

Spiritual Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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I. Introduction

God has given each believer a combination of opportunities and gifts that is perfectly suited to his or her situation in life. Every Christian is really a minister with a unique contribution to make to the body of Christ. The central thrust of your ministry depends on the spiritual gifts you have received. In the following we will look at the description of the gifts of the Spirit. We will also see how to discover and develop spiritual gifts and consider the danger of their abuse and directions for their use.

II. Diversity and Unity in the Body of Christ

When the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost in *Acts 2*, a new organism was created. This organism consists of all those who have received the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus. In *Romans 8:14-17*, *Galatians 4:4-7*, and *Ephesians 2:19*, it is described as a spiritual household or family. By virtue of both adoption and new birth, we have become sons and daughters of God. This organism is also called a holy temple in *Ephesians 2:20-22* and *1 Peter 2:4-5*, and believers are its living stones. But the most frequently used metaphor for this new creation is the body of Christ (see *Rom. 12:4-5*; *1 Cor. 12:12-27*; *Eph. 1:22-23*; *3:6*; *4:4-16*; *5:5:23-30*; *Col. 1:18*; *2:19*). *Romans 8:14-17, Galatians 4:4-7, and Ephesians 2:19 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Ephesians 2:20-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's temple. He was rejected by people, but He was chosen by God for great honor. And you are living stones that God is building into His spiritual temple. What's more, you are His holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23, 3:6, 4:4-16, 5:23-30; Col. 1:18, 2:19 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. The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.*

Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says,

“I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made Him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is His body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with Himself.

And this is God’s plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God’s children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all. However, He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, “When He ascended to the heights, He led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to His people.” Notice that it says “He ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that He might fill the entire universe with Himself. Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any blemish; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. ...and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For He holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.

The three major New Testament lists of the gifts are all introduced by a description of the unity and diversity in the body of Christ. Paul's metaphor for the church could not be more appropriate, because both the universal church (all believers) and the local church (geographically localized groups of believers) are unities which are built out of diverse elements. All believers have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (*1 Cor. 12:13*). Christ is the head, the ruler of the body (*Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18*), and believers are the individual members or components. In this analogy, each Christian has been given a special function to perform and the ability to fulfill it in a way that will benefit the other members. There is quantitative and qualitative growth when believers discover and actively use their spiritual gifts. Each part of the body depends on the rest for its well-being, and there are no useless organs. This is why edification through teaching and fellowship is so necessary in the local church. The biblical concept of *koinonia* or fellowship communicates the fact that isolation leads to atrophy (deterioration). Just as no organ can function independently of the others, so no Christian can enjoy spiritual vitality in a relational vacuum. The Spirit has sovereignly distributed spiritual gifts to every member of the body, and no single member possesses all the gifts. Thus, growth does not take place apart from mutual ministry and dependence. *1 Cor. 12:13* *Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.*

The body of Christ is an organism, not a dictatorship or a democracy. As such, the local church is best structured around the distribution and function of the spiritual gifts found in its members.

Exercise: In *Ephesians 4:4-16*, Paul outlines the role of God-given gifts in the edification of the body. What are the seven points of unity found in verses 4-6? According to 4:7-10, what is the basis for the giving of gifts to the church? Verse 12 speaks of quantitative (corporate) growth, while verse 13 speaks of qualitative (individual) growth. How does 4:11-13 relate to 4:14-16?

III. Definition and Design of Spiritual Gifts

A. Definition

The Greek word most frequently used for spiritual gifts is *charismata*, a word that relates to the grace (*charis*) of God. Concerning these gifts, Paul writes, *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. (Eph. 4:7)*. Another word, *pneumatikos*, means spiritualities, or spiritual things. William McRae defines a spiritual gift as a divine endowment of a special ability for service upon a member of the body of Christ. C. Peter Wagner offers a similar definition: A spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ according to God's grace for use within the context of the Body.

B. Design

Here are twelve principles that relate to God's design for spiritual gifts:

1. Every Christian has one or more spiritual gifts.

To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all (*1 Cor. 12:7*). *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

It is one and the same Spirit, distributing as He decides to each person, who produces all these things. (*1 Cor. 12:11*). *It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.*

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. (Eph. 4:7).

Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of the varied grace of God. (*1 Pet. 4:10*). *God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

Spiritual gifts are not limited to a sub-group of believers; they are distributed by the Spirit to all Christian men, women, and children.

