

Class 5

# You were Created for a Purpose

# **SLIDE**

- You were put on Earth to make a contribution
  - God didn't create you simply to consume resources and take up space
- You were created for a PURPOSE
- God designed you to make a difference with your life
  - God wants you to give something back to those around you

# **SLIDE**

Your Purpose is SERVING OTHERS

## SLIDE

Serving others is called MINISTRY

- Ministry is your 4<sup>th</sup> Purpose
- Christ was clear in expressing the need for you to minister to the needs of others...

- Matthew 25:40 MSG
  - 40) Then the King will say, 'I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me you did it to me.'
- · Whenever you serve others in any way...
  - You are actually serving God
- God called you and saved you for this very purpose
- It's very important that we understand how this works:

# **SLIDE**

You are not saved BY your service to others

#### SLIDE

- You are saved SO THAT YOU CAN PROVIDE service to others
- · You serve others not because you feel obligated to
  - But, because you want to thank God for the great gift he has given you
- The way that you serve God...
  - And the way He WANTS to be served is by serving others
- Ministry doesn't mean becoming a pastor or a member of the clergy
  - It simply means to minister to the needs of those around you

- That is what God wants from you
  - To become a servant and to serve those around you
- Not all ministries are the same
  - But that doesn't make one less important than the others

God has chosen you for a specific purpose

#### SLIDE

- You have **TALENTS** and **ABILITIES** that God wants you to use in service to others
- You can't just sit back and watch others do it

#### SLIDE

- Matthew 20:28 AMP
  - Just as the Son of Man came not to be waited on but to **serve**, and to **give** his life as a ransom for many
- To Serve and to Give
  - These two words sum up Christ's life
  - And they sum up the calling you have received also

## SLIDE

- Because you have talents that God wants to use to serve and to give to others
- And, it's not really a choice you have either...

#### SLIDE

- Service is NOT OPTIONAL
  - It is the heart of Christian life
- Spiritual maturity is not an end in itself
  - You grow up in order to give out
- It is not enough to keep learning more and more
  - You have to act upon what you know and practice what you claim to believe
- Impression without expression causes depression

# **SLIDE**

STUDY without SERVICE leads to STAGNATION

- The whole reason we study the Word of God is to learn better how to serve those around us...
- If we never put that service into action, we never mature, we never grow, we never become who God wants us to become...
  - · We stagnate!
- We have a great object lesson in the two Seas found in the Promised Land
- The Sea of Galilee is alive, because it takes water in, but it also gives water out
  - The Dead Sea is dead, because it takes water in, but it has no outflow
- Don't look for another Bible study in your Ecclesia
  - Look for an opportunity in your Ecclesia in which you can SERVE and exercise your spiritual muscles
- Serving is the opposite of our natural inclination
  - You normally look to the Ecclesia to meet your needs
  - The mature follower of Christ looks to the Ecclesia to see which needs need to be met
- What matters to God is not the **DURATION** of your life
  - But the **DONATION** of it
- Not how long you lived
  - But how much you gave while you lived
- You were designed for service

• Like in all good design, Form follows Function

#### SLIDE

 Before God formed you, He decided what ROLE He wanted you to play during your time here on earth

You are the way you are, because God designed you for a SPECIFIC PURPOSE

# **SLIDE**

- A SPECIFIC MINISTRY!
- God planned every day of your life to help mold you into what He desired

#### SLIDE

- Psalm 139:16 MSG
  - Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, **The days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day.**
- God gave you the abilities, interests, talents, gifts and personality you have because He intends to use them to His glory
  - By identifying and understanding these factors, you can discover God's purpose for your life

#### SLIDE

- There are many factors that make up a person
- Let's talk about <u>5</u> of them, and share how you can discover them in your life, and put them to use for God's glory

## **SLIDE**

#### 1 - Your GIFTS

- God gives every believer different gifts
  - Not every believer gets the same gifts
  - But every believer gets gifts
- However we have come to understand the verses about gifts in the New Testament, we cannot deny them
- You may not believe in the Holy Spirit Gifts

