

# **Discovering Our Spiritual Gifts**

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# 1. Discover What the Bible Teaches About Gifts

## I. WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT?

### A. Working Definition:

A spiritual gift is a specific ability or skill, given by the Holy Spirit, which enables each believer to contribute to the Body of Christ with pleasure and effectiveness.

### B. Expanded Description: (1 Cor. 12:1, 4-7)

1. Pneumatikoi - "spiritual gifts"; come from the Spirit
2. Charismata - "gifts"; of God's grace
3. Diakonia - "service"; to serve others
4. Energama - "working"; express God's power
5. Phanerosis - "manifestation"; reveal God's ways

## II. WHO HAS SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

- A. Every Christian has at least one gift - 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10
- B. Many Christians have more than one gift - "gift-mix"
- C. Not all Christians have the same gift - 1 Cor. 12:11, 14:20, 29-30

## III. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

- A. Strengthens the believer
- B. Helps the church to grow
- C. Glorifies God

## IV. WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DO NOT USE OUR GIFTS?

As stewards, we are accountable! 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Cor. 4:2; Matt. 25:14-30

## V. CAN SPIRITUAL GIFTS BE ABUSED?

- A. Gift exaltation
- B. Gift projection

## VI. WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-11, 28-30; Eph. 4:7-12

- A. The list is not exhaustive
- B. There are hyphenated gifts
- C. There are variations and degrees
- D. Avoid identifying gifts with -
  1. Natural talents

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2. The Fruit of the Spirit
3. Christian roles
4. Counterfeit gifts

## **VII. HOW LONG DO WE KEEP OUR GIFTS?**

- A. They are a permanent possession
- B. They can become dormant through inactivity

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## 2. Study the Meaning of Each Gift

### THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

#### **Romans 12:3-8 lists:**

1. Prophecy (preaching, inspired utterance)
2. Service (ministry)
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation (stimulating faith, encouraging)
5. Giving (contributing, generosity, sharing)
6. Leadership (authority, ruling, administration)
7. Mercy (sympathy, comfort to the sorrowing, showing kindness)

#### **1 Corinthians 12 adds (without repeating those already listed from Romans):**

8. Wisdom (wise advice, wise speech)
9. Knowledge (studying, speaking with knowledge)
10. Faith
11. Healing
12. Miracles (doing great deeds)
13. Discerning of Spirits (discrimination in spiritual matters)
14. Tongues (speaking in languages never learned, ecstatic utterance)
15. Interpretation of tongues
16. Apostle
17. Helps
18. Administration (governments, getting others to work together)

#### **Ephesians 4 adds (again, without repeating any of the above):**

19. Evangelist
20. Pastor (caring for God's people)
21. Celibacy (continence)
22. Voluntary poverty
23. Martyrdom
24. Hospitality

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25. Missionary

**These gifts are also included in this study:**

26. Exorcism

27. Intercession

**TWO QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. What do the New Testament writers mean?
2. What if we do not practice *all* the gifts?

## THE GIFT OF APOSTLE

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ which enables them to assume and exercise helpful leadership over a number of churches in spiritual matters which is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches."
- B. Office vs. Gift
  - 1. The ministry of the 12 Apostles plus Paul was temporary.
  - 2. The gift of apostle is still being exercised.
- C. Reasons
  - 1. The New Testament calls many others "apostles":
    - a. James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19)
    - b. Barnabas (Acts 14:4,14)
    - c. Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25)
    - d. Silas and Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1, 2:7)
    - e. Andronicas and Junia (Rom. 16:7)
    - f. Others (2 Cor. 8:23 1 Cor. 15:5,7; 2 Cor. 11:13)
  - 2. There is a continuing need for the gift:
    - a. Strengthening churches
    - b. Starting churches

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## THE GIFT OF MISSIONARY

A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to some members of the Body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture."

B. Gift of Missionary in the Bible

An example: Paul (Eph. 3:2-13; Acts 9:15; 1 Cor. 9:19-23)

C. Identifying the Gift of Missionary

1. More than most, do you have a strong desire to see people of other countries won to Christ?
2. Do you cooperate with, and participate in, our church's foreign missions emphasis?
3. Are you frustrated when there is little opportunity to minister to those of different customs or languages?
4. Do you desire to serve in a cross-cultural situation?
5. Do you adapt well in a different culture?
6. Are you comfortable relating to people of other countries and minorities, and do they seem to accept you?
7. Do you feel you could learn another language well in order to minister to those in another culture?

