



*An Introduction to the
Purpose and Practice
of Spiritual Gifts*

Gifts that keep on Giving

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SPIRITUAL GIFTS

10 Common Questions

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. What are spiritual gifts?

- Special endowments of God's grace bestowed on believers by the Holy Spirit to advance the gospel and to build up the body of Christ.
- When believers exercise their giftedness in the proper way, they become a gift to the church.

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2. Which passages teach us about spiritual gifts?

Four key texts:

- Romans 12:3–8
- 1 Corinthians 12–14
- Ephesians 4:10–13
- 1 Peter 4:10–11

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Romans 12:3–8 —For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

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Romans 12:3–8 — Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

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1 Corinthians 12:4–11 — Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;

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1 Corinthians 12:4–11 — to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

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1 Corinthians 12:27–31 — Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.

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1 Corinthians 12:27–31 — All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of* miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? But earnestly desire the greater gifts.

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Ephesians 4:8–12 — WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN. . . . And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.

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1 Peter 4:10–11 – As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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Romans 12:3–8

Prophecy
Service
Teaching
Exhortation
Leading
Giving
Mercy

1 Corinthians 12

Word of Wisdom
Word of Knowledge
Faith
Healing
Miracles
Prophecy
Discernment
Tongues
Interpretation
Apostleship
Administration
Helps

Ephesians 4:11

Apostleship
Prophecy
Evangelism
Pastoring
Teaching

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3. How should we categorize spiritual gifts?

- **Extraordinary Gifts** – Sign Gifts and Revelatory Gifts
 - These were for the initial foundation of the church.
- **Edifying Gifts** – Speaking Gifts and Serving Gifts
 - These are for the ongoing function of the church.

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4. What were the extraordinary gifts?

- **Sign Gifts** – authenticated the ministry of the Apostles and verified the early advancement of the gospel
- **Revelatory Gifts** – imparted new revelation from God to the church through prophets

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4. What were the extraordinary gifts?

- **Sign Gifts**
 - Apostleship
 - Miracles and healing
 - Tongues (languages)

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1 Corinthians 14:22 – So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 12:12 – The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

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Hebrews 2:3–4 – how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

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4. What were the extraordinary gifts?

- **Revelatory Gifts**
 - Prophecy
 - Words of Wisdom and Knowledge
 - The interpretation of tongues

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John 16:12–15 – I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

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1 Corinthians 14:3–5 – One who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. . . .

Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying

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5. Why did the extraordinary gifts pass away?

- They were for the foundation age of the church, the age of the apostles (Ephesians 2:20)
- They were no longer needed after the canon of Scripture was complete and the church firmly established (cf. 2 Peter 1:2–3, 19–21)

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Ephesians 2:19–22 – So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

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No one today meets the qualifications of an Apostle.

- An eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22; 10:39–41; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:7–8)
- Appointed by Jesus Christ (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13; Acts 1:2, 24; 10:41; Gal. 1:1)
- Able to confirm his mission and message with miraculous signs (Matt. 10:1–2; Acts 1:5–8; 2:43; 4:33; 5:12; 8:14; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3–4)

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1 Corinthians 9:1 — Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

1 Corinthians 15:7–8 — Then He [the risen Christ] appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

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No one today meets the standard for biblical prophets.

- A prophet had to demonstrate moral integrity (Jer. 23:14–16; Matt. 7:20; 2 Peter 3:1–2)
- A prophet had to maintain doctrinal orthodoxy (Deut. 13:1–5; Rom. 12:6; 2 Peter 3:1–2)
- A prophet was held to a standard of perfect accuracy when he delivered divine revelation (Deut. 18:20–22; Ezek. 13:3–9)

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Deut. 18:20–22: The prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. You may say in your heart, “How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?” When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

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The gift of foreign languages is not operating in the church today.

- Acts 2 clearly defines tongues as real languages.
- The church historically understood the gift of tongues (in both Acts and 1 Corinthians) as the ability to speak foreign languages which the speaker had never learned.
- Even early Pentecostals believed they were speaking in foreign languages.