- We may no longer have the gifts of healing or the gifts of tongues, but the Bible also speaks about gifts like:
  - Administration
  - Exhortation
  - Giving
  - Knowledge
  - Leadership
  - Mercy
  - Service
  - Teaching
  - Wisdom
- Any parent that has ever prayed for Wisdom in making a decision about how to handle a problem with their child knows that God does bless us with help beyond which we ever thought possible
- Any Arranging Board that has ever asked God to help them lead a troubled Brother or Sister knows that God's Holy Spirit is still active today
- We must believe that the power of God through his Holy Spirit is a fundamental part of our lives
  - If we didn't believe that the Holy Spirit was still at work in our Ecclesias today, then why would we pray before an exhortation for God to "be with the speaking Brother, so that his words may be your words..."
- God **DOES** gives believer gifts
  - But we don't all get them all
  - We all get different gifts

- Ephesians 4:7 MSG
  - 7) But that doesn't mean you should all look and speak and act the same. Out of the generosity of Christ, **each of us is given his own gift.**
- God planned it that way so that you would feel the need for each other
- You don't earn the gifts you are given and you don't deserve them
  - You also can't choose the kinds of gifts that you have

- Two common problems with gifts are:
  - Comparing your gifts to others
    - Feeling dissatisfied with what God has chosen to give you, and becoming jealous or resentful of others
  - Expecting everyone else to have your same gifts
    - Getting upset when they don't feel the same way about things that you do

Your gifts are an integral factor that make up who you are

# **SLIDE**

# 2 - You HEART

- The Bible uses the term Heart to describe the bundle of desires, hopes, interests, ambitions, dreams and affections that you have
- Your heart represents the source of all your emotions
  - What you love to do and what you care most about

- Proverbs 27:19 NIV
  - 19) As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.
- Your heart reveals the true you
  - Your heart determines what you say, what you do, and why you feel the way you do
- Another word for heart is PASSION
  - There are certain subjects that you feel passionate about
- God wants you to use your natural interests to serve Him and others
  - God wants you to do what you feel most passionate about

- When you are serving God from the heart, you will experience two things:
  - You will be very enthusiastic about it...
    - You won't have to drag yourself to do it
      - You will do it for the sheer enjoyment of doing it
  - You will be effective at it...
    - Few people excel at things they are not passionate about
      - When you do what God wired you to do, you get good at it

Who you are is due in large part to what is in your heart

## **SLIDE**

## 3 - Your ABILITIES

- Abilities are slightly different from gifts
- Abilities are the natural talents that you are born with
  - Gifts are the spiritual talents that God blesses you with at your rebirth
- Abilities are still given to us from God
  - Abilities are given to everyone, whether they are a believer or not...

- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:6 TEV
  - There are different abilities to perform service, but the same **God gives**ability to all for their particular service
- You are given literally hundreds of abilities
  - Tests show the average person has between 500 and 700 skills and abilities
- Every one of your abilities can be used for God's glory
  - God has a place where your special abilities can shine you have to find it

- Your abilities are not given to you just to make a living
  - God gave them to you for your ministry to others
    - He wants you to find a good use for them

Your abilities also make up who you are

#### SLIDE

## 4 - Your PERSONALITY

- It is obvious God loves variety
  - How else can you explain the Duck-billed Platypus?
- God designed introverts and extroverts
- God designed people who love routine and people who love variety
- God designed some people as thinkers and others as feelers
- God designed some people to work best on an **individual** assignment and some to work best on a **team**

- 1st Corinthians 12:5 PHP
  - 5) God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves His purpose through them all.
- There is no "right" or "wrong" temperament for ministry
  - The Ecclesia needs all types of personalities to balance it out
- Your personality will affect **HOW** and **WHERE** you use your gifts and abilities
- Two people might have the same gifts, but their different personalities will express it in a different way
- When you minister in a manner consistent with the personality that God gave you, you experience fulfillment, satisfaction and fruitfulness

