

English Transcript

Discover How God Has SHAPED You for Ministry

Lesson 2: Spiritual Gifts 101

Welcome back to Lesson 2 in our course called Discover How God has SHAPED You for Ministry. In Lesson 1, we discussed God's design for His church and the instruction that the Apostle Paul gave the church in Corinth related to the nature of the church and the use of spiritual gifts.

As we continue with Lesson 2, we will offer more biblical teaching on spiritual gifts. Let us first read how Paul started his first letter to the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 1:4-9.

⁴ I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵ that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶ even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

We take note that Paul thanks God for His grace for the wide range of gifts given to every member of the church in Corinth. When Paul refers to “you”, this is in the plural, meaning each person in the church. They were blessed in every way, collectively with all of the spiritual gifts that God determined they needed. Paul emphasizes the sustaining grace of the Lord Jesus and His faithfulness to fulfill His purposes for them, in Christ.

There is an activity we do when we teach this course in a classroom setting, where we ask a team of 10 students to attempt to assemble a model of a church. There are 10 plastic pieces that can be put together to construct a church building. It would not be possible to build the church with just one person, or four people, or even 7 people. Every member of the group is needed to build the church because each person brings a unique piece that is essential to the completion of the church.

The team must be united and work together to complete the task. This is exactly what Paul writes to the church in Corinth in verse 10 of chapter 1.

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

We will learn in this lesson that there are four primary passages in the Bible that provide us with a description of spiritual gifts and how they are to be used in a healthy manner within the Body of Christ. In Lesson 1 we introduced each of these passages. We can refer to 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, as well as Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4.

Throughout this lesson, we will explore what the Bible clearly teaches about what spiritual gifts are and what they are not. And we will offer biblical guidance on how spiritual gifts are to be used within the context of the local church.

Let us begin on page 6 of your handout with a working definition of spiritual gifts.

Definition of a Spiritual Gift

Spiritual gifts are divine abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God's design and grace for the common good of the body of Christ.

We will briefly explain each phrase in this definition.

Spiritual gifts are divine abilities...

They are endowments or special gifts given by God that enable us to make our unique contribution. They are not natural talents, but divine abilities that enable us to do ministry.

distributed by the Holy Spirit...

These divine abilities created by God are given to believers through the Holy Spirit when we become members of the body of Christ. Not only does the Holy Spirit distribute the gifts, He also empowers us in our use of them.

according to God's design and grace...

There is no Christian without a spiritual gift. Every believer has at least one. Gifts equip believers to fulfill the Lord's purpose by reflecting His design for their lives.

for the common good of the body of Christ...

Your spiritual gift(s) are not for you alone, but given to you for blessing of others. The divine abilities you have been given enable you to meet the needs of others and the church as a whole. Each of us can make a kingdom impact. Our gifts allow us to serve one another better. They enable us to glorify God and edify others.

In 1 Corinthians 14:12, Paul states that the church in Corinth was to "excel in building up the church."

When we consider the four primary teaching passages related to spiritual gifts, we can deduce that Paul was not attempting to provide an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts. There does not appear to be a rank ordering of gifts by importance. The list of gifts in each passage are not the same while there is some overlap. The main point seems to be that God gives a variety of gifts to every believer, as He determines, with the common purpose of strengthening and building

up the church. Beginning on page 7 in your handout, we will discuss what we do know about spiritual gifts based on the teaching from the Bible.

What do we know about spiritual gifts from Scripture?

1. We are commanded to understand Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor 12:1).

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

2. We are commanded to use our spiritual gifts for the glory of God (1 Peter 4:10-11).

¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

3. Spiritual Gifts are given by God (Jesus in Ephesian 4:11 and the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor 12).

a. As the Holy Spirit determines (1 Cor 12: 11,18)

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. (12:11)

But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. (12:18)

b. To every believer (each one) (1 Cor 12:7)

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (12:7)

c. In differing measures (Romans 12:3)

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

d. For the common good (12:7)

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (12:7)

e. To glorify God (1 Peter 4:11)

... so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

f. To build up the church (14:26)

What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

- g. To be used in love (13:1-13)

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails.

