

The Communion of Saints

The occasion of his sermon was the funeral of David Brainerd (1718–47). It was a sad funeral because Brainerd's brief life had been an inspiration to many Christians. He had served as a pioneer missionary to the Native American Indians of eastern Pennsylvania. After barely a year of riding from place to place on horseback and preaching the gospel, more than one hundred Indians had been converted. But Brainerd contracted a disease and died when he was just twenty-nine years old.

Edwards felt the loss deeply because of the apparent loss to the cause of missions and because of his warm friendship with Brainerd, who died in the Edwards home. Yet as America's greatest theologian delivered his friend's funeral sermon, his sadness was replaced with the joy of eternal communion with Christ:

We cannot continue always in these earthly tabernacles. They are very frail, and will soon decay and fall. . . . Our souls must soon leave them, and go into the eternal world. O, how infinitely great will be the privilege and happiness of those, who, at that time shall go to be with Christ in his glory . . . where he sits on the throne, as the King of angels, and the God of the universe; shining forth as the Sun of that world of glory;—there to dwell in the full, constant, and everlasting view of his beauty and brightness;—there most freely and intimately to converse with him, and fully to enjoy his love, as his friends and brethren; there to share with him in the infinite pleasure and joy which he has in the enjoyment of his Father—there to sit with him on his throne, to reign with him in the possession of all things . . . and to join with him in joyful songs of praise to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God forever and ever!⁷

And all the saints say, "Amen. Come Lord Jesus. Come soon!"

APPENDIX

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

Introduction

The Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire is designed to identify your spiritual gift(s).^{*} This appendix may be reproduced as needed.

Instructions

For each question below, enter a number in the left-hand blank to indicate whether the question reflects your experience much, some, little, or not at all. Use the following scale:

3 = much 2 = some 1 = little 0 = not at all

- ___ 1. Do you feel a great amount of satisfaction performing routine tasks for God's glory?

^{*} This previously unpublished inventory is used by permission of Reverend Ronald Steel, who developed it while on staff at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. It is based in part on resources from Bill Gothard's Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts and on C. Peter Wagner's *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts: Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire* (Glendale, Calif.: Regal, 1995).

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

- ___ 2. Do you have a sensitivity to recognize people's prayer needs before others do?
- ___ 3. Do you enjoy public speaking to a group?
- ___ 4. Are you able to provide food/lodging graciously to those in need?
- ___ 5. Are you effective in persuading others to move toward achieving biblical objectives?
- ___ 6. When circumstances are bleak, do you always have the ability to see God keeping his promises to you?
- ___ 7. Do you know when and to whom to delegate important responsibility?
- ___ 8. Do you seek out unbelievers in order to win them to Christ?
- ___ 9. Do you adapt easily to a different culture than your own?
- ___ 10. Do you effectively apply biblical truth to your own life?
- ___ 11. Do you enjoy assisting leaders so that they can focus their energies on their primary responsibilities?
- ___ 12. Do you manage your money well in order to give over and above the tithe to the Lord's work?
- ___ 13. Can you clearly and correctly perceive the difference between truth and error immediately when statements are made about spiritual matters?
- ___ 14. Have you had the desire to care for the spiritual needs of a group of people?
- ___ 15. Have people often expressed to you how much you have encouraged them in time of need?
- ___ 16. For your own enjoyment, do you regularly and systematically study God's Word?
- ___ 17. When you hear of someone in the hospital, do you feel challenged to go and comfort him or her?
- ___ 18. When you hear of a job that needs to be done, are you anxious to do it?

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

- ___ 19. Do you faithfully pray for others, recognizing that their effectiveness as a teacher, employer, husband, wife, etc., depends on it?
- ___ 20. Do you find it easy to organize your thoughts and explain things to people?
- ___ 21. Can you provide a comfortable haven for guests without the feeling of family interruption?
- ___ 22. Do you have a sense of direction in life and see other Christians follow you?
- ___ 23. Do you have an unusually strong, personal assurance from God that he will accomplish great things that may seem impossible to others?
- ___ 24. Are you able to organize ideas, people, things, and time for more effective ministry?
- ___ 25. Do you find it easy to make friends with non-Christian people?
- ___ 26. Would you like to learn another language well in order to minister to different peoples?
- ___ 27. When you need to make a decision between several biblical alternatives, do you have a clear sense of which one is best?
- ___ 28. Do you sense the need to help other people to become more effective in their ministry?
- ___ 29. Do you enjoy giving to the Lord's work without asking the question of whether or not you can afford it right now?
- ___ 30. Do you accurately recognize whether a teaching is of God, Satan, or human origin?
- ___ 31. Do you seek to protect and provide for those under your spiritual care?
- ___ 32. Do you find that you are a good and patient listener?
- ___ 33. Do you study and read a great deal in order to discover biblical truth?

