

My D.E.S.I.G.N. for Ministry

(Part 2 of 2)

Disclaimer: The following are Dr. Jeff Stott's sermon notes and manuscript. They have not been carefully proofed for spelling or grammar. They are printed and given "as is." All Scripture quotes are from the New International Version unless noted.

Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." You are God's workmanship. You are His creation. He designed you and shaped you and molded you and is molding you into the person He wants you to be because He had unique plans for your life. Those unique plans were prepared in advance for you to do. God designed you with a purpose in mind.

We are in a two part sermon series on God's DESIGN for you and your ministry. Once you understand who God made you to be, then you will understand what God made you to do. Who God made you to be determines what God intends for you to do. You will better understand the purpose you were created for when you better understand the kind of person you are.

God is consistent in His plan for each of our lives. He would not give you a desire, experiences, spiritual gift, individual personality, spiritual growth, and natural abilities and then not use them. As you discover your design for ministry you will discover your place of ministry.

Before we get into this let me tell you some things we don't have time to look at in relation to God's DESIGN for you. We don't have time to examine the role of the Holy Spirit on your DESIGN, God's sovereignty, prayer, the sinful nature, or the impact the fruit of the Spirit has on your DESIGN. You will have to study these on your own to further your understanding of God's DESIGN for your life. These two messages only serve as an introduction to the concept.

We began this DESIGN message last week. We looked at the first three elements of your design for ministry. Let's review those three and then let's look at the last three. These elements are not placed in order of priority. They are arranged in such a way as to help you remember them.

D... Desire: What ministry would I love to do?

The first element in your design is your desire. God has given you a heart, passion and interest for a specific kind of ministry. **Philippians 2:13** says, "For it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for His own chosen purpose!" God will inspire you about getting involved in one ministry, but not another. This is why you are attracted to Ministry A and not Ministry B. The question to ask yourself is, "What ministry would I love to do?" The ministry God places a desire or will for you to do may appall you at first. You may not want to do it. But God will give you "the will" to do the deed He's called you to do? You may not like what God has called you to do, but God will give you the will to do it.

E... Experiences: What has God guided me through?

The second element in your design are your experiences. God's Word tells us in **2 Corinthians 1:3** that God "comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." What God has allowed you to go through in life, whether good or bad, is an indication of where He might want you to serve. A former workaholic is able to minister to someone who is addicted to work better than anyone else. Someone who has struggled with depression and gone successfully through God's recovery process is usually the best person to help someone struggling with depression. The question you need to ask yourself is, "What has God brought me through that He wants to use to comfort someone else?"

S... Spiritual gifts: What am I gifted to do?

The third element in your design is your spiritual gift. God has given you at least one spiritual gift for ministry (1 Cor. 7:1). So the question you are to look at is, "What am I

gifted to do?” If you have the gift of teaching or mercy or leadership then that is a strong indicator of how God wants to use you.

I... Individual style: Where does my personality best suit me to serve in God’s kingdom?

The fourth element regarding your design for ministry deals with your individual style.

This answers the question, “Where does my personality best suit me to serve in God’s kingdom?” When God created you, you received some inborn character traits, a disposition, and a temperament. Your personality was also affected by your environment. But the bottom line is God caused and allowed you to have the personality you have. God created you a certain way because He had already “prepared in advance” some ministries and good works that He wanted you to do and He gave you the personality that would fit that purpose (Eph. 2:10).

Let’s lay a Biblical foundation for this. Does God have anything to do with creating your personality, temperament, and disposition? Yes He does. Look at **Psalm 139:1**, “O Lord, You have searched me and You know me. (2) You know when I sit and when I rise [God knows what you are doing and when you are doing it]; You perceive my thoughts from afar [God knows what you are thinking]. (3) You discern my going out and my lying down [God knows why you do what you do]; You are familiar with all my ways. (4) Before a word is on my tongue You know it completely, O Lord [God knows what you are going to say and He completely understands what you are saying].”

How can God know you that well? Jump down to **verse 13**, “For You created my inmost being [the psalmist is not just talking about his physical heart, lungs, liver, and intestines... he is referring to his “inmost being” referring to the real him, his personality, his character, his disposition, his temperament, who he really is]; You knit me together in my mother’s womb. (14) I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (15) My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, (16) Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” God made you who you are. You are wonderfully made. Every day of your life has been ordained by God before you were ever made. That’s why **Ephesians 2:10** can say, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ

Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Because God has a ministry in mind for you, He made you to fit that ministry. You are His workmanship, this includes your personality.

