

SUMMER SERIES

Gifts of the Spirit

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Summer Series: Gifts of the Spirit

"A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church. God gives these gifts to every believer so that we might serve one another and build up the body of Christ in love. They are to be exercised with faith, in an orderly manner, and always under the lordship of Christ."

- **Wayne Grudem (from *Systematic Theology*)**

"Spiritual gifts are for strengthening others. A spiritual gift is an expression of faith which aims to strengthen faith. They are not given for personal prestige or spectacle, but so that Christ might be magnified in His church as we love and serve one another with the strength that God supplies."

- **John Piper**

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Introduction

In Romans 12:1-8, the Apostle Paul calls believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices and be transformed by the renewing of their minds. He then describes the spiritual gifts given by God's grace for the benefit of the whole church.

This study explores the gifts in Romans 12 and other key passages (1 Corinthians 12–14, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4). We wholeheartedly believe that the Holy Spirit continues to distribute these gifts today.

However, all gifts must be exercised "*decently and in order*" (1 Corinthians 14:40), with self-control, love, and edification as our guide. We believe that chaotic manifestations have no place in biblical worship.

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What Should Our Attitude Be Towards Our Spiritual Gifting?

Rom 12:3-5 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

- **The emphasis in verses 3-8 is not so much on the Spiritual Gifts themselves, but rather on the attitude of the Believer**
- **The Believer is to have an attitude of humility as it pertains to the gifting we have received from God**
- **There is a strong tendency in man where we become prideful about our talents, abilities, appearance, and social status**
- **This attitude clings to Believers when they become "full of themselves" about any manner of gifting God has bestowed upon them**

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"… not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think"

- **Spiritual gifts are just that – gifts!**
  - **God – in His Sovereign Will – is the one who bestows these gifts**
  - **The gifts are a PRIVILEGE, not a MERIT!**
  - **Should an extremely beautiful woman become prideful because – somehow – she happened to win the gene pool lottery? What did she "do" to inherit her beauty?**
  - **Likewise, if God has gifted someone with an amazing ability to speak or play a musical instrument, should that person become full of pride because of it?**
- **Believers must recognize that it is God who distributes the gifts**

"God has dealt to each one a measure of faith"

- **He also has allotted to each Believer a "measure of faith"**
- **Some individuals have tremendous faith**
- **Others are a work in progress**
- **Our attitude should be one of encouragement and exhortation for our brethren, irrespective of our faith or abilities**

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- *"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function"*
  - Just as a human body has many parts, so does the assembly of believers
  - The "many members" are all believers who have been united into ONE BODY
  - Yet, just as each body part has a specific function, so does each member in the church
  - Not all believers have the same gifts … and no single believer will ever have ALL the gifts!
  - *1 Cor 12:12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.*
  - *1 Cor 12:15-17 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?*

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Rom 12:6-8 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

- ***"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them"***
  - **All believers have diverse gifting in accordance with God's grace**
  - **God's deliberate choice of which believers receive specific gifts fosters mutual dependence within the Church**
  - **If every believer was granted every gift, we would not NEED each other**
  - **God chose to distribute the gifts among the believers so we can minister to one another and be mutually dependent on each other**
  - **Believers cannot (and should not!) glory in themselves because:**
    - **The gifting we have received is unmerited**
    - **No single believer has all the gifts**
  - **The gift(s) we receive from the Holy Spirit *may or may not align* with our natural human talents**

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- **There are five main passages within the New Testament that address spiritual gifts:**
  - **Every believer has been given at least one gift**
  - ***1 Pet 4:10-11 As <u>each one has received a gift</u>, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***
  - ***Rom 12:6-8***
  - ***Eph 4:11-16***
  - ***1 Cor 7:1-7***
  - ***1 Cor 12:12-14***
- **All totaled, the NT mentions twenty unique spiritual gifts**
- **Simply stated, a spiritual gift is a God-given ability for service**
- **The primary purpose of the spiritual gifts is to build up the body of the Messiah**

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- **List of spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament**

1.	Apostles	1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11
2.	Prophecy	Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; Ephesians 4:11
3.	Serving/Ministry	Romans 12:7
4.	Teaching	Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11
5.	Exhortation/Encouragement	Romans 12:8
6.	Giving	Romans 12:8
7.	Leadership	Romans 12:8
8.	Mercy	Romans 12:8
9.	Word of Wisdom	1 Corinthians 12:8
10.	Word of Knowledge	1 Corinthians 12:8
11.	Faith	1 Corinthians 12:9
12.	Healing	1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30
13.	Miracles	1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 29
14.	Discerning of Spirits	1 Corinthians 12:10
15.	Tongues	1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30
16.	Interpretation of Tongues	1 Corinthians 12:10, 30
17.	Helps	1 Corinthians 12:28
18.	Administration	1 Corinthians 12:28
19.	Evangelism	Ephesians 4:11
20.	Pastoring/Shepherding	Ephesians 4:11

