

Sunday School – Spiritual Gifts

There are three biblical lists of the “gifts of the Spirit,” also known as spiritual gifts. The three main passages describing the spiritual gifts are [Romans 12:6–8](#); [1 Corinthians 12:4–11](#); and [1 Corinthians 12:28](#). We could also include [Ephesians 4:11](#), but that is a list of offices within the church, not spiritual gifts, per se. The spiritual gifts identified in [Romans 12](#) are prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, and mercy. The list in [1 Corinthians 12:4–11](#) includes the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues. The list in [1 Corinthians 12:28](#) includes healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. A brief description of each gift follows:

Prophecy – The Greek word translated “prophecy” in both passages properly means “a speaking forth.” According to *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, the word refers to “discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproving and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; especially by foretelling future events.” To prophesy is to declare the divine will, to interpret the purposes of God, or to make known in any way the truth of God that is designed to influence people.

Serving – Also referred to as “ministering,” this gift involves providing service of any kind; it is the broad application of practical help to those in need. “Serving” is a translation of the Greek word *diakonian*, from which we get the English *deacon*.

Teaching – This gift involves the analysis and proclamation of the Word of God, explaining the meaning, context and application to the hearer’s life. The gifted teacher is one who has the unique ability to clearly instruct and communicate knowledge, specifically the doctrines of the faith.

Encouraging – Also called “exhortation,” this gift is evident in those who consistently call upon others to heed and follow God’s truth, which may involve correction or building others up by strengthening weak faith or comforting in trials.

Giving – Gifted givers are those who joyfully share what they have with others, whether it is financial, material, or the giving of personal time and attention. The giver is concerned for the needs of others and seeks opportunities to share goods, money, and time with them as needs arise.

Leadership – The gifted leader is one who rules, presides over, or has the management of other people in the church. The word literally means “guide” and carries with it the idea of one who steers a ship. One with the gift of leadership rules with wisdom and grace and exhibits the fruit of the Spirit in his life as he leads by example.

Mercy – Closely linked with the gift of encouragement, the gift of mercy is obvious in those who are compassionate toward others who are in distress, showing sympathy and sensitivity coupled with a desire and the resources to lessen their suffering in a kind and cheerful manner.

[Word of wisdom](#) – The fact that this gift is described as the “word” of wisdom indicates that it is one of the speaking gifts. This gift describes someone who can understand and speak forth biblical truth in such a way as to skillfully apply it to life situations with discernment.

[Word of knowledge](#) – This is another speaking gift that involves understanding truth with an insight that only comes by revelation from God. Those with the gift of knowledge understand the deep things of God and the mysteries of His Word.

[Faith](#) – All believers possess faith in some measure because it is one of the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on all who come to Christ in faith ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)). The spiritual gift of faith is exhibited by one with a strong and unshakeable confidence in God, His Word, His promises, and the power of prayer to effect miracles.

[Healing](#) – Although God does still heal today, and while there is no biblical reason that God could not empower an individual with the spiritual gift of healing today, God miraculously healing people directly through the spiritual gifting of an individual seems to have primarily been limited to the ministry of the apostles and their close associates in the very early days of the church ([2 Corinthians 2:12](#); [Hebrews 2:4](#)).

[Miraculous powers](#) – Also known as the working of miracles, this is another temporary sign gift that involved performing supernatural events that could only be attributed to the power of God ([Acts 2:22](#)). This gift was exhibited by Paul ([Acts 19:11-12](#)), Peter ([Acts 3:6](#)), Stephen ([Acts 6:8](#)), and Phillip ([Acts 8:6-7](#)), among others.

[Distinguishing \(discerning\) of spirits](#) – Certain individuals possess the unique ability to determine the true message of God from that of the deceiver, Satan, whose methods include purveying deceptive and erroneous doctrine. Jesus said many would come in His name and would deceive many ([Matthew 24:4-5](#)), but the gift of discerning spirits is given to the church to protect it from such as these.

