

I Surrender



My Abilities

Key Verse: I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well (*Psalms 139:14, KJV*).

Everyone Is Gifted

I urge you to stop what you are doing and read 1 Corinthians 12. This passage is critical to un-

derstanding how abilities relate to the church and therefore the individuals within the body of Christ. If I could impress anything upon each of you, it is that God has given every human being He created talents. I think sometimes we struggle because we feel if our talent is not as overt as someone else, our talent is not as important.

In black and white, it seems silly, but I guarantee you need look no further than your own church—maybe even your own family—to encounter a brother or sister who has felt this way. I've heard things such as, "I can't be as important as the piano player because they have to be there every week." As the church pianist at Westerville Free Will Baptist Church, I can tell you it is not always the singers, the pastor, or a Sunday school teacher that ministers to me but the sister who took the time to send me a card because she knew I was having a tough week.

After reading 1 Corinthians 12 and assuring yourself that the Lord has blessed you with talent, take an inventory of your spiritual gifts. Multiple inventories are available online, or contact your pastor and ask for assistance in finding a reputable spiritual gifts inventory.

Often, we don't get involved because we aren't sure what God wants us to do. While an inventory such as these are not the *be all end all* of your talents, they can help you decipher a good place to start.

It is important to understand your spiritual gifts are not the same as the fruit of the Spirit; they are easy to confuse. I've often heard kids in my classes say things like, "Well I do okay at this

one, but that one isn't one of my gifts."

Galatians 5:22 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." In the context of the passage, we understand that as we strive to be like Christ the fruit should come. However, no matter how much we strive to be like Christ, God may not call us to preach.

Why were spiritual gifts given according to 1 Corinthians?

What is your gift(s)?

Are you using your gift(s) regularly? If not, what is your hindrance?

Besides church, where else could you use your gift?

Availability and Ability are not Synonyms

I have a question for you: how many times have you done a job in the church not because you felt it was one of your unique God-imparted abilities but because the job needed done? We have all heard of the 20/80 rule; 20% of the people in the church do 80% of the work. Unfortunately, in many churches, the 20/80 rule is a sad reality.

I am NOT telling you to avoid work in the church that needs done. I'm telling you quite the opposite. If we stop working in our churches because no one is there to do a job, our churches may crumble. It is a difficult topic and may be part of the cause why our spiritual gifts get confused.

Evaluate your work in the church. Are you serving because it is your gift, or because you are available?

If it is not your gift, could someone else do it?

Know When to Serve and When to Be Served

A second side to this particular issue is not often discussed in our churches. What happens when

a brother or sister has certain abilities, but we don't have a job available to help them use those abilities?

Some of you may be experiencing a gut reaction that we should immediately make a job available to them! If we are honest, that isn't reality either. We are not going to ask a Sunday school teacher who has been teaching for the last 30 years to step down, because we have a new member who is available to teach. But, should we? It's not a simple question. Read Titus 2.

I've often heard our Ohio WAC President say if someone feels led to serve on the OWAC board, the current board members should be willing to step down to let someone else serve. My fear is that ladies don't feel comfortable asking.

Like our state board, our churches need to be vigilant. We need to watch for opportunities to allow others to serve. Last year, after a series of difficult events in my mom's life, she stepped down from several jobs in the church; that was hard for me to see. I struggled thinking, "My mom doesn't want to be involved at church." After much prayer and consideration, I publicly commend my mom.

It is easy to remain stagnant in a position. It is far more difficult to say, "Lord, I surrender

to You. I need some time with You." There is nothing wrong with what she did, and I thank God for her example. I wonder if others in similar circumstances did the same, would there be more opportunities to serve, allowing the individual stepping down to have the opportunity to be fed?

Read Psalm 37 before looking at these questions for study

What do I say to other believers who are discouraged and feel like they don't have a place in the church?

Ruth Senter said the following: "God has designs on our future...and He has designed us for the future. He has given us something to do in the future that no one else can do."

What a gloriously beautiful sentiment! God has things for me, just me, to do. Assure the discouraged that God has a plan for them.

What should I do when I am approached to take a job in the church that I don't feel equipped to do?

First, stop and pray. Second, seek godly advice. Third, if you don't feel a peace that only God can give, it is okay to say no.

How do I encourage others in the church who aren't involved to become involved?

Gloria Gaither said this; "Choices can change our lives profoundly. The choice to mend a broken relationship, to say yes to a difficult assignment, to lay aside some important work, to play with a child, to visit some forgotten person—these small choices may affect our lives eternally."

Sometimes, our own priorities and prideful natures stop us from encouraging others to use their abilities.

Lord, I Need a Break!

This third instance of abilities is a little tougher. What happens when you are the only one at your church with the unique, God-imparted gift to do a certain job, but you are burned out? The Lord certainly provides sustenance, provision, and relief; as Christians we must believe these truths.

Unfortunately, sometimes we have to persevere. One of my favorite truths in Scripture is Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,

and I will give you rest." Wow! Thank you Jesus, when our strength is at an end He promises us rest.

Come on now. . . how many pastors' wives just said Amen? It is true we don't always get a break; it's not always possible. If, however, you find yourself in this position, I urge you to speak with your pastor to find a resolution, so you can give God your very best; we all owe that to Him.

In conclusion, I commend each of you who are workers in your home church. Thank you for teaching the younger generation to be workers. I promise that each of you is uniquely gifted, you are wonderful, important and loved.

If you don't know what those unique gifts are, please take the time to find out. If you aren't using your gifts, talk to your church leadership. If there isn't a job available according to your unique gifts, keep being available to the Lord. If you are burned out, take time to chat with your pastor so you can give God your best.

About the Author: Jessica Musetti lives in Columbus, Ohio, with her husband Mark. Jessica teaches Sunday school, plays piano, and helps direct VBS at Westerville FWB Church. She serves as secretary of Ohio WAC and Vice President of both the Central Ohio District and her local WAC.