This is why some of you are more outgoing while others are more reserved. If you prefer interacting with many people and tend to gain energy from being around them, then that’s an indication that God made you to be more outgoing. He made you as an extravert. If you prefer interacting with just a few people at a time (or maybe even one-on-one) and you find your energy renewed through times of being alone then that is an indication that you are more reserved and an introvert. Whether you are outgoing or reserved or somewhere in between you are wonderfully made. God made you that way because He knew you needed to be that way in order to accomplish the good works He prepared in advance for you.

This is true in many areas of your personality. This is why you can have one person who is high-risk oriented and another who is low-risk oriented, some like working with people while others like working on projects, some are more followers while others are more leaders, some prefer to work with a team while others prefer working solo, some want routine and others want variety. When it comes to these things keep in mind you are wonderfully made and your personality is perfect for the ministry God prepared in advance for you to do.

When you study Bible characters you can’t help but notice their various personalities. For example when you study the life and ministry of **Peter** you discover his temperament and disposition can be described as eager, aggressive, bold, and outspoken – with a habit of revving his mouth while his brain was in neutral.

But when you study the life and character of Peter’s brother you find a different personality. Almost everything Scripture tells us about **Andrew** shows that he had the right heart for effective ministry in the background. He did not seek to be the center of attention. He did not seem to resent those who labored in the limelight. He was evidently pleased to do what he could with the gifts and calling God had bestowed on him, and he allowed the others to do likewise.

No matter what person you study in the Bible you find there disposition and character and personality was perfect for what God had them do. That is also true for you. You are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus. He made you exactly how He wants you to be because your personality is the right fit for what He wants you to do.

There are all kinds of helpful personality evaluations that you can use to help discover how God has made you. I would encourage you to take some of them and ask family and friends who know you to take it for you. I would recommend Gary Smalley's Personality Type Inventory, and Tim Lahaye's Temperament Inventory and Briggs-Myers Personality Test. There are others out there but that will get you started.

Observations and implications:

1. **You have a unique personality.** No one is just like you.
2. **Your unique personality causes you to approach every ministry uniquely.** This is why you can take two similar people and they will still approach the same ministry a little differently. So expect others to perform Ministry A different than you would. It may be that God wants Ministry A done the way they would do it.
3. **Don't be offended if your personality is not a good match for some ministries.** You cannot do it all. You were not made to do it all. There are some ministries that you would be horrible at. Admit that truth and get busy in the area of ministry God made you for.
4. **Every believer has a quirk in their personality so be graceful and merciful toward them.** It is usually that quirk that gets on your nerves, but you are still to love them anyway.

Questions to ask yourself:

1. Do you tend to *relate to others* by being: outgoing or reserved, self-expressive or self-controlled, cooperative or competitive?

2. Do you tend to *respond to opportunities* that are: high-risk or low-risk, people oriented or project oriented, routine or variety, as a follower or leader, teamwork oriented or solo oriented?

G... Growth: What ministry am I ready for?

The fifth element in your design for ministry deals with growth. This concerns your maturity? It answers the question, “What ministry am I ready for?” God is growing you into the various ministries He has for you. Some ministries call for certain levels of spiritual, emotional, and mental maturity. You may have a passion for leading a ministry, you may have some experiences that are preparing you, you may be spiritually gifted for it, and your personality is suited for it but your maturity level is not there yet.

A great example of this in the Bible deals with the leadership of the church. In **1 Timothy 3** we see qualifications for overseers and deacons of the church. To be an overseer or deacon your level of maturity had to be tested and examined in various areas of your life and character.

No matter who you are, as a believer, you should be growing spiritually. God wants you to grow and to become stronger in the faith, in character, and in Christ likeness. Throughout God’s Word, God identifies those who are spiritual infants and spiritually mature or somewhere in between (1 Cor. 3:1; 1 John 2:12-14). For example, **1 Peter 2:2** says, “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.” Then we read in **Ephesians 4:14**, “then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. (15) Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ.” As you grow in the Lord greater responsibility may be given to you and you will be able to handle greater pressure, greater criticism, and greater levels of complex issues.

Some areas of maturity and questions to consider are:

- **Emotional maturity:** Are you ready to handle this ministry emotionally? The criticism, the praise, the heartache, and the rejection that may come with it.

- **Mental maturity:** Do you know enough to make good decisions based on facts? Can you think about the complexities of the ministry, without feeling like you are mentally burning out?
- **Spiritual maturity:** Do you have the faith and character to finish? Can you approach this with humility?
- **Social maturity:** Have your people skills developed enough to handle difficult people and multiple personality styles that you will encounter?

