

Spiritual Gifts

ADMINISTRATION

The divine enablement to understand what makes an organization function, and the special ability to plan, execute, and achieve procedures that increase the church's organizational effectiveness. This gift is distinguished from regular administration in that its focus is to edify the church.

- **Characteristics:** The administrator loves to organize, strategize, and systematize things so as to make them run more smoothly, efficiently, and effectively. They are experts at knowing how something works or functions. They are constant improvers of the system and can tell others how to get something done or get from point A to point B. They are great trouble shooters and anticipators of problems.
- **Cautions:** They can become so focused on the tasks, charts, and graphs that they lose sight of the people. They may be too "black and white" in their approach to issues and problems. They can tend to lack flexibility and depend on systems and strategies more than the Holy Spirit to get things done. They are detailed people who need the visionary leader to inspire them. In leadership, this gift needs to be supportive of apostles, prophets, and teachers.
- **Scripture Example:** Baruch (Jeremiah 36:4-8)

APOSTLE

Apostle literally means "one sent forth". A true apostle is a minister sent by God to accomplish a specific work. Apostles have the highest level of spiritual authority compared to all other gifts. Apostles are sent forth to establish and build up groups of believers in all areas of the believer's lives. Apostles become Fathers to their ministries.

- **Characteristics:** The apostolic gift includes the ability to do whatever is necessary to accomplish what God has sent the apostle to do. They release blessings through their words, prayers, and the laying on of hands. Apostles also strongly minister in the other four ministry gifts of leadership; Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher. Apostles attract leaders in a supernatural way with strong gifts of pastoring, teaching, evangelism, and prophecy. They may remain as heads of ministries they have founded or they may move on leaving the leadership to others. The legacy of a prophet is his words but the legacy of an apostle is his works. They see the overall ministry and are burdened for the churches and the people under their care. They know supernaturally when a part of their work needs help or when a minister under them is suffering. Apostles have big hearts and out of their hearts flow spiritual blessings and anointings for those under them. Often apostles are looked up to beyond their local church and they may find themselves connected with others, ministering to a group, association, or denomination.
- **Cautions:** The biggest caution is that most churches function without an apostle at the helm. This seems to be a rare gift and limited to only a few. When an apostle is found, they need to surround themselves with strong leaders who can balance their opinions and strengthen their ministries. Apostles need to remember that most under their care do not have the same spiritual passion and their expectations of others can be very high. For those who see this gift primarily as church planting, they may have the potential of always looking abroad and not developing the ministry of their own local church before handing it off to others.
- **Scripture Example:** Paul's Missionary Journeys

Spiritual Gifts

DISCERNING of SPIRITS

The divine ability to sense the presence of spiritual forces and distinguish between truth and error. (I Thess 5:19-22)

- Characteristics: These people have a keen sense of what is right and what is wrong “spiritually speaking”. They are able to distinguish truth from error in a divine fashion which was especially crucial in the early church when the Bible was not readily available to all, thus there was no way to measure the claims of the teacher or prophet. These people have a keen sense of spiritual intuition and may be called upon often by the Holy Spirit for there is an element in which those with this gift can more easily identify the spiritual influence of the demonic on individuals or in the room.
- Cautions: They may rely way too much on “feeling” and not on scripture to decide truth from error. There is a potential to either relegate this gift to the back burner, or give it too much credibility in decision making. Usually it takes years of practice to develop this gift and often shy and introverted people have it but they are unwilling to tell their leaders of their experiences and impressions for fear of being mocked. This slows down their gift development.
- Scripture Example: Nathan (2 Samuel 12); Peter (Acts 5:1-11)

ENCOURAGEMENT

The divine enablement to reassure, strengthen and affirm those around you.

- Characteristics: This person is an exhorter. The term is derived from a Greek word whose literal meaning is “to come along side”. The encourager regularly helps others to apply God's word to their lives in a productive fashion. They bring comfort to those who are going through difficult times, and they tend to be very positive and complimentary. They are expressive about God's will being attainable and their goal is to motivate, comfort, and challenge.
- Cautions: They need to guard against being a “yes man or woman” and they may not be good at confrontation when it is needed. Their optimism may not take into account when some issues need the “prophet's challenge” in order to be corrected.
- Scripture Example: Barnabus (Acts 4:36)

EVANGELISM

The divine enablement to effectively communicate the message of Christ to unbelievers who respond in faith and discipleship.

- Characteristics: This term literal means “messenger of good news”. They have a strong desire to communicate the message of salvation to a lost world. A person with this gift often looks and prays for opportunities to work Christ into the conversation. They are regularly “harvesting” lost souls for the kingdom. An evangelist isn't concerned with imparting deep spiritual truths as the teacher is, but they are motivated to help people understand and respond to the basic biblical messages. The Holy Spirit flows out of them in a way that convicts people of their sins. Excuses

Spiritual Gifts

for inactivity and indecisiveness are exposed by the light of the Spirit. Evangelists are active individual's motivating others to act. They are exciting to be around, like quick results, big crowds, fast change and are constantly moving.

