

A PERSONAL GUIDE TO DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

What Is a Spiritual Gift?

Is there a difference between a spiritual gift and a talent? Is it important to recognize the difference? Will it help me discover my own spiritual gifts if I can distinguish between the two?

The answer to all three questions is yes. And recognizing the differences between talents and spiritual gifts can be one of the keys to finding those spiritual gifts God has given to you.

Let's look first at talents, or natural abilities. A natural ability may be something you're born with, like physical co-ordination. Or it may be a talent you've developed through the years, such as playing a musical instrument.

These natural abilities or talents may be useful or entertaining but they deal primarily with the surfaces of life. The root concern of one's relationship to God is left untouched. Abilities and talents affect people on a temporary basis, not an eternal basis. And spiritual growth isn't necessary for their development.

A woman who frequently opens her home for dinner guests and social gatherings may not have the gift of hospitality. Why not? Because spiritual gifts *differ* from natural abilities in two important respects.

First, the *motivation* for the gift is based on love for God and love for humanity. Self-glory or gain can never be the incentive. Paul tells us that one's communication, knowledge, and faith might all *be perfect*, but they are *worthless* unless love is the motive (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Second, the *goal* of spiritual gifts differs from that of natural abilities. Spiritual gifts are granted "for the common good..... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:12).

Keep in mind this motivation and goal as you seek to discover your gifts. Ask yourself, "What is my motivation and goal in this area?" Remind yourself that these gifts form the basis for our individual and collective service for God.

Remember, too, that hardly anyone discovers all his gifts at the beginning of his Christian experience. A period of time, or a special set of circumstances may be required to bring your gifts to light. Be willing to try your hand in new areas. Your spiritual gifts can be confirmed only in the actual setting where they are put to use.

What you find in the next few pages should not be used merely as an assessment.

Rather, use this guide to provide a focus for future service to God and to your fellow man.

Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

This guide in discovering your spiritual gifts should not be viewed as a test. The only right answers here are honest answers. The answers you provide will help you find your areas of strength within the realm of Christian service.

Before You Start

Follow These Four Steps:

Step 1 - Print out the answer sheet from the next page. Go through the list of 125 statements on the questionnaire in part four. For each one, mark on the answer sheet to what extent the statement is true of your life: MUCH = 3, SOME = 2, LITTLE = 1, or NOT AT ALL = 0.

Warning! Do not score according to what you think should be true or hope might be true in the future. Be honest and score on the basis of past experience. If you are a young Christian or new in the faith, the results will need extra care in interpretation.

Step 2 - When you are finished, score the questionnaire according to the instructions on the scoring sheet.

Step 3 - Study the gift definitions and Scripture references.

Step 4 - Complete the exercises to gain a tentative evaluation of where your gifts may lie and to explore the implications for your ministry in the Body of Christ.

Instructions for Scoring

1. Turn to your Score Sheet.
2. Now, add your Score Sheet answers together, from left to right, and write that total in the Totals box next to each gift.

Example: Add together the number you wrote in box 1, plus the number in box 26, plus the number in box 51, plus the number in box 76 and the number in box 101. Those five numbers, added together, become your total score to be written in the Totals box.

Directions

When you have finished responding to all 125 statements and are ready to score your test, follow the instructions listed. When your Score Sheet is totaled, return to this page for further instructions.

STEP 1

After adding up your points, you should have several notably high scores. These are your probable spiritual gifts. Please indicate them below, starting with your highest score. Any score below 12, however, is probably not a positive indicator of a gift. If you had other high scores, or if you feel sure you have certain gifts even though they didn't receive high marks, put them down as well.

STEP 2

Pray, believing that God will continue to reveal to you what gifts He has given you. Don't forget 1 CorCorCor. 12:11: Gifts have been distributed "to each individual." Pray also for the wisdom and desire to use your gifts with greatest efficiency for Him.

STEP 3

Study the Bible passages that deal specifically with this topic: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 3, 4 and 1 Peter 4. And take time to reflect on the contexts of the many Bible stories of men and women who used their gifts for God. Such accounts serve as examples and as inspiration.

STEP 4

Experiment by using your new-found gifts. This may be a new experience, and you may not know where to start. See the next page for some suggestions. As you begin to work for God, your gifts will develop in an exciting way.

STEP 5

Confirm the gifts of others. When you see another person using his gift effectively, say so. This isn't flattery, it's a vital step in the ongoing process of spiritual gift development.

Let's begin this process right away. Please mark down the spiritual gifts you've observed in three fellow Christians in your congregation. Your keen observations will be appreciated by each of them and your pastor.