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## THE GIFT OF EVANGELIST

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to some members of the body of Christ to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that people become disciples of Christ and responsible members of the church."
- B. Usage: "Evangelist" occurs three times in the New Testament  
Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5
- C. How Many Have the Gift?
  - 1. Average - 10% of a church
  - 2. Highest potential: Combine the 10% with new Christians!
- D. Identifying the Gift of Evangelist
  - 1. Do you enjoy sharing the gospel?
  - 2. Do you wish to relate to non-Christians so you can share your faith?
  - 3. Are you at ease in sharing how Christ has changed your life?
  - 4. Do unbelievers understand you when you explain who Christ is and how to become a Christian?
  - 5. Have you led others to Christ?
  - 6. Do you get frustrated when others do not seem to share their faith with unbelievers as much as you do?

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## THE GIFT OF TEACHING

A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to communicate information, relevant to the health and ministry of the Body and its members (children and/or adults) in such a way that others will learn and be edified."

### B. Description

1. A basic grasp on the content and doctrine of the Bible
2. A proven ability to communicate the Bible to others
3. Such a love for the truth and for people as to make the teaching effective.

### Talent

### Gift

Present from natural birth

Present from spiritual birth

Operates through common grace in society

Operates through special grace and the church

Communicates any subject

Communicates biblical truth

Often yields just understanding of topic

Prepares for involvement and obedience

### C. Varieties of Expression

### D. A Time-consuming Gift

### E. Identifying the Gift of Teaching

1. Have people told you that you have helped them learn biblical truth in a meaningful way?
2. Do you enjoy giving considerable time to learning biblical truth in order to minister to children and/or adults?
3. When you communicate biblical truth to others, do you see changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or conduct?
4. Do you strongly agree with this statement: "Studying the Bible and sharing my insights with others for their growth in Christ are very satisfying for me."?
5. Do you think you possess the ability to concisely instruct listeners in the precise meaning of words, stories or passages of Scripture?
6. Can you make difficult biblical truths understandable to others?

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## **THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION**

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement and counsel to other members of the Body in such a way that they feel helped and healed."
- B. Varieties of Expression:
  - 1. Group
  - 2. One-on-one
- C. Identifying the Gift of Exhortation
  - 1. Have you verbally encouraged the wavering, the troubled or the discouraged?
  - 2. Can you effectively motivate people to get involved in ministry when such motivation is needed?
  - 3. Have people come to you in their afflictions or sufferings, and told you that they have been helped, relieved and healed?
  - 4. Do you have a desire to effectively counsel the perplexed, the guilty or the addicted?
  - 5. Have you urged others to such a biblical solution to their affliction or suffering?
  - 6. Are you accepting of people deeply troubled or in crisis?
  - 7. Are you sensitive and sympathetic to persons who seem to be suffering or mentally ill?

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## THE GIFT OF WISDOM

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the Body of Christ."
- B. Examples:
  - 1. James (Acts 15:13-20)
  - 2. Leighton Ford
- C. Identifying the Gift of Wisdom
  - 1. Have you applied spiritual truth effectively to situations in your own life?
  - 2. Can you intuitively arrive at solutions to fairly complicated problems?
  - 3. When a person has a problem, are you usually able to guide them to the best biblical solution?
  - 4. Have people indicated that you have perceived and applied biblical truth to their specific needs?
  - 5. Have you sensed God's presence and direction when important decisions needed to be made?
  - 6. Do others ask you for workable ideas or alternatives?
  - 7. Do your recommendations for church positions often prove to be good selections?
  - 8. Do you make what appear to be correct decisions for your life?

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## THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance."
- B. Varieties of Expression:
  - 1. Prediction - Acts 11:25-28; Acts 21:10-11
  - 2. Proclamation
  - 3. Social Consciousness
- C. Misunderstandings:
  - 1. To regard prophecy as taking place in a highly charged emotional state
  - 2. To regard prophecy as the same as preaching or teaching
  - 3. To suppose that the gift came to an end
- D. Results:

Comfort, encouragement, guidance, warning, rebuke
- E. Guidelines (1 Cor. 14):
  - 1. To build up the Body of Christ
  - 2. Minister in an orderly way
  - 3. Tested by Scripture
  - 4. Concerned about evangelism
- F. Identifying the Gift of Prophecy
  - 1. Do you desire to speak direct messages from God that edify, exhort or comfort others?
  - 2. Has God enabled you to reveal specific things that will happen in the future?
  - 3. Have people told you that you have communicated timely and urgent messages which must have come directly from the Lord?
  - 4. Do you sometimes have a strong sense of what God wants to say to people in response to a particular situation?
  - 5. Do you sometimes feel that you know exactly what God wants to do in ministry at a specific point in time?
  - 6. Do you strongly desire to speak out boldly and directly against evil in society or in the church?