2. Many believers have evidently received more than one spiritual gift. Because there is such a variety of gifts, the number of possible combinations is great. Each multi-gifted Christian has received a combination of spiritual abilities that is perfectly suited to his or her God-given ministry.

3. Spiritual gifts may be given at the moment of regeneration, but they may lie undiscovered and dormant for a long period of time. Multi-gifted Christians often discover their combination of gifts through a gradual process.

4. Spiritual gifts can be abused and neglected, but if they are received at regeneration, it would appear that they cannot be lost. The Corinthian church illustrates the fact that believers can be highly gifted but spiritually immature.

5. Spiritual gifts are not the same as the gift of the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit has been bestowed on all believers (*John 14:16; Acts 2:38*), and every member of the body should appropriate this gift. The gifts of the Spirit, on the other hand, are distributed as He decides to each person (*1 Cor. 12:11*). ***John 14:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 12:11*** *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever — Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

6. Spiritual gifts are not the same as the fruit of the Spirit. Spiritual fruit is produced from within; spiritual gifts are imparted from without. Fruit relates to Christlike character; gifts relate to Christian service. The fruit of the Spirit, especially love, should be the context for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. Paul made it clear in *1 Corinthians 13* that spiritual gifts without spiritual fruit are worthless. Fruit is eternal, but gifts are temporal (*1 Cor. 13:8*); the former is a true measure of spirituality, but the latter is not. ***1 Cor. 13:8*** *Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.*

7. Spiritual gifts are not the same as natural talents. Unlike the natural abilities which everyone has from birth, spiritual gifts belong exclusively to believers in Christ. In some cases, the gifts of the Spirit coincide with natural endowments, but they transcend these natural abilities by adding a supernatural quality. Both are given by God (*Jas. 1:17*), and should be developed and used according to their purpose for the glory of God (*1 Cor. 10:31*). ***Jas. 1:17; 1 Cor. 10:31*** *Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.*

He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

8. All Christians are called to a ministry, but not all are called to an office. Ministry is determined by divinely given gifts and opportunities (*Eph. 3:7*). Offices (e.g., elder, deacon, evangelist, and teacher) are humanly recognized and appointed spheres of ministry within the body. *By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving Him by spreading this Good News.*

9. Some spiritual gifts are more desirable in the church than others because they result in greater edification of the body. Paul exhorted the Corinthian church to be eager for the greater gifts (**1 Cor. 12:31**; see **12:28-30, 14:5**). *But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.*

10. Charismata literally means grace-gifts – they are sovereignly and undeservedly given by the Holy Spirit. There is no basis for boasting or envy. Every member of the body has a special place and purpose. Whether more or less prominent in the eyes of men, the same standard applies to all: it is required of stewards that one be found faithful (*1 Cor. 4:2*). Work with what God has given to you (*2 Tim. 1:6*), and seek to please Him rather than men (*Gal. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4*). **1 Cor. 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:6; Gal. 1:10; Thess. 2:4** *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant. For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts.*

11. Gifts are God's spiritual equipment for effective service and edification of the body.

They are not bestowed for the self-aggrandizement of the recipient, or as an evidence of a special endowment (bestowing) of the Spirit, but for the profit and edification of the Body of Christ. The possessor is only the instrument and not the receiver of the glory (J. Oswald Sanders).

Gifts were given so that in everything God will be glorified through Jesus Christ (**1 Pet. 4:11**). *Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God Himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to Him forever and ever! Amen.*

12. High mobilization of spiritual gifts was the key to the rapid multiplication of the church in the New Testament (**cf. Rom. 1:11; Eph. 4:11,12; 2 Tim. 2:2**). *For I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord. Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ.*

The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

IV. Desirability of the Gifts

It is important that every Christian discover and develop the spiritual gifts that have been bestowed on him or her by God. These gifts are desirable for three basic reasons:

A. You Will Be Satisfied

Knowing and using your gifts will give you an understanding of the unique and indispensable ministry you have been called to accomplish in the body of Christ. You will discover a significant part of your purpose for being on this planet and realize that God has made you competent to produce something that will last for eternity. You will have a sense of fulfillment and joy in the service of others as you become an available instrument through which the Holy Spirit can work.

In addition, knowledge of your spiritual gifts will greatly assist you in discerning and affirming the will of God at various points in your life. God will not call you to accomplish anything without giving you the power and enablement to do it. You will be able to make more intelligent decisions about possible involvement in specific opportunities and training in light of your God-given function in the body (*Rom. 12:3-5*). You will also use your time more effectively by focusing on the things you have been equipped to do well rather than expending your energy in areas of minimum potential.

