

Spiritual Gifts - Defined and Applied (part 1)

There are 27 spiritual gifts according to the studies of C. Peter Wagner. We will explore these gifts seeking to define them according to their scriptural context and discover practical application of these gifts within the body of Christ universal and the local church in particular.

Prophecy

- ***Defined:*** The Greek word for the gift of prophecy is *propheteia* which is the ability to receive a divinely inspired message and deliver it to others in the church. These messages can take the form of exhortation, correction, disclosure of secret sins, prediction of future events, comfort, inspiration, or other revelations given to equip and edify the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:1-5)
- ***Practical Application:*** Those with the gift of prophecy have a deep desire for individual and communal righteousness, truth, and justice. The gift of prophecy is the empowerment to speak truth to power. People gifted with the gift of prophecy are suited to serve national church leaders, teacher, evangelists, authors, counselors.

Pastor

- ***Defined:*** The Greek word for pastor is *poimen* and simply means shepherd or overseer. The goal of the pastor is to reveal the glory of God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit to a people who need God's grace for life. The Holy Spirit gives the spiritual gift of pastor to some in the church to humbly teach them, guide them, protect them, and to lead them in the mission that God has for His church, namely the Great Commission. (Ephesians 4:11, Jeremiah 3:15, Acts 20:28, John 10:11-18)
- ***Practical Appreciation:*** Every person with the gift of pastoring is not called to the office of pastor. Those with the gifting of pastoring can serve in a senior or staff pastor, as well as, denominational and auxiliary leader, convention presidents, or demographic-specific ministry leaders.

Teaching

- ***Defined:*** The Greek word for those with the spiritual gift of teaching is *didaskalos*. From the root of this word we get our English word, "didactic." The word *didasko* means to teach, instruct, instill doctrine, explain, and expound. Without this gift, the church would quickly fall into error and sin. Teachers are there to make sure that doesn't happen. They hate when Scripture is abused and used out of context or with ill intent. They love the truth and speak the truth in love. (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:28, Romans 12:7, James 3:1)
- ***Practical Application:*** Those gifted to teach may serve as senior or associate pastors, lead various educational trainings (Bible studies, small groups, etc.), provide training on various ministry related topics.

Wisdom

- ***Defined:*** The spiritual gift of wisdom, like the gift of knowledge, is also referred to as the "word of wisdom" or "utterance of wisdom." The Greek word for wisdom is *sophia* and it refers to the intimate understanding of God's Word and His commandments which results in holy and upright living. The Holy Spirit gives some the spiritual gift of wisdom to not only impart the truth and understanding to believers, but to invoke a response of holiness and worship lived out in the world and amongst God's people. Wisdom doesn't end with knowledge, but is expressed in transformed hearts and lives. (1 Corinthians 2:6-16, 12:8, James 3:13-18)
- ***Practical Application:*** Those with the gift of wisdom have a deep understanding of the holiness of God and the lack of holiness in their own hearts. They can recognize this in others as well and have

the compassion and boldness to share that truth with them. They can easily recognize where a decision or action may lead and can warn against those that may be harmful or unfruitful. They can often see through the confusion of a situation and can give direction that would help an individual or group obtain a God-glorifying goal. Those with the gift of wisdom are empowered to provide counsel, assist in conflict resolution, serve on governing board of local church or other organizations.

Knowledge

- Defined: The spiritual gift of knowledge is also known as the “word of knowledge” or “utterance of knowledge.” The Greek word for this gift is *gnosis* and it simply means knowledge and understanding. The gift of knowledge is an understanding of the things in this world and in our lives that is supplied by the Holy Spirit. The gift of knowledge allows a believer to relate the Scriptures, and particularly the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to all aspects of life in this world. They can see how it connects to every situation and circumstance and how the reality and truth of the Gospel is to inform every decision a Christian makes. This gift is closely related to the gift of wisdom. (1 Corinthians 12:8; Romans 15:14)
- Practical Application: The person with this gift is usually well-versed in the Scriptures and often has much committed to memory. They can retain the truth and communicate it effectively at the appropriate times. Those gifted in the area of knowledge may lead in ministry preparation and long term planning efforts, teaching ministries, and evangelistic efforts.