- Cautions: The evangelist has the tendency to project his gift upon all other Christians and he can see witnessing as the means of measure for everyone's spirituality and godliness. Although we are all called upon to witness, the evangelist may see God call upon him more often and more dynamically. However, he may also lose sight of the other purposes of the church and see "soul saving" as the end of spiritual growth instead of the beginning of a life with Christ. Often he may lead people to Christ and then abandon them. Nowhere in Scripture does an evangelist lead a church. They are left off the list of leadership gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 because they need to be free to be mobile and somewhat independent, going where God tells them, when He tells them, and not tied down to ruling positions.
- Scripture Example: Philip (Acts 8:26-40)

FAITH

The divine awareness to see the Lord's will and act on it with an unwavering belief in God's ability.

- Characteristics: These people have an easier time trusting God for the miraculous. Their faith becomes a catalyst for others whose faith may be wavering. They pray often and easily, even in the face of adversity and act as a calming influence on others during troubled times. They are more acutely aware of God's presence and to call upon the readiness of His power. Their faith is centered only in God regardless of obstacles or the surrounding environment.
- Cautions: There may be a tendency to "claim" things for God without seeking His will. There can also be an awkwardness having faith in God to do something in any circumstance, and yet trying not to predetermine God's will in a given situation.
- Scripture Example: Abraham (Hebrews 11:8-12)

GIVING

The divine enablement and ability to contribute money and material resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality.

- Characteristics: These people give generously, freely, and joyfully. They don't just give money, but they are free with all of their possessions. They are not always the "rich" among us but they are often given the talent for making money and increasing wealth even though they have no interest in possessions. They give above and beyond their normal tithe in order to support Christ's Church. They see themselves as caretakers and stewards of their resources and they usually prefer anonymity when they give.
- Cautions: They can think that giving should give them respect and a place of leadership in the church. They can make the error of replacing serving with giving. Another caution is that those with this gift can see themselves as the ultimate authority, deciding through their giving which ministries are worthy to fund and which will die of financial neglect, rather than leave those

Spiritual Gifts

decisions to the Holy Spirit through God's appointed leaders, pastors, and ministers.

- Scripture Example: Early Believers (Acts 4:34-35)

HEALING

The divine enablement to be God's channel to restore people to health.

- Characteristics: This gift is exactly as it sounds. People with this gift have an ability to allow the Holy Spirit to work through their prayers and encouragement to bring about physical, emotional, relational, or spiritual healings. This gift seems to be exercised more often in cultures where faith is not so readily tied to "scientific principles" as it is in Western nations. The use of this gift is always to bring glory to God and authenticate the message of the gospel of salvation.
- Cautions: This could easily be seen as a special power that the individual wields. There is no magic formula or strategy which brings about healing. It is only the Holy Spirit. The focus of God's revelational gospel in Jesus Christ could be relegated to a back seat with the misuse of this gift.
- Scripture Example: Peter and John (Acts 3:6-10)

HELPS / SERVICE

The Bible doesn't give us much detail or definition on this one. They are found listed in two places in Scripture and they are different words. Service is most likely the divine enablement to attach spiritual value to the accomplishment of physical tasks within the Body of Christ. Helps is a gift listed above administration on the list of 1 Corinthians 12. Helps may be Service in the leadership positions. Therefore a working definition is: The special anointing by which one stands alongside and serves, in a very personal way, those leading the Church. The helper knows personally how to serve their needs and can sometime speak with authority on behalf of an apostle or prophet.

- Characteristics: These people are absolutely essential to the life of the church. They are the ones who flow to the obvious needs automatically. They don't need a lot recognition, just appreciation. They value serving the leaders because they see the value of serving in support of those up front. They are the ultimate team players of Christ's church. They differ from those with the gift of craftsmanship in that they focus more on the impact of people and not on the finished physical product.
- Cautions: They can devalue their contribution to the Lord's work, and they may not see their abilities as being a spiritual gift, given by the Holy Spirit. They too, can get frustrated doing their ministry and they may fall into the trap of saying "I just let My light shine for Jesus", when we are all called to speak up as His witnesses and ministers at some point and time.
- Scripture Example: Tabitha (Acts 9:36-43)

HOSPITALITY

The divine enablement to care for new or needy people by providing fellowship, food and shelter.