Rom. 12:3-5 *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 with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For 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, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

B. Others Will Be Edified

Knowing and using your gifts will lead to the edification of other members of the body of Christ. As you exercise your spiritual gifts, you will play a substantial role in building up other Christians and leading them into maturity (*Eph. 4:12-16*). If you fail to develop your gifts or let them decline through disuse, your brothers and sisters in Christ will actually be hurt because they will be deprived of the unique ministry that only you could perform in their lives. **Eph. 4:12-16** *Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

C. God Will Be Glorified

According to *1 Peter 4:10-11*, your spiritual gifts are ultimately designed to bring glory to God. This is your highest calling, and it relates to all three Persons of the Godhead. As you use your spiritual gifts in conjunction with the power and fruit (especially love) of the Holy Spirit and in the name and Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Father receives the glory. **1 Peter 4:10-11** *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various*

forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Digging for the Gifts

*Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, and Ephesians 4 are the three primary biblical passages on spiritual gifts. 1 Peter 4:8-11 provides supplementary information on this vital subject. Before moving to the next section, use this chart to list the gifts you find in these passages. **1 Peter 4:8-11** Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God Himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to Him forever and ever! Amen.*

Then ask yourself these questions:

- What is the nature of each of these gifts?
- Are all of these gifts present in the church today?
- Are there any other gifts that are not mentioned in this list?

V. Description of the Gifts

A spiritual gift is a manifestation of the Spirit ... given for the benefit of all (*1 Cor. 12:7*). As a supernatural endowment, its source is always the Holy Spirit, and its purpose is the building up of others to the glory of God. **1 Cor. 12:7** *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

A. The Gifts in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4

1. Prophecy The ability to receive and proclaim a message from God. This could involve the foretelling of future events, though its primary purpose as seen in *1 Corinthians 14:3* is forthtelling: one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement, and consolation. *But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.* This gift provides a word from God to a specific group, not the normative Word of God to all believers. Some maintain that prophecy is still operative in this sense today, while others say that the nearest current equivalent is Spirit-empowered preaching. **Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10, 28-29; 14:1-40; Eph. 4:11** *In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in*

unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? (1 Cor. 14:1-40 – See your Bible – maybe the NLT version) Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

2. Service The ability to identify and care for the physical needs of the body through a variety of means. The Greek word for this gift is the same as that for ministry or deacon, but the gift should not be confused with the office. **Rom. 12:7; Galatians 5:13** *If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another humbly in love.*

3. Teaching - The ability to clearly explain and effectively apply the truths of God's Word so that others will learn. This requires the capacity to accurately interpret Scripture, engage in necessary research, and organize the results in a way that is easily communicated i.e. teaching. **Matthew 28:19; Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11** *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.*

4. Exhortation - The ability to motivate others to respond to the truth by providing timely words of counsel, encouragement, and consolation. When this gift is exercised, believers are challenged to stimulate their faith by putting God's truth to the test in their lives. **Rom. 12:8; Hebrews 3:13, 10:25** *If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.*

5. Giving - The ability to contribute material resources with generosity and cheerfulness for the benefit of others and the glory of God. Christians with this spiritual gift need not be wealthy. **Rom. 12:8; 2 Corinthians 9:7** *If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

6. Leadership - The ability to discern God's purpose for a group, set and communicate appropriate goals, and motivate others to work together to fulfill them in the service of God. A person with this gift is effective at delegating tasks to followers without manipulation or coercion. **Rom. 12:8** *If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.*

7. Mercy - The ability to deeply empathize and engage in compassionate acts on behalf of people who are suffering physical, mental, or emotional distress. Those with this gift manifest concern and kindness to people who are often overlooked. **Rom. 12:8; Ephesians 4:32** *If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

8. Wisdom - The ability to apply the principles of the Word of God in a practical way to specific situations and to recommend the best course of action at the best time. The exercise of this gift skillfully distills insight and discernment into excellent advice. **1 Cor. 12:8; James 1:5** *For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

9. Knowledge - The ability to discover, analyze, and systematize truth for the benefit of others. With this gift, one speaks with understanding and penetration. Some also associate supernatural perception with this gift. **1 Cor. 12:8; James 1:5; 2 Peter 3:18** *For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to Him, both now and forever! Amen.*

