

FROM LIGHTBULB TO LASER BEAM

The Spiritual Gifts

***A STUDY THAT SEEKS TO HELP THE BELIEVER IDENTIFY AND USE
HIS GOD-GIVEN ABILITIES TO STRENGTHEN HIS LOCAL CHURCH***

MARTIN PURYEAR

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Our Purpose

The *purpose* of this course is to guide each believer to discover God's unique calling upon his life. This will result in a higher level of zeal, skill, efficiency and satisfaction as he ministers to both the lost and the saved.

Our Course Objectives

For each of us to *identify* his God-given abilities and passion.

For each of us to *use* these gifts to strengthen our local church.

Our Goals

To help each of us understand how he has been uniquely "stitched together" by the hand of his Creator to prepare both the lost and the saved for eternity (***giftedness***)

To make each of us aware of what ministry gets us excited. In doing so, our work as God's stewards will be so satisfying and so purposeful that it will not seem like work at all (***passion***)

To mobilize each of us to be involved in a ministry that maximizes our giftedness and passion to the fullest for the building up of the body of Christ (***the work of service***)

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JOYFUL ASSIGNMENTS

- # 1** **in class:** Read “Farmer Brown’s Garden” (7-14)
- at home:** Answer the six questions under “An Introduction to the Spiritual Gifts” / “Let’s Get Started” (15)

Identification

- # 2** **in class:** Read “Basic Understanding of the Gifts” (16-17)
- in class:** Discuss the six questions under “An Introduction to the Spiritual Gifts” / “Let’s Get Started” (15)
- at home:** Read “The Individual Spiritual Gifts” (18)
- at home:** Read “Administration” and “Leadership” (19-22)
- at home:** Answer the questions under “Usage” and “Identification” (20) (22)
- # 3** **in class:** Discuss “Administration,” and “Leadership” questions
- at home:** Read “Knowledge” and “Wisdom” (23-26)
- at home:** Answer the questions under “Usage” and “Identification” (23-26)
- # 4** **in class:** Discuss “Knowledge” and “Wisdom” questions
- at home:** Read “Exhortation” and “Teaching” (27-30)
- at home:** Answer the questions under “Usage” and “Identification” (27-28) (30)
- # 5** **in class:** Discuss “Exhortation” and “Teaching” questions
- at home:** Read “Mercy” and “Faith” (31-34)
- at home:** Answer the questions under “Usage” and “Identification” (31-34)
- # 6** **in class:** Discuss “Mercy” and “Faith” questions
- at home:** Read “Giving” and “Helps / Service” (35-38)
- at home:** Answer the questions under “Usage” and “Identification” (35-36) (38)

7 **in class:** Discuss “Giving” and “Helps / Service” questions

at home: Read “Discernment of Spirits” (39-40)

at home: Answer the questions under “Usage” and “Identification” (39-40)

Usage

8 **in class:** Discuss “Discernment of Spirits” questions

in class: Read “The Gifts in Action” (41-42)

in class: Read “How to Discover Your Spiritual Gifts” / “The Spiritual Gifts Reviewed” (43-44)

You will need to set aside some extra time for the following “at home” steps:

at home: Answer the questions under “Questionnaire” (44-45)

at home: Complete “How to Use Your Spiritual Gifts to Strengthen Your Local Church” (51). To do so, consult “Suggested Uses of Each Spiritual Gift” (46-50)

at home: Complete “Specific Plans to Begin Your Chosen Ministry” (52)

at home: Fill in the lines under “God’s Calling Upon Your Life” (53) (Each of you will be called upon to present your answer **to the group**)

at home: Read “Appendix: The Miraculous Gifts” (54-57)

9 **in class:** Each one presents his answer to “God’s Calling Upon Your Life” (53)

in class: Discuss “Appendix: The Miraculous Gifts” (54-57)

FARMER BROWN'S GARDEN

FOR JUST AS WE HAVE MANY MEMBERS IN ONE BODY AND ALL THE MEMBERS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION, SO WE, WHO ARE MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST, AND INDIVIDUALLY MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER. SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, EACH OF US IS TO EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY: IF PROPHECY, ACCORDING TO THE PROPORTION OF HIS FAITH; IF SERVICE, IN HIS SERVING; OR HE WHO TEACHES, IN HIS TEACHING; OR HE WHO EXHORTS, IN HIS EXHORTATION; HE WHO GIVES, WITH LIBERALITY; HE WHO LEADS, WITH DILIGENCE; HE WHO SHOWS MERCY, WITH CHEERFULNESS. (ROMANS 12:4-8)

It was April and time for Farmer Brown to plant his garden. So, he called all his animals together to meet him at the barn.

"It is time to plant the garden," said Farmer Brown to his animals, *"and I want all of you to help me."* Turning to his horse, the farmer said, *"Nelly, I would like for you to be the leader. Here is the plow. Here is the seed. Here is the water. Here are the water buckets. And here is the cart. If you need anything else, just let me know."* Then he went back into his house.

Turning to the animals, Nelly said, *"Since I am a plow horse, I will plow the garden."* So, Nelly plowed the land. And the rows were deep and straight.

Then Nelly gathered the animals and asked, *"Who will sow the seed?"*

"I won't," said Henrietta the hen.

"I won't," said Porky the pig.

"I won't," said Billy the goat.

"I won't," said Daisy the duck.

"I will," said Barker the dog.

So, Nelly helped Barker sow the seed. But because of Nelly's big hooves and Barker's big paws, much of the seed fell on hard ground.

"Who will water the seed?" asked Nelly.

"I won't," said Henrietta the hen.

"I won't," said Porky the pig.

"I won't," said Billy the goat.

"I won't," said Daisy the duck.

"I will," said Barker the dog.

So, Nelly helped Barker carry the water in a bucket to the garden. But because most was spilled on the way and because neither could easily pour the water from the bucket, very little fell onto the seed.

"Who will hoe the ground?" asked Nelly.

"I won't," said Henrietta the hen.

"I won't," said Porky the pig.

"I won't," said Billy the goat.

"I won't," said Daisy the duck.

"I will," said Barker the dog.

So, Nelly helped Barker hoe the ground around the seed. But because neither could handle the hoe very well, the ground began to be filled with weeds.

"Who will protect the garden from the crows?" asked Nelly.

"I won't," said Henrietta the hen.

"I won't," said Porky the pig.

"I won't," said Billy the goat.

"I won't," said Daisy the duck.

"I will," said Barker the dog.

So, Barker patrolled the garden. And because Barker was a guard dog, not one crow was allowed to eat any of the vegetables.

"Who will reap the crops?" asked Nelly.

"I won't," said Henrietta the hen.

"I won't," said Porky the pig.

"I won't," said Billy the goat.

"I won't," said Daisy the duck.

"I will," said Barker the dog.

So, Nelly helped Barker pick the vegetables that had grown. But because their jaws were so strong, most of the tomatoes were torn, most of the beans were broken, most of the cucumbers were crushed, most of the potatoes were pulverized, and most of the squash was squished. Very little was brought into the barn.

It was now September, and Nelly and Barker were exhausted. Nelly had worked like ... well ... like a horse. And Barker? His dogs were barkin'. (His feet hurt.)

When Farmer Brown walked into the barn,

he looked in every corner ...
he looked in every stall ...
he looked in every room ...
he looked in the loft ...
he looked behind the tractor ...
and he looked behind the hay.

“Dear friends, where are all the vegetables?”

But not one of the farm animals spoke.

“Nelly,” smiled Farmer Brown, “I am very proud of the rows you plowed in my garden. Each row was straight and deep. Good job! But dear friend, (and now his face looked sad), should you not have helped each animal find its special place in the work? Your job was to lead, dear Nelly, not sow and hoe, water and reap.”

“And Barker, not one crow was allowed in the garden. Good job! But dear friend, while you sowed and hoed, watered and reaped, my house was robbed. Your job was to guard, dear Barker, not sow and hoe, water and reap.”

The farmer then looked intently at Henrietta the hen, Porky the pig, Billy the goat, and Daisy the duck.

“Henrietta, you can scratch the seed into the rows; but you did not. What did you do to help me grow my garden?”

But Henrietta the hen had nothing to say.

“Porky, you can hoe the rows with your tusks; but you did not. What did you do to help me grow my garden?”

But Porky the pig had nothing to say.

“Billy, you can carry water in your cart to the rows and push the water buckets over with your horns; but you did not. What did you do to help me grow my garden?”

But Billy the goat had nothing to say.

“Daisy, you can pick the vegetables with your big, wide bill; but you did not. What did you do to help me grow my garden?”

But Daisy the duck had nothing to say.

“DEAR FRIENDS, WHERE ARE ALL THE VEGETABLES?”

The obvious intent of this allegory is to portray the ineffectiveness of many of our local churches. We would do well, therefore, to analyze the situation.

