

THE STUDY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.”
1 Corinthians 12:1*

Spiritual Gifts are divine abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God’s design and grace for the common good of the body of Christ. The body of Christ is made up of every born again believer. The gift/gifts are given by the Holy Spirit at the moment a person makes a commitment to Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Spiritual Gifts are not talents; cannot be earned; nor something you are born with.

GIFT DESCRIPTIONS

Administration: *1 Corinthians 12:28*

Meaning: To steer

Description: The divine enablement to plan and execute procedures which guides the church to accomplish God’s will and goals.

Characteristics:

1. Develop strategies to reach identified goals
2. Assist ministries to become more effective and efficient
3. Create order out of organizational chaos
4. Manage or coordinate a variety of responsibilities to accomplish a task
5. Organize people, tasks or events

Apostles: *Ephesians 4:11*

Meaning: To be sent with a message

Description: The divine ability to exercise gentle leadership or oversight in developing the ministry of the church. The gift is exercised through missions / missionary activity.

Characteristics:

1. Pioneer and establish new ministries or churches
2. Adapt to different surroundings by being culturally sensitive and aware
3. Desire to minister to unreached people in other communities or countries
4. Have responsibilities to oversee ministries or groups of churches
5. Demonstrate authority and vision for the mission of the church

Discernment: *I Corinthians 12:7-11*

Meaning: To separate or make a distinction

Description: The divine enablement to distinguish between truth and error. It is the ability to discern the spirits, differentiating between good and evil, right and wrong.

Characteristics:

1. Distinguish truth from error, right from wrong, pure motives from impure
2. Identify deception in others with accuracy and appropriateness
3. Determine whether a word attributed to God is authentic
4. Recognize inconsistencies in a teaching, prophetic message or interpretation
5. Are able to sense the presence of evil

Exhortation: *Romans 12:8*

Meaning: To come along side of

Description: The divine enablement to present truth so as to strengthen, comfort, or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith.

Characteristics:

1. Come to the side of those who are discouraged to strengthen and reassure them
2. Challenge, comfort; or confront others to trust and hope in the promises of God
3. Urge others to action by applying biblical truth
4. Motivate others to grow
5. Emphasize God's promises and to have confidence in his will

Evangelism: *Ephesians 4:11*

Meaning: To bring good news

Description: The divine enablement to effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers so they respond in faith and move toward discipleship.

Characteristics:

1. Communicate the message of Christ with clarity and conviction
2. Seek out opportunities to talk to unbelievers about spiritual matters
3. Challenge unbelievers to faith and to become fully devoted followers of Christ
4. Adapt their presentation of the gospel to connect with the individual's needs
5. Seek opportunities to build relationships with unbelievers

Faith: *1 Corinthians 12:9*

Meaning: To trust, have confidence, believe

Description: The divine enablement to act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief in God's ability to fulfill his purposes.

Characteristics:

1. Believe the promises of God and inspire others to do the same
2. Act in complete confidence of God's ability to overcome obstacles
3. Demonstrate an attitude of trust in God's will and his promises
4. Advance the cause of Christ because they go forward when others will not
5. Ask God for what is needed and trust him for his provision

Giving: *Romans 12:8*

Meaning: To give part of, share

Description: The divine enablement to recognize God's blessings and respond by generously, sacrificially and cheerfully giving and looking for no return.

Characteristics:

1. Manage their finances and limit their lifestyles in order to give as much of their resources as possible.
2. Support the work of ministry with sacrificial gifts to advance the Kingdom
3. Meet tangible needs that enable spiritual growth to occur
4. Provide resources, generously and cheerfully, trusting God for his provision
5. May have a special ability to make money so that they may use it to further God's work

Hospitality: *1 Peter 4:9*

Meaning: To love strangers

Description: The divine enablement to care for people by providing fellowship, food, and shelter. Always willing to invite guest into their home.

