

Spiritual Gifts

Purpose: To enable the student to appreciate his and other's value to the Kingdom by understanding the place of spiritual gifts and exercising his giftedness in the Body of Christ.

Objectives: By the end of this lesson the student will

1. Be able to explain the purpose of spiritual gifts
2. Know how to discern giftedness in himself and others
3. Know how to develop and utilize giftedness
4. Value his and by extension, other's, place in the Kingdom

Key Verses: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 28; 1 Peter 4:10-11

I. Introduction

Note to instructor: Explore what the students currently know about Spiritual Gifts. Share about your "journey" of discerning your spiritual gifts; ways that you have employed them; and how you have seen the body of Christ edified and God glorified through your spiritual gifts.

II. What is a Spiritual Gift?

A. Charisma

Charis - grace, Charisma - a thing of grace, Charismata - grace gifts

B. Definition

A supernatural capacity given to each believer by the Holy Spirit for use in growing the Body of Christ. (Exodus 31:2-6)

1. Expansion – growing influence
2. Maturation – wiser use of gifts
3. Care – motivated by love

III. Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

A. Unity (Ephesians 4:4-16)

1. 4-6: Unity of the body
2. 7-11 Diversity of responsibilities

Responsibilities are not self-chosen, but given — our job is to be good stewards of the gifts given to us.

B. Effectiveness in Ministry (Ephesians 4:12-13; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 12:7)

When all the parts function together properly, there is effectiveness. Individual athletes who want to be “The Superstar” in team sports will bring about strife and failure. Similarly in the church, when individuals want to use their spiritual gifts to be “Superstars,” there will also be strife and failure.

Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 12:16-27 and Ephesians 4:11-16 that the whole body needs to work together and not be proud if the body is to be successful. The body is effective when the individual members of it willingly seek to serve the whole. Self-servers only break down the group.

Problem: most Christians view our relationship with one another as a loose affiliation of self-promoting individuals. God’s view is an interwoven community of self-sacrificing individuals.

C. Maturation (Ephesians 4:14-16) As the body works together it matures.

IV. Usage of Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

- A. A Variety of Gifts - direction of ministry
- B. A Variety of Effects - scope of our ministry (Romans 12:6 measure of faith)
- C. A Variety of Ministries - place of ministry

No single gift operates the same at all times for all people. Bill Bright and Billy Graham are both evangelists, but in very different style and organization.

Application: The same gift can be used through different avenues and have different effects.

V. What Spiritual Gifts are not

A. Natural Talents

A natural capacity given by God from conception to fulfill the original command to rule and subdue the earth. God may use your natural gift in a new way.

B. The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22,23)

The fruit of the Spirit focuses on character which we all develop as we walk by faith in the Spirit’s power. This applies to all Christians uniformly.

C. Primarily Roles (there are corresponding commands for many of the gifts)

Note to instructor: what this means is that some of the gifts also correspond to commands given to all Christians. For example: Hospitality (1 Peter 4:9; Hebrews 13:2), Teaching

(Matthew 28:19,20), Exhortation (Hebrews 10:25), Discerning of Spirits (1 John 4:1), Giving (2 Corinthians 9:7), Showing Mercy (Ephesians 4:32), Service (Galatians 5:13), Evangelism (Acts 1:8), Leadership (Ephesians 6:4), and Faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).

D. Word of Caution

The Evil one counterfeits many of the gifts. Therefore, the exercise of a gift is not a sign of membership in the Kingdom.

VI. How do Gifts and Talents Work Together?

- A. God will often use talent as an avenue to exercise a gift.
- B. God will often gift a person in the area where he has a talent.
- C. God will sometimes gift a person where he does not have a natural talent.

VII. Discovering Your Gifts

One could use something like the “Wesley Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire” (available through Fuller Seminary Bookstore) to help discern their spiritual gifts. One can also discern their gifts through service. Get involved and your gifts will become obvious.

A. Explore the Possibilities

1. Learn what the gifts are.
2. Functional definitions. What does it look like in practice?
3. Learn how the Body should function. Gifts enable the Body of Christ to accomplish God’s will. They are not job descriptions which limit our responsibility in the Body of Christ.

B. Experiment

Look for needs and volunteer

C. Examine Your Feelings

What needs do you see? What do you enjoy? (joy = Chara. Char is the root of both joy and grace.)

D. Evaluate Your Effectiveness

Spiritual Gifts are task oriented. They are designed to build the Body of Christ. Thus, they should work. If you think you have a gift, but the Body of Christ is not being built up by it, then, a) it is not a gift, b) wrong ministry or c) need some development.