Your personality obviously is a big part of what makes you you

# **SLIDE**

## **5 - Your EXPERIENCES**

- You have been shaped by the experiences in your life
  - God allowed them to happen in order to mold you
- Many types of experiences affect us:
  - Family
  - Educational
  - Vocational
  - Spiritual
  - Ecclesial
- But, there is one type of experience that affects more than any other:
  - PAINFUL
- You will probably be most effective in ministering to the needs of others in an area that you have had painful experiences in the past
  - God intentionally allows you to go through painful experiences in order to equip you for ministry to others
- Experiences in your life haven't simply happened to you randomly and by chance...
  - God brought them into your life because He knew that you could handle them, and He wanted you to learn something by them
- Something that you could share with others when the time came

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:4 MSG
  - 4) He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us.

- For God to use your painful experiences, you must be willing to share them
- You have to be willing to honestly admit your faults, failures and fears
  - People are always more encouraged when you share how God's grace helped you in your weakness than when you brag about your strengths
- Experience is not just what happens to you...
  - it's what you do with what happens to you!
- God deserves your best
  - God designed you for a purpose, and He expects you to make the most out of what you have been given
- If you try to serve God in way's you're not designed to serve Him, it's frustrating
  - The best use of your life is to serve God in the way you were designed

• To do this you have to discover what God's purpose is for your ministry

- Begin by assessing your GIFTS and ABILITIES
  - Take a long, honest look at what you are good at and what you are not good at
- Ask others to help you in this process...
  - Honestly, not just fishing for compliments
- Gifts and abilities are always confirmed by others
  - You might thing you are a gifted singer, but if no one else agrees...
- Consider asking those who you think might not like you very much
  - Your true reflection is found only in a dirty pool
- Experiment with different areas of service
  - Just start serving and you'll soon discover the things you are good at

- Next, consider your HEART and your PERSONALITY
  - You excel when you find something that combines what you are good at with what you love
- Ask yourself what you really enjoy most...
  - When do you feel most alive?
  - What are you doing when you simply lose track of time?
  - Do you like routine or variety?
  - Are you introverted or extroverted?

- Lastly, examine your past **EXPERIENCES** and extract the lessons you have learned
  - This is a perfect example of how keeping a journal of your spiritual lessons comes in helpful
- This process will take time
  - Give it time, but be diligent about actually thinking about it and not forgetting it
- Often this is readily apparent, as the experience is a major part of your history
  - Who better to minister to people who have lost a child
    - Than a parent who has?
  - Who better to minister to women who have been cheated on by their husbands
    - Than a woman who has?
- Often the area that you are being called to minister to others will stare you right in the face
- Once you have figured out what your ministry is...
  - Accept it
- Instead of trying to remold yourself to be like someone else enjoy who you are

- Part of accepting your role in the Ecclesia is recognizing your limitations
  - Nobody is good at everything So don't compare yourself with others!

- Galatians 6:4 MSG
  - 4) Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself.

    Don't compare yourself with others.
- If you start to compare yourself to others, you will run into two big problems:
  - You will always be able to find someone who is doing a BETTER job than you, and you will become DISCOURAGED
  - You will always be able to find someone who is doing a WORSE job than you, and you will become full of PRIDE
- Either attitude will hurt your ability to minister, and rob you of the joy of serving God
- Fail to use what you have been given, and you will lose it
  - Use the abilities you have, and God will increase them
- So, put your Gifts, Abilities, Talents, Heart and Personality to work in the Lord!
  - Start serving God
- Serve God by serving others
- Jesus measured greatness in terms of service, not status

- Mark 10:42-45 MSG
  - 42) Jesus got them together to settle things down. "You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around," he said, "and when people get a little power how quickly it goes to their heads.
  - 43) It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant.
  - 44) Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave.
  - 45) That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not to be served..."

