

Core Values

Mark 12:28-34

This morning we will continue on a journey we began about a month-and-a-half ago (on February 10th) – a journey that’s designed to help us discover our God-given potential. During our journey we’ve talked about life gifts, spiritual gifts, and personality types.

Life gifts are things we’re good at ... things that come naturally ... things we

enjoy doing. Life gifts are God-given abilities (see James 1:17) and are closely related to life interests. Your special blend of interests and abilities define who you are – the unique person God created you to be.

God has good things in mind for you to do (see Eph. 2:10) and wants you to use your life gifts for his honor and glory. As you use your life gifts for the Lord, you will be a great blessing to others AND you will be greatly blessed.

All human beings have life gifts, but only those who accept Jesus as Savior and Lord have spiritual gifts. When you accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit of God comes to live within you.

Spiritual gifts are manifestations of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12:7) – signs and expressions of the Holy Spirit working in you and through you, enabling you to do things you could not do on your own.

Every follower of Jesus has at least one spiritual gift. Many followers of Jesus

have several spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit determines who gets what gift or gifts (see 1 Cor. 12:11).

The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts to serve others (1 Pet. 4:10), for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7), so that the Body of Christ – the Church – may be built up (Eph. 4:11,12). In the Body of Christ all spiritual gifts are important and all members of the Body of Christ must use their gifts for the Church to function properly (see 1 Cor. 12:12-31).

As followers of Jesus we have life gifts AND spiritual gifts. We also have God-given personality types. Our preferences – things that appeal to us – are closely related to our personality type. No personality type is better or worse, just different in its approach to life. Every personality type has its own strengths and every personality type can be used to honor and glorify God.

Listen carefully. God has a special place for you in life. And until you find

**that place and put yourself in that place,
you will never experience a fulfilled life.**

**Knowing your God-given personality and
gifts will help you to understand yourself,
those around you, and the settings and
situations that bring out your best.**

**That said let's take the next step of our
self-discovery journey and talk about core
values.**

**I want you to think for a moment
about what you value. Think about
things that are important to you ... things**

**that define your fundamental character
...things that give meaning to your life
and work ...things that influence the
decisions you make ... things that compel
you to take a stand. Your values provide
additional clues to who you are, why
you're here, and what you do best.**

**All followers of Jesus should have
certain values in common. When Jesus
was asked which commandment was the
greatest (which commandment was the
most important), he answered, "Love the**

**Love your God with all your heart and
with all your soul and with all your mind
and with all your strength ... and love
your neighbor as yourself” (Mark
12:30,31). All followers of Jesus should
agree that it’s important to love God and
people. That’s what being a follower of
Jesus is all about.**

**While all followers of Jesus should
have certain values in common, not every
follower of Jesus will have the same
values. Some of the things that are**

important to you may not be that important to someone else.

Our season of life will determine some of our values. As times and circumstances change, so do our values.

Varying circumstances can also affect how we prioritize our values.

Knowing your values will help you to understand how and where you can use your life gifts and spiritual gifts.

Knowing your values will help you to understand why certain vocations and

ministry/service opportunities are better choices for you.

This morning as we go through some exercises to discover our core values, I want us to consider two questions.

The first question is this: “Does my life reflect my values?” “Is my life in conflict or in harmony with what’s important to me?” The purpose of this first question is to determine if there is a gap (small or large) between who we are and who we want to be.

The second question is this: “Are my values the values God wants me to have? For followers of Jesus, this second question is more important than the first one. It’s more important because it has to do with the lordship of Christ. If Jesus is the Lord of your life (he should be; this is what following Jesus is all about), he will influence your values. The purpose of this second question is to determine if there’s a gap (small or large) between who we are and who God wants us to be.

As we consider these questions, we need to remember that no one – not even the most mature follower of Jesus – is perfect. We’re all works in progress. The Apostle Paul talks about this in Philippians 3:12-14. He says, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is

**behind and straining toward what is
ahead, I press on toward the goal to win
the prize for which God has called me
heavenward in Christ Jesus.”**

**The Apostle Paul realized that he
wasn't everything God wanted him to be
...he realized that he wasn't perfect – that
he hadn't arrived. Paul was well aware of
his shortcomings and dealt with them.**

**But he didn't dwell on them. He pressed
on. And because he pressed on, he grew
in the faith and became more like Jesus.**

You and I need to follow Paul's example. Yes, we all need to take a good look at our life and deal with our shortcomings. But we don't have to dwell on them. As Paul says, we need to forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead.

Listen carefully. You and I need to enjoy who we are and where you are in Christ. We need to enjoy the moment. But we must never get so comfortable that we become complacent and stagnate.

There's always room for improvement.

And we need to keep improving. We need to press on. That's what growing in the Lord is all about.

Enough said. Are you ready to get to work? Ready or not, here we go! Class is now in session! We're going to do some of the work here and now and the rest will be homework.

I want you to go to the page on your handout that's titled "Values

Clarification Exercise.” We’re going to take a few minutes and fill this out.

As you evaluate each listed value, use the following prompt: “As I make important decisions, this is how I value” If the listed value is VERY IMPORTANT to you, put the number one in front of it. Limit yourself to eight very important values. If the listed value is IMPORTANT to you, put the number two in front of it. If the listed value is NOT VERY IMPORTANT to

you, put the number three in front of it.

Take about five minutes and do this.

Hopefully you were able to come up with eight very important values. For homework I'd like you to fill in the appropriate information and answer the questions on the other three pages of your handout. Simply follow the directions and do the work.

I hope that you are doing the work I'm asking you to do and saving the handouts because ultimately we will list all

important information (your life gifts, your spiritual gifts, your personality type, your values, etc.) on one sheet of paper (I'll hand this out). If you've missed any of the self-discovery messages/sessions, there are handouts on the front pew.

Please take the time to do this work. It's important. As I've said before, this work will help you to determine your place in life. Until you find your place in life (where God wants you to be) and put

**yourself in that place, you will never
experience a fulfilled life.**

**Let's pray. "Lord God, show me what
you would have me value. I understand
that not all of us need to have the same
values, but I want to know your will for
me in this area. Help me to listen to no
one but you as I clarify what is most
important to me. Show me how to work
these values into the decisions I make
about how to live, where to work, and
how to serve you. Amen."**