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## **THE GIFT OF SHOWING MERCY**

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds that reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering."
- B. Characteristics:
  - 1. Engages in one-to-one relationships
  - 2. Differs from our Christian role
- C. Examples:
  - 1. Church
  - 2. Individual
- D. Identifying the Gift of Showing Mercy
  - 1. Do you desire to work with those who have physical or mental problems, to alleviate their suffering?
  - 2. Have you cared for others when they have had material or physical needs?
  - 3. Do you enjoy visiting in hospitals and/or nursing homes, and feel you do well in such a ministry?
  - 4. Do people call on you to help those who are less fortunate?
  - 5. Would you enjoy spending time with a lonely, shut-in person or someone in prison?
  - 6. Do you work joyfully with and help those people who are ignored by the majority of those around them?
  - 7. Do you hurt for others who are in distress, and desire to do acts of love for those who cannot or will not return them?

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## THE GIFT OF HELPS

A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the Body, thus enabling the person helped to increase the effectiveness of his/her spiritual gifts."

B. Differences Between Mercy and Helps:

### Mercy

### Helps

Directed toward people in distress      Directed toward Christian works

Purpose: to reflect love and suffering

Purpose: release workers from / alleviate temporal service so they can concentrate on their primary ministry

C. Examples:

1. Biblical
2. Current

D. Identifying the Gift of Helps

1. Have you assisted Christian leaders to relieve them for their essential job?
2. Have other Christians told you that you have helped them become more effective in their ministries?
3. Do you enjoy doing routine tasks that lead to more effective ministry by others?
4. Is this time in your life: "When I do things behind the scenes and others are helped, I am joyful." "And I really do not care who gets the credit"?
5. Would you rather be a supportive background person than an up-front leader or speaker?
6. Do you enjoy typing, filing, recording minutes, or similar church-related tasks, in order to assist others?
7. Do you delight in serving as a teacher's aide in a class, or doing similar helpful tasks?

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## THE GIFT OF SERVICE

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals."
- B. Use of "Service" in the New Testament:
  - 1. The Christian role - John 12:26
  - 2. The gift of Service - Romans 12:6-7
  - 3. The office of Servant (deacon) - Phil. 1:1
- C. Identifying the Gift of Service
  - 1. Do you enjoy being called upon to do special jobs around the church?
  - 2. Have others mentioned that you seem to enjoy routine tasks and do well at them?
  - 3. Do you respond cheerfully when asked to do a job, even if it seems menial?
  - 4. Are you content to take orders rather than to give them?

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## THE GIFT OF GIVING

The Christian role: giving begins with 10% (tithe) of salary

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness."
- B. Examples:
  - 1. R. G. LeTourneau
  - 2. Stanley Tam
- C. Principles:
  - 1. In secret - Matthew 6:2-4
  - 2. In love - 1 Corinthians 13:3
  - 3. In cheerfulness - 2 Corinthians 9:7
- D. Results (Phil. 4:14-19):
  - 1. Alleviates human need (vss. 16,18)
  - 2. Extends the gospel (vss. 14,15)
  - 3. Enriches the giver (v. 17)
  - 4. Honors God (v. 18)
- E. Identifying the Gift of Giving
  - 1. Do you seek to manage your money well in order to give liberally to the Lord's work?
  - 2. Do your giving records show that you give more than 10% of your income to the Lord's work?
  - 3. When you are moved by an appeal to give to God's work, do you usually find the money you need to respond?
  - 4. Do you strongly agree with this statement: "I am so confident that God will meet my needs that I give to Him sacrificially and consistently"?
  - 5. Are you willing to maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work?
  - 6. Do you consider all that you own as resources for God's use, and do you freely and joyfully give of these resources because you love God?

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## THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas which are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the Body."
- B. Characteristics:
  - 1. Something of a scholar, at home with research and books
  - 2. A low need for people
  - 3. Interested in ideas, problem solving through study
  - 4. Favorite rooms are the library, the office, the study
- C. Examples:
  - 1. Walter Martin
  - 2. Dr. Chang
  - 3. Bible translators
- D. Identifying the Gift of Knowledge
  - 1. Have others told you that you have helped them distinguish key and important facts of Scripture?
  - 2. Do you enjoy studying and reading quite a bit in order to learn biblical truth?
  - 3. Have you frequently discovered new insights into Scripture through personal study?
  - 4. Do you enjoy doing word studies, examining the historical background of a text and getting at the facts of a passage in order to benefit yourself and other believers?
  - 5. Paul's concern (Col. 1:10) that believers be "increasing in the knowledge of God" is something you take very seriously.
  - 6. Do you long to share with others the biblical insights that you discover?

