

Sixth lesson

ST. PAUL'S TEACHING ON THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Biblical passages for the lesson: Romans 12:3-7/ Ephesians 4:11/ 1 Corinthians 12:1-28

What is a Spiritual gift and who is the author and for what purpose it is given to us?

It is something every believer is given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 4:12) when we receive the gift of salvation in Jesus. It is granted as an act of God's grace and not based on our worthiness or personal abilities; they are given according to God's sovereign choice for the common good. The spiritual gifts may differ in each one of us but all spiritual gifts are meant to be used for the edification of the body of Christ and to the glory of God. Its purpose is for building and encouraging people. The Holy Spirit provides individuals with extraordinary confidence in God's promises, power and presence so that they can take heroic stands for the future of God's work in the Church and Faith community. This gift involves a healthy prayer life, sensitivity to the will of God and a firm trust that God will come through, even when there is no concrete evidence.

How many spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Scripture?

There is a variety of Gifts. St. Paul's survey of spiritual gifts in Romans 12 and in 1 Cor 12. He gives also in the book of Ephesians By putting together all the gifts, we can identify 7 gifts in Rom 12 and 9 gifts in 1 Cor 12, 5 gifts in Ephesians although a few overlapping is there.

Romans 12: 4-8 *For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith; if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness (7 gifts)*

1 Corinthians 12 : 4-12 *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the*

same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes (9 gifts).

Ephesians 4: 11-12 *And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ*

Detailed study on each spiritual gift with Definitions and Descriptions

From the book of Romans 12: 4-8

1. **The Gift of Prophecy:** The spiritual gift of prophecy is an extraordinary and unique gift. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:1 to “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” The gift of prophecy can take the form of exhortation, correction, disclosure of secret sins, prediction of future events, comfort, inspiration, or other revelations given to equip and edify the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:3-4, 24-25). The Holy Spirit gives the gift of prophecy to some believers to make God’s heart known and to edify the church. This gift is for the benefit of both believers and unbelievers and is a sign that God is truly among His church (1 Corinthians 14:22-25).

2. **The Gift of Service:** The Greek word for this gift of service is *diakonia*. The basic meaning of this word is “to wait tables,” but it is generally understood as “ministry” in the church. It refers to any act of service done in genuine love for the edification of the community. Those with this gift do not seek recognition or a position in the “spotlight,” they just love to help out. They are content with serving in the background knowing that their contribution will bless the church, display the love of Christ to the world, and bring glory to God.

3. **The Gift of Teaching:** The spiritual gift of teaching is one that carries a heavy responsibility in the church. In fact, James 3:1 warns, “*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*” The teacher is the steward of the Word of God. The teacher has been entrusted with the task of effectively communicating what the Bible says, what it means, and how we as followers of Jesus Christ are to apply it to our lives here and now. The Greek word for those with the spiritual gift of teaching is *didaskalos*. From the root of this word we get our English word, “didactic.” The word *didasko* means to teach, instruct, instill doctrine, explain, and expound. Those with the spiritual gift of teaching love to study the Word of God for extended periods of time. They consume the Scriptures as food for their hearts, souls and minds with the expressed purpose of knowing Him and then making Him known to others. They want to know what God has revealed of Himself and what He requires of us as people created in His image. They take great joy and satisfaction in seeing others learn and apply the truth of God’s Word to their lives. Without this gift, the church would quickly fall into error and sin.

Teachers are there to make sure that doesn't happen. They hate when Scripture is abused and used out of context or with ill intent. The effect of their ministry is the upholding of God's Word and the growth and maturity of His Bride (church) until the day of His return.

4. The Gift of Exhortation: The spiritual gift of exhortation is often called the "gift of encouragement." The Greek word for this gift is *parakaleo*. It means to beseech, exhort, call upon, to encourage and to strengthen. The primary means of exhortation is to remind the hearer of the powerful and amazing work of God in Christ, particularly in regard to the saving work of Jesus in the atonement. We see Paul commanding Titus to use this gift in Titus 1:9. The Spirit of God gives this gift to people in the church to strengthen and encourage those who are wavering in their faith. Those with the gift of exhortation can uplift and motivate others as well as challenge and rebuke them in order to foster spiritual growth and action. The goal of the encourager is to see everyone in the church continually building up the body of Christ and glorifying God.

