

Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

God has given each Christian two vitally important gifts. The first is the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, his work of redemption, and thus forgiveness of sin. The second is the gift of one or more special abilities, which are to be used for the purpose of unifying the body of Christ and for the growth of God's Kingdom. These abilities are called spiritual gifts and they are received through our baptism.

Like other presents, it is impossible to fully appreciate and make use of our spiritual gifts until they have been opened. This tool will help you begin to open your spiritual gifts by guiding you through the following three activities:

Scripture Review:

Highlighting scripture references that both support the existence of spiritual gifts and identify those which are commonly found in service today.

Self Assessment: a list of 60 questions which will help you identify which gifts you have received in greatest measure.

Exploration of Use: suggestions for the various types of ministry you might be most effective in because of your spiritual gifts. These three activities will begin to help you discover and employ your spiritual gifts. May the special abilities God has given you be deployed in areas of ministry where they will be most effective for the good of the entire church body. These gifts should also be affirmed by the body and utilized by the one who is gifted.

Scripture References:

The Apostle Paul addresses the presence of spiritual gifts in three main sections of scripture: Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. Peter also verifies their existence in I Peter 4:10. Through these sections of scripture, we learn that all Christians have been given at least one spiritual gift. The purpose of spiritual gifts is twofold: (1) to unify Christians in their faith and (2) to produce growth within the church, both numerical and spiritual. These gifts are to be used out of love for one another, and in service to one another.

We do not choose which gifts we will receive. God bestows them upon us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Not all of the gifts identified in scripture are used in this inventory. The spectacular gifts (speaking in tongues, healing and miracles, prophecy, bold proclamation of God) and some of the non-spectacular gifts (martyrdom, celibacy) have not been included. Although these gifts exist, they are not commonly utilized in the mainstream of parish life. Since the objectives of spiritual gift deployment are to unify and produce growth through service, in today's church climate, only the service related gifts have been included.

Administration: the gift that enables a believer to formulate, direct, and carry out plans necessary to fulfill a purpose. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:28, Acts 14:23.

Artistry: the gift that gives the believer the skill of creating artistic expressions that produce a spiritual response of strength and inspiration. Biblical References: Exodus 31:1-11, Psalm 149:3a.

Discernment: the gift that motivates a believer to seek God's will and purpose and apply that understanding to individual and congregational situations. Biblical References: John 16:6-15, Romans 9:1, I Corinthians 2:9-16.

Evangelism: the gift that moves believers to reach nonbelievers in such a way that they are baptized and become active members of the Christian community. Biblical References: Matthew 28:16-20, Ephesians 4:11-16, Acts 2:36-40.

Exhortation: the gift that moves the believer to reach out with Christian love and presence to people in personal conflict or facing a spiritual void. Biblical References: John 14:1, II Timothy 1:16-18, III John 5-8.

Faith: the gift that gives a believer the eyes to see the Spirit at work and the ability to trust the Spirit's leading without indication of where it all might lead. Biblical References: Genesis 12:1-4a, Mark 5:25-34, I Thessalonians 1:8-10.

Giving: the gift that enables a believer to recognize God's blessings and to respond to those blessings by generously and sacrificially giving of one's resources (time, talent, and treasure). Biblical References: II Corinthians 9:6-15, Luke 21:1-4.

Hospitality: the gift that causes a believer to joyfully welcome and receive guests and those in need of food and lodging. Biblical References: Romans 12:13, Romans 16:23a, Luke 10:38.

Intercession: the gift that enables a believer to pray with the certainty that prayer is heard and when requests are made, answers will come. Biblical References: Matthew 6:6-15, Luke 11:1-10, Ephesians 6:18.

Knowledge: the gift that drives a person to learn, analyze and uncover new insights with regard to the Bible and faith. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:8; I Corinthians 14:6, Romans 12:2.

Leadership: the gift that gives a believer the confidence to step forward, give direction and provide motivation to fulfill a dream or complete a task. Biblical References: Romans 12:8, John 21:15-17, II Timothy 4:1-5.

Mercy: the gift that motivates a believer to feel deeply for those in physical, spiritual, or emotional need and then act to meet that need. Biblical References: Luke 7:12-15, Luke 10:30-37, Matthew 25:34-36.

Music--Vocal: the gift that gives a believer the capability and opportunity to present personal witness and inspiration to others through singing. Biblical References: Psalm 96:1-9, Psalm 100:1-2, Psalm 149:1-2.

Music--Instrumental: the gift that inspires a believer to express personal faith and provide inspiration and comfort through the playing of a musical instrument. Biblical References: Psalm 33:1-5, Psalm 150, I Samuel 16:14-23.

Pastoring (Shepherding): the gift that gives a believer the confidence, capability and compassion to provide spiritual leadership and direction for individuals or groups of believers. Biblical References: I Timothy 4:12-16, I Timothy 3:1-13, II Timothy 4:1-2.

