

THE WORK GOD SHAPED YOU TO DO

Work Matters • Part 3 & 4

Discussion Guide

*“You (God) shaped me—first inside, then out;
you formed me in my mother’s womb...
You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body;
You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit...
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!”*

Psalm 139:13-16 (MSG)

You are unique; a true one-of-a-kind. You are unlike any other person who ever was or ever will be. Of the billions of people on earth, no two are exactly identical. That’s how much God cares about you. You are *not* an accident. God made you in a special way and gave you a special SHAPE, which can be discovered by taking a look at your **S**piritual gifts; **H**ear; **A**bilities; **P**ersonality; and **E**xperiences. With these five indicators as your guide, you can find the work God shaped you to do.

Open your group with a prayer. This is only a guide – select the points you want to discuss.

WHY IS MY SHAPE IMPORTANT?

IT REVEALS GOD’S PURPOSE FOR ME AND IT EQUIPS ME FOR MY LIFE MISSION AND MESSAGE.

*“Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you.
Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you.”*

Jeremiah 1:5 (MSG)

1. God told Jeremiah that he designed him for a great purpose. According to Jeremiah 1:5, *when* did God begin forming his plans for Jeremiah’s life? *What* kinds of plans were they, and what do you think that means?

“The people I have shaped for myself will broadcast my praises.”

Isaiah 43:21 (NJB)

2. Read aloud Isaiah 43:21. Now several of you say this verse in your own words. Why is understanding God’s purpose for our lives important?

HOW DO I FIND THE WORK I’M SHAPED FOR?

I EXAMINE & EVALUATE MY SHAPE; I EXPERIMENT & TEST; I STEP OUT IN FAITH

*“Dreaming all the time instead of working is foolishness.
And there is ruin in a flood of empty words.”*

Ecclesiastes 5:7 (NLT)

3. Not everything I desire to do, am I shaped to do. Share a time you discovered something you were doing was not right for you, even though you’d wanted to do it. Was there a time you discovered a gift you didn’t know you had?

“Put these abilities to work: throw yourself into your tasks so everyone may notice your improvement and progress.”

1 Timothy 4:15 (LB)

4. Throughout Joseph’s life, God continued to shape him into becoming a leader, one acknowledged by Pharaoh, and one who eventually saved not only his people, but the world. Discuss with your small group the importance of persevering through trying times in seeking God’s will.

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. Do you ever feel frustrated, fatigued, or like a failure at work? These are indicators that we may not be doing what God shaped us to do. How can we be *certain* it’s time for a change?

2. What kind of work is easy for you to focus on? Where do you feel fulfilled? When have you seen meaningful results from work you’ve done? Discuss how these indicators can help you discover the work you’ve been shaped to do.

Review any assignments or commitments made during your previous meeting.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

As a child, how did you respond when asked what you wanted to be when you grew up?

Recognize that God has given each of us a unique SHAPE and until we discover it we cannot fulfill our purpose in life. Living our SHAPE brings him glory and helps us to be focused, fulfilled, and fruitful.

Conclude your time together by committing your work to God. Pray something like, *“Jesus, today I commit my work to you. I commit my life completely to you. I commit my future, my relationships, my income, and all the issues of my life completely to you. Help me to live after your divine plan for me. In Your name, amen.”*

Preparing to Lead Your Group

Pray for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.

Plan where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.

Ponder your progress after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the

questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.

Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.

The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.

Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.

Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.