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## THE GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ, and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals."
- B. Word Picture: Pilot or helmsman (Acts 27:11)  
Titus 1:5
- C. Characteristics:
1. Likes to prepare agendas and reports to help a committee to be more productive
  2. Takes satisfaction in a well-run organization
  3. Will pay careful attention to even small details in planning an activity.
- D. Identifying the Gift of Administration
1. If a group you are in is lacking organization, do you desire to step in to help it to run more smoothly?
  2. Do you enjoy handling the details of organizing ideas, people, resources and time for more effective ministry?
  3. Have you ever made effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group?
  4. Are you able to give directions to others without using persuasion to get them to accomplish a task?
  5. Do you enjoy bearing the responsibility for the success of a particular task within the church?
  6. Do you enjoy working with facts and figures in order to complete a project successfully?
  7. Are you able to lead a committee or group in making decisions together?

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## **THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP**

A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish these goals for the glory of God."

B. Characteristics:

1. Diligence - Rom. 12:8
2. Discernment
3. Delegation

C. Identifying the Gift of Leadership

To what extent are these true in your life:

1. When I speak, people seem to listen and agree.
2. Other Christians have followed my leadership because they believe in me.
3. When I set goals, others seem to accept them readily.
4. When I join a group, others expect me to take leadership.
5. When I am in charge, things seem to run smoothly.
6. I find it easy to motivate others to follow through on a ministry project.
7. I would enjoy guiding a group of people to achieve their desired ends.

## THE GIFT OF PASTOR (SHEPHERDING)

### A. Distinction:

1. Office of Pastor - Pastor, Elder, Bishop - used interchangeably in the New Testament (Acts 20)
2. Gift of Pastor - Eph. 4:11

### B. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers."

1. May not be a preacher
2. May not be a teacher

#### Teacher

low need for people

content-centered

#### Pastor

high need for people

person-centered

3. Like all gifts, given to men and women

### C. The Gift of Pastor (Shepherding) in a Large Church:

1. In a congregation: 40 to 100 members
2. In a cell (Care Group): 8 to 12 members  
Activities: visitation, counseling, Bible teaching  
Example: Garden Grove Community Church

### D. Identifying the Gift of Pastor

1. Do you enjoy relating to a certain group of people over a long period of time, sharing personally in their successes and failures? Assuming responsibility for their spiritual well-being?
2. Have you helped individual believers, over a period of time, by guiding them to relevant portions of the Bible and praying with them?
3. Have people told you that you have helped them be restored to the church?
4. Is it your desire to commit yourself sacrificially to care for the spiritual welfare of a group of young Christians? Shut-ins? People in pain?
5. Would you be concerned about guarding, like a shepherd, a group of Christian sheep from those who are "wolves," i.e., enemies of Christians?
6. Are you able to feed followers in Christ by guiding them through selected Bible passages?

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## THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

- A. The Christian Role of discernment:  
Hebrews 5:14; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1  
Gift: 1 Corinthians 12:10
- B. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to some members of the Body of Christ which enables them to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human, or Satanic."
- C. Examples:
  - 1. In Corinth
    - a. Tongues
    - b. Prophecy
  - 2. Apostle Peter: Acts 5:1-11; Acts 8:9-25
- D. How the Gift Functions:
  - 1. Ability to know that *apparently* good behavior is in reality the work of Satan.
  - 2. Knowing whether something a Christian does emerges from godly or carnal motives.
  - 3. Ability to distinguish truth from error, even when motives are proper.
- E. Identifying the Gift of Discerning of Spirits
  - 1. Have others in the church noted that you are able to see through phoniness before it is evident to other people?
  - 2. Is your "sense" that a person's teaching is from God, Satan, or of human origin later confirmed to be true?
  - 3. Are you given affirmation by other christians that you are able to distinguish spiritual untruth from supernatural insights?
  - 4. Are you able to differentiate between demonic influence and mental illness?
  - 5. Can you judge between the inadequate and the acceptable, or between evil and good?

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## THE GIFT OF EXORCISM

A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives certain members of the Body of Christ to cast out demons and evil spirits."

