



Spiritual Giftedness

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:10-11

What is the difference between a natural talent and a spiritual gift?

Out of His common grace, God gives talents to all people. Since we are created in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26–27) all people possess at least one aspect of His abilities in a very limited and incomplete manner. When we become Christians, He gives us a special means of grace called spiritual gifts. While the two differ, they can both be used to reflect His character and extend His kingdom. Oftentimes, our natural talents and spiritual gifts complement each other to give us unique ministry opportunities.

How do you get a spiritual gift?

Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to Christians and every Christian has at least one spiritual gift, and some people may have many (1 Cor. 12:11,18; Heb. 2:4; 1 Peter 4:10). Christians are given their spiritual gift solely by God's grace and can do nothing to earn or get a different gift (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4–7, 11). God has appointed people in churches the specific gifts that are needed for the overall health of the church. If people are dissatisfied with their gift, they are sinning by coveting the gift of their Christian brother or sister. They are being selfish and thinking solely about their wants rather than the needs of the entire church, which requires all gifts to be in operation.

What is the purpose of a spiritual gift?

*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.** Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. **From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.** Ephesians 4:11–16*

The Scriptures often refer to the interrelatedness and mutual need for every person in a church like the parts of a human body connected together in purposeful unity (Col. 1:18, 1:24, 2:19; Eph. 1:22–23, 4:4, 12, 16, 5:30; 1 Cor. 12:12–31; Rom. 12:5). Therefore, the Scriptures are clear that every Christian is vitally important to the work of the gospel in and through the local church. Therefore, using of your spiritual gift will accomplish the following:

- help build up the church (Eph. 4:12,16)
- establish fellow Christians (Rom. 1:11)
- encourage fellow Christians (Rom. 1:12)
- enhance the effectiveness of the whole church (1 Cor. 12:7)
- expand the mission of the church beyond its present state (Eph. 4:16)
- honor the true head of the church, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 4:11, 5:4)

What are the spiritual gifts?

Several different lists of gifts appear in the New Testament: 1Cor. 12:8–10, 28–30; Rom. 12:6–8; Eph. 4:11; 1Peter 4:11.

Apostle

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11

Defined: An apostle is someone who has a mixture of gifts that enables him or her to proclaim the gospel with boldness and plant new churches (Acts 13:3–4). This gift also includes the capacity to minister cross-culturally (Acts 10:34–35; Eph. 3:7–8).

Do you have this gift?

1. Can you start a ministry from nothing by raising such things as leaders, money, etc.?
2. Are you burdened for lost people?
3. Are you a gifted leader that people naturally follow?

Prophet/Prophecy

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10; 12:28

Defined: A prophet has a twofold ministry. First, they foretell the future (Jer. 35:15a). This function ended when the church was built and the Bible was completed (Eph. 2:20). Second, a prophet fortells God's Word, and this aspect of the prophet continues today (Jer. 35:15b–19). A prophet has the ability to recognize sinful behavior and a driving compulsion to confront individuals, groups, and/or cultures by proclaiming God's Word without compromise. In our present day, the prophet is often called a preacher.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you delight in the Word of God?
2. When you see sin or errors do you feel compelled to confront them?
3. Are you bold for Christ?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember not to neglect the love of God as you confront others.

Remember not to become too critical and judgmental.

Evangelist

Place in Scripture: Ephesians 4:11

Defined: The gift of evangelism is the ability and desire to boldly and clearly communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16–17; 1 Cor. 15:1–4).

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy being with non-Christians and sharing the gospel?
2. Are you able to effectively communicate to non-Christians?
3. Do you find it easy to direct a conversation toward the topic of Jesus Christ?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember that you'll want to see people not only connected to Jesus but also to the local church where they can be trained and grow. Remember to spend time with non-believers and bring other Christians along so that you can train them.

Pastor-Teacher

Place in Scripture: Ephesians 4:11

Defined: The gift of pastor-teacher is associated with the office of elder (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:2) and the qualifications of bishop (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1–4; Titus 1:5–9). The pastor-teacher shepherds a local church and oversees its growth by teaching the Word of God.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you diligently study God's Word?
2. Is your family a good model for the church?
3. Do you enjoy mentoring others?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember to train others to do the work of serving, rather than doing it all yourself.

Teaching

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28

Defined: The gift of teaching is the God-given ability to understand and communicate biblical truth in a clear and relevant manner so that there is understanding and practical application.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy intense studying and researching?
2. When you see someone confused in their understanding of the Bible do you feel a responsibility to speak to them about it?
3. Do you enjoy speaking to various sizes of groups about biblical issues you have strong convictions about?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember always to be a student who is learning from others. Remember to teach only what the Bible says without reading your own thoughts into it.

Encouragement

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:8

Defined: The gift of encouragement involves motivating, encouraging, and consoling others so they mature in their walk with Christ.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do people seek you out for advice and encouragement?
2. Do you enjoy walking with someone through difficulties?
3. Would you rather speak personally with someone about their problems rather than sending them to someone else for help?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember to give biblical answers and solutions.

Remember not to take on more needy people than you can handle.

Wisdom

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:8

Defined: The gift of wisdom is the ability to have very practical insight into people and situations that is not obvious to the average person, combined with an understanding of what to do and how to do it. It is the ability not only to see, but also apply the deep mysteries of God.

Do you have this gift?

