



**TWELVE SESSIONS
FOR EXPLORING YOUR
GOD-GIVEN PURPOSE**

**DISCOVER
YOUR
Gifts
WORKBOOK**

**TONY COOK
AND DON EVERTS**



InterVarsity Press
ivpress.com

Taken from *Discover Your Gifts Workbook*
by Tony Cook and Don Everts.
Copyright © 2022 by Lutheran Hour Ministries.
Published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL.
www.ivpress.com.

SESSION ONE

Technical Gifts



You shall speak to all the skillful, whom I have filled with a spirit of skill, that they make Aaron's garments.

EXODUS 28:3

You've got to learn your instrument. Then, you practice, practice, practice. And then, when you finally get up there on the bandstand, forget all that and just wail.

CHARLIE PARKER, AMERICAN SAXOPHONIST

Professionally, Tony is a leader, researcher, pastor, and educator—and he uses a variety of the gifts entrusted to him in his work. But over the years Tony has also developed a surprising technical gift that has little to do with his day job.

There is a wide variety of technical gifts, of course. In our nationwide research we asked people if they had any gifts that helped them perform specific tasks that required a special and refined set of skills. These are what we call technical gifts, and respondents listed a wide variety of skills: baking, photography, sewing, cooking, problem identification, planning events, exegeting Scripture, computer knowledge, fixing, language acquisition, health care, real estate, electronic and optical materials, teaching math (including engineering calculus), computer repair, gardening, painting and general house repair, music, media production, organizing and scheduling, and more.¹

When Tony took the survey, he listed “digitally mixing music” as one of his technical gifts! But what does digitally mixing music have in common with baking, gardening, and general house repair? They all have this in common: *technical gifts help you perform specific tasks that require a special and refined set of skills.*

All technical skills can be used to promote the common good. Additionally, they can be further developed over time with practice. While many people have technical gifts, there are some people for whom these gifts are a significant part of their lives. In a national survey, 8 percent of respondents listed the technical gift as their primary gift and another 8 percent listed it as their secondary gift.

DISCOVERING TECHNICAL GIFTS

Before considering what it looks like to share technical gifts in different areas of life and what it looks like to grow these gifts over time, first consider who in your life (including yourself!) may have technical gifts.

List people you know who may have technical gifts and what their specific gifting is (such as Tony—digitally mixing music).



Technical gifts help you perform specific tasks that require a special and refined set of skills. Gifts include craftsmanship, profession-specific knowledge, and acquired skills.

SHARING TECHNICAL GIFTS

While some technical gifts are developed and used in a professional setting (like the MIT scientist who listed “electronic and optical materials” on the survey), others are developed and used in nonwork settings (like Tony’s digital music mixing). Technical gifts can be used to bless others and pursue the common good in many different areas of life.

To get a picture of what that could look like, let's consider the relevance of technical gifts to four different vocations in life. For each area we will also consider the case study of Terri. Terri is a car mechanic who has developed multiple technical gifts and uses them in a variety of places.

Family: The blessing of technical gifts within the household frequently goes overlooked. The variety of skills developed through specialized training or experience can not only improve the quality of life within a household but also help to reduce household expenses by providing services that would otherwise need to be paid for.

Terri has become the go-to mechanic for her large extended family, who all live in the same city. This isn't just a convenience for her family; in many cases, they wouldn't have the money to fix their cars or lawnmowers and would have to simply do without.

Church: The household of faith can benefit from the large variety of skills possessed by its members. Technical skills can benefit the members of the congregation and can also be used as key resources in a variety of outreach programs offered to the surrounding neighborhood and community.

When the pianist at Terri's church was taken out of commission for a few months because of a skiing accident, a call for pianists went out in the church bulletin. People were surprised when Terri (who it turns out has technical gifts in *music*, as well!) filled in wonderfully.

