

“The What and Where of Spiritual Gifts”

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"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord (Jesus Christ); and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God (the Father) who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Cor. 12:5-7)

Personality traits are natural talent are resources all people possess. These are not the same as spiritual gifts which are given to us by God and received through the power of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual Gifts are distributed at the time we become Christians and are reallocated and distributed as the Spirit sees fit throughout the rest of our spiritual journey. Both spiritual gifts and natural talents must be used in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in the desires of our own flesh so that we might please God and bring positive results.

There is no definitive listing of Spiritual Gifts, but there are gifts that consistently are lifted up in scripture and by scholars. The differing Spiritual Gifts are listed in Romans 12, Ephesians 4, I Corinthians 13-15, and elsewhere. New Testament scholars differ as to whether the list totals 22, or fewer, gifts. The gifts are divided into (1) teaching/leadership gifts, (2) service gifts, and (3) sign gifts given to authenticate the work of apostles and prophets.

Here is a rather complete list:

1. Apostleship

(apostolos) The Greek word means "one sent forth" (on an official errand), i.e., an ambassador. In addition to the twelve original disciples who became apostles, Paul was added to the list of those commissioned by God to lay the foundations of the Christian church and impart a full body of truth which would guide Christian faith and conduct. There were also other apostles, for example, Barnabas, Acts 14:4,14; Andronicus and Junia, Romans 16:7, 2 Corinthians 8:23; Philippians 2:25.

Apostleship today would be acted out among missionaries who establish churches in foreign lands where the gospel has not yet been proclaimed. People in the church today with the apostleship gift are the skeleton and musculature of the human body.

2. Prophecy

(prophetes), lit: "to speak forth," to proclaim the mind and counsel of God. Prophets vigorously stimulate and challenge the Body of Christ, pastor-teachers patiently feed the sheep and care for their needs. Prophets are to edify, exhort and console, (see 1 Cor. 14:3).

3. Evangelism

(evangelistes) from eu = well, plus angelos = messenger. The gift of bringing the good news of God to unbelievers individually and in groups. The content of the message is outlined in I Cor. 15. The digestive apparatus of the human body which has the ability to take material which is not a part of the body and transform it into parts of the body. Evangelists are also to teach other believers how to lead people to the Lord Jesus.

4. Pastoring

(poimenes) to be responsible for spiritually caring for, protecting, guiding, and feeding a group of believers entrusted to one's care.

5. Teaching

(kai didaskalos) The circulatory system of the human body which "cleanses and feeds" the members of the body.

6. Administration

(kubernesis = government). To pilot, guide, or steer as one steers a ship. To preside over the assembly and guide the proceedings. In order to preserve order in Christian meetings the person in charge should know how to direct the course of events towards a spiritual goal as led by the Spirit.

7. Leadership

(proistemi) "to stand before" to attend with care and diligence, as the head of a family does. Perhaps this also includes setting the pace, imparting direction and goals in a ministry. Most people like to follow a good leader. God's leaders are not only visionary they lead by serving.

8. Faith

(pistis), the ability to believe God for new direction and power. Visionary faith that sets in motion events others can join in and follow. "Without a vision the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18).

9. Knowledge

(logos gnoseos), lit: "word of knowledge," systematic understanding of truth in broad, sweeping terms so that others may be trained and instructed. Not supernatural utterances from God. All Christians have some knowledge, but there is also a gift of knowledge given to some so they may teach and edify the Body. The ability to sum up lots of information or pieces of knowledge so as to give a clear concise overview.

10. Wisdom

(logos sophias), lit: "word of wisdom." The ability to make wise choices and decisions at critical forks in the road. Very valuable to an individual or a group when it needs to choose but has no specifically clear information on the best choice. All Christians can grow in wisdom as they make a series of wise choices over a life-time, however there is also a gift of wisdom given to some in the Body of Christ.

11. Encouragement

(paraklesis), to come alongside, comfort, strengthen, to counsel, exhort, bring aid, admonish. The same Greek word describes the Holy Spirit's role in our lives.

12. Discernment

(diakriseis pneumatou), is a gift to judge or evaluate the spirits so as to distinguish whether something is from God or from an evil source. Similar to the natural talent of intuition but of course more reliable and consistent.

13. Ministering

(diakonia) A wide variety of activities one performs with the help of God to comfort, encourage, support and build up God's people.

14. Service/Helps

(antilempsis), "to lay hold of (and support)", especially the weak and needy. To minister to others and meet their needs.

15. Giving

(metadidomi), is the gift of sharing and imparting, not only money but other resources. All Christians should learn to give generously since "God loves a 'hilarious' giver", however certain individuals are given the gift of giving so they can act as stewards over material resources in the Body of Christ.

16. Tongues/"kinds of languages"

(glossalalia) The ability to speak in other languages not previously learned, but known languages to people. The gift is for the purpose of praising God. It must be directed to God, not to be used to pass a message from one member to another or from one member to the congregation. Not a means of communication from the Lord to the flock.

17. Interpretation of Tongues

The ability to translate unknown languages so as to edify and instruct others regarding what has been said.

18. Miracles

(energemata dunameon) The ability to raise people from the dead, call fire down from heaven and otherwise present signs that manifest and authenticate the power of God in certain situations.

19. Healing

(charismata iamaton) Ability to heal at the physical, emotional and spiritual levels. God sometimes heals physically, but more often emotionally and spiritually. A valuable gift for a counselor.

20. Mercy

(eleos) An ability to be touched inwardly with compassion. To be filled with "cheerfulness".

21. Hospitality

(philoxenia), lit: "love of people/strangers." Those who believe this is a separate gift also still believe that all believers are to practice hospitality.