

Spiritual Gifts

Introducing Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1

October 4, 2026

HDBC

Let's talk about gifts! Who doesn't love the joy of opening a gift. Whether you are the meticulous type who carefully preserves the paper and ribbon, or you rip it open with a single jerk, it's so much fun. You know what I am talking about. Get someone to open a gift. Front rows. (Gift card to Andys)

Gifts are normally associated with birthdays, graduations, anniversaries, and Christmas. But there is another time in a person's life when gifts are given. There is no fanfare, no wrapping, no decorations. But the gifts which are given are more valuable than any gift which can come in a box or bag.

God is a **gift-given** God. He loves to give gifts. I think of His gifts to me. Life. Health. Family. Home. Vehicles. Friends. Food.

In fact the Bible says ***Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.*** (James 1:17)
Everything that we have that is good is a gift from God.

So many of the great gifts from God **are given to us at the moment of our salvation.** Eternal life. Holy Spirit. Inheritance in Heaven. Spiritual siblings. Church family. But He also gives to us ***spiritual gifts.***

Spiritual gifts are often ignored, forgotten or just misunderstood. Yet the New Testament has much to say about them. They are essential when comes to the life of the church and the effectiveness of the individual believer. So, with that in mind, today we begin a study of this very important topic.

I think the apostle Paul would approve. Listen to his words in 1 Cor. 12:1. ***Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be unaware.***

The believers in the Corinthian church knew about spiritual gifts, but they

were **confused about how they were to be used** in the functioning of the church. Paul wanted them to know they possessed spiritual gifts, but also to know how they were to function in the church. I want the same for us.

Four primary passages in the N.T. list spiritual gifts. None of them are complete. Each is given to a different group and with a different purpose in mind. **Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4**. As we get further into this series, we will deal with these passages. For today I want to encourage you to do three things as we begin our study.

Understand the nature of spiritual gifts. (What they are and are not)
See your spiritual gifts as gifts given to the church. (Not just for you)
Begin to discover and develop your spiritual gifts. (Intentional process)

1. The nature of spiritual gifts.

Really important to define what we meant by spiritual gifts. In a moment I'll give you a definition. But first, **some things they are not.**

1) Natural Talents

Every person, by virtue of having been made in the image of God possesses some natural talents. These vary from one person to the next. Seen in physical, mental, psychological abilities.

A person may have an unusual ability to sing, or play a musical instrument. Another might have a real knack at math or physics. Still another may be a whiz at mechanical things. Another may be naturally athletic. These are not spiritual gifts, but are natural talents. They should be seen as coming from God, but are not the same as spiritual gifts.

2) Fruit of the Spirit

Fruit of the Spirit is described in Gal. 5:22-23. These character traits are not spiritual gifts, but are the results of a person's being totally yielded to the Spirit. When a person allows the Spirit of Christ to rule in his life, these things will become evident in the person's life.

Spiritual gifts are God-given endowments; the fruits of the spirit are God-produced characteristics.

3) Christian Roles

As you examine the list of spiritual gifts, you will see that most are directly tied to roles and functions. But understand that there is a distinction. There is the gift of evangelism, but evangelism is also a function. There is a gift of faith, but we are also to function in faith. There is the gift of mercy, and the function of mercy. They are not the same thing.

I may not have the gift of mercy, but I am still called by God to show it. I may not have the gift of evangelism, but I am to still carry out the function of evangelism. It is not a case of each one only doing that which pertains to his specific gifts.

So, what are spiritual gifts?

The Greek word generally translated *spiritual gifts* is the word charismata. You recognize that it is the same word which we use to refer to a person who has such a personality that tends to draw others to him. We say that the has charisma.

It has also come to refer to those who hold to a Pentecostal type of theology, usually with a strong emphasis on tongues, prophecy, and healing. The word itself refers to a "gift of holy grace" or a "grace gift." It is a gift given to one completely without merit or worthiness. Here is my definition:

Spiritual gifts are supernatural endowments from God, given to believers which enable them to fulfill their God-given assignment.

They do not necessarily have anything to do with talents or abilities. Think of it like this. ***God has a calling on your life. An assignment.*** Something He wants you to do with your life. He gives spiritual gifts that enable you to do what He has called you to do. ***He calls and He equips!***

2. The exercise of spiritual gifts.

Where, when and how am I to use my spiritual gifts? Are they primarily for me, or are they given to me with a broader purpose in mind?

