

WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

The following descriptions are taken from Chip Ingram's excellent study "Discovering Your Divine Design."

Apostleship – The divine enablement to start churches and oversee their development. Ability to minister cross-culturally with the goal of planting churches.

Prophecy – The divine enablement to proclaim God's truth with power and clarity in a timely and culturally sensitive fashion for correction, repentance, or edification. Ability to reveal God's Word accurately.

Evangelism – The ability to be an unusually effective instrument in leading unbelievers to a saving knowledge of Christ. Some with this gift are most effective in personal evangelism, while others may be used by God in group evangelism or cross-cultural evangelism.

Pastor/Teacher – A person with this spiritual gift has the ability to lead, nourish, protect and personally care for the needs of a "flock" of believers. Not all people with the office of pastor (elder, overseer) have or need the gift of pastoring or shepherding, and many with this gift do not have or need the office. This gift also includes teaching ability and is the only dual gift in the list.

Teaching – The divine enablement to understand and give detailed explanation of biblical truth. Ability to search out and validate truth that has been presented.

Miracles- (1 Cor 12:10, 28) The ability to serve as an instrument through whom God accomplishes acts that manifest supernatural power. Miracles bear witness to the presence of God and the truth of His proclaimed Word and appear to occur most frequently in association with missionary activity. The gospel message carries its own authority, but God sometimes graciously uses miracles to authenticate and open doors for the proclamation of forgiveness and life in Christ.

Healing – (1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30) The ability to serve as a human instrument through whom God cures illnesses and restores health. 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. This spiritual gift should not be confused with the signs and wonders performed by Jesus and the apostles, and it should not be discredited because of the abuse of grandstanding faith healers.

Helps – (1 Cor 12:28) The ability to enhance the effectiveness of the ministry of other members of the body. This is the only use of this word in the New Testament, and it appears to be distinct from the gift of service. Some writers suggest that while the gift of service is more group-oriented, the gift of helps is more individual-oriented.

Administration/Leadership – (1 Cor 12:28) This word, like helps, appears only once in the New Testament, and it is used outside of Scripture referring to a helmsman who steers a ship to its destination. This suggests that the spiritual gift of administration is the ability to steer a church or Christian organization toward the fulfillment of its goals by managing its affairs and implementing necessary plans. A person may have the gift of leadership without the gift of administration.

Wisdom – (1 Cor 12:8) The ability to apply the principles of the Word of God in a practical way to specific situations and to recommend the best course of action at the best time. The exercise of this gift skillfully distills insight and discernment into excellent advice.

Knowledge – (1 Cor 12:8) The ability to discover, analyze, and systematize truth for the benefit of others. With this gift, one speaks with understanding and penetration. But the word of knowledge can also involve supernatural perception and discernment for the purpose of ministering to others.

Faith – (1 Cor 12:9) The ability to have a vision for what God wants to be done and to believe confidently that it will be accomplished in spite of circumstances and appearances to the contrary. The gift of faith transforms vision into reality.

Distinguishing of Spirits (Discernment) – (1 Cor 12:10) The ability to discern the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (cf. 1 John 4:6). With this gift, one may distinguish reality versus counterfeits, the divine versus the demonic, true versus false teaching, and in some cases, spiritual versus carnal motives.

Tongues – (1 Cor 12:10, 28, 30; 14:1-40) The ability to receive and impart a spiritual message in a language the recipient has never learned. For other members in the body to be edified, this message must be interpreted by the recipient (1 Cor 14:13) or by another person with the gift of interpretation (1 Cor 14:26-28).

Interpretation of Tongues – (1 Cor 14:13) The ability to translate into the vernacular a message publicly uttered in a tongue. This gift may be combined with the gift of tongues or it can operate separately.

Service – The divine enablement to attach spiritual value to the accomplishment of physical tasks within the body of Christ. Ability to demonstrate love by meeting practical needs that release others for direct spiritual ministry.

Encouragement – The divine enablement to come alongside another in need of encouragement to reassure, strengthen, affirm, and challenge those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith. Ability to stimulate the faith of others.

Giving – The divine enablement to earn money, manage it well, and wisely contribute to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality. Ability to entrust personal assets to others for the furtherance of their ministry.

Leadership – The divine enablement to see what needs to be done, set goals, and attract, lead, and motivate people to accomplish the work of ministry. Ability to coordinate activities of others for the achievement of common goals.

Mercy – The divine enablement to minister cheerfully and appropriately to people who are suffering or undeserving and to spare them from punishment or consequences justly deserved. Ability to identify with and comfort those who are in distress.

¹ Ingram, Chip, *Discover Your Divine Design: How to Discover, Develop, and Deploy Spiritual Gifts for Kingdom Impact*. Living on the Edge: Atlanta, GA, 2008, 8-9, 14-16.