

The Spiritual Gifts

What Are Spiritual Gifts?

Every believer has at least one, if not more, spiritual gift. Do you know what your primary gift is, and are you using it? Have you ever even opened it?

[I have found few quotations on spiritual gifts, but since it is such an integral part of a believer's spiritual growth, we will delve into the topic for a few days excluding our traditional quotation section.]

Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4–7, 11 NIV

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10–11 NIV

God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. Hebrews 2:4 NIV

Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 1 Corinthians 1:7 NIV

I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. 1 Corinthians 7:7 NIV

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. 1 Corinthians 14:1, 12 NIV

A *spiritual gift* is a distinctive ability or special attribute given by the Holy Spirit according solely by His determination to every believer at conversion by God's grace and design for the purpose of building up the body of believers in Christ. Every believer receives at least one or more spiritual gift that remains with them throughout their life, and as that gift is used, it will accordingly mature and blossom. A spiritual gift is not the same as a natural talent or ability that you have received genetically or developed on your own in the natural. It is truly God's chosen spiritual talent given to you as a believer. However, very often as we will see later in our discussions, God can utilize a natural talent and ability as a spiritual gift, but they will operate differently. Your natural talent is used primarily for the benefit of you, whereas the spiritual gift is always used to strengthen and mature others and glorify God. Only believers have spiritual gifts, as well as their natural talents, whereas nonbelievers only possess their natural talents.

The spiritual gifts are based solidly on Scripture and are very specific. There are approximately twenty-three spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament that we will discuss, and there are certainly a few in the Old Testament that are mentioned as well, which would bring the total number of spiritual gifts to around twenty-seven or twenty-eight, depending upon how you count them. The main goal in our discussions will be for you to ultimately discover your gifts and use them to build up others and bring glory to God.

What Spiritual Gifts Are Not

Every believer needs faith to believe, has duties and responsibilities as a Christian, should be displaying the entirety of the fruit of the Spirit, and probably has at least a couple spiritual gifts that need to be taken out of the spiritual closet and opened.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22–23 NIV

Spiritual gifts are not the *fruit of the Spirit*. The fruit of the Spirit is a work of the Holy Spirit in every believer to bring about all nine of those listed attributes or characteristics to make a believer mature and complete. The fruit of the Spirit is the cooperative work between the believer and the Holy Spirit to continually, in increasing fashion, display those listed attributes in all their fullness—all for everyone. Spiritual gifts are unique for each believer.

Likewise, there are some spiritual gifts which seem to be the same as our normal Christian experience and responsibilities. For instance, there are the spiritual gifts of *faith, giving, intercession, and evangelist*. We will specifically define those later, but they are distinct and separate from every believer's necessity to have faith, to give of their tithes and offerings, to pray for others, and to share their testimony and the love of Jesus Christ with others. And remember, we've already stated that the spiritual gift of *tongues* is separate and unique from a believer's private prayer language when praying in the Spirit—every believer can potentially pray in the Spirit, but only a few believers will receive the spiritual gift of tongues, and the spiritual gift of tongues is a public gift requiring an interpretation for building up the body of believers, whereas praying in tongues (in the Spirit) is generally private or in small groups with no interpretation.

As a final note, remember that the Holy Spirit is a perfect gentleman, and as such, the utmost respect and order should always be displayed when the spiritual gifts are exercised. No particular gift should be coveted or seen as superior, since we are all essential parts of the body of Christ. Additionally, one should not neglect your gift nor your assumed duties and responsibilities, regardless if that is your area of spiritual gifting or not. The desired result of the gifts is to bring glory to God, not self, and to build each other up. Many of the gifts are interdependent and work best together—either from separate individuals or an individual possessing multiple gifts.

Opening the Gifts—Part 1 (Prophecy, Service, Teaching)

It's time to begin to open the spiritual gifts and discover which ones are yours!

