

Spiritual Gifts pt. 2

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (CGS#24)

INTRODUCTION: Last week, we looked at 1 Corinthians 12:1–11 to begin our conversation about spiritual gifts. This week, we are back in the same passage. Why? Well, because there is more to glean from Paul on spiritual gifts in this section, specifically his teaching that there are a variety of “gifts, services, and activities.” Spiritual gifts can be confusing for us, and they were certainly confusing for them. Paul reframes the Corinthians’ fascination with spiritual gifts by grounding them in the character and work of the Holy Spirit. Paul emphasizes both diversity and unity of the gifts. Andrew Wilson notes that Paul deliberately repeats the pattern: “different gifts, same Spirit; different service, same Lord; different workings, same God.” The point is not hierarchy but harmony. Gifts are not badges of superiority or elitism; they are gracious distributions given “for the common good.” Wilson also highlights that Paul places revelatory, powerful, and practical gifts side by side—wisdom, healing, prophecy, tongues—without ranking them. This undercuts the Corinthian tendency to prize dramatic gifts as marks of elite spirituality. Instead, the Spirit sovereignly apportions gifts as he wills, reminding the church that spiritual life is not self-generated but God-given. The truth we cannot miss in this section is that **the Holy Spirit empowers your following and service.** We’re not alone in following Jesus. We have each other, and most importantly, we have the Holy Spirit.

In another letter, to another church, the letter of Ephesians, Paul reminds them that they, too, have been given spiritual gifts. His list in Eph. 4:11-14 is a little simpler, so we will also look at it to help aid our understanding of this topic. Paul tells the Ephesians that their gifts were given for the “building up the body of Christ, until we all attain the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood.” Those gifts are apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher. We all have one of these gifts. How do I know that? Because Paul tells us. So our job is not to be convinced that we have a gift, but to figure out which it is and how we are to use it. Here’s a little secret: your gift can be used in multiple ways and in every season you find yourself. That means two believers with the same gift are going to serve in different ways and with different expressions. But the gifts are always to bring the body into maturity and build up in love. Let’s understand the gifts and our S.H.A.P.E.

1. **Apostle** – Pioneer, entrepreneur, visionary – (*Peter, Paul, John, Priscilla & Aquilla*)
2. **Prophet** – Preaching, gives clarity to truth, calls to obedience – (*Isaiah, Jeremiah, Anna*)
3. **Evangelist** – Sharing the gospel & conversations with non-Christians – (*Philip*)
4. **Shepherd** – Care, counsel, empathy, and concern – (*Barnabas, James*)
5. **Teacher** – Those who explain tough concepts – (*Apollos, Philip*)

Your SHAPE helps you to figure out how and where to use your gift.¹

- **S** = Spiritual Gift (Which gift resonates with you?)
- **H** – Heart (What stirs your emotions, positively/negatively?)
- **A** = Abilities (What could you teach a class on? What is your occupation? What special skills do you have? Etc.)
- **P** = Personality (Are you an introvert/extrovert? Prefer church people or non-believers?)
- **E** = Experiences (What tough things have you been through? What have you seen? Where have you been? What have you done? Etc.)

Remember, using your gift is not optional in Paul’s mind. It is a normal and needed thing.

¹ This is from Pastor Brent’s class – Discipleship 301.

GETTING STARTED – As a group, take time to answer this question. What excites you about the idea of having a spiritual gift? What makes you nervous about having a spiritual gift?

IN THE WORD – Let's dig back into the passage(s). It is important to strengthen our muscles in reading God's Word. On Sunday, we walked through the passage in the sermon. Hopefully, that helped you to see the landmarks of the passage with fresh eyes. Now, with your group, go back through it and see what God is saying to you specifically.

First, before you read the passage, take a moment to ask God's Spirit to quiet your mind and heart and to illuminate the text to you. Second, read the passage aloud to the group. Then, follow the simple method below. (O.P.A)

Observe: Make 8-10 observations from the passage. Pay close attention to observe and note repeated words and phrases, names, places, and themes.

Principles: From your list of observations, what patterns or big ideas do you see emerging? Can you distill it down into 2-4 big idea truths?

Apply: Moving from your list of principles, it is time to apply God's Word. Remember, we believe that God's Word is living and active and that it can change the way we live Monday- Friday. What is one tangible way to apply a truth from your list above?

Note: Another way to approach your time together is to talk through the following questions.

1. What did you hear God's Spirit say to you through the passage this week? How does it encourage you? How does it sharpen you?
2. How have you seen God at work in your life this week? Have you enjoyed him? Have you heard his voice and the leading of his Spirit? Big ways or small ways.
3. Paul makes a big deal of the source of our gifts. What is it and why does that matter?
4. Come back to the topic of spiritual gifts and natural talents: As we keep talking about this, what are the differences? Can you name some things that are natural talents in your life? Remember, you can use natural talents to glorify and serve God, but you can also use them without doing those things. You can only use spiritual gifts to glorify and serve God with the result of building up the church.
5. Look at the APEST gift list above and the descriptions. What gift do you think you have?
6. Take time to discuss with your group what gift they think you have.
7. Now, look at your SHAPE. How might you use your gift in your SHAPE to build up and mature the body?