B. Examples:

1. Jesus gave His apostles the power to expel demons:  
Mark 3:14-15; Mark 6:13
2. The gift was exercised in the earliest days of the church:  
Acts 15:16; Acts 16:16-18
3. Exorcism was a prominent gift in the early centuries of the church
4. Exorcism today: Walter Martin

C. Precautions:

1. Developing an excessive preoccupation with demons and evil spirits
2. Distinguishing between demon possession and temptation
3. Not attributing all mental illness to demonic possession

*Exorcism...enjoyed unrivaled prominence. The reason is easy to see.* The other gifts such as prophecy, glossolalia, and healing all had their parallels and imitations in pagan cults and religions; exorcism had no such parallel. In exorcism a confrontation took place between Christ and all of his supernatural contestants and rivals. As a result, Christians were seen to be not merely exponents of "new magic" but servants of the living God.

-- David Wells, *God the Evangelist*

"And now you may learn this from what goes on under your own eyes. Many of our Christian men have exorcised (in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate) numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city. When all other exorcists and specialists in incantations and drugs have failed, they have healed them and still do heal, rendering the demons impotent and driving them out."

-- Justin (A.D. 150) *Apology*

Just as Christians are prone to physical illness, so they may fall victim to mental illness. Nothing can be more harmful to those who are so distressed than to be told they are possessed of the devil and for an instantaneous cure to be attempted by exorcism. Even when possession is accompanied by mental illness (and this will not always be the case) it will be evidenced not so much in the symptoms of mental illness as in opposition to the gospel and the servants of God. Reading of Christ's victory over spirits to one who is possessed often produces a reaction which will confirm the presence of one or more evil spirits. Then and only then should the spirits be cast out in the name of Christ.

-- *Bridge & Phypers Spiritual Gifts*

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D. Identifying the Gift of Exorcism

Are these statements true of your life?

1. I have spoken to evil spirits and they have obeyed me.
2. I have actually heard a demon speak in a loud voice.
3. Others call on me when they suspect that someone is demon possessed.
4. People have been instantly delivered from demons when I have prayed.

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## **THE GIFT OF FAITH (1 Cor. 12:9)**

A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to some members of the Body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purpose of God for the future of His work."

"...I tell you the truth, if you have *faith* as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matt. 17:20 NIV®)

"...I tell you the truth, if you have *faith* and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you *believe*, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matt. 21:21-22 NIV®)

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." (Mark 11:24 NIV®)

B. Examples:

1. George Mueller
2. Robert Schuller

C. Problem to Avoid: Gift projection

D. Identifying the Gift of Faith

1. When you are in a group, are you the one others often look to for vision?
2. Have you believed God for the impossible and seen it happen in a tangible way?
3. Have other people told you that you had faith to accomplish what seemed impossible to them?
4. Have there been times when you have felt sure you knew God's specific will for the future growth of His work, even when others have not been so sure?
5. Do you depend upon God's resources and guidance to an unusual degree?

## THE GIFT OF HOSPITALITY

### A. Hospitality in the New Testament

1. Provided lodging for traveling evangelists and missionaries.
2. Symbolized by an open door.
3. The term: philos (love) and xenos (stranger)  
"Hospitality" = "love for the stranger"
4. The command to show hospitality is given to two groups:
  - a. To all Christians:  
Rom. 12:13: "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." (NIV®)  
1 Pet. 4:9: "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." (NIV®)  
Heb. 13:2: "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some people have experienced angels without knowing it." (NIV®)
  - b. To all Elders of the church:  
1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8: "hospitable"

B. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to provide an open home and a warm welcome to those in need of food and lodging."

### C. How it Contributes to Body Growth:

1. It encourages Christians to know that someone cares.
2. It is useful in evangelism.

### D. Identifying the Gift of Hospitality

1. Is your home usually open to people passing through who need a place to stay?
2. do you enjoy participating in church suppers or other events directed by the hostess committee?
3. When people come to your home, do they indicate that they "feel at home"?
4. Have others mentioned to you that you are a warm, helpful host/hostess?
5. Do you desire to make your home available to those in the Lord's service whenever needed?
6. Are you personally uplifted from hosting persons in your home?
7. Are you comfortable with opening your home to others regardless of how neat or clean it is?

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8. Are you happy to temporarily add someone to your family in order to provide a helping or healing ministry?

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## **THE GIFT OF INTERCESSION**

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specific answers to their prayers, to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian."
- B. Examples:
  - 1. In Church of the Savior (Washington, DC)
  - 2. Asbury Seminary
  - 3. Campus Crusade
  - 4. Bernice Watne
  - 5. Rees Howells
  - 6. Evelyn Christenson
  - 7. Coral Ridge Presbyterian
- C. Identifying the Gift of Intercession
  - 1. Do you spend at least an hour a day in prayer?
  - 2. When you hear a prayer request, do you pray at least several times for the need to be met?
  - 3. Is intercessory prayer one of your favorite ways of spending time?
  - 4. Have others told you that your prayers for them have been answered in tangible ways?
  - 5. Do you find yourself praying for others and often losing track of time?
  - 6. Are you confident that when you pray for others your prayers will have tangible results?

