



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Spiritual Gifts

How the Holy Spirit Equips Believers to Serve Christ and Build Up His Church

The Short Answer

Spiritual gifts are gracious abilities God gives for serving others and building up Christ's church.

Opening Memory Anchor

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The Short Answer Spiritual gifts are gracious abilities, ministries, and Spirit-empowered capacities God gives His people for the good of others and the building up of the body of Christ. They are not rewards for spiritual superiority, personality labels, or trophies. They are gifts. The New Testament describes many gifts and ministries, including teaching, serving, encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, tongues, interpretation, discernment, helps, administration, evangelism, shepherding, and apostolic ministry. Christians disagree about whether every New Testament gift continues in the same way today. Those disagreements should be studied carefully. But Scripture is clear about the purpose of gifts:

To Serve Others.

To Build Up The Church.

To Glorify God.

A spiritual gift should never become a source of pride, competition, control, celebrity, or division. Spiritual giftedness is also not the same as spiritual maturity. The Corinthian church had many gifts and serious problems. That is why Paul places his teaching about love directly in the middle of his discussion of spiritual gifts. The most important question is not, "What gift makes me special?" It is, "How can what God has graciously given me be used to love people, strengthen Christ's church, and glorify Him?"

Key Verse

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.

Peter tells believers to use whatever gift they have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace.

God Gives.

The Believer Stewards.

Other People Are Served.

God Receives The Glory.

Opening Memory Anchor

Spiritual Gifts Are Not Given To Make Us Important.

They Are Given To Help Us Serve.

1. WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT? A spiritual gift is something God graciously gives a believer for service within His purposes. **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-11.** Paul emphasizes that different gifts come from the same Spirit. They are not earned through intelligence, education, maturity, status, or religious achievement. That is why they are called gifts.

2. WHO GIVES SPIRITUAL GIFTS, AND WHY? God does. **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7.** Paul speaks of the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God working through different gifts, services, and activities. Gifts belong within the work of the Triune God. Their purpose is not primarily the importance of the person receiving them. Paul says the Spirit's manifestation is given “for the common good.” **READ EPHESIANS 4:11-16.** God equips His people so Christ's body will be strengthened and mature.

3. DOES EVERY CHRISTIAN HAVE A PLACE TO SERVE? Yes. **READ 1 PETER 4:10** and **1 CORINTHIANS 12:7.** Christians may not always know exactly how to label their gifting, but every believer belongs to Christ's body and matters within it. Uncertainty about a gift label does not mean spiritual uselessness.

4. GIFTS, TALENTS, AND THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT Spiritual gifts are not exactly the same as natural talents. Natural abilities such as music, communication, organization, creativity, or leadership may overlap with spiritual gifting, but Scripture connects spiritual gifts specifically with God's gracious work for service. Spiritual gifts are also not the same as the fruit of the Spirit. **READ GALATIANS 5:22-23.** Gifts describe ways believers are equipped to serve; fruit describes Christlike character produced by the Spirit. A person can be highly gifted and spiritually immature. Giftedness is not the same as godliness.

5. WHAT GIFTS DOES SCRIPTURE NAME? Read the major gift passages:

Romans 12:3-8 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31

Ephesians 4:7-16 1 Peter 4:7-11

These passages mention prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leadership, mercy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, discernment, tongues, interpretation, apostles, helps, administration, evangelism, and shepherding. The lists are not identical, and Scripture never says, “This is the complete exhaustive list.” Some Christians therefore view the lists as representative; others prefer to limit formal gift language more closely to what Scripture explicitly names. Either way, the goal is faithful service, not perfect labeling.

6. CAN A CHRISTIAN HAVE MORE THAN ONE GIFT OR SERVE DIFFERENTLY

OVER TIME? Scripture does not teach that every believer receives exactly one gift and only one gift. Christians often serve fruitfully in several ways. Opportunities and responsibilities also change with life seasons. Remain available to God rather than insisting, “This is my gift, so this is the only way I will serve.”

7. HOW DO I DISCOVER MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS? Start by serving.

Pray. Serve. Notice. Listen. Develop. Evaluate.

Keep Serving.

Ask: What needs do I consistently notice? Where does service seem fruitful? What do mature believers recognize in me? What opportunities has God placed before me? What strengthens other people? Gift discovery often happens in the middle of faithful service.

8. DO I NEED A SPIRITUAL-GIFTS TEST? No. Assessments may help identify patterns in interests, strengths, experiences, and service, but they are not Scripture and cannot determine the Holy Spirit's work with certainty.

A Questionnaire Can Suggest Patterns.

It Cannot Tell The Holy Spirit What He Has Given You.

Use assessments as tools, not spiritual verdicts.

9. CAN OTHER CHRISTIANS HELP ME RECOGNIZE MY GIFTS? Yes. Other believers may recognize that you explain Scripture clearly, consistently notice hurting people, organize effectively, encourage the discouraged, give generously, or serve faithfully. Christian community can help confirm patterns of fruitful service. But no individual has authority to assign you a spiritual identity God has not given.

10. WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW MY GIFT OR IT SEEMS ORDINARY? Keep serving. You do not need to identify your gift perfectly before obeying Jesus. You can pray, encourage, give, show hospitality, help, share the gospel, and bear burdens without knowing your official category. Many important ministries also look ordinary: listening, bringing food, teaching children, organizing transportation, visiting the lonely, praying faithfully, repairing something, or sitting with someone who is grieving.

Visibility Is Not Value.

11. ARE SOME GIFTS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS? Scripture sometimes speaks of “greater gifts,” but it does not give a simple prestige ranking. **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-14:1.** Paul emphasizes what builds up the church. A gift's usefulness depends partly on context and the needs of others. The body needs different members. Spiritual importance cannot be reduced to what is most public, dramatic, or impressive.

12. WHY SHOULDN'T CHRISTIANS COMPARE GIFTS? READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-26. The foot cannot say it does not belong because it is not a hand, and the eye cannot say it does not need the hand. One believer should not think, “I matter more,” while another thinks, “I do not matter.” God designed one body with different members.

13. CAN I DESIRE A PARTICULAR GIFT? Paul tells believers to desire spiritual gifts. **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1.** But the desire should be governed by love and concern for the church, not spiritual ambition for status. A healthy prayer is not, “Give me the gift that will make me look most spiritual.” It is, “God, give and develop whatever will help me faithfully serve Your people.”

14. COMMON SERVICE AND SPEAKING GIFTS ROMANS 12 highlights several accessible examples:

TEACHING helps others understand truth and should remain accountable to Scripture.

Read James 3:1.

SERVICE recognizes practical needs and meets them faithfully, often without public visibility.

ENCOURAGEMENT strengthens, comforts, urges, or helps someone take the next faithful step. GIVING uses resources generously and sincerely. A large gift does not purchase authority in a church.

LEADERSHIP serves, guides, organizes, and protects. Leadership gifting does not automatically qualify someone for every church office. MERCY moves toward suffering with compassion.

15. WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE, AND FAITH First Corinthians 12 speaks of a word or message of wisdom, a word or message of knowledge, and faith. Christians interpret some of these descriptions differently. Some understand wisdom and knowledge primarily as Spirit-enabled insight into biblical truth; others include more immediate Spirit-given insight in particular situations. Faith is required of every Christian, yet Paul also lists faith as a particular manifestation. Many understand this as an unusual capacity for confident trust in God in difficult circumstances. Whatever interpretation is adopted, no claimed word of wisdom or knowledge may override Scripture, and no gift of faith should be used to shame Christians who struggle with fear or doubt.

16. HEALING AND MIRACLES The New Testament clearly records miraculous healings and works of divine power. Jesus healed. The apostles healed. The early church prayed for the sick. Christians disagree about exactly how gifts of healing and miracles operate today. But several truths remain clear:

God Can Heal.

Christians May Pray For Healing.

Medical Care Is Not A Denial Of Faith.

Not Every Faithful Christian Is Physically Healed In This Life.

Illness Is Not Automatic Evidence Of Weak Faith.

17. PROPHECY Prophecy is one of the most debated gifts in modern Christianity. Scripture contains prophets who speak God's revealed word with authority, and the New Testament also describes prophecy within early Christian congregations. **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14.** Christians disagree about how New Testament congregational prophecy relates to Old Testament prophecy and whether it continues today. One safeguard is essential:

No Claimed Prophecy Has Authority To Override, Correct, Or Add To Scripture.

18. TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION Acts 2 describes believers speaking languages recognized by listeners from different regions. First Corinthians 12-14 discusses tongues, interpretation, prayer, understanding, and order in gathered worship. Christians disagree about whether every instance refers to human languages or whether some passages describe another form of Spirit-enabled speech. Paul is clear, however, that public use must serve the church. **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-28.** Interpretation is required in gathered worship, people speak in turn, and if there is no interpreter the speaker remains silent publicly.

19. DISCERNING SPIRITS **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:10 and 1 JOHN 4:1.** This gift is commonly understood as Spirit-enabled discernment concerning spiritual claims or influences. All Christians, however, are told to exercise discernment. Spiritual language does not make a claim

automatically true.

Test It.

20. EVANGELISTS, SHEPHERDS, APOSTLES, HELPS, AND ADMINISTRATION

EPHESIANS 4 refers to evangelists and pastors/teachers. Evangelists proclaim the gospel; shepherds feed, guide, protect, and care for God's people. Jesus remains the Chief Shepherd, and human shepherds serve under Him. The New Testament gives the Twelve and Paul a unique foundational apostolic role while also using "sent" language more broadly in some contexts. Christians disagree about whether "apostle" should be used as an ongoing office today. No modern leader has authority equal to the foundational apostles whose teaching is preserved in Scripture. First Corinthians 12 also mentions helps and administration, reminding us that practical assistance, coordination, planning, and organization matter deeply in church life.