10. Faith - The ability to have a vision for what God wants to be done and to confidently believe that it will be accomplished in spite of circumstances and appearances to the contrary. The gift of faith transforms vision into reality. **1 Cor. 12:9; 2 Corinthians 5:7** *The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

11. Healing - The ability to serve as a human instrument through whom God supernaturally cures illnesses and restores health. The possessor of this gift is not the source of power, but a vessel who can only heal those diseases the Lord chooses to heal. Inner healing, or healing of memories is sometimes associated as another manifestation of this gift. **1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30** *The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Of course not!*

12. Miracles - The ability to serve as an instrument through whom God accomplishes acts that manifest supernatural power. Miracles bear witness to the presence of God and the truth of His proclaimed Word, and appear to occur most frequently in association with missionary activity. **1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 29** *He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of*

leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Of course not!

13. Distinguishing of spirits - The ability to clearly discern the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. With this gift, one can distinguish reality versus counterfeits, the divine versus the demonic, true versus false teaching, and in some cases, spiritual versus carnal motives. **1 Cor. 12:10; (cf. 1 John 4:6)** *He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.*

14. Tongues - The ability to receive and impart a spiritual message in a language the recipient never learned. For other members of the body to be edified, this message must be interpreted either by the recipient (*1 Cor. 14:13*) or by another person with the gift of interpretation (*1 Cor. 14:26-28*). **1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 30; (1 Cor. 14:1-40 – See your Bible – maybe the NLT version) 1 Cor. 14:13; 1 Cor. 14:26-28** *He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership and those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Of course not! So anyone who speaks in tongues should pray also for the ability to interpret what has been said. Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you. No more than two or three should speak in tongues. They must speak one at a time, and someone must interpret what they say. But if no one is present who can interpret, they must be silent in your church meeting and speak in tongues to God privately.*

Because of the controversial nature of this gift, here are several observations:

a. Paul qualified the public use of this gift, stating that in a meeting of the church, two or at the most three could speak in a tongue, it must be done in turn, and a person with the gift of interpretation must be present so that the body would be edified (*1 Cor. 14:26-28*).

b. There are a number of differences between the manifestation of tongues at Pentecost (*Acts 2:1-13*) and its use in Corinth (*1 Cor. 14*), and these differences suggest that the two are not identical (see J. Oswald Sanders, *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts*, p. 125). **Acts 2:1-13** *On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by*

the believers. They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed. “These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!” They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean?” they asked each other. (1 Corinthians Chapter 14 – See your Bible – maybe the NLT version)

c. In his list of spiritual gifts in *1 Corinthians 12:28*, Paul spoke of kinds of tongues. This, coupled with the statements in *1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14-15, 28* has led many to distinguish a private use of tongues, often called a prayer language (*1 Cor. 14:14-15*), from the public use of tongues which must be interpreted. Paul wrote that if there is no interpreter, he should be silent in the church. Let him speak to himself and to God (*1 Cor. 14:28*). ***1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14-15, 28; Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership and those who speak in unknown languages. For if you have the ability to speak in tongues, you will be talking only to God, since people won't be able to understand you. You will be speaking by the power of the Spirit, but it will all be mysterious. A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church. For if I pray in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying. Well then, what shall I do? I will pray in the spirit, and I will also pray in words I understand. I will sing in the spirit, and I will also sing in words I understand. But if no one is present who can interpret, they must be silent in your church meeting and speak in tongues to God privately.***

d. This gift is easily counterfeited and often abused. It can be a source of spiritual pride, excessive preoccupation, and divisiveness.

e. Contrary to some teaching, tongues are not the only sign of the filling of the Spirit, and not all believers are to manifest this gift ***1 Cor. 12:17-19, 30***. *If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not!*

15. Interpretation of tongues - The ability to translate into the vernacular a message publicly uttered in a tongue. This gift may be combined with the gift of tongues (*1 Cor. 14:13*), or it can operate separately (*1 Cor. 14:26-28*). ***1 Cor. 12:10, 30, 14:5, 13, 26-28*** *He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! I wish you could all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you could all prophesy. For prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church will be strengthened. So anyone who speaks in tongues should pray also for the ability to interpret what has been said.*