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## THE GIFT OF CELIBACY

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to remain single and enjoy it, in order to use one's time and other spiritual gifts to serve God more effectively."

1 Cor. 7:7: "I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that." (NIV®)

Matt. 19:12: "...others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven." (NIV®)

- B. Problems:

1. Shakers - universalizing the gift
2. Roman Catholic Church - requiring it of all clergy

- C. How it Contributes to Body Growth:

1 Cor. 7:32-34: "I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs -- how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world -- how he can please his wife -- and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord both in body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world -- how she can please her husband." (NIV®)

- D. Identifying the Gift of Celibacy

1. Do you enjoy being single?
2. Compared to others, are you comfortable about not being married?
3. Are you glad, because of being single, that you have more time to serve the Lord?
4. As a single, do you have little difficulty controlling your sexual desires?
5. Do you readily identify with Paul's desire for others to be single as he was?

## THE GIFT OF MARTYRDOM

I Cor. 13:3: "If I...surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."  
(NIV®)

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to undergo suffering for the faith, even to death, while consistently displaying a joyous and victorious attitude that brings glory to God."
- B. Examples:
  - 1. Jim Elliot
  - 2. New Tribes missionaries
  - 3. Chet Bitterman
- C. Attitude
  - 1. Acts 7:59-60: a forgiving spirit
  - 2. 1 Peter 2:20-23: no retaliation
  - 3. 1 Peter 4:12-13, 16: the need to rejoice and to praise God
- D. How may the Gift be Demonstrated (in addition to death)?  
"Martyrios" = "witness, testimony"
  - 1. Matt. 10:16-23: imprisonment; rejection of loved ones
  - 2. 1 Peter 4:3-4: abuse
- E. How it Contributes to Body Growth:
  - 1. Those who take the lead in the persecution are sometimes converted.  
Acts 8:1-4; Phil. 1:12-14
  - 2. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." (Tertullian)
- F. Identifying the Gift of Martyrdom  
To what extent are these statements true in your life?
  - 1. Physical danger is insignificant to me.
  - 2. Suffering physical persecution for my faith is not a major concern.
  - 3. Dying for my faith seems like a desirable way to go.
  - 4. Hoping at times for the privilege of dying for my faith.
  - 5. Identifying with persecuted Christians in other countries who will not recant to avoid imprisonment or death.

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## THE GIFT OF VOLUNTARY POVERTY

1 Cor. 13:3: "If I give all I possess to the poor...but have not love, I gain nothing."  
(NIV®)

A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to renounce material comfort and luxury and adopt a personal lifestyle equivalent to those living at the poverty level in a given society, in order to serve God more effectively."

B. Examples:

1. John Wesley
2. George Mueller
3. Ron Sider

C. Reasons for the gift:

1. To provide for the poor (Acts 2:45; Acts 4:34-35).
2. To resist material temptation.
3. To prove the faithfulness of God.

D. Identifying the Gift of Voluntary Poverty

To what extent are these statements true in your life?

1. I could live more comfortably, but I choose not to in order to live with the poor.
2. Living a simple lifestyle is an exciting challenge for me.
3. I am not poor, but I can identify with poor people.
4. Others tell me I sacrifice much materially in order to minister.
5. Poor people accept me because I choose to live in their level.

## THE GIFT OF TONGUES

Stage 1	1906-1954	Beginnings of Pentecostal denominations
Stage 2	1960-1966	Acceptance by main-line denominations
Stage 3	1967-present	Present in Roman Catholicism

### **GLOSSOLALIA (GLOSSO=tongue; LALEO=to speak) appears 25 times in the New Testament**

#### A. Is it for Today?

##### 1. Arguments against it:

- a. God raised up extraordinary officers (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists) to establish His church.
- b. God gave these officers extraordinary gifts to authenticate their message (miracles, healings, tongues).
- c. These extraordinary officers are no longer in existence. Therefore, neither are their gifts.

##### 2. Arguments for it:

- a. Christians, other than apostles and prophets, exercised these gifts (1 Cor. 12:14).
- b. The Bible nowhere states that any of the gifts have passed.
- c. The Bible does not distinguish between "extraordinary" and "ordinary" gifts.
- d. The "Gifts-withdrawn" theory presents problems for those who wish to use the New Testament as their guide.

