

Essay: Spiritual Gifts (full version) (NIV based)

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INTRODUCTION:

There is considerable confusion and disagreement today about the identity, purpose, and usage of spiritual gifts. Furthermore, most believers are unable to personally identify their spiritual gifts and exercise them. This may be due to a general lack of proper Biblical knowledge and understanding about spiritual gifts. God desires that believers **"not...be ignorant... about spiritual gifts"** (1 Corinthians 12:1). Studying the spiritual gifts can assist you in better identifying, comprehending, and using your gifts. This should consequently dispel confusion, promote the kingdom of God, and foster harmony within the Body of Christ.

DEFINITION:

- - From studying the listings in the Scriptures of the 'spiritual gifts' in the context of their containing verses, spiritual gifts can be defined as fundamentally "grace-gifts" in that higher-than-ordinary empowerment, or "extraordinary powers", or "supernatural talents" are graciously bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon individual believers, enabling them to serve the Body of Christ. (Putman 1212; Faricy 549; Unger 475)

- - Spiritual gifts are the vehicle or channel through which the Holy Spirit supernaturally ministers to the Church and other people. (MacArthur 51)

-- A significant distinction exists between a spiritual gift and a natural talent:

- - - - a spiritual gift is a "capacity for service" in spiritual situations that is directly given by and actively empowered by the Holy Spirit who indwells that believer, but "usually the spiritual gift must be developed" (Gangel 9) - in other words, that believer must learn how to fully access and draw upon that empowering of the Holy Spirit in order to implement that spiritual gift in the precise manner for spiritual purposes that the Holy Spirit desires; - - - - whereas a natural talent is a "ready-made ability to perform", which the person implements according to his/her own will, purposes, and abilities, being apart from or without necessarily the active empowering, direction, and spiritual purposes of the Holy Spirit (Gangel 9).

- - Yet, a spiritual gift may be constructed upon natural talents (Faricy 549).

CONTEXT:

- - Of particular importance to understanding the usage and function of spiritual gifts is the context in which the gifts are listed in the Scriptures. For example, preceding Romans chapter 12, the context has been the describing of aspects of God's mercy to believers. In view of God's mercy, Romans 12:1-3 declares that the believer should humbly live a consecrated and yielded life to the Lord. Romans 12:4-6 expounds that with this type of pleasing life to God comes empowering to serve Him and the interconnected body of believers through the implementing of spiritual gifts.

- - In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, the foundation for the usage of gifts is laid by comparing them to how the parts of the human body function in relation to each other (Baker 269). Specifically emphasized is the concept that the "exercise of gifts and the ongoing total ministry of the church are inseparably related" and that each believer is to exercise his gift(s) accordingly (Gangel 10, Romans 12:4-6a).

PURPOSES:

- - The main purpose of spiritual gifts is to infuse ordinary believers with beyond-normal specific ministering abilities from God, so that those believers more-appropriately and more-effectively minister in a manner that God orchestrates. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)
- - Spiritual gifts are to serve other people, through the ministry of the Church. (1 Peter 4:10; Gangel 116, 10)
- - They are for edification or building up of the whole Church body of believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 14:12). They are not intended merely for the enjoyment or enrichment of the individual members who possess them (1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:5,12).
- - Through the ministry of the Church, spiritual gifts are also to be utilized for assisting in the conviction and conversion of unbelievers. (1 Corinthians 14:21-25, Putnam 1212)
- - True churches, those whose members have personally placed their faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning death on the cross to save them from the eternal punishment for their **own** sins, already have within their members all of the spiritual gifts that are needed to function and minister properly and effectively as a true church. (Romans 3:20-25a; 1 Corinthians 1:1-7)
- - Of utmost importance, spiritual gifts are always to glorify Christ. (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-11, **14**)
- - If the exercise of spiritual gifts does not make for the Lordship of Christ, then that which is manifesting does not have its source from God. (1 Corinthians 12:1,3)
- - Therefore, if the intention of the exercise of a spiritual gift is to bring glory to the person effectuating the gift, then that exercise is not from God.
- - Spiritual gifts are given to unify believers, not divide them or set them against each other. (1 Corinthians 12:25)
- - The Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes particular gifts of the various spiritual gifts to whom He wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- - Each believer is given at least one spiritual gift at the moment of salvation. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- - No believer has all the gifts, nor is any one of the gifts bestowed on all believers. (1 Corinthians 12:14,21, 28-30)
- - No believer has a choice as to which spiritual gifts he/she receives. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- - A reasonable assumption is that the gift(s) each believer has been given are the best suited to his/her temperament and character, in accordance to God's evaluation and purposes for that believer.
- - Therefore, believers must not expect everyone to perform their spiritual gift(s) with the same success in each area.
- - Although not equally conspicuous, all gifts are important and they are not to be set over against one another as though their possessors are rivals. (1 Corinthians 12:22-26,18-21)
- - Because they are sovereignly given by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11), possession or lack of a particular spiritual gift is no cause for pride, regret, or discouragement. (1 Corinthians 12:18, 22-27; 1:7; 7:7)
- - Each believer should be happy with his/her own gift(s) and use them.
- - Those who have particular spiritual gifts are to cooperate with others in working out the Lord's divine purpose. (1 Corinthians 12:22-30)

- - Spiritual gifts should always be used in an orderly fashion with an attitude of love, humility, harmony, and unity - to edify, encourage, and serve others (Romans 12:3-5,10, Gangel 116).

- - The Lord holds each believer responsible to discover his/her spiritual gift(s) and then to develop them.

- - Yet, one's particular gift(s) should determine where the majority of one's time, energy, and resources are to be expended. (1 Corinthians 12:17-20)

- - However, there are some areas, such as 'faith', 'giving', and 'evangelism' for examples, in which all believers should engage in the activity even though they may not possess the spiritual gift. ('faith' - see 2 Corinthians 5:7 in the NAS or KJV; 'giving' - 1 Timothy 6:17-19; 'evangelism' - 2 Timothy 4:5)

HINDRANCES TO EXPOSING SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

- - The spiritual gifts can be difficult to expose and identify as being present in a believer. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

-- Logically, there are several probable reasons why spiritual gifts are not readily observable among believers:

- - - - The person may in fact **not** be a true believer. Non-believers do **not** possess any of the genuine spiritual gifts, nor are they capable of using them appropriately in a spiritual manner (1 Corinthians 2:14). However, it should be noted that as a non-believer, they may have a natural talent that has many secular characteristics that appear to align with an actual spiritual gift, for examples - teaching secular content, or serving in a secular environment.

- - - - Many believers are not aware that spiritual gifts exist or what spiritual gifts are, nor that they have one or more of the gifts, so they do not pursue discovering and using their gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

- - - - A sad reality is that many believers do not consider it a priority that they discover and utilize any spiritual gift(s) they may have, because they are too comfortable operating in their form of living as a 'good Christian' but producing very little fruit for God's kingdom. (1 Corinthians 14:1a; 15:58c; John 15:8)

- - - - Many believers are operating in a state of frequent or substantial sinning even though they are a true believer. Their engaging in sinfulness hinders, dampens, quenches, and suffocates the presence and their usage of their spiritual gift(s), which comes by means of empowering from God. (Romans 8:5-8; see 'rocky' soil (vv.5-6,20-21), and soil of 'thorns' (vv.7,22) in Matthew 13:3-9,18-23)

- - - - God is not being in control of the believer's life - God is not being given fertile conducive conditions in that believer's life to bring out and let shine their spiritual gifts. (see 'good' soil (vv.8,23) in Matthew 13:3-9,18-23)

- - - - Very little, if any, opportunity is allow in churches and ministries to experiment on whether a believer has a particular spiritual gift or not. Essentially, the leadership fails to prioritize this aspect of equipping ordinary believers to do the work of the ministry. (Matthew 28:19-20)

----- When an opportunity does arise, that experimenting believer does not receive any affirming accurate feedback from anyone who rightly has detected and identified the presence of a particular spiritual gift in that experimenter's life - most likely because

even leaders of ministry are not detecting and identifying the presence of a particular spiritual gift in that experimenter.

- - - In some denominations, many believers are in error seeking only the long-ago-ceased spiritual gifts that produce supernatural phenomena and that would greatly enhance their own status, and essentially they are not interested in the still-active spiritual gifts that do not produce supernatural phenomena. (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; 1:7; in v.13:10 "when perfection comes" is referring to the completion of the writing and forming of the New Testament)

- - - Some believers are caught up in the considerable confusion and deviation today regarding spiritual gifts. Their conduct in pursuing and using spiritual gifts conveys an outright rejection of proper Biblical training, knowledge, and understanding about spiritual gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

IDENTIFICATION:

A basic list containing the spiritual gifts can be obtained by listing and combining those gifts mentioned in:

Romans 12:6-8	Ephesians 4:11-12	1 Corinthians 12:8-10	1 Cor. 12:28-30
-----	-----	-----	-----
prophesying	apostles	message of wisdom	apostles
serving	prophets	message of knowledge	prophets
teaching	evangelists	faith	teachers
encouraging	pastors	healing	miracles
leadership	teachers	miracles	healing
showing mercy		prophecy	help others
contributing to the needs of others		tongues	administration
		interpretation of tongues	tongues
		distinguishing between spirits	
1 Peter 4:10-11			

speaks (giving revelation)			
serves			

It is important to note that Scriptures do very little to describe, expound, or explain what some of these individual gifts are and how they are manifested in believers' lives. Consequently, many of the following descriptions of these spiritual gifts are based on a combination of biblically-based logic and reasoning, defining of original Greek words, relating Biblical statements, experiential evidence and observations, Holy Spirit-guided insights, and the supporting opinions of several well-respected authors.