Some Servants Are Not Serving

The “Henrietta, Porky, Billy and Daisy” Factor

To borrow from an old illustration, the Church of Jesus Christ has been likened to an American football game. There are 22 players on the field in desperate need of rest. And there are 100,000 spectators in the stands in desperate need of exercise. Tragically, this comparison is a realistic picture of many local churches. Twenty percent of the people are doing ninety percent of the work while the rest are content to simply “attend.” And the results?

- *Much* that should be done *is not getting done*.
- The *quality* of what *is* being done is, at times, *mediocre* (because the workers are spread too thin and are often not serving within their areas of strength).
- And those who *are* working are in danger of *burn-out*.

Why is this? Why are not all the servants serving?

Our Eternal Focus Is Blurred by Temporal Distractions

Perhaps the main reason many church members are not involved in ministry is because the passion of their hearts is directed elsewhere. Their focus is on the temporal rather than the eternal.

Now, it is true. We all must sleep. Most of us must work, including (and especially) stay-at-home moms. We all must eat ... and take a shower ... and pay our bills. And then there is the caring for children or aging parents. In the process of “life,” we find ourselves trying to force 25 hours of activity (some of which could be dropped) into a 24-hour day, leaving little time for much else.

It is what we choose to do with our limited *free time* that often reveals the passion of our lives. (We tend to devote as much time as we can toward those things that have captured our hearts.) Tragically, many believers are quite often “captured” by something less than what has eternal value.

Therefore, one reason many church members are not ministering within the Body of Christ is because they have allowed their hearts to be choked out by the weeds of this world's attractions.

THEREFORE, IF YOU HAVE BEEN RAISED UP WITH CHRIST, KEEP SEEKING THE THINGS ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST IS, SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. SET YOUR MIND ON THE THINGS ABOVE, NOT ON THE THINGS THAT ARE ON EARTH. (COLOSSIANS 3:1-2)

“For Me to Minister Is Not All That Necessary”

There is another reason the local church has so many spectators.

Many members have an “I am dispensable” mentality. That is, they view their contribution to the Body of Christ as not being all that necessary. Certainly, the pastor is indispensable ... and the worship leader ... and all the elders and deacons and small group Bible teachers are important. Those who are “up-in-front of others” – the high-profile people – are the important ones. But since most members do not hold an up-in-front position, many consider what they have to offer as being insignificant. As a result, many remain uninvolved. They do not understand that every single person in the Body is a vital part for the proper working of the whole.

*FOR THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER, BUT MANY. IF THE FOOT SAYS, “BECAUSE I AM NOT A HAND, I AM NOT A PART OF THE BODY,” IT IS NOT FOR THIS REASON ANY THE LESS A PART OF THE BODY. AND IF THE EAR SAYS, “BECAUSE I AM NOT AN EYE, I AM NOT A PART OF THE BODY,” IT IS NOT FOR THIS REASON ANY THE LESS A PART OF THE BODY. IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE, WHERE WOULD THE HEARING BE? IF THE WHOLE WERE HEARING, WHERE WOULD THE SENSE OF SMELL BE? ... THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY WHICH SEEM TO BE WEAKER ARE **NECESSARY**. (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:14-17, 22)*

Some Servants Are Not Serving Properly

The “Barker” Factor

We have seen one reason the local church has been ineffective in fulfilling its purpose: *all the individual parts are not working*. Another reason is that *some who are working are not working properly*. They mean well. But for some reason they have allowed themselves to be plugged into the wrong position, trying to be something they are not.

Willingness Does Not Mean Giftedness

There is much to be done by the local church. As the believer faces this sometimes-overwhelming fact, he needs to remind himself of a most liberating truth: *“A need does not constitute a calling.”* Just because something needs to be done does not mean that he is the one called by God to do it.

It is a major *disservice* to both the believer and to the church for Her leadership to look for a “warm body” to plug into an area of service simply because there is a need for someone to be there. Too often the only question asked is, “Are you *willing* to serve in this ministry?” without also asking, “Are you *gifted* to serve in this ministry?” When this happens – and it often does – not only is the servant in the wrong place; he is also not in the right place. In other words, there are *two* ministries suffering: the one where he is but should not be ... and the other where he should be but is not.

Not one of us was created to be a spiritual “Jack-of-all-trades.” Each one of us has been “wired” to be a *master* ... a *specialist* ... whether that be a knee or an elbow or a shoulder blade. A knee should not be asked to serve as an elbow simply because there is a need for an elbow. Specialists should serve in their areas of strength. And when they do,

- they thoroughly *enjoy* what they do (it is not a drudgery) ...
- they are *faithful* in the task (they do not give up very easily) ...
- and the *quality* of their work is very, very *good* (they do not throw something together at the last minute)

Most certainly, one’s willingness to serve is to be commended. But the fact is, he needs more than willingness. For one to serve *effectively*, he must have a God-given *ability* and a God-given *passion* for that ministry. One’s highest level of achievement comes when he is matched with activities that use his strengths.

SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, EACH OF US IS TO EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY: IF PROPHECY, ACCORDING TO THE PROPORTION OF HIS FAITH; IF SERVICE, IN HIS SERVING; OR HE WHO TEACHES, IN HIS TEACHING; OR HE WHO EXHORTS, IN HIS EXHORTATION; HE WHO GIVES, WITH LIBERALITY; HE WHO LEADS, WITH DILIGENCE; HE WHO SHOWS MERCY, WITH CHEERFULNESS. (ROMANS 12:6-8)

The Proper Service of the Pastor

The “Nelly” Factor

We have seen two reasons why many local churches have not been effective in fulfilling their purpose: *all the members are not serving*; and some that *are* serving *are not serving properly*. There is yet a third reason; and this one lies within the church’s leadership.

Professional Versus Laity

For a local church to recognize certain men as being gifted by God and called of God for leadership positions is a practice that dates to the infant Church.

NOW THERE WERE AT ANTIOCH, IN THE CHURCH THAT WAS THERE, PROPHETS AND TEACHERS: BARNABAS, AND SIMEON WHO WAS CALLED NIGER, AND LUCIUS OF CYRENE, AND MANAEN WHO HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP WITH HEROD THE TETRARCH, AND SAUL. WHILE THEY WERE MINISTERING TO THE LORD AND FASTING, THE HOLY SPIRIT SAID, "SET APART FOR ME BARNABAS AND SAUL FOR THE WORK TO WHICH I HAVE CALLED THEM. " THEN WHEN THEY HAD FASTED AND PRAYED AND LAID THEIR HANDS ON THEM, THEY SENT THEM AWAY. (ACTS 13:1-3)

Furthermore, it has been a practice of the local church since its early days to financially support those whose ministry is to "work hard at preaching and teaching."

THE ELDERS WHO RULE WELL ARE TO BE CONSIDERED WORTHY OF DOUBLE HONOR, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO WORK HARD AT PREACHING AND TEACHING. FOR THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," AND "THE LABORER IS WORTHY OF HIS WAGES." (1ST TIMOTHY 5:17-18)

A problem begins when either the pastor himself or the congregation (or both) begin to view him as the only one *qualified* to do the work of the ministry. He is the one who is called to preach ... and to evangelize ... and to mentor the youth ... and to do premarital and marital counseling, etc. "After all, that is what he is trained to do and that is what we pay him to do." In allowing himself to be viewed in this way, the pastor has – perhaps unwittingly – discouraged a "body mentality."

This same problem can exist in larger churches as well, only not so easily noticed. Larger churches – able to afford a pastoral staff – bring in ministry specialists. There is a teaching pastor, a worship pastor, a youth pastor, an outreach pastor, a world missions pastor, etc. Of course, it can be a blessing to have a gifted pastoral staff. But if these vocational ministers are not careful, they can – again unwittingly – cultivate this same attitude among the people: "I'm not qualified to do the work of ministry (but that's OK because we have several trained ministers that are)."

Extensive damage to the effectiveness of many local churches has been caused by this attitude. Tragically, this was never Christ's purpose for appointing church leadership.

AND HE GAVE SOME AS APOSTLES, AND SOME AS PROPHETS, AND SOME AS EVANGELISTS, AND SOME AS PASTORS AND TEACHERS, FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE, TO THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. (EPHESIANS 4:11-12)

Summary

Why is the local church so often ineffective in making an eternal impact on the lives of both the saved and the lost? Because:

- all the members are not working
- some members that *are* working are not working properly
- some pastors / pastoral staffs have cultivated (not necessarily intentionally) a "I'm-not-qualified-for-spiritual-ministry" mentality within the body.

The Calling of God Upon Our Lives

Many believers have not made the connection between their God-entrusted *abilities / passions* and His *calling* upon their lives. If asked to fill in the blank, "God's calling upon my life is _____," many would not know what to write. Consequently, few in the Body know where to focus their time, energy, resources, and abilities to maximize their impact for the Kingdom of Christ. Instead, we go from scattering a little light over here to scattering a little light over there. We are a church of light bulbs.

