

Discipleship Lesson 21

Spiritual Gifts

Key Memory Verse:

*There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
But one and the same Spirit works all these things,
distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

1Corinthians 12:4, 11



Discipleship Lesson 21 Spiritual Gifts

As you study this lesson you will understand why the following statements are **not true**.

1. You can have all the gifts you want if you have enough faith.
2. Only those who have been to Bible College or seminary should minister within the church.
3. Anybody can do any ministry within the church effectively if they would only work hard enough.

Who Needs to Know about Spiritual Gifts?

You need to know about spiritual gifts if:

1. You are a Christian.
2. You believe that Jesus is your Lord, and you want to love Him and follow Him in the best way possible.
3. You want your church to be a healthy, active, and growing group of people showing forth God's love.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to clarify the responsibilities of the Christian in the local church by defining the God-given gifts that enable us all to minister toward the "edifying of the body."

The benefits of spiritual gifts:

What happens when you decide to discover, develop, and use your spiritual gift or gifts?

First, you will be a better Christian and more able to allow God to make your life count for Him.

Secondly, not only does knowing about spiritual gifts help individual Christians, but it helps the church as a whole (Ephesians 4:13–14).

Thirdly, knowing about spiritual gifts glorifies God. 1 Peter 4:10–11 advises Christians to use their spiritual gifts and then adds the reason why.

I. Why Are Christians Responsible for Service as Individuals and as Part of the Church?

Explain from the following verses why we are responsible to minister to one another:

- A. Ephesians 2:10
- B. 1 Corinthians 12:7
- C. We are called to function as part of the body. Read Romans 12:4–8.
- D. Ephesians 4:11–16

God has called us to serve Him and to bear fruit (John 15:16). He has provided the Holy Spirit, who has equipped us with spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11).

II. Clarifying Some Misconceptions about Spiritual Gifts

It would be helpful at this point, before we go on to define the spiritual gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit, to clarify exactly what is not a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 12:1).

- A. A spiritual gift is not a natural talent, either physical or mental, that you have developed through personal sacrifice and discipline.
- B. A spiritual gift is not a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22–23.



Notes and Questions:

- C. Spiritual gifts are not character qualities such as honesty, integrity, conscientiousness, loyalty, or holiness.
- D. Spiritual gifts are not presents given to us for our benefit. They are divine abilities given to us for the benefit of the church body. Why did God choose to give us spiritual gifts? Simply, He gave them to us to do service. Why?

1. To glorify Himself, to lift Him up, to exalt Christ (1 Peter 4:11). This is vital to understand. This is what often causes problems in churches; God is not given the glory.
2. To build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11–12). God has a plan, and He is in charge. He will get the job done, and He wants to bless us for helping.
3. To develop unity in the body of Christ. We must come together to meet the goals set for us by Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

- E. Spiritual gifts are not something we should boast about (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Spiritual gifts came through the gracious sovereignty of the Spirit and not through any merits of ours.

- F. Spiritual gifts are not for our personal edification but for building up the body (1 Corinthians 12:7).

- G. The absence of a particular gift does not excuse disobedience to biblical commandments. Give an example.
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III. Defining and Discovering Your Spiritual Gift

- A. Simply stated, a spiritual gift is a divine motivation that helps you develop a special skill or ability.

Another good definition—a spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the body of Christ, according to God's grace for use within the context of the body.

- B. How do you discover your spiritual gift or gifts?
1. First, you have to be a Christian. Spiritual gifts are given only to members of the body of Christ.
 2. Second, you have to believe in spiritual gifts. This is a question of faith. You must believe that God has given you a spiritual gift before you start the process of discovering it.
 3. Third, you have to be willing to work. God has given you one or more spiritual gifts for a reason. There is a job He wants you to do in the body of Christ, a specific job for which He has equipped you.
 4. Fourth, you have to pray (James 1:5).

IV. What Are the Spiritual Gifts as Listed in the Bible?

- A. There are basically three main passages that list the spiritual gifts. See how many gifts you can list from these passages:
1. Romans 12:6–8
 2. 1 Corinthians 12:8–10
 3. Ephesians 4:11. Name gifted offices.

