

# COMMISSIONED

THE ART OF LIVING OUT THE  
WORDS, WAYS, & MISSION OF JESUS

## 5.3 Spiritual Gifts

### Way of Empowerment

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Hey, this is Pastor Joel Schmidgall and I want to talk about *Desiring, Identifying, and Using Spiritual Gifts*.

When I was 16 years old, I was at a prayer meeting at the old Benton Street church. I was on my knees praying, frustrated at God, feeling unknown and unheard. While in my frustration, someone put their hand on me and began to pray over me. They didn't just pray, they read my mail. In other words, they began to pray things that I had been thinking. Things I had been frustrated with. They began to speak a word of knowledge that so deeply encouraged my spirit. It was a moment of spiritual breakthrough that came for me. And it came, only because somebody else exercised a spiritual gift that God had given them. For that, I'm forever grateful.

I believe God wants to use every single one of us in a unique way. It might be intimidating to think that God wants to use you in an exceptional way. It might seem like something that is for other very talented or spiritual people. But here's what the Scripture says...

*"Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit."* -1 Corinthians 14:1

God wants you to seek him for spiritual gifts! In fact, we honor God when we seek to receive that which He desires to give. Now, we don't ONLY seek *the gift*. We seek *the giver* of the gift.

I think about when I bought my daughter a basketball, and she kept asking about it, hoping, desiring that gift. It brought me so much joy to give it to her. And then, because of her desire, I was also able to help her use and develop that gift - after I gave it to her.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 NLT

*“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same spirit in the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.”*

So, as you seek the gifts, know that you are not trying to become someone else. In fact, each of us is made and uniquely gifted differently from others. It's the same all-powerful God – but God's work through you has a different shape and color than His work in me. And that's what makes his church so kaleidoscopic.

Years ago, I had the opportunity to be at ground zero of a refugee crisis. Syrian refugees were fleeing their war-torn country, living in a tent city outside of Greece. Pastor Dave and I stayed overnight with some of the families, I hope bringing encouragement to some friends we had met and were present with, through the riots and rubber bullets of the night. We were there for long hours, through a lot.

The next day, my wife Nina showed up. It was within 15 minutes that she was sitting around the fire crying with these new friends through their experience and ministering to them. My wife has the gift of tears, as the Puritans used to call it. I spent the entire night there, being present through adversity, but in a moment, she was able to cut through the adversity to the human heart and bring comfort because of a unique expression of God's gift on her life.

Each of us has a gift that God desires to use uniquely. Seeking and uncovering those uniquenesses is a gift to those God places in our path.

What are the different gifts of the Spirit? In verse 8 of 1 Corinthians 12, Paul begins to list some of them. Things like wise advice, special knowledge, great faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, ability to discern. These are probably listed here by the author Paul, because

they are gifts that had some confusion around them to the church. Because later Paul continues listing gifts of the Spirit in Romans 12. And he lists a version that might sound a little more common. Serving others – teaching - encouraging – giving – leadership – showing kindness. But we see spiritual gifts listed in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4.

I want to encourage you to study the Scriptures, and as you do, begin to listen and identify that which the Spirit is empowering. In fact, if you want to take a survey on learning your gifts, check out a few of the links that we'll provide below as a further way to study the gifts and yourself as well.

[giftpassionstory.com](http://giftpassionstory.com)

[giftstest.com](http://giftstest.com)

[spiritualgiftstest.com](http://spiritualgiftstest.com)

But know this. You don't just identify your gifts by thinking about it. You identify them by practicing. Put faith into action and God will begin to reveal that which he has bestowed on you. Don't just think about a gift of encouragement. Go out and try to practice it! Don't ponder about service. Find a way to plug in and step out in faith. God reveals Himself in our action!

We've got to remember the why of this pursuit. Gifts are not given to us for us. Gifts are given to us for others. God's gifts in you are for my benefit. God's gifts in me are your benefit. Here's how Paul says it in 1 Corinthians 12:7

*"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."*

Your gift is for the Church community! In fact, to become a greater version of us, we need you to exercise who God has made you to be! We often think that different gifts would leave us jealous and separated, when in fact, Paul contends that differing gifts draw us together because we are forced to depend on each other within community (1 Cor 12:11 *"The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you' "*).

Pause right now to ask the question: "How can my gift build up the Church?"

Our primary drive should be to figure out how we can build up others.

John Maxwell said it well, “Potential is God’s gift to you. What you do with it is your gift to God.”

One of the most fulfilling exercises in life is finding your God given gift and exercising it for the betterment of others.

We are believing for a vision of the church that is the body of Christ. That each of us would pray our part and would play our part. Spirit and truth.

So now, I pray for a Holy Spirit inspired desire and pursuit of the gifts God has for you. I pray the *dunamis* – the Greek word for power – that comes through the Holy Spirit to fill you that you would breathe and live and walk in the calling He has laid out for you. I pray you would be bold. Take steps of faith. And that you would practice the gifts and see how God will use you. In Jesus name, amen.