21. CAN SPIRITUAL GIFTS BE MISUSED? Yes. The Corinthian church demonstrates that gifts can become occasions for pride, competition, disorder, self-promotion, and division. A genuine gift does not guarantee faithful use. This is why character, humility, truth, love, and accountability matter.

22. WHAT MATTERS MORE THAN AN IMPRESSIVE GIFT? Love.

Read 1 Corinthians 13.

Paul deliberately places this chapter in the middle of his discussion of gifts. Without love, eloquence can become noise, knowledge can become pride, faith can become self-display, and sacrifice can become empty performance.

Giftedness Without Love Misses God'S Purpose.

23. A GIFT DOES NOT CANCEL A CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY Having a particular gift does not exempt other Christians from biblical commands. Some may be especially gifted in giving, mercy, evangelism, serving, or encouragement, but all Christians are called to generosity, mercy, service, encouragement, love, prayer, and participation in Christ's mission. Never let "That's not my gift" become another way of saying, "I don't have to obey."

24. HOW SHOULD I BEGIN? Begin with what is already in front of you. Love someone. Help someone. Encourage someone. Give. Serve. Practice mercy. Share the gospel. Teach faithfully when given opportunity. Do not wait for a title, a platform, or perfect self-understanding.

You Do Not Need To Identify Your Gift Perfectly Before You Begin Serving Jesus.

Gifts Are Given To Serve People, Not To Establish Spiritual Rank.

Beginner Review

- 1. Spiritual gifts are given by _____.**
- 2. Gifts are given for the _____ good.**
- 3. Spiritual gifts are not the same as spiritual _____.**
- 4. The fruit of the Spirit describes Christian _____.**
- 5. Spiritual-gifts tests are tools, not _____.**
- 6. The church is one _____ with many members.**
- 7. Gifts without _____ miss God's purpose.**
- 8. Spiritual giftedness is not the same as spiritual _____.**
- 9. A gift does not cancel a Christian _____.**
- 10. Gifts should serve others and glorify _____.**

Beginner Review Answers

1. God

2. common

3. fruit

4. character

5. Scripture

6. body

7. love

8. maturity

9. responsibility

10. God

25. READ THE GIFT PASSAGES TOGETHER Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4:7-16, and 1 Peter 4:7-11 provide much of the New Testament's teaching about gifts. Romans emphasizes humble service within one body. First Corinthians emphasizes diversity, unity, love, order, and edification. Ephesians emphasizes equipping the church toward maturity. First Peter emphasizes stewardship and God's glory. Do not build an entire theology of spiritual gifts from one list or one dramatic passage.

26. THE TRINITY, THE SPIRIT'S SOVEREIGNTY, AND THE COMMON GOOD READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11. Paul speaks of the same Spirit, Lord, and God working through different gifts, services, and activities. The Spirit distributes as He wills. A believer may desire to serve and develop skills, but gifts are not self-selected spiritual possessions. The Spirit's manifestation is given for the common good. Ask of any gift or claimed manifestation: Does this strengthen others? Build Christ's church? Serve people? Glorify God? If it consistently produces status, fear, confusion, or dependence upon one gifted person, something is wrong.

27. ONE BODY, MANY MEMBERS READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27. Unity does not mean sameness, and diversity does not require division. The believer who feels insignificant should not say, "I do not belong," while the visible or gifted leader must never say, "I do not need you." Paul even says members that seem weaker are indispensable.

The Church Does Not Need Every Christian To Be The Same.

The Church Needs Every Christian To Be Faithful.

28. LOVE, EDIFICATION, AND ORDER First Corinthians 13 is not an interruption between chapters 12 and 14. Love governs the exercise of every gift. Paul then repeatedly emphasizes edification - building up the congregation - and gives practical instructions for orderly worship.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40. Spiritual intensity is not the only measure of spiritual faithfulness. Understanding, peace, order, and the strengthening of others matter.

29. WHY DO CHRISTIANS DISAGREE ABOUT WHETHER ALL GIFTS

CONTINUE? Two broad positions are commonly called continuationism and cessationism.

CONTINUATIONISTS generally believe miraculous or revelatory gifts such as prophecy, tongues, and healing continue to be available to the church. They often point to Acts 2:17-18, 1 Corinthians 12-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22, and Ephesians 4:11-16, noting that Scripture does not explicitly say these gifts cease before Christ's return.

CESSATIONISTS generally believe certain revelatory or sign gifts were particularly connected with the apostolic foundation of the church and are no longer normative in the same way. They often emphasize passages such as Ephesians 2:19-22 and 2 Corinthians 12:12. Many cessationists still believe God performs miracles and answers prayers for healing while denying that individuals possess continuing apostolic-type sign gifts. There are also many positions between these poles. Do not caricature either side.

30. WHAT CAN FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS ON BOTH SIDES AFFIRM? God is sovereign. God can perform miracles. Scripture is authoritative. No contemporary experience may override Scripture. Christlike character matters. Prayer matters. The church should be built up. Spiritual claims should be tested. Jesus should receive the glory. Faithful Christians who affirm the authority of Scripture disagree about important details of spiritual gifts. Disagreement should lead to careful study, not spiritual superiority.

31. OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY Old Testament prophets spoke God's word with extraordinary authority. READ

DEUTERONOMY 13:1-5 and 18:15-22. False prophecy was treated seriously. The New Testament also refers to prophecy in Acts, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, and elsewhere. Christians disagree about whether New Testament congregational prophecy operates with the same authority as Old Testament prophecy. Continuationists often distinguish contemporary congregational prophecy from Scripture-level revelation; many cessationists question whether such a lower-level category is biblically justified. This disagreement should be stated honestly rather than hidden.

32. PROPHECY MUST BE TESTED READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14:29 and 1 THESSALONIANS 5:19-22. Paul says not to despise prophecy, but he also commands believers to test everything.

Do Not Automatically Reject Every Claim.

Do Not Automatically Believe Every Claim.

Discernment matters.

33. "GOD TOLD ME..." Christians sometimes use the phrase "God told me" when they mean very different things. One person may mean, "Scripture clearly teaches this." Another may mean, "I sensed a strong impression." Those claims do not carry the same authority. Subjective impressions should be expressed with humility. "I believe God may be leading me this way, but I want to test that" is often wiser than presenting an impression as unquestionable divine speech. No claimed revelation should be used to control another believer's marriage, finances, medical decisions, church membership, vocation, or conscience.

34. SCRIPTURE REMAINS THE AUTHORITY No modern prophecy, dream, impression, vision, teacher, pastor, apostle, or prophet has authority to correct, contradict, replace, or add doctrine to Scripture. Whatever

position Christians take on contemporary prophecy:

No Claimed Gift Or Revelation Stands Above Scripture.

35. TONGUES IN ACTS AND 1 CORINTHIANS

READ ACTS 2:1-13. At Pentecost, people from many regions recognize the languages being spoken. This passage clearly involves intelligible human languages. First Corinthians 12-14 discusses tongues, interpretation, prayer, understanding, and corporate order. Christians disagree about whether tongues there are always human languages or may include another kind of Spirit-enabled speech. The text should be studied rather than automatically forced into modern experience.

36. WHAT ABOUT A PRIVATE “PRAYER LANGUAGE”? Some continuationists interpret 1 Corinthians 14:13-19 as supporting private prayer in tongues. Others believe Paul is discussing tongues without interpretation and is not creating a separate private prayer-language category. This is a contested interpretation. Whichever view is held, Paul's repeated concern for prayer, understanding, love, and edification should shape practice.

37. CORPORATE ORDER AND WHO SPEAKS IN TONGUES READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-28. Public tongues require interpretation; speakers are limited and speak in turn; without an interpreter, the speaker remains silent publicly. READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-30. Paul's rhetorical questions indicate that not every Christian has the same gifts, including tongues. Therefore tongues should not be treated as a universal gift possessed by every believer.

Some Pentecostal traditions understand tongues as initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism; other charismatic and non-charismatic Christians disagree. Whatever view is held, Christians should not casually conclude that a believer who does not speak in tongues does not have the Holy Spirit. READ ROMANS 8:9.

38. HEALING IN JESUS' MINISTRY AND ACTS The Gospels repeatedly show Jesus healing, revealing His compassion, authority, identity, and the arrival of God's kingdom. Acts also records extraordinary healings during the gospel's expansion. READ ACTS 3:1-10, 5:12-16, and 19:11-12. Christians disagree about whether these patterns should be expected as ordinary church experience in every period. Their biblical reality should neither be minimized nor mechanically turned into a formula.

39. SHOULD CHRISTIANS PRAY FOR HEALING? Yes. READ JAMES 5:13-18. Christians can faithfully pray, “Lord, please heal,” while also praying, “Your will be done.” Faith trusts God; it does not control Him. When

healing does not come, do not automatically blame the sick person. Paul experienced weakness, Timothy had physical ailments, and Trophimus was left sick. We live in a world still awaiting resurrection. Physical healing may occur now; final bodily healing is promised in resurrection.

40. MEDICAL CARE, MONEY, AND MIRACLE CLAIMS Seeking medical care is not unbelief. God can work through physicians, medication, surgery, therapy, rehabilitation, and ordinary means. Prayer and medical care do not need to compete. No ministry should promise healing in exchange for money. **READ ACTS 8:14-24.** God's grace and power are not for sale. Christians should also be neither cynical nor gullible about miracle claims. Ask what actually happened, whether evidence exists, whether the testimony changes, and whether honest questions are allowed. Truth does not need protection from reasonable examination.

41. APOSTLES AND THEIR FOUNDATIONAL ROLE

READ EPHESIANS 2:19-22 and ACTS 2:42. The New Testament gives the foundational apostles a unique role in establishing and teaching the early church. Christians disagree about whether "apostle" may be used today in a secondary sense for pioneering or missionary ministry. Whatever terminology is used, no modern leader should be treated as possessing canonical authority equal to Christ's foundational apostles.