Spiritual Gifts

SERVING:

"If it is serving, let him serve;..." - Romans 12:7, (also listed in 1 Peter 4:11)

- - The word "**serving**" (Romans 12:7) literally means "giving aid or service as an attendant or servant to the ministry" (Strong's #1248), with the original Greek word being

"diakonia", from which is derived the church position of 'deacon', as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

- - The spiritual 'gift of serving', therefore, is "the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to identify the unmet needs involved in tasks related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals". (Wagner 226)
- - Believers with the spiritual 'gift of serving' actively look for practical ways "to take a burden off of someone else in the ministry and place it on himself/herself". (Hillman 70; MacArthur 127)
- - These believers eagerly serve the church, its people, and its leaders, providing physical assistance, help, and logistical support, while being very accommodating and subservient under the oversight and authority of the ministry leaders.
- - In reality, they minister in the sense of physically carrying out or administering in physical actions the decisions and policies of the church, its ministries, and its leaders.
- - In effect, they acquire a substantial sense of fulfillment from their service, because they see and appreciate that they are contributing to the optimizing of the functioning of a church or ministry for spiritual healthiness, effectiveness, and logistical maintenance.
- - Thus, these believers genuinely enjoy taking on tasks that serve others in the ministry, and they willingly and cheerfully work at those tasks without grumbling or looking for ways to terminate their commitment to a task.
- - They are reliable and contented in their service to ministry work, not seeking any attention or accolades, controlling authority, lofty status, or compensation for their service, because they know that they are serving the Lord.
- - Their enjoyment, reliability, strength, contentment, commitment, and sense of fulfillment, that these believers experience from performing the spiritual 'gift of serving', come directly from the empowering of this spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit. (1 Peter 4:10-11)
- - Some examples of the functions that a believer with the spiritual 'gift of serving' would typically perform in a church or ministry are: the setting up and cleaning up of events; being ushers, greeters, and parking lot attendants; making repairs to the facilities; cleaning of rooms and carpets; preparing and serving of food or meals or communion elements; moving of chairs and tables; mowing the grass; trimming trees and bushes; sweeping the floors and sidewalks; physically acquiring and distributing benevolent supplies; collecting the offering; and etcetera.

Some relating verses:

- - John 12:26 - **"Whoever serves me [Jesus] must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."**
- - Galatians 5:13 - **"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love."**
- - Ephesians 6:7-8 - **"[Slaves,] serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."**
- - 1 Peter 4:10,11b - **"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." "...If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."**

HELP OTHERS:

"And in the church God has appointed..., also... those able to help others,..." - 1 Corinthians 12:28

- - The spiritual gift of **"help others"** (1 Corinthians 12:28) pertains, in essence, to "providing "relief" or compensate for losses that have been incurred". (Strong's #0484 with *AHD* 'remunerate')
- - The spiritual 'gift of help others', therefore, is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to identify the unmet needs of a person who has suffered a catastrophic loss of physical belongings or property, and then to acquire and utilize available resources to meet those needs and thereby help that person suitably recover from that catastrophic loss.
- - This scenario implies that the catastrophic loss has propelled the person into serious deficiency or destitution - "extreme need of resources or the means of subsistence". (*AHD* - 'destitution')
- - Logically, this scenario also implies that the catastrophic loss could certainly include the person experiencing the loss of, or the inability to, or the struggle to generate sufficient income.
- - Fundamentally and more broadly, believers with the spiritual 'gift of help others' have an innate compelling desire to help other people.
- - They especially want to help those persons who need help but do not have the means to acquire the training / skills / knowledge / finances / resources to solve their predicament on their own.
- - So they naturally gravitate toward assisting low-income, downtrodden, or destitute people. (Hillman 70)
- - Believers with the spiritual 'gift of help others' particularly want to provide that help at no cost or sacrifice to the recipients.
- - Therefore, believers with the spiritual 'gift of help others' excel at being resource persons - accumulating and maintaining a list of a variety of potential resources that are ready to be utilized as needed for specific situations.
- - Furthermore, these believers maintain themselves in a state of flexibility and readiness to work, always being very willing and ready to adjust their schedule in order to go and meet someone's urgent need without delay.
- - An equally-important objective for these believers with the spiritual 'gift of help others' is to overtly represent the Kingdom of God, using outreach techniques such as: talking about and sharing Scripture verses and concepts with the person as the believer is meeting that person's needs; talking about and inviting the person to become involved in the believer's church and its ministries; looking for and acting upon any opportunities to likewise draw in other people that are present with the person whose needs the believer is meeting; and etcetera.
- - Thus, these believers have a purposeful underlying spiritual intention and desire to minister verbally as they are ministering through actions to meet needs. This, too, motivates and compels them.
- - Even though these believers with the spiritual 'gift of help others' are edified while they are performing the meeting of a person's needs, they are especially edified when

they have successfully and sufficiently met someone's need, and even more edified if they were able to also engage in outreach and ministering conversations with the person.

- - And of course, the Holy Spirit is actively working to orchestrate, empower, and drive this whole process, by means of influencing the mind, heart, words, and actions of the believer who has this spiritual 'gift of help others'.

-- However, the believer can easily derail the activities and goals of the Holy Spirit here in this process by doing such things as:

- - - - failing to do what he said he would do;
 - - - - failing to arrive when he said he would;
 - - - - failing to complete the work or project like he said he would;
 - - - - behaving in a carnal, angry, or cussing manner when things do not proceed as planned or desired;
 - - - - failing to communicate sufficiently and/or honestly with the person;
 - - - - refusing to do work in the manner or to the specifications that the person wants, and instead doing the work in the way that the believer wants;
 - - - - doing poor workmanship;
 - - - - leaving a mess for someone else to clean up;
 - - - - damaging other parts of the person's property;
 - - - - speaking about the believer's own church, its leaders, or its ministries in a disparaging way;
 - - - - misrepresenting the Scriptures and/or promoting false doctrines; and etcetera.
-

CONTRIBUTING TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS (GIVING):

"...if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously;..." - Romans 12:8

- - The spiritual gift of "**contributing to the needs of others**" (or 'giving') involves "to give over or share" one's material possessions with others. (Romans 12:8; Strong's #3330; Hillman 85)

- - Romans 12:8 proclaims that believers with the spiritual 'gift of contributing to the needs of others' should share "**generously**", in a manner that has the characteristic of being "abundant - fullness to the extent that is plentiful and overflowing in amount". (AHD 'generously', 'abundant')

- - Furthermore, these believers are to maintain "sincerity" as they share abundantly, not possessing, harboring, "disguising, or concealing sinful intentions, appearances, or feelings". (Strong's #0572 with AHD 'dissimulation')

- - Likewise, within their abundant sharing, they are not to possess nor pursue "self-seeking" - formulating and implementing any scheme that attempts to bring any kind of benefit to themselves. (Strong's #0572)

- - Believers, who have the spiritual 'gift of contributing to the needs of others', enjoy sharing what they have, not giving begrudgingly or out of a sense of compulsion, not possessing any selfish ulterior motives, but instead with willingness, eagerness, and cheerfulness. (2 Corinthians 9:5,7; Gangel 85)

- - They persist in always being watchful and ready to give in ways that are helpful, meet needs, and further God's kingdom.

- - Their perspective is that God has abundantly blessed them, now they are going to abundantly pass on those blessings to others. (in contrast to James 5:3c)
- - Thus, the spiritual 'gift of contributing to the needs of others' can be described as "the Holy Spirit-given ability to voluntarily give of one's material goods and financial resources with joy, eagerness, and delight without any motives of self-benefit but rather with the single motive of sharing with others out of compassion and love, to the glory of God". (Gangel 83; Hillman 84)
- - While those with the 'gift of contributing' strive to give anonymously as often as possible in order not to compromise their motives, their "ongoing generosity will nevertheless inspire others to give". (Hillman 86)
- - Generally, the Scriptures indicate that when the resources are limited or scarce, there should usually be consideration for priorities of who receives those limited resources first, with the local (true) church having top priority, then of descending priority are specific ministries of the local (true) church, then (true) ministries outside of the local (true) church, then specific needy believers within the local (true) church, then specific needy believers outside of the local (true) church, and then unbelievers. (2 Corinthians 9:5,12-13; Galatians 6:10)
- - When resources are plentiful, then resources should be given **"generously on every occasion" - "in all things at all times, ...abound in every good work"**. (2 Corinthians 9:11,8)

- - The inner qualities and virtues, for this spiritual gift of extraordinary generous joyful giving, are empowered by the Holy Spirit, and they naturally bring glory, honor, and praise to God.
- However, God is not honored nor pleased when a believer corrupts this spiritual gift by operating from the flesh in such ways (actual examples) as:
 - - - - contributing to needy ministry persons or missionaries only if the contribution results in a tax deduction being achieved for the giver;
 - - - - inappropriately manipulating the bookkeeping system of a church or ministry in order to achieve a tax deduction (from the giving) for the giver;
 - - - - bargaining with God to receive a gigantic windfall (such as a huge inheritance or lottery winning, for examples), giving an extremely minuscule amount of it to the church, keeping all of the rest for oneself, and then considering oneself as having been very virtuous, pious, and generous in the handling of this gigantic windfall;
 - - - - exerting or **"showing favoritism"**, for example giving a sizeable generous amount to one needy person but giving nothing to another person who is likewise in exactly the same situation, under the same conditions, and at the same time. (v.1 in James 2:1-9)

SHOWING MERCY:

"...if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." - Romans 12:8

- - The spiritual 'gift of **showing mercy**' involves showing "pity, mercy, and compassion". (MacArthur 142)
- - A believer with the 'gift of showing mercy' has the Holy Spirit-given special capacity to display "compassion, empathy, weeping, and a genuine, deep, infectious joy" as

he/she identifies with, sympathizes with, and suffers alongside those who have fallen into grievous affliction. (Hillman 73, 74; Gangel 97)

- - Not overcome by sorrow, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of showing mercy' is steadfast in cheerfulness as he/she endeavors to ease and console others who are in misery, adversity, and pain. (Hillman 74; Gangel 96)

- - From a technical sense, the spiritual 'gift of showing mercy' applies primarily to situations in which the suffering is a consequence due to sin in the person's life.

