

# Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

## What are spiritual gifts?

A spiritual gift is a God-given enablement to do certain tasks, enjoy doing them, and see great results come from doing them. Most of the spiritual gifts are things every Christian is commanded to do (e.g., give, share the gospel, pray for others, show mercy, etc.). The difference between doing something if you have a particular gift and if you don't is that people with a spiritual gift in a certain area find more enjoyment in serving in that way and their efforts are typically especially fruitful.

## What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

Scripture teaches that God gives us spiritual gifts is to build up the body of Christ and bring glory to God. (Ephesians 4:11-16). Our spiritual gifts are entrusted to us by God to steward them by investing them in service to others.

## Where do our gifts come from?

The Holy Spirit gives us our gifts and is the one who produces fruit from those gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). God will sometimes give us a gift temporarily in a situation where we need it.

## Where are spiritual gifts discussed in Scripture?

Three primary passages address spiritual gifts:

- + 1 Corinthians 12
- + Romans 12
- + Ephesians 4:11-13
- + 1 Peter 4:9-11

## How do I discover what my spiritual gifts are?

There is not one singular path to discovering your spiritual gifts. You will find many spiritual gifts inventories on the internet. These inventories are typically very long and produce results with questionable accuracy. Christians who are new to church life tend to score low on all of the gifts and Christians with a lot of ministry experience tend to score high on many of the gifts. Your scores also are affected by life and work experiences and may reflect that experience more than true spiritual gifting.

Instead of taking an inventory, embark on a journey of exploration. This journey can include one or more of the following steps:

- 1) Pray for the Holy Spirit to show you where you are gifted to serve in the church. Ask the Spirit to open doors to opportunities to try out different ministry roles and settings. Step into opportunities that are offered by the church and in your neighborhood.
- 2) As you serve in different ways, make take to reflect after each opportunity on your experience. How did you feel as you were serving? What was enjoyable and what was challenging? What ways did you see God working in and through you as you served? How was your heart naturally draw to express love toward those you were serving? Were

there other roles you didn't serve in that you would like to try out next time? Make notes about each experience. Talk with the leaders about trying out other roles in that ministry.

- 3) Take some time to reflect and respond prayerfully to the open-ended questions listed at the end of this guide. Once you have responded to the questions, read over the spiritual gift description document. Note where your responses line up with the descriptions.
- 4) In the gift description document, note gifts that stir feelings of interest and excitement in you. What would it look like for you to experiment with that gift in your existing relationships and ministry context? Think of some ways that you could practice the work of that gift in your church or community. If practicing radical generosity excites you, make a sacrificial contribution to a need in your community. If you feel drawn to encouragement, ask God to show you someone who feels discouraged. Take the person out for coffee and listen to them without giving advice or fixing them. Reflect on your experiences as you experiment in this way.
- 5) Ask mature Christians who know you well to share their reflections on how they see the Holy Spirit working in and through you. What spiritual gifts do they think you should learn more about? What ministry roles would they suggest you try out?

### **Open-Ended Questions for Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts**

1. Of all the jobs you've ever held, which was your favorite? What about it did you like most? What did you like least about your favorite job? What did you learn about yourself from jobs you did not enjoy?
2. What part of your present job do you enjoy most? (If you're a student or retired, what part of being a student or what retirement activities do you enjoy most?)
3. What part of your present job do you enjoy least? (If you're a student, what part of being a student do you enjoy least? If you are retired, what activities have you tried and not enjoyed?)
4. When you look back at your childhood, what kinds of things did you naturally gravitate towards doing? What role(s) (formal or informal) did you enjoy taking on in your group of friends, sports teams, art clubs, and other extracurricular activities? What did you enjoy about those roles?
5. What messages have you received in your past about what you are or are not good at? These messages may have come from parents, teachers, coaches, or other influential adults in your life. Think critically about these messages before the Lord and ask Him to lead you into truth about whether these messages are true or not. Ask a prayer minister to pray with you to release any untrue stories about who you are and how you are gifted.
6. What kinds of activities and tasks do you consider yourself to be good at that bring you joy?
7. What abilities or qualities do friends often compliment in you?
8. What sorts of things do you find yourself doing that help others without even trying?
9. What action words would you choose to describe what you love to do (for example: draw, sing, counsel). List as many as you can think of, then circle two or three that best capture what you enjoy.
10. What ministry or ministries (if any) have you been involved in that you found very fulfilling? What was your role? What ministry roles have you tried and not enjoyed? What was unfulfilling about those roles?
11. What themes are repeated in your answers to the questions above?
12. Write down the phrases that capture your most important discoveries from the process of answering the questions above.

*Based on your answers and the descriptions of each spiritual gift, what gifts do you think you might have? List them below. Pray for opportunities to try out serving in these ways. Reflect on your experiences as you serve and continue to refine your understanding of how God has gifted you.*