

Spiritual Gifts Study Summary

Each person of the Trinity is said to give spiritual gifts sovereignly (which means as God determines), which gifts, and how much of each gift. The Holy Spirit seems to be the most directly active in giving and applying the gifts to Christians. The Bible also emphasizes that gifts are given to “each one” so we are on a good foundation for believing that every Christian has at least one (likely more than one) spiritual gift.

Spiritual gifts are given to build up, or edify the church. This means we encourage one another, teach one another, correct one another, help one another, worship together, serve together. Even though the gifts are very diverse, they should be exercised in love and should unify the church.

The Bible doesn’t present a comprehensive, systematic explanation of spiritual gifts. The lists that exist in Romans 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Corinthians 12-14 and a few other passages seem to be representative rather than exhaustive. There may be gifts other than those listed, but we should be careful about attributing the title “spiritual gift” without biblical example. Instead of saying, “I have the spiritual gift of _____,” it may be better to say, “I feel called to _____,” or, “I love serving the church by _____.”

The gifts listed in the NT are: prophecy, service, teaching, encouragement/exhortation, generosity, leadership, mercy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, apostleship, guidance/administration, evangelism, celibacy, and hospitality.

In Romans and Ephesians (two of the three extended discussions on spiritual gifts) it really helps us to understand the purpose of spiritual gifts when we note the context of Paul’s teaching on gifts. In both letters, he has just concluded an extensive doctrinal section and is transitioning to an application section. The gifts passages in both letters occur at the beginning of the application section. In essence, Paul is saying that if we want to know how to apply the gospel and sound doctrine in our lives, one of the first ways we can do that is by identifying and putting to work our spiritual gifts for the good of the church.

We should use caution in making blanket statements that go beyond what the Bible actually tells us. Some common statements about spiritual gifts that go beyond what the Bible teaches: (1) Spiritual gifts are given at the moment of conversion. (2) Spiritual gifts are permanent. (3) There is a clear difference between natural abilities and spiritual gifts. These statements may or may not be true, or they may be true sometimes and for some people, but not true for others.

The themes surrounding the major spiritual gift passages are remarkably similar. Romans 2: humility (3), unity (4-5), love (9), and service (10-13). Ephesians 4: humility (2), unity (3-6), service (11), maturity (13-14), love (16). 1 Corinthians: service (12:5), unity 12:12-26), love (13:1-13), order in public worship (14:1-40).

Two important cautions: Be aware of gift projection, where you expect others to serve and take part in ministry in the same ways you do. Also be aware of gift envy, where you identify a gift you like and admire and begin pursuing an area where you might not really be called.

Spiritual Gifts by Scripture Passage

Romans 12:3-13	1 Corinthians 12-14	Ephesians 4:7-16
prophecy	prophecy	prophets
service	service (helping)	
teaching	teachers	pastors who teach
encourage/exhort		
giving		
leadership		
mercy		
	message of wisdom	
	message of knowledge	
	faith	
	healing	
	miracles	
	distinguishing spirits	
	speaking in tongues	
	interpreting tongues	
	apostles	apostles
	guidance (administration)	
		evangelists

1 Cor. 7:7-8	celibacy
1 Pet. 4:9-11 (Rom 12:13)	hospitality

Spiritual Gifts by Scripture Passage

Romans 12:3-13

Where does the section on spiritual gifts fall in the context of the letter?

Does Paul address who gives gifts and how much grace is given? Where?

Does this seem like a systematic teaching on spiritual gifts?

Which spiritual gifts are mentioned? (See worksheet)

What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

What other themes are mentioned in the context?

Ephesians 4:7-16

Where does the section on spiritual gifts fall in the context of the letter?

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Does this seem like a systematic teaching on spiritual gifts?

Which spiritual gifts are mentioned? (See worksheet)

What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

What other themes are mentioned in the context?

1 Corinthians 12-14 (primarily 12:1-11, 27-31, 14:1-40)

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MAY
06
2010

How do I discover my spiritual gift?

The question about discerning particular spiritual gifts is probably the primary question on many a Christian's mind. However, I want to propose that it is the wrong question. It is the wrong question because [as I have already argued](#), the lists are representative, not exhaustive. Consequently, any spiritual gifts inventory will be limiting.

Another reason this is the wrong question is because once we believe we have found the answer ("I have the gift of _____."), it will limit how, where and when we serve. For example, I may have the gift of teaching (so it has been affirmed by others), but that is not the limits of my service. Can you imagine if we were breaking down after a church-wide meal and other brothers were moving tables and chairs, then they looked at me to assist them, but I said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I'm THE teacher! That's my spiritual gift; I don't do tables and chairs." That would not be Christian; it would not be helpful; and I would not blame the guys throwing a few chairs in my direction.