42. GIFT != OFFICE != MINISTRY ROLE A GIFT describes God's gracious equipping for service.

An OFFICE is a recognized position of responsibility within the church and may carry specific biblical qualifications.

A MINISTRY ROLE is a particular responsibility or opportunity in which someone serves. These can overlap without being identical. Someone may be gifted to teach without being a pastor or elder. Someone may demonstrate leadership gifting without meeting qualifications for eldership. Someone may evangelize effectively without holding the title "evangelist." Gifting does not automatically create office.

43. CALLING != GIFTING != QUALIFICATION != APPOINTMENT CALLING concerns God's direction and a believer's responsibility to serve. GIFTING concerns capacities God provides.

QUALIFICATION concerns the character, maturity, doctrine, and other requirements appropriate to a responsibility.

APPOINTMENT concerns being recognized or entrusted with a specific role. A sincere sense of calling does not eliminate character development, training, confirmation, opportunity, biblical qualifications, or accountability. Saying "God called me" does not make someone immune from examination.

44. GIFTEDNESS DOES NOT QUALIFY SOMEONE FOR LEADERSHIP READ 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13 and TITUS 1:5-9. These passages emphasize character: self-control, faithfulness, hospitality, sound teaching, reputation, and

maturity. A charismatic personality, powerful teaching gift, apparent prophetic ability, or effective evangelism does not by itself qualify a person to lead.

Character Matters More Than Charisma.

45. CHURCH RECOGNITION AND COMMISSIONING The New Testament does not present significant ministry as purely individualistic. Believers are sometimes recognized, sent, appointed, commended, or entrusted with responsibility.

READ ACTS 13:1-3, 14:23, and 1 TIMOTHY 4:14. Not every act of Christian service requires formal authorization, but significant ministry responsibility normally belongs within relationships of discernment, community, accountability, and appropriate recognition.

46. LAYING ON OF HANDS AND “IMPARTATION” Scripture describes laying on of hands in contexts including blessing, prayer, healing, reception of the Spirit in particular events, commissioning, and ministry. READ ACTS 6:1-6, ACTS 8:14-17, ACTS 13:1-3, 1 TIMOTHY 4:14, and 2 TIMOTHY 1:6.

Christians disagree about whether passages concerning Timothy establish a continuing method by which one Christian “imparts” spiritual gifts to another. The text should not be made to say more than it says. One principle remains clear from 1 Corinthians 12:

The Holy Spirit Remains Sovereign Over The Distribution Of Gifts.

No minister possesses spiritual power that can be dispensed to others on demand.

47. THE CORINTHIANS WERE GIFTED AND IMMATURE READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-7. Paul says the Corinthians were not lacking in gifts, yet the letter addresses division, pride, sexual immorality, lawsuits, disorder at Communion, competition over gifts, and chaotic worship.

Spiritual Giftedness Is Not The Same Thing As Spiritual Maturity.

48. CHARACTER, CELEBRITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY A powerful gift combined with weak character can become dangerous. Gifted people may gain attention, influence, access, trust, money, and authority. Without humility and accountability, those advantages can be abused. Modern ministry culture can also create spiritual celebrity. Jesus is indispensable; every human leader is replaceable. No amount of visible success should place a Christian leader above accountability.

49. WHEN SPIRITUAL GIFTS BECOME TOOLS OF CONTROL Claims such as “I am a prophet, so you cannot question me,” “I have discernment, so I know your motives,” or “God gave me authority over your decisions” should be examined carefully. Spiritual abuse can use words such as submission, anointing, authority, covering, prophecy, honor, obedience, or spiritual warfare to create inappropriate control. Christlike leadership serves. It does not dominate.

50. A DISCERNMENT GRID FOR SPIRITUAL CLAIMS

SCRIPTURE - Does it agree with God's revealed Word?

JESUS - Does it exalt Christ or primarily elevate a person?

TRUTH - Can the claim withstand honest examination?

FRUIT - What kind of character does it produce? LOVE - Does it build others up?

ORDER - Does it respect biblical instruction?

ACCOUNTABILITY - Are questions permitted?

HUMILITY - Is correction welcomed?

EDIFICATION - Does it strengthen the church? READ 1 JOHN 4:1-6 and 1 THESSALONIANS 5:19-22. Biblical discernment avoids both extremes: believing everything and rejecting everything.

51. OCCULT PRACTICES ARE NOT SPIRITUAL GIFTS Scripture condemns divination, sorcery, mediumship, attempts to contact the dead, and other forbidden methods of seeking supernatural guidance. READ DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14 and ACTS 19:18-20. Biblical spiritual gifts should not be blended with horoscopes, psychic readings, mediums, tarot, fortune-telling, or attempts to contact the dead. At the same time, not every strange dream, sensation, coincidence, or unexplained experience should automatically be labeled supernatural or demonic. Human experiences can also have ordinary, psychological, physical, neurological, or environmental explanations.

Discernment Avoids Both Gullibility And Sensationalism.

