

## SERIES: MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## PART 1: DISCOVERING YOUR GOD-GIVEN DESIGN

Welcome back home, precious family. If you are a guest with us today, or you have begun attending recently, we are a multigenerational and multicultural church family. We are thrilled that you are with us today, and if you have been with us in the last few weeks or months, and we trust you sense that you are loved and accepted for who you are.

Today we start one of the most important series I will ever do here. We started in 2011 our DECADE OF DESTINY campaign. We have two years until we complete it. 2018 we have declared is **THE YEAR OF BREAKTHROUGH**. I recommend that you go onto our website, and you can browse through the series we have covered so far. We actually did a 12 week series on what the process of breakthrough looks like for you personally. I am still hearing comments about how profound that has been for so many of you. Last week we finished our 8 week series on I'M NOT ANGRY. I continue to hear from many of you how groundbreaking of a series that was and is for you.

I confess that I believe that this series could be one of the most life changing yet. Why? did you know in one cubic inch of snow there are eighteen million snowflakes? Not one of those snowflakes is like the other of the eighteen million.

Father God could have created us all to be alike, but He didn't. Why? Because an original is always worth more than a copy. You are worth far more as an original than you are as a copy of someone else. God says you are valuable. God created you, Jesus died on the cross for, and, when you surrender your life to Jesus, God's Holy Spirit lives in you. Loved ones, that's how much you matter to God.

The Bible is very clear that God has specifically shaped every human being to His customized standard. You are unique. There is no one else like you in the world. Whitney gave this to me for Christmas. (**Mug pic**) We see this when God created the first human couple in Genesis chapter 1 & 2. This morning (afternoon) we're talking about discovering why God made you the way He did. Genesis 2:7 in the New Jerusalem Bible says, "**God shaped man from the soil of the ground and blew the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being.**" The Bible tells us that God specifically shaped and designed us just the way He wanted us to be. We get a very intimate picture of the lengths God has gone to shape us in Psalm 139:13-16 in the New Century Version. "**You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.**  
<sup>14</sup>**Thank You for making me so wonderfully complex!**  
**Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.**  
<sup>15</sup>**You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.** <sup>16</sup>**You saw me before I was born.**" Please circle some of these key words. **You made** all the delicate parts of my body. **You knit** me together. What is the author saying?

That God was shaping you from conception on. The Bible says God made me, formed me, watched me, shaped me. God put me together, and God planned every day of my life before I was ever born.

Loved ones, can you see why abortion is so deadly and wrong. Abortion short-circuits a human being that God had planned from the very beginning. God says, “I formed and shaped, and I thought you up before you were even conceived.” God obviously believes that a fertilized egg is a real human being. It’s not just the sperm and egg together. It is a human being that God created. Please read with me Job 10:8a, **“You formed me with Your hands; You made me.”** What does this mean? Regardless of the circumstances of your birth, you’re not an accident. There are accidental parents but no accidental babies. There are illegitimate parents but no illegitimate children. Your parents might not have planned you, but God did. You matter to Him. You are a person of worth, significance and value. God went through this extraordinary process to give birth to you because He wanted you to be an original. He wanted you to be who you are. The idea of DISCOVERING YOUR SHAPE is part of being a purpose driven church. Why? Because your God-given shape determines all of the outcomes of your life. Your SHAPE determines what kind of friends you will have. The kind of person you will marry. Your SHAPE determines the kinds of tests and temptations you will face in life. Your SHAPE determines how certain things frustrate you more than your wife, husband, child, or parents. You’re shaped differently. Your SHAPE determines the best work

environments for you. The best ministry for you. Your SHAPE indicates where you are more prone to fail and where you have your best chances to succeed. Your SHAPE is all about God's specific design so that you can fulfill Ephesians 2:10, "**For we (you) are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.**" You are shaped by God so you can MAKE A DIFFERENCE in this world. You are shaped to make a Kingdom difference. So how do you figure out the difference you were designed to make? You start with your God-given design. This is what we will do for the next 5 weeks.

