

Spiritual Gifts - Defining, Distinguishing, Discovering

Defining Spiritual Gifts

A spiritual gift as “a special ability that God gives, according to God’s grace, to each member of the body of Christ to be used for the development of the kingdom.¹”

- *A spiritual gift is a special ability.*
 - Every Christian should not be expected to possess every spiritual gift because each Christian provides a unique contribution to the body of Christ.
- *A spiritual gift is God given.*
 - No one can boast about the possession of a spiritual gift because they are distributed by the Holy Spirit.
- *A spiritual gift demonstrates God’s grace.*
 - Spiritual gifts are a sign of grace, not spiritual maturity. The effectiveness of a gift, however, depends on spiritual maturity.
- *A spiritual gift is given to every believer.*
 - Every Christian has a spiritual gift and that gift should serve as a guide in ministry service.
- *Spiritual gifts are for the benefit of the whole church.*
 - Individual gifts are for the collective benefit.

Distinguishing Spiritual Gifts

- *Spiritual Gifts are different from natural talent.*
 - Both natural talent and spiritual gifts have God as their source
 - Spiritual gifts are only for those who are apart of the body of Christ
 - Talents are purposed to benefit the world. Spiritual gifts are purposed to benefit the Kingdom.
- *Spiritual Gifts are different from fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).*
 - All Christians, regardless of their God-assigned gifts and ministries, should evidence the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.
 - Spiritual gifts are discovered, fruit of the Spirit are developed.
 - Spiritual gifts help define what a Christian does, the fruit of the spirit helps define what a Christian is.
- *Spiritual Gifts are different from Christian responsibility.*
 - Christian responsibility are the actions that should characterize every Christian.
 - Spiritual gifts can correspond to a Christian responsibility, though they are not the same thing.
 - The absence of a particular spiritual gift should not keep us from fulfilling our Christian responsibilities.
- *Spiritual Gifts are not for self-fulfillment.*
 - Spiritual gifts are for the purpose of lovingly enriching other believers.
 - Using spiritual gifts should provide a measure of joy and fulfillment.
 - The focus of spiritual gifts should be edification of the church, not seeking the spotlight.
- *Spiritual Gifts are not a temporary empowerment.*
 - Since spiritual gifts are an important part of the body of Christ, therefore they are a lasting empowerment from God.

¹ This definition is taken from the book *Colors of Ministry* by Charles Schwarz.

- The dominance or sub ordinance of our spiritual gifts can change with time and new gifts can be given or revealed by God along our Christian journey.

Steps to Discovering Spiritual Gifts

- Open Your Heart to the Lord in Prayer (James 1:5)
- Commit to Using the Gifts that God Identifies (1 Peter 4:10)
- Learn the Ways the Spirit graces Individuals with Gifts
- Take Spiritual Gifts Identification Survey
- Try Using an Assortment of Spiritual Gifts
- Verify the Effectiveness of Your Gift(s)
- Seek the Validation of Other Believers

List of Spiritual Gifts²

Romans 12:6-8

Prophecy (preaching, inspired utterance)

Service (ministry)

Teaching

Exhortation (stimulating faith, encouraging)

Giving (contributing, generosity, sharing)

Leadership (authority, ruling)

Mercy (sympathy, comfort to the sorrowing, showing kindness)

1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28

Wisdom (wise advice, wise speech)

Knowledge (studying, speaking with knowledge)

Faith

Healing

Miracles (doing great deeds)

Discerning of spirits (discrimination in spiritual matters)

Tongues (speaking in languages never learned, ecstatic utterance)

Interpretation of Tongues

Apostle

Helps

Administration (governments, getting others to work together)

Ephesians 4:11

Evangelist

Pastor (caring for God's people)

Other Gifts

Celibacy (continence) - 1 Corinthians 7:7

Voluntary poverty - 1 Corinthians 13:3

Martyrdom - 1 Corinthians 13:3

Missionary - Ephesians 3:6-8

Hospitality - 1 Peter 4:9

Intercession

Deliverance (exorcism, casting out demons)

Leading Worship (music)

² This list is compiled from *Discover Your Spiritual Gifts* by C. Peter Wagner