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

- ___ 34. Do you feel a lot of compassion for those who are suffering physically and think of ways to help them?
- ___ 35. Do you enjoy taking care of physical tasks for the church?
- ___ 36. Do you pray a lot and enjoy it?
- ___ 37. Do you enjoy spending time learning new biblical truths in order to share them with others?
- ___ 38. Do you have a knack for making strangers feel at home?
- ___ 39. Do you enjoy leading, inspiring, and motivating others to involve themselves in the Lord's work?
- ___ 40. Do you find God working in amazing ways when you encounter difficult circumstances?
- ___ 41. Are you able to make effective and efficient plans to accomplish goals of the group?
- ___ 42. Do you find yourself regularly sharing the gospel message with nonbelievers?
- ___ 43. Do you relate well to Christians of different races, languages, or cultures?
- ___ 44. Do you have the ability to choose from several biblical alternatives an option that usually works?
- ___ 45. Do you enjoy doing routine tasks that lead to more effective ministry by others?
- ___ 46. Are you really thrilled when someone asks you to help financially in some project, seeing this as a great honor or privilege?
- ___ 47. Can you accurately distinguish between what is good and what is evil?
- ___ 48. Do you enjoy the responsibility for the spiritual well-being of a group of Christians?
- ___ 49. Do you find yourself urging others to seek a biblical solution to their affliction or suffering?
- ___ 50. Does studying the Bible personally come easy for you?
- ___ 51. Would you really like a regular ministry to the sick, shut-ins, or others who are hurting?

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

- ___ 52. When someone asks a favor of you, do you feel grateful that they asked you?
- ___ 53. Do you see God consistently answer your prayers?
- ___ 54. Have you been effective in communicating biblical truths to others, which produce changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, or conduct?
- ___ 55. Do you take unexpected guests in stride, without apology for how your house may look?
- ___ 56. Have you influenced others to accomplish a particular task or biblical purpose?
- ___ 57. Has God done miraculous works for you and others in response to your prayers?
- ___ 58. Do you desire to help organize ministry areas and activities?
- ___ 59. Can you explain clearly that Jesus Christ is the Savior and see a positive response in your listeners?
- ___ 60. Would you enjoy living in a foreign country, not just visiting?
- ___ 61. Do you feel an unusual presence of God and personal confidence when important decisions need to be made?
- ___ 62. Do you regularly look for ways to relieve leaders of responsibilities that you or others could do?
- ___ 63. Do you give consistently and sacrificially to the Lord, knowing he will meet your needs?
- ___ 64. Are your perceptions of people's motives always correct?
- ___ 65. Do you enjoy the task of relating to the successes and failures of the same group over a long period?
- ___ 66. Do you really get a lot of joy encouraging people who are going through personal problems and trials?
- ___ 67. Do you have a strong desire to study God's Word?
- ___ 68. Have others encouraged you to have a special ministry toward the sick and suffering?

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

- ___ 69. Are you always looking for jobs to do and to get done?
- ___ 70. Do you always take prayer requests very seriously?
- ___ 71. When you hear a spiritual question, are you anxious to both find and give an answer?
- ___ 72. Do you enjoy making your home available to those in the Lord's service for an extended period?
- ___ 73. Do others follow you because you have expertise regarding the ministry of the church?
- ___ 74. When all looks dim, do you say and do things that demonstrate your confidence in God?
- ___ 75. Are you effective in giving direction to and making decisions for others?
- ___ 76. Would you like to learn how to share your faith more effectively?
- ___ 77. Do you think of the people in other cultures who have never heard of Christ?
- ___ 78. Do you enjoy working out solutions to complicated problems?
- ___ 79. Would you be happy as a teacher's aide in a Bible class?
- ___ 80. Do you look for extra opportunities to give without hearing any appeals?
- ___ 81. Do you always see through a person who is a phony before it is evident to others?
- ___ 82. Is it important for you to know intimately and be well known by those you serve and guide?
- ___ 83. Have you been effective in helping the complacent and redirecting the wayward to face life's reality?
- ___ 84. Do people often recognize your ability to distinguish important facts from Scripture?
- ___ 85. Do you desire to work with those who have physical or mental problems in order to alleviate their suffering?
- ___ 86. Are you able to identify and meet the needs involved in a task in the Lord's work?