Service (Helps): the gift that enables a believer to work gladly behind the scenes in order that God's work is fulfilled. Biblical References: Luke 23:50-54, Romans 16:1-16, Philippians 2:19-23.

Skilled Craft: the gift that enables a believer to create, build, maintain or repair items used within the church. Biblical References: Exodus 30:1-6, Exodus 31:3-5, Ezekiel 27:4-11.

Teaching: the gift that enables a believer to communicate a personal understanding of the Bible and faith in such a way that it becomes clear and understood by others. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:28, Matthew 5:1-12, Acts 18:24-48.

Wisdom: the gift that allows the believer to sort through opinions, facts and thoughts in order to determine what solution would be best for the individual believer or the community of believers. Biblical References: I Corinthians 2:6-13, James 3:13-18, II Chronicles 1:7-11.

Writing: the gift that gives a believer the ability to express truth in a written form; a form that can edify, instruct and strengthen the community of believers. Biblical References: I John 2:1-6, 12-14, I Timothy 3:14-15, Jude 3.

Self-Assessment Inventory

Instructions:

For each of the 60 questions which follow, circle the number that corresponds with the response that most closely matches how you perceive yourself. Categories are presented diagonally, across the top of the inventory.

- 4, consistently true
- 3, frequently true
- 2, occasionally true
- 1, infrequently true
- 0, rarely true

You might also ask a person who is close to you to score the inventory with, and for, you. Their perception of your strengths may be useful in identifying the gifts with which you have been truly blessed. After responding to each question, turn to the scoring grid on page six to analyze your results.

1. When presented a goal, I immediately think of steps that need to be taken in order to achieve the desired results. 4 3 2 1 0

2. I express myself through artistic means. 4 3 2 1 0

3. My faith requires me to seek out God's will and purpose in all circumstances that arise in my life. 4 3 2 1 0
4. I am able to convey the Gospel message to non-believers in ways that they are able to easily understand. 4 3 2 1 0
5. I am moved by those who through conflict or sorrow are wavering in faith. 4 3 2 1 0
6. I am certain of the spirit's presence in my life and the lives of others. 4 3 2 1 0
7. I am blessed by God each day and gladly respond to these blessings by giving liberally of my time and money. 4 3 2 1 0
8. I enjoy meeting new people and becoming acquainted with them. 4 3 2 1 0
9. I know that God hears and responds to my daily prayers. 4 3 2 1 0
10. I feel compelled to learn as much as I can about the Bible and faith. 4 3 2 1 0
11. I am a take charge person. When others follow my direction, the goal or task will be completed. 4 3 2 1 0
12. When I see a person in need, I am moved to assist them. 4 3 2 1 0
13. I love to sing and enjoy inspiring others through song. 4 3 2 1 0
14. I find joy and express myself by playing a musical instrument. 4 3 2 1 0
15. I am motivated to provide spiritual leadership to those who are on a faith journey. 4 3 2 1 0
16. I like working behind the scenes to ensure projects are successful. 4 3 2 1 0
17. I enjoy working with my hands in a trade or skill that required considerable experience to perfect. 4 3 2 1 0
18. My great joy is to communicate biblical truth in such a way that it becomes real and understood by others. 4 3 2 1 0
19. When a challenge is presented, I am usually able to identify an appropriate solution. 4 3 2 1 0
20. I am able to take a thought or idea and put it into a clear and inspiring written form. 4 3 2 1 0
21. I enjoy organizing thoughts, ideas, hopes and dreams into a specific plan of action. 4 3 2 1 0
22. I can translate into artistic form what I first see in my imagination. 4 3 2 1 0

23. I have assisted others as they sought to discern whether or not their personal decisions were helpful and in accord with God's will for their lives. 4 3 2 1 0
24. I enjoy being with non-believers and like having the opportunity to encourage them to faith and commitment. 4 3 2 1 0
25. When I know someone is facing a crisis, I feel compelled to provide support and care. 4 3 2 1 0
26. My trust in the Spirit's presence, when I encounter times of personal crisis, is a source of strength for others. 4 3 2 1 0
27. I manage my time and money so that I am able to give much of it to the work of the church or other organizations. 4 3 2 1 0
28. I am often asked to open my home for small group gatherings or social occasions. 4 3 2 1 0
29. I often become so absorbed in my prayer life that the door bell or phone can ring and I will not hear it. 4 3 2 1 0
30. Not one day would be complete without biblical study and thought. 4 3 2 1 0
31. When I am in a group, others will often look to me for direction. 4 3 2 1 0
32. I feel an urgency to provide housing for the homeless, food for the starving, comfort for those in distress. 4 3 2 1 0
33. I have sung before groups and felt a real sense of God's presence. 4 3 2 1 0
34. By my playing a musical instrument, inspiration has been provided for both myself and others. 4 3 2 1 0
35. I have responsibility for providing spiritual guidance to an individual believer or group of believers. 4 3 2 1 0
36. People tell me that without my willingness to do the unnoticed jobs, their work would be more difficult. 4 3 2 1 0
37. I am good at building, repairing, or restoring things and find satisfaction in doing so. 4 3 2 1 0
38. I want to express my faith by assisting others to discover the truths contained in the Bible. 4 3 2 1 0
39. People come to me for help in applying Christian faith and values to personal situations. 4 3 2 1 0
40. I often feel moved to write about my thoughts and feelings so others may benefit from them. 4 3 2 1 0