(Zodhiates p.563, Strong's #1653 - 'mercy' - Romans 12:8; e.g. see v.14 in John 5:2-15)

- - By means of the empowering of this spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit, then, the believer possesses an innate understanding of what the suffering person is experiencing as consequence of the person's own sin, an innate appreciation for the reality that God wants this person to go through the suffering in an effort to refine the person, and that circumventing this refining process in reality subverts these refining activities of God in the person's life. (Hebrews 12:10-12)

- - So in consequence-for-sin situations, the believer is very careful not to subvert the refining activities of God in the person's life but yet extends to the suffering person compassion, "empathy, caring, sensitivity", and cheerfulness - being genuinely glad that God is actively working to produce righteousness in the life of the suffering person.

(Strong's #1653 - 'mercy'; AHD 'compassionate')

- - The believer with the spiritual 'gift of showing mercy' is also careful not to make statements that attempt to predict the future for the suffering person, or predict an optimistic outcome, or predict an unrealistic outcome, or minimize the sin of the person.

- - God has a spiritual objective to be accomplished in the life of the suffering person, and therefore, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of showing mercy' should be looking for and striving to facilitate that spiritual objective of God while refraining from the desire and temptation of trying to remove the suffering of the person without the person dealing adequately with the sin that is the source cause of the suffering from God.

FAITH:

"...to another [there is given through the Spirit] faith by the same Spirit,..." -

1 Corinthians 12:9

- - The definition of spiritual "**faith**" is summarized in Hebrews 11:1, "**Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**"

- - "**Being sure of**" or "**being... certain of**" are phrases that indicate being confidently persuaded - strongly and firmly accepting and believing as true, valid, and trustworthy what God says in the Scriptures, and then relying on what is taken by faith, whether or not there exists empirical evidence to support the confident persuasion. (Hebrews 11:1; 1 Corinthians 12:9, from Strong's #4102 with AHD 'faith' and 'credence')

- - In essence, faith is firm and loyal belief and trust in God, and in all that He is, all that He does past / present / future, and all that He says as recorded in the Holy Bible - even though there may be little or no physical evidence or proof to support such belief and trust.

- - The spiritual 'gift of faith' is the Holy Spirit-given special ability to believe in an unusual or extraordinary way in God's promises and power to supply specific needs or accomplish specific objectives.
 - - This spiritual gift involves the intensive ability to trust and believe God in the face of enormous obstacles, and to determine with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for the future of His work.
 - - This kind of faith is connected with prayer and with God's response to prayer, with the objective of laying hold of God's promises for the benefit of other persons.
 - - It is important to note that every believer has been given 'saving' faith and a measure of 'general' faith by which to live (Romans 12:3), but not everyone has been given this extraordinary spiritual 'gift of faith'.
 - - With utter dependence on the Lord, a believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' is able to envision what others cannot see and endure what others cannot endure.
 - - This believer maintains high personal integrity in his/her life, goals, and motives while steadfastly trusting God even when there seems to be no human or natural basis for that trust.
 - - This believer is usually more interested in the future than in history, is a goal-centered possibility thinker, and is patiently undaunted by hindering circumstances, suffering, or obstacles.
- - In exercising this spiritual gift properly, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' does not receive or expect a direct audible or visual supernatural revelation or supernatural confirmation from God, nor ever asserts that a supernatural revelation or supernatural confirmation has been given to this believer.
- - Asking God for a supernatural revelation, or a supernatural confirmation, or a supernatural verifying sign is an exercise of gross unbelief - a gross **lack** of faith. (see v.4 in Matthew 16:1-4)
 - - Furthermore, this believer does not inappropriately or hastily interpret aspects of unfolding events or occurrences as being affirmative verifying signs from God.
 - - And regarding subjects for which the Scriptures do not give direct specific guidance, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' never makes declarative statements such as, "God wants us to do this...!", but the believer can make statements such as, "I am fully convinced that God wants us to do this...!".
- - Within the process of dealing with a potential objective that pertains to some aspect of ministering or ministry functioning, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' naturally possesses a rock-solid confidence that God has far more than enough supernatural power, ability, and knowledge to do what is being requested of Him in prayer to accomplish the potential objective (like the centurion in Matthew 8:5-10). (Ephesians 3:20)
- - The question that remains to be ascertained, though, is, "Is God willing to do this - to cause this to be accomplished?" (like the man with leprosy in Matthew 8:1-3).
 - - So this believer consistently and persistently continues to ask God (in prayer) to grant this request (the accomplishing of the potential objective), and then watches to determine if God is granting this request in some form or manner, while maintaining flexibility in case God wants to accomplish the request but with some modifications and alterations from the original request.

- - After fully bathing the request in prayer before God for a length of time and subsequently receiving no seeming indications from God for or against the accomplishing of the request, the believer subsequently takes an initiating step of faith to 'test the waters' (so to speak) - to determine if God is willing, approving, on board, and proceeding to grant the request.
 - Even though success is the foremost desired outcome of the request, the believer does remain aware that there may be times when God wants a believer to attempt to do something but ultimately fail in accomplishing the outcome objective of the request.
 - - - Failures can accomplish objectives that God has.
 - - - And failures can and do give direction as to what God wants to accomplish, just as well as successes can and do give direction.
 - - This believer also is supremely patient and self-controlled in the exercising of the spiritual 'gift of faith', accepting and implementing the dynamic of proceeding with blinders on - "walking by faith and not by sight", in other words, actually seeing no more than only one step ahead to move forward by faith as God reveals it, and then waiting to see and move forward by faith with the next step as God reveals it, and so on. (2 Corinthians 5:7 with Strong's #4043)
 - - The believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' likewise exercises supreme patience in waiting upon God to distinctly impress upon the believer an intuition of what the next potential ministry objective might be, that of course again requires properly exercising this spiritual 'gift of faith'.
 - - Furthermore, this believer must exert additional and protracted patience with other ministry personnel, waiting for them to favorably respond because they do not readily recognize that God is attempting to use this believer with the spiritual 'gift of faith' to nudge them forward into initiating the pursuit process of the next potential ministry objective.
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ENCOURAGING:

"...if it is encouraging, let him encourage;..." - Romans 12:8

- - The meaning of the original Greek word that is translated as "**encouraging**" is "exhorting - to call near, in other words: invite, invoke (by imploration, exhortation or consolation)", "to urge by strong, often stirring argument, admonition, advice, or appeal; to move to action". (Romans 12:8; Strong's #3870; AHD 'exhort')
- - Within the use of the spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting', there is a distinct characteristic and quality of earnest and urgent appeal for the listeners to be moved from their current way of thinking, and moved into a different way of thinking that aligns with what God wants and says in His Word.
- - In essence, the spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' primarily is a pursuit to spur others into a life of thinking, believing, obeying, and acting in alignment to God's Word and His will. (Gangel 36)
- - "Urging, admonishing, challenging, requesting, counseling, reasoning", advising, exhorting, and etcetera, as well as "consoling, comforting, cheering up", and encouraging, are utilized to present and apply the Word of God to the listeners and their situation by means of addressing their thinking and beliefs. (Hillman 43, Gangel 33)

- - There does exist secular encouraging/exhorting that unbelievers utilize, but this 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' possesses a spiritual component that comes from and is empowered by the Holy Spirit, who is within the believer that is exercising this gift.
- - Therefore, from and by this innate spiritual propensity, orientation, and drive, a believer with this gift actively seeks situations and appropriately-timed opportunities to bring divinely-incited encouragement/exhortation, even though secular encouraging/exhorting could be presented and utilized instead.
- - The spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' can be used in both the private and public arenas, within such formats as conversations, social media, social gatherings, preaching, teaching, evangelism, counseling, songs, and etcetera. (Gangel 34; Hillman 44)
- - In order to fully and effectively exercise this spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting', the believer with this spiritual gift will need to either possess substantial knowledge of Scriptures that apply to discouraging situations or conditions that people commonly experience, or else carry with him/her a Bible that has a good concordance to easily and quickly find, reference, and utilize applicable Scripture verses.
- - And of course, the application of Scripture verses, concepts, doctrines, commands, and etcetera always requires that those scriptural elements contain complete truth, correctness, and appropriateness, because any falseness, incorrectness, or inappropriateness immediately and effectively quench the activities and the releasing of influencing power by the Holy Spirit in that presentation. (John 7:18; Ephesians 4:25,30)
- - Another impropriety or unpleasantry that believers with the spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' commonly commit is they get into the habit of always so immediately verbally responding to every situation with a spiritual comment that is intended to be encouraging, that they fail to stop and consider if the comment fits the situation, or if the comment is realistic, or if the comment is truthful, or if the comment contains false doctrine, or if the comment is sounding like a platitude because it is too frequently stated by the believer.
- - Therefore, believers with the spiritual 'gift of encouraging/exhorting' need to constantly self-monitor and self-critique what they are saying within their encouraging/exhorting statements so that truth, sound doctrine, correctness, and appropriateness are always being adhered to.