16. Apostleship (*1 Cor. 12:28,29; Eph. 4:11*) In the New Testament, the apostles were not limited to the Twelve, but included Paul, Barnabas, Andronicus, Junias, and others as well (*Acts 14:14; Rom. 16:7; 1 Cor. 15:5,7; 1 Thess. 2:6*). If the requirement for the office of apostle includes having seen the resurrected Jesus (*Acts 1:21,22; 1 Cor. 9:1*), this office ceased to exist by the second century. However, many believe that the gift of apostleship continues to be given. As a spiritual gift, this is the ability to begin and/or to oversee new churches and Christian ministries with a spontaneously recognized authority. *1 Cor. 12:28,29; Eph. 4:11; Acts 14:14; Rom. 16:7; 1 Cor. 15:5,7; 1 Thess. 2:6; Acts 1:21,22; 1 Cor. 9:1* Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard what was happening, they tore their clothing in dismay and ran out among the people, shouting... Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. Then He was seen by James and later by all the apostles. We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. So now we must choose a replacement for Judas from among the men who were with us the entire time we were traveling with the Lord Jesus—from the time He was baptized by John until the day He was taken from us. Whoever is chosen will join us as a witness of Jesus' resurrection. Am I not as free as anyone else? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord with my own eyes? Isn't it because of my work that you belong to the Lord?

17. Helps - The ability to enhance the effectiveness of the ministry of other members of the body. This is the only usage of this word in the New Testament, and it appears to be distinct from the gift of service. Some suggest that while the gift of service is more group-oriented, the gift of helps is more person-oriented. *1 Cor. 12:28* Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership and those who speak in unknown languages.

18. Administration - This word, like helps, appears only one time in the New Testament, and it is used outside of Scripture of a helmsman who steers a ship to its destination. This suggests that the spiritual gift of administration is the ability to steer a church or Christian organization toward the fulfillment of its goals by managing its affairs and implementing necessary plans. A person may have the gift of leadership without the gift of administration. *1 Cor. 12:28; Ephesians 3:1-3* Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church; first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership and those who speak in unknown languages. For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly.

19. Evangelism - The ability to be an unusually effective instrument in leading unbelievers to a saving knowledge of Christ. Some with this gift are most effective in personal evangelism, while others may

be used by God in group evangelism or cross-cultural evangelism. **Eph. 4:11** *Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.*

20. Shepherd or pastor - Peter was commissioned by Christ to shepherd His sheep (*John 21:16*), and Peter exhorted the elders in the churches of Asia Minor to do the same (*1 Pet. 5:2; cf. Acts 20:28*). A person with this spiritual gift has the ability to personally lead, nourish, protect, and care for the needs of a flock of believers. Not all people with the office of pastor (elder, overseer) have or need the gift of pastoring or shepherding, and many with this gift do not have or need the office. **Eph. 4:11; John 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28** *Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. He *said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He *said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.*

B. Other Gifts

None of the lists in *Romans 12*, *1 Corinthians 12*, and *Ephesians 4* is complete, and it is evident that there are other spiritual gifts apart from those listed above. C. Peter Wagner in *Your Spiritual Gifts* suggests seven others: celibacy (the ability to enjoy being single and maintain sexual self-control; *1 Cor. 7:7-9*); voluntary poverty (the ability to renounce material comfort and adopt a life-style of relative poverty; *1 Cor. 13:3*); martyrdom (the ability to display an attitude of joy while suffering or even dying for the faith; *1 Cor. 13:3*); hospitality (the ability to welcome and provide for those in need of food and lodging; *Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9*); missionary (the ability to minister effectively in a second culture); intercession (the ability to pray for a long period of time on a regular basis for the ministries and needs of others); and exorcism (the ability to discern and cast out demons with authority). Other spiritual gifts (e.g., music, craftsmanship) are also given to members of the body of Christ for mutual edification. **1 Cor. 7:7-9; 1 Cor. 13:3; Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9** *But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. Yet each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another. So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am. But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with passion. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, it profits me nothing. When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. Be hospitable to one another without complaint.*

C. Combinations and Variations of Gifts

Many if not all believers have combinations of two or more spiritual gifts. Some combinations are unusual, while others are commonly combined. Gifts that work together include shepherd (pastor)-teaching, leadership-administration, evangelism-teaching, tongues-interpretation, and discernment-exorcism. In addition, Paul distinguishes three parameters in *1 Corinthians 12:4-6*: gifts (charismaton), ministries (diakonion), and effects (energematou). In *Body Life* (pp. 40-41), Ray Stedman links gifts to the Spirit, saying that a gift is a specific capacity or function; he links ministries to Jesus, saying that a ministry is the sphere in which a gift is performed; and he links effects or energizings to the Father, saying that an energizing is the degree of power by which a gift is manifested or ministered on a specific occasion. There are not only variations in the

gifts and gift-combinations, but also in the spheres and manifestations of gifts. For example, there are many variations in the spiritual gift of teaching. Some are more effective with small groups, others with large groups; some can effectively communicate with youth, while others are best at teaching adults. *1 Corinthians 12:4-6* *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is 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.*

D. Classification of Gifts

Perhaps the best classification of spiritual gifts emerges from *1 Peter 4:10-11*:

God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God Himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to Him forever and ever! Amen.

