

## Christian Stewardship

### Part 8 – Our Gifts (Pt 3)

Distances in astronomy are awesome in their magnitude. Expressing them in miles or kilometres, one soon gets lost in a maze of zeros. A more convenient unit is the light year, being the distance travelled by light (the swiftest entity) in one year. A light-year is about 9.5 million million km (6 million million miles), but is more readily visualised by remembering that light takes only 8.5 minutes to reach Earth from the Sun which is 150 million km (93 million miles) away. The moon is about 1 light-second from Earth. In these units, the solar system is a few light-hrs across, and nearest star is a little over 4 light-years away. The galaxy is roughly 100,000 light years in radius and in this vast space are contained at least 100,000 million stars. Distances to other galaxies are measured in millions of light-years. Nearby Andromeda is about 2.5 million light-years away, and the world's largest telescopes can detect galaxies as far away as 10,000 million light-years<sup>1</sup>.

Outside the Milky Way galaxy, which possibly moves around the centre of the local super-cluster of 2,500 neighbouring galaxies at a speed of 1,350,000mph (2,182,500km/h), there exist 10,000 million other galaxies. These range in size up to 200,000 light-years in diameter<sup>2</sup>.

All of creation is incredibly vast.

But the crowning achievement of all of God's handiwork is the creation of human beings.

How many of you have been around long enough to know some of this?

At one time:

1. salt was bad for you, now it's okay in small quantities;
2. alcohol was bad for you, except that now studies have shown that red wine is at least good for your heart;
3. chocolate was bad for you, but now it has been shown to contain antioxidants which are good for you;
4. cholesterol was bad for you, but then they discovered the existence of good cholesterol;
5. mammograms were good for detecting breast cancers, but now there is an increasing body of evidence that the resulting treatments may actually cause cancer;
6. fish was highly recommended for its omega-3 fatty acids, but now it has been discovered that the higher up the fish food chain you go, the higher the mercury content, so you need to take care what fish you eat;
7. HRT was recommended for women reaching menopause, but has now been shown to be carcinogenic.

It's very difficult to nail anything down with absolute certainty.

The problem lies in the fact that human beings' bodies are so incredibly complex.

And it's not just our bodies, but the Bible tells us that we also have a soul, and we have a spirit too.

And we should understand that our soul – the part of us which contains our mind – is also extremely complex.

What I want you to understand here is this: We have been amazingly and intricately designed.

But my experience over the years is that some people have a tendency to try to put other people into a box.

When we do that, we're trying to put God the Creator in a box too.

ILLUS – Let me give you an example. There are lots of little personality and aptitude tests around. For instance, one divides people into categories of thinkers, feelers, doers and influencers.

They may give you some helpful clues – but don't build your life on one of these little tests.

Life is a journey, and you can spend your entire life discovering new things about yourself – especially if you take that journey with God.

In fact, some psychologists are saying that “giftedness unfolds over the course of a lifetime<sup>3</sup>”.

ILLUS – Sir Christopher Wren, who built St Paul’s Cathedral in London in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, served as professor of astronomy at Graham College and Oxford, then around the half-century mark, entered enthusiastically upon a new profession; he turned architect. In the 41 years after his 48<sup>th</sup> birthday he executed 53 churches and cathedrals, most of which still stand today. Noah Webster studied 17 languages after he was 50.

You’re never too old to learn new things, or discover new things about yourself.

Today, I want to take a look at one small part of our makeup – the issue of intelligence.

Because apart from the gifts that God offers us supernaturally, there are also natural gifts we are born with.

Rom 12:3-6 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. (4) For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, (5) so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. (6) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: ...

I’m going to give you some important facts about intelligence.

### **1. We are all different for a reason.**

God has a different purpose for every human being.

ILLUS – What would happen if God suddenly decided to make all the next generation into great musicians? They’d all sit around happily strumming their guitars – till they starved to death, because there’d be no farmers; or till they ran out of instruments because there’d be no-one to make them.

We can’t all be the same, nor can we all be equally endowed when it comes to intelligence.

### **2. There are multiple intelligences.**

This was proposed in 1983 by American psychologist Howard Gardner who went on to show how there were at least seven different kinds of intelligence.

Those seven intelligences are:

1. Logical / Mathematical
2. Musical / Rhythmic
3. Body / Kinaesthetic
4. Verbal / Linguistic
5. Visual / Spatial
6. Interpersonal
7. Intrapersonal

That list has apparently expanded to include others, but I don’t have the details on the new ones – so we’re going to look at these seven.

