



Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters,
I do not want you to be uninformed.
1 CORINTHIANS 12:1 (TNIV)

Your spiritual gifts were not given for your own benefit but for the benefit of others.
RICK WARREN, THE PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCH

I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves—one above another—and the taller we grow, the easier we can reach them. Now I find that God's gifts are on shelves—and the lower we stoop, the more we get.
F. B. MEYER

You have been gifted for greatness



When God planned the masterpiece he would make of your life, he decided to give you certain gifts that would enable you to effectively share his love and make your own unique contribution to his kingdom. He placed these spiritual abilities within you and waits eagerly for you to discover them.

Understanding Spiritual Gifts



At first, this whole issue of spiritual gifts may seem mysterious, complicated, and difficult — but in fact the opposite is true. God has given us wonderful gifts, and he doesn't make it difficult to discover and use them.

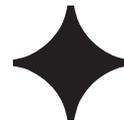
In 1 Corinthians 12:1, Paul says, "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant." The word ignorant here does not mean "unintelligent" or "naive." Rather, Paul is telling us that if we are uninformed, we will miss out on the wonderful gifts God has given us. Your heavenly Father wants his children to be fully informed so they can unwrap every single gift they have received. Your gifts are the key to fulfilling the Kingdom Purpose he has set aside just for you.

What Are Spiritual Gifts?



For this study, let's define a spiritual gift as a God-given special ability, given to every believer at conversion by the Holy Spirit, to share his love and strengthen the body of Christ. The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 4:10 that God is the gift giver: "God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you" (NLT).

Why Does God Give Spiritual Gifts?



In 1 Corinthians 12:7, Paul says, "A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church" (NLT). The spiritual gifts God gives you are neither for you nor about you. They weren't given to boost your self-image or to serve as some kind of special reward from God. They were not given to raise you up to some level of worldly greatness or success. They are yours for the express purpose of blessing the body of Christ — the church. That is why you need to be part of a church family. Discovering your spiritual gifts is not the ultimate goal — using them to bless others is.



Does Everyone Get a Gift?

The Bible assures us that every believer receives gifts from God: “Each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that” (1 Corinthians 7:7b, TNIV). You may not feel tremendously gifted, but God says that you are. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift.

God gives gifts to everyone, not just “special” people. There are no special qualifications needed, no special level of maturity required, not even a particular time span needed in your journey with Jesus. If you are a believer, then you have the Spirit living in you. If you have the Spirit living in you, then you have spiritual gifts to use for God’s glory and the benefit of others.

You may not have discovered the gifts you have or begun to use them yet, but you definitely have them. You have God’s word on it. He is the one who decided which gifts to give you. How many gifts you have is not nearly as important as discovering and developing the gifts you do have.

When we use what God has graced us with, people are helped, he is honored, and we are fulfilled. As mentioned before, the best place to explore your giftedness is at your church — the body of Christ in which God has placed you. If you aren’t involved with a local church, I strongly suggest you find one so you can experience the many blessings that come from being part of a church family.

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Unwrapping Spiritual Gifts

Perhaps you now understand for the very first time the great importance of spiritual gifts. But understanding without experiencing is like seeing presents under the Christmas tree but never opening them. Actually unwrapping your spiritual gifts will help you see the masterpiece God has created you to be and discover the wonderful ways he has made it possible for you to live a meaningful life of service to others.

The key to discovering your gifts is twofold: (1) examining what gifts you think you may have, and then (2) serving in various roles to see which ones bring the greatest fulfillment for you and the greatest results for God. Taking tests designed to identify your gifts and abilities cannot take the place of actually experimenting with different types of service. Rick Warren says, “Many books get the discovery process backwards. They say, ‘Discover your spiritual gift and then you’ll know what ministry you’re supposed to have.’ It actually works the exact opposite way. Just start serving, experimenting with different ministries, and then you’ll discover your gifts. Until you’re actually involved in serving, you’re not going to know what you’re good at.”