The Right, Better Question: How can I serve the body?

We tend to get hung up on particular gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul broadens the categories of gifts under the umbrella the manifestation of the Spirit and argues that we manifest the Spirit when we serve one another in faith and in love ([1 Corinthians 12:7](#); [13:1-3](#)). Therefore, let us serve one another in faith and in love. How?

- 1. First, find out what help the body needs.** What are the biblical needs of any body? There are, of course, word ministry needs (preaching, teaching, etc. – [Ephesians 4:11](#)). There are also serving needs: widows, orphans, elderly, parents, children, single mothers, etc. ([1 Peter 4:10-11](#)). Ask the leadership of your church to find out what specific needs exist.
- 2. Once you see and begin to understand the needs of the body, PRAY!** Pray for the particular needs of the body (Ask the leadership how you can join them in praying for the needs of the body). Pray that the Lord of the harvest would raise up laborers. Pray that the leadership of the body would have wisdom in guiding these ministries. Then, ASK the Lord if He is calling you to serve in one of those areas.
- 3. Ask yourself, "What do I enjoy doing?"** Why do we think that doing the Lord's will has to be miserable? If the Spirit has gifted us, and if we are growing in grace, then we will enjoy serving the Lord and the body with these particular gifts. However, there may be areas of need that you may not be thrilled about (i.e., nursery) but that are important needs. The Lord may also have equipped you with certain capacities (i.e., accounting) that would serve the body well but which you may be reluctant to use because that is what you do all day, every day. Serve the body! Normally, it will be a delight!
- 4. Seek godly counsel – from elders (leaders), mentors, small group leaders, etc.** Mature Christians with whom you spend much time will be observing you and caring for you. They will be a valuable asset in either confirming or denying whether or not you have particular gifts in certain areas. Listen to them wisely.
- 5. Serve! Don't just sit there, do something!** Each of us is gifted for the common good; therefore, let us use our gifts ([1 Peter 4:10-11](#)). We don't have to wait until we have discovered our gifts to serve. Serve the church! As you are serving, you may even discover that you really enjoy it; the leaders in your church may confirm what they see; and you will have discovered one of the areas where the Spirit has equipped you to build up the body in love. Imagine that! You discovered your gift(s) while serving. Don't just sit there, do something! May the Lord deliver us from consumerism!

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Self-Assessment Inventory

Instructions:

For each of the 60 questions which follow, circle the number that corresponds with the response that most closely matches how you perceive yourself. Categories are presented diagonally, across the top of the inventory.

4-Consistently True 3-Frequently True 2-Occasionally True 1-Infrequently true 0-Rarely True

You might also ask a person who is close to you to score the inventory with, and for, you. Their perception of your strengths may be useful in identifying the gifts with which you have been truly blessed. After responding to each question, turn to the scoring grid on page six to analyze your results.

1. When presented a goal, I immediately think of steps that need to be taken in order to achieve the desired results. 4 3 2 1 0
2. I express myself through artistic means. 4 3 2 1 0
3. My faith requires me to seek out God's will and purpose in all circumstances that arise in my life. 4 3 2 1 0
4. I am able to convey the Gospel message to non-believers in ways that they are able to easily understand. 4 3 2 1 0
5. I am moved by those who through conflict or sorrow are wavering in faith. 4 3 2 1 0
6. I am certain of the spirit's presence in my life and the lives of others. 4 3 2 1 0
7. I am blessed by God each day and gladly respond to these blessings by giving liberally of my time and money. 4 3 2 1 0
8. I enjoy meeting new people and becoming acquainted with them. 4 3 2 1 0
9. I know that God hears and responds to my daily prayers. 4 3 2 1 0
10. I feel compelled to learn as much as I can about the Bible and faith. 4 3 2 1 0
11. I am a take charge person. When others follow my direction, the goal or task will be completed. 4 3 2 1 0
12. When I see a person in need, I am moved to assist them. 4 3 2 1 0
13. I love to sing and enjoy inspiring others through song. 4 3 2 1 0
14. I find joy and express myself by playing a musical instrument. 4 3 2 1 0
15. I am motivated to provide spiritual leadership to those who are on a faith journey. 4 3 2 1 0
16. I like working behind the scenes to ensure projects are successful. 4 3 2 1 0
17. I enjoy working with my hands in a trade or skill that required considerable experience to perfect. 4 3 2 1 0
18. My great joy is to communicate biblical truth in such a way that it becomes real and understood by others. 4 3 2 1 0
19. When a challenge is presented, I am usually able to identify an appropriate solution. 4 3 2 1 0

