

Spiritual Gifts

Understanding and Developing Spiritual Gifts

Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services

877-370-9988

www.accounseling.org

info@accounseling.org



Questions

- Do you have a spiritual gift or gifts?
 - If “yes,” what are they and in what ways are you currently using them?
 - If “no,” why don’t you have any?
 - If “not sure,” why not?

1 Corinthians 12:1

Apostle Paul’s introductory statement on the teachings on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.”

What Are Spiritual Gifts?

Spiritual Gifts: the Role of Grace

- Greek word for spiritual gift is “charisma.”
 - “a gift of grace, a gift involving grace” on the part of God as the donor. (Vines)
- The Greek word for grace is “*charis*” which forms the root of the word “charisma.”
- Since spiritual gifts are rooted in *grace*:
 - They are not earned.
 - They are not deserved.
 - They are not only given to “special people.”

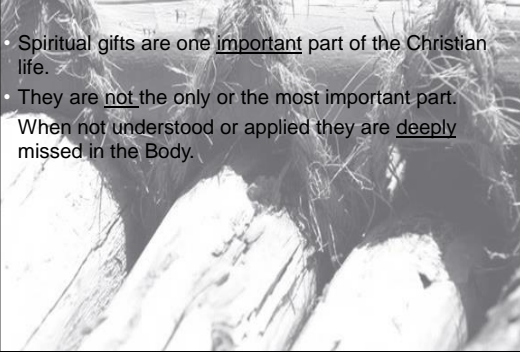


Spiritual Gifts: The Role of the Spirit

- Being equipped is about God’s spirit; not our abilities.
 - **2 Timothy 1:6-7**, *“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”*
- Being equipped is about God’s worthiness; not about us.
- When we realize serving Him by using our spiritual gifts is about His power and love, we realize we don’t have to fear.

One Part of the Whole

- Spiritual gifts are one important part of the Christian life.
 - They are not the only or the most important part.
- When not understood or applied they are deeply missed in the Body.



Spiritual Gifts And The Body



The Body: Primary Scriptures

- There are three primary scriptural texts on spiritual gifts in the New Testament although they are referred to in other passages as well:
 - **Ephesians 4:7-13**
 - **Romans 12:3-8**
 - **I Corinthians 12-14**



The Body: Given to Every Believer

- God has provided **each believer** with spiritual gifts for the purpose of strengthening the Body of Believers and glorifying God.
 - **Ephesians 4:7-8**, "*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*"
- If you are a believer, then God has given you spiritual gifts as a result of the Holy Spirit's work in your life.
- Unbelievers may be talented in many ways, but spiritual gifts are absent without the Holy Spirit's presence.

The Body: Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

- Spiritual gifts are always mentioned in the context of the body of believers when discussed in Scripture.
 - There are no "Lone Ranger" spiritual gifts!!
- Seeking feedback from others and being open to counsel are key features of spiritual gifts.
- **Ephesians 4:11-12**, "*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*
 - **For the perfecting** of the saints,
 - **for the work** of the ministry,
 - **for the edifying** of the body of Christ."

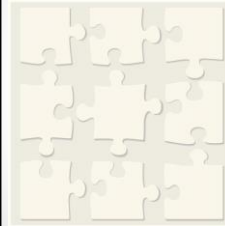
The Body: Romans 12:4-8

4. *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:*
5. **So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.**
6. *Having then **gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us**, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*
7. *Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;*
8. *Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

The Body: I Corinthians 12, 13, 14

- These three chapters are all part of one topic the Apostle Paul was teaching about:
- **Diverse and United in Christ**
 - *I Corinthians 12* – describes God’s design for spiritual gifts as being diverse and being connected in one body.
- **Motivated by Love**
 - *I Corinthians 13* – describes spiritual gifts must be motivated by love or they are nothing.
- **Appropriately Used**
 - *I Corinthians 14* – describes the importance of timing and appropriate use of gifts.

The Body: How Many Gifts Are There?



