

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

What They Are and How They Build Up the Church?



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INTRODUCTION

What Are Spiritual Gifts?

They are special abilities God gives to each believer for the purpose of building up the church body.

The “building up of the body” is referring to helping fellow believers in a way that enables them to mature spiritually, to become more Christ-like, and to remain united as a body of believers. It also includes leading others to Christ which adds to the body.

“When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men. It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:8-13

God designed the church so that every member of the body is interdependent on all other members, and all are under Christ who is the Head. Each member has a special God-given way to build up and strengthen other believers while at the same time is being strengthened by others.

In this way the whole church body becomes strong and healthy. This process is accomplished through the use of spiritual gifts that are empowered by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given to every person, who has accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, for the purpose of building up the church.

Scripture Related to Spiritual Gifts

- Read Romans: 12:6-8
- Read: I Corinthians 12:1-31
- Read: Ephesians 4:1-16

What Are the Purposes of Spiritual Gifts?

- They are for developing the unity of the Body of Christ (church)
- They are for adding to the Body of Christ
- They are for bringing about spiritually maturity in the Body of Christ
- They are for reflecting the likeness of Christ as a Body

Spiritual gifts vs. Natural Abilities

Comparison	Natural & Acquired Abilities	Spiritual gifts
Source	From God through parents or through learning	From God, independent of parents
When acquired	From birth or from learning	Probably from conversion
Purpose	To benefit mankind on the natural level	To benefit mankind on the spiritual level
Process	Must be recognized, developed, exercised	Must be recognized, developed, exercised
Function	Ought to be dedicated by believers to God for his used and glory	Ought to be used for God's glory

Spiritual Gifts are Not:

- Necessarily natural talents (See following table)
- Supernatural manifestations (i.e., occult practices, not glorifying God)
- Chosen by the believer
- The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)
- Intended to attract attention or bring glory to the believer

What Personal Benefits Do Spiritual Gifts Bring?

- You experience the joy of knowing that God is working through you in a special way
- You become a contributor to the building-up process of the church
- You discover that you have a unique way of edifying others
- You glorify God through them

Seven Principles of Spiritual Gifts

- Principle No. 1: They are given to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- Principle No. 2: We are to know what gifts we have (1 Corinthians 12:1).
- Principle No. 3: Gifts are manifested in varying degrees of strength (1 Peter 4:10-11).
- Principle No. 4: They are to be developed (Rom. 12:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).
- Principle No. 5: There is diversity and purpose in spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4; Ephesians 4:11-12).
- Principle No. 6: They are an essential ministry of every local church (1 Corinthians 12:26-27).
- Principle No. 7: Unity of the Body results from their usage (1 Corinthians 12:12).

Table of Spiritual Gifts

	Spiritual Gift	1 Cor. 12:8- 10	1 Cor. 12:28- 30	Rom. 12:6-8	Eph. 4:11	1 Cor. 7:7
1	Administration		x			
2	Apostles		x		x	
3	Celibacy					x
4	Distinguishing between spirits	x				
5	Encouraging			x		
6	Evangelists				x	
7	Faith	x				
8	Giving			x		
9	Healing	x	x			
10	Helps		x			
11	Interpretation of Tongues	x	x			
12	Knowledge	x				
13	Leadership			x		
14	Marriage					x
15	Mercy			x		
16	Miracles	x	x			
17	Pastors				x	
18	Prophecy	x		x		
19	Prophets		x		x	
20	Service			x		
21	Teaching		x	x	x	
22	Tongues	x	x			
23	Wisdom	x				

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Not being aware of the nature and need for spiritual gifts
- Selecting a gift without seeking God's choice
- Comparing your giftedness to others
- Being too reluctant to use your God-chosen gift
- Placing more of an emphasis on gifts than on a personal daily relationship with Christ
- Not using your gift because you don't like what you see in others
- Putting personal needs above the needs of others
- Failing to be persistent when opposed by the enemy
- Neglecting to remain dependent on the Holy Spirit for power

SERVICE GIFTS

The Gift of Helps

- I Corinthians 12:28
- The special ability to: unselfishly meet the needs of others, free up another person so they can exercise their spiritual gift(s)
- They see and meet unobvious needs
- They enjoy assisting others so they may exercise their gift
- It is usually a one-on-one ministry
- Very others oriented
- Applications:
 - *Deaconess*
 - *Fellowship assistant*

- *Vacation Bible School arts & craft coordinator*
- *Children's church assistance*
- *Arranges church pew cards*
- *A/V technician*

