

# Spiritual Gifts & Definitions

## Handout Number Twelve

**Spiritual gifts were given by God to strengthen and build up the body of Christ, however often their use (misuse) has been problematic in the life of the Church.** A cursory look at the New Testament and the Apostle Paul's writings reveal that spiritual gifts were at the center of controversy in the Corinthian Church as well as others. As a result some teachers have elected to avoid mentioning them and others have taken a very guarded approach.

In this study we are looking at Spiritual Gifts in the context of the Church body and the fruit of the Spirit. Both teachings are necessary to a full understanding of Spiritual gifts. Please keep this context of the Church in mind as you review the material that follows.

### Worship and Spiritual Gifts

Ministry involvement is an essential part of God's will for each believer and that ministry begins with worship. Worship of God, corporate and private, helps prepares us for meaningful service for Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-12 identifies the roles of ". . . pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service." A full and careful reading of the New Testament will reveal that for every reference to worship, there are many exhortations to ministry. But it is not to be one or the other; it is both: corporate worship provides the inspiration and motivation for fruitful service.

### The Fruit of the Spirit

An important part of the Church's responsibility is to help believers identify their spiritual gifts with an equal emphasis upon growing in the fruit of the Spirit recorded in Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Growth in grace is imperative for every Christian regardless of gifting. Spiritual gifts that are exercised without the fruit of the Spirit will produce mixed or even destructive results in the Church and in ministry to the world.

### Gift Lists

Several Scripture passages speak to the subject of spiritual gifts. Each passage catalogs variations in the list of gifts presented with the common call for unity. Let's take a cursory look at the passages.

Romans 12:4-8: "We have different gifts" (v. 6), such as: prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership, and showing mercy.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men" (vv. 4-6). These gifts include: messages of wisdom or knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

Ephesians 4:11: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers."

### From these passages we learn:

- All gifts are given according to the sovereign wisdom of God;
- The list of gifts may vary but the purpose remains the same – the unity and the building up of the body of Christ;
- All gifts are given for service, not for selfish enjoyment; and
- Every believer is gifted with one or more gifts.

Too many Christians have labored under the impression that only those who have gifts for public ministry (preaching, teaching, music, etc.) can really serve God in a meaningful way. Nothing could be further from the truth. All believers have been gifted by God to serve, both in private and public ways, and all gifts are needed in the kingdom of God. When all believers use their gifts to serve God and others then the Church experiences growth and unity and the world experiences God's message of love and hope. Let's all find and use our gift(s) for God's kingdom and experience the joy He has for us as a result.

### Definitions

Special note: this list of gifts is to be used as one reference point for discussion. There are other lists of spiritual gifts which vary in number and description which will serve as well.

**Administration**

This gift involves the ability to put things together, getting things done, setting a pattern for others to follow, and overseeing organizations or programs by direction, instruction, guidance, and example. To exercise this gift, one must be good at planning, organizing, delegating responsibilities, and problem solving.

**Apostle**

This gift involves leading with wisdom and compassion and training others in spiritual matters. It includes a combination of wisdom, discernment, leadership, and teaching. To exercise this gift, one must know and accept God's call to lead others in their spirituality and to be instrumental in acknowledging God's grace and authority in the life of the church. Some believe that this gift only applies to the first generation of Christians who were eyewitnesses to the words and actions of Jesus Christ.

**Caregiver**

This gift involves a willingness to help others even when the job may be uncomfortable or involve getting into close to people who are sick or distressed. To exercise this gift, one needs to give assistance or relief where it is needed.

**Craftsmanship**

This gift involves using artistic and creative means to build up the Kingdom. To exercise this gift, one must have or develop a skill and share this ability with others either in finished products or in teaching the skill.

**Discernment**

This gift requires great wisdom, prayerfulness, and the ability to discover the will of God. To exercise this gift, one must be able to distinguish between truth and error and to identify whether something is of God.