- This is difficult to know for sure and is a matter of considerable debate among Christians.
- It is important to avoid extremes.
- Three broad categories of gifts:
 - Ministry gifts (e.g., pastor, evangelist)
 - Service gifts (e.g., giving, mercy, administration)
 - Miraculous gifts (e.g., tongues, healing)

The Body: One List of Spiritual Gifts

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Prophecy | • Knowledge |
| • Shepherding/Pastors | • Giving |
| • Missionary/Apostleship | • Helps/Service/Ministry |
| • Evangelist | • Hospitality |
| • Exhortation | • Leadership/Administration |
| • Wisdom | • Mercy |
| • Teaching | • Faith |
| • Discerning of Spirits | • Tongues/Healing/Miracles |

What do these gifts look like in real life application?

The Body: Miraculous Gifts

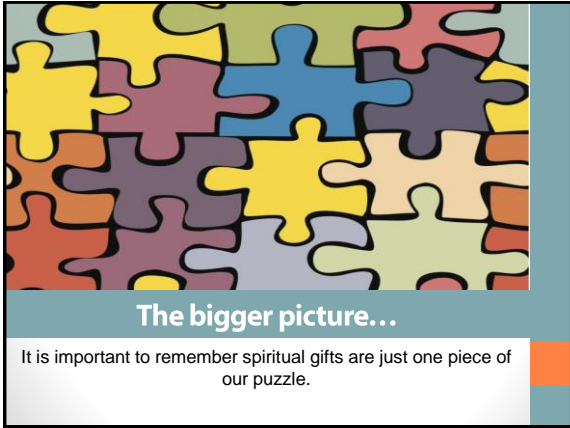
- There are two main positions among Christians about the miraculous gifts:
 - **Charismatics:** Christians who believe the miraculous gifts continue to be expressed as they were in Bible times.
 - **Cessationists:** Christians who believe the miraculous gifts have essentially ceased since the end of the first century.
- Since God is the giver of the gifts, He is also the one who has the power to allow or withhold their use as He sees fit.

The Body: Public and Private Gifts

- Some spiritual gifts are readily observed publicly by others while other gifts are used more in the background.
- **Public gifts** are often easy to observe and recognize. Examples: teaching and pastoring
- **Private gifts** are often easy to overlook because we do not readily observe others doing them. Examples: mercy and giving
- It is important to not value “public” gifts over “private” gifts in ourselves or others.
- Both are equally important to God!

The Body: Recognized and Overlooked Gifts

- Some spiritual gifts tend to look “spiritual” while others look “common.”
 - **“Spiritual-looking” gifts** have to do with things that appear to be closely linked to the Gospel message and ministry (e.g., evangelism, shepherding).
 - **“Common-looking” gifts** are no less important to God, but may not appear to be “spiritual” at first glance (e.g., helps, service).
- Some spiritual gifts are defined by people too narrowly or too broadly, providing an inaccurate view of gifts.
 - “I have the spiritual gift of reading the Bible.”
 - “I have the spiritual gift of waiting tables during lunch.”



Spiritual Gifts and Us: S.H.A.P.E.D

- You have been uniquely created, gifted, shaped, and molded by God. You have:
 - S – Spiritual Gifts** – given to you by God
 - H – Heart** – things you feel strongly about (passion)
 - A – Abilities** – natural talents you can use
 - P – Personality** – uniqueness in relating to others
 - E – Experiences** – give you perspective on life

Warren, R. (2002). The Purpose Driven Life. Zondervan.

What are you passionate about?

- Passions are strong emotions which can be given to us by God to help influence how we use our gifts.

Spiritual Gifts and Us: Gifts and Talents

- Everyone (including unbelievers) has an array of talents/abilities.
- However, in a believer's life, God will **extend and empower** what a person could normally do to accomplish His spiritual purposes by exercising spiritual gifts.
 - God often uses an individual's talents as a platform for them to exercise a spiritual gift.
 - e.g., God will use an individual's talent for organization to exercise the spiritual gift of administration.
 - e.g., God gives a school teacher the spiritual gift of teaching.
- Conversely, spiritual gifts can also be seen in ways which show God has done something beyond what a person could normally do.
 - God gave the Apostles the ability as "unlearned men" to speak in the diverse languages of all of the hearers (*Acts 2*)



Spiritual Gifts and Us: Gifts and Talents

- Either way:
 - We acknowledge the empowerment is from God.
 - We are motivated by God's priorities as found in the Word and not by self-promotion.
 - We are a "vessel" for God's power and not the source of the power.



