



Lesson 1

DISCOVERING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Objectives

- Define spiritual gift, ministry and vocation.
- Understand when spiritual gifts are received.
- Identify gifts through a test.

Main Ideas



- All Christians have a vocation, gifts, and are called to the ministry.
- Gifts are varied and necessary for the mission of the church.
- When we discover our gifts, we can be trained for service.

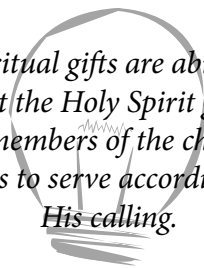
Introduction

In 1996, a Work and Witness team from the United States went to Puerto Rico to build a chapel and stayed next to a house where they raised roosters. It was difficult to sleep at night due to the constant “singing” which is typical of these birds. Then they began to wonder why roosters have this annoying habit, and why do they crow constantly. One member of the group answered the question, “Why do roosters crow?” saying, “Because they do it well.”

This simple story teaches us a great truth: God wants His children to serve Him doing what they have been gifted to do, and doing it well. We do not all need to be important theologians and preachers to serve our Father. God has given one or more gifts to all Christians to use for His service. He only asks us to invest what He has given us. God calls us to fulfill the vocation in Christ for which we have been created.

What is a Spiritual Gift?

Spiritual gifts are abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to members of the church so as to serve according to His calling.



Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit.



A spiritual gift is the ability or capacity received from God through the Holy Spirit to perform a Christian service. Some gifts include teaching, providing for the needs of others, healing the sick, among others (1 Corinthians 12:4, Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13).

What is Ministry?

Ministry is all the work we do to serve God and others



The term ministry encompasses all work assignments in the church. In the New Testament, ministry was a “function” that all brothers and sisters took part in, that is, all the disciples participated in the task of presenting Christ according to their gifts and capabilities.

Over the centuries this function was centralized in one person: the priest or pastor, and this affected the mission of the church, leaving the members separated from ministry. However, in the Bible, the term “ministry” applies to many more functions than any one person (Senior Pastor) can perform.

We are thankful that in our time, Christians are rediscovering the New Testament principles regarding the priesthood of “all believers” (1 Peter 2:5-9). In Ephesians 4, Paul teaches that God’s call to ministry is for all believers regardless of their age, sex, marital status, social class, race or educational background, and they share the following privileges by the grace of God:

- They are called.
- They must walk worthy of their “calling.”
- They have a “vocation.”
- They have the same Spirit that unites them.
- They have gifts.
- They are ministers and have a ministry.
- Some of them are set apart for roles of spiritual leadership.

Paul teaches that there are special leadership ministries: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (Ephesians 4:11), but these are not the only ones who have a ministry in the church, since God’s purpose is to equip “all” Christians for the work of ministry (v. 12). The verb “equip” refers to providing education and training for each member of the Body of Christ in order that they might serve God and their neighbors, according to the gifts received from the Holy Spirit.

What is Vocation?

There is only one vocation in the life of a Christian.

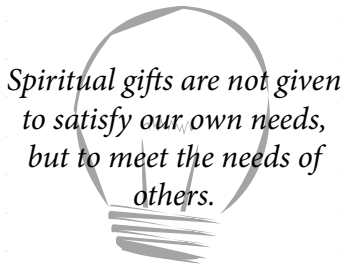


Vocation is the inclination placed in the heart of Christians by the Holy Spirit for a profession or job where they can invest their lives in serving God and their neighbor.

In the early centuries of Church history, vocation was understood as the inclination to the work of ministry or a religious calling. Afterwards the term was secularized, in other words, it was applied to other non-religious professions and trades, such as, the vocation of a teacher, doctor, mason, and so on. Over time a division arose between a “secular” and a “religious” vocation. And so, a Christian could have a job to make a living (secular vocation) and, at the same time, have a ministry in the church where he or she served God. This leads to a division between the two vocations, and permanent tensions as to which should receive more energy, time, and skills.

When every believer serves according to his or her gifts, it prevents other members from being overloaded with tasks and feeling exhausted.

When believers use their gifts, there is more joy in the congregation and many more ministries of service to the community.



Spiritual gifts are not given to satisfy our own needs, but to meet the needs of others.

