



What Is Your Spiritual Gift?

THE HOLY SPIRIT & SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:11 tells us that the source of “Spiritual Gifts” is the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who gives specific “gifts” to each member of the Church and directs their use. Before we look at the gifts it will be helpful to have greater understanding of who the Holy Spirit is, what He does, and why.

The Holy Spirit is a real person...

The Holy Spirit is not an “it” or an impersonal force. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit has intellect, emotions, and a will of His own. The Bible describes the Holy Spirit as performing the actions and possessing the emotions we would expect of a person.

1. He speaks (Acts 13:2; Revelation 2:7)
2. He intercedes (Romans 8:26)
3. He testifies (John 15:26)
4. He leads (Acts 8:29; Romans 8:14)
5. He commands (Acts 16:6,7)
6. He guides (John 16:13)
7. He appoints (Acts 20:28)
8. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3,4)
9. He can be insulted (Hebrews 10:29)
10. He can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:31,32)
11. He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30)

The Holy Spirit is God...

The Bible describes the Holy Spirit as having attributes which are only true of God Himself.

1. He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14)
2. He is all-powerful (Luke 1:35)
3. He is everywhere present (Psalm 139:7)
4. He is all-knowing (1 Corinthians 2:10,11)
5. He is the creator (Genesis 1:1,2; Colossians 1:16,17)
6. He is called God (Acts 5:3,4; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and is of the same nature/essence as God the Father and God the Son (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

WHAT THIS MEANS.... is that the one who “gifts” us is the Almighty God of creation who works in our lives, individually and as the corporate church, with the wisdom and will of God and with the power to sustain and enable our lives as Christians. Spiritual gifts are not randomly given. They are given according to the wisdom, will, and design of God. Your gifting has a vital and important purpose in the working of God’s will.

The Holy Spirit and the Believer

When we speak of the “believer” we are referring to those who are spiritually reborn (John 3:1-21). Concerning the believer in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit:

1. Regenerates (John 3:5,6)
2. Baptizes (1 Corinthians 12:13)
3. Indwells (John 14:16,17)
4. Seals us as a pledge of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:13,14).
5. Sanctifies (2 Thessalonians 2:13)
6. Fills and empowers (Ephesians 3:16; 5:18)
7. Gives gifts of service to the Body of Christ (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:4-13)

The Holy Spirit restrains the sinful activities of Satan (2 Thessalonians 2:6,7) and convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11). The Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20,21). By the above we know that the Holy Spirit has a vital role in the proclamation of the Gospel. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will guide the believers in obedience to Jesus’ teaching and in the process testify of Jesus (John 16:13,14). Specifically, Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come upon them and empower them to proclaim the Gospel (Acts 1:8). On the day of Pentecost we see the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy. The Holy Spirit came, the disciples proclaimed the Gospel, and thousands came to place their trust in Jesus as the Savior (Acts 2:1-41).

One specific way in which the Holy Spirit is active in our lives today is through the giving and administration of Spiritual Gifts. These gifts are given to enable us to work in unity together towards the common goal of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is vitally important that we understand; 1) the specific work of the Holy Spirit in our personal lives and especially what gift we have been individually given; 2) what other spiritual gifts are; 3) how these gifts work together to accomplish the purpose of the Church.

WHAT THIS MEANS.... is that without a proper understanding of Spiritual Gifts we will be unable to fully realize God’s plan for our lives as individuals and as the Church of Jesus Christ. We will rob ourselves of His blessing, presence, and the satisfaction and joy of seeing Him work through us. Ultimately we will fail to live in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

For an overview of Paul’s teaching it is suggested that the key texts concerning Spiritual Gifts be read: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:1-13.

1. What is the specific main singular purpose of Spiritual Gifts (John 15:26,27; 16:13,14)?

2. What are the purposes and potential benefits of Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:1,4; 1 Corinthians 12:7,25,26; Ephesians 4:1,12,13,16)?
3. What do you think should be an overriding principle for the proper exercise of Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:3,9,10ff; 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:1; Ephesians 4:1-3)?