Are we gifted? Yes!

Are we well-intentioned? Absolutely!

Are we busy? Unbelievably!

Are we focused? Not necessarily.

Beloved co-laborers in Christ, it is better for the individual Christian to serve God well in a few things than to serve Him poorly in a lot of things. To know how to best serve our Master, it is important for each of us to know the calling that God has placed upon our lives. To know what that calling is, one must ask himself:

What is my gift? What is my passion? Do I have the physical and mental strength to do so?

This is true whether we receive our income from the secular workplace or from a vocational ministry.

If we know God's calling upon our lives, we will know which ministries to say "Yes" to and which ones to say "No" to. (We cannot say "Yes" to everything.) This will produce labor that is *zealous* instead of half-hearted ... *skillful* instead of mediocre ... *thorough* instead of incomplete ... *efficient* instead of wasteful ... *satisfying* instead of ho-hum. And when it is time to give an account of our stewardship at the Judgment Seat of Christ, we can be sure that we had been faithful in the use of our God-given resources.

Sadly, many courses on the spiritual gifts can be likened to an army whose captain tells his troops on the line of battle

"Ready."

"Aim."

"Aim."

"Aim."

but who never seem to get around to "firing"! At the conclusion of this course, you will know God's calling upon your life. And you will be challenged to fulfill that calling.

You will be called upon to "**Fire!**"

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

AS EACH ONE HAS RECEIVED A SPECIAL GIFT, EMPLOY IT IN SERVING ONE ANOTHER, AS GOOD STEWARDS OF THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD. (1st PETER 4:10)

Let's Get Started

1. **From where** do spiritual gifts come? (1st Corinthians 12:1, 11)

2. **Why** did God give spiritual gifts to His Church? (1st Corinthians 12:7)

3. Should every believer have a **ministry** within his local church? (Ephesians 4:11-16)

4. Does every believer have at least one **spiritual gift** to fulfill that ministry?
(1st Corinthians 12:7, 11)

(Ephesians 4:7)

(1st Peter 4:10)

5. Is every gift important and necessary to the local church? (1st Corinthians 12:14-22)

6. How is the church affected if the believer does **not know or use** his spiritual gift? (1st Corinthians 12:26)

Basic Understanding of the Gifts

Every Human Being, Lost or Saved, Is the Recipient of a God-Given Natural Ability

Every ability known to man is a God-given gift. Furthermore, whether he is born again or not, every human being is the recipient of at least one of these gifts. *Generally speaking*, God's purpose in giving each human being at least one ability is *to benefit mankind*. We have all known men and women who were outstanding teachers ... but who did not know the Lord. The business world is full of men and women who are excellent leaders and administrators ... but who are lost. And those who serve with any humanitarian aid organization have a desire to help and serve others ... but some are not born again.

Every human being – whether lost or saved – has at least one God-given *natural* ability.

What, then, is a Spiritual Gift?

A spiritual gift is a God-given *natural* ability that *now* has (upon one's conversion to Christ) a *transformed purpose*. A *spiritual* purpose. Through the ministry of the indwelling Spirit of God, the believer is now motivated to use his ability *to fulfill the will of God* (something a gifted unbeliever has no interest in). Or to be more specific,

A SPIRITUAL GIFT IS A GOD-GIVEN NATURAL ABILITY THAT IS NOW HOLY SPIRIT-EMPOWERED TO FULFILL A GREAT COMMISSION PURPOSE. THAT PURPOSE IS TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL CHURCH SO THAT SHE WOULD BE A MATURE (EPHESIANS 4:16), EFFECTIVE WITNESS (ACTS 1:8) TO A WORLD IN DESPERATE NEED OF JESUS CHRIST.

How Does One Discover His Gift?

Perhaps the individual acquired his God-given *natural* ability at conception ... or at birth ... or at some point in his early childhood. But whenever he received it (the Lord knows), it often takes time for him to *discover* what that ability is. The same is true with a spiritual gift. It is quite common for a person's strengths (and limitations) to surface *as* he tries his hand at various ministries. (Abilities and inabilities are usually revealed through experiences.) But let us take note: when the discovery is finally made, he is not *receiving* a new gift. He has always been in possession of that ability. He simply did not *know* that he had that gift until he was put in a situation that called upon him to use it.

Having said that, we should be careful not to make the mistake of "boxing in God" to fit our theology. God can give any gift to any believer He wants to ... *whenever He wants to*. Although not the norm, this can happen when a believer finds himself in a situation that calls upon the use of an ability he did not possess. Missionaries in remote settings can testify to this situation.

1st Corinthians 13:1-8

1st Corinthians chapters 12 and 14 provide us with an extended discussion on the church's use (and misuse) of spiritual gifts. Positioned between these two chapters is, at first glance, what seems to be nothing but an interruption. Right in the middle of his discussion on spiritual gifts, Paul begins to talk about love.

IF I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS, BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, I HAVE BECOME A NOISY GONG OR A CLANGING CYMBAL. IF I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND KNOW ALL MYSTERIES AND ALL KNOWLEDGE; AND IF I HAVE ALL FAITH, SO AS TO REMOVE MOUNTAINS, BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, I AM NOTHING. AND IF I GIVE ALL MY POSSESSIONS TO FEED THE POOR, AND IF I SURRENDER MY BODY TO BE BURNED, BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, IT PROFITS ME NOTHING. (1st Corinthians 13:1-3)

In these three verses Paul presents the importance of love as one's *motive* in the use of his gifts. We would do well not to miss this.

IF THE MOTIVE BEHIND OUR LABOR IS NOT LOVE,
THEN EVEN THE FULLEST USE OF OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS WILL "PROFIT US NOTHING."

But if we were honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that the quality of love presented in 1st Corinthians 13 is beyond human achievement. Without a doubt, this kind of love can only be realized through faith in the Spirit of God's power. It is a supernatural love; and when provided, is nothing short of a miracle.

LOVE IS PATIENT ... IS KIND ... IS NOT JEALOUS ... DOES NOT BRAG ... IS NOT ARROGANT ... DOES NOT ACT UNBECOMINGLY ... DOES NOT SEEK ITS OWN ... IS NOT PROVOKED ... DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT A WRONG SUFFERED ... DOES NOT REJOICE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH ... BEARS ALL THINGS ... BELIEVES ALL THINGS ... HOPES ALL THINGS ... ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS. (1st Corinthians 13:4-8)

Therefore, as we strive to faithfully use our gifts, let this be our plea:

"FATHER, AS I USE MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS,
PLEASE HELP ME DO SO WITH YOUR LOVE,
FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR CHURCH'S GROWTH
AND FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR HONOR AND GLORY."

THE INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We will now study eleven (non-miraculous) spiritual gifts. With each one we will consider:

- a **key verse**
- a **description** of a person with this gift
- its **strengths** (the positive traits of a person with this gift) ¹
- its **limitations** (common weaknesses of a person with this gift) ²

Every coin has two sides. With every strength a person has, there tends to be – on the “flip side” – a corresponding weakness.

What flaws do you suppose a person *might* have in his life because he possesses the strengths of this gift?

- its **usage** (how this gift can be *used* to strengthen the Body of Christ)
- **identification** (*who*, in your local church, do you believe has this gift)

¹ Those with this gift may not have every *strength* listed.

² Those with this gift may not have every *weakness* listed.

ADMINISTRATION

“The Planner”

Key Verse

AND GOD HAS APPOINTED IN THE CHURCH, FIRST APOSTLES, SECOND PROPHETS, THIRD TEACHERS, THEN MIRACLES, THEN GIFTS OF HEALINGS, HELPS, ADMINISTRATIONS, VARIOUS KINDS OF TONGUES (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:28).

Description

Administration is the ability to organize the church ... Her strategies and Her programs. This gift belongs to those whom God has given the skill of orderliness. They cannot tolerate disorganization. (This gift should not be confused with the gift of leadership. Not all administrators can lead people; nor are all leaders of people organized.) (See Titus 1:5)

Strengths

- * Tends to have a broad perspective (he is a visionary)
- * Is highly motivated to organize that for which he is responsible
- * Is willing to work on long-range goals and projects without giving up
- * Eager to make the most of resources and people to complete tasks or goals
- * Finds great fulfillment and joy in working to accomplish goals
- * Ready to move on to a new challenge once something is completed

Limitations

- * Because he is very goal oriented, he may have the tendency to drive both himself ... as well as those working with him ... to complete a particular project or goal
- * May prefer doing things himself (since he “wants it done right”)
- * May become upset when others do not get excited about his vision

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of administration use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

* Church secretary

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Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

BUT ALL THINGS MUST BE DONE PROPERLY AND IN AN ORDERLY MANNER (1ST CORINTHIANS 14:40).

LEADERSHIP

“The Delegator”

Key Verse

AND SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET EACH EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY: ... HE WHO LEADS, WITH DILIGENCE ... (ROMANS 12:6-8).