5. The Gift of Contribution: The Greek word "contributing" is a compound word "metadidomi" meaning to "give, impart, share with". It is a sharing with others. Contributing is linked to finances and material things. However, it is not limited to wealthy people, nor is it expressed through financial generosity only. Financial support is only one of the concrete expressions of this gift.

The New Testament links five different things with the word **Sharing of material things**. "And he answered them, 'Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.' (Luke 3:11) **Sharing of spiritual things**. "For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you." (Romans 1:11) **Sharing of finances from one's own honest wages**. "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need." (Eph 4:28) **Sharing of one's own self**. "So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us." (1 Thes 2:8). **Sharing the gospel**. "So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us." (1 Thes 2:8)

6. The Gift of Overseeing: We find the words in the NT "elder" (*presbuteros*), "overseer" (*episkopos*), and "pastor" (*poimen*). All refer to the same office. In other words, overseers and pastors are not distinct from elders. The qualifications for an overseer in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and those for an elder in Titus 1:6-9 are unmistakably parallel. All three terms are used interchangeably in Acts 20. In Acts 20:17, Paul assembles all the elders (*presbuteros*) of the church of Ephesus to give them his farewell message. In verse 28 he says, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God." First Peter 5:1-2 brings all three terms together as well. Peter writes, "Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow

elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God.”

The Apostle Paul left Titus in Crete and instructed him to “appoint elders in every city” (Titus 1:5). James instructed his readers to “call for the elders of the church” to pray for those who are sick (James 5:14). When Paul and Barnabas were in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, they “appointed elders for them in every church” (Acts 14:23).

The Qualifications of Elders are found in 1 Tim 3:2-7 *“This saying is trustworthy: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. Therefore, a bishop must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not aggressive, but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with perfect dignity; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of the church of God?”*

The Functions of Elders: As the apostolic era came to a close, the office of elder emerged as the highest level of local church leadership. Thus, it carried a great amount of responsibility. The primary responsibility of an elder is to serve as a manager and caretaker of the church (1 Tim. 3:5). That involves a number of specific duties. As spiritual overseers of the flock, elders are to determine church policy (Acts 15:22); oversee the church (Acts 20:28); ordain others (1 Tim. 4:4); rule, teach, and preach (1 Tim. 5:17; and refute (Titus 1:9); and act as shepherds, setting an example for all (1 Pet. 5:1-3). Those responsibilities put elders at the core of the New Testament church’s work.

7. **The Gift of Mercy:** All Christians are called to be merciful because God has been merciful to us (Matt 18:33; Eph 2:4-6). The Greek word for the spiritual gift of mercy is *eleeo*. It means to be patient and compassionate toward those who are suffering or afflicted. Those with this gift have great empathy for others in their trials and sufferings. They are able to come alongside people over extended periods of time and see them through their healing process. They are truly and literally the hands and feet of God to the afflicted.

The Holy Spirit gives the spiritual gift of mercy to some in the church to love and assist those who are suffering, and walk with them. The gift of mercy is founded in God’s mercy towards us as sinners and is consistently expressed with measurable compassion. Those with this gift are able to “weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:15) and “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal 6:2). They are sensitive to the feelings and circumstances of others and can quickly discern when someone is not doing well. They are typically good listeners and feel the need to simply “be there” for others.

From the book of 1 Corinthians 12

1. **The Gift of Wisdom:** The Greek word for wisdom is *sophia* and it refers to the intimate understanding of God's Word and His commandments for a holy and upright living. Several Scriptures reveal the true beauty and fruit of wisdom. Psalm 111:10 says: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!"* Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord. Wisdom is undoubtedly a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. The highest wisdom is found in the cross of Christ, which is "folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18). The Holy Spirit gives some the spiritual gift of wisdom to not only impart the truth and understanding to believers, but to invoke a response of holiness and worship lived out in the world and amongst God's people.

2. **The gift of Knowledge:** The spiritual gift of knowledge is also known as the "word of knowledge" or "utterance of knowledge." The Greek word for this gift is *Gnosis* and it simply means knowledge and understanding. In the opening passages of 1 Corinthians, Paul speaks of knowledge and recognizes that the highest form of knowledge among men is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit gives this spiritual gift to some believers to bring about understanding and to inform the church about God's plans. The person with this gift is usually well-versed in the Scriptures and often has much committed to memory. They can retain the truth and communicate it effectively at the appropriate times.