The Gift of Administration

- I Corinthians 12:28 (governments)
- The special ability to: provide the organization needed for a church to meet its goals; prepare and carry out an efficient plan of action
- Helmsman - one who steers a ship to a given destination
- Good organizer and planner
- Committee chairperson
- Can translate a vision (idea) into a plan of action
- Applications:
 - *Head usher*
 - *VBS coordinator*
 - *AWANA coordinator*
 - *Missions-week coordinator*
 - *Children's church coordinator*
 - *Sunday school supply coordinator*

The Gift of Service

- Romans 12:7 (ministering)
- The special ability to: identify unmet needs in the body of Christ, use whatever resources necessary to meet those needs
- Servant leader roles

- Similar to “helps” but usually serves more than one person at a time
- Resourceful at meeting difficult needs
- Can offer practical solutions which are usually not seen by others
- They often see church needs before others do
- Applications:
 - *Serves during fellowship times*
 - *Greets and assists newcomers*
 - *Assists with church building maintenance*
 - *Host or hostess*
 - *Serves at church dinners*

The Gift of Faith

- I Corinthians 12:9
- The special ability to: trust God with extra-ordinary confidence
- Believe that God will work out His purposes in every situation
- Willing to carry out God's will in the midst of enormous difficulties and hindrances
- They move out in faith when others may be hesitant or unwilling
- Applications
 - *Church planter*
 - *Outreach leader*
 - *Those placed in a “position of prayer”*
 - *Finance committee member during difficult decision times*
 - *Missionaries to other cultures*

The Gift of Giving

- Romans 12:8
- The special ability to: give freely, cheerfully, and sacrificially of one's money
- Give possessions for the sake of building up of the local church
- See money and possessions as tools to serve god
- Give liberally to the church
- Giving is quiet and confidential
- They do not give to gain favor of others
- Applications:
 - *Meet financial needs of church, especially in time of great need*
 - *Provide financial gifts to needy church members*
 - *Help with procuring church busses, cars, instruments and other short term critical needs*

The Gift of Mercy

- Romans 12:8
- The special ability to: show great empathy and compassion for those who suffer physically, emotionally, or spiritually assist those in need
- They are drawn to those who may be outcast or outsiders
- Effective in ministering to those who are terminally ill
- One who cares for those who are hurting or in need
- Applications:
 - *Visit sick and shut-ins*
 - *Jail ministry*
 - *Pajaro Mission support*

- *Nursery worker*
- *Work with retarded or handicapped children as an outreach effort*

EQUIPPING GIFTS

What is Equipping?

- What does it mean to “equip” others?
- Webster’s Dictionary: “To prepare intellectually; to train; to furnish with the necessities for an undertaking, such as with a soldier going to battle.”

The Gift of Pastor

- Ephesians 4:11
- The special ability to: care for, feed, and protect the long-term spiritual needs of individuals or groups in the church, enabling many to grow toward spiritual maturity. To be a “shepherd”
- More person-centered than task-centered
- Applications:
 - *Sr. Pastor*
 - *Youth Pastor*
 - *Deacon, Elder*
 - *Small group leader*
 - *Bible study group leader*
 - *Meeting regularly with a few good friends to help them grow*

The Gift of Leadership

- Romans 12:8
- I Thess. 5:12 ("...those over you")
- The special ability to: provide overall vision for the body of Christ; to manage others in a way that they willingly follow and work together
- Can lead with a relaxed approach
- Clearly see the Lord's leading within a church and know it's from God
- People follow them willingly
- Applications:
 - *Class leader*
 - *Church deacon/elder*
 - *Church chairman*
 - *Small group leader*
 - *Bible study group leader*

The Gift of Encouragement

- Romans 12:8
- The special ability to: encourage, comfort, challenge or rebuke others toward right action in such a way that they respond and act.
- They offer specific, practical guidance for other's spiritual growth
- They clearly see spiritual potential in others
- They encourage and motivate from biblical principles
- Applications:
 - *Worship team*
 - *Counselor*

- *One-on-one discipling, especially with the discouraged*
- *Small group leader*
- *Bible study group leader*

The Gift of Evangelism

- Ephesians 4:11
- The special ability to: share the Gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women respond and become followers of Jesus Christ.
- They have an ongoing desire to share Christ with everyone
- They can clearly present the way of salvation
- Unsaved people respond to them
- Applications:
 - *Outreach leader*
 - *One-on-one discipling of unsaved individuals*
 - *Jail/prison ministries*
 - *Pajaro mission supporter*
 - *Valley Churches United ministry (homeless)*

The Gift of Apostleship

- Ephesians 4:11
- The special ability to: assume and exercise general leadership over a number of churches; to be sent forth
- They are humble while serving in positions of high authority
- They have a God-given desire to oversee the welfare of many churches
- They have a compassion for reaching larger groups of unsaved people