What do these intelligences comprise of?

1. Logical / Mathematical Intelligence
  - Things you might like to do: Analyse, calculate, categorise, classify, experiment, explain, group, hypothesise, order, plan, prove, sequence, solve, survey, test.
  - Things you might like to work with or focus on: Attributes, calculations, charts, classifications, codes, data, deductions, differences, equations, estimates, experiments, explanations, formulas, graphs, grids, hypotheses, inferences, measurements, number patterns, patterns, probabilities,

problems, results, scale drawings, sequences, similarities, solutions, statistics, strategies, surveys, tables, themes, theorems

## 2. Musical / Rhythmic Intelligence

- Things you might like to do: Beat out, chant, compose, create, hum, play, rap, record, rhyme, sing, tap, whistle
- Things you might like to work with or focus on: Accents, beats, chants, composition, harmonies, jingles, lyrics, musical arrangements, musical memory, musical score, operas, oral instrumentation, percussion, performances, raps, songs, sound effects, sounds, tunes

## 3. Body / Kinaesthetic Intelligence

- Things you might like to do: Act out, build, catch, choreograph, construct, crochet, dance, demonstrate, exercise, find, fix, hike, hit, hop, interpret, juggle, jump, knit, make, manipulate, mime, move, perform, run, sew, skip, swim, throw, walk
- Things you might like to work with or focus on: Aerobics, ball games, body and mouth percussion, body language, charades, choreography, cooking, creative drama, creative movement, crochet, dancing, demonstration, excursion, exercise, floor games, folk dance, gestures, gymnastics, knitting, macramé, martial arts, mime, models, movements, orienteering, playing musical and non-musical instruments, puppet play, role-playing, sewing, sport

## 4. Verbal / Linguistic Intelligence

- Things you might like to do: Argue, brainstorm, debate, discuss, explain, instruct, interview, list, listen, narrate, preach, read, spell, summarise, talk, teach, tell, translate, write
- Things you might like to work with or focus on: Advertisement, anagram, book, booklet, brochure text, caption, comedy, definitions, dialogue, diary, directions, essays, explanations, instructions, joke, journal, languages, letter, lyrics, manual, monologue, newsletter, newspaper, play, poems, proverbs, radio programmes, report, review, riddle, script, sentences, sermon, slogan, speech, story, summary, talk, teaching, translations, tutoring

## 5. Visual / Spatial Intelligence

- Things you might like to do: Construct, create, design, doodle, draw, film or video, illustrate, interpret, make, paint, photograph, print, read map, sculpt, sketch, visualise
- Things you might like to work with or focus on: Banner, board game, brochure, calligraphy, card, cartoon, chart, collage, colour scheme, construction, design, diagram, display, drawing, flowchart, graph, graphics, illustration, logo, map, mobile, mural, painting, pamphlet, perspective drawing, photograph, plan, poster, print, screen printing, sign, sketch, slideshow, stage set, symbol, videotape

## 6. Interpersonal Intelligence

- Things you might like to do: Act, advise, collaborate, communicate, convince, cooperate, counsel, decide together, discuss, encourage, explain, give feedback, help, interview, lead, listen, manage, mediate, mentor, negotiate, organise, perform, persuade, play, predict behaviour, research people, role play, sell, survey, teach, team up with, tutor
- Things you might like to work with or focus on: Biography, conference, cooperative learning, counselling, dialogue, games, group games, groups, interview, leadership skills, marketing plan, mentoring, oral presentation, peer support programme, performance, play, role play, social skills, speech, survey, tutoring

## 7. Intrapersonal Intelligence

- Things you might like to do: Choose, describe, discuss, dream, give opinion, meditate, record, reflect, self-analyse, self-assess or evaluate, self-disclose, set goals

- Things you might like to work with or focus on: Acting, autobiography, counselling, diary, dreams, feelings statements, journal, learning goals, meditation, opinions, personal goals, personal reactions, preferences, reflection, self-description, self-portrait, self-assessment, self-evaluation, similarities and differences to others, strengths or interests list, values

Understanding the real nature of intelligence has enormous repercussions for us.

### 3. There is great variety of expression in just one intelligence.

Just because you have a high level of body / kinaesthetic intelligence, doesn't mean you are automatically going to be a great sportsman.

