

Spiritual Gift Descriptions

This paper provides a brief description of the spiritual gifts mentioned or implied in the Bible. It is designed to help individuals recognize ways in which God has empowered them to build up the body of Christ. We have defined twenty-three gifts, but this is not an exhaustive list.

The gifts described in this paper fall into two categories: speaking gifts and service gifts.

Speaking gifts require building a reputation of proven faithfulness. It is important to build relationships with integrity before you have a platform in which to express these gifts. It is not enough to say, "I have a gift of teaching so I want to teach." We first need to establish a proven record of service. Some speaking gifts require a long maturing process and education before they can be fully expressed. Speaking gifts include evangelism, prophecy and teaching.

Service gifts often have a lower profile and less visible effect than speaking gifts. They are typically exercised in supporting roles that are more "behind the scenes." Sometimes people with service gifts think that what they do and where they're gifted isn't all that important. God thinks differently. Christians need to agree with Him about the vital importance of service gifting in the purpose of His church. Service gifts include helps, giving and mercy.

ADMINISTRATION: The spiritual capability to understand what makes an organization function, and the special ability to plan and execute procedures that increase the church's organizational effectiveness. (1 Corinthians 12:28)

APOSTLESHIP: The spiritual capability to start churches and oversee their development. (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11)

COUNSELING: The spiritual capability to effectively listen to people and assist them in their quest for psychological and relational wholeness.

CRAFTSMANSHIP: The spiritual capability to enhance ministry through the creative construction of necessary tools for ministry. (Exodus 31)

CREATIVE COMMUNICATION: The spiritual capability to communicate God's truth through a variety of art forms. (The Holy Spirit's expression is in various forms in the Bible - poetry, song, narrative, parable, metaphor, etc.)

DISCERNMENT: The spiritual capability to distinguish between truth and error, and to identify deception in character and in relationships. (1 Corinthians 12:10, "distinguishing between spirits.")

ENCOURAGEMENT: The spiritual capability to reassure, strengthen, and affirm those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith. (Romans 12: 8)

EVANGELISM: The spiritual capability to effectively communicate the message of Christ to non-Christians so they can respond in faith and move toward discipleship. (Ephesians 4:11)

FAITH: The spiritual capability to trust God's will and act on it with unwavering belief in His ability. (1 Corinthians 12:9)

GIVING: The spiritual capability to contribute money and material resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality. (Romans 12: 8)

HEALING: The spiritual capability to be God's channel to restore people to health. (1 Corinthians 12:9)

HELPS: The spiritual ability to attach spiritual value to the accomplishment of practical and necessary tasks which support the body of Christ. (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28)

HOSPITALITY: The spiritual capability to personally care for people by providing fellowship, food, or shelter. (1 Peter 4:9)

INTERPRETATION: The spiritual capability to make known to the body the message of one who is speaking in tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:10)

KNOWLEDGE: The divine empowerment to accumulate and analyze information effectively. (1 Corinthians 12:8)

LEADERSHIP: The spiritual capability to instill vision, to motivate, and to direct people to accomplish the work of the ministry. (Romans 12:8)

MERCY: The spiritual capability to minister cheerfully and appropriately to people who are suffering. (Romans 12:8)

MIRACLES: The spiritual capability to obtain exceptional interventions of God's power that glorify Him and give evidence of His grace. (1 Corinthians 12: 10, 28)

PROPHECY: The spiritual capability to proclaim God's truth with power and clarity in a timely and culturally sensitive fashion for correction, repentance, or edification. (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; Ephesians 4:11)

SHEPHERDING: The spiritual capability to guide, care for, and nurture individuals or groups in the body of Christ as they grow in faith. (Ephesians 4:11)

TEACHING: The spiritual capability to understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God to the lives of listeners. (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11)

TONGUES: The spiritual capability to express praise and worship to God in an unknown spiritual language. (1 Corinthians 12:10)

WISDOM: The spiritual capability to apply spiritual knowledge effectively. (1 Corinthians 12:8)