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No one today can perform miraculous healings as described in the New Testament.

1. New Testament healings did not depend on the recipient's faith (e.g. Matt. 8:5–13, 28–29; Mark 1:23–26; Luke 17:11–19; John 5:1–16; Acts 3:7; 9:40; 16:18; 20:10)
2. New Testament healings were complete, permanent, and 100% effective (Matt 8:2–3; 14:36; Mark 1:40–42; Luke 5:12–13; 17:11–21)

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3. New Testament healings were undeniable and cured real diseases and disabilities (Matt. 12:24; John 11:47-48; Acts 4:16–17; 16:20)
4. New Testament healings were immediate (Mark 1:42; 10:52; Acts 3:8, etc.)
5. New Testament healings were not prearranged (Matt. 8:14–15; 9:20, 27–29; Acts 3:6–7, etc.)

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- Modern charismatic gifts do not measure up to the biblical standard for these extraordinary gifts
 - Apostleship
 - Prophecy
 - Tongues
 - Healing
- A preoccupation with signs and ecstatic phenomenon is spiritually dangerous (cf. Matthew 6:7; 16:4)

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6. What are the edifying gifts?

- **Speaking Gifts** – Includes gifts like pastoring, teaching, exhortation, and evangelism
- **Serving Gifts** – includes gifts like serving, giving, leading, discernment, faith, showing mercy, helps, and administration

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Ephesians 4:11 — And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.

- The slides that follow contain verses where we see examples of these virtues in action. Though not specifically about spiritual gifts, they provide insight into how these gifts operated in the early church.

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Pastoring

1 Peter 5:1–3— Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

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Pastoring

- The Greek word for “pastor” means “shepherd.” It involves leading and feeding the flock of God’s people.
- It is intrinsically tied to the office of pastor. That title “pastor” is interchangeable with the title “elder.”
- The qualifications for elders (pastors) are listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

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Teaching

2 Timothy 2:2, 15 – The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. . . . Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

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Teaching

Colossians 3:16 – Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

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Exhortation

2 Timothy 4:1–2 – I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

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Exhortation

Hebrews 3:13 – But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

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Evangelism

2 Timothy 4:3–5 – For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

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Evangelism

Matthew 28:19–20 – Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

6. What are the edifying gifts?

- **Serving Gifts** – includes gifts like serving, giving, leading, discernment, faith, showing mercy, helps, and administration

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1 Peter 4:10–11 – As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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Serving

John 13:12–14 – So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.

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Giving

2 Corinthians 9:6–7 – Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

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Leading

1Timothy 5:17 – The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

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Administration

Acts 6:1–3 — Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

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Discernment

1 Thessalonians 5:20–22 –

Do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil.

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Faith

Matthew 17:20 – If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

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Helps and Mercy

Galatians 6:9–10 – Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are

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- It should be noted that many of these things are commands for all believers, even if not everyone is specially gifted in that area.
- Other gifts like hospitality (1 Peter 4:9) and singleness (1 Corinthians 7:7) are sometimes included in lists of spiritual gifts.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

7. Why does the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts?

1 Corinthians 12:6–7 – There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

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7. Why does the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts?

Romans 12:4–5 – For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

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Ephesians 4:11–12 – And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

7. Why does the Holy Spirit give us spiritual gifts?

1 Peter 4:10 – As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

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8. Does everyone receive the same gifting?

1 Cor 12:12–14 – For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but man

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9. What if people use their gifting for selfish ends?

1 Cor 13:1–3 – If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

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1 Cor 13:4–7 —Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

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10. How do I discover my spiritual giftedness?

- Invest yourself in the life of the church (1 Peter 4:10- 11)
- As you serve, the Spirit will give you interests and abilities corresponding to what He has called you to do
- This giftedness will be confirmed by others as they see you serve (cf. 2 Timothy 1:6)

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10. How do I discover my spiritual gifting?

- Recognize that God gifts everyone differently
- Focus less on identifying your set of gifts, and focus more on being a gift to the rest of the body of Christ
- As you serve others and build up your fellow believers, you will bring glory to the Head of the body

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