

# Spiritual Gifts

Excerpt From: Driscoll, Mark. "Who Do You Think You Are?."

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

Those with the gift of wisdom have extraordinary insight into people and situations, combined with an understanding of what to do and how to do it. They not only see but also apply the principles of God's Word to the practical matters of life by the "Spirit of wisdom" and often function well as coaches, counselors, and consultants.

### Do you have this gift?

1. When studying God's Word, do you find that you discover the meaning and its implications of a passage before others do?
2. Do you understand things about God's Word that other believers with the same background and experience don't?
3. Are you able to apply biblical truth in a practical way to help others make good life choices?
4. Do you get frustrated when people make foolish decisions because you know what they should have done instead?
5. When people have important decisions to make, do they come to you for prayer and biblical counsel?

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

Those with the gift of knowledge research, remember, and make effective use of information on a number of subjects. They love to study and learn, and aren't content with a surface-level knowledge. They're compelled to thoroughly research and compile their findings for others' benefit. People with this gift love God with "all (their) mind."

### Do you have this gift?

1. Do you love to study and have a good memory?
2. Have others pointed out your ability to know and understand God's Word?
3. Do people come to you with difficult problems and questions from the Bible, seeking your insight, because they know you'll have the answer or find it?
4. In studying God's Word, have you found that new insights and understanding of difficult subjects is easy for you?
5. Are you frustrated when you hear bad teaching from people who've not done their homework?

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

Faith is the ability to envision what needs to be done and to trust God to accomplish it, even if it seems impossible to most people. Those with the gift of faith trust God in difficult—even impossible—situations when others are ready to give up and are often visionaries who dream

big dreams, pray big prayers, and attempt big things for Jesus. They're also persuasive about Scripture because they are convinced of the truth and power of God and his Word.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you see obstacles as opportunities to trust God for the impossible?
2. Do you find yourself frequently boasting about the power of God and what you have seen him do?
3. Does it bug you when someone says something can't be done or accomplished?
4. When other believers face overwhelming trials or tasks, do they come to you for encouragement and prayer?
5. Have you seen many wonderful answers to prayers that were impossible from the human point of view?

### **Healing** (1 Cor. 12:9)

Healing is the ability to call on God through prayer in faith to heal the sick through supernatural means for the purpose of revealing God. Those with the gift of healing see healings as signs God uses to reveal his power so that many will come to believe in Jesus. This doesn't mean, however, that every time those with the gift of healing pray, others are healed. God alone sovereignly decides whether to heal someone or not.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you have a deep compassion for people who are sick?
2. Do you have a deep conviction that God can heal anyone he chooses?
3. Do you enjoy praying for people who are sick, and have you seen people healed when you do so?
4. When God heals someone, are you excited because it helps reveal his power to others?
5. Do you long for the coming of God's kingdom, when there will be an end to all sickness?

### **Miracles** (1 Cor. 12:9)

The gift of miracles is the ability to call on God to do supernatural acts that reveal his power. People with the gift of miracles see God show up in extraordinary ways from little events to major public displays. Examples from the Bible include casting out demons, causing nature to obey God's authority, and raising the dead. Obviously, miracles are uncommon and don't happen regularly. Otherwise they wouldn't be viewed as miraculous. People with this gift should not chase signs and wonders, but they should expect them to follow God's people.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you truly believe that God can do the impossible?
2. When you read of the many miracles in the Bible, are you encouraged because you love to see God made known in ways that can't be ignored?
3. Have you seen someone freed from demonic oppression?
4. When you hear of or see miracles, is your faith in God greatly increased?

5. Do you use stories of God's miracles to help prove to others that Jesus is God?

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

Discernment is the ability to quickly perceive whether something is from God or from Satan. People with the gift of discernment know that Satan and his demons disguise themselves as holy, i that he empowers counterfeit miracles to deceive people, and that he empowers false teachers, prophets, apostles, and doctrines.

#### Do you have this gift?

1. Have you felt a special responsibility to protect the truth of God's Word by exposing error?
2. Do you often make a swift evaluation of someone or something that others did not see but that proved to be correct?
3. Do you have a solid understanding of Scripture and sensitivity to the leading of God the Holy Spirit?
4. Are you keenly aware of moral sin and doctrinal heresy?
5. Can you read a book or hear a teacher and almost immediately uncover any false teaching?

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

The gift of apostle can be confusing because there is sometimes a failure to distinguish between the office of Apostle (big A) and the gift of apostle (little a). The office of Apostle refers to the early apostles chosen by Jesus. The requirements for the office included witnessing the life and resurrection of Jesus and miraculous power. "Big A" Apostles don't exist today (e.g., writing books of the Bible), although the function of their office continues in a limited sense. For example, apostleship in a secondary sense applies to such people as Barnabas, Apollos, Sosthenes, Andronicus, Junias, James, Silas, and Timothy. They, like apostles, were gifted individuals sent out to plant local churches, raise up leaders, and minister cross-culturally. Today, church planters and missionaries often operate out of a gift of apostleship, as well as Christian leaders God raises up to lead and influence multiple churches and pastors. These people often have a number of gifts, such as evangelism, teaching, leadership, faith, and exhortation, and are motivated by difficult new tasks.