Description

Leadership is the ability to guide ... to direct ... to “navigate” believers within the church. It belongs to those that God has appointed in the church with authoritative oversight. This gift is not to be misused as an overbearing dictatorship but used to lovingly guide (not harshly drive) and care for the flock. (Compare 1st Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1st Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7,17; 1st Peter 5:1-4.)

Notice that the *administrator* provides the leader with the organized plan; the *leader* implements the plan by involving people to accomplish it.

Strengths

- * Is a “people” person
- * Feels natural “up in front of people”
- * Generates confidence that he knows where he is going and what needs to be done
- * Enjoys supervising people
- * Is able to easily delegate responsibilities to others

Limitations

- * Often does not like doing administration. Wanting the program to “get going,” he may become impatient toward those who are working out all the details
- * To execute the plan, he may impatiently fill a position with a “warm body” rather than matching that position with a person gifted for that service
- * As the “leader” of a group, activity, etc., he may take credit for what others have done

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of leadership use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

* Director of the different church activities (youth, student, etc.)

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Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

HE WHO IS SLOW TO ANGER IS BETTER THAN THE MIGHTY; AND HE WHO RULES HIS SPIRIT, THAN HE WHO CAPTURES A CITY (PROVERB 16:32).

KNOWLEDGE

“The Researcher”

Key Verse

BUT TO EACH ONE IS GIVEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE COMMON GOOD ... AND TO ANOTHER THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO THE SAME SPIRIT (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:7, 8).

Description

Knowledge is the ability to acquire the facts of the Bible and to understand them. This is the academic side of the Christian faith. It is upon their important work of research and interpretation that the other members of the Body build their faith.

Strengths

- * Is intellectually sharp
- * Loves to read
- * Loves to study in-depth and do research
- * Evidences knowledge about his subject
- * Emphasizes facts and the accuracy of words

Limitations

- * His knowledge of different subjects may foster an attitude of superiority
- * Tendency to view his own opinions as authoritative

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of knowledge use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

- * Does outside research for the pastor's sermons
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD AS A WORKMAN WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, HANDLING ACCURATELY THE WORD OF TRUTH (2ND TIMOTHY 2:15).

WISDOM

“The Applier”

Key Verse

BUT TO EACH ONE IS GIVEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE COMMON GOOD. FOR TO ONE IS GIVEN THE WORD OF WISDOM THROUGH THE SPIRIT ... (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:7, 8).

Description

Wisdom is the ability to understand and apply the deep spiritual truths of God to present-day life. Those with this gift gain these insights from the Scriptures, from life's experiences, and from creation.

GO TO THE ANT, O SLUGGARD; OBSERVE HER WAYS AND BE WISE (PROVERB 6:6).

Strengths

- * Emphasizes the application of Biblical principles
- * Consistently makes wise decisions
- * Provides godly insights and counsel for problems

Limitations

- * May insist that others hold the same convictions he has in the “gray areas”
- * May tend to give unsolicited advice

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of wisdom use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

- * Counselor
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

BUT IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, WHO GIVES TO ALL MEN GENEROUSLY AND WITHOUT REPROACH, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO HIM (JAMES 1:5).

A WISE MAN WILL HEAR AND INCREASE IN LEARNING, AND A MAN OF UNDERSTANDING WILL ACQUIRE WISE COUNSEL (PROVERB 1:5).

EXHORTATION

“The Motivator”

Key Verse

AND SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET EACH EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY: ... HE WHO EXHORTS, IN HIS EXHORTATION ... (ROMANS 12:6-8).

Description

Exhortation is the ability to effectively motivate others to obey God in a spirit of love. This sometimes requires a firm rebuke and often it requires great patience.

Strengths

- * Loves to encourage others to live victoriously
- * Emphasizes the application of truth
- * Views trials as opportunities to produce personal growth

Limitations

- * May not be entirely truthful as he or she attempts to encourage another
- * Tends to interrupt others in eagerness to give opinions or advice
- * May be hard for him or her to firmly confront another when a rebuke is in order

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of exhortation use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

- * Counseling
- *
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- *
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- *
- *
- *

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

BUT ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER DAY AFTER DAY, AS LONG AS IT IS STILL CALLED "TODAY," LEST ANY ONE OF YOU BE HARDENED BY THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN (HEBREWS 3:13).

TEACHING

“The Explainer”

Key Verse

AND SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET EACH EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY: ... HE WHO TEACHES, IN HIS TEACHING (ROMANS 12:6, 7).

Description

Teaching is the ability to clearly explain the truths of the Bible. Those who have this gift have a passion for study. They are not necessarily eloquent in speech, but they must be able to clearly communicate the Word of God.

Strengths

- * Enjoys studying
- * Evidences knowledge about his subject
- * Has strong convictions and opinions based on his study
- * Presents truth in a logical, systematic way
- * His explanations of Scripture are clearly understood
- * Emphasizes facts and the accuracy of words
- * Is aware of and sensitive to Scripture being used out of context

Limitations

- * Natural tendency to provide unsolicited instruction to others
- * May develop pride in intellectual ability
- * May be dogmatic
- * May acquire a judgmental attitude

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of teaching use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

* Small group teacher

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*

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

(1)	(6)
(2)	(7)
(3)	(8)
(4)	(9)
(5)	(10)

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE (MATTHEW 28:19-20).

MERCY

“The Empathizer”

Key Verse

AND SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET EACH EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY: ... HE WHO SHOWS MERCY, WITH CHEERFULNESS ... (ROMANS 12:6-8).

Description

Mercy is the ability to cheerfully care for needy people, especially the sick and afflicted. Those who have this gift do not come to another's aid simply out of a sense of duty. They are deeply moved with compassionate kindness.

Strengths

- * Is attracted to people who are hurting or in distress
- * Eager to take action to help
- * Has a heart to pray for the hurts and problems of others
- * Has tremendous capacity to show love

Limitations

- * Tends to come to the compassionate defense of those who, instead, may need some loving correction
- * May have trouble saying “No”
- * May struggle with the tendency to be ruled by the heart rather than the head

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of mercy use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

- * Hospital visitation
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL RECEIVE MERCY. (MATTHEW 5:7)

FAITH

“The Truster”

Key Verse

BUT TO EACH ONE IS GIVEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE COMMON GOOD ... TO ANOTHER FAITH BY THE SAME SPIRIT (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:7, 9).

Description

Faith is the ability to believe God to supply specific (and sometimes extremely difficult) needs. They persist in their undaunted trust when most others have given up (because of unchanged circumstances or long delays). Those with this gift can lay hold of God in a special way, to depend upon Him to a greater degree.

Strengths

- * His attitude is optimistic, not pessimistic
- * He emphasizes in his speech the believer's need to focus on God to accomplish a task
- * He will give God abundant credit for supplying all resources necessary to accomplish a task

Limitations

- * He may ignore the God given role of human responsibility in a situation
- * He may have a problem accepting the answer “No” to his prayers (e.g., someone with an illness for whom he has been praying dies)

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of faith use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

- * Is involved with the church's “prayer chain”
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

FOR THROUGH THE GRACE GIVEN TO ME I SAY TO EVERY MAN AMONG YOU NOT TO THINK MORE HIGHLY OF HIMSELF THAN HE OUGHT TO THINK; BUT TO THINK SO AS TO HAVE SOUND JUDGMENT, AS GOD HAS ALLOTTED TO EACH A MEASURE OF FAITH (ROMANS 12:3).

GIVING

“The Provider”

Key Verse

AND SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET EACH EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY: ... HE WHO GIVES, WITH LIBERALITY (ROMANS 12:6, 8).

Description

Giving is the ability to cheerfully distribute one’s material goods to aid others who are unable to supply their own needs, with no thought of return or gain for self. It has nothing to do with how much the giver possesses. Some poor Christians have this gift.

Strengths

- * Looks for ways to help people materially
- * The giving can include various resources ... money, possessions, time, energy, etc.
- * The incentive for giving may be to support or advance a ministry or to help meet the needs of a specific individual or cause, all to the glory of God

Limitations

- * May want to control how his contributions are used
- * May desire some kind of acknowledgment for these kinds of material gifts
- * May provide “detrimental” gifts, that is, giving to someone who needs to be providing for himself

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of giving use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

- * Overseeing a church’s “benevolent” fund specifically designated for the needy
- *
- *
- *
- *
- *

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

NOW THIS I SAY, HE WHO SOWS SPARINGLY SHALL ALSO REAP SPARINGLY; AND HE WHO SOWS BOUNTIFULLY SHALL ALSO REAP BOUNTIFULLY. LET EACH ONE DO JUST AS HE HAS PURPOSED IN HIS HEART; NOT GRUDGINGLY OR UNDER COMPULSION; FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER. AND GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE ALL GRACE ABOUND TO YOU, THAT ALWAYS HAVING ALL SUFFICIENCY IN EVERYTHING, YOU MAY HAVE AN ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD DEED (2ND CORINTHIANS 9:6-8).