3. **The Gift of Faith:** The word for faith in the New Testament is *pistis*. The gift of faith is rooted in one's saving faith in Christ and the trust that comes through a close relationship with the Savior. Those with this gift have a trust and confidence in God that allows them to live boldly for Him and manifest that faith in mighty ways. In the Bible the gift of faith is often accompanied by great works of faith. In Acts 3:1-10 we see this gift in action when Peter sees a lame man at the Beautiful Gate and calls on him to stand up and walk in the Name of Jesus. Jesus said even a small amount of this faith could move mountains (Matthew 17:20; 21:21). Paul echoed this truth in 1 Corinthians 13:2. The Holy Spirit distributes this gift to some in the church to encourage and build up the church in her confidence in God.

4. **The Gift of Healing:** This spiritual gift is closely related to the gifts of faith and miracles. All spiritual gifts are to be exercised in faith, but gifts of healings involve a special measure of it. This gift is interesting in that there is no guarantee that a person will always be able to heal anyone he or she desires. It is subject to the sovereign will of God, as all spiritual gifts are. The Disciples were given authority to heal and cast out demons, but they were not always successful. The Apostle Paul was not able to heal himself and was told that God's grace was sufficient to carry him through his infirmity without removing it from him (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). This gift is given at various times

and places to reveal the God of heaven to the sick and tormented. If healing is not granted, then we can conclude that God has greater plans for letting the person go through the illness or infirmity. The spiritual gift of healing reveals the heart and compassion of God. Jesus is the Great Healer and Physician and during His ministry on earth He healed countless people and cast out demons (Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16; 9:35, Mark 1:34). Healings reveal that God is near to His people and He cares about their sufferings. Healings are meant to draw people to God through His Son Jesus Christ.

5. The Gift of Mighty deeds (Miracles): We know that Jesus performed many miracles in His earthly ministry, even more than those recorded in Scripture (John 20:30-31, Acts 2:22). The Apostles regularly performed miracles of all kinds including casting out demons, healings, raising people from the dead, striking people dead, causing blindness, and much more. Other believers performed miracles as well, including Stephen (Acts 6:8) and Phillip (Acts 8:4-8). Miracles were given by God to the church to reveal the presence and glory of God among His people and to create a sense of awe and wonder and Godly fear. Those with the spiritual gift of miracles often have a heightened sensitivity to the presence and power of God through His Holy Spirit. Those with this gift understand that God is Sovereign and He can work when and how He desires.

6. The Gift of Prophecy: (see above)

7. The Gift of Discernment of spirits: The spiritual gift of discernment is also known as the gift of “discernment of spirits” The word describes being able to distinguish, discern, judge or appraise a person, statement, situation, or environment. In the New Testament it describes the ability to distinguish between spirits as in 1 Corinthians 12:10, and to discern good and evil as in Hebrews 5:14. The Holy Spirit gives the gift of discernment to enable certain Christians to clearly recognize and distinguish between the influence of God, Satan, the world, and the flesh in a given situation. The church needs those with this gift to warn believers in times of danger or keep them from being led astray by false teaching.

8. The Gift of Tongues: The spiritual gift of tongues is more accurately called the gift of languages. The Greek word for tongues is *glossolalia*, which literally means “tongue.” Speaking in tongues is glorifying God, typically spoken to God (1 Cor 14:2), in a language that is unknown to the one speaking it. In the garden, mankind had one language and was in direct communication with God, having perfect communion with Him. Unfortunately, this relationship changed at the fall when Adam sinned against God and He and Eve were cursed and banished from Eden along with their descendants. Mankind continued to have one language up until Genesis 11 where God confused their language and people were dispersed throughout the earth. He did this because they had united together in one language and conspired to build a tower at Babel. Their intention was to “make a name” for themselves and thus replace God in their hearts. After God confused their language and scattered them across the earth, He

chose one people with one language to bring Him glory and draw mankind back to Himself. Abram, later called Abraham, was the one through whom God promised to bless “all the nations.” Eventually, through the nation of Israel, the Hebrew language would be used to communicate God’s Word to the nations. However, the rest of the world did not speak or understand this language and for the most part continued to remain ignorant of God’s plan of redemption.