This is a good opportunity to let your friends know what their gifts are, simply by listing them here. It's also a good time to let them know, in a very gracious (and anonymous) way, what their gifts aren't by leaving those gifts off the list. Make this an honest appraisal.

The summary of gifts beginning on the next page may help you in your evaluation.

STEP 6

Expect confirmation of your gifts by other church members. Following your handing in this inventory to your pastor, your inventory will be returned listing some of the gifts your fellow believers have observed in you. Everyone who hands in his inventory should receive an evaluation. You may not agree with this evaluation! But instead of dismissing these opinions, explore them. Look for ways to develop the abilities others believe you possess.

WAGNER-MODIFIED HOUTS QUESTIONNAIRE

**For each statement, mark to what extent it is true of your life:
MUCH = 3, SOME = 2, LITTLE = 1, or NOT AT ALL = 0.**

1. I have a desire to speak direct messages from God that edify, exhort or comfort others.
2. I have enjoyed relating to a certain group of people over a long period of time, sharing personally in their successes and their failures.
3. People have told me that I have helped them learn biblical truth in meaningful ways.
4. I have applied spiritual truth effectively to situations in my own life.
5. Others have told me I have helped them distinguish key and important facts of Scripture.
6. I have verbally encouraged the wavering, the troubled or the discouraged.
7. Others in the church have noted that I have been able to see through phoniness before it was evident to other people.
8. I find I manage money well in order to give liberally to the Lord's work.
9. I have assisted Christian leaders to relieve them for their essential job.
10. I have a desire to work with those who have physical or mental problems, to alleviate their suffering.
11. I feel comfortable relating to ethnics and minorities, and they seem to accept me.
12. I have led others to a decision for salvation through faith in Christ.
13. My home is always open to people passing through who need a place to stay.
14. When in a group, I am the one others often look to for vision and direction.
15. When I speak, people seem to listen and agree.
16. When a group I am in is lacking organization, I tend to step in to fill the gap.
17. Others can point to specific instances where my prayers have resulted in visible miracles.
18. In the name of the Lord, I have been used in curing diseases instantaneously.
19. I have spoken in tongues.
20. Sometimes when a person speaks in tongues, I get an idea about what God is saying.
21. I could live more comfortably, but I choose not to in order to live with the poor.

22. I am single and enjoy it.
23. I spend at least an hour a day in prayer.
24. I have spoken to evil spirits and they have obeyed me.
25. I enjoy being called upon to do special jobs around the church.
26. Through God I have revealed specific things that will happen in the future.
27. I have enjoyed assuming the responsibility for the spiritual well-being of a particular group of Christians.
28. I feel I can explain the New Testament teaching about the health and ministry of the Body of Christ in a relevant way.
29. I can intuitively arrive at solutions to fairly complicated problems.
30. I have had insights of spiritual truth that others have said helped bring them closer to God.
31. I can effectively motivate people to get involved in ministry when it is needed.
32. I can "see" the Spirit of God resting on certain people from time to time.
33. My giving records show that I give considerably more than 10 percent of my income to the Lord's work.
34. Other people have told me that I have helped them become more effective in their ministries.
35. I have cared for others when they have had material or physical needs.
36. I feel I could learn another language well in order to minister to those in a different culture.
37. I have shared joyfully how Christ has brought me to Himself in a way that is meaningful to non-believers.
38. I enjoy taking charge of church suppers or social events.
39. I have believed God for the impossible and seen it happen in a tangible way.
40. Other Christians have followed my leadership because they believed in me.
41. I enjoy handling the details of organizing ideas, people, resources and time for more effective ministry.
42. God has used me personally to perform supernatural signs and wonders.

43. I enjoy praying for sick people because I know that many of them will be healed as a result.
44. I have spoken an immediate message of God to His people in a language I have never learned.
45. I have interpreted tongues with the result that the Body of Christ was edified, exhorted or comforted.
46. Living a simple lifestyle is an exciting challenge for me.
47. Other people have noted that I feel more indifferent about not being married than most.
48. When I hear a prayer request, I pray for that need for several days at least.
49. I have actually heard a demon speak in a loud voice.
50. I don't have many special skills, but I do what needs to be done around the church.
51. People have told me that I have communicated timely and urgent messages that must have come directly from the Lord.
52. I feel unafraid of giving spiritual guidance and direction in a group of Christians.
53. I can devote considerable time to learning new biblical truths in order to communicate them to others.
54. When a person has a problem I can frequently guide him or her to the best biblical solution.
55. Through study or experience I have discerned major strategies or techniques God seems to use in furthering His kingdom.
56. People have come to me in their afflictions or suffering, and told me that they have been helped, relieved and healed.
57. I can tell with a fairly high degree of assurance when a person is afflicted by an evil spirit.
58. When I am moved by an appeal to give to God's work, I usually can find the money I need to do it.
59. I have enjoyed doing routine tasks that have led to more effective ministry by others.
60. I enjoy visiting in hospitals and/or retirement homes, and feel I do well in such a ministry.
61. People of a different race or culture have been attracted to me, and we have related well.