20. I am able to take a thought or idea and put it into a clear and inspiring written form.
4 3 2 1 0
21. I enjoy organizing thoughts, ideas, hopes and dreams into a specific plan of action.
4 3 2 1 0
22. I can translate into artistic form what I first see in my imagination. 4 3 2 1 0
23. I have assisted others as they sought to discern whether or not their personal decisions were helpful and in accord with God's will for their lives. 4 3 2 1 0
24. I enjoy being with non-believers and like having the opportunity to encourage them to faith and commitment. 4 3 2 1 0
25. When I know someone is facing a crisis, I feel compelled to provide support and care. 4 3 2 1 0
26. My trust in the Spirit's presence, when I encounter times of personal crisis, is a source of strength for others. 4 3 2 1 0
27. I manage my time and money so that I am able to give much of it to the work of the church or other organizations. 4 3 2 1 0
28. I am often asked to open my home for small group gatherings or social occasions.
4 3 2 1 0
29. I often become so absorbed in my prayer life that the door bell or phone can ring and I will not hear it. 4 3 2 1 0
30. Not one day would be complete without biblical study and thought. 4 3 2 1 0
31. When I am in a group, others will often look to me for direction. 4 3 2 1 0
32. I feel an urgency to provide housing for the homeless, food for the starving, comfort for those in distress. 4 3 2 1 0
33. I have sung before groups and felt a real sense of God's presence. 4 3 2 1 0
34. By my playing a musical instrument, inspiration has been provided for both myself and others. 4 3 2 1 0
35. I have responsibility for providing spiritual guidance to an individual believer or group of believers. 4 3 2 1 0
36. People tell me that without my willingness to do the unnoticed jobs, their work would be more difficult. 4 3 2 1 0
37. I am good at building, repairing, or restoring things and find satisfaction in doing so.
4 3 2 1 0
38. I want to express my faith by assisting others to discover the truths contained in the Bible. 4 3 2 1 0
39. People come to me for help in applying Christian faith and values to personal situations. 4 3 2 1 0
40. I often feel moved to write about my thoughts and feelings so others may benefit from them. 4 3 2 1 0

41. I have been successful in organizing, directing and motivating people to achieve a goal. 4 3 2 1 0
42. My artistic work has given spiritual strength to both believer and non-believer. 4 3 2 1 0
43. In the congregation, I am often asked if a direction being discussed is in accord with God's will and purpose. 4 3 2 1 0
44. I do not find it difficult to share what Jesus means to me with non-believers. 4 3 2 1 0
45. Those who are struggling with life questions have come to me for guidance and help. 4 3 2 1 0
46. I can see great things happening in my congregation and am not derailed by the pessimism of others. 4 3 2 1 0
47. When I receive money unexpectedly, one of my first thoughts is to share this gift through the church. 4 3 2 1 0
48. I enjoy welcoming guests and helping them to feel at ease. 4 3 2 1 0
49. Believers have asked me to pray for healing in their lives, and have evidenced God's healing power. 4 3 2 1 0
50. My study of the Bible has proven helpful to others in their faith journey. 4 3 2 1 0
51. People have said they like to work with me because the task will be successfully completed. 4 3 2 1 0
52. People have been surprised by how at ease I am while working with those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit. 4 3 2 1 0
53. I am grateful and humbled that my singing has provided inspiration and hope for others on their faith journey. 4 3 2 1 0
54. Others have told me they were moved by my playing a musical instrument. 4 3 2 1 0
55. People have come to me for spiritual help and it has developed into a long-term relationship. 4 3 2 1 0
56. When I turn out the lights, take tables down, work in the kitchen or put chairs away, I feel that I have served the Lord. 4 3 2 1 0
57. My knowledge of building, maintenance or repair has been a special value to the church and others. 4 3 2 1 0
58. Students have told me that I can take the most difficult idea or concept and make it understandable. 4 3 2 1 0
59. When direction is needed at work or in the congregation, I am generally asked for my opinion. 4 3 2 1 0
60. My written work has been helpful to others in understanding life's truths. 4 3 2 1 0

Gift/Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Administration 1, 21, 41												
Artistry 2, 22, 42												
Discernment 3, 23, 43												
Evangelism 4, 24, 44												
Exhortation 5, 25, 45												
Faith 6, 26, 46												
Giving 7, 27, 47												
Hospitality 8, 28, 48												
Intercession 9, 29, 49												
Knowledge 10, 30, 50												
Leadership 11, 31, 51												
Mercy 12, 32, 52												
Music-vocal 13, 33, 53												
Music-instrumental 13, 34, 54												
Pastoring 15, 35, 55												
Service 16, 36, 56												
Skilled Craft 17, 37, 57												
Teaching 18, 38, 58												
Wisdom 19, 39, 59												
Writing 20, 40, 60												