On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the outpouring of the Holy Spirit came on the people of God. Here we see a glimpse of God’s reversal of the curse of divided languages. In Acts 2 people from all over the world hear God’s people proclaiming His mighty works in their own languages. This is the beginning of the redemption of language for its intended purpose: to glorify God and draw all people to Himself. In heaven an innumerable group from every nation, tribe, people and tongue will join together to praise God with one language. (Revelation 7:9-12). The intention of the spiritual gift of tongues is to glorify God now, but also to prepare ourselves as His church to glorify Him forever in heaven. The gift however is only partial, in that it is not given to all believers, and in the context of the church requires an interpreter in order for it to be edifying. The Holy Spirit gives some believers the spiritual gift of tongues to glorify God and, with the help of an interpreter, to edify the church. This gift is dealt with extensively in the Scriptures and its use should not be discouraged.

9. The Gift of the interpretation of tongues: The spiritual gift of interpretation of tongues is found alongside the gift of speaking in tongues in 1 Corinthians 12:10. This spiritual gift is the supernatural ability to understand and explain messages uttered in an unknown language. This is a revelatory gift, meaning that God “reveals” the meaning of the words or message being spoken and allows the interpreter to communicate its meaning to those who need to hear it. When this happens in the church two things happen: the church is edified and God is glorified. The spiritual gift of interpretation is given by the Holy Spirit to certain individuals to reveal messages spoken in an unknown tongue to God for the building up of the church. Like the gift of prophecy, tongues that are interpreted have the effect of encouraging and blessing the church to love and serve God more deeply and effectively.

From the book of Ephesians

1. **The gift of Apostleship:** The gift of apostleship continues in a different sense. The mission for those with the gift of apostleship today is to plant new ministries and churches, go into places where the Gospel is not preached, reach across cultures to establish churches in challenging environments, raise up and develop leaders, call out and lead pastors and shepherds, and much more. They often have many different gifts that allow them to fulfill their ministry. They are able to take risks and perform difficult tasks. Missionaries, church planters, certain Christian scholars and institutional leaders, and those leading multiple ministries or churches often have the gift of apostleship.

2. **The gift of Evangelism:** All Christians are called to evangelize and reach out to the lost with the Gospel (Matt 28:18-20), but some are given an extra measure of faith and effectiveness in this area. St. Paul says that Jesus gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ. Evangelists are given the unique ability by the Holy Spirit to clearly and effectively communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others. They are burdened in their hearts for the lost and will go out of their way to share the truth with them.

3. **The gift of shepherding:** The spiritual gift of leadership is closely related to the gift of administration and the spiritual gift of pastor/shepherd. The shepherd is to lead, to assist, to protect and to care for others. It is a gift associated with caring for others. It is more people oriented than task oriented in its application. This is not to say those with the gift of administration do not care for people, of course they do, but those with the spiritual gift of leadership focus on people and relationships more directly. In 1 Thes 5:12-13 Paul says to *“Respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.”* The Holy Spirit gives the spiritual gift of leadership to some in the church to care for God’s people and lead them into deeper relationship with Christ and each other. With this gift the Holy Spirit enables certain Christians to organize, direct, and implement plans to lead others in the various ministries of the Church. This gift is closely related to the gift of leadership, but is more goal or task oriented and is also more concerned with details and organization.

How does God distribute Spiritual Gifts and When? 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 Cor 12:7, 14:12). The exact timing of the giving of these gifts is not specifically mentioned. Most assume that spiritual gifts are given at the time of our baptism. However, there are some verses that may indicate God gives spiritual gifts later as well. Both 1 Tim 4:14 and 2 Tim 1:6 refer to a gift that Timothy had received at the time of his ordination “by prophecy.” We are also told in 1 Cor 12:28-31 and in 1 Cor 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 long after spiritual gifts, they should strive after the more edifying gifts just as Solomon sought wisdom from God in order to be a good ruler over God’s people, so God will grant to us those gifts we need in order to be of greater benefit to His church. Having said this, it still remains that these gifts are distributed according to God’s choosing, not our own.