Given this confusion, we must return to the Biblical meaning of the term. Everyone has a vocation, that is a purpose or mission for which God gave them life. This vocation is performed in everything a person does, whether in church, at work, at school, or with their family, etc. Christians never cease to serve God. In the Bible, life, service, and worship go together and are inseparable.

So a person can work as a baker, and because he has the gift of service, he could be a steward in the local church. When he is kneading bread to feed the people, he is not just doing it for a paycheck, but as a service to his Lord, sharing not only bread, but also the bread of life which is Christ Jesus. In this way, any occupation or profession becomes, for the Christian, a ministry in a place where we fulfill our vocation.

How and When Do You Receive a Spiritual Gift?

The gifts are received at the time of being born again.



Do not confuse gifts with talents. Talents are natural abilities given at birth. In some cases, these abilities are transformed into gifts by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual gifts are given to new believers at the time they receive new life in Christ, at their conversion. It is then that we are born into the family of God and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our lives teaching us and guiding us in the process of growing into the image of Christ. In this first “baptism” of the Spirit, gifts are given in order to serve God and others. As he or she grows, the believer learns to identify his or her vocation in Christ, the ministry for which life has been given by the Father.

In the church in Corinth there were many relationship problems between brothers and sisters in the faith. This was because they still lived governed by their own selfish desires and had not experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit. This church is praised by the apostle for the wealth of gifts they had, but he warned them about the danger of implementing the gifts without perfect love. Instead of edifying the church, the Corinthians’ gifts were destroying it.

No matter how many gifts we have, we must seek this second work of grace, the fullness of the Spirit, in order to use them in a right attitude of helpful love.

How Many Gifts Are There?

There are as many gifts as there are needs in the church and community.



Spiritual gifts should not be confused with the fruit of the Spirit. Gifts enable us to “do” something, while the fruit of the Spirit imparts the qualities of the character of Christ: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22).

In the New Testament there are several lists of gifts:

- 1 Corinthians 12:8-10
- Romans 12
- 1 Corinthians 12:28-30
- Ephesians 4:11
- 1 Corinthians 13
- 1 Peter 5:1

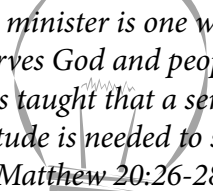
There are other gifts listed in 1 Timothy 3:11, 5:9, 6:12 and 2 Timothy 2:22.

The gifts mentioned in these passages are the following: apostle, prophet, teacher, miracles, healing, tongues, interpretation, knowledge, faith, discernment of spirits, insight, wisdom, support, administration, martyrdom, giving, mercy, service, leadership, ministry with women, with widows, and others. Looking at the list of gifts that are mentioned in the New Testament, we can draw the following conclusions.

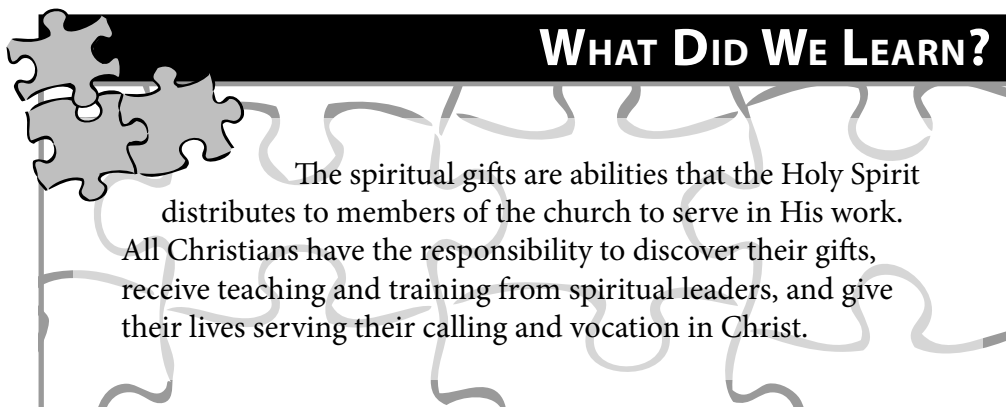
1. There are gifts that appear together such as being an elder, bishop, pastor, and teacher (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 5:17). This indicates that there are gifts that come together because they are required to perform certain ministerial roles. For example, a pastor must have the gift of teaching since one of his responsibilities is to edify believers in the Word.
2. The gifts are distributed to all Christians, not just to pastors and leaders. All who have received new life in Christ have at least one gift (1 Corinthians 7:7, Ephesians 4:7, 1 Peter 4:10 and Romans 12:3).
3. Ministry, which means service to God and others, is for everyone, not just for those with professional theological education.
4. Ministries involve working as a team. It requires a variety of gifts to lead local congregations, to open missionary fields, for theological education, for youth ministry, etc.
5. There is great diversity of gifts and ministries. This means that God is creative and wise in giving gifts to church members so that they may serve to meet the needs of their church and community.