41. I have been successful in organizing, directing and motivating people to achieve a goal. 4 3 2 1 0
42. My artistic work has given spiritual strength to both believer and non-believer. 4 3 2 1 0
43. In the congregation, I am often asked if a direction being discussed is in accord with God's will and purpose. 4 3 2 1 0
44. I do not find it difficult to share what Jesus means to me with non-believers. 4 3 2 1 0
45. Those who are struggling with life questions have come to me for guidance and help. 4 3 2 1 0
46. I can see great things happening in my congregation and am not derailed by the pessimism of others. 4 3 2 1 0
47. When I receive money unexpectedly, one of my first thoughts is to share this gift through the church. 4 3 2 1 0
48. I enjoy welcoming guests and helping them to feel at ease. 4 3 2 1 0
49. Believers have asked me to pray for healing in their lives, and have evidenced God's healing power. 4 3 2 1 0
50. My study of the Bible has proven helpful to others in their faith journey. 4 3 2 1 0
51. People have said they like to work with me because the task will be successfully completed. 4 3 2 1 0
52. People have been surprised by how at ease I am while working with those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit. 4 3 2 1 0
53. I am grateful and humbled that my singing has provided inspiration and hope for others on their faith journey. 4 3 2 1 0
54. Others have told me they were moved by my playing a musical instrument. 4 3 2 1 0
55. People have come to me for spiritual help and it has developed into a long-term relationship. 4 3 2 1 0
56. When I turn out the lights, take tables down, work in the kitchen or put chairs away, I feel that I have served the Lord. 4 3 2 1 0
57. My knowledge of building, maintenance or repair has been a special value to the church and others. 4 3 2 1 0
58. Students have told me that I can take the most difficult idea or concept and make it understandable. 4 3 2 1 0

59. When direction is needed at work or in the congregation, I am generally asked for my opinion. 4 3 2 1 0

60. My written work has been helpful to others in understanding life's truths. 4 3 2 1 0

SCORING GRID:

For each set of three questions, fill in the number 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 of rectangular blocks equal to your total score. For example, in the category of Administration, the numbers 2+4+3 total 9. Once completed, note that the longer the bar the stronger the corresponding gift.

The strongest gift(s) will generally have a total score of "7" or more. If you have more than one gift with a total of seven or more, then all of these gifts can be referred to as your "gift cluster." Notice how each gift within the cluster has the potential to compliment and support another. The gifts within the cluster will need to be further explored to determine which ones you have truly been blessed with.

This inventory is designed to begin your journey toward spiritual gifts discovery. Keep in mind that it is not a scientific instrument. Your perceptions will be validated by others and confirmed through prayer and by their use over time. Identify your spiritual gift cluster, then list the gifts in the gifts cluster.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Administration

Questions 1, 21, 41

Artistry

Questions 2, 22, 42

Discernment

Questions 3, 23, 43

Evangelism

Questions 4, 24, 44

Exhortation

Questions 5, 25, 45

Faith

Questions 6, 26, 46

Giving

Questions 7, 27, 47

Hospitality

Questions 8, 28, 48

Intercession

Questions 9, 29, 49

Knowledge

Questions 10, 30, 50

Leadership

Questions 11, 31, 51

Mercy

Questions 12, 32, 52

Music-vocal

Questions 13, 33, 53

Music-instrumental

Questions 14, 34, 54

Pastoring

Questions 15, 35, 55

Service

Questions 16, 36, 56

Skilled Craft

Questions 17, 37, 57

Teaching

Questions 18, 38, 58

Wisdom

Questions 19, 39, 59

Writing

Questions 20, 40, 60

Spiritual Gift Cluster: Draw three circles. In each of the circles, write one of the spiritual gifts that had a total score of seven or more. Begin with the center circle, identifying the gift that had the highest score. In the event of a tie, select the gift you feel you have used effectively in the past, or the one you think you might be most effective in. Then fill in the other circles with a five of the remaining gifts. This group of gifts is your gift cluster.