Spiritual Gifts and Us: Design not by Accident

- Finally, God has given you an unique personality and has brought experiences into your life which have further molded and completed the SHAPE He desires you to have.
- God's design in your life is pleasing to Him and is for His purposes:
 - **1 Corinthians 12:18**, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."

Spiritual Gifts and Us: His Workmanship



Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Our Role With Spiritual Gifts



Our Role: Covet~Desire~Excel

1 Corinthians 12:31, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

1 Corinthians 14:1, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy."

1 Corinthians 14:12, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."

Our Role: Stewardship ~ | Peter 4:10-11

10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Role: Strengths and Weaknesses

- Each gift can be a strength when it is empowered by the love of Christ.
- However, each gift also brings with it the potential to be a weakness.
 - Ex: someone with the gift of Mercy may be tender-hearted and compassionate, but they may also be easily hurt by others and may have difficulty dealing with conflict.
 - Ex: someone with a strong gift of Administration may be skilled at organizing people and getting projects done, but may become impatient or “bossy” with others.

Our Role: The Role of Love

- The Word is clear that if spiritual gifts are not motivated by love, they are meaningless. (*1 Cor. 13*)
- This love must remain our ultimate motivator for using and developing our Spiritual Gifts.



Seven Hindrances To Spiritual Gifts

Hindrance #1: Pride/Fear of Looking Proud

- Many Christians assume recognizing they have a spiritual gift is the same as being proud.
 - It is incorrect to label having an accurate awareness of our strengths and weaknesses as pride.
 - Remember spiritual gifts are “bestowed” by God. You are a steward.
 - Spiritual gifts do not refer to “giftedness” in the sense of some people are “special” while others are not.
- Pride is self-exaltation
 - Spiritual gifts are not about us so we should not be exalting ourselves!

Hindrance #1: Pride/Fear of Looking Proud

- Humbly using spiritual gifts does not involve the extremes of pride or inferiority.
 - **Romans 12:3**, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”
- Instead of making us proud or self-reliant, understanding our worth, spiritual gifts, and talents come from Christ should lead us to desire to serve Him more fully and faithfully.

Hindrance #2: Overvaluing or Devaluing

- It is easy for us to value some gifts over others.
 - Our goal should be to have a biblical view of spiritual gifts and recognize God can use them in whatever manner He sees fit to use them in the Body.
- It is important to acknowledge the role of **each** of the gifts. They are God’s! (*1 Co. 12*)
 - Some ethnic and church cultures tend to value some gifts to the exclusion of others.
 - Sometimes believers are using their spiritual gifts and don’t know it! When this happens, they tend to devalue the gifts because they don’t seem “special.”

Hindrance #2: Overvaluing or Devaluing

- **Tunnel Vision:** when someone feels strongly about a particular role, mission, or ministry, sometimes they accidentally start to view other opportunities as less important or less spiritual.
- This can lead people to devalue other roles and ministries... Sometimes to the point of becoming judgmental.
- "When you have a hammer, everything else becomes a nail."



Hindrance #3: Comparison

- Comparison keeps many Believers from using their spiritual gifts:
 - "She does that so much better than me."
 - "I can't do much; so why try?"
- Satan wins when Believers compare themselves to each other.
 - **2 Corinthians 10:12**, "...but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

Hindrance #3: Comparison

- God ***never intended*** for us to have to be "the best" at something in order for us to use our gifts!
 - There will always be someone better than you (e.g., looks, intelligence, money, strength, social skills, humor, etc.).
- The sooner you accept this, the sooner you can stop trying to perform up to impossible standards or be someone you're not and start serving God the way He created you to be.