In the activities section, there is a test included to help you to identify your gifts.

Do not confuse a spiritual gift with ministerial function or position. For example, the gift of teaching is required for teachers; the gift of hospitality for hosts and hostesses; the gift of leadership, for coordinators of ministries.



A minister is one who serves God and people. Jesus taught that a servant attitude is needed to serve (Matthew 20:26-28).



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The spiritual gifts are abilities that the Holy Spirit distributes to members of the church to serve in His work. All Christians have the responsibility to discover their gifts, receive teaching and training from spiritual leaders, and give their lives serving their calling and vocation in Christ.

INSTRUCTIONS:

STEP 1. Complete the Spiritual Gifts Test

Each of the 96 test questions describes activities. Evaluate each one according to your interest, whether you have practiced them or not, according the following scoring table:

0. No, this does not interest me (no matter if I have experienced it or not)
1. I have very little interest
2. I have some interest
3. I am more interested in this than others
4. Yes, this is what I enjoy (I would like to specialize in/dedicate myself to this)

QUESTIONS:

- 1 ___ Do I prefer to communicate in writing rather than talking?
- 2 ___ Do I usually take a step forward and assume leadership of a group where there is none?
- 3 ___ Do I tend to identify and go to people who are alone in services or church activities?
- 4 ___ Do I have the ability to recognize a big or small need and resolve it?
- 5 ___ Do I have the ability to organize ideas, people, and projects to fulfill a specific purpose?
- 6 ___ Do I have the ability to recognize when someone doesn't have a genuine spiritual life?
- 7 ___ Am I generally sure we can accomplish great things for the glory of God?
- 8 ___ Do I rejoice when I sing or play musical instruments during church services?
- 9 ___ Do I have the ability to learn languages?
- 10 ___ Has God done miracles and healings through my prayers?
- 11 ___ Do I have the ability to use my hands in designing and building things?
- 12 ___ Do I like the idea of using technology to communicate something?
- 13 ___ Do I consider giving money to the work of the church a privilege rather than a liability?
- 14 ___ When I see someone's need, am I moved by a desire to do something to help?
- 15 ___ Do I usually have insights to offer a useful solution when a problem arises?
- 16 ___ Do I investigate an issue to get the bottom of the truth?
- 17 ___ Do I rejoice in encouraging and giving comfort to those who are discouraged?
- 18 ___ Do I want to study scriptural topics thoroughly and share them with others?
- 19 ___ Am I passionate about helping others in their spiritual growth?
- 20 ___ Would I like to see there be a church in each community where people could congregate?
- 21 ___ Do I feel drawn to evangelize groups of marginalized or foreign people?