## I. What is my S.H.A.P.E.?

On your notes, **S stands for your Spiritual gifts.** When you surrender your life to Jesus Christ, He has already given you abilities, but He also wants to give you Spiritual gifts by His Holy Spirit. He gifts you so you can serve Him by serving His people—His church, and the world. We will look at how to **engage your spiritual gifts.**

**H stands for your heart.** This has to do with your passion. What is the thing that gets you up in the morning? What drives and motivates what you see as God's preferred vision for you. There are certain things you're passion about and other things you don't care anything about. We have members of CVCHURCH who are insanely passionate about their own children and the children that God grants us to serve here in Kids' Place!. They can't wait to see you bring

your children to Kids' Place!. They pray for and talk about your children when they are alone. Children are their passion.

Kathe and I received a prophecy from Dick Mills that our home will be a house of healing. We are preparing to buckle down and follow what is called the Wahls protocol. It is a very specific way of eating. The Doctor who came up with this has been healed through this way of eating of MS and has seen many people with mental illness diagnosis healed and leading diseases healed. This has just unleashed within me a greater desire than ever to create a lifestyle of healing in me and all of you who are willing to learn new ways to eat the kind of food that truly can heal whatever ails you. That is part of my God-given shape. Another passion of mine is to share the truth about the 7 areas of S.E.R.F.V.I.P. What passions are you getting in touch with? What passions are you willing to pray and ask God to reveal to you?

**A stands for abilities.** What natural abilities has God given you, and what abilities have you honed through practice and learning how to use them? Who has mentored you in how to use your specific talents and skills? Identify them, because this is part of your God-given shape and design, and God will use them to serve Him and bless others.

**P stands for your personality.** This is where we look to answer the question, "**How has God wired me?**" We all navigate life differently. Some of us in this room are very competitive. Some of us are very cooperative. Some of us are extroverts, and some of us are introverts. Some of you are

self-expressive, while others of us are self-controlled. Some of us in the room just love variety, while others in this room just love to be around routine. God takes a man and a woman in a marriage and puts routine and variety together. How has God wired you? Remember that the kind of environment and nurture you received growing up greatly and deeply impacts every area of your God-given S.H.A.P.E.

**E stands for experiences.** We all have a large amount of experiences in our lives. Many of us have had experiences that have traumatized our lives, and we work overtime to make sure that no one ever finds out about them. I cannot say strongly enough of how proud I am of you, CVCHURCH, and especially those of you who have been willing and are planning on sharing your experiences with your CVCHURCH family. So many of you have said to me just how life impacting and transformative it was to hear 11 outstanding testimonies of those who shared their past experiences with us in our 12 week series entitled **THE PROCESS OF CHANGE**. We heard stories of sex addiction, drug abuse, alcoholic abuse, parental neglect, sexual, physical, emotional, and verbal abuse, and how their willingness to bring these issues to Jesus and to His people has brought profound healing. Question: What experiences in your past might just be holding you back from advancing God's Kingdom purposes in you and through you? I am praying that God will challenge you to get in touch with those experiences that satan has meant for harm and to shut your life down, and that you will bring them out into the light and let God's love, acceptance and forgiveness heal you and open

your life to impact others to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ and make a difference. These five elements of your life—Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experiences—are the things that make you who you are. They are God’s unique design for who God wanted you to be. This leads us to Pt II.