**Evangelist**

This gift involves an authentic boldness to share the gospel in such a way that others come to know God. To exercise the gift of evangelism is to share one's faith within and beyond the local church.

**Exhortation**

This gift involves helping others to be more dedicated in living out their faith, standing beside others who are in need, bringing comfort, and challenging others to see the goals to which God calls them. To exercise this gift, one must verbally call for the best from others.

**Faith**

This gift involves extraordinary confidence in God's promises, power, and presence and taking a bold stand for the future of God's work. To exercise this gift involves a healthy prayer life, sensitivity to the will of God, and a firm trust that God is faithful, even when there is no concrete evidence.

**Giving**

This gift involves liberally offering one's time, energy, talent, skills, material possessions, and money for the work of the Church with exceptional willingness, cheerfulness, and generosity. To exercise this, one operates out of a spirit of selflessness, requiring no recognition or reward.

**Healing**

This gift leads some to share in restoring the sick and manifests itself in an unshakable confidence in God's desire and power to provide courage in suffering, and wellness of spirit regardless of the condition of the body or mind. To exercise the gift of healing is to pray that something of good may come out of the suffering and distress.

**Hospitality**

This gift involves a willingness to open one's home and offer lodging, food, and fellowship cheerfully to others. To exercise this gift, one must have a concern for the comfort and ease of others, even strangers.

**Intercession**

This gift enables some to pray intensely and for extended periods of time with great positive effect. To exercise this gift, one must have confidence that God acts in response to prayer, be patient and persistent in prayer even when change is not evident, and have a continuing sense of responsibility to pray for people and situations.

**Knowledge**

This gift involves an exceptional understanding of God's Word and the ability to perceive the relevance of the scripture to specific situations in the church and daily life. To exercise this gift, one must have the skill to share this knowledge graciously.

**Mercy**

This gift involves a readiness to forgive those who have erred, comfort the bereaved, help those who face a crisis, minister to the sick, become a peacemaker, or offer assistance to those in need. To use this gift, one must exercise empathy and compassion for those who are weak or suffering and devote time and energy to alleviate these conditions with kindness and compassion.

**Missionary**

This gift involves a willingness to be with and share with people of different heritage, customs, economic background, or experience, and have an awareness that God loves all people, no matter what they believe or how they express their beliefs. To exercise this gift, one must faithfully share what one has learned about God.

**Musician**

This gift enables some to praise God through various forms of music and enhance the worship experience of the local congregation or the Church at large. To exercise this gift, one may be involved in singing, playing an instrument, or have the ability to select appropriate music for a worship service or event.

**Pastor**

This gift enables some to assume responsibility for the spiritual welfare and shepherding of groups or individuals within the Church. To use this gift, one may use a variety of gifts to express the Shepherd's care in a wide variety of settings including worship, preaching, pastoral counseling, care giving, and leadership in ministries.

**Prophet**

This gift empowers some to interpret and apply God's revelation in a given situation. To exercise this gift, one must have a sense of call, a sense of timing, knowledge of Scripture and the workings of the Church, and respect for the dignity of all people.

**Serving**

This gift enables some to do whatever is needed, no matter how detailed or tedious, and be willingly to share the burdens in such a way that others can do their tasks more effectively. To exercise this gift, one must identify closely with the needs and problems of others and willing work with them, no matter how small or how big the task.

**Teacher**

This gift enables some to communicate in such a way that others can learn. To exercise this gift, one must effectively impart information or proclaim precepts of truth, either vocally, visually, or by example.

**Tongues**

This gift allows some to speak in a language not native to the person so that unbelievers can hear the Gospel in their own language. To exercise this gift is to communicate in or understand a foreign language other than our own native language.

**Wisdom**

This gift helps some understand God's will and help them see practical connections to life, relationships, choices, and work. To exercise this gift involves knowledge of God and scripture, discernment of God's will, and skill in analyzing the problems and dilemmas of life with good interpersonal skills.



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