- 4. The four primary spiritual gift passages are Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4). We can remember chapters 12 and 4.**
- 5. There were and continue to be false gifts tied to pagan worship and demonic influence within the church (1 Cor 12:2).**

You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.

As Paul began to teach the church in Corinth about genuine spiritual gifts, he reminded them that before they were in Christ, they were influenced by demons and were empowered with false gifts and powers that were not from God.

- 6. The church is one body with many members. There is unity and diversity within the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12).**
- a. Every part is significant
 - b. Every part has a role to play (Eph 4)
 - c. No place for superiority or false humility

We can think about an orchestra or a choir. In each there are many instruments and voices. Unless each of the instruments and voices are played or sung following the same melody, there will be chaos. But when unified and led by the conductor, there will be a beautiful sound. This is a picture of God's design for the church.

- 7. Spiritual Gifts are NOT:**

- a. The same as Personality traits
- b. The same as Natural Abilities (common grace)
- c. The same as Fruit of the Spirit (being vs doing)
- d. The same as Spiritual Disciplines

- e. Limited to type of serving
 - f. Reserved or defined by an office or title (i.e., Elder, Deacon, Pastor)
 - g. Limited to a specific age group ministry
 - h. Limited by a specific technique (i.e., writing, Christian education, music, social media)
 - i. Prioritized one over another
There is no ranked order between helping, serving, giving, administering, encouraging, and being kind, on the one hand, and preaching, teaching, leading, and exhorting, on the other, let alone such "sign-gifts" as healing, speaking in tongues, and interpreting tongues.
 - j. To be used as a measure of spiritual maturity or being baptized into Christ Jesus
- 8. There seem to be two broad categories of gifts: speaking gifts and serving gifts (1 Peter 4:10-11).**
- 9. Some believe all gifts are current today, while others believe that some gifts were for the founding of the church.**
- 10. The best way to discover gifts may be through serving, affirmation by other believers, and the leading of Holy Spirit.**
- 11. Spiritual Gifts can be neglected and abused (seems like they can't be lost though) (1 Tim 4:14).**
- The apostle Paul reminded Timothy not to neglect the gift(s) that he was given.
- 12. It appears like spiritual gifts are given at the point of salvation, but nothing indicates that the Holy Spirit can't give additional gifts as He determines based on the needs of a local church.**
- 13. Distributed to the Body of Christ as a whole.**
- a. Every local church may not have every gift.
 - b. Every generation may not need/expect to have every gift.
 - c. A gift given once benefits the entire body across time (e.g., Apostles, Ephesians 2:20).
The actual apostles and New Testament prophets played a specific role for a season. In Ephesians 2 we are told that the church is built upon their foundation. The official Apostles were taught by Jesus and were eyewitnesses to his life, death, resurrection and ascension. There is no continuation of Apostles beyond the first century church yet the Universal church has been blessed through their ministry.

14. Most spiritual gifts are to be an active part of the daily life of every believer.

Paul was clear that no single believer has all of the gifts. Some have been given one or more spiritual gifts with supernatural impact. Yet every believer is still commanded to demonstrate the use of the various gifts in a more “natural way”. A few examples are listed below.

Not everyone may have this specific spiritual gift, but we are each called to ...

- a. serve one another (Gal 5:13)
- b. encourage one another (Heb 10:25)
- c. give generously and cheerfully (2 Cor 9:6-7)
- d. make disciples and teach others (Matthew 28:18-20)
- e. be kind and compassionate to one another (Eph 4:32)
- f. walk by Faith (2 Cor 5:7)
- g. be witnesses (Acts 1:8) and ambassadors of Reconciliation (2 Cor 5) even if we have not been given the gift of evangelism.