#### Do you have this gift?

1. Can you effectively minister cross-culturally?
2. Are you called and qualified to plant a church?
3. Can you start a church from nothing?
4. Are you an entrepreneur?
5. Has God given you leadership and influence over multiple churches as a movement leader?

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

Teaching is the ability to understand and communicate biblical truth in a clear and relevant manner that results in understanding and application. Those with this gift enjoy studying and learning new information and find great joy in sharing it with others. Teaching opportunities

vary from one-on-one discipleship to formal classes, informal Bible studies, large groups, and preaching.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy studying and researching?
2. Do you enjoy imparting biblical truth to others?
3. Do others come to you for insight into Scripture?
4. When you teach, do people “get it”?
5. When you see someone confused in his or her understanding of the Bible, do you feel a responsibility to speak to that person about their misconceptions?

**Helps and Service** (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Peter 4:11)

The gift of helps and service is the ability to joyfully work alongside another and help that person complete a God-given task. People with this gift generally prefer to humbly work behind the scenes and find joy in identifying and helping alleviate others’ burdens and responsibilities. They demonstrate a servant attitude, loyalty, attention to detail, and responsiveness to the initiatives of others, and they function well in positions of detail and assistant leadership.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy helping others become more effective in their work?
2. Do you prefer to labor behind the scenes?
3. When someone is doing a job poorly, is your first instinct to help instead of criticize?
4. Do you prefer to work in a supportive rather than a leadership capacity?
5. When someone asks for your help, do you have difficulty saying no?

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

Administration is the ability to give direction and make decisions on behalf of others that result in efficient operation and accomplishment of goals. The mark of an administrator is his or her ability to accomplish things in a “fitting and orderly way,” and administrators often have a keen eye for detail, resulting in natural talents of organization, observing and using details, problem solving, and reasoning.

Do you have this gift?

1. When things are poorly organized, do you get frustrated and want to help fix them?
2. Can you bring order out of chaos?
3. Do you naturally organize your life, schedule, finances, priorities, etc.?
4. Do you become energized when working on tasks and projects?
5. Do efficiency and promptness matter more to you than they do for others?

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

Evangelism is the ability and passion to boldly and clearly communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to non-Christians. Evangelists feel compassion for the lost and seek to earnestly understand their questions and doubts so they can provide compelling answers. They generally prefer being with people in the outer culture rather than hanging out with Christians in the church.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy being with non-Christians and sharing the gospel?
2. Can you effectively communicate to non-Christians?
3. Does a person's conversion bring you profound joy?
4. Do you feel frustrated when you haven't shared your faith for a while?
5. Do you enjoy teaching others how to share their faith?

**Pastoring/Counseling** (Eph. 4:11)

In one sense, pastoring is a function of the office reserved for those who meet the biblical criteria of elder. In another sense, there is a pastoral gift, also commonly known as shepherding or counseling, that God gives to people in the church. Those with a pastoral gift have a deep love for people that compels them to protect, guide, counsel, and disciple other people. People with this gift find great joy in seeing others mature in their faith to overcome sin and discouragement.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do you have a deep love for people that compels you to care for them?
2. Do you enjoy meeting with people to listen to their life stories and provide biblical counsel to help them mature in faith?
3. When you hear that someone is hurting, is your first instinct to try to be of help?
4. Are you able to point out sin and folly in people's lives in a loving way that they receive as helpful?
5. Do people pursue you for counsel and instruction?

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

Encouragement (also called exhortation) involves motivating, inspiring, and consoling others so they mature in their walk with Jesus. Christians with this gift have an unusual sensitivity, patience, and optimism for those who are discouraged or struggling, and people pursue them for healing words, gracious truth, and compassionate counsel. They may have a knack for one-on-one relationships and prefer working with individuals or small groups.

Do you have this gift?

1. Do people seek you out for advice and encouragement?
2. Do you enjoy walking with someone through difficulties?
3. Are you drawn to those who are hurting and needy?
4. Are you patient with people?

5. Would you rather speak personally with people about their problems than send them to someone else for help?

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

Giving is the ability to be generous with wealth to joyfully and wisely meet others' needs and support ministries. People with this gift view their treasures, talents, and time, regardless of the amount, as on loan from God, enjoy giving of themselves and what they have, and are often moved to meet the physical needs of others. Even if they do not possess the resources to help, they earnestly pray for those needs to be met.