DISCOVERING & UNDERSTANDING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT

By definition, “spiritual gifts”* are special abilities which God gives to those who have come to salvation through Jesus Christ. When we receive salvation through God’s “grace” He gives us “gifts of grace.” Spiritual gifts are given by God, not as something that is expected, but, as a bonus for our Christian lives. We do not deserve them nor have we earned them. But, God as we are called upon to serve in His Kingdom, blesses us, favors us, by enabling us, by giving us a means to spiritually and physically serve Him.

Please keep in mind an often missed and subtle distinction, Spiritual Gifts are not talents. Spiritual Gifts are supernaturally given and administered by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4,11), under the Headship of Jesus over His Church (1 Corinthians 12:5), and according to the plan and will of God (1 Corinthians 12:6). Talents are our natural abilities. Spiritual Gifts are special supernatural abilities which enable us to use our talents according to God’s will.

The two pages contain a listing of the Spiritual Gifts, descriptions of each, and their basic usage in the Church. Following these descriptions is a chart which will help you to discover your Spiritual Gift and unique place in the Body of Christ.

THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Spiritual Gifts below are arranged according to their ministry/use in the Church. Two categories are listed: Practical Ministry; and Ministry of the Word. In addition, specific notation is given as to which gifts are “sign gifts” and which are “edification gifts.” It should be noted that there are different ways in which the Spiritual Gifts have been classified. However, what is listed here is fairly basic and standard.

* Greek: “*charismaton*” χαρισμάτων from “*charisma*” χαρισμα, meaning a gift of grace given because of favor and/or kindness, from “*charis*” χαρις, meaning God’s grace.

PRACTICAL MINISTRY

- ** **Faith:** Special unusual ability to rely on God and His Word. All believers have faith, but not all have the gift of faith. As an unquestioning belief in God's power to aid me... the faith that moves mountains. Special extraordinary faith. Founders of great movements usually have this gift. (1 Corinthians 12:9)
- ** **Giving:** Distributing one's own money to others. The superlative quality of committing earthly possessions to the Lord for His use with no thought of return or gain for self in any way. Not tithing, but giving possessions to someone else. (Romans 12:8; Ephesians 4:28)
- ** **Governments/Rule/Administration/Leading:** Special ability to assume the role of leadership and function effectively therein. Not limited to church officers. Governments/Administration is sometimes listed separately from Rule as the ability to give wise counsel and direction in the practical affairs of the church. To organize and administer in such a manner as to bless spiritually. (Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28)
- * **Healing:** Ability to heal supernaturally and instantaneously the bodies of men. (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30)
- ** **Mercy:** The ability to emotionally respond when in contact with affliction or injustice which comes to someone else. This gift may be used to motivate others to minister or render assistance to the suffering. (Romans 12:8)
- ** **Ministry/Helps:** Capacity to render assistance to those who have personal needs: physical, material, and spiritual. Ministry, sometimes classified separately is the ability of the individual believer to render practical service to other believers, individually or collectively. (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28)
- ** **Miracles:** Ability to perform supernatural miracles (usually in the physical realm). (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 29)

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

- ** **Apostle:** Literally, "sent one" - special authoritative eye-witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Divinely appointed leaders in the formative stage of the church. Office has now ceased. (1 Corinthians 12:28)
- ** **Discernment/Distinguishing Spirits/Prophecy:** Power to see through people... ability to discern true from false with respect to the things of the spirit within the body. (1 Corinthians 14:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:20 ff)
- ** **Evangelist:** In a sense, evangelism is everybody's business of the great commission. Yet, beyond this, certain individuals are given the gift: a unique ability to proclaim the Gospel. This gift is inseparable to the New Testament missionary philosophy (a missionary is a wandering evangelist). Many mistake the Gift of Evangelist with that of the ceased Gift of Apostle. (Ephesians 4:11)
- ** **Exhortation:** A gift to admonish, exhort encourage, appeal for action. Moving people to action - utilized through various channels. (Romans 12:8)