Whenever we study Scripture, we should be careful not to go beyond what Scripture clearly teaches. We may hold personal opinions related to a specific doctrine, but if not clearly taught in Scripture, we should hold these very loosely.

There are differing views on spiritual gifts held by professing Christians. Based on what we have just looked at from Scripture, there are several points that all believers can find agreement.

- God wants us to understand spiritual gifts.
- God is the giver of spiritual gifts.
- Every believer is gifted in some way, and we are to honor and appreciate the great diversity within the church.
- The possession of certain spiritual gifts does not elevate some believers over others.
- Spiritual gifts are to be used in love.
- Spiritual gifts are intended to build up the church.
- Spiritual gifts are meant to glorify God

As we grow to understand more about spiritual gifts and how God has prepared us, by His grace, to serve Him, there are wonderful benefits or blessing for the individual , the local Church, and the Kingdom of God.

Personal Benefits

- Once you know your spiritual gifts, you know your spiritual job description.
- When you know your spiritual gifts, your ministry will be more focused.
- You will be more fruitful and fulfilled. (John 15:8, 11)

Local Church Benefits

- There is greater unity and harmony in churches that teach and develop gift-based ministries.
- There is less pride and false humility in churches with gift-based ministries.
- There is a Spirit-led desire for continued growth and maturity

Kingdom Benefits

- God is glorified and people are edified

With this as a primer on spiritual gifts, let us review some key points as we read what a well-known pastor and theologian has written about Spiritual gifts. Included in your handout on page 9 is an article written by J.I. Packer titled, *Experiencing God's Presents: What are Spiritual Gifts?*

Please follow along in your handout as I read the article for you. The first 4-5 short paragraphs will sound familiar to you because many of the points that J.I. Packer includes were discussed in this lesson. Near the end you will hear about the contrast between spiritual gifts and natural abilities. He will go on to say that the test of whether we are exercising a spiritual gift is that people in the church feel the influence of Christ through what one says and does.

Give careful thought to what is written about how the church is meant to be less like a bus and more like an anthill. This is the part of the article that illustrates the true value of spiritual gifts and how they are to be used within the church.

Follow along as I read this article on page 9 of your handout.

What are spiritual gifts? None of the New Testament passages that speak of them (Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12–14; Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Peter 4:10–11) define them. Because these passages all come from letters to churches where gifts were already in use, and the only question was whether they were being used well, that need not surprise us. But constructing a definition is not hard.

Gifts are manifestations of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4–11), given to build up the church (12:7, 14:4) and the individuals within it. It is only through Christ, in Christ, and by learning and responding to Christ that anyone is ever edified. Therefore, gifts should be defined in terms of him—as powers of expressing, celebrating, displaying, and obeying Christ. Gifts communicate his reality through word or action in service of God and others (fellow believers and non-Christians too).

Gifts vary. There are gifts of speech and of Samaritanism; Paul's flitting to and fro between the two kinds in his gift lists (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:8–10) shows that there is no scale of values attached to them. There is no pecking order between helping, serving, giving,

administering, encouraging, and being kind, on the one hand, and preaching, teaching, leading, and exhorting, on the other, let alone such "sign-gifts" as healing, speaking in tongues, and interpreting tongues.

The key truth is that in the church, which is one body in Christ, we're all members—that is, body parts of Christ, and, in him, of each other.

Among the variety of God's gifts, some are natural abilities and character qualities sanctified, while others correspond to nothing that was previously seen in the person's life. That the gift is from the Holy Spirit is more evident in the latter case than in the former, but the reality is that all our capacities for expressing Christ are spiritual gifts. By means of them, Christ from his throne uses us as his hands, feet, and mouth—even his smile—and he speaks, meets, loves, saves, and sustains.

As the test of whether you are a leader or teacher is that others follow you or learn from you, so the test of whether you're exercising a spiritual gift is that people in the church feel the influence of Christ through what you say and do. Natural abilities, however spectacular, are not spiritual gifts as such, whereas diffident clumsiness of word and gesture is no sign that a spiritual gift is not in action.