*For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is **prophesying**, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is **servicing**, then serve; if it is **teaching**, then teach; if it is to **encourage**, then give encouragement; if it is **giving**, then give generously; if it is to **lead**, do it diligently; if it is to show **mercy**, do it cheerfully. Romans 12:3–8 NIV*

There is no set order of the spiritual gifts, so we will address them in the order that we find them presented in the New Testament. The primary twenty spiritual gifts are discussed in four main blocks of Scripture: Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; 1 Corinthians 12:27–31; and Ephesians 4:11–13.

Most of 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, is a discussion of spiritual gifts and their importance and use in the body of Christ. None of the listings in these Scripture blocks are complete, and there is also overlap, so all the passages must be taken together, plus a few more, to gain a full understanding. Over the next few days, we will give a brief description of each of the gifts and then ultimately direct you to resources where you can more fully discover your personal gifts so you can become more spiritually mature and effective in the tasks that God has for you to do. Let's begin to open the gifts!

Prophecy. The gift of prophecy is the distinctive ability to receive and boldly communicate the truth of God in an immediate and divinely inspired message, despite the potential consequences, that generally serves to call people into righteous living. The divinely inspired message may be in the form of a warning, exhortation, instruction, or judgment to make manifest the truth in a person's heart and to guide that person to God or God's plan. The gift of prophecy is most misunderstood, as it is not a prediction of the future but speaks into current situations. Because of the sensitive nature of the gift of prophecy, the gift of *discernment* must always be possessed as well.

Service. The gift of service is the distinctive ability to identify and meet the practical needs of others, bringing about a sense of community and wholeness to the body of believers. This is a function of you personally seeing what needs to be done and you personally doing whatever it takes to get it done. This is different from the gift of *helps*, where you are usually helping another with a ministry function or task and not directly overseeing it yourself. Both of these gifts, service and helps, are extremely common among believers.

Teaching. The gift of teaching is the distinctive ability to employ a logical, systematic, and disciplined approach to biblical study in preparation for clearly communicating those truths that are relevant and necessary to the spiritual health and well-being of believers, such that the students are empowered to learn and act upon the information. The gift of teaching empowers the holder to learn, prepare, and deliver the information, usually by public speaking. The gift of teaching is one excellent example where a natural talent or ability may be transformed into a spiritual talent, but this need not be the case! A professional teacher will not always have a spiritual gift of teaching. Sometimes, the spiritual goes in synchrony with the natural, but oftentimes, they are quite different. The Holy Spirit is the one who knows best, and attempting to undertake spiritual ministry outside of your spiritual gifting will most often result in ineffectiveness. Tomorrow we will look at the final four gifts in Romans.

Opening the Gifts—Part 2 ***(Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Mercy)***

Today we finish discussing the spiritual gifts listed in Romans. As you read these descriptions, be praying for the Holy Spirit to give insight as to your personal gifts.

*We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to **encourage**, then give encouragement; if it is **giving**, then give generously; if it is to **lead**, do it diligently; if it is to show **mercy**, do it cheerfully.*
Romans 12:6–8 NIV

Exhortation. The gift of exhortation, sometimes called encouraging or counseling, is the distinctive ability to appropriately communicate words of encouragement, challenge, or occasional rebuke to bring health and wholeness to the body of believers. This requires an understanding and empathetic persuasion, with great people skills, and the delivery of well-chosen and anointed words.

Giving. The gift of giving is the distinctive ability to cheerfully, generously, and often quietly contribute material resources to God’s work, above and beyond the normal tithes and offerings expected of all believers. The true gift of giving is deeply gratifying, done with the purest motives, never controlling, and never prideful.

Leadership. The gift of leadership is the distinctive ability to set goals in accordance with God’s purpose, plan, or mission and to effectively communicate these goals to others in positive influential ways, such that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for God’s glory. The gift of leadership is never prideful nor misuses power or influence. Once again, remember, a leader in the natural is not necessarily a leader in the spiritual.

Mercy. The gift of mercy is the distinctive ability to have genuine empathy and compassion for individuals who are suffering distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems and to cheerfully undertake actions which help to alleviate the suffering situations and display God’s love. The gift of mercy brings relief, comfort, and hope in material, action, and verbal ways to those who are hurting to restore them to wellness and productivity.

