

## Spiritual Gifts, Defined

**Prophecy** (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10, 28-29; 14:1-40; Eph. 4:11)

The ability to boldly proclaim Spirit-prompted insight into God's will and share in such a way that the recipients are strengthened, encouraged, and consoled (I Cor. 14.3). This gift may include messages related to what is yet to come, or it may simply be a message for a specific people, at a specific time. These proclamations made should never contradict the truth of Scripture and should always be weighed against it.

**Service/Ministry** (Rom. 12:7)

The ability to identify neglected tasks and people in God's work, however menial, and use available resources to get the job done. The Greek word for this gift is the same as that for "deacon."

**Teaching** (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11)

The ability to understand God's Word and make it accessible to God's people so that they can apply it to their lives.

**Encouragement/Exhortation** (Rom. 12:8)

The ability to come alongside the discouraged, confused, or hardhearted by providing truth in such a way that they take courage, consolation, and counsel for the path ahead.

**Giving** (Rom. 12:8)

The ability to be generous with one's resources in such a way that others benefit from the gift given and God is glorified. Wealth is not the defining factor of a gifted giver – cheerful generosity and sincerity ought to mark the one so gifted.

**Leadership** (Rom. 12:8)

The ability to stand before others in such a way that they become motivated followers, understanding and supporting the vision that has been provided. The word was used of a ship captain, a pilot who navigates through stormy waters.

**Mercy** (Rom. 12:8)

The ability to enter into the physical, mental, or emotional distress of others with unusual kindness and compassion while providing timely help and support.

**Wisdom** (1 Cor. 12:8)

The ability to make connections between what is going on in one's life and applying the principles of God's Word in such a way that the person helped sees not only the way forward but a better way to get there.

**Knowledge** (1 Cor. 12:8)

The ability to research, examine, and organize spiritual teaching for the benefit of others. The knowledge received by one so gifted may benefit and bless him/her, but the gift is so that others in the body can be better equipped and strengthened.

**Faith** (1 Cor. 12:9)

The ability to see God's preferred future and move confidently in that direction trusting that God will do what only he can do. Those with this gift become catalysts amongst those who may not have the same measure of trust and faith. Those gifted with faith have a strong sense of God's faithfulness in times past and it compels them with certainty into a God-sized vision when others may only see it with great uncertainty.

**Healing** (1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30)

The ability to be a conduit to God's sovereign power whereby he touches people's brokenness and restores them to wholeness. The one so gifted can only heal those sicknesses that the Lord chooses to heal.

**Miracles** (1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 29)

The ability to be used by God in such a way that the works done (deliverance from demonization; divine interventions, etc) bear testimony not only to the power displayed but the appropriate attribution of that power to God. The miracles are typically supportive of God's Truth and the proclamation of his Word.

**Discernment** (1 Cor. 12:10)

The ability to discriminate between truth and error, good and evil, right and wrong; to be able to sense the presence of an evil spirit; to be able to point out inconsistencies in teaching.

**Tongues** (1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 30; 14:1-40)

The ability to speak in languages not known. When people spoke in languages they didn't know, the common thread in Paul in I Cor. 12 and 14 is that they were speaking to God. This gift, to be exercised in public worship, had to be accompanied by one with the gift of interpretation.

**Interpretation of tongues** (1 Cor. 12:10, 30; 14:5, 13, 26-28)

The ability to interpret the tongue's speech of another believer. This gift may be resident within a believer who also has the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 14:13), or it may function separately (1 Cor. 14:26-28).

**Apostleship** (1 Cor. 12:28, 29; Eph. 4:11)

The ability to start and oversee the development of new churches or ministries. People with this gift tend to be able to adapt well to new environments and cultures. The Greek word referred one who was sent for a particular purpose. The gift is different from the office of Apostle. If the prerequisite for the office included having seen the resurrected Jesus (Acts 1:22; I Cor. 9:1) it would appear that the office would have ceased by the second century.

**Helps** (1 Cor. 12:28)

The ability to serve another individual in such a way that the task God has entrusted to them gets accomplished and their effectiveness is enhanced. Some believe this manifestation may be more one-on-one while the gift of service may be more group related. Both gifts are supportive in nature.

**Administration** (1 Cor. 12:28)

The ability to give direction and make decisions that result in a more efficient achievement of determined goals. The Greek word speaks of a helmsman who steers a ship to its destination.

**Evangelism** (Eph. 4:11)

The ability to share the Gospel with such Spirit-empowered clarity that unbelievers regularly come to a faith in Christ.

**Shepherd or pastor** (Eph. 4:11)

The ability to care for the souls of believers in such a way that they feel nurtured, protected, and guided as they grow in their relationship with Christ and toward greater spiritual maturity.