

Real Help in Time of Need: The Spirit Gives Us What We Need

08/31/2025 - Andy Deane

Ever tried fixing something with the wrong tool? It's frustrating and rarely works the way you hoped. God never meant for us to serve Him like that. Through the Holy Spirit, He's given every believer spiritual gifts—tools designed to build up the church and meet real needs. Today we'll explore what those gifts are, why they matter, and how to use them.

UNDERSTANDING THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. God doesn't want us guessing...He wants us equipped.

- 1 Corinthians 12:1, *...about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.*
- "Spiritual gifts are not optional extras but part of the way the risen Christ equips His church." – N.T. Wright

2. Variety is one of God's strategies for the church's strength.

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, *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.*
- 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, *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.*
- Romans 12:6-8, *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.*
- Text GIFTS to (951)425-4425 for descriptions of each of these spiritual gifts.
- In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul corrects a church that was out of balance in its public use of tongues and urges them instead to value prophecy in larger gatherings. From this we learn that some gifts are best expressed in settings like prayer teams, monthly prayer nights, close-knit small groups, and personal conversations—always following biblical guidelines so that everything is done in order.

3. The Spirit knows the needs of each church and for each moment.

- 1 Corinthians 12:11, *...he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*
- Each gift is valuable; God never intended us to compare or compete with one another.

PRACTICING THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Gifts are for serving others, not spotlighting ourselves.

- 1 Corinthians 12:7, *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*
- A person may be very gifted but spiritually immature. Gifts are not the same as the fruit of the Spirit.

2. The church flourishes when we use a gift faithfully.

- 1 Peter 4:10, *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*
- God sees every real need and chooses to meet them through His people.

3. Humility is the posture that makes the gifts effective.

- Romans 12:3, *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 w/ the faith God has distributed to each of you.*
- Use humble language like “I think” or “I sense” instead of absolute statements like “Thus says the Lord.”

RESPONDING TO THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Stay open and expectant for the Spirit to move.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20, *Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies.*
- “We have become so afraid of the false that we fail to expect the true. Better to be a little too open than to quench the Spirit altogether.” — Martin Lloyd Jones
- “What if you could be missing out on something extraordinary the Spirit wants to do because you’ve decided in advance what He cannot do?” — Francis Chan

2. We trust a gift when it carries the grace and truth of Jesus.

- 1 Corinthians 12:3, *I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.*
- People listen more readily when we speak of Jesus with accuracy and with His grace-filled tone.

3. Test everything and only treasure what’s true.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:21, *but test everything; hold fast what is good.*
- “We must be neither gullible nor cynical, but discerning. Test everything, hold fast what is good.” — D.A. Carson
- Judge it optimistically but cautiously, by Scripture, with confirmation, by the messenger, and in community. For more on how to do this, text GIFTS to (951)425-4425.

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT

The best way is to study God’s Word, pray for the Spirit’s leading, and then let the church community confirm and affirm the gifts they see in us. So join a group, or a team, and attend our prayer meetings. As you get to know people you can eventually ask them what gifts they see in your life. If you’d like prayer on this, join Pastor Andy at our next Prayer Night on 9/25 from 6:30-7:30pm on the third floor in the MPR.

Text GIFTS to (951)425-4425 for a free online spiritual gifts assessment.