You made us to be. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

1. Commit to the ministry covenant.

Turn in your signed covenant tonight. I'll sign the back and have it laminated for you. Then when we send out information for updates and ministry -- additional material -- you'll get it. You'll be put on the mailing list for S.A.L.T. -- o be notified about the different salt meetings.

2. Complete your S.H.A.P.E. self-evaluation.

That's the ministry profile. Then transfer your results to your Ministry Profile form.

3. Schedule an INTERVIEW WITH A PERSONAL STAFF MINISTRY GUIDE.

Call the ministry development Center at the Church Office for an appointment. Right now we've got to finish training Ministry Guides before we can take you. If you call in, hang in there, be patient. If it's God's will for you to have a ministry, it'll be God's will for you in three weeks as it is tomorrow. If you don't get in immediately, hang on. Bring your ministry profile with you. Together you will select two or three ministry opportunities that best math you shape using the Brown Ministry Discovery Guidebook.

4. After you've had the interview, you'll contact the supervisors over the ministries you've selected for possible involvement. Out of the interview you're going to come up with two or three different ideas, then maybe you'll go talk to one of the supervisors. They'll be waiting to hear from you. It's your responsibility to contact them. All of the staff are ready and primed to do this. Do this within two weeks after your meeting with your ministry guide, while your ideas are still fresh in your mind.

5. You'll begin serving.

6. Start attending the monthly S.A.L.T meetings. Brown Advanced Leadership training meets for two hours each month. You can choose the first Wednesday night or first Saturday morning of each month to attend. I teach the first hour and then the staff supervisors lead the second hours.

7. Enhance your maturity and ministry through other C.L.A.S.S. courses. Congratulations! You've taken 101 and 201 and you've finished 301. You've only got one more basic class to complete -- "Discovering My Ministry 401" and you will be a Grand Slam Disciple. We're actually working on a little pin, kind of a baseball diamond that we're going to present when we publicly honor those who've completed all four basic classes -- 16 hours of training. You'll be presented with a certificate and lapel pin for completing these hours of training. Then you can

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begin to take elective courses of your own choosing. As we move into our facilities we're going to have classes every day of the week for you to take.

Brown's Program to Help You Grow
Christian Life Age Service Seminars

Class is a program designed to help take a believer to full maturity and effective ministry for Christ. If you haven't taken 101 or 101 Update (Update means you're already a member. If you haven't joined the church yet you need to take the full 101 class in detail. You've taken 201 and 301. I'll teach 401.

Go on to Home Base!

Previewing The Opportunities

BROWN'S MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

ADOPT-A-GRANDPARENT: This ministry focuses on the seniors of the community to lead, encourage, and aid them in seeing Jesus as a source of hope by visiting, holding worship services, and showing special care during holidays.

AWANAS: A weekly time for elementary children to participate in games, scripture memory, crafts, and be exposed to local and foreign missions.

AUDIO/VIDEO TECHNICIANS: A team who set up and monitor the sound for music activities.

BACKYARD BIBLE CLUBS: Backyard clubs for children during the summer for five days, about 2-3 hours per day. People needed to help in the activities for the children, and to provide homes at which to meet.

CAMP COUNSELORS: A team that ministers to a group of seven children of 4th-6th grades in a Christian camp setting by encouraging children to grow spiritually, and with evangelism.

CARE CALLERS: Thursday evenings at the church office to call regular attenders and ask if they have any comments, prayer requests, or family needs to share with Pastor Rick or other staff. They record the comments, etc., and leave them for Pastor Rick or other staff review or follow-up.

CARING HEART: The ministry team of women who come to the aid of other women in crisis or "life-change" challenging times through one-on-one encouragement.

CHERUBS: The musical group consisting of older preschoolers that practice during the week to sing on Sundays and community events.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH: This team directs the homeless to protective shelters, those in need of food to meal providers, and the jobless to resources of employment.

CRADLE ROLL: The ministry to new and expectant mothers that visit and help lead special events.

ELI HOME: The ministry that provides a home and care for abused children and women.

EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATION: This team is charged with analyzing and improving all written and visual communication that go out from SVCC. They are experts in various areas of communications.

FRESHSTART DIVORCE RECOVERY: This work shop style event seeks to meet the specific needs of the divorced. The Freshstart Divorce Recovery ministry team schedules and facilitates all aspects of the seminar, and follows up with phone calls and encourager cards.

GOLDEN LADIES: The team of senior women who get together for Sunday brunches, make hospital visits to church family members, volunteer in church office, and prepare dinners for the Pastoral Care.

GOOD FOOD GOOD COMPANY: The ministry to bring married couples in the church family together through a dinner setting once a month for five months. the dinners take place in homes, restaurants, beaches, ... anywhere.

HABIT FOR HUMANITY: An international organization to eliminate inadequate housing by working with God's people to build modest, adequate homes. Work project sites include Rancho Santa Margarita, Santa Ana, and Mexico.

HARVEST PARTY: The outreach event that is provided as an alternative to traditional Halloween. This team of people help with the organization and administration of the carnival style event.

KIDS CHOIR: The musical group consisting of elementary children that practice during the week to sing on Sundays and community events.

