

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

CHRIST CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Who and Why?

Every believer is gifted by the Spirit, in one way or another, to serve Christ within the ministry of the church. No one is lacking when it comes to gifts of the Spirit. However, many believers misunderstand the purpose of the Spirit's gifts.

They are intended to further the ministry and edify the church. They are not given to benefit the individual, although believers do receive satisfaction from excelling in their gifted area.

1 Corinthians 14:11 says, *"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."* If you are born again by the Spirit of God, you have a specific gift which the Holy Spirit has given you. Whether you recognize it yet or not, that gift (or gifts) is specifically meant to be used to further the work of the gospel and to edify the church of Jesus Christ. Your specific fellowship needs you and your specific set of gifts.

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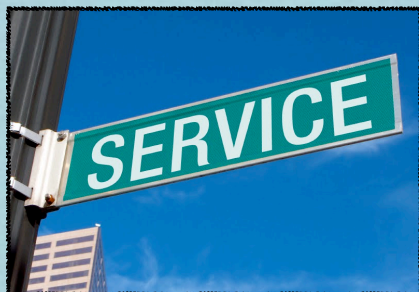


Spiritual Gifts: Defined

A Spiritual Gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church.

We must be clear in asserting that a spiritual gift is different than a natural talent. There is no "spiritual gift" of music listed in Scripture, yet there are many talented musicians.

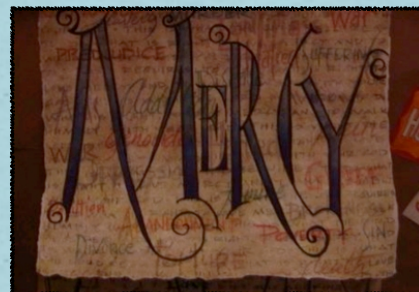
Not every natural ability is included because spiritual gifts must be empowered by the Spirit (1 Co. 12:11), for the common good (1 Co. 12:7), and for edification of the church (1 Co. 14:26).



THE GIFT OF SERVICE: called "ministering" Rom. 12:7, and "helps" in 1 Co. 12:28



THE GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION: called the gift of "governments" 1 Co. 12:28



THE GIFT OF SHOWING MERCY: Rom. 12:6-8 -

What are Spiritual Gifts For?

There is much confusion about what the Spiritual gifts are actually used for. Before Paul gives us a list of spiritual gifts in Romans 12:6-8, he gives us a hint as to why we are given these gifts. He writes, *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."* (v. 4-5).

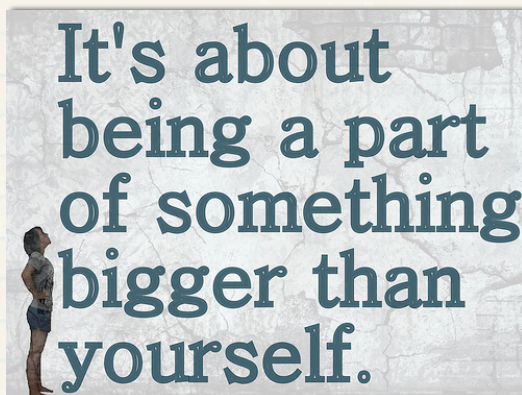
Paul tells believers to exercise their spiritual gifts because they are all members of one body. They are members of one another. The gifts given by the Spirit are intended to be used in the context of the local church. This is confirmed by Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 14:11. *"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."* The gifts that believers are given are for the building up and ministering to the church.



We must never think that God's spiritual gifts are given for our own pleasure, our own pride, or our own benefit. Very often, people desire the gifts that give them authority over other, the ability to teach others, or elevate themselves to positions of leadership. However, the spiritual gifts are

given for the benefit of the church. They are given as the Spirit of God wills and for His purpose.

They are gifts of service to the body of Christ.



Gifts of Service™

Gifts that do a World of Good!

Lists of Spiritual Gifts

Before looking at the four lists of spiritual gifts in the NT, we must make sure to understand that Paul was not intending to give us an exhaustive list of all the various gifts. There are perhaps many different gifts which the Spirit empowers for use in the body of Christ. There is also some overlap in the lists he gives. The four lists are in 1 Co. 12:8-10; 12:28; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Pt 4:11. (Some see Eph. 4:11 as a list of spiritual gifts, but I take it as a list of people given to the church by God.)

1. 1 Co. 12:8-10 -

- a. The Word of Wisdom - The ability to make skillful and practical application of God's truth to life situations
- b. The Word of Knowledge - Ability to study God's Word and discover meaning of context, words, phrases, and related passages to help bring understanding for others.
- c. The Gift of Faith - an intense ability to trust God in difficult and demanding ways. (Distinct from Saving faith)
- d. The Gifts (notice the plural) of healing - Various ministries, helps, prayers, and concerns of healing physical illness. Notice: Today, men are not given the **gift** of healing to use as they see fit, like Jesus and the Apostles did. God still heals but it is by His power through the fervent prayer of the elders of the Church (James 5:14-15)
- e. The Working of Miracles - Miracles still happen today as in the days of Christ. However, God works miracles through His Word and the prayers of His people. No single individual today, has the "gift" of performing miracles. This gift was given to validate the message of Christ and the Apostles as God's Word was being revealed.
- f. The Gift of Prophecy - The OT prophets, more time than not, simply spoke the Word's of God. Although on rare

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



occasions they told the future, most of the time they simply said, "Thus saith the Lord." This gift continues when the man of God speaks the Word of God from the Scriptures. God is not giving new revelation apart from the text of Scripture.