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1. Apostles (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11):

- **We believe the Office of Apostle was through direct appointment by Jesus Christ**
- **Jesus appointed 12 Apostles over the 12 tribes of Israel (Matthias replaced Judas), and Paul was appointed an Apostle over the Gentile nations**
- ***Eph 2:19-21 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone*. (We don't lay foundations on roofs!)**

2. Prophecy (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; Ephesians 4:11):

- **We believe there is a distinction between the *gift of prophecy* and the *Office of Prophet*. We believe the Office of Prophet is not currently active.**
- **Prophecy is the Spirit-empowered ability to receive and declare a message from God that edifies, exhorts, and consoles the church (1 Corinthians 14:3)**
- **It may involve forth-telling God's truth or revealing future events, always exercised in proportion to one's faith (Romans 12:6) and subject to evaluation by others**
- **Prophecies help guide and strengthen the body of Christ while pointing people toward holiness and faithfulness**

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3. Serving/Ministry (Romans 12:7):

- The gift of serving is the God-given capacity to joyfully perform practical tasks and meet tangible needs that support the church's ministry and the well-being of others
- It reflects the servant heart of Christ and enables the practical functioning of the body so that other gifts can operate effectively
- Those with this gift often work faithfully behind the scenes with humility and diligence

4. Teaching (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11):

- Teaching is the ability to clearly explain and apply Scripture so that others grow in understanding, maturity, and obedience to God's Word
- Teachers communicate truth with accuracy and clarity, equipping believers for works of service so the church reaches unity in the faith and the fullness of Christ

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5. Exhortation/Encouragement (Romans 12:8):

- **Exhortation is the gift of coming alongside others to urge, comfort, challenge, or motivate them toward godly living and action**
- **Exhorters strengthen the discouraged, stir up faith, and help people apply biblical truth practically, often bringing renewed hope and determination in the face of difficulty**

6. Giving (Romans 12:8):

- **The gift of giving is the supernatural ability and cheerful willingness to contribute resources – financial, material, or otherwise – generously and sacrificially to meet needs and advance God's kingdom**
- **Givers often give beyond the normal expectation with liberality and without seeking recognition, reflecting God's own generosity**

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7. Leadership (Romans 12:8):

- Leadership is the capacity to cast vision, organize people, and direct efforts with diligence and zeal so that the church or ministry moves forward effectively
- Leaders guide others with care and foresight, inspiring them to work together toward shared biblical goals

8. Mercy (Romans 12:8):

- The gift of mercy is the special ability to show genuine empathy, compassion, and kindness toward those who are suffering, hurting, or in need
- Those with this gift minister cheerfully and sensitively, offering comfort and practical help without judgment, mirroring God's tender mercies

9. Word of Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8):

- The word of wisdom is the supernatural ability to apply divine insight and biblical truth to specific situations or problems in a timely and effective manner
- It provides godly counsel that cuts through complexity and leads to righteous solutions that glorify God and benefit the church

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10. Word of Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8):

- The word of knowledge is the Spirit-given ability to receive or discern specific information, facts, or biblical understanding that would not otherwise be known
- It equips believers for ministry, teaching, or prayer with supernatural insight into people, situations, or truths

11. Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9):

- This gift is a special, extraordinary confidence in God and His promises, especially in the face of impossible circumstances
- It enables bold prayer, trust, and action that moves mountains and inspires the community of believers

12. Healing (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30):

- The gift of healing is the supernatural ability, through prayer and faith, to restore health – physical, emotional, or spiritual – in a way that demonstrates God's power and compassion
- It serves as a sign of the kingdom and points people to Jesus, the ultimate Healer

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13. Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 29):

- The working of miracles is the God-given power to perform supernatural acts that transcend natural laws, authenticating the gospel and glorifying Christ
- These acts display divine intervention and authority in extraordinary situations

14. Discerning of Spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10):

- Discernment of spirits is the ability to distinguish between the influence of the Holy Spirit, human spirits, or demonic spirits
- It protects the church from deception, error, and false teaching while enabling wise judgment in spiritual matters.

15. Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30):

- The gift of tongues is the supernatural ability to speak in languages unknown to the speaker (human or angelic) for the purpose of prayer, praise, or (when interpreted) edifying the church
- It serves as a sign and a means of personal devotion to God

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16. Interpretation of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10, 30):

- Interpretation of tongues is the supernatural ability to understand and convey the meaning of a message spoken in tongues so the church can be instructed and edified
- Without interpretation, public use of tongues is unprofitable

17. Helps (1 Corinthians 12:28):

- The gift of helps is the ability to provide practical assistance and support that relieves burdens and enables others to fulfill their ministries more effectively
- Those with this gift strengthen the body through faithful, behind-the-scenes help and partnership in the work of the Lord

18. Administration (1 Corinthians 12:28):

- Administration (sometimes called governments) is the capacity to organize, plan, and manage resources, people, and details with order and effectiveness so that ministry goals are accomplished efficiently
- Administrators provide structure and stewardship that allow the church to function smoothly

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19. Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11):

- **The gift of evangelism is the special ability to proclaim the gospel clearly and effectively to unbelievers, leading them to faith in Christ**
- **Evangelists have a passion for the lost, communicate the good news with boldness and relevance, and often see fruit in new conversions**

20. Pastoring/Shepherding (Ephesians 4:11):

- **Pastoring is the gift of caring for the spiritual flock through nurturing, protecting, feeding, and guiding believers toward maturity**
- **Pastors provide relational oversight, counsel, correction, and encouragement, acting as under-shepherds under the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ**

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How do I know or identify my Spiritual Gifts?

- **Discovering your spiritual gifts involves a combination of self-reflection, prayer, and practical engagement. Here are steps to help you identify them:**

  - **Pray for Guidance: Ask God for clarity and wisdom to reveal your spiritual gifts. Regular prayer opens your heart to divine insight.**

  - **Study Scripture: Explore biblical passages about spiritual gifts, such as Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, and Ephesians 4:11-13. These list gifts like teaching, prophecy, serving, healing, and administration.**

  - **Reflect on Your Passions and Strengths: Consider what activities bring you joy, energize you, or feel natural. For example, do you love encouraging others (exhortation)? Are you drawn to helping those in need (mercy)?**

  - **Seek Feedback from Others: Ask trusted friends, family, or church members what strengths they see in you. Others often notice gifts you might overlook.**

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How do I know or identify my Spiritual Gifts (cont.)

- **Take a Spiritual Gifts Assessment**: Use tools like online questionnaires or church-provided inventories (e.g., the Spiritual Gifts Test from Lifeway or similar resources). These can highlight potential gifts but aren't definitive.

- **Experiment in Ministry**: Get involved in your church or community. Volunteer in different roles—teaching, hospitality, leadership, or outreach. Notice where you feel effective and fulfilled.

- **Listen to the Holy Spirit**: Pay attention to inner promptings or recurring thoughts about specific ways to serve. These may indicate your gifts.

- **Consult Church Leaders**: Pastors or mentors can offer insight and opportunities to explore your gifts within the church.

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Real-World Example Regarding the Gift of Tongues

While sitting next to a well-dressed Native American (Kiowa) man on a flight, the Holy Spirit told Jack Hayford speak to the gentleman in his spiritual language (tongues). Jack argued with the Spirit for several minutes concerned that the guy would think Jack was a nut-job! Finally, Jack asked the man if he could share a phrase he had learned to see if the man would recognize it. He agreed to listen. So, Jack began speaking his prayer language to the man.

The passenger got a shocked look on his face and asked Jack where in the world he had learned the phrase, as he recognized it from an older or "pre-Kiowa" dialect/form of his people's language.

The message the man understood was essentially about "light coming down from above" (interpreted as a reference to God or divine light). Hayford then explained to the man what had happened – that he had been praying in the Spirit – and they were able to have a meaningful conversation about the Gospel.

This event served as a striking real-life example for Hayford of how the Holy Spirit can use spiritual language in unexpected, evangelistic ways (distinct from its more common role in personal prayer and edification).

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Concluding Remarks

Spiritual gifts are not optional add-ons for the Christian life but essential expressions of God's grace at work in His church. From Romans 12:1-8 and the broader testimony of Scripture, we see that every believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit for the common good. These gifts – whether prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, mercy, or others – are to be discovered, developed, and deployed with humility and faithfulness.

We rejoice in the reality of the gifts while holding firmly to the biblical mandate that they must be exercised "decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). The Holy Spirit does not produce chaos, confusion, or spectacle, but rather self-control, love, unity, and the clear proclamation of Christ. We should avoid any fleshly or disorderly extremes and pursue the pure, edifying work of the Spirit.

2 Tim 1:6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.