So let’s begin by recognizing what God identifies as spiritual gifts. To do so, we need to look at a few passages of Scripture:

We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

ROMANS 12:6 – 8

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers

EPHESIANS 4:11

And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:28

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:8 – 10

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.

1 PETER 4:9 – 10



Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gifts

MOTVIATIONAL GIFTS (Romans 12:6-8)	MINISTERIAL OFFICE GIFTS (Ephesians 4:11)	SUPERNATURAL GIFTS (I Corinthians 12:8-10)
Helps (ministry)	Apostles	Word of wisdom
Administrator	Prophets	Word of Knowledge
Exhorter	Evangelists	Discerning of spirit
Giver	Pastors	Gifts of healings
Server	Teachers	Working of miracles
Teacher		Faith
Perceiver		Prophecy
Showing mercy (compassion)		Different kinds of tongues
		Interpretation of tongues

OUR GIFT COLORS ALL WE SEE

If you put on a pair of sunglasses, all you see will be colored accordingly.

So it is with a person's motivational gift. A perceiver will look at life through a perceiver's eyes. Everything will look wither good or bad, right or wrong, in God's will or out of God's will. It is impossible for the perceiver to see life in any other way.

A server on the other hand will approach reality with the question, "What can I do to help in this situation?" He constantly notices opportunities to do things for others.

A teacher will search for truth in everything he encounters. Like the persistent Diogenes of Greek literature searching with a lantern for an honest man, the teacher will investigate, seek, and research.

An exhorter will see opportunities to encourage people at whatever they do.

The giver will look for ways in which he can invest his time, talent, and money providing for the needs of others.

The administrator with his broad vision will grasp the overall dimensions of a situation.

The compassion person will recognize hurts and wounds that need to be healed and see endless opportunities to express love.

And each one may think, "Why don't others see things the way I see them? It's clear to me!"

THE MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS IN THE BODY

1. Perceivers: This is the eye of the body.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" (Matthew 6:22-23, RSV).

It has become evident to us that perceivers, of all the members of the Body of Christ, are the most gifted with spiritual sight. They see things that the rest of us often miss completely. Although these words of Jesus may apply to the individual, they also have direct application to the Body of Christ. The perceiver has the special responsibility of having a clear and sound eye with which to detect God's truth. Of all the members, this is the person who cannot afford pollution or sin in his life – for if he does, his sight becomes clouded. The rest of the Body counts on the perceivers to accurately identify and proclaim the will of God. If the perceiver is not walking in purity of life, his vision is impaired and what he states as truth may, in fact, be error, leading many astray. Then how great the darkness becomes!

2. Server: This is the hands of the body.

"She opens her hand to the poor; yes, she reaches out her filled hands to the needy [whether in body, mind or spirit]" (Proverbs 31:20, TAB).

Of all the gifted, we notice that servers are literally the most capable with their hands. They have great dexterity. They seem to be able to fix or build just about anything.

This is also referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as the gift of helps. These people love to be helpful, anytime, anyplace... especially if it includes hands-on involvement.

3. Teacher: This is the mind of the body.

"Now these [Beroean Jews] were better disposed and more noble than those in Thessalonica for they were entirely ready and accepted and welcomed the message (the word), with inclination of mind and eagerness, searching and examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11, TAB).

Teachers are exceptionally gifted with intelligence. At first this may not seem fair to the rest of us, but remember that being the mind of the Body, they need to be so gifted. They are always asking questions. They want to know the basis for everything and they will search until the facts convince them that something is true. Note that the Beroeans were commended by Paul for checking out the Scriptures (what we now call the Old Testament) to be sure that their acceptance of the Good News was on a verifiable foundation.

4. Exhorter: This is the mouth of the body.

“After the reading of the Law and the prophets, the leaders [of the worship] of the synagogue sent to them saying, Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation or consolation or encouragement for the people, say it” (Acts 13:15, TAB).

Exhorters talk a lot. We have jokingly said that they have the best-oiled jaws of all the gifts. But, seriously, God has endowed them with great facility of speech. How else can an exhorter exhort, console, or encourage?

