

Solid Foundation

Pillars of Christianity

Lesson Seven

“Spiritual Responsibility”

INTRODUCTION:

God does everything with a purpose. When we look at what He has done in each of us we see a “two-fold” purpose. First of all, the reason He saves us, cleanses us and forgives us is because He loves us and wants us to spend eternity with Him. Secondly, the reason He teaches us, fills us and equips us is because He wants us to bring as many people with us as we can. Therefore, it is in this lesson that we see our responsibility.

* Our responsibility is summed up in one word: _____

II Corinthians 5:17-20

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God.

*** Four Observations:**

1. _____ (verse 17)

2. _____ (verse 18)

• **Reconciled:** _____

• **Reconciliation:** _____

3. _____ (verse 19)

4. _____ (verse 20)

• **Ambassador:** _____

* We must take our responsibility _____.

- * Because of what God has done for us, we are now to _____ and _____ by God's _____.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand . . .

- * Everyone that has _____ of God's grace has also been _____ by God's grace.
- * We are to use these _____ to effectively _____ our responsibility.

Romans 12:4-6a

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:1

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.”

* **The Key To Discovering Your Gifts Is Twofold:**

1. _____ what gifts you _____ you may have.
2. _____ in various roles to see which ones bring the greatest _____ for you and the greatest _____ for God.

Taking tests designed to identify your gifts and abilities cannot take the place of actually experimenting with different types of service. Rick Warren says, “Many books get the discovery process backwards. They say, ‘Discover your spiritual gift and then you’ll know what ministry you’re supposed to have.’ It actually works the exact opposite way. Just start serving, experimenting with different ministries, and then you’ll discover your gifts. Until you’re actually involved in serving, you’re not going to know what you’re good at.”

- * **Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gifts:** As you read each definition, think back on your own experience in serving Christ. Then indicate “yes” if you feel you have this gift, “maybe” if you might have this gift, or “no” if you don’t think you have this gift.

Administration: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by effectively organizing resources and people in order to efficiently reach ministry goals. Individuals with this gift...

- Are effective organizers of people and projects toward reaching ministry goals.
- Are known for having specific plans to achieve clearly defined goals.

- Naturally delegate tasks, making it possible to accomplish more for God's kingdom.
 - Seek decision-making opportunities.
 - Understand what needs to be done for dreams to become a reality.
- Yes Maybe No

Apostleship: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by launching and leading new ministry ventures that advance God's purposes and expand His kingdom. The original Greek meaning of the word is "sent one" (literally, one sent with authority, or as an ambassador). People with this gift...

- Are driven to start new endeavors for God, most often churches.
 - Often welcome risky new challenges.
 - Enjoy making a difference in the lives of believers and unbelievers alike.
 - Are eager to be known as ambassadors for Christ in the world.
 - Willingly work hard to see churches reach their full potential for God.
- Yes Maybe No

Discernment: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by recognizing truth or error within a message, person, or event. People with this gift...

- Find it easy to "read" others, and are most often right.
 - Recognize the spiritual source of a message—whether it is from God, Satan, or man.
 - Recognize inconsistencies in others.
 - Easily identify people's true motives and agendas.
 - Perceive when the truth is twisted or communicated with error.
- Yes Maybe No

Exhortation: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by helping others live God-centered lives through inspiration, encouragement, counseling, and empowerment. People with this gift...

- Are driven to inspire others and impact their lives positively for Christ.
 - Rejoice with those whose reliance on Christ has helped them overcome difficult life situations.
 - Seek out opportunities to help others reach their full potential in Christ.
 - Are natural encouragers, whether in words or through actions.
 - Rejoice at others' success.
- Yes Maybe No

Evangelism: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by sharing the love of Christ with others in a way that draws them to respond by accepting God's free gift of eternal life. People with this gift...

- Look for ways to build relational bridges with nonbelievers.
- Sense when a person is open to Christ's message.
- Have likely seen many people come to faith in Jesus.

- Win others to Christ through the use of love over logic.
- Are deeply burdened for those who don't know Jesus.

Yes Maybe No

Faith: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by stepping out in faith in order to see God's purposes accomplished, trusting Him to handle any and all obstacles along the way. People with this gift...

- Welcome risk for God.
- Are energized by variables.
- Are challenged by ideas most see as impossible.
- Are often characterized by a passionate prayer life.
- Have great God-confidence in their ventures.

Yes Maybe No

Giving: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by joyfully supporting and funding various kingdom initiatives through material contributions beyond the tithe. People with this gift...

- Plan and purposely give over and above the 10 percent tithe, in order to see God's kingdom advanced.
- Generally prefer that their donations remain anonymous or low-profile.
- Strategically seek out ways to increase their resources, in order to contribute more for God's use.
- See their resources as tools for God's use.
- Recognize God's ultimate ownership of everything.