1. When studying God's Word with others, do you find that you discover the meaning and its implications before others do?
2. Are you able to apply deep biblical truth to practical daily living?
3. Does God give you profound insights into people and circumstances?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember to study Scripture and maintain a biblical worldview. Remember to remain humble. Remember to remain in continual prayer and walk in holiness so that God can speak to you clearly.

Knowledge

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:8

Defined: The gift of Knowledge is the ability to seek out, remember, synthesize, and make effective use of a variety of information on a number of diverse subjects for the good of the church and its mission.

Do you have this gift?

1. Have others frequently pointed out your ability to know and understand God's Word?
2. Do people often come to you with difficult problems and questions from the Bible, seeking your insight?
3. In studying God's Word, have you found that new insights and understandings of difficult subjects are simple for you?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember not to become proud because you know what others do not. Remember to balance your time in study with the sharing of your insights with others.

Helps

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:28

Defined: The gift of helps is the remarkable ability to work alongside another and help that person complete the task God has given them.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you prefer to work in a supportive rather than leadership capacity?
2. When you hear of someone with needs do you offer your services if possible?
3. Do you feel a burden to relieve others of their tasks so they are free to do their most important work?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember not to take on more work than you are able to accomplish. Remember to serve God first and not unquestionably comply with another person's wishes.

Serving

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:7

Defined: The gift involves the capacity to recognize and joyfully provide assistance in meeting practical needs, thus making life a little easier for others, particularly those who cannot help themselves.

Do you have this gift?

1. Are you drawn to those in need?
2. Are you burdened to relieve the needs of others?
3. Do you look for opportunities to serve others?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember to learn to say no when you need to. Remember to learn to receive the service of others.

Leadership

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:8

Defined: The spiritual gift of leadership is found in people who have a clear, significant vision from God and are able to communicate it publicly or privately in such a way that they influence others to pursue that vision.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do others have confidence in your ability to lead?
2. Do you usually take leadership in a group where none exists?
3. Do you find leadership enjoyable rather than frustrating and difficult?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember to learn to train other leaders and delegate responsibility and ownership to them. Remember to avoid being placed in a position that requires devotion to details and the implementation of particulars. Remember that leadership is service and requires humility.

Administration

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:28

Defined: The gift of administration is the God-given ability to give direction and to make decisions on behalf of others that result in efficient operation and accomplishment of goals. Often the mark of an administrator is the ability to accomplish things in a "fitting and orderly way" (1 Cor. 14:40).

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you find it easy to make decisions?
2. Do you find yourself frequently thinking of decisions that need to be made in giving overall direction to a group or organization?
3. Are you organized and efficient?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember that you have to make decisions quickly and decisively. Remember to seek wise counsel before making major decisions.

Giving

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:8

Defined: The gift of giving is the ability to give eagerly, wisely, generously, and sacrificially to meet the needs of others.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy giving your time, talent and treasure to others?
2. Do you see giving to a worthwhile project as an exciting honor and privilege?
3. Do you sense a great deal of joy in giving?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember to give out of pure motives with joy.

Mercy

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:8

Defined: The gift of mercy is the capacity to feel and express unusual compassion and sympathy for those in difficult or crisis situations and to provide them with the necessary help and support to see them through these times.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy visiting people who are sick or disabled?
2. Do you sense a great deal of compassion for people having personal and emotional problems?
3. Do you find that when visiting those who are suffering physically that it brings you joy rather than depressing you?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember to be honest with people in confronting sin. Remember to balance God's mercy with his justice.

Discernment

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:10

Defined: The spiritual gift of discernment is the ability to give an immediate evaluation of what was spoken and the person who said it, as to whether it is of God or Satan.

Do you have this gift?

1. Have you felt a special responsibility to protect the truth of God's Word by exposing that which is wrong?
2. Have you often made an evaluation of someone or something that was said that others did not see, but yet proved to be correct?
3. Do you sense often that what is being said is produced by the devil rather than God, and has your judgment been correct?

Dangers to be aware of: Base your feelings on God's Word. Remember to have the courage to speak up when you know something is wrong. Remember to judge to correct and not to condemn.

Faith

Place in Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:9

Defined: The gift of faith is the ability to envision what needs to be done and to trust God to accomplish it even though it seems impossible to most people.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you view obstacles as opportunities?
2. Do you trust God for the impossible?
3. Do you have an effective prayer life with many answers to prayers that were impossible from the human point of view?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember not to merely look at the problems and trials in life. Remember not to worry. Remember to pray with others who have the gift of faith.

Hospitality

Place in Scripture: Romans 12:13

Defined: The spiritual gift of hospitality is the ability to entertain guests in your home with great joy and effectiveness.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy having people in your home?
2. When you think of your home do you view it from the perspective of guests who will visit?
3. Do you consider your home as a place of ministry?

Dangers to be aware of: Remember to maintain some closed time for your immediate family's needs. Remember to always check your motives and maintain a good attitude.

How can I discover my spiritual gift?

- **Seek the advice of church leaders and mature Christians who have wisdom (Acts 13:1-4; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6).**
- **Begin serving in various areas to discover what seems like a good fit for you (Rom. 12:1; Isa. 6:8).**
- **Think through your areas of burden and joy because those may be areas that God is leading you for a ministry opportunity.**
- **Seek to recall in what ways God is already using you to bear fruit since that may be an indication of your gift(s).**
- **Though serving the Lord can always be tiring you should expect to have a sense of accomplishment, energy, and enthusiasm if you are serving in your area of gifting.**