Which gifts have you truly been blessed with? Discovering the answer to that question requires the following:

Prayer:

Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance while evaluating your gifts.

Study:

Become familiar with the scripture references, definitions, and how each gift functions within the Body of Christ. This will provide you with a solid foundation from which to further evaluate your gifts.

Self-Examination:

Explore your feelings about each of the spiritual gifts in your cluster. Examples of how each gift may be utilized in the church are provided below. As you read these examples, ask

yourself how you feel about the types of ministry activity identified for the gifts in your cluster. You may expect to feel fulfilled through the use of your gifts.

Track Your Results:

As you use your spiritual gifts, pay close attention to the results produced through your efforts. You can expect to experience positive results from the use of your gifts.

Listen For Affirmation:

As you use your spiritual gifts, listen for affirmation from other Christians. They will recognize and confirm your spiritual gifts, through genuine expressions of approval and thankfulness for a job well done!

Putting Your Gifts To Use:

All Christians are to work together, supporting one another. However, our gifts make us better prepared and equipped to perform in some areas of ministry over others. A person who is working within a ministry area they are gifted for, will be more effective in that ministry than one they not gifted for.

What types of ministry will you be most effective in? A brief list of ministry examples follows. These examples have been provided merely as thought starters and should not be considered an exhaustive list. Use them as a starting point in exploring the possibilities for putting your gifts to use within your congregation and in your community.

Administration:

Church Board, Congregation Council, Finance Staff, Sabbath School Superintendent, Vacation Bible School Coordinator, Business Manager

Artistry:

Banner Making, Drama Club/Clown Ministry/Puppetry, Film/Photography Work, Crafts/Handicrafts, Decorating Team, Set/Props Design Team

Discernment:

Congregation Council, Long Range Planning Team, Social Ministry Team, Peer Counseling, Support Group Facilitator

Evangelism:

Prospective Member Visitation, Evangelism Team, Advertising and Marketing, New Member Sponsor, Community Visitation

Exhortation:

Mutual Ministry Team, Hospital/Home/Institution Visitation, Telecare Ministry, Peer Counseling, Small Group Leader

Faith:

Congregational President, Stewardship Team, Long Range Planning Team, Teacher/Bible study leader

Giving:

Capital Campaign Steering Team, Stewardship Team, Volunteer Coordination, Giving Personal Testimony

Hospitality:

Greeter/Usher, New Member Sponsor, In-Home Bible Study Host, Visitor Welcome/Information Center, Banquet Server, Fellowship Hour Host/Server

Intercession:

Prayer Chain, Prayer Partner, Prayer Families/Prayer Circles

Knowledge:

Parish Resource-Library Coordinator, Nominating Team, Long Range Planning Team, Congregation Council

Leadership:

Sabbath School Superintendent, Committee Chairperson (all types), Fellowship Activity Coordinator, Vacation Bible School Coordinator, Congregational President, Speaker-Special Events

Mercy:

Home/Hospital/Institution Visitation, Transportation to Worship/Bible Study, Social Ministry Team, Support Group Leader, Telecare Minister

Music-Instrumental:

Band Leader/Member, Choir Pianist, Special Event Music, Substitute Organist, Vacation Bible School-Music Program

Music-Vocal:

Church Choir, Vocal Ensemble, Song Leader, Praise Team Leader, Vacation Bible School Song Leader

Pastoring (Shepherding):

Adult In-Home Bible Study Leader, New Member Sponsor, Young-Adult Counselor, Small Group Leader, Telecare Minister

Service (Helps):

Computer Programmer/Data Entry, Newsletter Collation, P.A./Sound System Technician, Tape Recording Worship Services, Child Care, Building/Grounds Upkeep, Kitchen Cleaning Team, Providing Transportation

Skilled Crafts:

Building Maintenance/Upkeep, Electrical/Masonry/Plumbing/Roofing, Mechanical Repair/Maintenance, Audio/Visual Operator and Repair, Computer Maintenance, Web-Page Developer

Teaching:

Adult Bible Class Teacher, Sabbath School Teacher, Teen Bible Class Teacher, Vacation Bible School Teacher, Conference/Seminar Leader

Wisdom:

Long Range Planning Team, Congregation Council, Peer Counselor, Support Group Leader, Mutual Ministry Team

Writing:

Newsletter Article Writer, Newsletter Editor, Public Relations/Publicity Committee, Letter Writing

For Further Thought: Your Spiritual Gifts do not appear and disappear as you pass through the doors of your church! The special gifts God has given you are with you always. They are meant to also be used in your daily life to bring glory to God and serve the needs of others. In the spaces below, identify some of the ways your gifts may be used for these purposes. Specific contexts have been provided as thought starters.

Context Gift Ideas For Use Gift Ideas For Use

At home, with family.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____
- (6) _____

At work, with colleagues.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

Within your community.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

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