MESSAGE OF KNOWLEDGE:

"...to another [there is given] the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,..." - 1 Corinthians 12:8

- - The spiritual 'gift of **the message of knowledge**' is the Holy Spirit-given special ability: to subjectively and deliberately study the Bible; to observe and discover biblical facts; to draw out, accumulate, analyze and clarify information that is pertinent to the growth or well-being of the church Body; and then to present that information to persons as the Holy Spirit urges and provides opportunity.
- - Believers with the spiritual 'gift of the message of knowledge' learn information pertaining to God, the kingdom of heaven, and the Scriptures. As described in Matthew 13:10-18, they see (or read) the information (v.16), they hear it (v.16), they are open to it (v.15), they inquire about its meaning (v.10; cf. Luke 8:9), they receive the meaning of it

(v.18), they gain understanding of it (v.13), they retain all of this long-term (v.12), and over time they accumulate more of it (v.12).

- - In regard to this spiritual information, these believers are eager to learn it, they have a long attention span for it, they are able to absorb and retain unusual amounts of it, and they may be very comfortable being totally immersed in it.

- - They actually strive to gain an ever-increasing "**thorough knowledge of the Scriptures**". (Acts 18:24)

- - These believers have excellent memory skills - easily, quickly, and accurately memorizing and retaining this spiritual information long-term.

- - They even have an amazing referencing ability - to know where a particular verse, or phrase, or story, or account is located in the Scriptures.

- - They are good at acquiring, organizing, and remembering information in the Scriptures, such as: characteristics and details of various topics and narratives; definitions and descriptions of theological doctrines, words, concepts, commands, and etcetera; distinctive characteristics and facts about cultures and philosophies; constructing time lines of historical events; and etcetera.

- - On a side note: Apparently, up until the point in time when the New Testament of the Bible was completed in written form, God extraordinarily empowered some of His servants with the 'gift of knowledge' that enabled them to instantly and perfectly retain in memory the entirety of everything they saw or heard Jesus or His twelve disciples or His apostles or select persons do or say or preach or teach, word-for-word exactly perfect, presumably so that this information would be carried forward and precisely written into the New Testament books of the Bible (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; in a manner similar to the dynamic described in 2 Peter 1:20-21). It is plausible that God likewise extraordinarily empowered some of His servants during Old Testament times to instantly and perfectly retain in memory the entire contents of direct revelations that He gave to them, or accounts of certain stories, or specific statements by select persons, so that this information would be carried forward and precisely written into the Old Testament books of the Bible.

-- From the discourse that Jesus spoke to the 'Pharisees' and the 'experts of the law' in Luke 11:37-53, several concepts can be extracted that would pertain to believers with the spiritual 'gift of the message of knowledge':

- - - - they do not manipulate the usage of the knowledge of Scriptures to enhance their position and status within the church or ministries; (v.43)

- - - - they always possess, and maintain, and promote only an understanding of the Scriptures that correctly aligns with God's perspective and values (rather than their own perspective and values) and properly fits with other relating Scripture verses; (vv.38,42,46)

- - - - they personally possess and maintain an inner rightness with God - an inner genuine righteousness that comes from God, that submits to God, and that He delights in; (vv.39,44,52; Romans 10:1-4)

- - - - they properly promote and facilitate other people in learning the Scriptures; (v.52)

- - - - when confronted about an error that they have in their knowledge of Scriptures, they respond appropriately, re-evaluate all of their Scripture knowledge that pertains to the error, make all of the necessary corrections to their Scripture knowledge, and then humbly accept that they have been corrected - in other words, they remain teachable

and correctable, even if they have become an 'expert' in their knowledge of Scriptures.
(vv.53,52)

- - By means of this spiritual 'gift of the message of knowledge', these believers minister to people by presenting a message from Scriptures that contains knowledge from the Scriptures that pertains to some topic of discussion or to some situation that is being encountered.
 - - The Holy Spirit brings to their recollection a relating Scripture verse or phrase or section of verses, and then prompts them to present a message that highlights that Scripture.
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MESSAGE OF WISDOM:

"To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom,..." - 1 Corinthians 12:8

- - The spiritual 'gift of **message of wisdom**' is the Holy Spirit-given special ability to take the facts of biblical knowledge and, with a spiritual understanding of God's will, make a skillful application of the facts and then present that application to the listener(s).
 - - While different than accumulating wisdom through experience, the spiritual 'gift of message of wisdom' is Spirit-empowered, focusing on the biblical interpretation of truth to produce biblical solutions for problems or to apply biblical knowledge to spiritual life.
 - - This spiritual gift pertains to the regarding and considering of spiritual matters, spiritual issues, or spiritual problems.
 - - To draw a distinction between the spiritual 'gift of knowledge' and the spiritual 'gift of wisdom', the believer with the spiritual 'gift of knowledge' readily knows what the information, principles, instructions, and commands are from the Scriptures that pertain to the spiritual problem, whereas the believer with the spiritual 'gift of wisdom' readily knows how to properly and effectively apply that information, principles, instructions, and commands from the Scriptures to the spiritual problem.
 - - The emphasis here for this spiritual gift is on the skill of application for obedience rather than the knowledge of facts.
 - - The Holy Spirit "enlightens the understanding" of this believer, particularly empowering him/her to know how to apply the Scriptures to spiritual matters, spiritual issues, or spiritual problems - ultimately for spiritual growth of the listener towards spiritual maturity and spiritual productivity. (Zodhiates p.1300, Strong's #4678 - 'wisdom', in 1 Corinthians 12:8)
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- - A believer with the spiritual 'gift of message of wisdom' knows how to get to the heart of a spiritual problem quickly, has a practical mind, and is a problem solver.
 - - The empowering of the Holy Spirit produces a natural flow and tendency in this believer's thinking to easily and immediately engage and then complete the mental process that ultimately constructs a plan of implementation for spiritual matters.
 - - When detecting or encountering a spiritual problem, thereby, this believer with the spiritual 'gift of message of wisdom' consequently naturally and readily engages in listening, observing, noticing, examining, investigating, inquiring, searching, analyzing, evaluating, reviewing, studying, researching, critiquing, scrutinizing, hypothesizing,

contemplating, testing, verifying, learning, formulating, customizing, adapting, and modifying a practical biblical solution or biblical course of action for the spiritual problem.

- - For this believer, all of these elements of this mental process flow easily and naturally
- and even sometimes occurring in the middle of the night when the surrounding environment is quiet and dark, with no distractions and better able to be attuned to God.

- - Thus, these believers with the spiritual 'gift of message of wisdom' are very good at drawing out and emphasizing application steps from Scripture phrases, verses, doctrines, narratives, and etcetera for inclusion in Bible lessons, sermons, and 'messages of wisdom'.

- - Their messages always promote godliness, righteousness living, and corresponding doing of good works. (James 2:17; 3:13-18)

- - They will humbly provide godly and wise insights for spiritual problems, they may become known and consulted among their associates, they have little difficulty in making consistently wise decisions, and they can conjecture with a high degree of accuracy what the outcome of those decisions will be.

- - By virtue and result of this 'spiritual gift of wisdom', these believers also know how to pray wisely and thereby effectively.

- - Of course, they put into practice and consistently implement in their own life the various aspects of this spiritual gift, including exercising godly wise self-control and self-restraint in their own thinking, speech, and behavior.

- - Because of these Spirit-given abilities, these believers are really good at being highly effective as biblical counselors to believers and as ministry advisors or consultants to churches or ministries.

- - Indeed, God has specifically and intentionally gifted, empowered, ordained, and sent these believers to the church Body to present a "**message**" of practical spiritual wisdom for its benefit, and thereby God does **not** intend for these believers to be treated as or told to "Sit down and shut up!!" in church meetings and ministry meetings. Ministry leaders would be wise to accept and even invite input from believers with this spiritual gift rather than view them as a threat.

- - When a believer with the spiritual 'gift of message of wisdom' speaks and presents a message from this spiritual gift, other members of the church Body should recognize that truth and wisdom have been spoken and that a right and biblical course of action has been recommended.

- - On a negative note: For the believer whose personality is naturally-oriented towards and is furthermore exceptionally-empowered by this spiritual 'gift of wisdom', this believer consequently essentially instantly initiates analyzing of potentially everything and everyone every day throughout the day - which can easily facilitate and lead this believer into the pitfall of having a critical spirit and/or an "I'm-always-right" attitude.