Caution: Effectiveness does not necessarily mean one is Spirit-filled. God will sometimes bless the exercise of a gift in spite of the spiritual condition of the person.

E. Expect Confirmation

Gifts are not for us. They are for the Body. You should expect the Body to confirm the action of the gift in their lives.

VIII. Barriers to Development

Like any muscle, gifts only develop through exercise and atrophy through lack of exercise. Following are six reasons why we don't develop our gifts.

- A. Wrong Priorities
- B. Lack Encouragement from Others
- C. No Structures to Practice in
- D. Insecurities
- E. Like to Maintain Options
- F. Desire to Please Self over God

Tendency of this generation to save ourselves rather than expend ourselves.

IX. The Gifts: An Overview

A. Set Amount or Representative

There is no agreement among the Body of Christ of whether the gifts listed are the only ones, or whether they are simply representative of kinds of gifts. Certain theological branches consider some of the gifts to have passed away.

B. What's Listed (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, 1 Peter 4)

Romans	1 Corinthians	1 Peter
prophecy	word of wisdom	Speaks
service	word of knowledge	Serves
teaches	faith	
exhorts	gifts of healing	
gives	effecting of miracles	
leads	prophecy	
mercy	distinguishing spirits	
	various tongues	
	interpreting tongues	
	helps	
	administrations	

Note to instructor: Ask if the students have questions about anything in the notes. Ask if they wrote any thoughts on X.A-R.

X. The Gifts: Defined

The best way to define the gifts is according to their function. The following is based upon “Wesley Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire” by Donald Hohensee. (*Write down any thoughts you have on A-R*)

A. Administration

The special ability to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the body of Christ and to devise and execute plans for the accomplishment of those goals in an efficient manner.

B. Discerning of Spirits

The special ability to know with assurance whether certain behavior, belief and/or ministry purported to be of God is in reality divine, human or Satanic.

C. Exhortation

The special ability to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement and counsel to other members of the body of Christ in such a way that they realign and are ready for action.

D. Faith

The special ability to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purpose of God for the future of His work.

E. Giving

The special ability to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.

F. Healing

The special ability to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means.

G. Helps

The special ability to invest one’s talents in the life and ministry of other members of the body, enabling the person helped to increase the effectiveness of his or her spiritual gifts.

H. Hospitality

The special ability to provide an open house and a warm welcome for those in need of food and lodging and make them feel at home and part of the family.

I. Interpretation of Tongues

The special ability to make known in the vernacular the message of one who speaks in tongues, without having learned the tongue.

J. Knowledge

The special ability to discover, analyze and clarify information and ideas which are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the church. In some rare cases, there could be a “Word of Knowledge” as demonstrated by Peter in Acts 5:3,4.

K. Leadership

The special ability to set goals in accordance with God’s purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God. They are people oriented and able to rally people around a common cause.

L. Mercy

The special ability to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds which reflect Christ’s love and alleviate the suffering.

M. Miracles

The special ability to serve as intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that have altered the ordinary course of nature.

N. Prophecy

The ability to proclaim the Word of God with divine unction which brings conviction to the hearers so that they recognize that it is truly the Word of God and that they must do something about it. This is forth-telling. Prophecy can also be foretelling the future (which must be correct 100% of the time – Deuteronomy 18:21, 22).

O. Service

The special ability to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God’s work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals.

P. Teaching

The special ability to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the body in such a way that others learn it and apply it.

Q. Tongues

The special ability to a) speak to God in a language they have never learned and/or b) to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely anointed utterance in a language they have never learned, or c) communicate an evangelistic message in a human language they've never learned.

R. Wisdom

The special ability to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ.

Note to instructor: Have the students get into their ministry (Target Area) teams to discuss this page. If they are not in ministry teams, have them get into groups of 3 or 4 to discuss this page. At the end, wrap up the session by asking, "Has this been helpful to you and if so, how?"

Inventory of Spiritual Gifts

1. What needs do I see in the Body of Christ that I would love to be a part of satisfying or fixing?
2. What activities have I seen the greatest fruitfulness in over the past twelve months?
3. Rank these in terms of enjoyment. (first highest, last lowest)
4. From these activities, for which ones have you received the greatest affirmation or praise from other Christians?
5. Are there other activities that Christians have affirmed you in, that are not listed above? Name these and list these by degree of affirmation from others.
6. Look over the spiritual gifts, which gifts align closest with the activities you listed above?