Characteristics:

1. Provide an environment where people feel valued and cared for
2. Able to meet visitors at church and help them to feel welcomed
3. Create a safe and comfortable setting where relationships can develop
4. Enjoy reaching out to new in the church or in the community
5. Set people at ease in unfamiliar surroundings

Knowledge: *1 Corinthians 12:8*

Meaning: To know

Description: The divine enablement to learn and retain information as well as clarify scripture essential to the work and mission of the church.

Characteristics:

1. Receive truth which enables them to better serve the body
2. Search the scriptures for insight, understanding, and truth
3. Able to discover new truths in scripture
4. Organize information for teaching and practical use
5. Know how to obtain information by using a wide range of study resources

Leadership: *Romans 12:8*

Meaning: To stand before

Description: The divine enablement to cast vision, motivate others so that the “big picture” can be seen to accomplish God’s purpose.

Characteristics:

1. Provide direction for God’s people or ministry
2. Motivate others to perform to their highest God given potential
3. Able to communicate a vision in a way that others commit to making it a reality
4. Able to work with different stages of spiritual maturity
5. Able to make critical decisions when necessary

Mercy: *Romans 12:8*

Meaning: To have compassion

Description: The divine enablement to cheerfully and practically help those who are suffering or are in need, compassion moved to action.

Characteristics:

1. Drawn toward opportunities to practically meet the needs of those who are suffering
2. Find fulfillment in visiting people with needs or who are lonely and forgotten
3. Express love, grace, and dignity to those facing hardships and crisis
4. Serve in difficult or unsightly circumstances and do so cheerfully
5. Tend to place the needs of others ahead of their own

Prophecy: *1 Corinthians 12:10, 28 Ephesians 4:11-14 Romans 12:6*

Meaning: To speak boldly

Description: The divine enablement to reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely manner in order to build up the body of believers.

Characteristics:

1. Expose sin or deception in others for the purpose of reconciliation
2. Able to translate words and messages of God in a way that motivates, edifies, and confronts believers
3. See truth that others often fail to see and challenge them to respond
4. Warn of God's immediate or future judgment if there is no repentance
5. Able to share strong biblical convictions

Service / Helps: *1 Corinthians 12:28*

Meaning: To assist in meeting needs

Description: The divine enablement to accomplish practical and necessary tasks which free-up, support, and meet the needs of others.

Characteristics:

1. Serve behind the scenes wherever needed to support the gifts and ministries of others
2. See the tangible and practical things to be done and enjoy doing them
3. Sense God's purpose in meeting everyday responsibilities
4. Have a servant's heart and a passion to help people
5. Enjoy knowing that they are freeing up others to do what God has called them to do

Shepherding: *Ephesians 4:11-14*

Meaning: To tend to or care for

Description: The divine enablement to provide spiritual leadership for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

Characteristics:

1. Take responsibility to nurture the whole person in their walk with God
2. Provide guidance and oversight to a group of God's people
3. Model with their life what it means to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus
4. Establish trust and confidence through long-term relationships
5. Are driven to help others reach their full potential for Christ

Teaching: *Romans 12:7*

Meaning: To instruct

Description: The divine enablement to instruct members in the truths and doctrines of God's word for the purpose of building up, unifying and maturing the body of believers.

Characteristics:

1. Communicate biblical truth that inspires greater obedience to the word
2. Seek out opportunities to speak biblical insight into daily situations
3. Present the whole counsel of God for maximum life change
4. Give attention to detail and accuracy
5. Prepare through extended times of study and reflection

Wisdom: *I Corinthians 12:8*

Meaning: To apply spiritual truths practically

Description: The divine enablement to discern the work of the Holy Spirit and apply His teachings and actions to the spiritual needs of the body of believers.

Characteristics:

1. Able to recognize God as the primary source of wisdom and direction
2. Receive and understanding of what is necessary to meet the needs of the Body
3. Takes pleasure in counseling others
4. Hear the spirit provide direction for God's best in a given situation
5. Apply spiritual truth in specific and practical ways

Research Resources

1981 Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts by Kenneth Kinghorn

2003 Lifeway Christian Resources

1993 Gene Wilkes – Lifeway Christian Resources

Wikipedia – Spiritual Gifts