5. Giver: This is the arms of the body.

“He has shown strength and made might with His arm...” (Luke 1:15, TAB).

Givers have great strength spiritually, extending the reach of every Christian endeavor.

Remember the story about Moses holding aloft the rod so that Israel might prevail in battle over Amalek? (See Exodus 17:8-16). When his arms grew weary he lowered them, and the Israelites began to lose. So, God provided two givers, two support people, Aaron and Hur, who held up Moses' arms until the battle was won. Givers are a strong support to those who are in spiritual battle or out on the “front lines” sharing the Gospel. Of all the seven motivational gifts this is the one least likely to be identified by the one who has it. Part of the reason may be that the giver's “left hand” does not know when his “right hand” gives alms (Matthew 6:3). Another may be the giver's “all-around” personality. The giver shares several traits of the server, can be a leader or a follower, and like the perceiver and the teacher has a love for the Word of God. But when it comes to the use of resources, the giver is unique.

6. Administrator: This is the shoulders of the body.

“For to us a child is born to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder...” (Isaiah 9:6, TAB).

We often say that someone in leadership is shouldering responsibility. Administrators are shoulders in the body of Christ, carrying the load of leadership. Wise administrators know how to yoke up with Jesus so that He bears the burden with them.

7. Compassion Person: This is the heart of the body.

“May the Lord direct your hearts into [realizing and showing] the love of God...” (2 Thessalonians 3:5, TAB).

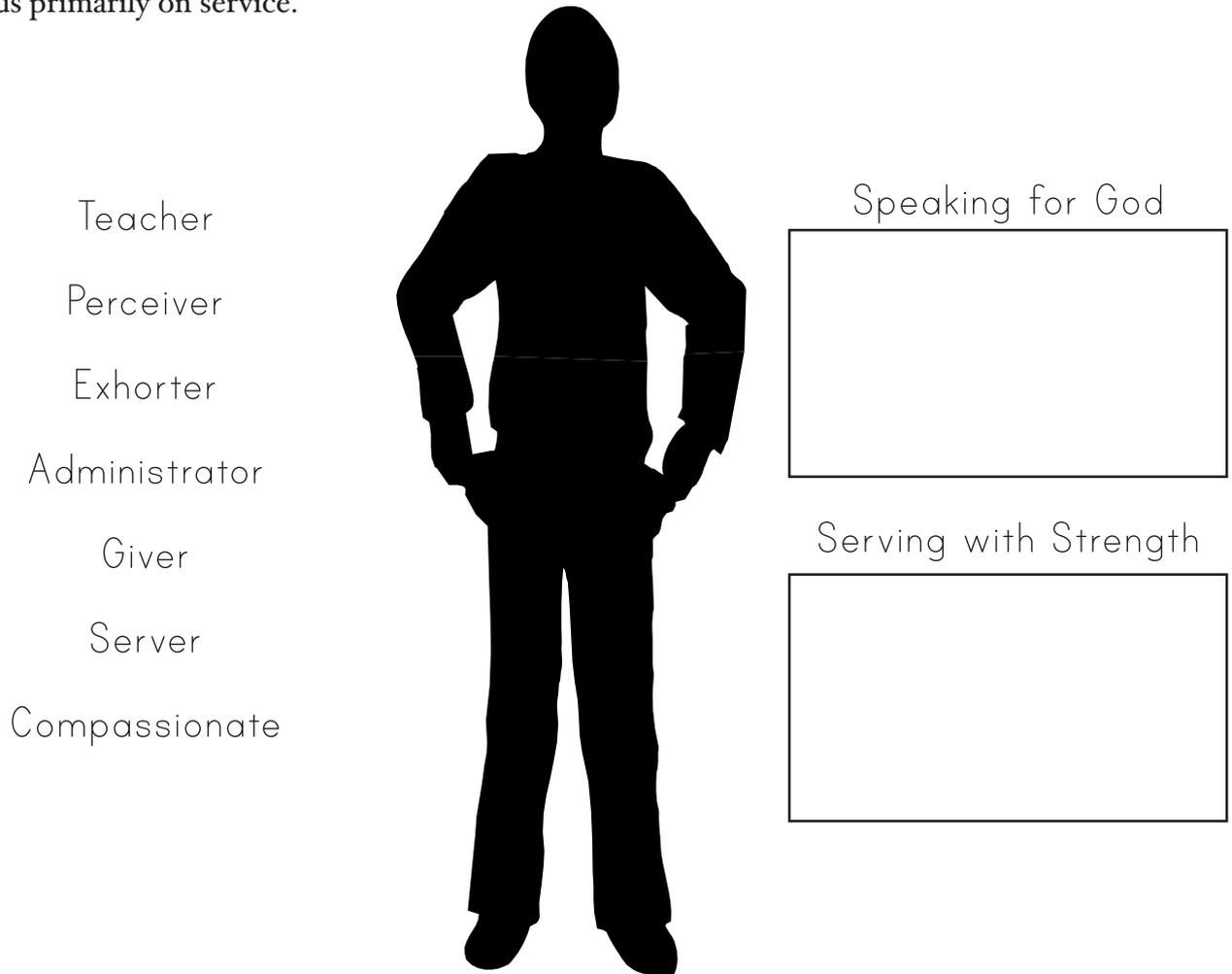
People gifted with compassion are ruled by the heart rather than the head. They reveal the true nature of God by showing kindness, care, and mercy to others.