The same applies, though to a lesser extent, when attention is turned to the Epistles. True, most of them make no reference at all to charismatic gifts. They are concerned primarily with sound doctrine and holy living - as all Christians should be. But when they do touch on the subject of the exercise of gifts, they tell their readers how to regulate them, how to test them, how to recognize them, how to exercise them - never how to phase them out. The Epistle which regulates the observance of the

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Lord's Supper also regulates the exercise of charismatic gifts, with no suggestion that one or the other should cease. The Epistle which says, 'let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread', also says, 'earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues'. Again, the only actual biblical instruction available on the subject assumes the presence of the gifts.

Bridge & Phipers, *Spiritual Gifts*

- e. The context of 1 Cor. 13:8 suggests a different view.
- B. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ (a) to speak to God in a language they have never learned and/or (b) to receive and communicate a message from God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance in a language they never learned."
1. Tongues-speaking, on the Day of Pentecost, involved known, foreign languages (Acts 2:4-11).
  2. Tongues-speaking at Corinth may have involved ecstatic utterances.
- C. What are the Purposes of this Gift?
1. Negative:
    - a. Not necessarily the sign of the baptism of the Spirit
    - b. Not the evidence of the filling of the Spirit
  2. Positive:
    - a. Personal edification - 1 Cor. 14:2,4,14-15

"Tongues enables our spirits to communicate directly with God above and beyond the power of our minds to understand."  
"Tongues liberates the Spirit of God within us."  
"Tongues enable the spirit to take its place of ascendancy over soul and body."  
"Tongues is God's provision for catharsis, therefore important to our mental health."  
"Tongues meets our needs for a whole new language for worship, prayer and praise."
    - b. Edification of the church - 1 Cor. 14:5
    - c. Judgment for unbelievers - 1 Cor. 14:20-25

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D. Should All Believers have the Gift?

We do not choose our gifts - 1 Cor. 12:11

E. What guidelines are Placed on its Use in the Church? 1 Cor. 14:26-28

1. Exercised for edification
2. Two or three, and one at a time
3. Interpretation is necessary

F. Should We Forbid Its Use?

"...do not forbid speaking in tongues" 1 Cor. 14:39 NIV®

## THE GIFT OF INTERPRETATION

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to make known in the vernacular the message of one who speaks in tongues (an interpretation, not a translation)."
- B. Who Interprets the Tongues?
  - 1. It is often the person who has spoken in the tongue - 1 Cor. 14:13  
"Though some men have the gift of interpretation who cannot themselves speak in tongues, this is unusual; for the most part it is those who already have tongues who gain this further gift of interpretation."  

Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*
  - 2. It may be someone else - 1 Cor. 14:27
- C. What Should be the Results?  
Comfort, guidance, warning, encouragement, admonition, edification
- D. What if there is No Interpreter?  
"...the speaker should keep quiet..." - 1 Cor. 14:28 NIV®

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## THE GIFT OF MIRACLES

Old Testament: miracles of Moses, Elijah, Elisha

Life of Jesus: walked on water, raised the dead, etc.

Acts: Peter (5:19); Paul (12:17)

1 Corinthians: Spiritual gifts (12:10,28)

### A. What About Miracles Today?

1. Counterfeit miracles - Satan
2. Abuses - snake-handlers
3. Naturalism

### B. What is a Miracle?

An event of supernatural power, perceived by the senses, accompanying a servant of the Lord, in order to draw attention to the Lord and His message.

1. Power - translated miracle 9 times
2. Wonder - occurs 16 times; something astonishing
3. Sign - 70 times, meaning miracle 60 times

### C. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature."

### D. Identifying the Gift of Miracles

1. Can others point to specific instances where your prayers have resulted in visible miracles?
2. Has God asked you to perform supernatural signs and wonders?
3. Does God seem to regularly do impossible things through your life?
4. Have people told you that the Lord used you to bring supernatural change in lives or circumstances?
5. Are you able to change circumstances through the name of the Lord?

## THE GIFT OF HEALING

- A. Definition: "The special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means."

"Gifts (plural) of healings (plural)" (1 Cor. 12:9): suggests varieties of the gift for different kinds of illness.

- B. Is the Person With This Gift Able to Heal Anyone? Any Time?

1. The gift does not give a person power over disease.
2. The gift does not make medical doctors and nurses obsolete.

- C. Do Healings Depend Upon the Sick Person's Faith?

