

Module 4 Notes

"Our gifts are not primarily gifts of God to us; they are gifts from God to others through us. If we behave as though our gifts belong to us, we rob others and dishonor God."

Habiger, True Leadership, p.102.

Types of Gifts

Welcome to Module 4 of Introduction to Ethical Leadership! This week, we continue to explore ethical leadership by focusing on the concept of gifts. The development of this module was inspired by Chapter 9 of "True Leadership" by Habiger.

1. Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are those that we obtain through grace. For this reason, it is essential to differentiate between virtues and spiritual gifts. Last week when we discussed virtues, we explored how character is shaped by the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and courage. As you will recall virtues are qualities of character developed through practice and conscious effort. These are the opposite of spiritual gifts which are bestowed upon us by divine grace. Spiritual gifts are unique abilities that align with our purpose and allow us to contribute meaningfully to the world. In many cases, our spiritual gifts enhance our virtues. For example, the spiritual gift of wisdom can enhance the virtue of prudence while the spiritual gift of fortitude can enhance the virtue of courage.

2. Natural Gifts: Talents and Life Pruning

Next, we have natural gifts, also known as talents, these are what most people think of when we mention gifts. We must begin by acknowledging that talents are not equally distributed. In fact, some individuals possess a multitude of diverse talents, while others may excel in specific areas. When analyzing talents most people focus on 'living up to our potential' but this concept assumes that talents are to be maximized towards one particular end. Do you think that is the case? Can you think of talents that can be used to accomplish alternative goals? Consider that talents are tools that can be used for good and evil.

It is also important to note that talent is not synonymous with vocation. Just because we excel at something doesn't necessarily mean we are called to dedicate our lives to it.

Here, we can draw insights from Henry Cloud's concepts in Necessary Endings. Recall the explanation of how life produces more opportunities and possibilities than we can effectively sustain. Just as a gardener prunes a plant to ensure its growth, we, too, need to curate our lives, focusing on the talents and endeavors that align with our vision.

3. Circumstances of Life: Opportunities and Challenges

The circumstances of our lives—our family situations, opportunities, and the challenges we face—are instrumental in shaping who we become as individuals and therefore as leaders. It's important to recognize that once again not all opportunities are equal, and not all challenges are insurmountable. The lottery of birth bestows different starting points on each of us, and it's our response to these circumstances that define our destiny.

Consider how different your life would be if you would have been born 100 years ago. Consider what your life would be like if you were born 50 years ago. Consider what your life would be like if you had been born on the same date but in another hemisphere. Consider what your life would be like if you were born into a different family. What did the lottery of birth provide you with? What opportunities and challenges have you been given?

Circumstances of Life

The circumstances of life include your DNA and what your first teachers and leaders, your parents, provided you with.

1. Personality: A Unique Blueprint

Our personality encompasses the patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that make us distinctly who we are. Each individual possesses a unique personality blueprint that influences how we approach challenges, interact with others, and make decisions. Understanding our personality traits can significantly impact our leadership style. For instance:

- An extroverted leader might excel at inspiring and energizing a team, thriving in collaborative environments.
- An introverted leader might exhibit strong analytical skills and thoughtful decision-making, often contributing valuable insights.

Recognizing and embracing our personality traits can guide us in selecting leadership roles that align with our natural tendencies. Recall our discussions of situational leadership and leadership models. Please watch the TedTalk below on Introverts, Extroverts and Ambiverts. Did you know that your personality can change? That you can be both an introvert and an extrovert? When watching consider the layers of your personality and how they impact your leadership style.

2. Temperament: Inborn Dispositions

Temperament goes beyond personality, focusing on inborn dispositions that impact how we react to situations and stimuli. Generally there are Four Temperaments—choleric, melancholic, phlegmatic, and sanguine which have been around prior to the birth of Jesus Christ. Our temperament influences how we perceive and engage with the world, which, in turn, shapes our leadership interactions.

Consider temperament in terms of leadership. For example, a leader with a choleric temperament might be assertive and driven, often taking charge of situations. A leader with a phlegmatic temperament could excel in maintaining harmony and balance within a team, avoiding conflicts. Ancient philosophers believed that temperament was destiny. What do you think? Watch the video explaining the four types of temperaments in Module 4 Lecture Materials & Resources.

Integrating Spiritual Gifts, Circumstances, Personality, and Temperament

Integrating these elements—spiritual; gifts, talents, circumstances, personality, and temperament—provides a holistic perspective of who we are as individuals and therefore as leaders. Recognizing our gifts and embracing our personality and temperament can guide us in making conscious decisions about the roles we undertake. It can also help us grow and learn.

Who are you vs. Who is your future self? Watch "The Psychology of Your Future Self" in Module 4 Lecture Materials & Resources.