HELP / SERVICE

“The Aider”

Key Verses

AND GOD HAS APPOINTED IN THE CHURCH, FIRST APOSTLES, SECOND PROPHETS, THIRD TEACHERS, THEN MIRACLES, THEN GIFTS OF HEALINGS, HELPS, ADMINISTRATIONS, VARIOUS KINDS OF TONGUES (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:28).

AND SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET EACH EXERCISE THEM ACCORDINGLY: ... IF SERVICE, IN HIS SERVING ... (ROMANS 12:6-8).

... WHOEVER SERVES, LET HIM DO SO AS BY THE STRENGTH WHICH GOD SUPPLIES; SO THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BELONGS THE GLORY AND DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN (1ST PETER 4:11).

Description

Help / Service is the ability to help others in a practical way. Those with this gift often labor “behind the scenes.” They serve with the attitude, “Just give me something to do and I’ll do it.”

Strengths

- * Easily recognizes practical needs and is eager and quick to meet them
- * Often operates on a less-talk, more-action style of service to others
- * Is more interested in meeting the needs of others than his own needs
- * Tends to do more than asked to do

Limitations

- * Has a hard time saying “No” to requests for help (becomes overcommitted)
- * May neglect his own family’s needs while helping others
- * May try to help when help is not wanted
- * May provide “detrimental” help, that is, “helping” someone who should be helping himself

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of help / service use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

* Nursery workers

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

FOR YOU WERE CALLED TO FREEDOM, BRETHREN; ONLY DO NOT TURN YOUR FREEDOM INTO AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FLESH, BUT THROUGH LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER (GALATIANS 5:13).

AND HE GAVE SOME AS APOSTLES, AND SOME AS PROPHETS, AND SOME AS EVANGELISTS, AND SOME AS PASTORS AND TEACHERS, FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE, TO THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST (EPHESIANS 4:11-12).

DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

“The Perceiver”

Key Verse

BUT TO EACH ONE IS GIVEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE COMMON GOOD ... AND TO ANOTHER THE DISTINGUISHING OF SPIRITS” (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:7, 10).

Description

Discernment of spirits is the ability to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, whether something is from God (proclaimed by one committed to God’s Truth) or from Satan (proclaimed by a deceiver).

Strengths

- * Quickly and accurately identifies that which is of God *and* that which is evil
- * Sees spiritual truths / principles from almost everything in life
- * Perceives the character of individuals and groups
- * Has strong opinions and convictions
- * Has strict personal standards

Limitations

- * Tends to be judgmental
- * Sees everything as either black or white; few gray or indefinite areas
- * Tends to be hard on self, as well as others
- * Is often intolerant of opinions and views that differ from his own

Usage

In what ways can those with the *gift* of discernment of spirits use it to strengthen your local church? (Be creative!)

- * Evaluating popular movies and hit songs for wholesomeness and purity
- *
- *
- *
- *

Identification

Who in your church (and especially in this group) do you think has this gift? (Don't flatter; be honest!)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| (1) | (6) |
| (2) | (7) |
| (3) | (8) |
| (4) | (9) |
| (5) | (10) |

ALL BELIEVERS are to practice this gift:

DO NOT DESPISE PROPHETIC UTTERANCES. BUT EXAMINE EVERYTHING CAREFULLY; HOLD FAST TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD
(1ST THESSALONIANS 5:20-21).

BELOVED, DO NOT BELIEVE EVERY SPIRIT, BUT TEST THE SPIRITS TO SEE WHETHER THEY ARE FROM GOD; BECAUSE MANY FALSE PROPHETS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD (1ST JOHN 4:1).

THE GIFTS IN ACTION

There are 12 people sitting around a table eating a meal. One of them is a little boy; the other 11 are adults. And each of the 11 adults has a different gift from all the others. As the little boy reaches for his milk, he accidentally knocks it over:

Administrator:
(*"The Planner"*) "Someone should get a towel. Someone should move all the dishes out of the way. Someone should wipe up the spill. Someone should pour the child another glass of milk. Someone should help the boy change his shirt and pants. And someone should wipe the milk off Aunt Clara's glasses."

Leader:
(*"The Delegator"*) "Right! Mary, you get the towel. John, you move all the dishes out of the way. Susan, you wipe up the milk. Fred, you pour the child another glass of milk. Sally, help the boy change his shirt and pants. And George, you wipe the milk off Aunt Clara's glasses."

Knower:
(*"The Researcher"*) "My qualitative analysis of milk shows that it has a basic pH of 6.6 that, if left upon the surface of a mahogany dining room table, will leave a significant mark on the woody fibrous surface, thus preventing the table from ever again being used for formal dining and probably will be good only for kids' birthday parties from now on."

Wise One:
(*"The Applier"*) "Well in that case, Susan, **quick**, wipe up the milk."

Exhorter:
(*"The Motivator"*) "Now that's all right, son. Just the other day, I spilled a glass of milk myself. We all have. Listen everybody! The Bible says we should forgive the erring one up to seventy times seven times. And since that was only the first time our little friend has done this, we ought to be willing to forgive him, not only this time, but also for the next 479 times he spills milk."

Teacher:
(*"The Explainer"*) "Next time, the child needs to pick up the milk with both hands. (He demonstrates how this is done.) Also, I noticed that he is left-handed. Therefore, the milk should be placed to the left of his plate. See, like this." (At this point he shows everyone the difference between their left hand and their right hand.)

Mercy:
(*"The Empathizer"*) "Little boy (as he says this, Mr. Mercy extends a cheerful smile), let me wipe those tears away." (A soft, linen handkerchief is gently dabbed under his eyes.) "That used to happen all the time to my little boy Gus, and today he's a very coordinated brain surgeon. Now, don't you feel much better?" (As Mr. Mercy gives him a comforting hug, the little boy nods.)

Faith:
(*"The Truster"*) "Since it is not God's will that little boys spill their milk at the table, I will pray that our young friend will be strengthened in his coordination. And since God will answer prayer according to His will, I am quite confident, beyond all doubt, that He will do so. I am so confident, that I insist on sitting next to him whenever he drinks milk from now on just to prove God's power."

Giver:
(*"The Provider"*) "Here, since the little boy didn't bring a change of clothes, let me give him this shirt off my back. I know it's a little big, but he can keep it, and eventually he'll grow into it. Also, I'd like to give our hostess a new table, since the milk – that has a basic pH of 6.6 – seems to have already left a significant mark on the table's woody fibrous surface."

Helper:
(*"The Aider"*) "Mary let me help you get that towel. Susan, I'll help you with the milk just as soon as I get through stacking the dishes out of the way with John. Fred, let me get a clean glass for you; that one's dirty. Sally, here is Mr. Giver's shirt. Let me help you change his clothes. George, let me wipe one side of Aunt Clara's glasses while you get the other. OK?"

Discerner:
(*"The Perceiver"*) "The exhorter is right. The Bible does say we should forgive the erring one seventy times seven times. But his math is terrible. Seventy times seven is 490, not 480."

The moral of the story?

IF EVERYONE USES HIS SPIRITUAL GIFT, THERE WILL BE NO NEED TO CRY OVER SPILLED MILK.

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Spiritual Gifts Reviewed

ADMINISTRATION is *the ability to organize the church ... Her strategies and Her programs*. This gift belongs to those whom God has given the skill of orderliness. They cannot tolerate disorganization. (This gift should not be confused with the gift of leadership. Not all administrators can lead people; nor are all leaders of people organized.) (See Titus 1:5)

("The Planner" helps to set goals and develops strategies. He "plans the work.")

LEADERSHIP is *the ability to guide ... to direct ... to "navigate" believers within the church*. It belongs to those that God has appointed in the church with authoritative oversight. This gift is not to be misused as an overbearing dictatorship but used to lovingly guide (not harshly drive) and care for the flock. (Compare 1st Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1st Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1st Peter 5:1-4.)

("The Delegator" sees that strategies are implemented. By means of delegation, he "works the plan.")

KNOWLEDGE is the ability to *gather and understand the facts of the Bible*. This is the academic side of the Christian faith. It is upon their important work of research and interpretation that the other members of the Body build their faith.

WISDOM is *the ability to apply the deep spiritual truths of God to present-day life*. Those with this gift gain these insights from the Scriptures, from life's experiences, and from creation.

EXHORTATION is *the ability to effectively motivate others to obey God in a spirit of love*. This sometimes requires a firm rebuke and often it requires great patience.

TEACHING is *the ability to clearly explain God's Word*. Those who have this gift have a passion for study. They are not necessarily eloquent in speech, but they must be able to clearly communicate the Word of God.

MERCY is *the ability to cheerfully care for needy people, especially the sick and afflicted*. Those who have this gift do not come to another's aid simply out of a sense of duty. They are deeply moved with compassionate kindness.