These verses imply a twofold classification: (1) speaking gifts (ministry of the Word), and (2) serving gifts (ministry of practical service).

Exercise: Classify all the gifts listed above according to this distinction. Do any of them overlap? Before looking ahead, can you think of other ways of classifying the gifts?

E. Debate Over the Gifts

Some of the gifts like prophecy, miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretation are the subject of considerable controversy. The vast majority of Christians are charismatics in the sense that they believe in the exercise of spiritual gifts (charismata). But in another sense, not all believers are charismatics; those who describe themselves by this term believe that all the gifts are still given today, while non-charismatics believe that the controversial gifts mentioned above have ceased. The latter generally make a distinction between sign gifts and edification gifts. Sign gifts, they say, served their purpose in the first century by attesting to the authority of the apostles and their divinely-inspired message. Once the New Testament canon was complete, miraculous gifts were no longer necessary, and they gradually disappeared from the church. *Hebrews 2:3-4*, for example, is used by non-charismatics to imply that signs and wonders had already ceased by the time of the second generation of Christians. Some also build a case for the cessation of sign gifts from *1 Corinthians 13:8-10*. *Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 13:8-10* *So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus Himself and then delivered to us by those who heard Him speak? And God confirmed the message by giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever He chose. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.*

Charismatics generally maintain that while these gifts declined in the early church, they did not disappear. They also contend that the non-charismatic argument from *1 Corinthians 13:8-10* is not conclusive, because the perfect may refer to the second advent of Christ rather than the

completion of the canon of Scripture. In addition, they say that the gifts of prophecy, miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretation are not merely for signs, but also for edification.

There are also differences of opinion even within the charismatic and the non-charismatic camps. Charismatics, for example, do not all agree on the role of tongues and the filling of the Spirit.

Exercise: Study *1 Corinthians 13:8-13* and develop your own perspective on the meaning of this passage. What do you think is the primary purpose of *1 Corinthians 13* in the broader context of chapters 12-14? *1 Corinthians 13:8-13 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.*

VI. Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s)

A. Three Prerequisites

As you seek to discover your spiritual gift or gifts, ask yourself these questions:

1. Have I received Christ as my Savior? Unlike natural talents, spiritual gifts are bestowed only on believers.
2. Am I walking in fellowship with the Lord? To be effective, spiritual gifts must be manifested in the context of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. This fruit is impeded by unconfessed sin and a failure to abide in Christ (*John 15:4*). *Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in Me.*
3. Do I really want to develop my gift(s)? A prerequisite to knowing your gifts is a willingness to go through the effort to be involved in discovering and developing them.

B. Six Steps

1. Asking. Begin to ask God to show you your gifts (cf. *Phil. 4:6-7; Jas. 1:5*). God wants you to discover and implement the gifts He has given you, and this is a request you can make with confidence and expectation. *Phil. 4:6-7; Jas. 1:5 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

2. Awareness.

- a. Expose yourself to the biblical teaching on spiritual gifts by studying *Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, and Ephesians 4*.

b. Expose yourself to one or more of the helpful books on spiritual gifts.

c. Expose yourself to other Christians who clearly know and use their spiritual gifts. Ask them about their gifts and how they discovered them.

3. **Aspiration.** God is committed to your joy, not your misery. Then you will take delight in the Lord, and He will answer your prayers (*Ps. 37:4*). As you pray and learn about the various gifts, ask yourself what you would most want to do. *For it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13)*. Your feelings should not be the only test, but they may indicate the direction for you to take. For example, Paul told Timothy, If someone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a good work (*1 Tim. 3:1*). **Ps. 37:4; Phil. 2:13; 1 Tim. 3:1** *Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him. This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be a church leader, he desires an honorable position."*

4. **Activity.** Just as we discover our natural talents by trying our hand at numerous things, in the same way we can discover our spiritual gifts by experimenting with several of the available gifts. If we don't try, we will never know. This requires availability and a willingness to learn our weaknesses as well as strengths.