TWO DISTINCTIONS WITHIN THE SEVEN GIFTS

Whoever speaks, [let him do it as one who utters] oracles of God; whoever renders service, [let him do it] as with the strength which God furnishes abundantly; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, the Messiah...

1 PETER 4:11, TAB

There are two basic categories of motivational gifts – those that focus primarily on speech and those that focus primarily on service.



FOR MORE MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT, PLEASE GO TO:

http://tabjoy.org/spiritual-health-assessment/question-set.php?health_assessment_main_cat_id=3&health_assessment_main_cat_name=Motivational+Gift+Class



Sharing Your Spiritual Gifts

Now that you have identified some possible spiritual gifts God has given you, start to express them by serving others around you. When we serve in areas that best match our giftedness, we experience great(er) fulfillment and see great(er) fruitfulness for God. On the other hand, when we serve outside our giftedness, we usually end up frustrated and fatigued. Serving others is the best way to clarify your giftedness because it allows you the opportunity to try out your gifts.

That is why we should aspire to serve in whatever way God has designed us to serve, rather than being driven by ambition to achieve what we think are great goals. Helen Keller once said, “I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.”

The apostle Paul says giftedness should be expressed in love. Whenever he talks about spiritual gifts, he follows with a message about love. For example, 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 talk about spiritual gifts, but right smack-dab between these two chapters, Paul wrote what has become regarded as the definitive message regarding love:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1 – 3

Do you see the importance of love when it comes to using our gifts for God? Paul tells us we may have wonderful and valuable spiritual gifts, but without love we are unusable. To determine what is truly propelling your spiritual gifts, ask yourself, “Who is the primary beneficiary of my actions?” If your actions benefit others, you are serving with love. If you realize you are the prime beneficiary of your actions, you need to immediately realign yourself with God. A love-driven life is the life God uses.

Don’t fall into the trap of exalting self rather than God. Rather, let love empower your gifts for the blessing of others and building up of the body of Christ.

Indeed, as you start to bless others through your spiritual gifts, you need to be aware of four common traps Satan often uses to trip up believers and make them ineffective.

Trap #1: Comparison

The first pitfall is comparison. This happens when we place greater value on the more visible gifts — those more likely to shine in the spotlight, such as leadership or teaching. If we have those gifts and compare ourselves with others, the result can be a prideful spirit. If we compare ourselves to others who have more visible gifts, we may feel we lack significance. Both are signs that our hearts need a serious love tune-up. Just because a gift is more visible does not guarantee it’s more valuable.