[Speaking in tongues](#) – The gift of tongues is one of the temporary sign gifts given to the early church to enable the gospel to be preached throughout the world to all nations and in all known languages. It involved the divine ability to speak in languages previously unknown to the speaker. This gift authenticated the message of the gospel and those who preached it as coming from God. The phrase “diversity of tongues” (KJV) or “different kinds of tongues” (NIV) effectively eliminates the idea of a “personal prayer language” as a spiritual gift.

[Interpretation of tongues](#) – A person with the gift of interpreting tongues could understand what a tongues-speaker was saying even though he did not know the language that was being spoken. The tongues interpreter would then communicate the message of the tongues-speaker to everyone else, so all could understand.

[Helps](#) – Closely related to the gift of mercy is the gift of helps. Those with the gift of helps are those who can aid or render assistance to others in the church with compassion and grace. This has a broad range of possibilities for application. Most importantly, this is the unique ability to identify those who are struggling with doubt, fears, and other spiritual battles; to move toward those in spiritual need with a kind word, an understanding and compassionate demeanor; and to speak scriptural truth that is both convicting and loving.

How does God distribute spiritual gifts?

- [Romans 12:3-8](#) and 1 Corinthians chapter 12 make it clear that each Christian is given spiritual gifts according to the Lord's choice. Spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the body of Christ ([1 Corinthians 12:7](#), [14:12](#)).
- We are also told in [1 Corinthians 12:28-31](#) and in [1 Corinthians 14:12-13](#) that it is God (not us) who chooses the gifts. These passages also indicate that not everyone will have a particular gift. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that if they are going to covet or long after spiritual gifts, they should strive after the more edifying gifts, such as prophesying (speaking forth the word of God for the building up of others).
- There is one thing that is abundantly clear—God's command is God's enablement. If God commands us to do something (such as witness, love the unlovely, disciple the nations, etc.), He will enable us to do it. Some may not be as gifted at evangelism as others, but God commands all Christians to witness and disciple ([Matthew 28:18-20](#); [Acts 1:8](#)). We are all called to evangelize whether or not we have the spiritual gift of evangelism.
- Are spiritual gifts given to us when we receive Christ, or are they cultivated through our walk with God? The answer is both. Normally, spiritual gifts are given at salvation, but also need to be cultivated through spiritual growth.

How do I identify my spiritual gift?

- The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts as He determines ([1 Corinthians 12:7-11](#)). A common problem for Christians is the temptation to get so caught up in our spiritual gift that we only seek to serve God in the area in which we feel we have been gifted. That is not how the spiritual gifts work. God calls us to obediently serve Him in all things. He will equip us with whatever gift or gifts we need to accomplish the task He has called us to.

1. Miraculous Gifts

- Apostleship ([1 Corinthians 12:28](#); [Ephesians 4:11](#))
- Tongues ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#), [28](#), [30](#))
- Interpretation ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#), [30](#))
- Miracles ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#), [28](#))
- Healing ([1 Corinthians 12:9](#), [28](#))

2. Enabling Gifts

- Faith ([1 Corinthians 12:9](#))
- Discernment ([1 Corinthians 12:10](#))
- Wisdom ([1 Corinthians 12:8](#))
- Knowledge ([1 Corinthians 12:8](#))

3. Team Gifts

- Evangelism: passionately leading others to the saving knowledge of Christ ([Ephesians 4:11](#))
- Prophecy: boldly and fearlessly proclaiming God's truth ([Romans 12:6](#); [Ephesians 4:11](#); [1 Corinthians 12:10, 28](#))
- Teaching: making clear the truth of God's Word with simplicity and accuracy ([Romans 12:7](#); [1 Corinthians 12:28](#))
- Exhortation: motivating others to action, application, and purpose ([Romans 12:8](#))
- Shepherding: overseeing, training, feeding, coaching/leading ([Ephesians 4:11](#))
- Serving: providing practical help both physically and spiritually ([Romans 12:7](#); [1 Corinthians 12:28](#))
- Mercy-showing: identifying with and comforting those in need ([Romans 12:8](#))
- Giving: releasing material resources to further the work of the Church ([Romans 12:8](#))
- Administration: organizing, administering, promoting, leading ([Romans 12:8](#); [1 Corinthians 12:28](#))

In 1 Peter 4:9-11, Peter gives us two groups of Team Gifts:

1. "Speaking" gifts. Those who have the speaking gifts are Evangelists, Prophets, Teachers, Exhorters, and Shepherds.

