

**Title:** Theology of Spiritual Gifts, part 3  
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### **How to Discern Your Spiritual Gifts**

If the Holy Spirit provides us with spiritual gifts, then He is also the person to illuminate for us what those gifts are. Ask the Spirit, and ask those around you who also have the Spirit.

### **Some Additional Guiding Principles**

#### **Unity and Diversity**

God's gift of the Holy Spirit to us is the foundation for the Church's unity. The Holy Spirit's gifts (spiritual gifts) to us are the foundation for the Church's diverse ministry.

#### **Receiving and Giving**

As much as each of us needs a willingness to use our spiritual gifts, each of us also needs a willingness to receive what other believers can give us through their gifts.

#### **Spontaneity and Order**

Order is from the Spirit, just as spontaneity is.

#### **Spirit and Mind**

When it comes to spiritual gifts, we can't only use our minds. But spiritual gifts are not to be anti-mind or irrational.

#### **Effectiveness and Excuseful-ness**

We should all seek to use our spiritual gifts, and to serve in ways that are most effective for that gifting. But one's spiritual gifts shouldn't be the excuse not to serve in places where there are needs.

### **Some Spiritual Gift Debates**

**Cessationism vs. Continuationism**

*“We must be very careful neither to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit by attributing his work to the devil, nor to quench the Holy Spirit by resolving to contain him within our own safe, traditional patterns. On the other hand, we should also not manifest a sinful discontent with his more normal and usual operations in us. Abnormal experiences are not necessary to Christian maturity.” -John Stott*

## **Charismatic Gifts vs. Non-Charismatic Gifts**

All spiritual gifts are charismatic gifts.

### **List of Spiritual Gifts**

**Wisdom** (1 Cor. 12:8) has to do with the ability to speak wisely into complex and confusing situations.

- Used to help one another be wise and love what is good.
- Used to provide wise counsel to leaders facing tough situations.

**Discernment** (1 Cor. 12:10) has to do with being able to see the sometimes subtle difference between God's purposes and Satan's.

- Used in prayer, in decision-making, and for those seeking ordained ministry
- Needed to determine the authenticity of spiritual gifts that don't have an objective proof of their authenticity

**Knowledge** (1 Cor. 12:8) has to do with comprehending truth (especially of God's Word and imparting that knowledge into situations which demand a deeper understanding than is readily available

- Used in study, acquisition of information, and writing
- Needed in Bible studies and small groups

**Teaching** (Rom. 12:7) has to do with the ability to communicate knowledge and ideas in ways that are readily understandable and learned.

- Order of presbyter requires the gift of teaching; but teachers come in all forms.
- Used in any environment where adults, children, or youth need to learn God's Word or how to follow Jesus.

**Shepherding** (Eph. 4:11) has to do with caring for the spiritual welfare of people.

- Another required gift for presbyters (or pastors: the word pastor is Latin for shepherd); but shepherds come in all forms.

- Used in small group environments, youth and children's ministry, counseling, and in prayer ministries.

**Faith** (1 Cor. 12:9) has to do with trusting God to do and to accomplish certain things that are beyond human capabilities.

- Every Christian is called to faith in God; but those with the gift of faith are those who can easily trust God's promises.
- Used in intercessory prayer, in visioning for the future, in counseling, and in one on one encouragement.

**Healing** (1 Cor. 12:9) has to do with praying for and imparting healing to another person in mind, body, or spirit.

- There are some people that when they pray for God's healing, God regularly answers their prayers.
- Used in prayer ministry, in pastoral care, and in outreach.

**Miracles** (1 Cor. 12:10) is quite broad, and has to do with bringing about a miraculous deed or circumstances.

- There is a wide range of ways in which we can experience the miraculous, so also a wide range of ways this gift can be used
- Needed in evangelism ministries and among missionaries who take the Gospel to the unreached.

**Prophecy** (1 Cor. 12:10) has to do with speaking prophetic truth which God brings to one's mind.

- Used to communicate a specific truth from God to a specific person or to a specific situation, or as a part of the church's public witness.
- Always requires discernment of for authenticity (1 Jn. 4:1).

**Tongues** (1 Cor. 12:10) has to do with speaking and praying in a language which is not known to one speaking

- Used in worship and prayer.
- In order for the gift of tongues to benefit the church, it has to be interpreted (1 Cor. 14); otherwise to be used privately.

**Interpretation of Tongues** (1 Cor. 12:10) has to do with translating an unintelligible word of tongues into a word which can be understood by others.

- Used along with tongues in a corporate environment.
- As with prophecy and tongues, the authenticity of the interpretation of tongues must be discerned.

**Service** (Rom. 12:7) has to do with seeing the practical needs of the body and joyfully assisting with those needs.

- Order of Deacon requires this gift; but wherever there are needs in the church, service says: "I can help with that."

**Mercy** (Rom. 12:8) has to do with feeling compassion for and acting on behalf of those who are hurting and needy.

- All Christians are to be merciful, but the gift of mercy is manifest in a gut level response to suffering.
- Used in everyday relationships for encouragement and empathy, in pastoral care, and for ordained Deacons.

**Generosity** (*Rom. 12:8*) has to do with giving above and beyond what is normal among the people of God.

- As with gifts like faith and mercy, all believers are expected to give what God is due, but those with the gift of generosity love to give freely and sacrificially.
- Needed for benevolence and blessing the needy, as well as for expanding the mission of the gospel locally and globally.

**Administration** (*1 Cor. 12:28*) has to do with organizing people and processes in ways that will bring about effective and efficient ministry.

- Used to ensure that the physical space and resources maximize the work that takes place there, as well as in the coordination of teams and volunteers to lead and serve.

**Exhortation** (*Rom. 12:8*) has to do with calling God's people to right belief and right practice with truth and love.

- Needed by those who are teaching and shepherding
- Used in a number of different contexts: counseling, mentoring, accountability partnerships, and discipleship.

**Leadership** (*Rom. 12:8*) has to do with directing and motivating people to accomplish God's purposes.

- This benefits anyone who takes up a leadership role; but those with the gift of leadership don't need an official role in order to lead. They just lead, and people are willing to follow.
- There are a wide variety of applications.

**Evangelism** (*Eph. 4:11*) has to do with the ability to communicate the truths of the Gospel to non-Christians in such a way that they hear and respond.

- We're all called to be witnesses of the Gospel; but those with the gift of evangelism have a deep burden for the lost, and are persuasive. When they share the Gospel, people respond.

**Apostleship** (*Eph. 4:11*) has to do with the ability to expand the ministry of the church into new territories and to help the people of God fulfill the Great Commission.

- The office of "Apostle" refers only to the Twelve, to Paul and to a few others in the NT. These were eye-witnesses of Christ, were personally appointed by him, and had unique authority.
- Those with the gift of apostleship have a hunger to witness for Christ where witness sorely needed. Many missionaries, ministry leaders and church planters are motivated by this gift.