52. WOMEN AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

READ ACTS 2:17-18, ACTS 21:8-9, 1 CORINTHIANS 11, and ROMANS 16. The New Testament clearly depicts women participating in ministry and receiving the Spirit's work. Christians disagree about certain governing and teaching offices. That debate should not be confused with whether women receive spiritual gifts. Women are unquestionably part of the Spirit-gifted body of Christ.

53. CHILDREN AND YOUNG BELIEVERS Young believers can serve Christ. **READ 1 TIMOTHY 4:12-16.** But gifting does not eliminate the need for maturity, training, supervision, wisdom, and appropriate responsibility. Adults should not place inappropriate spiritual authority or pressure on a child because the child appears gifted.

54. GIFTS OUTSIDE FORMAL CHURCH PROGRAMS Spiritual gifts are not limited to official ministries. God may use believers through hospitality, caregiving, encouragement, generosity, mentoring, work relationships, neighborhood service, evangelistic conversations, prayer, and practical help. Calling, vocation, natural ability, learned skill, spiritual gifting, and opportunity can overlap without being identical. Christ can use believers throughout ordinary life.

55. DISABILITY, AGING, AND CHANGING SEASONS

A believer's value to Christ's body is not determined by physical strength, mobility, speech, hearing, vision, income, education, or visibility. Disability does not make someone spiritually unnecessary. Aging, illness, caregiving, retirement, or changing responsibilities may alter how someone serves. Prayer, wisdom, encouragement, mentoring, generosity, hospitality, and faithful presence remain valuable forms of ministry. Do not measure spiritual usefulness only by activity level.

56. YOUR GIFT OR MINISTRY ROLE IS NOT YOUR IDENTITY A role may end because of health, retirement, leadership change, relocation, or circumstances. Even a healthy gift can become unhealthy when it becomes the center of identity: "I am the prophet," "I am the teacher," "I am the worship leader." A Christian's deepest identity is not a gift or title.

You Belong To Christ.

57. DEVELOP WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU A gift does not eliminate the need for development. Gifted teachers should study. Leaders should learn. Musicians practice. Evangelists can grow in clarity. Generous believers should develop wise stewardship. Training can develop ability, but it cannot force the Holy Spirit to grant a gift.

Development Is Not The Same As Divine Distribution.

58. WHAT IF I WANT SOMEONE ELSE'S GIFT? Ask why. You may genuinely admire how God uses another person, but you may also be attracted to their influence, recognition, platform, or authority. Return to 1 Corinthians 12. God arranged the body. Receive your place gratefully and serve faithfully.

59. GIFTS REQUIRE WISDOM AND LIMITS A gifted helper can burn out. A gifted giver still needs stewardship. A gifted pastor cannot meet every need. A gifted teacher should not teach every subject. A spiritual gift does not erase human limitations. “If God gave me this gift, I must say yes to every opportunity” is not necessarily true. Wise stewardship includes limits. Serving faithfully is different from being endlessly available.

60. PRAYER, SCRIPTURE, LOVE, AND HUMILITY Prayer keeps giftedness dependent upon God: the gift came from God, the strength comes from God, the fruit belongs to God, and the glory belongs to God.

No gift operates above Scripture. Teachers, leaders, prophecies, discernment, evangelism, and pastoral ministry remain accountable to God's Word. Return again to 1 Corinthians 13. A person can teach accurately, lead effectively, give generously, or display remarkable gifts and still fail to love. Giftedness should become a channel through which love serves.

READ ROMANS 12:3-8. Humility remembers: I received this. I did not create it. I need other members of Christ's body. God gets the glory.

61. WHAT IF MY CHURCH'S VIEW OF GIFTS DIFFERS FROM MINE? Ask whether Scripture is being handled responsibly, whether questions are permitted, whether spiritual claims are accountable, whether anyone is being coerced, whether the gospel is clear, and whether disagreement can be held charitably. Not every disagreement requires hostility. But manipulative, abusive, or clearly unbiblical practices should be taken seriously.

62. A SIMPLE GIFT-DISCOVERY PROCESS PRAY - Ask for wisdom and willingness to serve.

SERVE - Begin meeting real needs.

NOTICE - Pay attention to patterns of effectiveness, concern, and joy.

LISTEN - Invite mature believers to give honest feedback.

DEVELOP - Grow in skill and character.

EVALUATE - Ask whether the service genuinely builds others up.

KEEP SERVING - Do not let uncertainty become an excuse for inactivity.

63. QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN DISCERNING A GIFT What needs do I consistently notice? Where have I seen lasting fruit? What kinds of service strengthen others when I do them? What do mature Christians recognize in me? What ministry opportunities repeatedly arise? Where am I seeking recognition? Where do I need more training? Does this service align with Scripture? Does it produce love? Does it help other people follow Jesus? Who receives the glory?

64. WHAT THIS STUDY CONCLUDES Spiritual gifts are graciously given by God for the common good. Every believer belongs to Christ's body and has a meaningful place within it. Gifts are not the same as natural talents or the fruit of the Spirit, and giftedness does not prove maturity.