- While knowing God's purpose for your life of ministry is important, having the heart of a servant is even more important
  - Don't find yourself making excuses to not help out, because "that's not really something I'm gifted at"
- The priest on the road to Jericho could have been a very gifted priest ...
  - That could clearly have been God's calling and purpose for him...
    - But, when there was no one else around to help the Samaritan...
      - HE should have stopped
- To do what's needed, and not just what you think you are best at, is the sign of a true servant's heart
- Anyone can be a servant, all it requires is character
- Your servant's heart reveals your maturity
- No special gift or ability is required to stay after meeting and pick up trash...
  - Those who are most mature are the ones who stack the chairs after the class...
- How do you tell if you have the heart of a servant?
- Here are 6 hints:

#### SLIDE

- 1 Real servants make themselves **AVAILABLE** to serve
- Servants don't fill up their time with other pursuits that would limit their availability
- Like a soldier, a servant is always standing by ready for duty

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:4 NIV
  - 4) No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer.

- If you only serve when it's convenient for you, then you are not a real servant
- Are you available to God anytime?
  - Can God mess up your plans without you getting resentful?
- A servant doesn't get to pick and choose when and where they get to serve
  - Being a servant means giving up the right to control your schedule, and allowing God to interrupt it whenever He wants to
  - Remind yourself of that everyday, and interruptions won't upset you as much

• If you want to be a Servant, you have to make yourself available at any time

- 2 Real servants pay ATTENTION to the needs of others
- Servants are always on the lookout for ways to help others
  - When God puts someone in need right in front of you, He is giving you the opportunity to grow as a servant
- We miss many occasions to serve because we lack sensitivity
  - Great opportunities to serve never last long
- As children, Thanksgiving Dinner is kind of like a feast at Hogwarts in Harry Potter
  - Magically, all the trays full of food appear
  - You eat and eat and eat until you are stuffed
  - Then drift off somewhere to find a couch to fall asleep on
- When you grow up...
  - You start to learn what goes on in the kitchen
- When you Mature...
  - You actually begin to help!

- 3 Real servants do their BEST with what they have
- Servants don't wait for better circumstances
  - If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done
- Less-than-perfect service is better than the best intentions
- Many people don't serve because they fear that they are not "good enough" to serve
  - God doesn't expect excellence from you
  - But, he does expect effort

## **SLIDE**

- 4 Real servants do every task with EQUAL dedication
- Whatever they do, servants do it "with all their heart"
  - The size of the task doesn't matter
  - · What only matters is that you do it with a good attitude

- Galatians 6:2-3 NLT
  - 2) Share each other's troubles and problems, and in this way obey the law of Christ.
  - If you think you are too important to help someone in need, you are only fooling yourself. You are really a nobody.
- Nothing is too menial for a real servant, it's in the small services that you grow like Christ
- Small tasks show a big heart
  - Nothing is beneath you if you have a servant's heart
- Great opportunities often disguise themselves in small tasks
  - I feel that one of my most effective counseling sessions was done one afternoon in the kitchen up to my elbows in soapy water

- There are always people willing to do the great things for God
  - God is also looking for people to do the small things
- The little boy that said to his father, "I can't wait until I'm a great big man like you, then I will go into the forest and kill a great big bear!"
  - "There's little bears in the forest too", said the father.

• If you're a servant, you give equal dedication to the big jobs as well as the small ones

## SLIDE

- 5 Real servants are **FAITHFUL** to their ministry
- Real Servants finish their tasks, fulfill their responsibilities, keep their promises, and complete their commitments
  - Real servants don't quit when they get discouraged
- Faithfulness is one of the things that God wants most from us
  - In all of your commitments, God wants you to be trustworthy and dependable
- Your Ecclesia should never have to improvise because you didn't prepare, or didn't show up, or didn't call to let someone know you weren't coming
- Can you be counted on by others?
  - God is testing your faithfulness You are letting God down, not just your Brothers and Sisters

## **SLIDE**

- 6 Real servants maintain a LOW profile
- Servants don't call attention to themselves

- Matthew 6:1 CEV
  - 1) When you do good deeds, **don't try to show off**. If you do, you won't get a reward from your Father in heaven.