It should be quite apparent already that the spiritual gifts are extraordinarily diverse, and many are openly very visible and powerful, and yet some are very camouflaged but equally spiritually powerful. The point is that you must embrace the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given you and continually develop and mature those gifts. The body of Christ needs every person, part, and gift to function properly and powerfully. You may even have some hidden gifts that God will open up later for a particular time or season. Regardless, in the body of Christ, the toe is just as important as the head. Tomorrow we begin looking at the next listing of gifts in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12.

Opening the Gifts—Part 3 ***(Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing)***

Today we begin looking at the next block of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12. Are you eagerly anticipating and desiring to open your gifts? God only gives perfect gifts.

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a **message of wisdom**, to another a **message of knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by that one Spirit, to another **miraculous powers**, to another **prophecy**, to another **distinguishing between spirits**, to another **speaking in different kinds of tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. 1 Corinthians 12:4–11 NIV*

Wisdom. The gift of wisdom, or a word or message of wisdom, is the distinctive ability to know the mind of Christ and apply scriptural truth in practical ways to a specific situation in order to make the right choices and decisions to help others move in the right direction. The gift of wisdom is like the book of Proverbs—applying practical knowledge to everyday life as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Knowledge. The gift of knowledge, or a word or message of knowledge, is the distinctive ability to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify diverse information and ideas which are pertinent to the well-being and spiritual growth of the body of believers. This gift is not so much about intelligence as it is about being passionate in learning. As might be expected, this gift frequently is found with the gift of *teaching*.

Faith. The gift of faith is the distinctive ability to believe God with extraordinary confidence things unseen, spiritual growth, and the will and purposes of God in His various work that encourages and motivates others to believe and trust more powerfully as well. The gift of faith is used for the benefit of the body of believers, whereas your personal measure of faith is for your own well-being and maturity. The gift of faith is often seen to operate when the situation seems dismal or impossible.

Healing. The gift of healing is the distinctive ability to be used as a human intermediary through whom God’s supernatural power is applied to a directed individual, often with prayer and the laying on of hands, to heal them physically or emotionally without the use of natural means. The gift of healing is God-directed, and there is obviously a great measure of faith and trust and discernment applied in His directive. God’s all-knowing plan and ways are not always to heal, and we must always respect and honor His perfect will, as difficult many times as that is.

Tomorrow we will finish the final gifts in this block of Scripture.

Opening the Gifts—Part 4 (Miracles, Discernment, Tongues, Interpretation)

First, know your spiritual gifts. Second, use them appropriately. God didn’t give you them to sit on a shelf.

*To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another **miraculous powers**, to another prophecy, to another **distinguishing between spirits**, to another **speaking in different kinds of tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

1 Corinthians 12:8–11 NIV

[Prophecy has already been discussed in part 1.]

Miracles. The gift of miracles is the distinctive ability to serve as a human intermediary of God to perform supernatural acts which alter the normal or expected course of nature, all to bring attention and glory to God. This gift, like the gift of healing, requires a devout faith, trust, and close communion with God to know and carry out His will. Those who carry the Gospel message to the ones who have never heard the message of Christ are often seen to possess this gift. Signs, wonders, and miracles were a normal part of bringing the message of Christ in the book of Acts and still are seen today.

Discernment. The gift of discernment, or the discerning of spirits, is the distinctive ability to perceive with assurance whether certain behaviors or words, purported to be of God, are truly of God, merely human, or actually satanic in their origin, all to prevent confusion and false teaching from entering into the body of believers. The gift is a sensitive and insightful perception of the Word of God and the things of God and anything which is insincere or otherwise. The gift goes beyond every believer's ability and responsibility to "test the spirits" and everything as it pertains to God's Word, His Truth.

Dear friends, 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. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 1 John 4:1–3 NIV

Tongues. The gift of tongues is the distinctive ability to receive and deliver a divinely inspired message in an unknown language to unbelievers such that they would believe, or to the body of believers as an anointed message from God to His people. The gift of tongues should always be accompanied by its companion, the gift of interpretation, such that the public message is understood and believed. It is best if the one possessing the gift of tongues also possesses the gift of *interpretation*.