#### Do you have this gift?

1. Do you see the needs of others more than most people?
2. Do you enjoy giving your time, talent, and treasure to others?
3. Do you see giving to a worthwhile project as an exciting honor and privilege and seek those projects out without being asked?
4. Do you give to the church regularly, cheerfully, and sacrificially?
5. Do people often say that you're a generous person?

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

The gift of leadership is found in people who have a clear, significant vision from God and are able to communicate it publicly or privately in a way that influences others. Those gifted in leadership gravitate toward the "point positions" in a ministry, have trust and confidence in their abilities, and best serve others by leading them in the purposes of God.

#### Do you have this gift?

1. Do others have confidence in your ability to lead?
2. Do you enjoy having the overall responsibility for the direction and success of a group or organization?
3. When a difficult situation or major decisions arise, do others look to you for input and leadership?
4. Do you usually take leadership in a group where none exists?
5. Do you find leadership enjoyable rather than frustrating and difficult?

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

Mercy is the capacity to feel and express unusual compassion and sympathy for those in difficult or crisis situations and provide them with the necessary help and support to see them through tough times. Those gifted in mercy can "walk in another's shoes" and feel the pain and burdens of others, desiring to make a difference in hurting people's lives without being judgmental.

#### Do you have this gift?

1. Are you drawn to people who are needy, hurting, sick, disabled, or elderly?

2. Do you often think of ways to minister to the suffering?
3. Do you have great compassion for people having personal and emotional problems?
4. Does visiting the suffering bring you joy rather than depress you?
5. Do you respond to people out of compassion more than judgement?

## **Hospitality** (Rom. 12:13)

Hospitality is the ability to welcome strangers and entertain guests, often in your home, with great joy and kindness so they become friends. Hospitality includes one's family, friends, Christians, and strangers who may not be Christians, but not false teachers and the like, who are a danger. Those who are hospitable tend to have "open homes" where others are welcome to visit, and exhibit such natural talents as interior design, cooking, and event planning.

### Do you have this gift?

1. Do you enjoy having people in your home?
2. Do you enjoy watching people meet and have fun at parties and events you helped plan and host?
3. Is your home the kind that most people feel comfortable in and drop by to visit unannounced?
4. When you think of your home, do you view it from the perspective of guests who will visit?
5. Do you consider your home as a place of ministry?

## **Tongues** (1 Cor. 12:8–10, 29–30)<sup>5</sup>

The word tongues is best translated "languages" from the Greek. The confusion regarding tongues is that at least three different uses of the gift are mentioned in Scripture. One, there is a private prayer language, which Paul wrote of in 1 Corinthians 14:14, saying, "I pray in a tongue." Two, there is a missionary gift that enables someone to speak the gospel of Jesus in a way that foreigners hear it in their native language even when the speaker does not know the language. Acts 2:1-13 records just such an occasion, when three thousand people were saved in one day as the gospel was preached through the early Christians. Three, there is a revelatory language whereby a message of God is spoken in a language unknown to the speaker that must be translated into the native language of the people in the church so they can understand what is being said. This use of tongues, therefore, also requires the assistance of some with the gift of interpretation.

Those with a private prayer language feel closely connected to Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit as they enjoy intimate time with God. Those with a missionary or revelatory gift of tongues see God use them to communicate the gospel to people they otherwise could not because of language barriers.

### Do you have this gift?

1. Do you have a private prayer language that helps you connect with God?
2. Has God used you to communicate the gospel to those who do not share your language?
3. Has God used you to interpret the tongue speaking of someone else?

## **Prophecy** (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10, 28; Eph. 4:11)6

Much like the gifts of apostleship and pastor, there is both an office of prophet that is limited to a few people and a gifting of prophecy that is open to all. In the Old Testament, the title “prophet” refers to the office of the person chosen by God to both hear from and communicate for him.

Today, prophets who are the original source of inerrant Scripture no longer exist. There remains, however, the gift and ministry of prophecy. Those with the gift of prophecy easily spot compromise, sin, and error, and desire immediate change and action for Christ. They tend to be bold, sensitive to sin, and place a very high value on urgent biblical obedience.

Like tongues, prophecy is spoken of in various ways throughout Scripture. Importantly, the New Testament doesn’t elevate prophecy to the highest level of authority as the Old Testament does. Each potential prophecy is supposed to be tested and approved by church leaders, such as the elders.

Modern-day prophecy is sometimes the teaching ministry of preaching the Bible as God’s Word in the church, sometimes a revelation about a future event that God intends to reveal to the entire church that is authenticated by coming true, and sometimes a word from God for an individual.

### Do you have this gift?

1. Do you feel compelled to proclaim the Word of God boldly?
2. When you see sin or errors, do you feel compelled to confront them?
3. Are you capable of detecting and refuting false teachings?
4. Are you bold for Christ?
5. Do you love people and seek their best in Christ?”