- Real servants don't serve for the approval or applause of others
  - They serve out of gratitude and thanks to their Heavenly Father
- The most significant service is often the one that is unseen
- Don't get discouraged if you aren't noticed in the good that you...
  - · God sees it

- Service starts in your mind
- Developing the Heart of a Servant requires a mental shift, a change of attitude
- Real servants serve God with a mindset of 5 attitudes

#### SLIDE

- 1 Real Servants think more about OTHERS than about themselves
- Real servants focus on the needs of others instead of their own
- This is true humility:
  - Not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less

- Philippians 2:4 MSG
  - 4) Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.
- Don't let your service be self-serving
  - Don't serve to get others to like you or admire you
- Real servants don't use God for their purposes
  - They let God use them for his purposes
- Thinking like a servant challenges the basic problem of life
  - We are, by nature, selfish We think mostly about ourselves

• Thinking like a servant helps to change that and to think more about others instead

# SLIDE

- 2 Real Servants think like **STEWARDS**, not owners
- Real servants remember that God owns it all
  - A steward is a servant entrusted to manage an estate
- To become a real servant you are going to have to settle the issue of money in your life

## SLIDE

- Luke 16:13 NIV
  - 13) "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."
- Christ doesn't say, "you should not"
  - He says, "you cannot"!
- It is impossible
  - Living for ministry and living for money are mutually exclusive
- People are sidetracked by money more than anything else
  - "Once I meet this financial goal, then I can dedicate myself to serving God"
- When God is your master, then money serves you
  - If money becomes your master, then you serve it
- Wealth is not a sin, but failing to use it for God's glory is

#### SLIDE

 Think like a steward of God's money and property and vehicles, and not like the owner of it all

- 3 Real Servants think about THEIR work, not what others are doing
- Servants don't compare, criticize or compete with other servants

## SLIDE

- Galatians 5:25-26 NIV
  - 25) Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its implications in every detail of our lives.
  - That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.
- There is no place for jealousy between servants
  - When you are busy serving, you don't have time to criticize
- How petty Martha seemed when she complained to Jesus about Mary not doing her part - Even though in Martha's eyes, she was correct, she clearly wasn't looking at things through Jesus' eyes
- It is not your job to evaluate how another servant is doing
  - It is also not your job to defend yourself against the criticism of others
- One of the most beautiful acts of love ever shown to Jesus was criticized by his disciples
  - Your service to God is never wasted by what others say about it

#### SLIDE

• Concentrate on what you are doing, and don't worry about what others are up to

- 4 Real Servants think of their IDENTITY being based in Christ
- Servants don't have to prove their worth, because they realize that they are loved and accepted by God's grace

- Servants willingly accept jobs that others would consider "beneath them"
- One of the most profound examples of serving is Jesus' washing the disciple's feet
- The closest thing you can relate to what it is like washing someone's feet, is to pretend you are the guy at the airport that shines people's shoes
- The job was so menial that many people didn't even have their own family do it, but would hire a servant to be there at the beginning of the feast to take care of it
- Most of us wouldn't even think about doing something like this...
- Jesus was so comfortable with who he was, that this job didn't threaten his self-image
- Take a look at the context!

- John 13:3-5 NIV
  - 3) **Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power**, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;
  - 4) **so he got up from the meal**, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.
  - 5) After that, he poured water into a basin **and began to wash his disciples' feet**, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.
- If you are going to be a servant, you must settle your identity with Christ
  - Only people who are secure about who they are can effectively serve
- Insecure people are always worrying about how they might appear to others
  - The more insecure you are, the more you will want people to serve you
- When you base your worth and your identity on your relationship with God...
  - You are freed from the expectations of others

#### SLIDE

Base your identity with Christ, and you will have the mind of a servant

#### SLIDE

5 - Real Servants think of ministry as an OPPORTUNITY not an obligation

- Servants enjoy helping people
  - They serve with gladness
- Because they love the Lord
  - Because they are grateful for God's grace
- It is an opportunity to serve...
  - Not a responsibility, an obligation, or a chore...
- That is the attitude of a Real Servant
  - That is the attitude that God is looking for
- Do you think that you are the kind of Servant that God is looking for?
  - Are you maybe a little bit afraid that you don't have what it takes to be a Real Servant?
  - Are you afraid that you are a little weak in this area? You're in luck!