FAITH is *the ability to trust God to supply specific (and sometimes extremely difficult) needs*. They persist in their undaunted trust when most others have given up (because of unchanged circumstances or long delays). Those with this gift can lay hold of God in a special way, to depend upon Him to a greater degree.

GIVING is *the ability to cheerfully distribute one's material goods to aid others who are unable to supply their own needs, with no thought of return or gain for self*. It has nothing to do with how much the giver possesses. Some poor Christians have this gift.

HELPS / SERVICE is the ability to *cheerfully help the needy in a practical way*. Those with this gift often labor "behind the scenes." They serve with the attitude, "Just give me something to do and I'll do it."

DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS is *the ability to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error ... whether something is from God (proclaimed by one committed to God's Truth) or from Satan (proclaimed by a deceiver)*.

Questionnaire

Having refreshed your memory of the descriptions of each gift, please answer the following questions. As you answer each question, it is important that you tell *yourself* what is true rather than what you *want* to hear. So, be honest!

- (1) During this study, as I read over the lists of "*Strengths*" and "*Limitations*," did I see myself described in any of these gifts?
- (2) What abilities *feel comfortable* to me? Toward what activities do I *naturally* (and, therefore, frequently) *gravitate*? What do I have a "knack" for? (**Ability**)
- (3) What activities do I *enjoy doing* so much that I eagerly look for opportunities to do so (versus those activities I participate in out of a sense of duty)? (**Passion**)

- (4) What spiritual gift do I find myself *consistently doing*? (**Frequency**)
- (5) What do I have such a strong conviction to do that I feel I *must do it*? (In fact, this ministry is so important to me that, when I do not see others doing it, I wonder why (and am bothered by the fact that they are not.) (**Conviction**)
- (6) What kind of ministry has God been blessing? Do I have a sense of fulfillment that *God has used me*? (For example, do I see others developing in their spiritual maturity because of my teaching? Is the church better organized because of my administrative skills? Do those who suffer seem to be delighted in my visits and are stronger to face their trials because of my deeds of mercy toward them?) (**Fruitfulness**)
- (7) How have others encouraged me? *What abilities do those who know me best see in my life*? (Believers, especially, should be taking more initiative to assist fellow church members in identifying and using their spiritual gifts for the strengthening of their local churches!) (**Confirmation**)

Now that you have answered each of the above questions, look to see which gift(s) came up repeatedly.

SUGGESTED USES OF EACH SPIRITUAL GIFT

This list is not complete; it merely gives suggested applications for the different gifts.

Administration

Financial planning coordinator	Children's Church coordinator
Church secretary	Coordinator of ushers' training
Church fellowship coordinator	"Church Calendar" coordinator
Choir / music coordinator	Student / Youth activities coordinator
Outdoor activities coordinator	Visitor follow-up coordinator
Coordinator to meet peoples' physical needs	Prepares bulletin
Small Groups coordinator	Designs outreach strategies
Short range / Long range planning for the church	Prayer chain coordinator
Sunday School coordinator	Church council coordinator
Kitchen team coordinator	Nursery coordinator
Worship team coordinator	Creates the "agenda" for whatever committee he's on
Missions Conference coordinator	Plans holiday programs
Executive pastor	

Leadership

Financial planning chairman	Director of Children's Church
Church fellowship director	Chairman of the ushers
Worship team leader	Chairman of the elders / deacons
Choir / music director	Student / Youth activities director
Outdoor activities director	Visitor follow-up director
Chairman of a "Helps" team	Pastor
Home Bible study director	Outreach director
Short range / Long range planning director	Prayer chain leader
Sunday School director	Chairman of the church council
Kitchen team director	Nursery director

Wisdom

One who develops applications for sermons, Bible study lessons	Elders / deacons (to make church decisions)
Members of church committees who put Biblical principles into use: (finance, helps, short/long- range planning, etc.)	"Workshop" leaders (e.g. marriage, personal finance, parenting, homemakers, etc.) ... the "How To" teachers
Discipler / Mentor (children, youth, new believers, leaders)	Counselor

Knowledge

Helps others stay "true" to the

Scriptures as a member of:

the board of elders / deacons
the Church council
the Children's Church team
the youth leaders team
the evangelism team
the discipleship "shepherds"

the worship / music team
the visitation team
the prayer chain team
any of the church's committees
(finance, helps, short / long-range planning, etc.)

Does research *for*:

one who defends the Christian faith (apologist)
one who teaches a Bible study (home, Sunday School)
one who teaches in a Bible College or seminary
one who counsels

one who writes newspaper / magazine articles sympathetic to Christianity
one who writes commentaries or books on theology
the pastor's sermons (e.g. word studies, gathering statistics)

Provides research to program

coordinators planning church outings (where to go, what to see, how much it will cost, etc.)

Gives book reviews

Shares articles, books, handouts, with those who have specific needs
Reviews materials being considered for use as curricula

Exhortation

Choir member

Worship team member

Counseling

Greeting visitors at the door

Encouraging others to use their gifts to strengthen the church

Speaker on "practical Christian living" topics (dating, peer pressure, marriage, etc.)

Evangelist

Support Group mentor (for those in crises)

Encouraging the discouraged and fearful

Do "follow-up" of new believers (mentor / disciple maker)

Involved with visitation (hospital, prison, shut-in, etc.)

Given time during the worship service or space in the bulletin to express a "word of encouragement" to others

Pastor (in his role as preacher)

Teacher

Motivational speaker (at conferences)

Mediator (to resolve disputes)

Building up one's children

Teaching

Pastor-Teacher	older woman discipling younger women
Leads in family devotions	Evangelist
Home Bible study teacher	Sunday School / small group teacher
Mentor / Discipleship	Vacation Bible School teacher
Teacher trainer	Radio Bible teacher
Writes newspaper / magazine articles	Writes evangelistic tracts
sympathetic to Christianity	Debates (in defense of Christianity)
Writes theologies, commentaries	Writes home Bible study lessons as a
Writes devotional booklets	follow-up of the pastor's sermons
Counsels (knows where to take	Bible school / seminary teacher
people in the Bible)	Congregational preaching
Teaches workshops	Youth leader
Bible conference / Retreat speaker	

Mercy

Gathers information on the needs of the church (a "Helps Committee")	Elders / deacons assigned to oversee certain families of the church
Focuses on a special ministry of restoration: (alcoholics, single parents / unwed mothers / battered wives / troubled youth / divorce / etc.)	Oversees a First Aid Box (accidents at the church)
Plans for a church group to Christmas carol at nursing home, to shut-ins, etc.	Visitation (hospital, prison, nursing home, shut-in, downcast)
Works in a "soup kitchen" for the homeless	Offers moral and practical help to a person in need: picks up Rx drugs, takes him to the doctor, helps make funeral arrangements, talks through a difficult time, takes food to one who is ill, etc. > (widows / widowers / sick / grief-stricken / new Moms)
Distributes food and necessities to the needy during holidays	rakes leaves for the elderly
Disaster / Crisis Relief teams	

Faith

"Prayer warrior"	Organizes a system of prayer for those to whom the church's "Helps Committee" is ministering
Organizes a prayer chain (is at the top of the pyramid)	Supports other ministries with prayer (for those who do evangelism, lead in worship, preach, counsel, etc.)
Organizes prayer meetings	
Leads the church in <i>public</i> prayer	
Gives personal testimony of God's answers to prayer (motivational)	

Giving

A resource person to call on *privately* to meet specific needs (e.g. sponsors a teenager for the youth retreat)
 As a finance committee member, helps to designate the church's use of money, especially to the needy (i.e. he helps prioritize needs)
 Oversees ministry that distributes goods to meet needs: housing, car, clothes closet, food pantry

Missionary support
 Deacon (oversees the material deficiencies of the church)
 Church treasurer
 Financially supports the local church
 Call on him to raise money for special (non-budgeted) projects (he gets others involved financially)

Helps / Service

Cleans the church / grounds
 Sets up for church meetings
 Helps Committee (with each gifted person having a "specialty" area with which he is involved [e.g. housing, finances, medical], known to the entire church; they would keep the church informed of the needs of its members
 Kitchen committee (Church host / hostess)
 Called upon to meet specific needs (e.g. driving someone to the airport, taking an elderly person to the doctor, grocery shopping for shut-ins, .)

Deacons assigned to oversee certain families of the church
 Usher
 Oversee a First Aid Box (accidents at the church)
 Prepare meals for the sick / homeless
 Nursery workers
 Welcoming Committee
 Building / Grounds committee (oversees upkeep of the church)
 Hospitality (for overnight guests)
 Church host / hostess
 Baby-sitting (for overworked parents, for parents involved in a Bible study for church member sick in the hospital)
 Computer / AV / media operations
 Van ministry (bring elderly to church)

Discernment of Spirits

Teacher on the subject of "Cults"	Pastor / Elder
Church council / Advisory board	Helping leadership determine the direction of the church re: different fads (movements, books, etc.)
Teaching others how to answer the commonly asked questions by unbelievers ("I'm not a Christian because . . .")	Counseling: on ethics, parenting problems, new converts struggling with old beliefs / habits / doubts / marital problems / church discipline
Evaluating popular movies, hit songs, etc. for wholesomeness and purity, political parties' platforms	Helping youth learn how to make wise choices ("Is this music, movie, activity, etc. truly appropriate?")
Helping parents teach their children how to make wise choices	Selecting persons of influence who are solid doctrinally (e.g. pulpit supply)
Choosing Sunday School curriculum, books, etc.	

