

Development Phase Selected: Exploring

You selected the statement, "I am often amazed at the way some disciples selflessly serve others & I want to make a difference as well."

This is a very important step in the journey of discipleship. You have begun to explore this very significant dimension of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

One of the best ways to get started in the journey is to observe what others are doing. In this case, you have seen the selfless actions of other disciples and been impressed with the care and concern they exhibit for others. It is clear that God is working in you as you are beginning to sense a desire to make a difference as well.

This is a gift from God. It is the beginning of a transformative process in which God moves us away from being focused on ourselves and our own desires to being aware of the needs of others.

What's Next?

Continue to follow those 'heart longings.' Observe how other disciples are using their gifts and talents to make a difference. Listen to the stories of lives that are changed through the love of Jesus.

Then, begin to explore how God may have gifted you to serve.

One of the best ways to do this is to get involved with a group from your congregation that is focused on service. There is a great joy found in making a difference, and you can begin to see practical ways in which God can use you.

Some congregations offer a class in discovering spiritual gifts to help you discern how God has 'wired' you to serve.

You might also consider taking a spiritual gifts inventory to help you begin to discover how God has wired you for service. A free inventory is available at:

<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/spiritual-gifts-online-assessment>

A more comprehensive approach to discerning how God might use you in making a difference is the SHAPE process in which you discover your spiritual gifts, heart (passions), abilities, personality, and experiences that God can use.

Suggested Resources

If you like to read and study for personal development, we suggest the following resources:

SHAPE, by Eric Rees

PLACE, by Jay McSwain

Foundations, by Phil Maynard