Ideally, one person would deliver the message in a tongue, and a different person would deliver the interpretation. However, it is possible that there may be no one present who possesses the gift of interpretation, or a person is unwilling at the time to step out and use their gift of interpretation. Therefore, in that instance, after a moment of waiting, the responsibility for interpretation falls on the one who delivered the message in the tongue. Without an interpretation, God's message has been lost. This is why the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation are often counted as one gift, since they are so interdependent, but each is still unique. Finally, again note the difference between the gift of tongues—delivered to the public as a message from God to be interpreted—contrasted with praying in tongues—spoken in private or in small groups and is strictly praying as the Spirit directs and is never intended to be a message of God that is interpreted.

Interpretation. The gift of interpretation is the distinctive ability to make publicly known, in the common language present, an anointed message from God which has just been voiced by another, given in an unknown tongue, such that God's divinely inspired message would be understood by those present. Whereas it is probably essential for one who has the gift of tongues to also have the gift of interpretation, it should be apparent that the opposite is not true. One who has the gift of interpretation need not have the gift of tongues—but they certainly must be willing to step out and use their gift. This is a gift of clearly hearing the Divine Whisper and letting the Holy Spirit speak publicly through you.

Tomorrow we will look at the final gifts mentioned at the end of chapter 12 in 1 Corinthians.

Opening the Gifts—Part 5 (Apostleship, Helps, Administration)

Are you getting an idea about which gifts are yours?

*so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all **apostles**, second **prophets**, third **teachers**, then **miracles**, then gifts of **healing**, of **helping**, of **guidance**, and of different kinds of **tongues**. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all **interpret**? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way. 1 Corinthians 12:25–31 NIV*
[Of the nine spiritual gifts mentioned here, we will only discuss the three new gifts of apostleship, helps, and administration (guidance).]

Apostleship. The gift of apostleship is the distinctive ability to assume and exert divinely imparted authority and spiritual leadership to establish foundational church governments and to oversee a number of pastors and churches in an assigned sphere of ministry so as to set in order and direct spiritual health, growth, maturity, and outreach for that given area. The gift entails strategically and spiritually leading, equipping, organizing, and developing policy for the church or ministries in the church and their expansion. Simplistically, you're a church or ministry planter, expander, and overseer. Since this gift encompasses such vast and varied areas of expertise, it is almost essential that accompanied with the gift of apostleship are also the gifts of *leadership, faith, administration, and wisdom*. This is truly a gift of gifts. Later, we will also discuss the distinction between the spiritual gift of apostleship versus the *office* or position of apostle (and all those of the five-fold ministries of Ephesians 4:11 as well).

Helps. The gift of helps is the distinctive ability to invest time and talents in working with and supporting other Christian worker's efforts and ministries such that the end result is a greater accomplishment and more fruitful ministry. The gift requires a servant's heart and little need for attention or recognition. As we've said, this gift of helps along with the gift of service, are probably the most predominant in the body of believers and essential to the functional effectiveness of virtually every ministry. Also remember, one with the gift of helps is primarily assisting others in their ministry efforts, whereas one with the gift of service personally sees the need and addresses the situation directly.

Administration. The gift of administration, or guidance, is the distinctive ability to clearly understand the immediate and long-term goals of a particular ministry or ministries and to effectively and efficiently organize people and projects and to devise and execute effective plans all for the accomplishment of those goals. The gift entails the use of multiple talents, including goal setting, planning, organizing, a detailed thoroughness, and determination for completion, all done seamlessly and efficiently.

Tomorrow we will look at the last two gifts described in the four primary blocks of Scripture.

Opening the Gifts—Part 6 (Evangelist, Pastor)

Exercising your spiritual gifts will bring forth abundant fruit in others and pure joy for you.

*So Christ himself gave the **apostles**, the **prophets**, the **evangelists**, the **pastors** and **teachers**, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* Ephesians 4:11–13 NIV

[Of the five spiritual gifts mentioned in this passage, only two are new—the gift of evangelist and the gift of pastor.]