2. "Ministering" gifts, or support gifts. People with these gifts emulate Christ in that He came not to be served, but to served ([Mark 10:45](#)). They have been blessed with self-forgetfulness as they focus on the needs of others. Ministering gifts include Shepherds, Mercy-Showers, Servers, Givers, and Administrators.

Detail study of gifts - <https://www.gotquestions.org/search-results.html?q=examples+of+spiritual+gifts#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=examples%20of%20spiritual%20gifts&gsc.page=1>

Examples of Old and New Testament Gifts:

Old Testament Spiritual Gifts

1. **Wisdom and Understanding**

- **Bezalel and Oholiab** (Exodus 31:1-5, Exodus 35:30-35): Bezalel and Oholiab were filled with the Spirit of God to possess wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and craftsmanship to design and build the Tabernacle and its furnishings. This gift of craftsmanship was a form of spiritual gifting given by God to accomplish a specific task for His glory.
- **Joseph's Wisdom and Interpretation of Dreams** (Genesis 41:14-30): Joseph was gifted with the ability to interpret dreams. His interpretation of Pharaoh's dream led to his rise in power in Egypt and the saving of many lives during a time of famine. This gift is often seen as a manifestation of divine wisdom and insight.

2. Prophecy

- **Moses** (Exodus 4:10-16, Deuteronomy 34:10): Moses was a prophet who spoke directly with God. The gift of prophecy was central to his role, and God spoke to the Israelites through Moses. In Deuteronomy 34:10, it says, "Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."
- **Elijah and Elisha** (1 Kings 17–2 Kings 13): These two prophets performed miracles and spoke God's words to the people of Israel. Elijah's ministry involved calling down fire from heaven, raising the dead, and confronting the false prophets of Baal. Elisha continued Elijah's prophetic ministry with miracles such as multiplying food and healing Naaman from leprosy.

3. Leadership and Administration

- **King Solomon's Wisdom** (1 Kings 3:5-14): Solomon was known for his extraordinary wisdom, given by God, to govern Israel. When Solomon asked God for wisdom to rule justly, God granted him wisdom beyond measure. Solomon's ability to make wise decisions, including the famous judgment over two women claiming to be the mother of a child, was a manifestation of this spiritual gift.
- **The Seventy Elders** (Numbers 11:16-25): In response to Moses' complaint about leading the people alone, God instructed Moses to gather seventy elders. God placed His Spirit on them, and they prophesied as a sign that they too were empowered for leadership. This sharing of the prophetic gift allowed for better governance of Israel.

4. Craftsmanship and Artistic Ability

- **Gifts for the Tabernacle** (Exodus 35:30-35): God specifically gave certain individuals the skills and knowledge required to craft the sacred items for the Tabernacle. These individuals were "filled with the Spirit of God, with skill,

ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts" (Exodus 35:31). This is an example of a spiritual gift for service in the worship of God through craftsmanship.

5. **The Spirit Empowering Judges and Leaders**

- **Samson** (Judges 13-16): Samson's physical strength was a gift given by the Spirit of the Lord to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. His strength was supernatural and was linked to his Nazarite vow and God's calling on his life.
- **Gideon** (Judges 6-8): Gideon was chosen by God to lead Israel against the Midianites. The Spirit of the Lord empowered him to rally the people and lead them to victory, even with a small army, showing that God can give power for leadership and battle.