## **II. Why should I care about my S.H.A.P.E.?**

### **A. Because my S.H.A.P.E. reveals God's purpose for me**

The first way you find out what God wants you to do with your life is to discover how He has shaped and designed you. The better you understand God’s design and shape the greater clarity you will have concerning what God’s will is for you. Architects have a phrase that goes like this: Form follows function. All architects know this. Form follows function. What that means is tell me what you want the building to be used for, then I’ll tell you how to form it. Tell me what the function of the building is, and I’ll tell you how to build it. But with our lives it’s the exact opposite. Human beings function follows form. In other words, figure out how God shaped me, and then I’ll know what His purpose is for my life. As I figure out how He formed me, then I’ll know His will for the rest of my life. As I figure out how God wired me, that will give me a good clue as to what He expects me to do. God does not give me gift, heart, ability, personality, and experience in one area and then say, “By the way, we’re going to ignore all that. I want you to do this over here that you hate to do and you’re bad at.” If you’re good at

something it's a pretty good indication that that's what God wants you to do. We will unpack all of this in greater detail in the weeks ahead. Make sure not to miss one week, and invite your family and friends to come and join you. What a great series to invite non-Christians to. Knowing how God has shaped you gives you direction for your life. Jeremiah 1:5 in The Message paraphrase says, "**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: A spokesman to the nations—that's what I had in mind for you.**" Loved ones, before God shaped you in the womb He knew all about you. Before you were born He had and has holy plans for you. Wow. Here's the thing. God won't force you to do His plan. You can waste your life. You can use it on all kinds of personal, self-centered things and totally miss God's plan and purpose for your life. Most people do. That's the tragedy. God says, "Before you were even born, I had holy plans for you." This can give you a sense of confidence that God has you in His hands.

## **B. Because it equips me to serve God by serving others**

These truths are spoken to in detail in our LD Development 301 seminar that Pastor Kathe and her team teach. Once you go to LD 101, and decide to belong to your CVCHURCH Family through an intentional commitment to membership, then you go to LD 201 on how to mature spiritually, then you will go to LD 301. God equips you to serve Him through God-given design and shape. The Bible says much about how God has equips you and His ongoing equipping in your life.

Romans 12:6 says, “**In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.**” God wants you to excel in your ability to serve Him, His church and His world. So He graces and grants you differing gifts. This is why we’re better together. 1 Corinthians 12:7 & 18 says, “**A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other....**<sup>18</sup> **But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where He wants it.**” This is why we believe that your commitment to your local church is so important. We want and need everyone who calls CVCHURCH their home church to be involved in a ministry that fully engages your SHAPE. 1 Peter 4:10 says, “**God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.**” He desires that you make a difference in your family, where you work, in your church family and in the world. You do that in the best way possible when you discover your God-given design, and you throw yourself into serving God by serving others.

### C. Because life is a test

Knowing your shape is imperative, because this life is your preparation for eternity. God says, “I’m testing you to see what you will do with what you’ve been given on earth.” Somehow, obedience to His purpose and plan for our lives here impacts and influences our eternity in Heaven with Jesus. The first question you will be asked as you stand before the Father in what is called the final judgment is this: “What did you do with My Son Jesus Christ?” He’s not going to ask you whether you were Catholic, or Baptist, or

Buddhist, or Jewish, or Muslim. He is going to ask you, “Did you surrender your life to My Son and His Lordship, or did you reject Him? I sent Him to earth to be your Savior. He died on the cross for you. Did you accept Him and what He did for you, or did you dismiss Him? Did you receive My forgiveness and acceptance and repent of your sins and live your shape out in fulfilling My purposes and plans for your life?” The 2<sup>nd</sup> question is one about stewardship. What did you do with what you were given for His Kingdom? Knowing your shape and fulfilling it aids you in responding to all of the tests that God sends your way. Psalm 33:14-15 in The Message says, “**From where He sits God overlooks all of us on earth. He has shaped each person in turn; now He watches everything we do.**”

#### **D. Because it brings God glory**

When you serve God with your shape and His Divine design it brings you a great sense of significance, value and worth, but even greater than that, it brings glory to God. Jesus is the best example of this truth. Matthew 3:16-17 says, “**After His baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on Him.<sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is My dearly loved Son, who brings Me great joy.’**” When you live your life in devotion and you’re obedient to the life God has planned for you, you bring Him great glory by bringing Him great joy. When I witness Kathe, Benjamin and Whitney living out their shape for Jesus Christ, it brings Him great glory and it brings me great joy. You

bring great joy and glory to the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit when you are fully engaged every day living out God's purpose and plans for your life in the SHAPE He designed specifically for you. Isaiah 43:7 says, "**Bring Me all the people who are Mine, whom I made for My glory, those I formed and created.**"