Evangelist. The gift of evangelist is the distinctive ability to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with nonbelievers in such a way that they become true believers and members of the body of Christ. The gift empowers the possessor to initiate and develop relationships with nonbelievers such that they sincerely believe that they are sinners who need a savior, and Jesus Christ is that Savior. Remember that this gift is an ability over and above the normal responsibility of all believers to share their faith and personal testimony with others.

Pastor. The gift of pastor, sometimes called pastor/shepherd, is the distinctive ability to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual growth, welfare, and sense of community for a group of believers through nurturing, accountability, and by example. A person who possesses the gift of pastor should also always possess the gift of *teaching* and/or the gift of *exhortation* for true effectiveness. It is important to note that the gift of pastor certainly does not make you a pastor nor empower you to necessarily be a pastor—you are simply functioning in that capacity when operating within the sphere of your gifting.

This concludes the study of the twenty spiritual gifts listed in our four main blocks of Scripture. There are a few more that are found elsewhere in Scripture that are equally viable as spiritual gifts as we will see in the days ahead.

The Ephesians 4:11 Five-Fold Ministries. An important distinction needs to be made between the spiritual gifts and the *office* or positions listed in Ephesians 4:11 (often called the Ephesians 4:11 five-fold ministries). There are the spiritual gifts potentially possessed by any believer—apostleship, prophecy, evangelist, pastor, and teaching—in contrast with the actual office or occupational position of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. The office or position is a God-ordained calling and human-established position occupied by individuals anointed of God to do their called work. It would be assumed that each position would be held by individuals endowed with many spiritual gifts, including, of course, the spiritual gift of their office. However, it is interesting that oftentimes the same-named spiritual gift is not their primary gifting. For instance, the position of pastor usually shows leadership, teaching, faith, or exhortation as their primary gifting, along with the spiritual gift of pastor as well, but it's not necessarily the dominant gift.

Opening the Gifts—Part 7 ***(Hospitality, Missionary, Intercession)***

Do not neglect your gift. For best results, it needs to be opened often.

*Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice **hospitality**.* Romans 12:13 NIV

And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (missionary) Romans 10:15 NIV

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, **intercession** and thanksgiving be made for all people— 1 Timothy 2:1 NIV*

In this section, we will be looking at a few more spiritual gifts—hospitality, missionary, and intercession—found in various other Scripture references. Remember, all the spiritual gifts have at least four or five places where they are mentioned in the Scriptures, and we are only looking usually at one solitary place to identify it. Also, you will note that the word *missionary* does not occur in the Scriptures, so if you are searching for that spiritual gift, you must search for the concept rather than the word itself.

Hospitality. The gift of hospitality is the distinctive ability to provide an open house, warm welcome, nurturing atmosphere, and a sense of inclusiveness in a larger group. The gift encourages others to feel valued and provides for fellowship to deepen relationships. The gift obviously goes beyond our normal responsibility as believers to show some measure of hospitality as the need arises.

Missionary. The gift of missionary is the distinctive ability to minister effectively in cultures beyond your own to bring the message of the Gospel following in the tradition of the Great Commission to take the message to the ends of the earth. The gift of missionary enables you to be effective in areas of differing cultures, languages, and religions. As might be expected, the gift of missionary necessarily is complemented by a number of other gifts which would be most beneficial to possess—*leadership* and/or *administration, teaching, pastor, apostleship, and evangelist*—just to name a few. In this sphere of influence, there are always a multitude of barriers and obstacles to overcome.

Intercession. The gift of intercession is the distinctive ability to pray for others for significant lengths of time, on a regular basis, in intense fashion, and often observe specific answers to those prayers. The gift of intercession enables you to have a spiritual awareness and sensitivity to the ongoing spiritual battles and an innate ability to know how to pray and what to pray for. *Discernment* is often a companion gift. Once again, this gift goes beyond our responsibilities as believers to consistently pray for others.

We have completed the primary twenty-three gifts. Just a few more spiritual gifts left to discuss!

Opening the Gifts—Part 8 (Deliverance, Celibacy)

The spiritual gift list is almost complete. You may be surprised when you discover your true gifts!