TEACHING:

"**...if it is teaching, let him teach;**" - Romans 12:7, (also listed in Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:28)

- - The spiritual 'gift of **teaching**' can be described as "a Spirit-given ability to simply, compassionately, and searchingly build into the lives of believers a knowledge of God's Word and its application to their thinking, speaking, and conduct, with the goals of conformity to the likeness of Christ" and fostering other believers to one day likewise becoming teachers of the Word. (Graham 215; 2 Timothy 2:2)
 - - The teacher passes on truth and established doctrine in a broad and systematic way, explaining the content of God's Word clearly and applying it practically so that the believing listener is fed spiritually. (MacArthur 115; Gangel 75; Putman 1213)
 - - While relying on the Holy Spirit, the teacher utilizes preparation, study, learning, and verbal skills to effectively hold the attention of the listeners, transfer to them knowledge and understanding from the Scriptures, persuade them into accepting the information, and motivate them to implement the corresponding course of action. (Hillman 35; Gangel 75)
 - - By means of the empowering of this spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit, this believer 'naturally' or readily or automatically knows how to properly and effectively present God's Word in engaging and interesting ways so that it connects with the listeners at their level and within their frame of thinking.
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- - Even though the Holy Spirit substantially empowers and facilitates the usage of this spiritual gift, nevertheless there is some responsibility on the part of the believer who has this spiritual gift. (James 3:1)
 - - This believer must possess sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures and hold sound doctrines so that he/she is competent to teach the Scriptures. (1 Timothy 1:7; Romans 15:14)
 - - This believer must be sufficiently living his/her life in obedience to the Scriptures in order to teach others how to live in obedience to the Scriptures. (Romans 2:17-23)
 - - This believer must be successfully applying the Scriptures to his/her life in order to teach others how to successfully apply the Scriptures to their life.
 - - This believer must be spiritually mature in order to teach others how to be spiritually mature. (Ephesians 4:11-13)
 - - Consequently, the believer with the spiritual 'gift of teaching' must be an authentic good role model of living in obedience to the Scriptures, in order to be acceptable to the Holy Spirit to greatly empower the using of this spiritual gift, and in order for the listeners to be open to the instruction and open to imitating this teaching believer. (1 Thessalonians 1:1,4-7; cf. Hebrews 13:7)
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- - One problem that every believer, who teaches the Word of God, needs to be aware of is that **"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned"**. (1 Corinthians 2:14)
 - - By God's deliberate design, unbelievers cannot readily understand and accept teachings from the Scriptures because they view, process, and determine such teachings as being "foolishness, silliness, and absurdity". (Strong's #3472 in 1 Corinthians 2:14)
 - - So, the believer, who teaches the Word of God, needs to stay aware that unbelievers in the audience need assistance from the Holy Spirit, time, and excellent thorough explanations of teachings from the Scriptures in order to eventually attain some understanding of those teachings.

- - Another problem that every believer, who teaches the Word of God, needs to stay aware of is that some persons in their audience may be in bondage to sin that the Scriptural teaching relates to, so those persons may react by "**opposing**" and "**quarreling**" about the teaching. (from 2 Timothy 2:24-26)
- - So for this problem also, patience, "**gentle instruction, kindness, not quarrelling**", and excellent thorough explanations of teachings from the Scriptures need to be exercised by the believer who is teaching the Word of God, waiting for the Spirit of God to work in the hearts of those persons through the Scriptures that are being taught. (from 2 Timothy 2:24-26)

PREACHING:

- - 'Preaching' is not listed in the key verses that list the spiritual gifts, and yet it is cited in numerous places in the New Testament.
- - Therefore, a reasonable conclusion is that 'preaching' is an aspect of the spiritual 'gift of teaching', albeit perhaps being distinct in its form.
- - The Greek word, that is frequently used in the New Testament, means "to preach, to proclaim, to herald publicly", "to announce publicly; to publish; to teach; to urge reception of". (Strong's #2784; Zodhiates #2784 p.862)
- - From this Greek word definition and from the context of its usages in the New Testament, 'preaching' is distinguished from 'teaching' in that 'preaching' typically involves being conducted in public, in front of an audience that is substantially comprised of unbelievers, whereas 'teaching' is typically conducted in more private environments and is intentionally formulated for believers.
- - Also, 'preaching' usually involves the preacher delivering an uninterrupted verbal discourse or sermon, with the audience listening and not verbally interacting with the preacher during his delivery of the discourse.
- - Because of this kind of audience dynamics, the necessity arises that the verbal discourse or sermon needs to hold the interest of the audience throughout the entire time of its delivery.
- - Thereby, the sermon needs to contain and skillfully utilize some artistry - an artistic influence or flavor that is added to the presentation of the informational contents of the sermon in order to facilitate holding the attention and interest of that kind of audience.
- - This artistic performance quality is very difficult to master or even imitate, except when it is included in the spiritual gifting by the Holy Spirit.
- - A believer, that has this artistic preaching abilities within his Holy Spirit-given and Holy Spirit-empowered 'gift of teaching', can easily and naturally formulate, refine, specialize, polish, and customize his sermons to successfully and effectively attract and hold the attention and interest of both the unbelievers and the believers in his audience.
- - In a church service setting, this preacher furthermore always includes content that specifically pertains to and addresses the believing persons in the audience and likewise content specifically for the unbelieving persons in the audience.
- - Wherein the appropriate conduct of a teacher likewise applies to a preacher, it seems prudent to mention that in their desire to preach the Word with zeal, preachers should not yell at or get angry at the audience, because "**man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires**". (James 1:20)

- - Both 'teaching' and 'preaching' are loving endeavors of gentle persuasion - not angry tirades. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

EVANGELIST (EVANGELISM):

"It was he who gave... some to be evangelists, ..." - Ephesians 4:11

- - Evangelism is the activity of bringing, announcing, and communicating to unbelievers the good news of the gospel - of how God has arranged a way for the salvation of sinners, by means of the atoning sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)

- - Essential ingredients of evangelism include: 1. the declaration of the gospel events; 2. the describing of God's promise and means by which He offers and provides forgiveness of sins and eternal life; and 3. the presenting of an invitation for the listener to personally place his/her faith in Jesus Christ - that Jesus suffered and died on the cross to pay the penalty for the listener's own sins and that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.

- - Because God has designed the gospel message to effect a response of repentance and faith in the life of a nonbeliever, an integral, necessary, and crucial aspect of evangelism is to persuade or win over unbelievers to put their trust in Christ.

- - This persuasion seeks to bring about a change of mind by the influence of reason or moral considerations and to provide the necessary understanding for unbelievers to make an informed decision.

- - Thus, the persuasion of evangelism must include clarity, integrity, gentleness, and sensitivity in granting every listening unbeliever the right to decide for himself/herself. (1 Peter 3:15-16)

- - Evangelism does not incorporate being forceful, contentious, quarrelsome, demanding, pressuring, or overbearing.

- - The spiritual 'gift of evangelism' is the Holy Spirit-given special ability to present the gospel in a way that is particularly plain, easily understandable, and relevant to unbelievers and helping them to take the step of placing their faith in Christ, for salvation from the eternal punishment for their own sins.

- - This believer is: discerning in listening and taking note of the concerns that are important to the listeners; patient in allowing the teaching of God's Word to sink into their hearts; and yielding to the Holy Spirit's control to ensure that what is being communicated in the gospel presentation by the believer is according to God's will, and in His way, and in His timing.

- - In order to conduct himself/herself in this manner, therefore, a believer with the spiritual 'gift of evangelism' is prepared, available, and committed to living a life of integrity that is consistent and honoring to both the gospel message and the Lord who gave it.

- - Obviously, using the spiritual 'gift of evangelism' is not passive in nature but rather is an active effort to put oneself in situations where one can take the initiative to share the gospel and the faith.

- - Commonly within the spiritual 'gift of evangelism' is a Holy Spirit-given internal compelling drive to seek out unbelievers and speak up - share the gospel message with them, regardless of the danger or one's fears. (1 Corinthians 9:16; cf. Acts 18:9-10)
- - Nevertheless, though, evangelism is not reserved only for those few spiritually-gifted believers, because all believers are instructed to go and share the good news of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 4:5)
- - However, the exercising of the spiritual 'gift of evangelism' does require some training
- to ensure that the evangelism is conducted properly, the gospel is presented correctly and sufficiently, and the listener is treated appropriately and respectfully.
- - God has specific criteria that must be accomplished in the heart of the unbeliever in order for God to grant that person eternal life - the goal of the gospel and evangelism.
- - If any of those mandatory criteria is not accomplished, then in actuality God has not yet granted that person eternal life, even though that person has apparently listened to the gospel and has apparently responded agreeably to the invitation, but yet thereby incorrectly believes that he/she has now been given eternal life.
- - This is called 'a false sense of salvation', and it can occur easily if the presentation of the gospel with invitation is defective or deficient in a way that God does not allow to result in the granting of salvation to the unbeliever. (Galatians 1:6-8,11)
- - A good document for this training to do evangelism is available on the "Counseling" page of this website www.BelieverAssist.com, entitled "Session 02 - Presenting The Gospel".

- - Churches and ministries are significantly deficient if they do not have an element within them that is actively and frequently engaging in presenting the gospel with an invitation to receive Christ, which God has designed and designated all of His churches and ministries to be doing. (Colossians 1:6)
- - God intends that evangelism is to be conducted on all levels: personally by true believers of the church or ministry; corporately within the preaching, teaching, programs, and events of the church or ministry; locally in the community; nationally in the country; and internationally within other countries. (Colossians 1:6-7; Acts 5:42 - in private and in public)
- - Therefore, minimally, small churches or ministries should have at least one person who is encouraged, supported, and requested to do evangelism throughout the programs and events of the church or ministry. Medium-size churches or ministries should minimally have a group of persons who fulfill these evangelism functions. And large churches or ministries should minimally have an entire ministry or department that is devoted to fulfilling these evangelism functions.
- - Even if the pastor(s), elders, and leaders in the church or ministry are not inclined to do evangelism, the church or ministry nevertheless should have an endorsed element which or who is actively doing evangelism as suggested herein. (e.g. Romans 15:15-16)

- - On a note from experience: The most resistant and difficult place to do evangelism is in the church, but the most fruitful place to do evangelism is in the church.
- - On another note from experience: When speaking an evangelistic presentation in which the listening unbeliever is responding agreeably and receives Christ for salvation, in those few moments it is very exhilarating to realize and watch the eternal destination of that person change before your very eyes, with God using yourself as His spokesman
- as He changes that person's destiny of heading towards horrific torture eternally to

now instead heading towards indescribable joy eternally. What a great honor and privilege it is for God to involve yourself as He gives this unbeliever in front of you such a priceless gift!