Exhortation (Encouragement)

- Defined: The Greek word for this gift is *parakleo*. It means to beseech, exhort, call upon, to encourage and to strengthen. The primary means of exhortation is to remind the hearer of the powerful and amazing work of God in Christ, particularly in regard to the saving work of Jesus in the atonement. Those with the gift of exhortation can uplift and motivate others as well as challenge and rebuke them in order to foster spiritual growth and action. The goal of the encourager is to see everyone in the church continually building up the body of Christ and glorifying God. (Romans 12:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11)
- Practical Application: People who are gifted in this way assisting those who battle depression, defeat, and despair through sharing insight, perspective, and Scripture. They motivate others to serve in their spiritual giftedness and challenge them to grow in Christ. Those with the gift of exhortation are suited to serve as ushers, greeters, visitation team members, and other positions that call for encouragement and uplift of believers.

Discernment (Discerning of Spirits)

- Defined: The spiritual gift of discernment is also known as the gift of "discernment of spirits" or "distinguishing between spirits." The Greek word for the gift of discernment is *diakrisis*. The word describes being able to distinguish, discern, judge or appraise a person, statement, situation, or environment. The Holy Spirit gives the gift of discernment to enable certain Christians to clearly recognize and distinguish between the influence of God, Satan, the world, and the flesh in a given situation. The church needs those with this gift to warn believers in times of danger or keep them from being led astray by false teaching. (1 Corinthians 12:10, Acts 5:1-10; 1 John 4:1-3)
- Practical Application: Those with this gift empowers one to distinguish between right, wrong, truth and error. This gift is a companion to the gift of prophecy. Areas of effectiveness for this gift are church leadership council, deliverance ministry, and church planning, trustee board.

Administration

- Defined: The Greek word for the spiritual gift of administration is *kubernesis*. This is a unique term that refers to a shipmaster or captain. The literal meaning is "to steer," or "to rule or govern." It is the

special ability to understand and articulate immediate and long range goals and to develop and execute plans to accomplish said goal. A person with this gift guides and counsels a community of faith so that it moves in the direction that its leadership discerns it needs to go. (1 Corinthians 12:28, Luke 14:28-30; Acts 6:1-7)

- **Practical Application:** With this gift the Holy Spirit enables certain Christians to organize, direct, and implement plans to lead others in the various ministries of the Church. Those with this gift may serve by overseeing other ministries, organize planning for church growth and logistics, conduct evangelism campaigns, manage financial affairs and organize church events.

Giving

- **Defined:** The Greek word for the spiritual gift of giving is *metadidomi*. It simply means “to impart” or “to give.” However, this word is accompanied in Romans 12:8 by another descriptive word: *haplotes*. This word tells us much more about the kind of giving that is associated with this gift. The word *haplotes* means “sincerely, generously and without pretense or hypocrisy.” The Holy Spirit imparts this gift to some in the church to meet the various needs of the church and its ministries, missionaries, or of people who do not have the means to provide fully for themselves. The goal is to encourage and provide, giving all credit to God’s love and provision. (Romans 12:8, Acts 4:36-38, 2 Corinthians 8:1-4)
- **Practical Application:** Giving as spiritual gift is not based on wealth, but being compelled to give over and above that which we are compelled to give for the sake of the ministry. Those with the gift of giving may serve as project sponsors, treasurers, financial team members and advisors.

Faith

- **Defined:** While all Christians have been given saving faith, not all receive this special gift of faith. The word for faith in the New Testament is *pistis*. It carries the notion of confidence, certainty, trust, and assurance in the object of faith. Those with this gift have a trust and confidence in God that allows them to live boldly for Him and manifest that faith in mighty ways. This gift is a supernatural conviction that God will reveal God’s power or mercy in a special way in a specific instance. (1 Corinthians 12:9, Acts 27:13-44, Hebrews 11)
- **Practical Application:** Those with the gift of faith trust that God’s sovereignty and goodness. They take God at God’s Word and put the full weight of their lives in God’s hands. They expect God to move and are not surprised when God answers a prayer or performs a miracle. People with the gift of faith may serve as prayer group leaders, church council members, long term planning committees, or church planters.

Mercy

- **Defined:** All Christians are called to be merciful because God has been merciful to us (Matthew 18:33; Ephesians 2:4-6). The Greek word for the spiritual gift of mercy is *eleeo*, meaning to be patient and compassionate toward those who are suffering or afflicted. The concern for the physical as well as spiritual need of those who are hurting is covered by the gift of mercy. Those with this gift have great empathy for others in their trials and sufferings. (Romans 12:8, Matthew 5:7; Luke 10:30-37; James 3:17; Jude 22-23)
- **Practical Application:** The spiritual gift of mercy to some in the church to love and assist those who are suffering, and walk with them until The Lord allows their burden to be lifted. Those with this spiritual gift may minister through crisis phone lines, counsel, intercession, and ministry to people and groups facing long lasting challenges.