You may just as easily become a model or a dancer or a tailor.

### 4. No intelligence is inferior to another.

Have you ever heard someone say, "No, he's not very bright. So he dropped out of school and did an apprenticeship. So now he's just a carpenter."

What an insult to God's wisdom!

There is a subtle brainwashing that some intelligences are more important than others.

This isn't always an in-your-face kind of thing where you're told you're dumb.

But it pervades our world system.

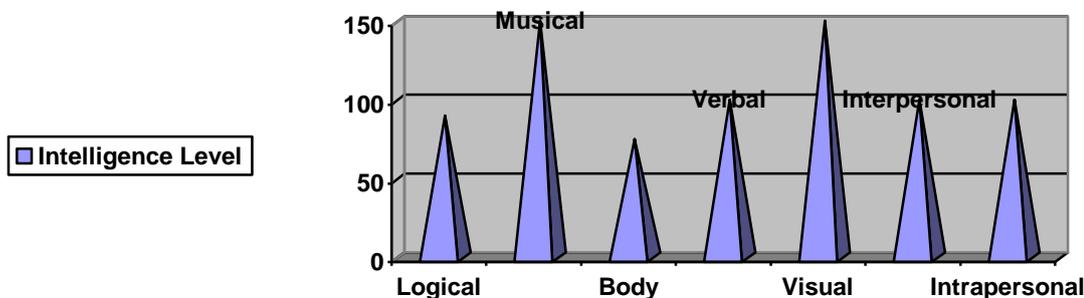
ILLUS – If you do well on an IQ test, they're basically measuring Logical / Mathematical Intelligence.

ILLUS – What do you need to do well in school? High Logical / Mathematical and Verbal / Linguistic Intelligence.

What kind of message is this sending to people?

ILLUS – Let's look at a possible scenario.

The Seven Intelligences



This person has high musical and visual intelligences, but either average or below average in every other area.

Imagine this guy isn't given the opportunity to do music by his parents, and the school he goes to doesn't offer art as a subject.

Since educational systems often value mathematical and linguistic intelligences more than others, would you be surprised to find that this kid comes out the other end of the system feeling that he's stupid?

This is only one example – it's possible for a lot of kids to come through the school system and feel like they've really missed the boat when God was handing out brains.

I don't pretend to know what can be done about it in the school system – it would take a major overhaul.

But whatever happens there, we in the church need to recognise the problem, and understand that God gives abilities to people according to His plan and purpose for them.

And our minds need to be renewed so that we agree with God.

Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We need to see things like intelligence the way God sees them, not the way the world system tells us we should see them.

### **5. We are accountable for how we use the intelligence God has given us.**

This is what Jesus said about your intelligence:

Mat 22:37-38 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with **all your mind.**’ (38) This is the first and great commandment.”

That means we’re accountable to use our mind and its faculties for the glory of God.

### **6. Most people are average in most things.**

When it comes to IQ, there’s an average of 100.

But if we wanted to be a little fairer, it’s not just an average number, it’s an average range.

In fact, most people (2/3) fall in the IQ range between 85 and 115 – and only 5% of the population will have an IQ below 70 or above 130<sup>4</sup>.

Now we’re going to move into uncharted territory.

Because this is just a theory: if most people fall into the average range of IQ – which measures mathematical and linguistic intelligences – my theory is that most people will fall in the average range in all the other intelligences too.

This explains why most of us aren’t sporting celebrities, but most of us can play sport.

Most of us aren’t a Mozart or a Beethoven, but most of us could play an instrument to a modest level.

Now think about this: one of the saddest things I ever hear is when people tell me, “I’m not particularly good at anything.”

First, because that statement is often not true – they just feel it is.

Maybe they never got the opportunities to develop something in their life.

Second because by saying that they’re often indicating a personal sense of inferiority.

And third, they don’t understand the nature of God’s calling.

If God has called you for a purpose, He has also equipped you.

If God has equipped you for a purpose, you can be good at it – but it takes faith to make it happen.

I am so thankful that God is in charge.

We need to understand that, in His wisdom, God has equipped us according to His great plan.

There is no inferior person in this church.

We all need each other – we cannot achieve what God wants us to achieve without everyone pulling their weight.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Davies, Professor of Theoretical Physics at University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in his book *Superforce* 1984

<sup>2</sup> Guinness Book of Records 1975

<sup>3</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, CD Rom 2001

<sup>4</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, CD Rom 2001