The New Testament gives several gift lists without explicitly identifying one exhaustive inventory. Christians can serve faithfully without perfectly identifying a gift label, and having a particular gift never cancels general Christian responsibilities. Christians disagree about the continuation of some gifts, including prophecy, tongues, healing, miracles, and apostolic ministry. Those disagreements should be represented accurately. Scripture remains authoritative regardless of one's position. Prophetic or supernatural claims should be tested, and no claimed revelation may override, correct, or add to Scripture. God can heal; Christians may pray for healing; medical care can appropriately coexist with prayer; lack of healing does not automatically indicate lack of faith; and God's power should never be sold or financially manipulated. Gift, office, ministry role, calling, qualification, and appointment are related but not identical. A sense of calling or obvious gifting does not remove biblical qualifications, church discernment, or accountability. The Holy Spirit remains sovereign over the distribution of gifts. Character matters more than charisma. Spiritual gifts must never be used to control, intimidate, exploit, or silence people. Biblical spiritual gifts should not be confused with occult practices. Women, young believers, people with disabilities, older believers, and Christians serving outside formal church programs all belong within the Spirit-gifted body. A ministry role is not a Christian's primary identity. Gifts should be developed wisely and exercised with prayer, Scripture, love, humility, accountability, and appropriate limits. Their ultimate purpose is not self-discovery or spiritual rank but faithful stewardship for the good of others and the glory of God.

65. A WEEK OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS DAY 1 - ONE BODY Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Ask where comparison has affected the way you see your place in Christ's body. **DAY 2 - LOVE** Read 1 Corinthians 13. Ask whether your service is becoming more loving. **DAY 3 - BUILD OTHERS UP** Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-12. Notice Paul's emphasis on edification. **DAY 4 - SERVE WITH WHAT YOU HAVE** Read Romans 12:3-8. Identify one concrete way to serve today. **DAY 5 - EQUIPPING THE BODY** Read Ephesians 4:7-16. Notice the goal: maturity in Christ.

DAY 6 - STEWARD GOD'S GRACE Read 1 Peter 4:7-11. Ask how what God has entrusted to you can serve someone else. **DAY 7 - DISCERNMENT** Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 and 1 John 4:1. Ask God for a heart that is neither gullible nor cynical.

66. THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION A person can be gifted, eloquent, charismatic, a powerful teacher, a strong leader, or associated with extraordinary spiritual experiences and still miss the heart of Christianity.

READ MATTHEW 7:21-23. The most important question is not, "What gift do I have?" It is:

Do I Belong To Jesus?

Spiritual gifts do not save. Teaching does not save. Prophecy does not save. Tongues do not save. Miracles do not save. Leadership does not save. Only Jesus saves. Christ lived faithfully, died for sinners, and rose from the dead. Salvation is God's gift received through faith. Then those whom Christ saves become part of His body, and God graciously equips them to serve.

Jesus Saves.

Jesus Forms A People.

God Equips His People.

His People Serve One Another.

God Receives The Glory.

67. RELATED 3NAILS STUDIES What Is Salvation? Following Jesus - The Cost and Joy of Discipleship The Holy Spirit Prayer and Access to God Reading and Understanding Scripture Worship Fellowship and the Church Spiritual Growth and Sanctification Baptism Communion

68. CONTINUE STUDYING

SPIRITUAL GIFTS Romans 12:3-8 1 Corinthians 12-14

Ephesians 4:7-16 1 Peter 4:7-11

PROPHECY AND DISCERNMENT Deuteronomy 13:1-5 Deuteronomy 18:15-22 1 Corinthians 14 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 1 John 4:1-6 TONGUES Acts 2:1-13 Acts 10:44-48 Acts 19:1-7 1 Corinthians 12-14

HEALING AND MIRACLES Matthew 8-9 Acts 3:1-10 Acts 5:12-16 James 5:13-18 2 Corinthians 12:12

APOSTLES, COMMISSIONING, AND LEADERSHIP Acts 1:12-26 Acts 13:1-3 Ephesians 2:19-22 1 Timothy 3:1-13 1 Timothy 4:14 2 Timothy 1:6 Titus 1:5-9

SPIRITUAL MATURITY Galatians 5:13-26 1 Corinthians 13 Colossians 3:12-17 2 Peter 1:3-11

69. QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN STUDYING SPIRITUAL GIFTS Who is being addressed? What problem is the author addressing? What does the text explicitly say, and what am I inferring? Is the passage descriptive, prescriptive, or both?

How does the context shape its meaning? What does it say about the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and the body of Christ? How does love shape the use of the gift? Does the gift serve the common good? Is this a unique apostolic event or an ordinary church practice? What remains debated among faithful Christians? Am I confusing a gift with an office, role, calling, qualification, or appointment? Does the interpretation preserve Scripture's authority? Who receives the glory?

70. A SIMPLE BIBLE-STUDY METHOD

Open Your Bible.

OBSERVE - What does the passage actually say?

INTERPRET - What did it mean in its original context?

CONNECT - How does it fit the wider biblical teaching about the Spirit, church, love, Scripture, and Christ?