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. (deliverance) Acts 8:5–7 NIV

I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (celibacy) 1 Corinthians 7:7–9 NIV

Deliverance. The gift of deliverance, sometimes referred to as exorcism, is the distinctive ability to cast out demons and evil spirits, thus releasing Satan's control over those afflicted. Deliverance should always be accompanied by the Gospel message and leading those afflicted to Christ, for without the indwelling Holy Spirit, those same individuals are still exposed to evil possessing them once again, and maybe even more so (Matthew 12:43–45). Also, deliverance requires much faith and much prayer and prayer warfare, and even fasting (Matthew 17:19–20a and Mark 9:28–29 NKJV). The casting out of evil spirits was very common throughout the ministry of Jesus and later of the apostles and still is a viable ministry even into today, especially in other countries where Christianity is minimally present and Satan has his stronghold.

“When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”
Matthew 12:43–45 NIV

Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “Because you have so little faith.” Matthew 17:19–20a NIV

And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” Mark 9:28–29 NKJV

Celibacy. The gift of celibacy is the distinctive ability to remain single, or not remarry, and enjoy it as a lifestyle (or possibly for a time or season), without suffering any undue sexual temptation, usually to commit one's self fully and wholly to God and His service. Most notably, we see this practiced in the order of monks and nuns. Additionally, along with celibacy among monks and nuns, we often find *volunteer poverty* as well, and some scholars include this as a spiritual gift also. For our purposes, I have not specifically included this as it is probably not a gift we would eagerly or earnestly desire, yet it certainly has God's special use and purpose to again separate one's self from the ways of the world and focus solely on Him.

In that same vein of thought, some scholars would also suggest *martyrdom* as a spiritual gift too. But for obvious reasons, I have not included that either; but one can see how God could use that to empower those individuals to persevere to the end. As you research and study and undertake various spiritual gift assessments to determine your gifting, you will find a few of these differences in the various explanations and lists. Tomorrow we will look at the final two spiritual gifts stemming back from the Old Testament.

Opening the Gifts—Part 9 (Leading Worship, Craftsmanship)

We've arrived! It's time for prayer and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discover your gifts.

*All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: “He is good; his love endures forever.” Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, (**leading worship/music**) 2 Chronicles 5:12–13 NIV*

*“See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. (**craftsmanship**) Exodus 31:2–5 NIV*

Here are our final two spiritual gifts. They are described primarily in the Old Testament but nevertheless, are valid gifts empowered by the Holy Spirit. This will bring our grand total of gifts to twenty-seven. Remember, the total number of gifts will vary among scholars.

Leading Worship/Music. The gift of leading worship, sometimes called the gift of music, is the distinctive ability to lead or make a significant contribution to a worship experience through singing or playing a musical instrument and to be especially sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit during the worship time, such that others are drawn to the worship and sense the presence of God. The gift also empowers the ability to change direction or emphasis as the worship progresses to allow the Holy Spirit to move and work among those present. This sensitivity and awareness of the leading of the Holy Spirit is what distinguishes the spiritual gift from natural talents and abilities. It is often during this time frame, directly before, during, and after the worship experience, that we see the operation of many of the other public spiritual gifts that bring God’s messages and edification to those present.

Craftsmanship. The gift of craftsmanship is the distinctive ability to use your hands and mind to benefit other believers through artistic, creative, or a wide range of construction arenas that enhance the physical surroundings in both attractive and functional ways to both bless believers and glorify God. In this gift, natural talents are often fully empowered and expounded upon by the Holy Spirit to bring about pleasing physical and spiritual results.

The Laying on of Hands

You just may have a few dormant spiritual gifts waiting to be awakened within you and used for His special service. Eagerly seek out the gifts as the Holy Spirit leads you.

