**Discovery of Your Ministry #1**

**By Del Dunavant, D.Min.**

1. Jesus’ mission statement (life’s motto) is recorded in Matt 20:28, “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

A. God’s kingdom is all about blessing others. Currently our universe has two conflicting philosophies; (1) you’re happiest helping others, or (2) you’re happiest when focused mainly upon yourself. Which is true for you?

B. Clearly, Jesus throughout His earthly life was primarily focused upon helping others. Should not those who claim to follow Him have the same focus; have the same “life mission”? Christian pew-warmer is an oxymoron!

1. Others in heaven love to serve.
2. “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14)
3. Angels love to serve others. Ellen White wrote, “Our Saviour's joy was in the uplifting and redemption of fallen men. For this He counted not His life dear unto Himself, but endured the cross, despising the shame. So angels are ever engaged in working for the happiness of others. This is their joy. That which selfish hearts would regard as humiliating service, ministering to those who are wretched and in every way inferior in character and rank, is the work of sinless angels. The spirit of Christ's self-sacrificing love is the spirit that pervades heaven and is the very essence of its bliss. This is the spirit that Christ's followers will possess, the work that they will do.” (SC:77.2)
4. Heaven’s greatest joy is serving others. “Self-sacrificing love” must be the greatest distinguishing characteristic of those who hope to be in heaven! No wonder Jesus said in John 13:35, “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”
5. Jesus said in Mark 10:43-44, “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”
6. The Holy Spirit empowers those He employs.
7. He empowered former slaves to build the wilderness sanctuary (Ex. 31:3)
8. He empowered former slaves to be Israel’s administrators (Num. 11:16-25)
9. He empowered “Judges” (military governors) to overthrow Israel’s oppressors. (Judges 3:10, 1 Sam 10:6)
10. He empowered His prophets to speak in His behalf. (2 Sam. 23:2, Ezek. 11:5)
11. The New Testament further clarifies the role of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is said to give “spiritual gifts” to Christians to empower them to serve.
12. One doesn’t need a seminary degree to serve God. We have Someone better than any formal earthly training.
13. The Holy Spirit walks beside us (to empower us, John 14:16-17), convicting others (John 16:8-10, using heaven’s resources to woo others into His kingdom). Our role is minor in comparison to His role. Yoked with the Holy Spirit to do ministry, we have nothing to fear.
14. We are called to serve, because this is what we need to spiritually mature us and to prepare us for what lies ahead. (Eph. 4:13-16)
15. The foot-washing service is more than just an example of humility. When we partake of this symbol, we are pledging to lead a life of service.
16. We are God’s royal priests (1 Pet. 2:9, Rev. 1:6, and Rev. 20:6). If we are not willing to serve Him now, how could we serve Him throughout eternity?
17. Unfortunately, not every member serves, not every member functions as God desires. Note what Ellen White said about this.
18. Unbelief, like the pall of death, is surrounding our churches, because they do not exercise the talents God has given them, by imparting the light to those who know not the precious truth. The Lord calls for the pardoned souls, those who rejoice in the light, to make known the truth to others. (ChS 37.2)
19. Satan is now seeking to hold God's people in a state of inactivity, to keep them from acting their part in spreading the truth, that they may at last be weighed in the balance and found wanting. (1T: 260)
20. Our future for eternity is at stake. The churches are withering up because they have failed to use their talents in diffusing light. (ChS 58:6)
21. Ellen White wrote, “The greatest cause of our spiritual feebleness as a people is the lack of real faith in spiritual gifts. If they all received this kind of testimony in full faith, they would put from them those things which displease God, and would everywhere stand in union and in strength. And three fourths of the ministerial labor now expended to help the churches could then be spared to the work of rising up churches in new fields.” *Review and Herald*, January 14, 1868
22. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 12:1 “Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.” How knowledgeable are we about this topic? How well do we use these spiritual gifts to mature God’s saints so they can advance His kingdom?
23. So, what are spiritual gifts? They are NOT –
24. Talents, everyone has talents, but only Christians have spiritual gifts. (God sometimes blesses talents to be used in His work).
25. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The fruit of the Spirit is what we are, spiritual gifts is what we do.
26. The same as counterfeit gifts (see Matt. 7:21-23, Ex. 7:10-12)
27. Done without love (1 Cor. 13:1-3)
28. A spiritual gift is that special ability given by the Holy Spirit to spiritually mature His children so they can advance His kingdom.
29. Every Believer receives one of more spiritual gifts, see 1 Pet. 4:10, 1 Cor. 12:7 & 11, and the Parable of the Talents, Matt. 25:14-30
30. One of the major passages on spiritual gifts is found in Eph. 4:11- 16. “Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” Note the following;
31. The leadership gifts (vs. 11) are to be used to (vs. 12) equip God’s people to do His work and build up His church. Every member is a minister!
32. This work continues until we become spiritual mature, measuring up to fullness of Christ (vs. 13). Are we there yet?
33. The results are fourfold, (1) we are no longer spiritual immature (vs. 14) and (2) we will not be deceived (vs. 14), (3) we are becoming more like Christ (vs. 15), and (4) Christ’s church is growing as He desires (vs. 16) Would you like to experience this?
34. Where in the Bible are most spiritual gifts mentioned? (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, & Eph. 4:11-16) See handout, “Where-sp-gifts” on this.
35. What are the prerequisites to receiving one’s spiritual gift(s)?
36. You must be a converted Christian (1 Cor.12:3)
37. You must believe that God wants to give you one or more spiritual gifts (Heb 11:6)
38. You must pray for wisdom to use these gifts (James 1:5)
39. You must be willing to work – use these gifts – to glorify God (Joel 2:28-29)
40. When serving remember what Ellen White wrote, “Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” MH:143
41. For a summary of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible see handout “Spiritual Gifts Summary.”