Spiritual Gifts

- **Characteristics:** These folks desire to make others feel comfortable, important, and accepted. They tend to gravitate to those who stand alone. They are generally friendly, warm, caring individuals who regularly have a “come-on-in-and-relax” attitude. They generally make time to be available and are not just into entertaining, but rather, showing genuine care and concern for others. The gift of hospitality differs from that of mercy in that this gift opens up the home and provides warmth and comfort by bringing others in. Whereas, mercy takes care and concern outside to others.
- **Cautions:** These people may not see their gift as “real” or “spiritual”. This gift can also provide stress in family relationships where the gift is not shared or understood by other family members. Ground rules need to be established with the exercise of the gift.
- **Scripture Example:** Gaius (Romans 16:23)

INTERPRETATION

The divine enablement to make known to the Body the message of one who is speaking in tongues (see Tongues).

- **Characteristics:** The person with this gift has the ability to interpret a message which is given in tongues to a local assembly. The point of the interpretation is to edify the body and bring glory to God. Often these people have the gift of tongues as well as interpretation.
- **Cautions:** These people can have a fear that what they are saying is not valid or authentic. They may be overly cautious to use their gift. They also need some sound biblical knowledge to know when, where, and how the Spirit may lead them to exercise this gift. It takes lots of unique experiences to develop this gift and often in the early stages of using it, pride and arrogance are the biggest pitfalls. Interpreters can wrongly assume they have some special relationship with God that is not shared by others.
- **Scripture Example:** Believers in Corinth (Romans 14)

KNOWLEDGE

It should be noted that the actual term is a word or a message of knowledge. This could mean that it is information divinely given that one could not otherwise know (see John 4:16-18). Others say that it is the divine enablement to accumulate and analyze information for the expression of God's truth. Or, a word given after careful thought and consideration. Both ideas are probable.

- **Characteristics:** This person may have a flash of insight into the needs and hurts of another person's life in order to bring about a change or correction in that person's life. Another aspect of this gift denotes a special ability to gain insight into God's word after careful and critical examination. This insight is then used to teach and edify the body of Christ, both individually and collectively. People with this gift have a deep understanding of God, His word, and His purposes.
- **Cautions:** This person can become too absorbed with collecting facts and lose sight of the purpose of “giving the word, or message of knowledge”. Many of the same cautions that exist with

Spiritual Gifts

the teacher (esoteric, too detailed, too profound, etc.) exist with this gift. In fact, this gift is often closely associated with the gift of teaching.

- Scripture Example: Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)

LEADERSHIP

The divine enablement to attract, lead, and motivate people to accomplish the work of ministry.

- Characteristics: These people are overseers and goal setters in the church. They are motivators of vision and direction. The good ones are team players and delegators who take the initiative when others do not make decisions. They are natural leaders who can point out the direction and course that others will follow. They dream big. Credibility and respect need to be built up before an individual can truly exercise this gift.
- Cautions: The leader can have the potential of becoming overconfident and perhaps demeaning of other gifts. They have the potential of losing sight of the individual and only seeing the “mass” or “the crowd”. Leaders can often tell others where the church is going and where a ministry is heading, but they are poor at charting the course in showing others how to get there. They are often poor at details. Good leaders must surround themselves with people who have the gifts of administration and of helps.
- Scripture Example: Peter (Acts 10:1-23a)

MERCY

The divine enablement to minister cheerfully and appropriately to people who are suffering.

- Characteristics: People with this gift assume the needs of others. They often desire to remove the pain of others. They aren't merely sympathetic, but they take action to alleviate the suffering. They often find themselves focused around social issues and they develop ministries along those lines (i.e. the homeless, sick, those in prison, single mothers, the poor, etc.). They reflect the heart and compassion of God.
- Cautions: They have the potential of being rescuers. Some pain and suffering is allowed and used by God as a tool to teach and correct behavior. The person with the gift of mercy needs to be aware of when God does not want the pain immediately removed, and when rescuing someone actually may perpetuate the problems in that person's life.
- Scripture Example: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35)

MIRACLES

The divine enablement to affect powerful acts which authenticate the message of Christ and glorify God. This could specifically mean "the casting out of demons". Some evidence for this exists in the fact that the word for "Miracles" used here is "dynamies" which is translated "powers" (i.e. demons) in the Greek.

Spiritual Gifts

- Characteristics: This gift may be closely associated with the gift of faith. The working of miracles, like healing, is often more commonly seen in cultures where the ties to a “scientific world view” are not so strong (our scientific views may be a barrier to faith). Someone with this gift may see God perform profound, supernatural acts which authentic the message of the gospel. Thus, it becomes a tool for evangelism in pagan cultures which do not know Christ.
- Cautions: Like healing, this gift can be seen as an end in itself. Those blessed with this gift need to use extreme caution so as not to fall into the rut of thinking they are the ones who have the ability or power to perform a supernatural act. On the other extreme, they need to have strong faith what God can and will move.
- Scripture Example: Philip (Acts 8:6-7,13)

PROPHECY

The divine enablement to proclaim God’s truth with power and clarity in a timely and culturally sensitive fashion for correction, repentance, or edification. There is New Testament evidence which indicates that future foretelling may accompany this gift, although some caution needs to be exercised.