Spiritual gifts are given to individual believers. But they are given to individual believers in order to benefit the church and the Kingdom of God. In other words they are given to individuals, but intended to be used primarily in the context of the local church. Three simple statements may help clarify.

Gifts are given to individual believers.

Gifted believers are given to the church.

All for the glory of God.

So, spiritual gifts, though given to individuals have a strong connection to the local church. The great N.T. illustration is the human body. The church is called ***the body of Christ*** and the human body offers a beautiful illustration of the church.

Many members connected together to function as one.

Various members have unique abilities and functions.

The members work in sync with other members of the body.

The members are dependent upon one another.

The health of the entire body is more important than individual members.

There is no jealousy between various members of the body.

The human body works best when all the parts are functioning together.

In a similar way the various members of the church come together to make up the body of Christ. The statements I made about the human body are also true of the spiritual body, the church.

Just as the physical body works best when all the members are functioning together in unity, each one doing what it was designed to do, so the church works best when all the members are functioning together.

Let's do a survey of a few passages at this point. And I want to show you what I mean about the church being called the body.

Romans 12:4-5

For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

1 Corinthians 12:12

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

Ephesians 1:22-23

And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body.

Colossians 1:17-18

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church.

These passages refer to the human body as a great reflection of the body of Christ. Just as the hand is endowed with the abilities to function as **a hand** and **the eye with the abilities to function as an eye**, so it is with the body of Christ. Each person given the ability to function according to the job which God has for them in the church (the body of Christ).

Illustration: Think of all the parts of my body that need to function correctly and in sync with each other for me to walk across this stage while talking. Eyes, legs, feet, inner ear. Tongue, vocal cords, lungs. Background - heart, liver, kidneys, stomach all doing their things. The brain processing it all.

3. The discovery of spiritual gifts.

You can function using your spiritual gifts without really knowing what they are. But it would be extremely helpful if you can discover how God has gifted you. I can think of at least three good reasons:

First, it will help you discover God's will for your life. He will provide the gifts needed to carry out His assignment, given specifically to you. If you know your gifts, that will help direct you to the ministries that God has called you to.

Second, once you know what your spiritual gifts are, you can take steps to develop and strengthen those gifts.

Third, you will know how you can best serve the church and function with other believers.

With that in mind I want to give you some practical steps that you can use to discover your spiritual gifts.

1) Explore the possibilities

Learn what the spiritual gifts are. Begin to think through them and to become familiar with them. Think of your personality, your unique makeup. You may be able to rule some out right away.

2) Take a spiritual gifts survey

We have them and would love to help you work through it.

3) Experiment

Jump into a ministry. See if it works. For example, if you feel that you have the gift of teaching, you might try it, and see if God might confirm that. If you feel that you have the gift of service, put yourself in a position to serve. I know that you do not yet know all of the gifts or what they mean, but as we discuss them, you might want to experiment with some of them.

4) Examine Your Feelings

You have to be careful not to put too much emphasis upon feelings, but it is equally dangerous and foolish to completely ignore them. The same God who gave you the gifts has also given you your feelings. It just makes sense that you will feel good about doing those things which you are equipped to do.

If there is something that you try with an honest desire to discern if that is your gift, and you find absolutely no pleasure in it, you may need to consider that they might not be your gift. When I was in Holly Springs I did some teaching and found that I loved it. Through that experience I discovered that I have the gift of teaching.

5) Evaluate Your Effectiveness

If God has given you a spiritual gift, and you use it according to His plan, it should work. It will do what it has been designed to do. If you consistently experiment with a gift and find that it doesn't work, that probably is a sign that you do not have that gift.

So, I've given you some practical steps to take. The ball is in your hands. What will you do next? I'll close with a quote that I hope you will challenge you to not sleep on this step.

Someone once observed that a wasted life is really nothing more than a collection of wasted days. As God gives us life, we can choose to either use and invest in eternal things or drift by without taking advantage of the gift we have been given.

Your impact in the kingdom will not be measure so much by your talents, abilities or even your spiritual giftedness. It will be measured by your diligence to use what God has given you for His glory.