That the indwelling Holy Spirit imparts to every Christian believer at least one gift appears both from Paul's image of the body growing toward the full stature of Christ, its head, "as [and clearly only when] each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16), and from his emphatic declaration: "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7). It's plain that every-member ministry in the body of Christ is Paul's, and therefore Christ's own, ideal.

The church is not to be like a bus, where passengers sit quietly and let someone else do the driving, but like an anthill, where everybody is at work. Not everyone who ministers will be a church leader, nor will the service they render always be appreciated. But just as every bit of that fabulous complex, the human body, has a job to do, so it is with each of us who believe.

Pause the audio recording now and take a few minutes to write down your responses to the questions on page 10 in your handout. When you have completed this activity, restart the audio for a brief summary and a quick review of the list of spiritual gifts that we can see described in the Bible.

Welcome back!

I encourage you to share with someone else what you have been learning about spiritual gifts in this course. Putting your thoughts into your own words helps with the learning process and will prepare you to live out 2 Timothy 2:2 as you teach others.

The question that I find fascinating related to how we each view our church, as either more like a bus with one driver in charge and everyone else just on board for the ride or is the church more like an ant hill? We can all picture an ant hill with hundreds and thousands of tiny ants all working hard for a common purpose.

In one of our classes, a pastor shared that his church functions more like a bus and he is the problem. He is the bus driver. He realized that he needed to follow the instruction of Ephesians 4 and equip the members of his church to know how they are gifted by God to serve within the church. He realized that his calling is to share the work of ministry with his church. This is what the apostle Paul has been teaching in 1 Corinthians 12 as well.

Beginning in Lesson 3, we will introduce you to a helpful model called SHAPE. You will discover that not only has God gifted every believer with at least one spiritual gift, but He has also shaped or formed each of us in other ways as well to serve within the church. He has blessed us with natural abilities, passions, unique personalities, and life experiences that are all part of the way that God has shaped us for ministry.

As we conclude this lesson, I will briefly summarize the more than 25 spiritual gifts that are referenced in the Bible with a short definition. This list will be helpful as we begin the first of five discovery activities in Lesson 3 to assess how God has SHAPED you for ministry within the Body of Christ.

You will find a list of spiritual gifts on pages 11 and 12 in your handout. I will define each gift and provide an example of where you might see this gift in practice in the Bible. You may then look for these examples on your own after this lesson concludes. These brief definitions for spiritual gifts come from an excellent book called *Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts The Network Way*.

Administration

The divine enablement to understand what makes an organization function, and the special ability to plan and execute procedures that accomplish the goals of the ministry.

Luke, Mark and Titus may be examples of people with this gift.

Apostleship

The divine ability to start and oversee the development of new churches or ministries.

Examples of men with this gift are Paul, Peter, Barnabus and Silas.

Discernment

The divine enablement to distinguish between truth and error. It is the ability to discern spirits, differentiating between good and evil, right and wrong. The ability to detect inconsistencies in another's life and confront in love.

In Acts 15 at the Jerusalem Council, we can see some of the leaders of the church with this gift.

Encouragement

The divine enablement to present truth so as to strengthen, comfort, or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in the faith. The ability to bring out the best in others and challenge them to develop their potential.

Barnabus was known as the Son of Encouragement in Acts 4:36. Paul was an encourager of church leaders.

Evangelism

The divine enablement to effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers so they respond in faith and move toward discipleship.

We may think of Phillip in Acts 8 with the gift of evangelism.

Faith

The divine enablement to act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief in God's ability to fulfill His purposes even in the face of overwhelming obstacles and human impossibilities. The willingness to risk failure in pursuit of a God-given vision, expecting God to handle the obstacles.

Nehemiah was a leader with great faith. Timothy as well (2 Timothy 1:3-8).