5. **Ability.** Activity eventually points to ability. Don't be premature in your personal evaluation, because ability increases with practice. Be sensitive to areas of improvement. Look for opportunities within the community of believers of which you are a part, and seek the evaluation of mature Christians who are familiar with your activities. Because of the danger of self-deception, spiritual gifts are best recognized by other members of the body.

6. **Affirmation.** The final affirmation of a spiritual gift is the blessing that should result from its exercise. As you use your gift or gift-combination in the power of the Spirit, God will confirm and establish you in your ministry, and there will continue to be positive feedback from those to whom you minister. It has been said that desire may indicate it, ability will confirm it, and blessing will accompany it.

VII. Developing Your Spiritual Gift(s)

Having discovered your gift or combination of gifts, you are accountable to yourself, others, and God to develop and cultivate that which the Spirit has implanted within you. In *The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts*, William McRae suggests that the gifts of the Spirit are developed in three ways:

A. **By exercise.** Like natural talents, spiritual gifts are developed by practice, not just by desire. Without regular exercise, they will suffer from atrophy. Continue to pursue opportunities and persevere in the use of your gift(s).

B. **By evaluation.** Be open to the evaluation and counsel of other believers. Periodically ask godly people to evaluate your ministry in terms of strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve.

C. By education. More educational and developmental materials are available today than ever before. Take advantage of the best books, classes, tapes, and seminars that can help you improve your God-given abilities.

VIII. Danger of Abuse

The mobilization of spiritual gifts is critical to the qualitative and quantitative growth of the body of Christ. For this reason, we must be careful to avoid the many pitfalls associated with this crucial subject. Here are ten:

A. Spiritual gifts are not merely for personal use. They are designed for the edification of others. Others should benefit primarily; the user should benefit secondarily.

B. Spiritual gifts are not gained by merit or by begging. The very term charismata tells us that they are given solely by the grace of God (*Eph. 4:7*). The Holy Spirit distributes them as He decides to each person (*1 Cor. 12:11*). ***Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 12:11*** *However, He has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.*

C. Spiritual gifts can be abused by being exercised in the power of the flesh. If they are not being used in the power of the Spirit and through the love of Christ, they are of no value. ***1 Cor. 13:1-3*** *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*

D. The discovery and use of spiritual gifts is not a game or an option. Your gifts will determine your ministry, and your ministry can have eternal consequences. God has called us to be committed and faithful to Him, and this is reflected in part by our stewardship of the abilities and opportunities He has given to us.

E. Spiritual gifts should not be a cause of discouragement. As a rule, they develop gradually, and this requires time and work. Don't be in a hurry, and don't become jealous of the gifts bestowed on others. As we have seen, gifts vary in nature, combination, extent, and intensity. God is sovereign in His distribution, and He has given you the gift(s) that perfectly suit your personality and circumstances. There is no reason to envy another person's ministry. God has called us to faithfulness, not results.

F. Spiritual gifts should not be a cause of pride. Since they are sovereignly distributed according to the grace of God, they ought to be regarded as divinely-entrusted responsibilities, not status symbols, achievements, or trophies. Christian character and maturity is measured by the fruit of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22-23*), not spiritual gifts. ***Gal. 5:22-23*** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

G. Spiritual gifts should not be sought as ends in themselves. In some circles, there is a tendency to exalt the gifts above the Giver.

H. Avoid extreme positions on the gifts that are not warranted by Scripture, like the teaching that we should not seek to discover spiritual gifts, or the teaching that a Spirit-filled Christian can have all the gifts.

I. The gifts of the Spirit can be counterfeited not only by the flesh but also by Satanic and demonic forces. Scripture counsels us to be sensitive to this problem. **Matthew 7:22-23, 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1.** *Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve. Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons. But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.*

J. Avoid the temptation of projecting your gifts onto others. Our thinking is naturally colored by the gifts we have been given, and if we are not careful, we will take the prescription that works for us and turn it into the norm for everyone. This can lead to a judgmental perspective on our part and a sense of guilt on the part of others who are not gifted in the same way.

IX. Directions for Use

Here are four principles that should govern our use of spiritual gifts:

A. Remember that the Holy Spirit is the true dynamic behind the gifts. They must be exercised in dependence upon His power.