- Applications
 - *Foreign Missions*
 - *Missionary organizations*

The Gift of Teaching

- Ephesians 4:11
- The special ability to: clearly and accurately communicate the truths of the Bible so that people learn
- Strong desire to teach the Word of God
- Able to pull spiritual insights together so that the presentation is insightful and helpful
- They like to study
- Communicate God's Word clearly
- Applications:
 - *Pastor-teacher*
 - *Bible study leader*
 - *Sunday School teacher*
 - *Missionary teacher*
 - *Seminary professor*
 - *Christian School teacher*

The Gift of Wisdom

- I Corinthians 12:8
- The special ability to: offer pertinent spiritual counsel immediately in situations where such guidance is needed
- They can apply spiritual knowledge in practical ways

- They can provide a special understanding in situations where confusion and chaos could easily result
- They are consistently accurate
- Applications:
 - *Elder*
 - *Deacon*
 - *Church chairperson*
 - *Missions committee member*
 - *Finance committee member*

SIGN GIFTS

The Gift of Knowledge

- I Corinthians 12:8
- The special ability to:
 - *Discover, accumulate, analyze and clarify information and principles from God's Word -- to exegete (read out of) rather than eisegete (read into) the Word*
- Special insights from God's Word
- Can assimilate and simplify large amounts of biblical information
- Receives supernatural insights coming from prayer
- Has a good overview of God's Word and can connect various scriptures logically

The Gift of Tongues & Interpretation

- I Corinthians 12:10; I Corinthians 14
- The special ability to:
 - *Speak to God in a language they have never learned*
 - *Receive and communicate an immediate message from God... through a divinely-appointed utterance or language*
- Question: What do the following verses in I Corinthians 14 tell you about tongues?
 - Verse 2 _____
 - Verse 4 _____
 - Verses 13, 27 _____
 - verse 22 _____
- They are known tongues (Acts 2:4) and angelic tongues (I Cor 13:1) in the Bible
- Tongues can create confusion and division if misused (I Cor 14:6-12)
- Tongues are for a sign to unbelievers (I Cor 14:22)
- Tongues are meant to be interpreted (I Cor 14:13, 27)

The Gift of Miracles

- I Corinthians 12:10
- The special ability to:
 - *Perform powerful acts by God's which alter the ordinary course of nature*
- They experience miraculous answers to their prayers
- God works through them to perform supernatural acts
- People confirm the manifestation of supernatural signs

The Gift of Healing

- I Corinthians 12:9
- The special ability to:
 - *Miraculously restore health to an individual in the physical, emotional, or spiritual realms through a direct act of God*
- They are sensitive to those who are suffering
- They believe that God can heal, but also that God may choose not to heal because of His larger plan
- They show a willingness to fail by praying for all who seek healing

The Gift of Spiritual Discernment

- I Corinthians 12:10
- The special ability to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality either divine, human, or Satanic
- They are able to discern people's true spiritual motivation
- They are quick to analyze people and situations for their "spiritual pulse"
- They are able to assist others in identifying the root of their spiritual problems

The Gift of Prophecy

- I Corinthians 12:10
- The special ability to:
 - *speak forth, or preach, the Word of God*
 - *foretell, or prophecy, an immediate message of God to His people.*
- They can be prophetic in either sense:
 - *they may challenge people regarding a future event*

- *Speak clearly about present situations*
- They proclaim timely and urgent messages from God

Churches Differ on Sign Gifts

- I Corinthians 12:8-11
- Churches differ on usage of sign gifts
- God blesses churches today regardless of how they view sign gifts
- Unity, love and caring fellowship are much more important in a church than which position it takes

Love is to be the Motivator

- I Corinthians 13:1-3
- How does the Christian appropriate this kind of (agape) love?
 - *By allowing God to make us like Christ (Romans 8:39; II Peter 1:5-8)*
 - *By deciding to love...not waiting for a feeling*
 - *See John 15:1-5*
- How do we abide (remain) in Christ?
 - *By making Him LORD of our lives*
 - *Without love, the use of spiritual gifts becomes empty!*

DISCOVERING YOUR GIFT(S)

Discovery Guidelines

- Make yourself neutral
- Ask God
- Explore your desires
- Experiment
- Look for confirmation
- Remember: discovery may take time

Remember

- You may have a gift mix
- Ask: will it build up the "body"?
- Check your gift motives against I Corinthians 13:1
- Don't be surprised if it results in a new ministry
- Use the gifts with the strength God provides you (Romans 12:3; I Peter 4:11)
- You experience the joy of knowing that God is working through you in a special way
- You become a contributor to the building-up process of the church
- You discover that you have a unique way of edifying others
- You glorify God through them

Where to Get More Information

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