

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Spiritual gifts are special attributes given by the Holy Spirit upon members of the Body of Christ according to God's grace for use within the context of the Body. The great majority of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible are found in three key chapters: Romans 12; I Corinthians 12; and Ephesians 4. There are also several secondary chapters that fill us in on other important details. They include mainly I Corinthians 13-14; I Peter 4; I Corinthians 7 and Ephesians 3.

Romans 12 mentions the following spiritual gifts:

Prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership and mercy.

I Corinthians 12 adds (without repeating those already listed from Romans):

Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Discerning of spirits, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Apostle, Helps, Administration

Ephesians 4 adds (without repeating any of the others):

Evangelist and Pastor.

A brief definition of the gifts are listed below: (they are in no particular order)

Wisdom:

The gift of wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the Body of Christ.

Knowledge:

The gift of knowledge is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the body.

Faith:

The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to some members of the Body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for the future of his work.

Healing:

The gift of healing is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means.

Miracles:

The gift of miracles is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature.

Discerning of Spirits:

The gift of discerning of spirits is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human or satanic.

Prophecy:

The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to receive and communicate immediate messages of God to his people through a divinely inspired utterance.

The gift of tongues:

The gift of tongues is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to speak to God in a language they have never learned and/or to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to his people through a divinely-anointed utterance in a language they have never learned.

The gift of interpretation:

The gift of interpretation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to make known in the vernacular the message of one who speaks in tongues.

The gift of service:

The gift of service is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals.

The gift of teaching:

The gift of teaching is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the Body and its members in such a way that others will learn.

The gift of exhortation:

The gift of exhortation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement and counsel to other members of the Body in such a way that they feel helped and healed.

The gift of giving:

The gift of giving is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.

The gift of leadership:

The gift of leadership is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God.

The gift of mercy:

The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully-done deeds that reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.

The gift of Apostle:

The gift of Apostle is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to assume and exercise general leadership over a number of churches with an extraordinary authority in spiritual matters that is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches.

The gift of helps:

The gift of helps is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the Body, thus enabling the person helped to increase the effectiveness of his or her spiritual gifts.

The gift of administration:

The gift of administration is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

The gift of Evangelist:

The gift of evangelist is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the Body of Christ.

The gift of Pastor:

The gift of Pastor is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

The gift of celibacy:

The gift of celibacy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to remain single and enjoy it; to be unmarried and not suffer undue sexual temptations.

The biblical text for the gift of celibacy is found in I Corinthians 7:7. Paul discusses his own celibacy and calls it a spiritual gift.

If you are single and find yourself terribly frustrated by unfulfilled sexual impulses, chances are, you don't have the gift of celibacy. Also if you are single and you often entertain the thought of getting married should the opportunity present itself, you more than likely do not have the gift.

Most singles that have the gift of celibacy are not troubled by either of the above and feel as though their life for Christ would be better served as a single individual. (If you have that God-given gift, then there is nothing wrong with living that lifestyle).

The gift of hospitality:

The gift of hospitality is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to provide open house and warm welcome for those in need of food and lodging.

The gift of Missionary:

The gift of missionary is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture.

The gift of intercession:

The gift of intercession is the special ability that God gives certain members of the Body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specific answers to their prayers to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian.

The gift of martyrdom:

The gift of martyrdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to undergo suffering for the faith even to death while consistently displaying a joyous and victorious attitude that brings glory to God.

The Apostle Paul stated very clearly in I Corinthians 12:1 that we should not be ignorant (have a lack of knowledge) concerning spiritual gifts. Although we should not just seek the gifts without the giver (God), we should desire to discover and develop our spiritual gifts so that we may be a blessing to the Body of Christ.

God holds us responsible and accountable for our own gifts that he has given to us. The parable of the talents found in Matthew 25:14-30 gives us a perfect picture of that.

It's not important the quantity of our gifts but the quality to which we use our gifts that is important. Some will have one gift, some will have more, but regardless of the gift/gifts given, we must use them to the best of our ability for the good of the Body of Christ.

It is important to note that gifts are given by God at his discretion and are not based on a person's goodness or intellect.

It is vitally important that if we claim to have a certain gift or gifts, that we be effective. Gifts are task-oriented therefore if you have gifts, it is not unreasonable to expect to see the effectiveness from the gift(s).

If you profess to have certain gifts, there should be evidences of those gifts in your life.