HOW TO USE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH

- (1) The above section, “Suggested Uses of Each Spiritual Gift” (pages 49-53), lists several ways each spiritual gift can be used to strengthen your local church. Referring to these pages, list 1-2 ways (*not* 5-6) you would like to use *each* of *your* spiritual gifts. Do *not* list any ministries you are merely *willing* to do. List only those ministries for which you have a real passion ... those you really *want* to do.

Your Gifts(s)	Your Preferred Ministries
a.	* *
b.	* *
c.	* *

- (2) Now put all your preferred ministries in order of *passion*. If you only had time to do just one of these ministries, which one would it be? If you only had time to do two, what would the second ministry be? And so forth.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

Specific Plans to Begin Your Chosen Ministry ³

Now, develop a specific plan. What steps do you need to take to begin your chosen ministry. Talk to the pastor? Wait until September when there is a change in ministry opportunities? Whatever you must do, write *each step* down in the space provided below. Be specific!

A.

B.

C.

*If you have the **time** and **strength** to do so,
it is your responsibility to use **all your gifts**
that Christ has entrusted to **your care**
within the context of **your passion!***

³ *Leaving a ministry.* Now that you have considered the spiritual gifts in more detail, you may have come to realize that the reason you agreed to take on the responsibility you presently have was because there was a need for someone to do it ... not because you had the ability and passion for it. Perhaps you have concluded that you would be more effective, more fruitful, somewhere else. Dear friends, remember

A NEED DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CALL

Therefore, one of the steps in your plan *might* be to *leave* a ministry in which you are presently involved to have the time and strength to serve in the one or two ministries you now believe to be your calling.

If so, you should not *immediately* drop what you are presently doing! Rather, you should ease out of it in a reasonable period. *Do not abruptly leave those who depend upon you.*

GOD'S CALLING UPON YOUR LIFE TO STRENGTHEN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH

According to the Scriptures, every reborn follower of Christ has a scheduled face-to-Face appointment with God. And dear friends, once we have been ushered into His Presence,

YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE THE FRANKEST DISCUSSION OF OUR LIVES

FOR IT IS WRITTEN, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD." SO THEN, EACH ONE OF US WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD.
(ROMANS 14:11-12)

You and I have been given the "heads up" as to what is in front of us; and we would do well not to ignore it. Because we all face the Judgment Seat of Christ, we should not squander any of our resources: our time, strength, money, abilities, education, experience, and opportunities. Instead, we should prepare ourselves for this accounting.

A major step in that direction is to understand His unique calling upon our lives. Please record below what you believe to be that calling:

God has called me to strengthen my local church by [see (2), page 54]

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, it is now time to "**Fire!**"

"SPIRIT OF GOD, AS I USE THE GIFTS YOU HAVE GIVEN ME, PLEASE LOVE YOUR PEOPLE THROUGH ME."

APPENDIX A: THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS

We have not included all the gifts listed in the New Testament. The reasons are given below.

Gifted Church Officers

First, this study does not include a discussion about "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). That is because these are not spiritual *gifts*. These are *gifted individuals* whom Jesus Christ has placed in *positions (or offices) of church authority*. These persons have been given certain spiritual gifts that are used "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

For example, the evangelist needs to be able ⁽¹⁾ to clearly explain the Gospel of Jesus Christ (the gift of teaching), ⁽²⁾ to appeal to a person's will to respond favorably to God's grace (the gift of exhortation), and ⁽³⁾ to lead the saints in *their* evangelistic efforts (the gift of leadership).

Miraculous Gifts

Furthermore, this study does not include a discussion on the so-called "miraculous gifts" (speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, healing, and exorcism).

These gifts were given by God to validate the messenger and his message. Anyone could say, "I have been sent to you by God with the following message." Therefore, a sign was needed to accompany that claim – something that only God could perform – to prove that his message truly came from the God of Truth.

These validations were necessary until the New Testament was completed. Since these writings have already been validated by these supernatural acts (*and we might also add, raising people from the dead*), the purpose of miracles was completed. Under normal conditions (that is, when copies of God's written Word are available) they are no longer needed to do what they were given to do and have already done.

It is, therefore, the view of this Bible student that these gifts, mentioned in the New Testament, have either been misunderstood or misused.

Speaking in Tongues ⁴

According to Acts 2:1-11, the gift of tongues is "the supernatural ability to immediately begin speaking in a *known (human) foreign* language without having first studied it."

Some reject this definition, taking this gift to refer to *a heavenly angelic language*. They use 1st Corinthians 13:1 to support this view.

IF I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS, BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, I HAVE BECOME A NOISY GONG OR A CLANGING CYMBAL. (1ST CORINTHIANS 13:1)

So, which is the correct view?

One of the basic principles of interpretation is to use a passage that is easy to understand to interpret a passage that is difficult to understand. (Scripture does not contradict Scripture.) The meaning of Acts 2:1-11 is clear. The meaning of 1st Corinthians 13:1 is controversial. Therefore, the latter passage should be understood in light of the former passage.

We should first consider what Paul was doing in 1st Corinthians 13:1. The apostle was making a point about the priority of love for others *over* one's full and flawless use of the gifts. He uses himself as an example. "If I could employ these spiritual gifts (tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith, giving) to the maximum, but do so without love for those I serve, I am nothing. Service to others without love is worthless." This is the point of 1st Corinthians 13:1-3.

So, does Paul believe that this gift of tongues can refer to an angelic language? Paul said that he himself spoke in tongues.

I THANK GOD, I SPEAK IN TONGUES MORE THAN YOU ALL (1ST CORINTHIANS 14:18).

But was he using a heavenly language to do so? Let's consider both sides.

- (1) *Paul **does** speak with the tongues of angels.* Paul could legitimately claim to have *exceptional experiences as an apostle*. Assuming this included an ability to speak in the language of angels, this made his argument to the Corinthians forceful.

But this is an assumption on our part. Paul's own testimony in 2nd Corinthians 12, however, carries more weight than our assumptions:

AND I KNOW HOW SUCH A MAN ... WAS CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE AND HEARD INEXPRESSIBLE WORDS, WHICH A MAN IS NOT PERMITTED TO SPEAK. (2ND CORINTHIANS 12:3-4)

Even though Paul heard the language of heaven while there, we must conclude that no one on earth is permitted to use this glorious, eloquent language, neither while the church is assembled nor as one's private "prayer language."

THEREFORE, THE LEGITIMATE USE OF TONGUES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT – INCLUDING THE TONGUES PAUL USED – CAN ONLY REFER TO SPEAKING A KNOWN (HUMAN) FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

- (2) *Paul **does not** speak with the tongues of angels.* Rather, he was using *exaggeration* (known in grammar as a hyperbole) to make a point about the priority of love. (A hyperbole is "a theoretical possibility rather than an established fact.")

“Even *if* I were to speak the language of angels ... I don’t, but if I did ... it would be nothing but noise without love.”

According to David K. Lowery (former professor of Greek, Dallas Theology Seminary) “... the statement (13:1) was probably meant to include every imaginable mode of speech. It was a statement of hyperbole concerning exalted eloquence” (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, 1st Corinthians, page 535, David K. Lowery)

Therefore, taking both (1) and (2) into account, the burden of proof rests with those who find in this term (“tongues”) a meaning other than *human language* (as in Acts 2:1-11).

Having said all this, we still need to be careful not to limit *God’s* use of *His* gifts. He can give any gift to any believer He wants to ... *whenever it is needed to fulfill His holy purposes*. (“All things are possible with God.”) Although not the norm, it *is* possible for a believer today to miraculously speak in a known foreign language he has never studied. For example, on the mission field the evangelist meets an unbeliever who does not understand his language and no copies of God’s Word are available in the unbeliever’s language.

Interpreting Tongues

In the early days of Christianity, it was necessary for the gift of interpreting tongues to accompany the use of tongues. This gift may be defined as “the supernatural ability to immediately interpret a *known* foreign language without having first studied it.” Since God’s Word has been translated in the languages of most of the world’s population, this gift – as with the gift of tongues – is no longer the norm of today. Likely, it still can be observed today, but only under the same conditions as with the gift of tongues (see above).