- ** **Interpretation:** Ability to translate foreign languages supernaturally apart from study. The misuse of “personal” or “kinds” of tongues also has led to a misuse of the Gift of Interpretation. However, interpretation of “kinds of tongues” should be classified under discerning the actual spirit behind this public demonstration of what should be a personal experience. (1 Corinthians 12:10,30)
- ** **Knowledge:** Literally “utterance which constitutes knowledge.” Innate God-given ability or aptitude to comprehend the logical nature of God’s wisdom (see wisdom) and to understand the inter-relationships of it and its implications to the present situation. (1 Corinthians 8: 12:8)
- ** **Prophecy:** Speaking forth God’s message. One moved by the Spirit of God and as His organ or spokesman solemnly declares to men God’s message. Speaking to the believing church. Telling forth the message of God. (1 Corinthians 12:2)
- ** **Teaching/Pastor Teacher:** Teaching: ability to communicate Divine truth so as to promote comprehension. Pastor Teacher (literally “shepherd”): Unique ability to care for believers - definitely involves spiritual leadership. Shepherd (involves feeding, leading, and protecting). Each pastor should, to a certain degree, be a teacher; but every teacher is not, therefore, a pastor, because the gift of teaching is listed separately. Note three terms that are similar: Pastor = gift, its function in the office; Bishop = office, the duties of office; and, Elder = office, rank and dignity of office. (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28 ff; Ephesians 4)
- ** **Tongues:** An often misunderstood gift. Two aspects are given in Scripture. The utterance which is beneficial only in one’s personal relationship with God. This is not a sign gift. Nor is it to be practiced as such, being unbeneficial for the edification of the Body (1 Corinthians 14:2, 3, 8-16). Clearly the more useful and practical aspect of this gift is the ability to supernaturally speak in a foreign language without benefit of study. (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 14:27; 1 Thessalonians 12:19, 20)
- ** **Wisdom:** Literally “utterance of wisdom.” The ability to give forth utterances that constitute wisdom. Wisdom is clearly defined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:6-13. It is wisdom which God communicates to men possessing this gift. It is the ability to perceive and pass on God’s mysteries: not general or practical wisdom available to all Christians. (1 Corinthians 12:8; James 1:5)

WHAT IS MY SPIRITUAL GIFT?

“But the greatest of these is love.”

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

The following chart (page 6) should give you a greater understanding of your Spiritual Gift. Please keep in mind that it is possible to have more than one gift or to be “gifted” temporarily with another gift(s). However, scripture seems to indicate that each believer has one primary gift. Other gifts may at times contribute to the primary role each of us plays in the Body of Christ.

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- * **Sign Gifts:** Given as demonstration of the power (miracles), love (healing/tongues/interpretation), and activity of God.
 - ** **Edification Gifts:** Given specifically to build the Body of Christ and to accomplish the purpose of Christ’s Church.

The goal here is to consider how God is using you in the Church. Then to consider this use with regard to the Spiritual Gifts. Often by examining “how” God uses us we discover how God desires to use us.

Answer the questions in column one by considering your interests and abilities. The answers to the questions in column two may require some investigation. Ask others in the congregation whom you work closely with for their perspective on your abilities and Spiritual Gift. Often our Spiritual Gift is noticed first by others. Also, if we think we have a Spiritual Gift, that self-assessment will generally be confirmed by others. The questions in the third column will help you to compare with the Spiritual Gifts what you are discovering about yourself.

I THINK MY SPIRITUAL GIFT IS:

What has God given me? Special talents, abilities, hobbies, etc.	How has God used these? Re-enforcement from others (recognition)	How can I serve God with these abilities? Development / opportunities to grow

USING OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

This last page is given as one illustration of how our Spiritual Gifts may work together. Consider in what situations these gifts may work effectively together in the Church.

If each of the seven gifts illustrated below were represented in a family and someone just dropped the dessert on the floor, here is what each one might say...

Prophecy: *"That's what happens when you're not careful!"*

(Motivation: To correct his life.)

Mercy: *"Don't feel bad. It could have happened to anyone."*

(Motivation: To relieve embarrassment.)

Serving: *"Oh, let me help you clean up."*

(Motivation: To fulfill a need.)

Teaching: *"The reason that fell is that it was too heavy on one side."*

(Motivation: To discover why it happened.)

Exhortation: *"Next time, let's serve the dessert with the meal."*

(Motivation: To correct the future.)

Giving: *"I'll be happy to buy a new dessert."*

(Motivation: To give to a tangible need.)

Administration: *"Jim, would you get the mop. Sue, please help pick it up and Mar, help me fix some other dessert."*

(Motivation: Achieve the immediate goal of the group.)