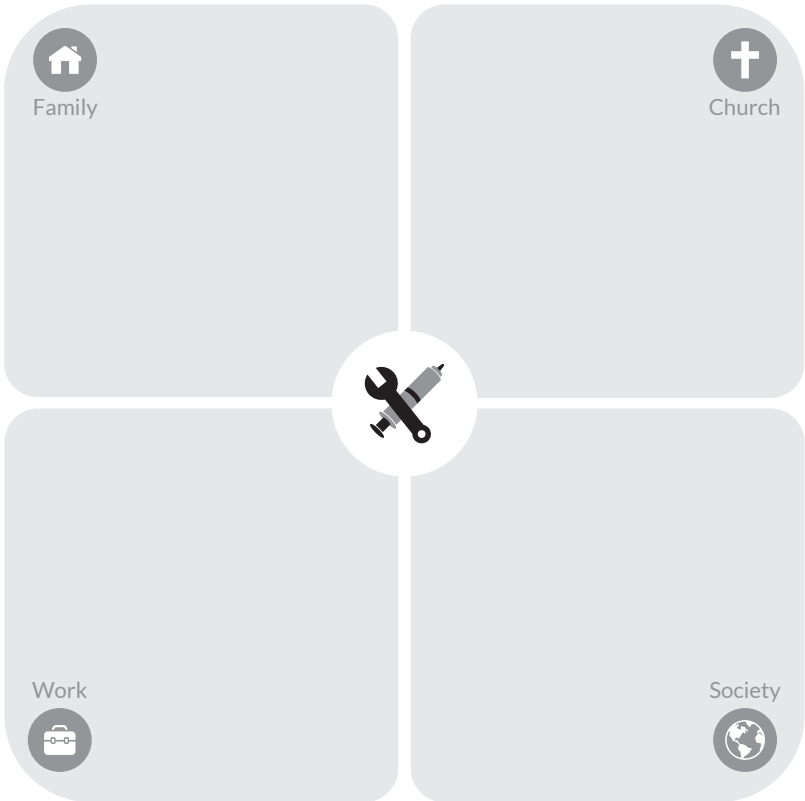
Work: Our occupational vocation is the most recognized context for the use of technical skills. The workplace is also the primary context where technical skills can be grown. As technical skills are developed for the workplace, new opportunities for personal advancement emerge along with more effective and efficient methods for achieving organizational vision and mission.

Terri's technical gifts with car repair are used daily in her work as an auto mechanic. Every day she works she is using the craftsmanship, profession-specific knowledge, and acquired skills that she has developed over time as she diagnoses what's wrong with the cars that are brought in and sets about fixing them.

Society: Our communities provide numerous opportunities to share our technical skills with our neighbors. When we share these abilities with others, we increase community cohesion and can directly affect neighborhood and community well-being. Using technical skills for service and mentorship in our communities creates a network of support and collaboration necessary for stability and growth.

Terri’s neighbors have benefited in many ways because of her technical skills as a mechanic, helping them with their cars, lawnmowers, and more. And because Terri is willing to patiently explain what she is doing, she is informally helping others develop some of the acquired skills she has been honing her whole life.

Brainstorm ways to share technical gifts in each of these four areas. (Keep in mind the people you listed in the previous exercise.)



GROWING TECHNICAL GIFTS

An important part of stewarding the gifts that have been entrusted with us is investing time and energy in developing those gifts. Nationally, only 11 percent of those with technical gifts test as having achieved exemplary mastery of them, while 19 percent test as accomplished, and 70 percent are in the developing range.²



For those who want to grow their technical gifts, there are three basic areas in which to pursue growth.

Craftsmanship involves demonstrating mastery-level skills in a particular craft. What does this look like in practice? Baz thoroughly enjoys creating pottery and ceramic home decor to sell through his small business. His craftsmanship is apparent in the intricate details and simple aesthetic of the items he makes by hand.

Profession-specific knowledge involves possessing information and skills needed for a specific profession. An engineer by trade, Caris is talented in designing blueprints, deciding which materials to use for a project, and organizing the steps with which to complete a task. Caris’s profession-specific knowledge allows her to manage a project well and achieve praiseworthy results.

Acquired skills involve developing new abilities through training or experience. What does that look like in practice? Isaac first expressed an interest in woodworking after years of watching his grandfather, a master carpenter, help neighbors and friends with home renovation projects. Now, after completing an apprenticeship, Isaac is ready to use his acquired skills professionally.

UNLEASHING TECHNICAL GIFTS

Our world needs everyone God has entrusted with technical gifts, like Tony, to use their gifts for the common good. The wide variety of technical gifts is a reminder of how important it is for all these gifts to be unleashed. Toward that end, remember to appreciate and celebrate

technical gifts whenever you see them—whether in yourself or in others. This is one small way we can help unleash these important gifts.

Choose a specific person and vocation from the previous exercise and brainstorm ways the person could pursue growth in one or more of these three areas. (Remember to think about growth in knowledge, attitude, and skills.)

<p>_____ has technical gifts.</p> 	<p>Area to use their gift: (circle one)</p> <table border="0"><tr><td> Family</td><td> Church</td></tr><tr><td> Work</td><td> Society</td></tr></table>	 Family	 Church	 Work	 Society	<p>Brainstorm ways to pursue growth:</p>
 Family	 Church					
 Work	 Society					

BUY THE BOOK!

ivpress.com/discover-your-gifts-workbook