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 when we accept Jesus as our Savior but also they are given when we cultivate our prayer life. We can

seek a spiritual gift from God and be zealous after it by seeking to develop that area. At the same time, if it is not God's will, we will not receive a certain spiritual gift no matter how strongly we seek after it. God is infinitely wise and He knows through which gifts we will be most productive for His kingdom.

"How do we identify our spiritual gift?" There is no magic formula or definitive test that can tell us exactly what our spiritual gifts are. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts as He determines (1 Cor 12:7-11). Identifying our spiritual giftedness can be accomplished in various ways. Prayer is a big help to identify our spiritual gift. Other people who see us serving the Lord can often identify a spiritual gift in us that we might take for granted or not recognize. The one person who knows exactly how we are spiritually gifted is the gift-giver Himself—the Holy Spirit. We can ask God in prayer to show how we are gifted in order to better use our spiritual gifts for His glory. Yes, God calls some to be teachers and gives them the gift of teaching. God calls some to be servants and blesses them with the gift of helps. However, specifically knowing our spiritual gift does not excuse us from serving God in areas outside our gifting.

What is the difference between a talent and a spiritual gift? The differences between spiritual gifts and talents: 1) A talent is the result of genetics and/or training, while a spiritual gift is the result of the power of the Holy Spirit. 2) A talent can be possessed by anyone, Christian or non-Christian, while spiritual gifts are only possessed by Christians. 3) While both talents and spiritual gifts should be used for God's glory and to minister to others, spiritual gifts are focused on these tasks, while talents can be used entirely for non-spiritual purposes. It is the job of the church leaders to help build up the saints so they can be further equipped for the ministry to which God has called them.

Catechism of the Catholic Church on Spiritual Gifts: 768 – *the Holy Spirit 'bestows upon [the Church] varied hierarchic and charismatic gifts, and this way directs her'. Henceforward the Church, endowed with the gifts of her founder and faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is on earth the seed and the beginning of that kingdom.* 799 - "Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world." 800 – "*Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms.* 801 – "It is in this sense that **discernment of charisms is always necessary. No charism is exempt from being referred and submitted to the Church's shepherds. 'Their office [is] not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good,' so that all**

the diverse and complementary charisms work together 'for the common good.'"

951 –"Communion of **charisms**. Within the communion of the church, the Holy Spirit 'distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank' for the building up of the Church. now, 'to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.'

How do spiritual gifts impact the Church? Spiritual gifts are part of the very nature of God, given to us for Him to use to fulfill His purposes in our lives and on the earth. As we use our spiritual gifts, the Body of Christ will be edified, unified, and matured; we will avoid deception by Satan and by wicked men; and we will grow in Christ.

How to discover our spiritual gift and how responsibly we exercise them? By Prayer, we seek the Holy Spirit's guidance to evaluating our Gifts. By Studying the Holy Scripture, we become familiar with our spiritual gift By Self-Examination, we realize our strength By using our gifts, we pay close attention to the results produced through our efforts and then by listening to our brothers and sisters, we get confirmed of our spiritual gifts. They will be able to recognize and confirm our Spiritual Gifts and through genuine expressions of approval, we can put our Gifts to use and we work together and support one another. The Church is the body of Christ which has many members and functions. The unity and interdependency of the body is an example of how spiritual gifts influence the Church. Each member of the Body is given Spiritual Gifts by the Holy Spirit. If we possess all of the spiritual gifts, we would be self-sufficient and have no need of the other members and it is for this purpose, God has deliberately given us different gifts: we *need* each other. As each believer responds to needs according to his particular spiritual gift, and as God allows believers to serve Him in various roles of spiritual service, the Body of Christ can experience the fullness of God's love. If we do not accept and obediently use our spiritual gifts, we neglect God's work of grace in our lives. We will "*fail of the grace of God*" (Hebrews 12:15). God forbid that we would make that choice! Knowing that each of us has gifts that are valuable and needed in the Body of Christ gives us purpose in God's kingdom. As we demonstrate the love of God through gifts that He gives us, we can experience personal fulfillment and great joy: we can experience purpose in life. As we mature in our understanding of spiritual gifts and learn to be channels of God's power as He works through them, we are equipped to bear abundant fruit in the kingdom of God.