- 22 ___ Do I like listening to a sermon and thinking about how I could present that message?
- 23 ___ Do I rejoice being with those who are not Christians, hoping to talk about Jesus?
- 24 ___ When I hear news or a conversation about needs, do I feel burdened to pray?
- 25 ___ Do I know more vocabulary than most people my age and use words properly?
- 26 ___ Is it easy for me to ask others to help with or contribute to a project?
- 27 ___ Do I delight in assisting guests so that they feel comfortable in my home or at church?
- 28 ___ Do I delight in serving others, no matter if the task is simple or small?
- 29 ___ Am I very organized and plan the steps necessary to achieve an objective?
- 30 ___ Can I easily distinguish when a person speaks and acts truthfully or deceitfully?
- 31 ___ Am I a naturally motivated person?
- 32 ___ Do I like to express my feelings to God through song in my private worship?
- 33 ___ Do I like helping people with different languages to be able to communicate?
- 34 ___ When necessary, do I pray with faith waiting for God to work in a supernatural way?
- 35 ___ Do I enjoy doing crafts such as woodwork, painting, or sewing?
- 36 ___ Do I have the ability to use media such as audio, video, etc.?
- 37 ___ Do I financially support brothers and sisters in need by giving money when I can?
- 38 ___ Do I think it is worth investing my time to help people with their needs?
- 39 ___ Does God allow me to choose correctly between several options when others do not know what to do?
- 40 ___ Do I study hard issues in God's Word tirelessly until I find the answer?
- 41 ___ Do people often tell me their problems and I encourage them?
- 42 ___ Do I have the creativity to explain or illustrate complicated issues in a simple way?
- 43 ___ Do I feel compassion for people who have no shepherd?
- 44 ___ Would I be excited and willing to start a new church?
- 45 ___ Can I adapt easily to other cultures and lifestyles different from mine?
- 46 ___ Do I always talk about Christian principles, even if what I say is not popular?
- 47 ___ Would I like to be well trained to evangelize people?
- 48 ___ Do I believe that prayer is the most important thing Christians can do?
- 49 ___ When I read something written by someone else, do I realize if they are expressing themselves poorly?
- 50 ___ Can I guide a group of people to achieve a specific goal?
- 51 ___ Do I rejoice in getting to know new people and introducing them to a group?
- 52 ___ Can I be depended on to accomplish tasks in a given time?
- 53 ___ Is it easy for me to delegate and trust other people to do difficult tasks?
- 54 ___ Can I distinguish between right and wrong in complex spiritual matters more than others?
- 55 ___ Do I have confidence in God's faithfulness for the future, even in the midst of problems?
- 56 ___ Do I rejoice in singing and do some people say I have a good voice?
- 57 ___ Is it easy and natural for me to learn a language and use it to edify the lives of others?
- 58 ___ Does God regularly bring to my mind someone who is sick when I pray?
- 59 ___ Do I think it is very important that church buildings are in good condition?
- 60 ___ Can I write scripts for a play, radio, or television?

- 61 ___ Am I willing to deprive myself of something so as to give more generous offerings?
- 62 ___ Am I willing to sacrifice my time to meet the needs of others?
- 63 ___ Do people often seek my advice for their lives when they don't know what to do?
- 64 ___ If I have a question, do I seek information from different sources to find the answer?
- 65 ___ Am I bold about confronting another person in order to help them in their spiritual growth?
- 66 ___ Would I like to learn more about teaching techniques to teach God's word?
- 67 ___ Do I enjoy working with people, helping them to grow in their service to the Lord?
- 68 ___ Do I identify with church planters?
- 69 ___ Would I like to evangelize in a language, culture, and lifestyle different from mine?
- 70 ___ Am I driven by the desire to teach God's will for the lives of His children?
- 71 ___ Is it one of the happiest moments of my life when someone accepts Jesus as Savior?
- 72 ___ Is it natural for me to put the needs of others before mine when I pray?
- 73 ___ When I write, do I review the material to make sure it is clearly stated?
- 74 ___ Do people usually respect my opinions and follow my directions?
- 75 ___ Do I like to open my home to receive visitors?
- 76 ___ Do I rejoice in helping leaders in whatever they need and I am happy to meet that need?
- 77 ___ Do I feel comfortable making important decisions even under pressure?
- 78 ___ Do I easily identify when God's Word is wrongly interpreted and taught?
- 79 ___ When I pray, do I do it with faith and often see that God answers my prayers in amazing ways?
- 80 ___ Would I like to convey a message through a song so that others might be edified?
- 81 ___ Do I feel compassion for people who do not have Christian books and Bibles in their own language?
- 82 ___ When someone faces a difficult situation, do I encourage them and pray with them, asking for divine intervention?
- 83 ___ Do I like to use photography, painting, plays and other art forms to convey a message?
- 84 ___ Would I like to help others by teaching techniques to improve communication between people?
- 85 ___ When I give money to someone, am I one who does not expect a thank you or recognition in front of others?
- 86 ___ Do I have the ability to find resources so that needs can be met even when others give up?
- 87 ___ Do I have the ability to apply the principles of the Word to make decisions in my daily life?
- 88 ___ Do I devote a lot of time to identifying Biblical truths and principles and enjoy doing it?
- 89 ___ Do people feel comfortable telling me their problems?
- 90 ___ Are my thoughts organized when presenting Bible teaching to a group of people?
- 91 ___ Do I rejoice in giving spiritual guidance to people when they are experiencing problems?
- 92 ___ Would I like to form new groups of Christians in areas where there are not many churches?
- 93 ___ Am I willing to use my financial resources to go and serve the Lord in distant places?
- 94 ___ Is it relatively easy for me to apply the teachings of the Bible to today's situations?
- 95 ___ Do I have a lot of interest in leading others to become Christians?
- 96 ___ Is prayer my favorite ministry in the church and do I spend much of the time practicing it?