62. Non-Christians have noted that they feel comfortable when they are around me, and that I have a positive effect on them toward developing a faith in Christ.
63. When people come to our home, they indicate that they "feel at home" with us.
64. Other people have told me that I had faith to accomplish what seemed impossible to them.
65. When I set goals, others seem to accept them readily.
66. I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.
67. God regularly seems to do impossible things through my life.
68. Others have told me that God healed them of emotional problems when I ministered to them.
69. I can speak to God in a language I have never learned.
70. I have prayed that I may interpret if someone begins speaking in tongues.
71. I am not poor, but I can identify with poor people.
72. I am glad I have more time to serve the Lord because I am single.
73. Intercessory prayer is one of my favorite ways of spending time.
74. Others call on me when they suspect that someone is demonized.
75. Others have mentioned that I seem to enjoy routine tasks and do well at them.
76. I sometimes have a strong sense of what God wants to say to people in response to particular situations.
77. I have helped fellow believers by guiding them to relevant portions of the Bible and praying with them.
78. I feel I can communicate biblical truths to others and see resulting changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or conduct.
79. Some people indicate that I have perceived and applied biblical truth to the specific needs of fellow believers.
80. I study and read quite a bit in order to learn new biblical truths.
81. I have a desire to effectively counsel the perplexed, the guilty or the addicted.
82. I can recognize whether a person's teaching is from God, from Satan, or of human origin.

83. I am so confident that God will meet my needs that I give to Him sacrificially and consistently.
84. When I do things behind the scenes and others are helped, I am joyful.
85. People call on me to help those who are less fortunate.
86. I would be willing to leave comfortable surroundings if it would enable me to share Christ with more people.
87. I get frustrated when others don't seem to share their faith with unbelievers as much as I do.
88. Others have mentioned to me that I am a very hospitable person.
89. There have been times when I have felt sure I knew God's specific will for the future growth of His work, even when others have not been so sure.
90. When I join a group, others seem to back off and expect me to take the leadership.
91. I am able to give directions to others without using persuasion to get them to accomplish tasks.
92. People have told me that I was God's instrument which brought supernatural change in lives or circumstances.
93. I have prayed for others and physical healing has actually occurred.
94. When I give a public message in tongues, I expect it to be interpreted.
95. I have interpreted tongues in a way that seemed to bless others.
96. Others tell me I sacrifice much materially in order to minister.
97. I am single and have little difficulty controlling my sexual desires.
98. Others have told me that my prayers for them have been answered in tangible ways.
99. Other people have been instantly delivered from demonic oppression when I have prayed.
100. I prefer being active and doing something rather than just sitting around talking, reading or listening to a speaker.
101. I sometimes feel that I know exactly what God wants to do in ministry at a specific point in time.
102. People have told me that I have helped them be restored to the Christian community.
103. Studying the Bible and sharing my insights with others is very satisfying for me.

104. I have felt an unusual presence of God and personal confidence when important decisions needed to be made.
105. I have the ability to discover new truths for myself through reading or observing situations firsthand.
106. I have urged others to seek biblical solutions to their affliction or suffering.
107. I can tell whether a person speaking in tongues is genuine.
108. I have been willing to maintain a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work.
109. When I serve the Lord, I really don't care who gets the credit.
110. I would enjoy spending time with a lonely, shut-in person or someone in prison.
111. More than most, I have had a strong desire to see peoples of other countries won to the Lord.
112. I am attracted to non-believers because of my desire to win them to Christ.
113. I have desired to make my home available to those in the Lord's service whenever needed.
114. Others have told me that I am a person of unusual vision, and I agree.
115. When I am in charge, things seem to run smoothly.
116. I have enjoyed bearing the responsibility for the success of a particular task within my church.
117. In the name of the Lord, I have been able to recover sight to the blind.
118. When I pray for the sick, either I or they feel sensations of tingling or warmth.
119. When I speak in tongues, I believe it is edifying to the Lord's Body.
120. I have interpreted tongues in such a way that the message appeared to be directly from God.
121. Poor people accept me because I choose to live on their level.
122. I readily identify with Paul's desire for others to be single as he was.
123. When I pray, God frequently speaks to me, and I recognize His voice.
124. I cast out demons in Jesus' name.
125. I respond cheerfully when asked to do a job, even if it seems menial.