"The close connection often found in Scripture between faith and miraculous healing must be recognized. This connection, it must be admitted, has often created practical problems when divine healing has been sought. Some Christians have sadly made a very crude connection between faith and God's ability to heal, making the latter depend on the degree of the former. Thus they have caused unnecessary heartache and suffering in those who have sought healing for themselves or others, and have not found it, by attributing the failure to the seekers' lack of faith. Yet this is a quite false and unscriptural line of reasoning. It is the power of God and the presence of faith which bring healing and not the pressure of faith on the reluctance of God. Jesus spoke of faith small as a grain of mustard seed (Mt. 17:20; Lk. 17:6) as being all that is necessary for the accomplishment of God's purposes, and when the prayer of faith does not receive the expected answer, this must not be attributed to the believer's lack of faith but left with the loving purpose of God."

Bridge and Phypers, *Spiritual Gifts*

"God does not always choose to heal us physically, and perhaps it is as well that He does not. How people would rush to Christianity (and for all the wrong motives) if it carried with it automatic exemption from sickness! What a nonsense it would make of Christian virtues like longsuffering, patience and endurance if instant wholeness were available for all the Christian sick! What a wrong impression it would give of salvation of physical wholeness were perfectly realized on earth whilst spiritual wholeness were partly reserved for heaven! What a very curious thing it would be if God were to decree death for all his children whilst not allowing illness for any of them. No, those who claim Christian immunity from illness not only fly in the face of facts and conjure up false hopes; they are guilty of the same basic theological error as those

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who preach the possibility of sinless perfection in this life. Both are wanting to have here and now what God has kept for the life to come, where perfect wholeness and perfect freedom from indwelling sin will go hand-in-hand."

Michael Green, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*

- D. Do All Healings Result From the Exercise of This Gift?
1. Healings by Satan
  2. Psychological factors
  3. Medical science
  4. God
- E. Why Does God Perform Healings?
1. To glorify Himself
  2. To bring growth to the church
- F. What Might a Church's Ministry of Healing Look Like?
1. North Shore Community Baptist
  2. Lake Avenue Congregational (see Common Questions Concerning the Ministry of Healing in the 120 Fellowship of Lake Avenue Congregational Church, Pasadena, California, George W. Eckart)
- G. Identifying the Gift of Healing
- A. In the name of the Lord, have you been used to cure diseases instantly?
  - B. Do you enjoy praying for sick people because you know that some of them will be healed as a result?
  - C. Have others told you that God healed them of an emotional problem when you ministered to them?
  - D. Has physical healing occurred as a result of your praying for people?

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### 3. Learn the Steps Necessary to Discover our Gifts

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Discovering our Spiritual Gifts...
  - a. Enables us to find our place in the church with more ease.
  - b. Enables the church to grow numerically (through conversions) and spiritually.
2. One of the most important spiritual activities for any Christian is to discover, develop and use his/her gifts.

#### II. HOW DO WE DISCOVER OUR GIFTS?

##### I. Four Prerequisites

- A. You have to be a Christian
- B. You have to believe in Spiritual Gifts...that He has given *YOU* gift(s)
- C. You must offer yourself to the Lord  
Commitment comes before effective service  
We must be willing to work
- D. You have to pray

##### II. Five Action Steps

- A. Explore the possibilities  
Study the Bible  
Read books on gifts  
Get to know gifted people  
Make gifts a conversation piece
- B. Experiment with as many as you can  
Look for something to do  
Be available for any job  
Undertake each assignment in prayer
- C. Examine your feelings  
If we have a gift, we will feel good using it
- D. Evaluate your effectiveness  
Gifted people get results

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Examples: the person with the gift of evangelist will see people  
come to know Christ.

E. Expect confirmation from the Body

This lets us know God is using us

This holds us accountable

## 4. Develop a Plan to Put What Has Been Learned into Action

### I. A PLAN OF ACTION WITH A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION - Ephesians 4:7,11-13

KJV: "And he gave some...pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ..." (4:11,12)

NIV®: "It was he who gave some to be...pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for the works of service, so the body of Christ may be built up..." (4:11,12)

The Pastor/Teacher has 2 main purposes:

1. Immediate Purpose: Training OTHERS to be ministers.
2. Ultimate Purpose: To build up the Body of Christ.

### II. A PLAN OF ACTION

#### A. The Personal Level: "What are my gifts?"

1. Explore the possibilities
2. Experiment with as many as you can
3. Examine your feelings
4. Evaluate your effectiveness
5. Expect confirmation from the body

#### B. The Corporate Level

1. Identify the volunteer positions which our church's ministry and programming require.
2. Identify the skills and gifts needed for each major position.
3. Draw up job descriptions:
  - a. functions and tasks involved
  - b. areas of responsibility and authority
  - c. reporting relationships
  - d. needed skills and spiritual gifts
  - e. anticipated length of service
  - f. expectations
4. Survey people to determine their spiritual gifts and ministry interests
5. Involve people in areas of service by matching their gifts with the requirements for the position.

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