STEP 2: Add up the answers for the Spiritual Gifts Test

After completing the test, copy the results of each item in the “Table of Answers” (below). Then add the four digits scored horizontally and enter the result in the column “TOTAL.”

Consider the following example:

| RESULTS | | | | TOTAL | GIFT |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 1. 2 | 25. 1 | 49. 1 | 73. 2 | 6 | A |
| 2. 4 | 26. 3 | 50. 2 | 74. 2 | 11 | B |

| ANSWERS | | | | TOTAL | GIFT |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------------------------|
| 1. | 25. | 49. | 73. | | A. WRITING |
| 2. | 26. | 50. | 74. | | B. LEADERSHIP |
| 3. | 27. | 51. | 75. | | C. HOSPITALITY |
| 4. | 28. | 52. | 76. | | D. SERVICE AND HELPING |
| 5. | 29. | 53. | 77. | | E. ADMINISTRATION |
| 6. | 30. | 54. | 78. | | F. DISCERNMENT |
| 7. | 31. | 55. | 79. | | G. FAITH |
| 8. | 32. | 56. | 80. | | H. MUSIC |
| 9. | 33. | 57. | 81. | | I. LANGUAGES |
| 10. | 34. | 58. | 82. | | J. MIRACLES AND HEALING |
| 11. | 35. | 59. | 83. | | K. ARTS / SKILLED LABOR |
| 12. | 36. | 60. | 84. | | L. COMMUNICATION |
| 13. | 37. | 61. | 85. | | M. GENEROSITY |
| 14. | 38. | 62. | 86. | | N. COMPASSION |
| 15. | 39. | 63. | 87. | | O. WISDOM |
| 16. | 40. | 64. | 88. | | P. KNOWLEDGE |
| 17. | 41. | 65. | 89. | | Q. EXHORTATION |
| 18. | 42. | 66. | 90. | | R. TEACHING |
| 19. | 43. | 67. | 91. | | S. PASTOR |
| 20. | 44. | 68. | 92. | | T. APOSTLE |
| 21. | 45. | 69. | 93. | | U. MISSIONARY |
| 22. | 46. | 70. | 94. | | V. PROPHECY |
| 23. | 47. | 71. | 95. | | W. EVANGELISM |
| 24. | 48. | 72. | 96. | | X. INTERCESSION |

STEP 3: Identify Your Ministerial Specialty

INSTRUCTIONS

Your highest scores in the total column above indicate your **STRONGEST GIFTS**. Now find these gifts in your **MINISTERIAL SPECIALTY**.

MINISTERIAL SPECIALTIES

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>PASTORAL AND LEADERSHIP GIFTS</p> <p><i>Leadership Administration Wisdom Pastor (Lesson 2)</i></p> | <p>TEACHING AND PREACHING GIFTS</p> <p><i>Discernment Knowledge Teaching Prophecy (Lesson 3)</i></p> | <p>EVANGELISM AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELING GIFTS</p> <p><i>Faith Miracles and Healing Exhortation Evangelism Intercession (Lesson 4)</i></p> |
| <p>GIFTS OF COMPASSION AND SERVICE</p> <p><i>Hospitality Service and Support Generosity Compassion (Lesson 5)</i></p> | <p>GIFTS RELATED TO CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY</p> <p><i>Languages Apostle Missionary (Lesson 6)</i></p> | <p>GIFTS OF CREATIVE ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS</p> <p><i>Writing Music Skilled Labor and Arts Communications (Lesson 7)</i></p> |

The next six lessons will include a study of each of these groups of gifts. A deeper study of your strongest gifts will be helpful in confirming and knowing how to start serving in your church.