LEADERSHIP:

"...if it is leadership, let him govern diligently;..." - Romans 12:8

- - The word "**leadership**" means "to lead, to have charge of, to oversee, to rule", "to stand before, or to take the lead". (MacArthur 123; Hillman 91; Strong's #4291 in Romans 12:8)
- - By definition then, a leader is "one who is set over others, or who in rank presides over or rules over others". (Gangel 18; Hillman 91)
- - A leader exhibits skills similar to a ship captain who "charts the course, knows the destination, and keeps the ship on course". (MacArthur 123)
- - The leader, who has this spiritual gift, acts not as a dictator but as a coach in ministry and exerts leading influence that has a distinct spiritual nature to it. (Hillman 90-91; Luke 22:25-26)

- The general steps of leading in a spiritual manner are:
 - - - - determining the direction that God wants the church or ministry to go;
 - - - - determining how God wants the church or ministry to proceed in that direction;
 - - - - preparing other people and/or groups of people in the church or ministry to be willing, cooperative, equipped, and ready to go in that direction;
 - - - - acquiring all of the necessary resources to enable the church or ministry to go in that direction;
 - - - - determining God's timing on when He wants the church or ministry to proceed in that direction;
 - - - - then acting in accordance to God's timing in initiating the moving in that direction;
 - - - - determining and implementing any adjustments that need to be made to facilitate the moving in that direction;
 - - - - in every step of this whole process, repeatedly consulting with other leaders in the church or ministry, especially in regard to determining what God wants;
 - - - - and furthermore throughout this whole process, monitoring, evaluating, and making any necessary corrections to ensure that everything being done is in accordance with God's will, God's way, God's timing, and God's purposes.
- - Obviously, properly leading a church or ministry in this spiritual manner requires abundant and continuing prayer by this leader - to ensure everything is done in a manner that God approves of and even delights in.

- - A believer with the spiritual 'gift of leadership' is hard-working, organized, decisive, determined, self-disciplined, efficient, prayerful, guarded, courageous, kind, considerate, attentive, caring, patient, insightful, wise, optimistic, ever hopeful, discerning, analytical, humble, resourceful, knowledgeable, faithful, morally upright, honest, and accountable. (Sanders 52,53,57,58,62)

- - This believer has the Holy Spirit-empowering to preside over or rule over or "lead" other persons in a church or ministry in a "**diligent**" manner - remaining focused, with "earnestness, eagerness, diligence, and zeal", to proceed with persistence in

accomplishing all that God desires for the church or ministry that this believer is exerting leadership in. (Romans 12:8; Strong's #4710; *AHD* - 'diligence', 'despatch')

- - This leader does not feel threatened when someone else comes along and is obviously more gifted than this leader.
 - - If this leader gets replaced by a more-gifted leader, then this leader is thrilled that God has upgraded the quality of leadership in the church or ministry that this leader had been exerting leadership in.
 - - And this leader is genuinely grateful that God has allowed himself/herself to fill in as a leader until God brought in that more-gifted leader - who will do an even better and more effective job at accomplishing all that God desires for that church or ministry.
 - - Thereby, this leader genuinely does not seek glory for himself/herself and he/she is not bothered that the better ministry functioning of the more-gifted leader makes him/her look less-gifted and/or less effective.
 - - This leader genuinely delights when other leaders excel more than he/she does at doing ministry in accordance with God's will - even if it means that this leader is out of a ministry job or employment.
 - - Essentially, this leader lives and leads by the motto "I will do this ministry work to the best that God empowers me, until He brings along someone to replace me who does it better!".
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ADMINISTRATION:

"...those with gifts of administration,..." - 1 Corinthians 12:28

- - The spiritual 'gift of **administration**' is the Holy Spirit-empowering of a believer in managing the policies, affairs, and logistics of a church or ministry.
- - The believer with the spiritual 'gift of administration' is personally involved in running or executing or implementing administrative functions of the church or ministry.
- - These administrative functions typically include: bookkeeping; record keeping; submitting required government forms and payments; processing the offering money and donations; managing financial accounts; managing budgets; processing payroll of employees; paying bills; processing purchases; managing the work, repairs, and maintenance to the buildings, property, and equipment; managing the mail and correspondences; managing administrative logistics for meetings, events, programs, worship services, classes, and conferences; managing schedules; and etcetera.
- - Because of this spiritual gifting, this believer performs these functions with skill, excellence, effectiveness, efficiency, orderliness, timeliness, carefulness, correctness, concern, awareness, communication, responsibility, trustworthiness, honesty, alertness for errors, attention to details, completeness, propriety, and etcetera.
- - Within the performing of these administrative functions, this believer possesses and applies a spiritual perspective to every aspect of these administrative functions - always seeing and regarding the entirety of these administrative functions as elements of God's kingdom.
- - The believer with the spiritual 'gift of administration' naturally and consistently practices the command in Colossians 3:17, "**And whatever you do, whether in word**

or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him".

- - Consequently, this believer never has a sour attitude, a bureaucratic mindset, a dictatorial approach, a haughty attitude, a subversive intention, a sarcastic comment, a demeanor of drudgery, an outlook of futility, and etcetera.

- - This believer is exceptionally edified when he/she performs well the administrative functions for the church or ministry, and prefers to always operate from behind the scenes rather than from up front in the spotlight.

- - This believer is thrilled when events of the church or ministry occur without any administrative glitches, miscues, blunders, deficiencies, miscalculations, and etcetera.

- - This believer deeply understands that when he/she does a good job administratively, other people serving in the church or ministry are being assisted and equipped to do a good job.

PASTORS (PASTORING):

"It was he who gave... some to be pastors..." - Ephesians 4:11

- - Synonymous with the English words 'elder', 'presbyter', 'overseer', and 'bishop', the word "**pastor**" means "to shepherd", carrying essentially the basic meaning of a shepherd out in a grassy field tending to his flock of woolly sheep animals - "to herd, guard, care for, guide, and tend sheep". (1 Peter 5:1-2; Ephesians 4:11, Strong's #4166; *AHD* - 'shepherd')

- - The spiritual 'gift of pastoring' is the Holy Spirit-given special ability to shepherd in the faith the portion of the flock of God that is committed to one's care. (1 Peter 5:2)

- - This involves leading, feeding, instructing, warning, challenging, motivating, exhorting, guarding, protecting, providing, counseling, and caring for persons individually, as well as corporately - as a group or flock, so to speak. (John 10:2-4)

- - The believer with the spiritual 'gift of pastoring' assumes upon himself an ongoing personal responsibility before God for the spiritual growth, nurture, welfare, direction, outreach and ministry of the group of believers who are under his care. (1 Peter 5:2)

- - This includes the responsibilities of teaching them the Scriptures, applying doctrine, healing the wounds, redirecting the straying, and developing unity.

- - Pastoring also should involve helping those believers find their spiritual gifts, equipping them to serve Christ by serving each other, identifying and facilitating some of them toward future ministry vocations (2 Timothy 2:2), and doing whatever else is necessary to see that the believers in the flock under one's care continue in the faith, grow in their spiritual lives, and bear much fruit for God's kingdom.

- - Obviously, pastoring is crucial to almost all aspects of vital congregational life.

-- A few of the duties of pastoring, that are cited in the Scriptures, include:

- - - - Strive to keep your life right with God. (2 Timothy 2:15)

- - - - Strive to interpret, teach, and apply the Word of God correctly. (2 Timothy 2:15)

- - - - Guard against and enforce the terminating of teaching false doctrines. (1 Timothy 1:3-4)

- - - - Keep reminding the flock of the basic doctrines of the faith. (2 Timothy 2:14)

- - - Keep warning them about inappropriate behaviors that are counterproductive or even destructive to the flock. (2 Timothy 2:14)
- - - - **"Avoid godless chatter"**, or "empty babbling or fruitless discussions", or frivolous theological arguments because they are likewise counterproductive to the spiritual well-being and growth of the flock. (2 Timothy 2:16; Strong's #0952, #2757)
- - - - **"Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage -- with great patience and careful instruction"** - 2 Timothy 4:2.

- - Note: The Books of 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy were written by Apostle Paul to the young pastor Timothy, and thereby these books are filled with directives for how pastors and churches are to function (1 Timothy 1:1-2; 3:14-15; 4:6,12; 6:20; 2 Timothy 1:1-2). On the website www.BelieverAssist.com, there are free downloads available of expository sermon-or-lesson documents for the entire Book of 1 Timothy. Another excellent and detailed resource for the topic of 'pastoring', that is also available on this website (on the 'Home Page'), is the document "Philosophy of Pastoral Ministry".