Healing and Exorcisms

Few are willing to deny that God still delivers His people from various afflictions (including serious illnesses and demon possession). Many have participated in those healings *through prayer*. However, the question is “Does God use *gifted individuals* to do so?” Those who believe that He does must be willing to pass those healings through the filter of God’s Word. Did the affliction truly exist (or was it a hoax)? And if so, was the deliverance immediate, complete, and permanent? As portrayed in the New Testament, these are the characteristics of miraculous healings by a gifted individual.

4

* This gift is *not* proof that one has been baptized by the Holy Spirit. Paul writes in 1st Corinthians 12:13:

FOR BY ONE SPIRIT WE WERE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY. (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:13)

Every member of the Corinthian church had been baptized by the Holy Spirit. Yet later, in 12:29-30 of the same letter, he asks a series of questions, each expecting the answer “No”:

ALL ARE NOT APOSTLES, ARE THEY? (NO) ALL ARE NOT PROPHETS, ARE THEY? (NO) ALL ARE NOT TEACHERS, ARE THEY? (NO) ALL ARE NOT WORKERS OF MIRACLES, ARE THEY? (NO) ALL DO NOT HAVE GIFTS OF HEALINGS, DO THEY? (NO) ALL DO NOT SPEAK WITH TONGUES, DO THEY? (NO) ALL DO NOT INTERPRET, DO THEY? (NO) (1ST CORINTHIANS 12:29-30)

All the believers in Corinth had been baptized by the Holy Spirit; but *not all* spoke in tongues.

* Furthermore, this gift is not proof that one’s spirituality is *superior* to those who do not have this gift. Several people in the Corinthian church spoke in tongues. Yet, in 1st Corinthians 3:1-3, notice how Paul described the spiritual condition of this church:

AND I, BRETHREN, COULD NOT SPEAK TO YOU AS TO SPIRITUAL MEN, BUT AS TO MEN OF FLESH, AS TO INFANTS IN CHRIST. I GAVE YOU MILK TO DRINK, NOT SOLID FOOD; FOR YOU WERE NOT YET ABLE TO RECEIVE IT. INDEED, EVEN NOW YOU ARE NOT YET ABLE, FOR YOU ARE STILL FLESHLY. FOR SINCE THERE IS JEALOUSY AND STRIFE AMONG YOU, ARE YOU NOT FLESHLY, AND ARE YOU NOT WALKING LIKE MERE MEN? (1ST CORINTHIANS 3:1-3)

APPENDIX B: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

FARMER BROWN'S GARDEN (Pages 7-10)

This little story is meant to address a very common problem that exists in many local churches ... worldwide.

? What *is* that problem?

Some Servants Are Not Serving

The “Henrietta, Porky, Billy and Daisy” Factor (Page 10)

Our Eternal Focus Is Blurred by Temporal Distractions (Pages 10-11)

We just read, “... one reason many church members are not ministering within the Body of Christ is because *they have allowed their hearts* to be choked out by the weeds of this world’s attractions.”

? How does one “allow” his heart to have the passion it does (whether good or bad)? Is that really something he can control?

“For Me to Minister Is Not All That Necessary” (Page 11)

? If a follower of Christ does not believe that his gift is all that important, what can be done to change that mindset?

Some Servants Are Not Serving Properly

The “Barker” Factor (Page 11)

Willingness Does Not Mean Giftedness (Pages 11-12)

? Why would someone agree to serve in a ministry for which he is not suited?

The Proper Service of the Pastor

The “Nelly” Factor (Page 12)

Professional Versus Laity (Pages 12-13)

- ? According to Ephesians 4:11-12, who is responsible to do “the work of service”?
- ? Are pastors included in the category of “saints”?
- ? According to this passage in Ephesians, what is the final goal the church should have when all the believers are using their gifts within (and on the outside of) the church?

Summary (Page 13)

The Calling of God Upon Our Lives (Page 14)

There are different ways to employ each gift. As a result, two people may have the same gift but not the same passion.

- ? Can you think of an example of this?

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Let’s Get Started (Page 15)

1. **From where** do spiritual gifts come? (1st Corinthians 12:1, 11)
2. **Why** did God give spiritual gifts to His Church? (1st Corinthians 12:7)
3. Should every believer have a **ministry** within his local church? (Ephesians 4:11-16)
4. Does every believer have at least one **spiritual gift** to fulfill that ministry?
(1st Corinthians 12:7, 11)

(Ephesians 4:7)

(1st Peter 4:10)

5. Is every gift important and necessary to the local church? (1st Corinthians 12:14-22)
6. How is the church affected if the believer does ***not know or use*** his spiritual gift? (1st Corinthians 12:26)

Basic Understanding of the Gifts

Every Human Being, Lost or Saved, Is the Recipient of a God-Given Natural Ability (Page 16)

What, then, is a Spiritual Gift? (Page 16)

- ? Would someone be willing to summarize – in your own words – these two sections?
- ? Do you have any thoughts on this?

How Does One Discover His Gift? (Page 16)

- ? What must one be willing to accept as he tries out various ministries in search of his gift?

1st Corinthians 13:1-8 (Page 17)

There is a truth found within 1st Corinthians 13 that we should not miss this. The Apostle Paul inserted this chapter about divine love in the middle of his discussion on one's use of his spiritual gift (chapters 12 and 14).

- ? Why does he do that? What is his point?

ADMINISTRATION (Pages 19-20)**“The Planner”**

Administration is the ability to organize the church ... Her strategies and Her programs. This gift belongs to those whom God has given the skill of orderliness. They cannot tolerate disorganization.

(This gift should not be confused with the gift of leadership. Not all administrators can lead people; nor are all leaders of people organized. See Titus 1:5)

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

LEADERSHIP (Pages 21-22)**“The Delegator”**

Leadership is the ability to guide ... to direct ... to “navigate” believers within the church. It belongs to those that God has appointed in the church with authoritative oversight. This gift is not to be misused as an overbearing dictatorship but used to lovingly guide (not harshly drive) and care for the flock. (Compare 1st Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1st Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7,17; 1st Peter 5:1-4.)

Notice that the *administrator* provides the leader with the organized plan; the *leader* implements the plan by involving people to accomplish it.

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

KNOWLEDGE (Pages 23-24)

"The Researcher"

Knowledge is the ability to acquire the facts of the Bible and to understand them. This is the academic side of the Christian faith. It is upon their important work of research and interpretation that the other members of the Body build their faith.

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?
- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

WISDOM (Pages 25-26)

"The Applier"

Wisdom is the ability to understand and apply the deep spiritual truths of God to present-day life. Those with this gift gain these insights from the Scriptures, from life's experiences, and from creation.

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

EXHORTATION (Pages 27-28)

"The Motivator"

Exhortation is the ability to effectively motivate others to obey God in a spirit of love. This sometimes requires a firm rebuke and often it requires great patience.

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?
- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

TEACHING (Pages 29-30)

"The Explainer"

Teaching is the ability to clearly explain the truths of the Bible. Those who have this gift have a passion for study. They are not necessarily eloquent in speech, but they must be able to clearly communicate the Word of God.

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

MERCY (Pages 31-32)

"The Empathizer"

Mercy is the ability to cheerfully care for needy people, especially the sick and afflicted. Those who have this gift do not come to another's aid simply out of a sense of duty. They are deeply moved with compassionate kindness.

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?
- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

FAITH (Pages 33-34)

"The Truster"

Faith is the ability to believe God to supply specific (and sometimes extremely difficult) needs. They persist in their undaunted trust when most others have given up (because of unchanged circumstances or long delays). Those with this gift can lay hold of God in a special way, to depend upon Him to a greater degree.

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

GIVING (Pages 35-36)

"The Provider"

Giving is the ability to cheerfully distribute one's material goods to aid others who are unable to supply their own needs, with no thought of return or gain for self. It has nothing to do with how much the giver possesses. Some poor Christians have this gift.

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?
- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

HELP / SERVICE (Pages 37-38)

"The Aider"

Help / Service is the ability to help others in a practical way. Those with this gift often labor "behind the scenes." They serve with the attitude, "Just give me something to do and I'll do it."

- ? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS (Pages 39-40)

"The Perceiver"

Discernment of spirits is the ability to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, whether something is from God or from Satan.

? Can you think of any other characteristics a person with this gift would have – either strengths or weaknesses – that are not listed here?

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Questionnaire (Pages 44-45)

? _____, after answering these seven questions on pages **44-45**, what do you believe is your spiritual gift(s).

HOW TO USE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH

Specific Plans to Begin Your Chosen Ministry (Page 52)

- ? If everyone in your local church knew and used his gift to the fullest, what do you think your church would be like?

- ? Do you think there is ever a time for someone to say “Yes” to a ministry that requires a gift he does not have? If so, in what situation would he do that?

APPENDIX: THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS

Gifted Church Officers (Page 54)

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

Miraculous Gifts

Speaking in Tongues (Pages 54-56)

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

Interpreting Tongues (Page 56)

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

Healing and Exorcisms (Page 56)

Conclusion (Page 56)

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?
- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"