



## WHAT DID GOD DESIGN YOU TO DO?

Can you believe we only have two sessions left of our Growth Track journey? While the last two sessions were mostly about you, we're about to zoom out. Your purpose is not just about you. It's about what God wants to do through you. Your design demands action. God wants you to do His work in the world, but He doesn't leave you hanging. He empowers you to do His work before He entrusts you to accomplish His work. All in all, we want you to be exactly who God designed you to be.

I was raised on an almost contradictory motto. Throughout school, I was taught, "If you believe in yourself, you can be anything you want to be." While the saying is cute, it couldn't be more inaccurate. No matter how hard I tried, I could not be in the NBA. I'm too young to be the president and too old to be in the Marines. Even more personal to me, I would really struggle as an accountant because numbers are hard.

Challenging this mindset is not supposed to limit you; it's supposed to encourage you. You can't be anything you want to be, and that's good news. You get to be what God made you to be. That's better.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to rain on your purpose parade. I just want you to understand that God's purpose requires work on our part. That's why God gave us "spiritual gifts" to provide the action behind our mission.

The Apostle Paul, a man who championed Christ after He left earth, was obsessed with the idea of spiritual gifts. Why? Because he wanted people to understand that God's plan is made up of God's people doing His work. If the Church was going to spread, God's people had better start serving within their spiritual gifts.

### **READ: 1 Corinthians 12:4**

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

### **Your Spiritual Gifts Are Distinct**

Notice the opening line: "There are different kinds of gifts." Not everyone is called to be a pastor, missionary, or church custodian. Not at all. Paul lists about a dozen spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians alone, in addition to other gifts in Romans and Ephesians. Some



people have the gift of serving while others have the gift of hospitality. Some people are called to loudly preach, and others are called to quietly encourage. All in all, the Bible lists about 21 spiritual gifts—and only a small fraction take place on the stage of a church.

You were created to accomplish something special. That's why God installed specific spiritual gifts into your human firmware. God made you on purpose for a purpose. All of us are called to “love God and love people” and to “spread the gospel to the ends of the earth,” but there's something more in store for you. God has something distinct in mind. Your gifts will help you get specific.

Paul wants to help the Corinthian believers live a fulfilling life, so he encourages them to explore their spiritual gifts. This leads us to a logical question: What is a spiritual gift? It's a special ability given by God to be used for God. Whether it's a talent, temperament, or skill, there's some special way God has blessed you—which brings us to our next observation.

### **Your Spiritual Gifts Are Divine**

Keep reading 1 Corinthians 12:4. Paul explains that God gives us distinct gifts, but they come from the same spirit. For this reason, we should understand that pride has no place in our purpose. Your gifts came from God. Your talent was ignited by your Creator. Your skills were shaped by your Savior. God gave your spiritual gifts to you. Why? So that you could give back to others. God blessed you so that you could bless others.

Don't believe me? Take a look at just some of the gifts listed in Paul's letters. He speaks of serving, teaching, preaching, encouragement, generosity, wisdom, healing, administration, and compassion. Do you see how all these gifts directly help others? God created each of us with specific skills that align with the needs of others.

Since Jesus is not walking the earth right now, the Holy Spirit has stepped in to invade our hearts and put us to work in God's Kingdom. How cool is that? So, what should you do? Give people the blessing of your spiritual gifts.



## **Your Spiritual Gifts Are Not Dormant**

Have you heard of a “dormant” volcano? This is a fancy way of saying the volcano could erupt...maybe. However, it shows no signs of doing so. There’s no smoke, no magma, and no heat perceivable from the surface.

Unfortunately, many Christians treat their spiritual gifts the same way. They’ve allowed them to go dormant. They know what they can do, but they choose to sit on the sidelines instead.

So many of us assume we’ll make a difference someday but not today. We must reject this lie. Every moment could be an investment into eternity. So, once you have a good idea of your gifts, it’s time to put them to work. It doesn’t matter your age, social status, or understanding. God wants you to get to work.

Just as a muscle grows with frequent use, utilizing your gifts will develop them. So, once you understand your gifts, use them immediately. It doesn’t matter if it’s at your school, within your family, or at the church. Like other skills, they’ll improve as you use them.

So, look around for the opportunities available to you now—at this very moment. Do you have the gift of service? Look for ways you can give back to your community. Do you have the gift of hospitality? Consider hosting a Bible study. Do you have the gift of exhortation? Make a calendar reminder to encourage a friend every day. Your spiritual gifts will be used by God to accomplish His goals for your corner of the universe.

They are called spiritual gifts, not spiritual decorations. What good is a gift if you don’t unwrap it and enjoy it? So many of us understand that God gave us a unique gift but decide to leave it on the shelf to gather dust. Let’s both unwrap them and use them.

So, take the next 20-30 minutes to read through the spiritual gifts lists on the next page. Then ask God which of these you have. Next, take a spiritual gifts test online ([like this one](#)) to get a better understanding of your gifting. With that information, highlight your top five gifts. Now we’re ready for the final step of our Growth Track journey—putting your purpose together.



## **Spiritual Gifts List:**

**Leadership:** Leadership is the ability to inspire and encourage people to accomplish goals together. You are ready to do whatever it takes to accomplish the mission, and you want to bring others with you (1 Cor. 12:8).

**Administration:** This is when you can manage tasks well to help people stay focused and organized (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Teaching:** Teaching is the gift of helping people understand spiritual ideas, ultimately resulting in growth and development (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

**Knowledge:** This is the ability to learn, know, and explain the life-changing principles in God's Word (1 Cor. 12:8).

**Wisdom:** This is when someone can sense if something is good or bad for the community as a whole. This is basically knowledge put into practice (1 Cor. 12:8).

**Prophecy:** 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. (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12:6).

**Discernment:** This is the ability to sense what's going on and how that will play out in the big picture. Think of it like having a gut feeling about something about to happen that turns out to be right (1 Cor. 12:10).

**Exhortation:** This is when your energy is contagious. You have the ability to get people excited about their work and mission (1 Cor. 12:8).

**Shepherding:** This is when you are skilled at keeping watch over the spiritual health of others. You can help people navigate tough situations and struggles while pointing them to Jesus (Eph. 4:11).

**Faith:** This is when you can push past doubts and radically believe in the promises of God, which ultimately drives your group forward (1 Cor. 12:9).



**Evangelism:** This is how the “body of Christ” grows. Evangelism is the gift of telling others about Jesus in a way that leads them to a life-changing salvation experience with Him (Eph 4:11).

**Apostleship:** Have you ever heard of church planting? This is what apostles do. It’s the entrepreneurial gift of starting new churches and ministries (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

**Service/Helps:** Do you ever notice a need and feel the urge to meet it? That’s service! You have a passion for helping others in need and cannot rest until perceived needs are met (Rom. 12:7).

**Mercy:** Merciful people are compassionate and empathetic. You can relate to people even in their struggles and show God’s mercy by letting them know God’s forgiveness is much bigger than whatever they’re going through (1 Cor. 12:8).

**Giving:** This is when you are cheerfully willing to give of your time or money to the mission of the local church or people in need (1 Cor. 12:8).

**Hospitality:** You can help new people feel at ease. You can sense when someone feels out of place, and you go out of your way to make them feel at home. You are welcoming, open, and warm to people you may not know (1 Pet. 4:9).