Giving

The divine enablement to contribute money and resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality.

Examples of those with the gift of giving might be Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43), Mary (John 12:1-8), and the Macedonia churches (2 Corinthians 8).

Healing

The divine enablement to be God's means for restoring people to wholeness. The possessor of this gift is not the source of power but a vessel who can heal only those diseases the Lord chooses to heal. The ability to pray, in faith, specifically for people who need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing and see God answer.

We may look to Peter in Acts 3 and many examples in the life of Paul.

Helps/Service

The divine enablement to attach spiritual value to the accomplishment of practical and necessary tasks that free up, support, and meet the needs of others. The ability to recognize unmet needs in the church family, and take the initiative to provide practical assistance quickly, cheerfully, and without a need for recognition.

The Deacons (Acts 6) are a good example for this gift as well as Phoebe (Romans 16:1), and Onesimus in Philemon.

Hospitality

The divine enablement to care for people by providing fellowship, food, and shelter. The ability to make others, especially strangers, feel warmly welcomed, accepted, and comfortable in the church family.

Lydia demonstrated this gift in Acts 16:13-15.

Intercession

The divine enablement to consistently pray on behalf of and for others, seeing frequent and specific results.

Epaphras was a man of prayer (Colossians 4:12).

Interpretation of Tongues (Languages)

The divine enablement to make known to the body of Christ the message of one who is “speaking in tongues” (different language).

The early church at Pentecost provided an example (Acts 2).

Knowledge

The divine enablement to bring truth to the body through a revelation or biblical insight.

Act 6:3 and the selection of the Deacons revealed this gift.

Leadership

The divine enablement to clarify and communicate the purpose and direction (“vision”) of a ministry in a way that attracts others to get involved. The ability to motivate others, by example, to work together in accomplishing a ministry goal.

Peter and James were leaders in the early church.

Mercy

The divine enablement to cheerfully and practically help those who are suffering or are in need, having compassion that is moved to action.

Dorcas (Acts 9:36) may have also had the gift of mercy known for her good works acts of charity helping the vulnerable in her community.

Miracles

The divine enablement to authentic the ministry and message of God through supernatural interventions that glorify Him.

We might look to Paul in Acts 20:7-14 with the bring back to life of Eutychus.

Prophecy

The divine enablement to reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance, or edification. The ability to publicly communicate God's Word in an inspired way that convinces unbelievers and both challenges and comforts believers. The ability to persuasively declare God's will.

Agabus (Acts 21:10 and the daughters of Phillip (Acts 21:9) are examples with this gift.

Shepherding

The divine enablement to nurture, care for, and guide people toward ongoing spiritual maturity and becoming like Christ.

Priscilla and Aquilla (Acts 18) and the apostle John.

Teaching

The divine enablement to understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God, causing greater Christlikeness in the lives of listeners.

Apollos, Paul, and Barnabus.

Tongues

The divine enablement to receive a spontaneous message from God in public worship and to speak it in an unknown language to the speaker that is then made known to the church through the gift of interpretation.

Peter in Acts 2 and Paul (1 Cor 14).

Wisdom

The divine enablement to effectively apply Spiritual truth to meet a need in a specific situation. The exercise of this gift skillfully distills insight and discernment into godly advice.

Stephen (Acs 6-7) and the Bereans (Acts 17).

So this is a brief summary of the spiritual gifts that are references in the New Testament. As we stated earlier, this list is not intended to be exhaustive. It does offer a helpful starting point though to discover just one of the ways in which God as SHAPED us for ministry.

As we conclude Lesson 2, you now have a solid overview of all that the Bible teaches about spiritual gifts. Now the real work begins. It is time to look at your own life to discover how God has been and continues to SHAPE you for ministry.

In Lesson 3 we will explain all that is included in the SHAPE assessments. This will be a wonderful time of discovering how God has equipped you uniquely to serve Him and His church.