



Discovering Your Design:

Preparing Christ's followers to change the world

DEFINITION, PITFALLS & PRINCIPLES

WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT?

Definition: Spiritual gifts are spiritual abilities given by God to every believer for the edification of the church to the glory of God until He comes.

WHAT SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NOT: DON'T CONFUSE GIFTS WITH...

1. Natural Talents

Natural Talents

- ✓ given by God to everyone
- ✓ present from birth
- ✓ has no defined purpose

vs.

Spiritual Gifts

- ✓ given by God to all believers
- ✓ present from spiritual birth
- ✓ has a clear purpose: to build up the church

Both come from God.

Both can be used to glorify the Lord.

Both gifts and talents need to be faithfully stewarded.

Both can be used within the context of the church.

Sometimes talents are transformed into a spiritual gift. Example: teacher receives the gift of teaching.

Other times, God does not choose to transform the talent or ability into a gift. This does not mean they do not have the ability to do it, but that God has given them other gifts which are to be used for the building up of the body.

2. Fruit of the Spirit

The Fruit of the Spirit

- ✓ singular | all to be present in our life
- ✓ character qualities that are eternal
- ✓ focuses on me: my character

vs.

Gifts of the Spirit Gal 5:22

- ✓ plural | can't have all of them
- ✓ spiritual abilities that are temporal
- ✓ focuses on others: edification

Both give evidence of the Spirit's work in our lives.

Both are to be seen in a Christian's life and find expression in and through one another.

3. The Gift of the Holy Spirit. The one Spirit is the giver of many gifts. We all receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at conversion. The gifts come from the Holy Spirit.

4. Ministry Positions: sometimes a certain ministry position carries a title that fits with the job they do but not necessarily the spiritual gift they have. For example, a small group leader may not have leadership gifts, and may not need them, but they certainly could benefit from the shepherding gift or the gift of encouragement. Similarly, the evangelism coordinator may not have the gift of evangelism, but rather the gift of administration. Ministry positions point to roles, spiritual gifts to tools which are needed to fulfill those roles.

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PITFALLS - WORDS OF CAUTION

Gift projection - this is the mistaken idea that everyone should be able to do what you are able to do. They may not have the same gift and even if they do they may express it in different settings. This is true for heart passions too.

Don't think there is a hierarchy of less and more important gifts (cf 1 Cor 12-26). The fact is God gives greater honor to the parts that lack it (v 24).

Beware of the inferiority/superiority complex that can come over gifts. (cf I Cor 12:15, 21)

Don't ever use your giftedness as an excuse not to serve. The old "I don't do windows," has no place in the church. Remember your bottomline motivation is to faithfully serve Christ's church whether that is by using your gifts, or by helping out where there is a need.

Don't forget just because you don't have the gift doesn't mean you aren't to share those qualities or responsibilities as we follow Christ's teaching. Examples- the gift of mercy, evangelism etc.

TEN KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to those who have put their faith in Christ (cf 1 Cor 12:11; Eph 1:13) The Holy Spirit determines our gifts not us and we should expect that they will fit with the other parts of who we are i.e. personality, passion, and abilities.
2. Every Christ follower has at least one spiritual gift (cf 1 Cor 12:7; 1 Pe 4:10).
3. No one person has all the gifts (cf 1 Cor 12:29-30) (note the questions in 29-30 expect the negative answer - the Greek language has that feature concerning questions).
4. Each gift is to be used in love and humility (cf 1 Cor 13; Rom 12:3). Unloving service is worthless and arrogance destroys rather than builds the body.
5. Gifts are given to grow or build up Christ's church (cf 1 Cor 14:12).
6. God's mercy expressed to us in Jesus Christ is the motivation for serving (cf Rom 12:1-2; Is 6:1-8).
7. We are responsible for what we do or don't do with our gifts (cf 1 Pe 4:10-11, Mt 25:14-30). It is a sin to waste the gifts God has given us.
8. We are called to develop the gifts God has given us (cf 1 Tim 4:14).
9. When we serve in God's strength for His glory, He gets the praise (cf 1 Pe 4:11).
10. When using our gifts we are to use them in an orderly way reflecting the order and character of our God. In so doing we reflect the order and character of God and promote the edification of the church (I Cor. 14).

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR GIFTS

- Study - learn what the Bible says, Romans 12: 1-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 4:7-11
- Analyze - take assessments
- Feedback - listen to those who know and observed you - Life Group Ministry Team