B. Spiritual gifts function best in the sphere of love (the way that is beyond comparison; *1 Cor. 12:31*). Paul placed his great description of love (*1 Cor. 13*) right in the middle of the most extensive biblical passage on spiritual gifts (*1 Cor. 12-14*). It is no accident that the two other major lists of spiritual gifts (*Rom. 12* and *Eph. 4*) also include exhortations to love (*Rom. 12:9-10; Eph. 4:15-16*). ***1 Cor. 12:31; Rom. 12:9-10; Eph. 4:15-16*** *So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

C. Exercise: Go through the characteristics of love listed in *1 Corinthians 13:4-8* and visualize each of them in relation to the exercise of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. ***1 Corinthians 13:4-8*** *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of*

wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

D. In your ministry, concentrate your energy in productive areas. It is wise to maximize time in gift-related activities and minimize time in activities for which you are not suited.

E. On the other hand, Scripture commands all believers to perform certain ministries regardless of individual gifts. Christian roles like intercession, faith, service, helps, mercy, and giving are the responsibility of all Christians, not just those who are specifically gifted in these areas. For example, some have the spiritual gift of evangelism, but all believers have a role of evangelism that corresponds to the opportunities they have been given. Be careful to avoid the spiritual cop-out mentality that says, That's not my gift!

Exercise: All believers are required to participate in certain Christian roles, and some of these roles correspond to several (but not all) of the spiritual gifts.

Spiritual Gifts to Some Commands to All

1. Evangelism - *Acts 1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*"

2. Teaching - *Matthew 28:19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

3. Faith - *2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

4. Giving - *2 Corinthians 9:7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

5. Discernment - *1 John 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.*

6. Exhortation - *Hebrews 3:13; 10:25 You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.*

7. Knowledge - *2 Peter 3:18 Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to Him, both now and forever! Amen.*

8. Mercy - *Ephesians 4:32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

9. Service - *Galatians 5:13* For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another humbly in love.

10. Wisdom - *James 1:5* If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

X. Reflections

1. Write out your own definition of a spiritual gift.
2. How do spiritual gifts relate to the unity and diversity of the body of Christ?
3. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and the fruit of the Spirit?
4. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and natural talents?
5. List the three principle reasons for discovering and developing your spiritual gifts.
6. Do you fulfill the three prerequisites for discovering your spiritual gifts? What are the six steps for discovering your gifts? How far have you moved in this process?
7. Go through the description of each of the spiritual gifts and ask these diagnostic questions as you do so:
 - a. Do I have a strong sense of concern in this area?
 - b. Is this something I would enjoy doing?
 - c. Have I shown any ability in this area?
 - d. Have others given me positive feedback in this area?

Scripture Memory Cards

Romans 12:4-5 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

1 Corinthians 12:7; 13:13 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 4:11,12; 4:15 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church.

Colossians 1:18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So He is first in everything.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

1 Peter 4:10. God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

Note: I've taken the prerogative to rearrange and consolidate some of the material presented into what I felt was a more cohesive and readable paper with all referred to Scriptures included.

<https://bible.org/article/gifts-spirit>

<http://www.kenboa.org>

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The Fruit of the Holy Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23 - (NIV)

Galatians 5:22-23 tells us, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*” The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the result of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the life of a Christian. The Bible makes it clear that everyone receives the Holy Spirit the moment he or she believes in Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14*). One of the primary purposes of the Holy Spirit coming into a Christian's life is to change that life. It is the Holy Spirit's job to conform us to the image of Christ, making us more like Him. ***Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14*** *But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to Him at all.) Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of His glory.*

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is in direct contrast with the acts of the sinful nature in ***Galatians 5:19-21***, “*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*” This passage describes all people, to varying degrees, when they do not know Christ and therefore are not under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Our sinful flesh produces certain types of fruit that reflect our nature, and the Holy Spirit produces types of fruit that reflect His nature.

The Christian life is a battle of the sinful flesh against the new nature given by Christ (*2 Corinthians 5:17*). As fallen human beings, we are still trapped in a body that desires sinful things (*Romans 7:14-25*). As Christians, we have the Holy Spirit producing His fruit in us and we have the Holy Spirit's power available to conquer the acts of the sinful nature (*2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 4:13*). A Christian will never be completely victorious in always demonstrating the fruits of the Holy Spirit. It is one of the main purposes of the Christian life, though, to progressively allow the Holy Spirit to produce more and more of His fruit in our lives—and to allow the Holy Spirit to conquer the opposing sinful desires. The fruit of the Spirit is what God desires our lives to exhibit and, with the Holy Spirit’s help, it is possible. ***2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 7:14-25; Philippians 4:13*** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away;*

behold, all things have become new. So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. O wretched man that I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.