RESPOND - How should believers faithfully live according to this truth? Do not begin with, "What happens in my church?" and force the passage to fit. Begin with, "What does Scripture actually say?" Then compare contemporary practice with Scripture.

71. FURTHER VERIFICATION AND STUDY When investigating differing Christian understandings of spiritual gifts, consult responsible primary sources from those traditions. Pentecostal questions should be checked against official Pentecostal sources; charismatic questions against responsible charismatic sources; cessationism against representative cessationist theologians and confessional sources; and Reformed, Baptist, Roman Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox views against responsible sources from those traditions. Different traditions frequently use words such as prophecy, apostle, tongues, revelation, Spirit baptism, impartation, calling, and healing differently. Define terms before comparing positions.

Verification Principle

Understand A Position From Its Own Responsible Sources Before Critiquing It.

Then Test Every Human Teaching And Every Spiritual Claim Against Scripture.

72. SCRIPTURE AND QUOTATION NOTE Scripture references throughout this study are provided to encourage direct Bible reading. Short biblical phrases may be included where helpful, while many passages are

summarized or referenced rather than reproduced in full. Readers are strongly encouraged to open a complete Bible and read every cited passage in context. Do not depend on this study - or any commentary, pastor, teacher, prophet, apostle, ministry, tradition, denomination, website, spiritual experience, or AI tool - as a replacement for Scripture. Use resources to help you study the Bible. Do not use them instead of studying the Bible.

73. FINAL REFLECTION What is your spiritual gift? That can be a useful question, but it is not the most important question. The search for a gift

can slowly become a search for identity, significance, recognition, or a spiritual label that explains why we matter. But you already matter - not because of your gift, but because you belong to Jesus. A gift does not make you more loved. A platform does not make you more valuable. A dramatic spiritual experience does not move you closer to the center of Christ's body, and a quiet gift does not move you toward the edge. Maybe God will use you to teach Scripture. Maybe He will use you to sit beside someone who is grieving. Maybe you will lead, organize, give, encourage, share the gospel, serve children, pray quietly, recognize a need, open your home, use your work, or carry wisdom gained through suffering. Do not wait until you feel impressive. Do not wait for a ministry title. Discovering a gift is not the finish line. The point of receiving a gift is using it. The point of using it is serving people. The point of serving people is glorifying God. If God gives you a visible gift, stay humble. If He gives you an ordinary-looking gift, stay faithful. If people praise your gift, remember where it came from. If people overlook it, remember who sees. If your ministry grows, remain accountable. If your role ends, remember who you are. If someone claims spiritual authority, test it. If someone says God spoke, compare the claim with Scripture. If someone claims a miracle, you are allowed to ask reasonable questions. If someone is not healed, do not shame them. If faithful Christians disagree with you about tongues, prophecy, apostles, miracles, or laying on of hands, represent them accurately. Hold Scripture tightly. Hold pride loosely. And whatever your theology of spiritual gifts becomes, never miss Paul's placement of 1 Corinthians 13.

Love Is Not Optional.

You can possess extraordinary gifts and still hurt people. You can speak about God and fail to look like Jesus. You can draw crowds and lack character. You can be spiritually impressive and spiritually immature. So ask a better question than, "What is my gift?" Ask, "Am I using what God has given me in love?" Does my teaching help people understand Christ? Does my leadership help people follow Jesus rather than depend upon me? Does my encouragement strengthen someone who wants to quit? Does my giving meet needs without demanding recognition? Does my mercy move toward suffering? Does my discernment produce wisdom rather than suspicion? Does my service lighten another person's burden? Does whatever I believe about supernatural gifts remain under Scripture? Spiritual gifts were never supposed to make Christians celebrities. They were supposed to make Christians servants. One day gifts will no longer be necessary. Christ's people will be complete. Until then: serve, teach, encourage, give, lead humbly, show mercy, pray, discern, help, share the gospel, develop what God has entrusted to you, remain teachable, stay accountable, keep Scripture open, keep Christ at the center, and keep love over everything. The final goal was never:

"Look What A Gifted Christian I Became."

The goal is:

“Look What God Graciously Did Through Ordinary People Who Belonged To Jesus.”

Final Memory Anchor

Gifted By Grace.

Guided By Scripture.

Governed By Love.

Used To Serve.

SPIRITUAL GIFTEDNESS IS NOT THE SAME THING AS SPIRITUAL MATURITY. GIFT != OFFICE != MINISTRY ROLE. CALLING != GIFTING != QUALIFICATION != APPOINTMENT.

Having A Particular Gift Does Not Exempt Other Christians From Biblical Commands.

The Holy Spirit Remains Sovereign Over The Distribution Of Gifts.

The Church Does Not Need Every Christian To Be The Same.

The Church Needs Every Christian To Be Faithful.

No Claimed Gift Or Revelation Stands Above Scripture.

The Gift Never Becomes More Important Than The Giver.

Use Whatever God Has Entrusted To You To Serve Others.

All For The Glory Of God.