- g. The Gift of Discerning Spirits - (Discernment) - Separating out for examination and judging in order to determine what is genuine and what is spurious.
 - h. The Gift of Divers Tongues and Interpretation - There is much discussion and controversy over these gifts. They will be discussed separately in another lesson.
2. 1 Co. 12:28 - Includes some of the same gifts previously mentioned, as well as:
- a. The Gift of Helps - Service - To take the burden off someone else and place it on oneself. An immeasurable important gift.
 - b. The Gift of Governments (Administration) - This is a giftedness in leadership. The term literally meant "to steer or pilot" a ship. It refers to one who keeps a ship, or a church, on course toward its proper destination.

THE CHURCH HAS A VARIETY OF GIFTS



In 1 Co. 12:29-30, Paul reminds us that not all have every gift or any one gift. There is a vast diversity of gifts and no gift is more important than another in the operation of the church. Likewise, though all do not have THE gift of teaching or

evangelism, all believers can teach or evangelize to some degree.

Spiritual gifts are not as mysterious or "other worldly" as many people make them out to be. They often coincide with the things the individual excels at and enjoys doing. Most of the time God places a desire to exercise the gift He gives to the believer.

In addition, spiritual gifts vary in strength from individual to individual. A certain person's gift may not be strong enough to function for the benefit of the entire church in a large church, but that same person may find that in a younger, smaller church, his or her gifts are very much in demand and able to benefit the entire congregation.



Besides the gift and the desire to use the gift, God will always give the believer the opportunity to use the gift. However, these opportunities characteristically start small and grow into bigger things.

Lists of Spiritual Gifts Continued...

3. Romans 12:6-8 - Previously mentioned gifts will be excluded

- a. The Gift of Ministry - is the same as helps or service. "Ministry" here is defined as "waiting" on someone.
- b. The Gift of Teaching - the ability to interpret and present God's truth understandably. The main difference between the gifts of teaching and prophecy is not the content of the message the difference between proclaiming truth and explaining truth.
- c. The Gift of Exhortation - Advising, pleading, encouraging, warning, strengthening, and comforting one another. Where prophecy proclaims the truth and teaching explains the truth, exhortation calls believers to obey and follow the truth.
- d. The Gift of Giving - the Spirit led ability to give sacrificially from one's possessions, property, and one's self to aid one another.
- e. The Gift of Leadership (He who ruleth) - This greek term is never used of governmental rulers in the NT, but of headship in the family and the church.
- f. The Gift of Mercy - The ability to actively demonstrate sympathy for someone else and having the resources to successfully comfort and strengthen that person.

Many also see Apostleship (planting Churches), shepherding (pastoral care), and hospitality (making guests feel at ease) as spiritual gifts from Eph. 4:11 and 1 Peter 4:9)

Of course we affirm that God may gift men in different areas of interaction with the body of Christ. Paul did not intend for men to take his lists of gifts as the ONLY gifts that possibly come from the Holy Spirit. However, in assessing our spiritual gifts we must remember that a natural talent may not be equal to a person's spiritual giftedness. Even people without God's Spirit possess talents and abilities to play sports, play music, do public speaking, etc.

The distinction lies in the fact that the Spirit's gifts to all believers are specifically for the building up of the church and the advancement of the Kingdom of God.



You Gift is Better than Mine!

What we must come to understand is that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are tools for ministry and service to God. They do not directly reflect the level of maturity of the Christian, nor do specific gifts show that God is more present with certain individuals.

There is a propensity to be envious of people who possess certain gifts and there are also those who look down on believers with certain gifts. This should never be the case.

1 Co. 12:12-26 shows us that every believer endowed with different gifts make up the body of Christ. In the body, the eye can't say that he doesn't need the foot. Nor can the foot say that he is not needed because he is not the eye. Every part of the body is needed and useful.

God has given you the gift, the desire, and the opportunity to serve as He wants you to serve. The only question is whether or not you will fulfill the role He has for you, or will you strive to be "the eye" when He has equipped you for something else.

What is the Greatest Gift?



Paul speaks most fully about the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14. The Corinthians were desiring to have the “showiest” gifts and were forsaking those who possessed lesser gifts. Paul writes to correct this practice.

The last verse of chapter 12 says, “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” (12:31). Paul is telling them that it is alright to desire great spiritual gifts to aid the body of Christ,

however, he says “I will show you a better way.”

The “more excellent way” is love. 1 Co. 13 is all about the folly of coveting God’s gifts rather than loving one another.

He writes, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, [love] I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so

that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Co. 13:1-3).

Notice that tongues, prophecy, understanding, knowledge, faith, giving, and self-sacrifice are **ABSOLUTELY** meaningless if one does not have the love of God for the brethren.