Hindrance #4:

Fear(s) of Failure or What Others Think

These fears take our focus off of God's ability and lead us to the following:

1. Not trying
2. Avoidance
3. Missed opportunities
4. Worry
5. Procrastination

Hindrance #4: Scripture~Exodus 4:10-14

10. *And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.*
11. ***And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?***
12. ***Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.***
13. *And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.*
14. *And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart*

Hindrance #5: Unwilling to Stretch

- Spiritual gifts were never meant to bring limitations on our willingness to be helpful.
- Just because you have a spiritual gift in one area doesn't mean that you shouldn't help with opportunities in other areas.
 - Example: "Sorry, I can't help you with church cleaning, I have the gift of teaching."
- That said, we want to avoid trying to "put square pegs in round holes."

Hindrance #6: Lack of Submission

- Sometimes when people feel called to a certain role or opportunity, they assume other people should either “agree or get out of the way.”
- Identifying a spiritual gift does not give someone license to become high-minded or be unwilling to seek and accept counsel, etc.
- Be cautious in the use of the phrase, “God told me.” This can be used as a way to avoid accountability.
- Remember the Bible repeatedly affirms spiritual gifts are to be used in the context of the body of believers.

Hindrance #7: Expectation of Maturity

- The process of growing and maturing spiritually is part of every aspect of the Christian walk, including spiritual gifts.
- Your spiritual gifts will move from “milk to meat” as you grow from “milk to meat.”
- We need to help each other grow through support, accountability, mentoring, and discipleship.
- Don't fall into the trap of believing someone who has a spiritual gift will find tasks in their area to be easy.
- How spiritual gifts are expressed in your life will likely change or shift across your lifespan.



Four Tasks

1. Desiring
2. Determining
3. Developing
4. Doing

#1 Desiring Spiritual Gifts

- You must first be a believer.
- Start by praying and asking God for His guidance and for the desire for spiritual gifts.
- Go to the Scripture. Meditate on the following passages:
 - *Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14, Ephesians 4*
- Study what the words mean. One suggestion is to look them up in the Greek (see Vines).
 - e.g., the word “prophecy” means numerous things in the Bible.
 - It can mean foretelling what will occur in the future OR as it says in *1 Corinthians 14:3, “But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”*

#2 Determining Your Spiritual Gifts

- Pray for God's direction.
- Talk with people who know you well and get their feedback.
 - Specifically seek out spiritual mentors who know both your strengths and weaknesses.
 - Seek counsel.
- Observe the areas of your life where you feel inspired to serve God and others.
- Take a spiritual gifts inventory

A Note on Spiritual Gifts Inventories

- Spiritual gifts inventories can be a very helpful tool in identifying and determining spiritual gifts. However:
 1. They should **not** be used as the sole source of information in determining spiritual gifts.
 2. Realize inventories vary widely in how well they are constructed.
 3. Labels used for spiritual gifts vary widely.
 4. Item content and wording on scales varies widely and can affect the results.
 - For example, some inventories ask for past experience of using gifts while others rate how appealing various tasks are to an individual.

#3 Developing Spiritual Gifts

- Pray for opportunities.
- Remember you don't have to be "the best" at something to use a spiritual gift.
- As God gives you opportunity to use the spiritual gift(s) He has given you, it will allow you to grow in your ability to express that gift.
- Don't be afraid to try. Be aware of hindrances.
- Learn from what works and what doesn't work.
- Look for small ways to grow and improve.
- Talk to your elder and/or ministers and get counsel.

#4 Doing: Use Your Spiritual Gifts

- Pray for empowerment and direction from the Holy Spirit.
- Use what you have been given for God's glory.
- Give the glory for spiritual gifts back to God.
- Seek to encourage others in their use of spiritual gifts.
- We are responsible for using our talents to the fullest (see the parable of the talents in **Matthew 25:14-30**).
- Watch out for the tendency to point out what other people should be doing.
 - **John 21:21-22**, "Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me."

Ephesians 4:16

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