Yes Maybe No

Healing: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by healing and restoring to health, beyond traditional and natural means, those who are sick, hurting, and suffering. People with this gift...

- Believe firmly that people can be supernaturally healed.
- Pray specifically to be used by God to heal others.
- Fully realize that healing occurs only by God's divine permission.
- View medicine as a means God may choose for healing.
- Embrace their gift as from the hand of God, and as a specific way to bring Him glory.

Yes Maybe No

Helping: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by offering others assistance in reaching goals that glorify God and strengthen the body of Christ. This aptitude is sometimes referred to as the gift of "helps" or "service." People with this gift...

- Enjoy and seek out ways to serve behind the scenes.
- Rejoice in the success of others.
- Are often detail-oriented.
- Look for ways to be of assistance to others.

- Do not seek recognition for their efforts.

Yes Maybe No

Hospitality: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by providing others with a warm and welcoming environment for fellowship. People with this gift...

- Are known for making those around them feel valued and cared for.
- Look for those individuals who may go unnoticed in a crowd.
- Desire that people feel loved and welcomed.
- See their home as God's property, given to them expressly to make others feel welcome.
- Promote fellowship among others wherever they are.

Yes Maybe No

Interpretation: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by understanding, at a specific time, God's message when spoken by another using a special language unknown to the others in attendance. People with this gift tend to...

- Have a clear idea of what God is saying, even though the language used by the speaker is unknown to them at the specific time.
- Be able to translate words and messages of God in a way that edifies, comforts, and exhorts believers.
- Convey the meaning of sounds, words, and utterances that glorify God, made by others.

Yes Maybe No

Knowledge: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by communicating God's truth to others in a way that promotes justice, honesty, and understanding. People with this gift...

- Devote much of their time to reading Scripture.
- Love to share biblical insight.
- Enjoy helping others increase their understanding of God's Word.
- Benefit from time spent in studying and researching Scripture.
- Take delight in answering difficult questions about God's Word.

Yes Maybe No

Leadership: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by casting vision, stimulating spiritual growth, applying strategies, and achieving success where God's purposes are concerned. People with this gift...

- Exhibit a tendency toward huge visions for God and the ability to inspire others to work toward accomplishing those visions for His glory, and to bless others.
- Are naturally drawn into leadership roles.
- Find it easy to motivate people—both individually and in teams—to work together in achieving goals for God's kingdom.

- Naturally grasp the “big picture.”
 - Are able to let go of responsibility and delegate it to others who are qualified.
- Yes Maybe No

Mercy: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by ministering to those who suffer physically, emotionally, spiritually, or relationally. Their actions are characterized by love, care, compassion, and kindness toward others. People with this gift...

- Are drawn toward opportunities to practically meet the needs of others.
 - Devote significant time in prayer for the needs of others.
 - Tend to place the needs of others ahead of their own.
 - Grieve with those who grieve.
 - Are most fulfilled when visiting people in need—in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, orphanages, villages, or wherever God directs them.
- Yes Maybe No

Miracles: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ through supernatural acts that bring validity to God and His power. People with this gift...

- Recognize prayer as a supernatural vehicle through which God acts in the lives of people on earth.
 - Render credit and thanks to God alone for supernatural works.
 - Fully grasp the fact that miracles only occur when God wills them to happen.
 - See themselves as instruments for God’s use.
 - Pray and look to supernatural results whenever they encounter impossible life situations.
- Yes Maybe No

Pastoring: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by taking spiritual responsibility for a group of believers and equipping them to live Christ-centered lives. Shepherding is another word used for this particular gift. You could have this gift if you...

- Are driven to help others reach their full potential in Christ.
 - Enjoy serving others and look for opportunities to do this.
 - Are good at developing personal, trust-based relationships with a small number of people.
 - Have a propensity toward meeting the needs of others, willingly giving your time to help them with spiritual issues.
 - Believe that people take precedence over projects.
- Yes Maybe No

Prophecy: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by offering messages from God that comfort, encourage, guide, warn, or reveal sin in a way that leads to repentance and spiritual growth. The original Greek meaning of this word is “to speak forth the truth.” The gift of prophecy includes both “forth telling” (preaching), and “foretelling” (revelation). You have this gift if you...

- Are known for publicly communicating God's Word, using a variety of means.
- Love to share your strong biblical convictions with others.
- View yourself as God's tool, ready to be used by the Holy Spirit in changing lives.
- Find it easy to confront others' motives when they are not up to God's standards.
- Frequently receive and share messages directly from God for comforting, challenging, and confronting His people.

Yes Maybe No

Teaching: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by teaching sound doctrine in relevant ways, empowering people to gain a sound and mature spiritual education. Individuals who have this gift...

