



What Are the Gifts of the Spirit?

“God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts.”
(1 Peter 4:10, NLT)

Have you discovered that you are good at something, such as playing a musical instrument, acting, working Math problems, playing in a sport, or taking things apart and fixing them? Perhaps a teacher, friend or parent has said, “You are so good at that!” This exceptional ability is a natural talent given to you by God when he designed you. In a similar way, when you became a new person in Christ, God the Spirit gave you one or more spiritual gifts. Every true Christian has at least one. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts of the Spirit as he sees fit. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) A spiritual gift is God’s way of enabling you to serve others in the church and to do what he calls you to do. Unfortunately, many believers miss the excitement of discovering, opening and using their gifts. What a waste! The church suffers greatly as a result.

Working together

How do these gifts work together in the church? Paul explains by using the analogy of the body. *“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 12:12, NLT) Believers make up Christ’s body, and even though each person is a separate individual, each is a part of it! Jesus is the head of the body. Just as each part of your body is essential to your health and well-being, each person is essential to the health and growth of a community of believers. When each person uses his or her gift, the work of the church is accomplished.

The gifts

How can you know what the gifts are? There are lists found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Peter 4:11 and Romans 12:6-8. In the Romans passage there are seven gifts listed. Think about each one. Although you may still be young in age or young as a believer, one of these may describe you. Remember, love is to control everything that you do.

The gift of prophecy

Prophecy is a special ability God gives to receive and communicate a special message from him. It is not just telling something in the future but also knowing the difference between right and wrong and willingly correcting that wrong. Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira were lying when the couple said they were giving the entire amount of

money for the land they sold. He confronted them for lying to the Holy Spirit. Read about the tragic outcome in Acts 5:1-11.

The gift of helps

Do you have a special desire and ability to help others and to do whatever it takes to get a task accomplished? If your sick neighbor needs her lawn mowed or your mother needs help with a younger child, do you jump in and help? If so, you may have a gift of helps. There is an exciting story in Acts 9:36-42 about a woman named Dorcas who had that gift. She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor by making coats and other garments for widows. She became very ill and died. The people she had helped were devastated. They sent for Peter who came, knelt and prayed, and God raised her from the dead!

The gift of teaching

Do you have a special ability to communicate information from God's Word in such a way that others learn, apply it to their lives and change? Do you like to search the Scriptures and try to find answers for yourself? Do you love to share what you have learned with others and help them learn? Do you find joy in helping someone discover truth? You may have the gift of teaching.

The gift of encouragement

Do you have the ability to help and encourage others to do what is right when they are tempted? Are you eager to help a friend when they have a problem with their parents? Do you have answers from God's Word to help others? You may have the gift of encouragement. The Apostle Paul continually shared steps to take that would help believers do what is right. When there were problems in the churches, he wrote letters to help them grow and get back on track. His greatest desire was to see his beloved sisters and brothers grow in unity and obedience to Christ. (Ephesians 3:14-21) Do you feel that way?

The gift of giving

Do you find great joy in giving cheerfully and liberally back to God and others? You don't have to have a lot of money to have this gift. One day Jesus watched as many rich people dropped large amounts of money in the Temple collection box. Then a poor widow dropped in two pennies. Jesus said her gift was greater because she gave all she had! (Mark 12:42) Are you quick to see a need to give of your time or money? If so, you may have the gift of giving.

The gift of leadership

Do you have the ability to plan and organize projects or activities and inspire others to join you? Your gift may be leadership. A leader sticks with a project until it is finished. It could be organizing a Bible study at school or planning a fundraiser to help a needy family. In the Old Testament, God gave Nehemiah this gift. He took a group of people back to Jerusalem and

rebuilt a wall around the city. When they were in despair because of persecution, he encouraged them and led them to finish. (Nehemiah 4:14)

The gift of mercy

Are you quick to forgive someone who has hurt you rather than punish him/her? When someone commits a sin, are you quick to judge or do you forgive him/her? Do you offer comfort by reminding him/her of God's love and strengthen their faith in the Lord? Your gift may be mercy (undeserved kindness). *"But God is rich in mercy, and he loved us so very much...he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead."* (Ephesians 2:4, NLT)

Discovering your gifts

How can you discover your gift or gifts? Study what the Bible says about the gifts. Pray and ask God to show you the gift or gifts he has given you. Evaluate your own abilities. What do you enjoy doing? What are you good at doing? Ask your friends, parents or youth leader what they think. Don't limit your service to just your gift. Always be ready to serve the Lord in whatever he asks you to do. Using your gift should be satisfying and enjoyable. One part of the Greek word for "gift" means joy. Work with joy and give God the glory! The church needs you.

Attitude Check:

- How eager are you to discover and use your gift or gifts?

Explore:

- Read "What Are Spiritual Gifts?" (Ephesians 4:11-16) and "Why the Church Needs You?" (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- Record in your journal what you think your spiritual gift might be. What do the spiritual gifts tell you about God and the church?

Talking with God:

- Father, help me to know my spiritual gift or gifts that I may use them to honor and serve you.