There are no second-rate masterpieces hanging in God's art gallery. Some roles may be less glamorous than others, and self-glorifying people may sniff in disdain at certain kinds of service, but God's Word says all the parts of the body of Christ depend on each other: "The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don't need you.' The head can't say to the feet, 'I don't need you.' In fact, some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary" (1 Corinthians 12:21 – 22, NLT). None of us should delude ourselves into thinking that the other members of the body of Christ exist to serve us, or that others are important and we are not.

Trap #2: Projection

The second trap is projection. When we expect others to be good at the same things we excel at, we're "projecting" our gifts onto them. Projection is especially common in relationships at work, or even at home. For example, I have the gift of administration. If I project that gift onto others and automatically expect them to be organized and punctual at all times, feelings of frustration and resentment can set in and cause the relationship to become strained.

That is exactly what Satan wants. On the other hand, I can choose to celebrate the unique gifts God gives to others and encourage each person to be who God created them to be — which is exactly what God wants.

Trap #3: Rejection

Another common pitfall we encounter is refusing to accept the gifts God has given us. This is the trap of rejection. Rejection is one of Satan's favorite mind games, because it keeps us from becoming all God has planned for us. For example, there are people who clearly have the gift of pastoring or shepherding, but won't acknowledge it, often because they don't have the "right" title or official position.

Allowing someone else's opinion to stop you from seizing and sharing your gifts will create nothing but disappointment and sorrow in your heart. Give yourself permission to be who God gifted you to be, regardless of what others have said.

Trap #4: Deception

The final trap Satan uses is deception. He manipulates you into believing you have certain gifts that God in fact has not given you — distracting you from putting your true gifts into effect and preventing you from accomplishing what God intended for your life. This deception especially plays itself out when it comes to leadership. John Maxwell has said, "If you think you are a leader, but no one is following you — you are just taking a walk." People like that often expect results that will be blessed by God, yet God never meant for them to be a leader — at least not in the way they imagine.

Be wary of Satan's deception as you begin to share the gifts God has given you. Focus on God so he can reveal the spiritual gifts he has for you and show you how he wants you to use them for his glory. An excellent way to ensure that you don't fall prey to one of these traps is to ask trustworthy people in your life for help and accountability.

Strengthening Your Spiritual Gifts



“Whatever gifts you have been given can be enlarged and developed through practice. For instance, no one gets the gift of teaching fully developed. But with study, feedback, and practice, a ‘good’ teacher can become a better teacher, and with time, grow to be a master teacher. Don’t settle for a half-developed gift. Stretch yourself and learn all you can.”

All of us can practice and improve our ability to use our gifts. If you have the gift of teaching, make a point of learning new teaching techniques. If leadership is part of your unique gift mix, learn how to be the best servant-leader around. If you are strong on hospitality or mercy or pastoral counsel, seek new ways to include, care for, and help others. If your life is pointing toward administration, sharpen that gift through additional training.

The apostle Paul uses a great word picture to show the importance of strengthening what God has given us when he tells young Timothy to “fan into flame” his gift (2 Timothy 1:6). Imagine smoldering embers that burst into flame as you fan them. This is exactly what happens when you develop the gifts God has given you — they become more powerful and purposeful for God and eventually boost your Kingdom Purpose like nothing else.

You have been gifted for greatness — in service, not status. Identifying your spiritual gifts is the crucial first step to finding the unique role God intends for you to fulfill. Now that you have begun to recognize your unique gifts, you need to hear from God about how he wants you to put them to work.

Reflect on what you have learned. What did this lesson show you about spiritual gifts?

Realize what you have been given. What spiritual gifts do you believe God has given you?

Request help from others. What two sources of wisdom can you seek help from to discover your spiritual gifts?

Respond in faith. Identify two action steps you can take in the next month to unwrap your gifts and start using them with others. (Hint: Start by serving those closest to you!)

1. _____

2. _____