- Are given to hours in the study of Scripture in order to best apply its principles and truth.
- Enjoy making the Bible clear and understandable to others.
- Seek out opportunities to speak biblical insight into daily situations.
- Are good at helping others learn to study the Bible.
- Recognize a variety of ways to effectively communicate the Word of God, including speaking.

Yes Maybe No

Tongues: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by communicating God's message in a special language unknown to the speaker. People with this gift tend to...

- Believe God is prompting them to communicate His message, often through prayer, in a specific language unknown to them.
- Intercede for others in prayer using unknown words, sounds, and utterances.
- Desire opportunities to pray, using these unknown languages for God's glory.
- Share with others words and/or messages of God given to them using unknown languages.
- Comfort or exhort others using unknown languages inspired by God.

Yes Maybe No

Wisdom: The God-given special ability to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by making wise decisions and counseling others with sound advice, all in accordance with God's will. You may possess this gift if you...

- Enjoy speaking biblical insights into life situations.
- Are sought after by others for advice/wisdom.
- Take pleasure in counseling others.
- Are known for making correct decisions and judgments.
- Recognize God as the primary source of wisdom and direction.

Yes Maybe No

Now that you have identified some possible spiritual gifts God has given you, start to express them by serving others around you. When we serve in areas that best match our giftedness, we experience great(er) fulfillment and see great(er) fruitfulness for God. On the other hand, when we serve outside our giftedness, we usually end up frustrated and fatigued. Serving others is the best way to clarify your giftedness because it allows you the opportunity to try out your gifts.

DEVELOPING AND USING YOUR GIFT

* Developing Your Gift:

1. Important attitudes to nurture:
 - A. Loving gratitude to God
 - B. Respect for other's gifts
 - C. Appreciation of your own gift
 - D. Desire to serve God
2. Important actions to pursue:
 - A. A life of devotion to God
 - B. Involvement in ministry
 - C. Be aware of the weaknesses of your gift

* Using Your Gift:

1. The emphasis of the scriptures is on ministry through gifts, not merely discovery of gifts.
2. Consider the possibilities of meaningful ministry through your gift.
3. Do not neglect opportunities simply because they do not seem complimentary to your giftedness.

* Four Common Traps:

1. _____
This happens when we place greater value on the more visible gifts—those more likely to shine in the spotlight, such as leadership or teaching. If we have those gifts and compare ourselves with others, the result can be a prideful spirit. If we compare ourselves to others who have more visible gifts, we may feel we lack significance. Both are signs that our hearts need a serious love tune-up. Just because a gift is more visible does not guarantee it's more valuable.
2. _____
When we expect others to be good at the same things we excel at, we're "projecting" our gifts onto them. Projection is especially common in relationships at work, or even at home. For example, if I have the gift of administration, and I project that gift onto others and automatically expect them to be organized and punctual at all times, feelings of frustration and resentment can set in and cause the relationship to become strained.

3.

Another common pitfall we encounter is refusing to accept the gifts God has given us. This is seen more often when working with people who clearly have the gift of pasturing and shepherding, but won't acknowledge it, often because they don't have the "right" title or official position. Allowing someone else's opinion to stop you from seizing and sharing your gifts will create nothing but disappointment and sorrow in your heart. Give yourself permission to be who God gifted you to be, regardless of what others have said.

4.

This is one of Satan's favorite traps. He uses it often. He manipulates you into believing you have certain gifts that God in fact has not given you—distracting you from putting your true gifts into effect and preventing you from accomplishing what God intended for your life. This deception especially plays itself out when it comes to leadership. John Maxwell has said, "If you think you are a leader, but no one is following you—you are just taking a walk." People like that often expect results that will be blessed by God, yet God never meant for them to be a leader—at least not in the way they imagine.

CONCLUSION:

You have been gifted for greatness—in service, not status. We may not have all of these gifts, but we do have at least one. Identifying your spiritual gifts is the crucial first step to finding the unique role God intends for you to fulfill. If we will learn to use our gift(s) effectively and efficiently, we will be well on our way to fulfilling our responsibility of ministry and God's divine purpose for our lives. The Apostle Paul uses his gift to encourage us that, "**It is God who works in you both to will and to do according to His good purpose**" (*Philippians 2:13*). Now that you have begun to recognize your unique gifts, you need to hear from God about how He wants you to put them to work.

By now, if you have attended all eight weeks of our **SOLID FOUNDATION** class, you should be experiencing some measure of growth. Continue in the path that you have started on and watch God's plan begin to be formed in you!

(The Spiritual Gifts Assessment used in this outline was taken from the book, *S.H.A.P.E.: Finding & Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*, by Erik Rees, published by Zondervan, 2006.)