- - A believer with the spiritual 'gift of pastoring' naturally gravitates to coming alongside and helping other believers grow in the faith, towards spiritual maturity and corresponding excellent fruit-bearing for God's kingdom.
- - The Holy Spirit gives this believer an intense drive and compassion to seek out and build a relationship with the numerous believers in his flock, for the purpose of sharing spiritual knowledge from the Scriptures with them that will blossom and flourish into an abundant and overflowing harvest of righteousness in each of them. (Matthew 9:35-38 - the example of Jesus)
- - This believer values every person in his flock equally, maintaining the awareness that theoretically God can transform any one of them to become an excellent mature fruit-bearing disciple.
- - Therefore, this believer consistently strives to cooperate with and collaborate with God in creating and maintaining conditions in the church or ministry that are conducive and fertile for those believers to be made into disciples. (Matthew 28:19-20)
- - This believer understands that the process of believers being made into a disciple can take a long time to occur - nevertheless, this believer remains hopeful for that outcome to occur.
- - When one of the sheep in his flock does respond quickly and wholeheartedly to being transformed by God into an excellent mature fruit-bearing disciple, this pastoring believer is greatly encouraged and exhilarated.
- - And when one of the sheep in his flock stumbles or falls away from the faith, this pastoring believer immediately notices that something has gone wrong and he promptly responds by contacting and meeting with the fallen sheep in order to bring that sheep back into healthy spiritual functioning in the faith and in the flock. (Matthew 18:12)
- - The believer, who uses his spiritual 'gift of pastoring' properly, never conducts himself in a manner that would generate shame and/or disrepute to God or to the faith or to his appropriately-functioning flock as a whole. (Hebrews 6:6)
- - Likewise, this believer never participates in the fomenting of an inappropriate or hostile split or takeover of a church. (Romans 16:17)
- - When conditions in a church become so disruptive that substantial harm will be inflicted upon the church, this believer will voluntarily and silently sacrifice himself and his ministry functioning there, even though he is completely innocent of any wrongdoing,

in order to protect the well-being of the church and/or to restore peace in the church. (John 10:11)

- - This believer regards his pastoring of his flock as an important vital duty, assigned by God, that necessitates his **full** attention, dedication, effort, and commitment to his own flock (1 Timothy 4:13-15; 6:20a). So, this believer does not give into temptations that draw him away from his flock for significant or frequent lengths of time, nor simultaneously get involved in other ministry activities to other flocks.

- - When hiring to fill a job position in his church or ministry, this believer does not resort to: nepotism - hiring an unqualified relative; or cronyism - hiring an unqualified friend. (2 Timothy 2:2)

Temporary Spiritual Gifts

During the early history of the Church, the New Testament Scriptures did not exist or were not readily available yet in written form. Consequently, God utilized certain spiritual gifts on a temporary basis to meet the needs unique during this time. These spiritual gifts functioned in various ways to establish the Word of God and the Church, with some gifts serving as a sign to authenticate the oral message of the Scriptures as the Word of God (e.g. Acts 14:3). Once the perfect Word of God was constituted or finalized in written form, the need for these temporary spiritual gifts ceased and consequently the giving of those gifts ceased also (1 Corinthians 13:8b-10). Credible Biblical and historical evidences support the reality that these temporary spiritual gifts have ceased since shortly after the New Testament Scriptures were written.

APOSTLES (APOSTLESHIP):

"It was he who gave some to be apostles,..." - Ephesians 4:11, (also listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28)

- - The spiritual 'gift of **apostleship**' was a unique, Holy Spirit-empowered authority that was given to select individuals who were chosen and authorized by Jesus personally, and who had been eyewitnesses of the resurrected living Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 9:1-2)

- - These select persons were "**sent not from men nor by man**", but were directly appointed by God and Christ Jesus to be "**apostles of Christ**". (Galatians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:6)

- - As 'apostles of Christ', they received direct revelation from God about the mysteries of Christ, the gospel, and the Church, and then they were to proclaim, preach, teach, and explain this new revealed information to other people. (Ephesians 3:1-12; 6:19; cf. Romans 1:1-5)

- - These apostles were sent "**to call people from among all the Gentiles**" and the Jews "**to the obedience that comes from faith**" in Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:5; 11:13-15; Galatians 2:8-9)

- - Subsequently, these apostles then laid, built, and established the organizational foundation of the Church as a whole, during this earliest period of its history, as well as starting or planting individual churches. (Ephesians 2:19-20)

- - Furthermore, these apostles were given the highest rank and the highest governing authority over the churches, and with the authority to be a direct spokesman for God.
 - - In order for their listeners to ascertain that these apostles and their new teachings were indeed genuinely sent and authorized by God, they were given the ability to perform "**signs, wonders and miracles**" by the power of God, which authenticated that their authority and their new teachings came directly from God. (2 Corinthians 12:12)
 - - From recorded church history, it is obvious that since about the time that the last of these apostles had died, there have been no true apostles of Christ with the God-given authority and empowering that is comparable to that of these original apostles. (2 Corinthians 11:12-15)
 - - Apparently primarily due to the arrival of the written New Testament of the Bible, the arrival of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the establishing of the institution of the Church, God has ordained that there are to be no more apostles - men with this spiritual 'gift of apostleship'.
 - - Since the time of these original apostles, ordinary ministry workers have been doing most of the ministry work that the original apostles had been doing, such as: missionary work; church planting; teaching those new revealed doctrines of the faith in Bible colleges, seminaries, books, sermons, and conferences; conducting evangelistic outreach; leading denominations; and etcetera.
 - - Of course, since the time of these original apostles, the Kingdom of Darkness has produced numerous counterfeit and false apostles, some of whom have successfully started false religions and even false churches, and produced false Scriptures, false doctrines, false gospel, false salvation, false spiritual gifts, and etcetera. (2 Corinthians 11:12-15)
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PROPHECY (PROPHECYING, PROPHETS, SPEAKS):

"...to another [is given through the Spirit] prophecy..." - 1 Corinthians 12:10, (also listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28, Romans 12:6, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Peter 4:11 "**speaks... the very words of God**")

- - The word "**prophecy**" means "prediction", "foretelling", or revealing of hidden or undisclosed information. (Strong's # 4394 in 1 Corinthians 12:10; #4396 in Ephesians 4:11)
- - The Holy Spirit directly revealed information, as well as "insight" and "understanding" about that information, to the believer who He had given this spiritual 'gift of prophecy'. (Ephesians 3:2-5; Strong's #4907 in v.4)
- - By its nature, the transmitting of 'prophecy' involved to publicly proclaim or "speak before or forth" the targeted person or group, in front of the public. (MacArthur 104; Gangel 37)
- - Pronouncements that are 'prophecy' generally address the present, and/or the near future, and/or the distant future.
- - God used 'prophecy' to reveal information that exposed, confronted, and convicted the targeted listener(s), in order to incite repentance, faith, worship and fear of God. (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)
- - 'Prophecy' also was designed and intended by God to bring "authoritative declarations of His will", direct revelation from God, "**instructing**", "learning", "**strengthening, encouragement and comfort**" to the targeted listener(s), and to

"**edify the church**", as a whole. (Putman 1213; 1 Peter 4:11; Acts 13:1-3; 1 Corinthians 14:31,3,4; Strong's #3129 in 1 Corinthians 14:31)

- - A main and general function of the temporary 'gift of prophecy' was to lay or build the organizational foundation of the Church during its earliest period of history. (Ephesians 2:19-20)

- - Therefore, the information that was contained in a 'prophecy' could be about or pertain to: a person - on a personal level; a group of persons - on a group level; a nation of people - on a national level; an ethnic race of people - on an international level; the human race - on a global level; or the Church - on a local level or an international level.

- - The spiritual 'gift of prophecy' was the "ability given by the Spirit of God to receive and proclaim authoritative information and/or messages from God to the world, the church, or to individuals". (Hillman 26; MacArthur 105)

- - Upon the completion of the writing of the "**perfect**" New Testament of the Bible, God "**ceased**" the spiritual 'gift of prophecy', as clearly and unquestionably pronounced in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, "8. **Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.** 9. **For we know in part and we prophesy in part,** 10. **but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.**"

- - Another reason that God ceased the spiritual 'gift of prophecy' is stated in Hebrews 1:1-2, "1. **In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,** 2. **but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.**"

- - Even though these Scriptures clearly and unquestionably pronounce that God has ceased the spiritual 'gift of prophecy', nevertheless, during the approximately two millennia since then, many false prophets have appeared and successfully established themselves within religions, societies, and churches throughout the world. (2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1)

- - True churches and true believers would be wise not to acquiesce or blindly allow the prophetic utterances of supposed prophets. (2 Corinthians 11:12-15,19-20)

- - If your church has people proclaiming prophecies, how do you expect the Lord to bless you and your church if you allow the exercising of this ceased spiritual 'gift of prophecy' and the speaking of false prophecies among you?

- - In Deuteronomy 18:20-22, God strictly requires that "20. **But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death.** 21. **You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?"** 22. **If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.**"

- - In obedience, use this prescription in Deuteronomy 18:20-22 to biblically test and prove that the supposed prophets and their prophecies are indeed false, and then confront them and root out from among you all of their prophesying activities, which will include their "**introducing of destructive heresies**", their "**shameful ways**", their "**disrepute of the way of truth**", and their "**exploiting of you with stories they have made up**". (2 Peter 2:1,2,3)

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SPIRITS:

"...to another [is given through the Spirit] distinguishing between spirits,..." - 1 Corinthians 12:10

- - The spiritual 'gift of distinguishing between spirits' was the Holy Spirit-given special ability to immediately distinguish between spirits - whether it is of God, or of an evil spirit, or of the human person.
 - - This gift enabled the believer to instantaneously know with complete correctness and assurance whether speaking that is purported to be of God was in reality divine, or human, or demonic.
 - - In the early Church, this gift was the guard for the local church to determine whether a prophecy or oral revelation was truth from God, or instead was a manufactured misrepresentation from the human person, or was a counterfeit from Satanic forces.
 - - This gift was very necessary before the New Testament was written, because there were those persons who claimed to bring revelation from God who were not true prophets.