### **III. How should I respond?**

#### **A. Acceptance: Demonstrates that I believe God knows best**

This is where you choose to say, "God, when You made me, You knew what You were doing. I am not going to fight You over my shape, design and Your purpose and plans for my life." It comes down to the matter of trust. Do I believe that God made a mistake when He made me? The truth is that I have made many mistakes in my life, and I have caused myself and others a lot of pain and misery, but that is not God's fault, and He has the ability to take my sinful choice and attitudes, and turn them around for my good and His glory when I accept who He is and how He has shaped me. Did you know when you reject yourself you are in essence rejecting God, because He is your Creator. He takes responsibility for your creation and life. Many people secretly hold grudges against God, because they are not exactly the way they would like to be. God says, "No, I made you exactly to be you, because I want to be with you. That includes your weaknesses as well as your strengths. Both of them can bring Me glory. Just start being who I made you to

be, and stop trying to be like someone else. Stop trying to please your parents, husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, or any other influencers in your life, and simply be to the fullest I have made you to be.” It is actually quite arrogant to reject yourself and to reject who God has made you to be. In Romans 9:20 in the CEV, “**My friends, I ask, ‘Who do you think you are to question God? Does the clay have the right to ask the Potter why He shaped it the way He did?’**” Whenever we doubt God’s love, and whenever we doubt God’s wisdom, we always get into trouble. The root behind the majority of your problems is you don’t trust God. You struggle to believe God really loves you and that He really has your best interest at heart. When you accept God’s plans for your life you are able to fight off the bitterness, anger and frustration that keep you from being the woman, from being the man, God meant for you to be. Remember the Bible says you were custom-designed by God Himself. Job 10:10 says, “**You guided my conception and formed me in the womb.**” You have all of the basics that God wanted you to have. Now, through your surrender of your life to Jesus, and with your faith community, He wants you to get about the business of living out your SHAPE and His design.

## **B. Salvation: I receive God’s love**

The second response is to say to God, “I want Your love, Father, to shape my life with the salvation as You promised.” Psalm 119:41 in the NLT says, “**Lord give me your unfailing love, the salvation that You promised me.**” The same verse in The Message paraphrase says, “**Let your love,**

**God, shape my life with salvation, exactly as You promised.”** You are loved by Jesus Christ, and what Jesus did on the cross proves it. He loves you. He says, “I have created you, shaped you, designed you, and saved you, and I have a plan for your life. I want you to receive My love and acceptance for you.”

### **C. Refocus: I develop my character**

This is what we’ll be doing more of in this series. This is what we have been doing all year long, because nothing is more important than your character. We focus way too much on our exterior and not enough on what is going on in the inside of us. In our society we are obsessed with outward appearance. It’s in every television show, every magazine, newspaper, and movie. As a society, we’re spending billions of dollars in order to look good and be accepted and respected by others. God taught Samuel the prophet this very lesson in 1 Samuel 16:6-7a, “**When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, ‘Surely this is the Lord’s anointed!’** <sup>7</sup>**But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him.’**” In other words, God has His own plan for you, and it won’t always look like you think it should. Even David, the Bible says, was good looking and had handsome eyes; it was his heart that God was looking for. The Bible calls David a man after God’s heart. Even though he did some terrible things, his heart was always for God, because he would repent and turn away from his wicked ways. In the next five weeks we’re going to unpack all of the material that I have

shared with you today. I believe that satan will do everything he can to keep you away from church for the next five weeks, because this is life-transforming truth I will be sharing with you. This is a perfect series to invite your family and friends to come and share with you. My goal for you in this series is to help you become a confident person in who Jesus Christ has shaped and designed you to be. Let's pray.