New Testament Spiritual Gifts

1. **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The New Testament reveals a fuller understanding of spiritual gifts, especially through the teachings of the Apostle Paul. The Holy Spirit distributes these gifts to believers to build up the Church. Here are some of the key gifts outlined:

- **Wisdom and Knowledge** (1 Corinthians 12:8): These gifts involve a deep understanding and insight into God's will and truths. "The word of wisdom" enables a believer to apply God's knowledge in practical, God-honoring ways, while "the word of knowledge" involves a deep understanding of the mysteries of God.
- **Faith** (1 Corinthians 12:9): This gift is a deep and unshakable confidence in God's power and promises, enabling the believer to trust God in extraordinary circumstances. It's distinct from saving faith and can inspire others to trust God in difficult situations.
- **Healing** (1 Corinthians 12:9, Acts 3:6-10): Some believers are given the gift of healing, enabling them to perform miraculous healings through prayer and the power of God. For example, Peter healed a lame man in Acts 3 in the name of Jesus.
- **Miracles** (1 Corinthians 12:10): This gift enables believers to perform signs and wonders that demonstrate God's power and authority. In the early church, the apostles performed many miracles, such as raising the dead, casting out demons, and delivering people from physical affliction.

- **Prophecy** (1 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21): The gift of prophecy allows individuals to speak God's message to others. Prophets were empowered to speak words of encouragement, exhortation, correction, and revelation.
- **Discernment of Spirits** (1 Corinthians 12:10): This gift enables a believer to distinguish between the Holy Spirit's activity and other spiritual forces (whether divine, demonic, or human). It helps to discern truth from error, especially in spiritual matters.
- **Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues** (1 Corinthians 12:10, Acts 2:4-11): The gift of tongues allows a believer to speak in languages they have not learned, often as a form of prayer or praise. The interpretation of tongues enables someone to understand and communicate the message being delivered in a foreign language.
- **Serving/Helps** (Romans 12:7, 1 Corinthians 12:28): Some believers are gifted with the ability to serve others in practical ways. This gift involves providing support, assistance, and encouragement to others, especially in the context of the church community.

2. The Gifts of Ministry

- **Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers** (Ephesians 4:11-12): These are specific ministry gifts given to equip the saints for the work of service and to build up the body of Christ. The apostles laid the foundation of the Church, prophets spoke God's word, evangelists preached the gospel, pastors shepherded the flock, and teachers instructed others in sound doctrine.

3. **Love** (1 Corinthians 13:1-13): Often called the "greatest gift," love (agape) is a foundational spiritual gift. Paul emphasizes that even if a person has all other gifts but lacks love, they are nothing. Love is central to the functioning of all the other spiritual gifts.

4. Administration and Leadership

- **Romans 12:8**: Paul speaks about the gifts of leadership and administration. Some people are given the ability to lead and organize effectively for the work of the gospel, helping the church function smoothly and with purpose.

Summary: Old vs. New Testament Spiritual Gifts

- In the **Old Testament**, spiritual gifts were often specific to certain individuals (prophets, kings, judges, craftsmen) and were typically used for particular tasks, such as leadership, prophecy, or the building of the Tabernacle.
 - In the **New Testament**, the concept of spiritual gifts expands to include a variety of abilities given to all believers for the edification of the church, with the Holy Spirit distributing gifts like wisdom, healing, prophecy, teaching, and leadership. The gifts in the New Testament are more broadly distributed across the body of Christ and are not confined to specific roles or individuals.
-

Gift Test:

<https://giftstest.com>

Applying Our Spiritual Gifts:

The purpose of [spiritual gifts](#) is to promote “the common good” of the body of Christ ([1 Corinthians 12:7](#)), to build up the church ([1 Corinthians 14:12](#)), and to prepare us each for “works of service . . . until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” ([Ephesians 4:12–13](#))

- The Body of Christ suffers or do not accomplish what God intended.
- The Church stops growing, both spiritually and physically.
- We miss the blessings of God.
- We do not mature in Christ.