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

- ___ 87. Is praying together with and for other Christians very meaningful to you?
- ___ 88. Do you desire to teach God's Word regularly?
- ___ 89. Can you provide a gracious haven for guests without a great hassle?
- ___ 90. Do you usually take the leadership in a group where none exists?
- ___ 91. Do you believe God's promises to a greater degree than your Christian friends?
- ___ 92. Does planning come easily to you?
- ___ 93. Do you share joyfully how Christ has brought you to himself in a way that is meaningful to nonbelievers?
- ___ 94. Do you have a strong desire to see peoples of other cultures won to the Lord, and would you like to help?
- ___ 95. Do people you recommend for positions regularly prove to be good selections?
- ___ 96. Have others involved in ministry sought you out to assist them in some way?
- ___ 97. Do you feel deeply moved to give, and do you give, when confronted with urgent financial needs in God's work?
- ___ 98. Is it instantly clear to you whether a person is growing or stagnant in his/her spiritual life?
- ___ 99. Are you able to restore persons who have wandered away from their Christian community?
- ___ 100. Do you enjoy verbally encouraging the wavering, troubled, or discouraged?
- ___ 101. Do you regularly acquire and master new facts and principles from your own study of the Bible?
- ___ 102. Do you feel strongly that the church should care for those who are hurting and that you would like to help?
- ___ 103. Would you enjoy being called upon to do special jobs around the church that no one else will do?

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

- ___ 104. Do people regularly share prayer requests with you because they know you will pray about them?
- ___ 105. Have other people ever told you that you ought to be teaching on a regular basis?
- ___ 106. Do you enjoy having strangers in your home?
- ___ 107. Do you usually think about long-range goals rather than short-range goals?
- ___ 108. Have you regularly visualized great things for the future of God's work and seen them accomplished?
- ___ 109. Do you like the responsibility for the success or failure of a group or organization?
- ___ 110. Has God used you to lead others to a decision for salvation through faith in Christ?
- ___ 111. Do you make friends easily with people from different cultures?
- ___ 112. Are you able to perceive and apply biblical truth to the specific needs of the body?
- ___ 113. Do you sense great satisfaction for helping someone else become successful?
- ___ 114. Do you give things or money cheerfully and sacrificially to the Lord's work?
- ___ 115. Have you accurately perceived a person under satanic influence?
- ___ 116. Have you been effective helping needy Christians by guiding them to relevant portions of the Bible and praying with them?
- ___ 117. Do people seek you out in order to get God's solution to their problems?
- ___ 118. Do you have the ability to accurately discover new truths from the Bible for yourself?
- ___ 119. Are you patient to spend time with someone who is physically suffering rather than wanting to leave as soon as you can?

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

Spiritual Gifts Chart

1. After you have answered the 119 questions above, transfer your answers (3, 2, 1, or 0) to the blanks under the question numbers on the chart below.

	TOTAL							GIFT
Q. 1	18	35	52	69	86	103		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ SERVICE	
Q. 2	19	36	53	70	87	104		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ INTERCESSION	
Q. 3	20	37	54	71	88	105		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ TEACHING	
Q. 4	21	38	55	72	89	106		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ HOSPITALITY	
Q. 5	22	39	56	73	90	107		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ LEADERSHIP	
Q. 6	23	40	57	74	91	108		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ FAITH	
Q. 7	24	41	58	75	92	109		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ ADMINISTRATION	
Q. 8	25	42	59	76	93	110		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ EVANGELISM	
Q. 9	26	43	60	77	94	111		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ MISSIONS	
Q. 10	27	44	61	78	95	112		
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ WISDOM	

