

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

Christmas and birthdays are always fun times of celebration, but no celebration is complete without a gift. Sometimes, gifts are given from groups of people. Sometimes, they are given from just an individual. But most of the time, gifts are given with YOU in mind! Someone bought you a gift or made you the perfect present that they thought that you would really enjoy or could use.

God also is a gift-giver! In fact, I often think of His gifts and how great they are whenever I give someone else a gift. Here's how the Bible describes God as a gift-giver.

Matthew 7:11: "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your _____ in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

That's really Who God is...a gift-giver. He loves to bless us with wonderful gifts that help us in life and make us prosper. Here's the thing, though...He gives each and every one of us unique gifts that are given for His special purpose! They are called "Spiritual Gifts," and He gives them so that you can use them to further the mission of spreading the Gospel.

There are three places in the New Testament where Spiritual Gifts are mentioned (Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12:6-8). Here's how Paul refers to them in Romans.

Romans 12:6-8: "We have different gifts according to the grace given us. If one's gift is prophecy, let him use it in proportion to his faith; if it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is giving, let him give generously; if it is leading, let him lead with diligence; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

Some of the gifts that jump out of that verse are: serving, teaching, encouraging, prophecy, giving and leading. These are all very different, and yet each gift is so valuable in God's mission of sharing His message with the world.

Each of us has Spiritual Gifts! They are God-given, and they are specifically for you to use in your context (where you live, where you work, the church that you attend) to help spread His message.

SO WHAT GIFTS DO I HAVE???

Take a few minutes to take this basic Spiritual Gifts Inventory. It will help you identify the gifts that God has given you. Simply place a check mark next to the statements that describe you. After you go through each statement, total your check marks at the bottom for each corresponding letter.

1. ____ I prefer ministering by myself rather than in a group. G
2. ____ People often say I am impulsive and direct. A
3. ____ My financial resources are above average. A
4. ____ I like to counsel people on a short-term basis. D
5. ____ I am a task-oriented person. G
6. ____ I love directing other people's work. B
7. ____ It's natural for me to show kindness to people. E
8. ____ People learn easily from me. C
9. ____ I can be very persuasive. F
10. ____ More than 10% of my income goes for Christian causes. A
11. ____ People often follow my advice. D
12. ____ I normally use several books in lesson preparation. C
13. ____ I like to recruit and lead people. B

14. ____ One-on-one relationships are important to me. E
15. ____ I possess a variety of talents and abilities. G
16. ____ I want to measure everything by God's Word. F
17. ____ Material possessions don't mean much to me. A
18. ____ Discouraged people are encouraged by my words. D
19. ____ Being accurate and truthful are important to me. C
20. ____ I love the challenge of accomplishing an organization goal. G
21. ____ Other people's spiritual welfare genuinely concern me. D
22. ____ I usually make quick decisions. F
23. ____ I look for ways to help the unfortunate. E
24. ____ Criticism doesn't bother me. C
25. ____ I often volunteer my time and talents to worthwhile causes. G
26. ____ I am usually self-confident. B
27. ____ I don't expect repayment for favors I do for others. E
28. ____ I enjoy being responsible for the success of the group. B
29. ____ When a question about truth comes up, I am normally right. F
30. ____ Deadlines challenge me, and I usually meet them on time. B
31. ____ People in pain are comforted by my presence. D

TOTALS: A ____ , B ____ , C ____ , D ____ , E ____ , F ____ , G ____
Recording a 3, 4 or 5 after a letter indicates a Spiritual Gift.

Now that you've taken the inventory and totaled up the check marks at the bottom, you should have one, two or more possible Spiritual Gifts that God has given you. If you're not sure, that's ok too. As you continue knowing God on a deeper level, He will continue to show you the gifts that He has given you and how you can use them for Him.

Let's take just a few minutes to go through the gifts that you identified. Below are short descriptions of each gift. If you have it, talk with someone else about how you can use this gift in the local church and how it can be used to help spread God's message of love and hope to others.

A. GIVING: You contribute material resources and do God's work with liberality and cheerfulness. You contribute sacrificially, motivate others and don't shun pressure or publicity.

B. ADMINISTRATION: You lead and communicate in such a way that people work harmoniously to reach goals for God's purpose. You enjoy being a leader and can endure adverse reaction to get the job done. You enjoy seeing tasks complete; are able to set guidelines, schedules and policies. You can delegate to get the work done.

C. TEACHING: You communicate the truth with obvious results. You believe your gift is foundational and work systematically and with accuracy.

D. EXHORTATION: You minister by giving comfort, consolation and encouragement so people feel helped and healed. Problems are only challenges, and you are drawn to those seeking spiritual growth. You can share personal failures to prompt others to talk. Learning and teaching practical information is your desire.

E. MERCY: You feel compassion for those who are suffering and perform deeds to reflect God's love. You are naturally drawn to hurting people, sensitive, giving, loving and desire healing.

F. PROPHECY: The goal of those who have the gift of prophecy is to bring persons face to face with God. You discern and reveal motives and actions and have strong convictions that you feel the need to express. You are impulsive, direct, persuasive and a strong person.

G. SERVING: You identify and meet the needs of others using personal as well as other resources. You see needs and enjoy responding. You work best short-term and alone - do it now and do it quickly. You possess endurance and stamina and have a tendency to do too much.

Well, what did you think? Did you see some of those gifts in your life? Did you see how God has given you gifts? Did you figure out how you can use them in the local church?

God has given each disciple gifts for them to glorify Him. And unlike humans that sometimes get a gift that isn't really that great, He gives REALLY good gifts that are perfect for each believer.

James puts it this way...

James 1:17: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

God's Spiritual Gifts are perfect, just for you, and are to be used to be on God's mission.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about Spiritual Gifts?
 2. Were you surprised at your gifts? Why?
 3. What will you do with your gifts to help God's mission?
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LESSON 10: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

