

## Spiritual Gifts Assessment Tool

*Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:9-11*

STEP ONE to find your personal ministry niche is to understand your spiritual gifts. It would be foolish to become a salesman if you'd rather work with computers. In the same way we pursue vocational employment based on aptitudes and abilities, we pursue spiritual service based on the way God has wired us with the gifts of the Spirit.

While theologians and teachers sometimes differ on how to precisely classify and name them, they are often broken into *service* gifts, *speaking* gifts, and *signifying* gifts. Here are the spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture.

### 1. Service Gifts

Service gifts are the ligaments and muscle tissue that hold the church of Jesus Christ together. Service gifts are often low profile, behind-the-scene gifts. They include showing mercy, service (or helps), hospitality, giving, administration, leadership, faith, and discernment.

People who serve are eager for God to receive the credit for whatever good comes. "If anyone *serves* he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 4:11, emphasis added). Here are brief definitions of the service gifts with a few examples of how each gift may be used. These, along with speaking and signifying lists, are adapted from the work of Carl Smith, Kenneth O. Gangel, and Leslie B. Flynn:

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Mercy***: Special ability to show sympathy to the suffering saints. Meals to the sick, hospital visits, phone calls and visits to the hurting.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Service***: Special ability to joyfully serve behind the scenes. Set up chairs, ushering, assist leaders.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Hospitality***: Special desire to offer home, food and lodging. Host missionaries, Bible studies, singles to dinner.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Giving***: Special desire and financial ability to give above and beyond a tithe. Generosity toward youth mission trips, deacon fund offerings, Para-church ministries, a suit for the pastor.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Administration***: Special ability to orchestrate program details. Committee work, volunteer for church office, conference/seminar supervision.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Leadership***: Special ability to preside or govern wisely. Boards of Christian ministries, visible roles, elders, deacons, committee chairmen, run nursery program, fundraising.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Faith***: Vision for new projects that need doing and perseverance to see them through. Building programs, new ministries.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Discernment***: Ability to detect error. Meet with teachers who may be teaching incorrectly, letters to the editor.

## 2. Speaking Gifts

Speaking gifts include knowledge, wisdom, preaching, teaching, evangelism, apostleship, shepherding, and encouragement. “If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God” (1 Peter 4:11, emphasis added). Here are definitions and examples of the spiritual gifts of speaking:

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Knowledge:** Spiritual ability to search and acquire Scriptural truth. Academic pursuits, writing, teaching.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Wisdom:** Special insight into applications of knowledge. Counseling, teaching, discussion group leader, accountability groups, friendship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Preaching:** Special ability to rightly proclaim and expound God’s truth. Preachers, lay preachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Teaching:** Special ability to explain Scripture in an edifying way. Sunday school teachers, Bible studies, Home groups, children, youth programs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Evangelism:** Special ability to clearly present the gospel to non-believers. Sunday night church visitation program, share faith with contacts on job, sponsor outreach events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Apostleship:** Special ability to begin new works. Missionaries, church planters, Christian service organizations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Shepherding:** Unique ability to care for a flock of believers over the long haul. Pastors, elders, nursery program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Encouragement:** Special skill to inspire, encourage, and comfort. Being a friend, counseling, writing letters.

People who have been given speaking gifts are able to help equip others to have a personal ministry of service. “It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:11-12, emphasis added).

## 3. Signifying Gifts

The signifying gifts are miracles, healing, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **Tongues:** Spiritual ability to speak in a language foreign to speaker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Interpretation of Tongues:** Spiritual ability to interpret the message of one speaking in tongues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Miracles:** Spiritual ability to actuate the supernatural intervention of God against the laws of nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Healing:** Spiritual agency of God in curing illness and disease and restoring to health supernaturally.

## Steps to determine your spiritual gifts

Learning your own spiritual gifts will 1) help you understand how and where you fit into the body of Christ, 2) help you set priorities for service, and 3) give you direction for developing a personal ministry.

Spiritual gifts are a blessing. Therefore, the exercise of your gifts will necessarily bring enjoyment, fulfillment, and produce fruit. If your service doesn't, you probably are not serving in the right area.

If you have never studied or don't understand your own spiritual gifts follow these suggested steps:

1. **Study and Reflection.** Study the four passages of Scripture which deal with spiritual gifts: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:11-13; and 1 Peter 4:9-11. You may want to study the context by examining the verses before and after these specific references.

Your gifts will usually be related to the following, so reflect on and answer these questions:

1. What are your natural abilities? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are your motivated interests? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your previous successful ministry involvement (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Where have you received positive feedback from other Christians? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the burden, or calling, you sense? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Narrowing.** Now that you have studied the Scripture passages and answered these questions, it's time to narrow the list to the specific spiritual gifts which you "think" you possess or "possibly" may possess. How do you do that?

First, make a photocopy of the list of gifts above (I'll explain why below). Now mark each gift in the blank space provided using on the following legend:

Y = Yes, I think I possess this spiritual gift.

M = Maybe. I may possess this spiritual gift.

N = No. I do not possess this spiritual gift.

D = Don't know. I don't know if I possess this spiritual gift.

3. **Ranking.** Now that you have sifted through the list of gifts you should have one or more “Y” and “M” notations in the blanks. Write each of those spiritual gifts in the following spaces:

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Now, rank these in order of priority based on what you know at this time. Put a “1” next to the gift with which you most identify, a “2” by your second choice, and so on. This is provisional – you are still exploring.

4. **Feedback.** An excellent way to help determine your spiritual gifts is to ask your Christian friends for help. Ask a few friends to rank you using the same legend you used in Step 2 above, Narrowing. Make enough additional photocopies of the spiritual gifts above for each friend. Compare the results to your own assessment. Should you add any spiritual gifts to your exploratory list?
5. **Exploration.** Now it is time to explore the possibilities. Take special training in your potential areas of giftedness. Experiment with different ministries. Which ones help you feel fulfilled? In which ones do you feel you are making a contribution? Which ones are drudgery? In what areas are you being affirmed by other people?

Discovering your spiritual gifts will inevitably open up a whole new realm of joy in the Lord. To know Him is to serve Him, and the happiest people in the world are those who know their spiritual gifts and are using them for the glory of God.