Notes and Questions:

V. Were These Gifts Used in the Early Church?

- A. List which gift you find in operation and who demonstrated its use from each of the following scriptures:

Note: There is a distinction to be made between offices and gifts. Although 1 Corinthians 12:28 talks about apostles in context with other gifts, there is a difference between an office or position (that of an apostle, pastor, or evangelist), and the gift or gifts that are given to the one holding that office (Ephesians 4:11).

1. Acts 2:14
2. Acts 4:36–37
3. Acts 5:42
4. Acts 6:1–5
5. Acts 8:5–12
6. Acts 11:23
7. Acts 11:28
8. Acts 15:13

- B. There is a distinction to be made between two major groupings of the gifts. One group would be referred to as the **sign gifts**, such as healing, tongues, and miracles. The other gifts are sometimes referred to as **ministering gifts**. For the purpose of this lesson, we will only be addressing the ministering gifts.

VI. How Would You List and Define These Gifts?

Below is a list of what are referred to as the active gifts in the church today and their definitions. Remember, each of these is Spirit given and empowered to be employed in service to the body, ultimately to the glory of God! Each of these abilities is coupled with the God-given desire to use them in service.

- A. **Administration or Leadership**—the ability to lead, organize, and give direction.
- B. **Exhorting**—the ability to encourage and explain to others practical steps of action, either in service to others or in personal spiritual growth. Being able to motivate others to action by urging them to pursue a course of conduct.

- C. **Giving**—the ability to recognize and give assistance to those in need by giving of his/her material resources, far beyond the tithe, to further the work of God. The emphasis is placed by many on finances, but this may also refer to any form of time, talent, or treasure.
- D. **Prophet**—to speak before; the ability to edify, exhort, and to proclaim God's truth, revealing sin in the hearer's life.
- E. **Teaching**—the ability to research doctrinal truths and communicate them in written form or verbally.
- F. **Mercy**—the ability to recognize and comfort those who are in need due to physical, spiritual, or emotional problems.
- G. **Serving** (also known as Helps and Ministry)—the ability to see or recognize needs (those of individuals or of the body), and to do whatever is necessary or in one's power to assist in meeting that need.
- H. **Pastor/Shepherd**—the ability to serve God by overseeing, training, and caring for the needs of a group of Christians.
- I. **Evangelist**—the ability to lead people, beyond one's natural ability, to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

VII. How Can These Gifts Be Used Today?

- A. Review the overall purpose for spiritual gifts before continuing (Romans 12:4–5; 1 Corinthians 12:4–7; Ephesians 4:12–16).
- B. Match the list of real life needs of Christians with the gift or gifts that might be used to fulfill that need. More than one gift could have an influence or part in meeting different needs!

A person may ... The spiritual gift to meet that need:

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|--|----------------------|
| 1. Need finances ____. | a. Administration |
| 2. Have a sin problem ____. | b. Exhorting |
| 3. Need salvation ____. | c. Giving |
| 4. Need to learn doctrine ____. | d. Prophet |
| 5. Need encouragement ____. | e. Teacher |
| 6. Need a helping hand ____. | f. Mercy |
| 7. Need leadership ____. | g. Serving |
| 8. Need emotional support
/ comforting ____. | h. Pastor / Shepherd |
| 9. Need a small-group
leader ____. | i. Evangelism |
| 10. Need a children's Sunday
School teacher ____. | |



Notes and Questions:

VIII. Basic Questions

- A. Who receives spiritual gifts and when? See 1 Corinthians 2:12–14; 1 Peter 4:10.
- B. How many gifts does each Christian have? See 1 Corinthians 7:7; 1 Peter 4:10.
- C. Does anyone get all the gifts? See 1 Corinthians 12:27–31.
- D. Who decides who gets what gift? See 1 Corinthians 12:4–11.
- E. What am I supposed to do with the gift or gifts that He gives me? See 1 Timothy 4:14.
- F. What if I don't use my gifts? Can they be taken away? See Romans 11:29.
- G. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–26. What is the purpose of this illustration? Note verses 25–26.

IX. Practical Application

- A. What attitudes or behaviors toward personal service have changed or been confirmed as a result of studying this lesson?
- B. What gift or gifts do you feel you have, and where do you think they could be used in the ministry of the church? (Review Section VI.)
- C. Name two important truths or principles that stood out to you from this lesson.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____