- Characteristics: The focus is on correcting behavior and applying biblical truth to culturally sensitive issues. These people identify and try to correct deception and sin. They often seem blunt and opinionated. Generally they can cause one to be uncomfortable. There also may be the element of a flash of insight into what God is doing in another person’s life and thus a “foretelling” of that person’s future. The results of this gift cause strengthening, correction, encouragement, and ultimately comfort. It helps if the person using this gift has built up a credible reputation.
- Cautions: These people can lack compassion and may not keep love, unity, and the building up of others as their goal. This leads to discouragement and disharmony. A person with the gift of mercy helps to balance the prophet.
- Scripture Example: Agabus (Acts 11:27-28, 21:10-11)

SHEPHERDING / PASTORING

The divine enablement to lead, care for, and nurture individuals or groups in the Body as they grow in their faith.

- Characteristics: This is one who guides, protects, and nurtures God’s sheep. They provide oversight and feel the responsibility for individuals in their sphere. They teach and help others grow by serving as role models of faith and patience through hard times and mistakes. Their purpose is to disciple others in their personal, emotional, and spiritual growth. They have a divine anointing that breaks bondages off people, bondages that cause them to be independent, isolated, and insecure. The Holy Spirit guided words that come out of the hearts and mouths of pastors make their listeners able to relax, come together, and feel secure in the Body of Christ. They are excellent at one on one development over long periods of time.
- Cautions: They may have the potential of taking on too much responsibility for the development of others, not leaving the Holy Spirit as the agent of change. The fact that they are good at one on

Spiritual Gifts

one may be a liability when the care of large groups and large ministries is what is really needed. They also may devote too much time to trying to “save” the black sheep at the expense of the others. The fact that we title modern day church leaders with the term "pastor" only serves to hurt the church. Many people expect the kind of treatment a spiritually gifted pastor shows from most of their church leaders. Instead, most leaders are apostles, prophets, or teachers, NOT pastors.

- Scripture Example: John (John 1,2,3)

TEACHING

The divine enablement to understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God to the lives of listeners. The Teacher explains what the Prophet proclaims.

- Characteristics: The teacher is a good communicator. This person has a thirst for knowledge and loves to learn. He is generally self-disciplined and usually prefers to teach groups, more than one on one. Gifted teachers do not just teach Bible knowledge and doctrine, but when they explain God's truth, people are set free of sin, natural limitations, depression, fear, anxiety, and the anointing breaks bonds off the listeners, freeing them from Satan's lies and the world's deceptions. A naturally gifted teacher may be able to explain to people why they sin and what the Bible has to say about the sin, but a teacher who is spiritually gifted releases the Holy Spirit's power through the gift to set the other person free.
- Cautions: The teacher may struggle to keep things simple because he is too detailed, not wanting to miss anything. He can be too profound, theological, and even esoteric. This can result in a sense of superiority and the teacher becomes unteachable. He can also get frustrated when others don't get it and can't keep up his pace for knowledge and insight. Teachers are often good communicators and lousy listeners.
- Scripture Example: Timothy and others (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

TONGUES

The divine enablement to speak in unknown tongues, or languages for the edification of those who hear.

- Characteristics: In private times of worship a person may speak prayerfully in a language that they may not have learned. Out of the depths of personal praise one may express unintelligible utterances to God. It edifies and inspires one to love God more and serve the body of Christ. On occasion this gift may show itself in corporate worship where others are then commanded to interpret.
- Cautions: This gift cannot be projected on all believers. Scripture states that it is the least of the gifts. If there is no interpretation then the one with the gift must keep silent in the church. In the early days of the church when there was no official Bible, tongues and interpretation was used to reveal God's word to the people. Today, since the canon is closed, there can be no new revelation and any message of tongues and interpretation must be weighed against Scripture as to its truth and validity.
- Scripture Example: Paul (1 Corinthians 14:18)

Spiritual Gifts

WISDOM

The divine enablement to apply knowledge and insight in accordance with God's purposes for someone's life.

- Characteristics: These people are readily sought for advice and counsel in spiritual matters. They can anticipate consequences and implications of a person's actions and make practical applications of biblical truth. In the midst of conflict they can see simple solutions and have a high degree of common sense. The person with this gift knows how to fix problems and meet challenges.
- Cautions: They may not see their gift as spiritual and thus rely too heavily on their own abilities to solve issues rather than resort to prayer and seeking God's will. They also need to enhance their abilities by increasing in knowledge, specifically, God's word.
- Scripture Example: Solomon (1 Kings 4:29-31); Steven (Acts 6:10)