Implications and observations:

1. **Don't feel offended or rejected if the leadership of the church doesn't think you are ready for a greater level of responsibility.** Just keep focusing on your growth becoming stronger and healthy spiritually, emotionally, and relationally. When the time comes God will open the door He wants you to go through.
2. **Not everyone will be at the same level of maturity in all categories of maturity.**
3. **Maturity takes time, don't expect to be at a high level of maturity over night.** Remember, God had to work on Moses for 80 years to get him ready to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.
4. **Even at your greatest level of maturity, you will still have moments of immaturity.** You will not be perfect, complete, and absolutely mature until you received your glorified body in heaven.
5. **Show grace toward those who are in leadership and serving in various ministries when their immaturity shows through.** Even Moses lost his temper at times and did things that hurt his leadership.

N... Natural abilities: What skills do I have that would help in ministry?

The final element we are going to look at regarding your design for ministry deals with your natural abilities. This answers the question, "What skills do I have that would help in ministry?" God has given you many skills and abilities that you can use in His kingdom. These natural abilities you were either born with or learned throughout your life. These natural abilities show up in areas like sports, mathematics, auto mechanics, carpentry, painting, cooking, drawing, typing, computer programming, medical assistance, and so on.

In **Exodus 31:3** we read about how God wanted to build a tabernacle and all the utensils for worship so He selected a man named Bezalel (BEHZ-uh-lehl) and “filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts – (4) to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, (5) to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship” (3-5). God still gives these abilities and hundreds of others, so people can serve Him as He sees fit.

When you do a skill study of the Bible writing down various skills that God used to accomplish His purpose in the lives of various people you come across skills like art work, architectural ability, administration, baking, boat making, candy making, debating, designing, engraving, farming, fishing, gardening, making music, making weapons, needle work, inventing, carpentry, sailing, and writing. No matter what your skills are, God has a place for your abilities so you can shine for His glory.

Let me give you some observations about your natural abilities.

First of all, natural abilities are not spiritual gifts. Natural abilities are given to you at birth or you learn them from others through experience and training. Everyone has some natural abilities whether they are a Christian or not.

Secondly, natural abilities are from God. They are just as important as your spiritual gifts. The only difference is that you were given them at birth or learned them later in life. God gave you the natural ability or let you learn that ability because you needed to know it as part of your ministry design.

Third, natural abilities can indicate what God would have you to do. If God has not given you the ability to carry a tune in a bucket, then He probably doesn't want you to carry a tune on stage either. If you don't have the skill as a singer then you don't need to pursue a singing ministry. God will never ask you to dedicate your life to a task you have no talent for. On the other hand, the abilities you do have are a strong indication of what God wants you to do with your life. They are clues to knowing God's will for you. If you are good at designing or recruiting or drawing or organizing, it is a safe assumption that

God's plan for your life includes that skill somehow. God doesn't waste abilities. He matches your calling with your capabilities that He gave you.

Questions:

To help you think through the skills God has allowed you to have, the following questions can help you.

- What is your current vocation? What do you do at your job?
- What are your job skills you have learned over the years?
- What can you do? Make a list of things that you have skills at?
- Have you ever taught a class on how to do something? What was it?

Conclusion

God has designed you for ministry in His Kingdom.

- God has given you a **desire**, conviction, compelling, and a calling for a certain ministry. He will give you the will and the desire to do what He has prepared for you to do.
- God has caused and allowed you to go through certain **experiences** that have helped prepared you for the ministry He has prepared for you to do.
- God has sovereignly given you at least one **spiritual gift** to use in the ministry that He has prepared for you to do.
- God has given you and allowed you to have the kind of personality and **individual style** you have because He knew that it would be the right one for what He prepared for you to do.
- God has helped you **grow** and mature through your life in many ways so you can be ready for what He has prepared for you to do.
- God has allowed you to have certain natural abilities and skills that will assist you in your ministry that God has prepared for you to do.

When you add all that up you discover God's DESIGN for your ministry. **Ephesians 2:10** says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." You are definitely God's workmanship, that

means God created and made you. But for the believer, you are also created in Christ Jesus. That refers to being saved and born again. Some of you have not been created in Christ Jesus yet. The way that happens is to turn to Jesus and receive His Lordship over your life. The Bible says anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. If you are ready to discover your design for ministry it all begins with a relationship with Jesus Christ.