KIDS ENSEMBLE: Children ages 7-12 years old who sing at various worship services, Wednesday night services and community activities.

LIVING ALTERNATIVES: This ministry is a crisis pregnancy center that seeks to provide an alternative to mothers who do not want abortion by meeting various needs like temporary housing, medical care, or helping with adoption procedures.

MEXICO (ORPHANAGE): This ministry helps meet the needs of the orphans. People volunteer a Saturday to help in projects and various needs the orphanage may have. People may also sponsor an orphan and visit them on trips and supply love and care.

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MISSIONS: Short-term mission teams that participate in projects around the world that are designed to introduce various aspects of foreign missions and missionaries to team members. These trips vary in length from 10 days to 3 weeks.

MISSION FRIENDS: This is the preschool missions education program during the mid-week service.

MONEY COUNTERS: This team takes care of counting, sorting, and recording all of the offerings from the weekend. They work together in the church office on Monday mornings.

OVERCOMERS: These are the "care groups" for women who are dealing with alcoholic or chemical abuse.

PARENTS OF TEENS: This ministry is for couples with teenagers that meet as small groups in homes for time of study, sharing and support.

PASTOR'S RESEARCH: This team of researchers is given specific target area of Biblical, demographic, and community study to compile for use in Sunday and mid-week messages.

PRAISE COMMUNITY SINGERS: This organization has opportunity for singers to use their talent in both worship services, salt and community activities.

PRAYER: The team that prays for and follows up on every specific prayer request that comes through the registration cards. They coordinate all church prayer chains and prayer events.

PRISONS: This ministry team visits local prisons, encouraging and witnessing to prisoners. They also minister to families through the Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree program at Christmas. Sports teams play prison teams and have opportunities to share together.

QUAD PARTY: A monthly Sunday morning event to attract and provide information to new students. This ministry team plans, coordinates, and runs the event.

RECREATION: This ministry helps people keep physically fit for life by offering a wide variety of team and individual sports activities. These activities are intended to serve as introduction points for our people to the community.

RECREATION LEADERS: This is a team of people with talent for running creative recreation for students in a camp setting.

RESOURCE TABLE: The resource table that consists of material on student and parents of students issues that may be check out. A team of people help with the set-up, the administration and the research for materials of the table.

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BROWN BRASS: An ensemble of brass musician that play special music for worship services, conventions and community activities.

BROWN ORCHESTRA: A team of instrumentalists who play on 1st and 3rd weekends of each month for worship services.

SINGLE'S ENCOURAGERS: This ministry adds a personal touch of encouragement to those involved in singles ministries and events by sending birthday cards, encouraging and special occasion notes. It also assimilates new members with calls, and "encourager dinners."

SINGLE'S OUTREACH: The ministry team that targets unsaved singles with the purpose of sharing Jesus with them. They also do follow-up work with new Christians in the group.

SINGLE'S PUBLICITY: This is a team with skills in graphic writing and communication, that develop flyers, promotional materials, and does publicity to educate on activities and Bible studies.

SONGCRAFTER: Songwriters, both word and/or music, meet monthly working together to write music for God's glory.

STUDENTS A team of people that helps with regular activities for Jr. High and Sr. High students. This team helps with food, coordinating socials, welcoming, leading or assisting small groups of 10-15 students.

STUFFERS: This team insures that all the bulletin inserts are included. They work in the church office on Thursdays and Fridays. Sunday morning stuffers work in the gym placing an outline of the sermon in each bulletin before the first service.

SUNDAY INFORMATION GUIDES: This ministry helps people who visit the church by assisting people to specific tables on the patio between the services on Sundays.

SUNDAY SCHOOL - ELEMENTARY: Bible learning classes of 1st-6th grades that include games, discussions of Bible stories and characters with applications to practical living.

SUNDAY SCHOOL - PRESCHOOL: Classes that provide Christian principles for children from newborns to kindergartners.

TAPE/VIDEO: This ministry provides either those who miss a weekend, or someone who lives out of the area a chance to get the service by coordinating and producing all the audio visual tapes.

TEEN MOMS: This is the ministry to new or expectant teenage mothers. Adult women lead this ministry of small groups, and lend practical help and support.

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TRAFFIC CONTROL: This ministry helps people to have a positive experience at church by helping cars flow smoothly into and out of the parking lot on Sundays between services.

VICTORS: These are the "care groups" for women deal with victimization and sexual abuse designed around two successive 12 week programs.

VOCAL WORSHIP ENSEMBLE: A vocal group that participates in the worship services as well as civic programs. The Brown Singers are selected from this group to lead Worship Services.

WORSHIP GREETER: The welcoming team that warmly greets everyone who is on their way to the worship service with a handshake and a smile. These people give first impressions of friendliness, acceptance, and love to members, attenders, and visitors alike.

WORSHIP HOSTS: The welcoming team to help visiting families find the correct Sunday school rooms by personally walking with them to each classroom. They introduce teachers to the parents, then lead them to the gym and wish them a good service.

WORSHIP USHER: The welcoming team that assists people into the worship service by handing out bulletins, overseeing the service in general, and assisting people where needed.