

WHAT Are Spiritual Gifts?



"A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other." 1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT

- *WHAT are spiritual gifts? WHO has spiritual gifts, and WHEN do they receive them? WHAT are YOUR spiritual gifts?*

Bible teacher Ray Stedman writes: **"The body of Christ functions by the exercise of its gifts, and every Christian has at least one gift. There are many different gifts; we do not all have the same gift. That's why we need each other in the body of Christ: No two Christians are alike, and no one Christian is expendable. If one Christian fails to exercise his or her gifts, the entire body of Christ suffers."**

Central Lesson

God gives every Christian a unique ability to serve Him and others at salvation.

1. The **STUDY** of the Gifts (12:1-3).

*"1 Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to **misunderstand this**." (The NIV "...I do not want you to be **uninformed**.")*

God wants us to be informed about spiritual gifts. More specifically, God wants you to know your spiritual gift and employ it in serving Him and others. Apparently, the Corinthians had abuses and questions about the gifts. It was a cause of division and self-serving. They wrote to Paul for instruction and clarification. Paul devoted three chapters (12-14) to explaining this subject.

2. The **SOURCE** of the Gifts (12:4-6).

*"4 There are **different kinds of spiritual gifts**, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are **different kinds of service**, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God **works in different ways**, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us."*

Spiritual gifts are given to every Christian by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. Notice the Trinity at work in the employment of spiritual gifts:

- **Different** gifts - **One** Spirit.
- **Different** kinds of service (ministries) - **One** Lord.
- **Different** ways God works (results) - **One** God.

Spiritual gifts, ministries, and results are all from one triune God. He is the source.

3. The **SAMPLE** List of the Gifts (12:7-11).

"7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.... 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have."

The list in 1 Corinthians 12 is a **sample** list of spiritual gifts. Another list of spiritual gifts is given in Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:9-10. (See the chart)

List of Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament

Positional Office Gifts - Eph. 4:11

1. Apostle (of Jesus Christ)
2. Prophet
3. Evangelist
4. Pastor (Shepherd) - Teacher

Ministry Serving Gifts

1. Administration (1 Cor. 12:28)
2. Apostles (of the Churches)/ Missionary (2 Cor. 8:23)
3. Discernment (1 Cor. 12:10)
4. Faith (1 Cor. 12:9)
5. Giving (Rom. 12:8)
6. Helps/Serving (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28)
7. Hospitality (1 Pet. 4:9-10)
8. Leadership (Rom. 12:8)
9. Mercy/Kindness (Rom. 12:8)
10. Shepherding/Pastoring (Eph. 4:12)

Message Speaking Gifts

1. Encouragement (Rom. 12:8)
2. Evangelism (Eph. 4:11)
3. Prophecy (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10)
4. Teaching (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28)
5. Message of Wisdom/Wise Advice (1 Cor. 12:8)

Miraculous Sign Gifts (to confirm the Gospel message: Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 14:22)

1. Healings (1 Cor. 12:9, 28)
 2. Miracles (1 Cor. 12:10, 28)
 3. Tongues (1 Cor. 12:10, 28)
 4. Interpretation (1 Cor. 12:10)
- (*Some believe the sign gifts ceased with the completion of the Bible)

4. The **SIGNIFICANCE** of the Gifts - One Body with Many Gifted Parts (12:12-28).

*"12 The human body has **many parts**, but the **many parts make up one whole body**. So it is with the body of Christ."*

The body of Christ, the Church, is a team. It has many different people with different abilities and contributions. Everyone is necessary for the Church to be complete and function as God has designed. *What is your place in Christ's body?*

Paul illustrated the diversity and unity of the body of Christ with the human body - the foot, hands, ear, eyes, and nose - all working together to serve Jesus Christ. *The Life Application Study Bible* notes explain:

"The church is composed of many types people from a variety of backgrounds with a multitude of gifts and abilities. It is easy for these differences to divide people, as was the case in Corinth. But despite the differences, all believers have one thing in common-faith in Christ. On this essential truth the church finds unity.... We don't lose our individual identities, but we have an overriding oneness in Christ...." (1 Corinthians 12:13).

5. The **SEEKING** of the Superior Gifts (12:29-31).

"31 So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts...." (NIV "...eagerly desire the **greater gifts**.")

Paul was speaking to the Corinthians **as a local church**, not as individuals when he said *"desire the most helpful gifts."* All the gifts are important and have a role in God's big picture of world redemption. However, some gifts are more helpful and needed than others within the church and its ministries.

Conclusion: God gives every Christian a unique ability to serve Him and others at salvation.

- ▶ Receive Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.