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

Q. 11	28	45	62	79	96	113	
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ HELPS
Q. 12	29	46	63	80	97	114	
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ GIVING
Q. 13	30	47	64	81	98	115	
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ DISCERNMENT
Q. 14	31	48	65	82	99	116	
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ SHEPHERDING
Q. 15	32	49	66	83	100	117	
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ EXHORTATION
Q. 16	33	50	67	84	101	118	
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ KNOWLEDGE
Q. 17	34	51	68	85	102	119	
A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	= _____ MERCY

- Now add together your seven numbers across each answer row and enter the sum in the TOTAL column.
- Note the three highest rated gifts, and enter them below. Then review the gift definitions that follow. The areas in which you have scored highest provide a tentative evaluation of what your gift(s) may be. This process should either affirm what you already know or provide direction for you to follow as God leads you to use the gifts he has given you.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Definitions and Scripture References

SERVICE. The gift of service is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work and make use of available resources to meet those needs, thus helping accomplish the desired goals. (Rom. 12:7; Eph. 6:5-9)

INTERCESSION. The gift of intercession is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specific answers to their prayers to a degree much greater than is expected of the average Christian. (Col. 1:9-12; 1 Tim. 2:1-2)

TEACHING. The gift of teaching is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to communicate biblical information relevant to the health and ministry of the body and its members in such a way that others will learn. (Acts 13:1; 18:24-28; Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11)

HOSPITALITY. The gift of hospitality is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to provide an open house and warm welcome to those in need of food and lodging. (Acts 16:15; Rom. 12:9-13; Heb. 13:1-2; 1 Peter 4:9)

LEADERSHIP. The gift of leadership is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate those goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God. (Acts 15:7-12; Rom. 12:8; 1 Tim. 5:17)

FAITH. The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for the future of his work. (Acts 11:22-24; 27:21-25; 1 Cor. 12:9)

ADMINISTRATION. The gift of administration is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals. (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:28)

EVANGELISM. The gift of evangelism is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the body of Christ. (Acts 8:5; 6:26-40; 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5)

MISSIONS. The gift of missions is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister by means of whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture. (Acts 8:4-5; 13:2-3; 22:21; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Eph. 3:7-8)

WISDOM. The gift of wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ. (Acts 6:3, 10; 1 Cor. 12:8; James 1:5-6; 2 Peter 3:15)

HELPS. The gift of helps is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the body, thus enabling them to increase the effectiveness of their spiritual gifts. (Rom. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 12:28)

Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire

GIVING. The gift of giving is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness. (Luke 21:4; Acts 4:34; 2 Cor. 9:7)

DISCERNMENT. The gift of discernment is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human, or satanic. (Acts 16:16–18; 1 Cor. 12:10; 1 John 4:1–6)

SHEPHERDING. The gift of shepherding is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers. (Eph. 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:1–7)

EXHORTATION. The gift of exhortation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel to other members of the body in such a way that they feel helped and healed. (Acts 14:22; Rom. 12:8; 1 Tim. 4:13; Heb. 10:25)

KNOWLEDGE. The gift of knowledge is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the body. (1 Cor. 12:8)

MERCY. The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds that reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering. (Matt. 5:7; Acts 16:33–34; Rom. 12:8; Heb. 4:16)

Notes

Preface

- 1 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
- 2 Charles Colson and Ellen Santilli Vaughn, *The Body* (Dallas: Word, 1992), 32.
- 3 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1954), 20.

Chapter 1: What Is the Communion of Saints?

- 1 John Winthrop, quoted in Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., *The Puritans*, rev. ed., 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1963), 1:197–98.
- 2 Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 1:55.
- 3 The early development of Catholic sainthood is traced in J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 490–91.
- 4 Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 60–61.
- 5 James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ: A Treatise on the Nature, Powers, Ordinances, Discipline and Government of the Christian Church*, 2 vols. (1869; repr. London: Banner of Truth, 1974), 1:91–92.
- 6 Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Philadelphia: P&R, 1956), 305.
- 7 Johan Heidegger, *Medulla Theologiae Christianae* (Zurich, 1696), 26.7, quoted in Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, rev. and ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 659.
- 8 Luther, *The Large Catechism*, 61.
- 9 Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 303.
- 10 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Communion of Saints: A Dogmatic Inquiry into the Sociology of the Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 42.