*I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—
Romans 1:11 NIV*

*Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders
laid their hands on you. 1 Timothy 4:14 NIV*

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the
laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us
power, love and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:6–7 NIV*

The *laying on of hands* is seen frequently in the Bible when praying for someone, anointing one with oil for a special service or calling, healing, and now here in these Scriptures, for the impartation of spiritual gifts. As the true giver and source of all the spiritual gifts, I believe that the Holy Spirit imparts many of us with multiple gifts. We have our primary and secondary gifts that we normally operate in, but I also believe that there are already present within us dormant gifts waiting to be awakened by the Holy Spirit, if and when they may be needed for a special time or season.

When we pray for others or anoint them for special service or lay hands on them for healing, we are following the leading and guidance of the will of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, I believe when we pray for another to have a certain gift, or maybe the same gift as we have. If we are in tune with the Spirit, we are acting according to His will, thus awakening or activating more spiritual gifts within another to empower them into greater service. Therefore, if you desire a gift and sincerely sense that the Holy Spirit wants to empower that gift in you, have those who have the gift pray for you with the laying on of hands and see if in fact the gift is awakened and empowered within you. Eagerly desire the gifts! It's all about serving Him and building up the body of believers.

Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

Discover the gifts within you, stir them up, and fan them into flame. Do not neglect your gift.

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:19–22 NIV

Effective ministry is ministry driven and directed by the Holy Spirit. For you to be effective in ministry and be effective for God, you must know what your spiritual gifts are and let them operate freely and develop fully. As you mature spiritually, so too will your spiritual gifting. In the process of discovering your spiritual gifts, here are some important points to remember:

1. Your spiritual gift will always enable and empower you to do more and be more effective than anything you could ever do in the natural alone. This is the first hallmark of a spiritual gift.
2. Operating within your spiritual gift will always bring you personally great joy. The Holy Spirit only gives the perfect gifts. This is the second hallmark of a spiritual gift.
3. Operating within your spiritual gift will always be beneficial and a blessing to those who receive your words or actions, such that oftentimes they will thank you and tell you so. If this happens on multiple occasions, this is the third hallmark and confirmation of your gift.

As you once again read through the definitions of the gifts with prayer and meditation, if you can answer yes to all three of the above hallmarks of a spiritual gift for any particular gift, then that most likely is one of your spiritual gifts, and the Holy Spirit should also be confirming that in your heart.

A great way to begin, or maybe to solidify what you believe in your heart, is to undertake one or more *spiritual gift assessments* that are 100–140 questions about what your past experience has been in these spiritual gift areas. These assessments are all slightly different but if answered in full honesty, will certainly point out the top three or four most likely dominant and secondary gifts that you possess. Although not perfect, they are a great place to start, and even better, to reassess every few years to see how things may be maturing. They give great definitions for the gifts, and usually four or five Scripture references for each gift also.

Remember that many of the gifts operate as teams or are complementary, such that certain gifts are often seen together, and you should be looking for that in yourself too. As examples, the following

pairs are often seen together—pastor and exhortation, giving and service, hospitality and helps, leadership and faith, healing and faith, teaching and knowledge, mercy and helps or service, tongues and interpretation, prophecy and discernment, and others.

It's time—stir up and fan into flame the gift of God that is within you!

Here are the spiritual gift assessment resources that I've found to be most helpful:

Finding Your Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire: The Easy to Use, Self-Guided Questionnaire by C. Peter Wagner, 2012. Found at Amazon.com for about \$5.

Spiritual Gifts—A Tool to Discover Your Place in Ministry by Dr. Dan Reiland, 1998. Found at www.injoy.com or www.johnmaxwell.com (Click on the "Shop" tab, type in "spiritual gift test" in the search box; about \$5.)

The Spiritual Gifts

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Prophecy | 10. Faith | 19. Evangelist |
| 2. Service | 11. Healing | 20. Pastor |
| 3. Teaching | 12. Miracles | 21. Hospitality |
| 4. Exhortation | 13. Discernment | 22. Missionary |
| 5. Giving | 14. Tongues | 23. Intercession |
| 6. Leadership | 15. Interpretation | 24. Deliverance |
| 7. Mercy | 16. Apostleship | 25. Celibacy |
| 8. Wisdom | 17. Helps | 26. Leading Worship |
| 9. Knowledge | 18. Administration | 27. Craftsmanship |