- God LOVES to use WEAK PEOPLE
  - And everyone has weaknesses
- The real question is:
  - What are you going to do with your weaknesses?
- Usually we deny your weaknesses, defend them, excuse them, and hide them
  - This prevents God from using them the way He desires
- God has a different way of looking at weaknesses

- 1st Corinthians 1:27 NIV
  - 27) ... God chose the **weak things** of the world to shame the strong...

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:9 NIV
  - 9) But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

## **SLIDE**

\* God loves to use weak people

# **SLIDE**

- Your weaknesses are not an ACCIDENT
  - God allowed them into your life to demonstrate his power through you
- God has never been impressed with the strong or self-sufficient
  - God is drawn to people who are weak and not afraid to admit it

## SLIDE

- A weakness ISN'T a sin or character DEFECT that you can change...
  - Like impatience

## SLIDE

- A weakness is a **LIMITATION** that you inherited or have no power to change
  - It may be physical, emotional, or intellectual

#### SLIDE

- God is NOT LIMITED by your LIMITATIONS
  - If you will let him work in you, He can show forth wonderful things

## SLIDE

• Try these **4** steps in regards to your weaknesses

#### SLIDE

1 - ADMIT your weaknesses

- Own up to your imperfections
  - Be honest with yourself
- Stop pretending you have it all together
  - Admit that you are human and frail

## 2 - Be CONTENT with your weaknesses

- This doesn't seem to make sense, you want to be freed from your weaknesses, not content with them, right?
- Look at what Paul said though,

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:9-10 NLT
  - 9) ...So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may work through me.
  - 10) Since I know it is all for Christ's good, I am quite content with my weaknesses and with insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
- · Contentment is an expression of faith in the goodness of God
  - Contentment shows that you believe that God knows what's best for you
- Accepting your weaknesses allows you to depend on God
  - Accepting your weaknesses helps to prevent arrogance
- God often attaches a major weakness to a major strength to keep your ego in check
- Your weaknesses also encourages fellowship among believers
  - You come to realize that you do need others to help you through
- Most importantly, your weaknesses increase your capacity for sympathy
  - You are far more likely to be compassionate and considerate of the weaknesses of others, if you have come to accept your own

- God uses your greatest weaknesses as tools to encourage others
- God specializes in turning weaknesses into strengths
  - He wants to take your greatest weakness and transform it

So learn to be content with them!

#### SLIDE

- 3 Honestly **SHARE** your weaknesses
- Ministry begins with vulnerability
  - The more you let your guard down, the more God will be able to use you in serving others
- Of course, it's scary to open yourself up like that to others
  - But, it's emotionally liberating
- You know that God "gives grace to the humble"
  - Humility isn't putting yourself down or denying your strengths
- Humility is being honest about your weaknesses
  - The more honest you are, the more of God's grace you get
- People are attracted to humble people
  - But repelled by pretentious people
- Your strengths create competition
  - Your weaknesses create community

- 4 GLORY in your weakness
- Instead of posing as a model of self-confidence
  - Consider yourself a trophy of God's grace

- Don't be ashamed of the fact you have weaknesses
  - Glory in the fact that God uses them to work out His purpose

- 1st Corinthians 12:5 NLT
  - 5) ... I am going to boast only about my weaknesses...
- Remember that God uses weak people to show forth His greatness
  - Be happy that God is able to use you to His glory

# **SLIDE**

- You were created for a purpose
- You were created for the purpose of serving others
- You will find only find true happiness when you fulfill this purpose

# SLIDE

• MINISTRY is one of God's purposes for you