 - - Today, the spiritual 'gift of distinguishing spirits' now does not contain the Holy Spirit-empowering to immediately distinguish between spirits, so instead it is now utilized mainly in the general, less emphatic sense of seeing through to the truth to achieve the uncovering and revealing of demonic influence, or spiritual falseness, or spiritual deception, or spiritual error.
 - - Despite this lessening of empowering, this gift is still important to protect the church from impure doctrines, to perceive the intrusion of carnal elements into worship, to identify when ministry leaders have personally strayed from maintaining a cleansed spiritual life with God, and to assist in the biblical counseling of believers.
 - - In a general permanent sense, the spiritual 'gift of distinguishing spirits' now involves the ability or discernment: to evaluate or analyze truly; to judge through; to see through to the truth; and to intuitively identify truth from error, or hypocrisy from genuineness.

 - - This Holy Spirit-given spiritual gift always distinguishes that the following phenomena that occur in supposed spiritual practices are **never** from an empowering from God or from the Holy Spirit: barking like a dog; vomiting; fainting or falling unconscious; falling down or falling backwards; uncontrollable fit of laughter; uncontrollable fit of crying; paralyzed or unable to move; and etcetera. (1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:32-33a)
 - - If the Kingdom of Darkness can divert God's people away from genuinely praying and/or studying the Scriptures and/or appropriately applying the Scriptures in their life and/or credibly worshiping God when they meet together, then the Kingdom of Darkness has gained a substantial victory each time that occurs.
 - - On a side note, this Holy Spirit-given spiritual 'gift of distinguishing spirits' does not enable a believer to visually see demons in the invisible realms; however, witchcraft can enable the visible manifesting of demons and their witchcraft activities in our physical realm.
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Temporary 'Sign' Gifts

MIRACLES (MIRACULOUS POWERS):

"...to another [is given through the Spirit] miraculous powers,..." - 1 Corinthians 12:10, (also listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28 "**workers of miracles**")

- - The spiritual sign 'gift of miracles' was a Holy Spirit-given special ability to serve as a representative of God in His activities wherein God performed instantaneous, direct, and complete supernatural powerful acts, mighty deeds, or miracles that were perceived by observers to have superseded the laws of nature and altered the ordinary course of nature.
 - - A believer with this spiritual gift could perform, or more accurately, could invoke from God the instantaneous accomplishing of miracles at will - whenever and however that believer so chose.
 - - Until the New Testament was completed in written form, this spiritual 'gift of miracles' served as a sign to authenticate that the oral message being delivered by that believer was indeed from God, as clearly stated in Acts 14:3, "**So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.**"
 - - It is obvious from subsequent recorded church history and secular history that no true believer has possessed this spiritual 'gift of miracles' since that time about 2,000 years ago.
 - - However, God retains the ability and the right and the volition to implement miracles whenever and however He so chooses, which He seems more inclined to do when believers ask in prayer, with proper motives and by faith. (James 4:2d-3; 1:5-8)
 - - And of course, the Kingdom of Darkness loves to counterfeit this ceased spiritual gift by performing magic, which is accomplished by clever manipulations and/or by witchcraft (demonic manifestations).
 - - A word of caution though, that we believers should not be naive and underestimate the power of the Kingdom of Darkness, because during the 7-year Great Tribulation that is coming, the Kingdom of Darkness will empower the performing of "**great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men**". (Revelation 13:13)
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HEALING:

"...to another [is given] gifts of healing by that one Spirit,..." - 1 Corinthians 12:9, (also listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28)

- - The spiritual sign 'gift of healing' was a Holy Spirit-given special ability to serve as a representative of God in His activities wherein God instantaneously, directly, and completely cured illness and restored health, apart from the use of any natural means, medicines, or medical procedures.
- - A believer with this spiritual gift could perform, or more accurately, could invoke from God the instantaneous accomplishing of healings at will - whenever and however and how many that believer so chose, even to the extent of lining up sick people and healing

all of them one right after another, or going from room to room in a hospital and quickly clearing out the entire hospital of all of its sick people. (e.g. Matthew 4:23; Luke 9:6)

- - This spiritual 'gift of healing' was a sign gift and temporary, utilized in the same manner and time period in history as the spiritual 'gift of miracles' (described above in this document).

- - And likewise to the spiritual 'gift of miracles', the Kingdom of Darkness loves to counterfeit this ceased spiritual 'gift of healing' as well.

- - Indeed, many church leaders have utilized the deceptive tactics of the Kingdom of Darkness to create the appearance that they are performing healings, when in fact they have skillfully performed only clever manipulations and not actual healings, in order to enhance their own status in the church.

- - Why not just pray and ask God to implement a healing, and then wait and accept the results?

- - Do you think God will bless you and your church if you fake the performing of healings?

TONGUES and INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES:

"...to another [is given through the Spirit] speaking in different kinds of tongues,..." - 1 Corinthians 12:10, (also listed in 1 Corinthians 12:28)

"...to still another [is given through the Spirit] the interpretation of tongues." - 1 Corinthians 12:10

- - The spiritual sign 'gift of tongues' was a Holy Spirit-given special ability to speak revelation from God in another foreign language that was known and native to unbelievers in the audience but was previously unlearned to the speaker.

- - The spiritual 'gift of tongues' was given as a sign to convince unbelievers of the presence and power of God through communication to them in their own native language. (1 Corinthians 14:22)

- - The spiritual 'gift of tongues' was to be used for edifying the church and other present people in their native language (1 Corinthians 14:5,10-13,26); the content of the speaking was to be a comprehensible message pertaining to God and in **"intelligible words"** (vv.14:6,9-11,19) in that foreign language; the speaking in tongues was only practiced in an orderly fashion by two or three persons in a single meeting and then only if an interpreter was present (vv.14:27-28); and the speaking in tongues was always to be conducted in a **"fitting and orderly way"** (v.14:40).

- - The spiritual sign 'gift of interpretation of tongues' worked in conjunction with the spiritual sign 'gift of tongues', immediately "translating" the foreign language, that is being spoken through the 'gift of tongues', into the native language of the audience. (1 Corinthians 12:10, Strong's #2058)

- - Because this speaking in a foreign language or 'tongue' was an intelligible message from God being given to foreign visitors in the audience who natively speak that foreign language, the person with the 'gift of interpretation of tongues' always would readily know exactly what each word of the foreign language in the message means, and would never have to 'guess' what any of those words mean.

- - Upon the completion of the writing of the "**perfect**" New Testament of the Bible, God "**ceased**" the spiritual 'gift of tongues' and the companion spiritual 'gift of interpretation of tongues' in the same manner as He did with the other sign gifts, as clearly and unquestionably pronounced in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, "8. **Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.** 9. **For we know in part and we prophesy in part,** 10. **but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.**"

-- Similarly as with the other temporary sign gifts, the Kingdom of Darkness even more especially loves to counterfeit the now-ceased 'gift of tongues' because the following agendas are easily and effectively accomplished:

- - - - because the genuine spiritual 'gift of tongues' was ceased millenniums ago, great numbers of believers are "**eager**" and easily duped into believing that they are speaking in a 'tongue' an important message directly from God even though they do not know what any of the words are or mean, that they are speaking supposedly by the empowering of the Holy Spirit; (1 Corinthians 14:12)

- - - - because the genuine spiritual 'gift of interpretation of tongues' was likewise ceased millenniums ago, the believers doing the interpretation likewise do not know what any of the words in the 'tongues' message are or mean, that they are supposedly interpreting and translating by the empowering of the Holy Spirit;

- - - - so the Kingdom of Darkness takes advantage of these fertile conditions to substitute and insert whatever words that it so chooses, for example cussing and cursing at God and Jesus, in whatever foreign language that it so chooses, and no person that is present in the room will know what is actually being said;

- - - - therein, the Kingdom of Darkness successfully diverts all of the believers in the room away from genuinely praying, genuinely worshipping God, genuinely hearing what God wants to say to them, and the believers are instead using up their meeting time engaging in speaking that is in its essence devoid of righteous meaning and in reality may even be insulting and cursing God; (1 Timothy 1:5-6)

- - - - prayer meetings, Bible studies, and worship services are turned into cursing-God sessions - what a **tremendous** victory for the Kingdom of Darkness!!

- - Do you think God will bless you and your church or ministry if you rebel against what God has ordained to be ceased, and you nevertheless engage in that activity of speaking in tongues, which therein creates fertile wide-open opportunity for the Kingdom of Darkness to gain a substantial foothold in your church and its ministries?

- - In Ephesians 4:30, the Word of God says, "**...do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption**", 4:27 "**...and do not give the devil a foothold.**"

- - Abandon the 'sign' gifts, and instead focus on what God says through the Scriptures, which are complete and contain all the information that is needed to live a godly life. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- - If someone from a foreign country unexpectedly visits your church or ministry, connect your cell phone to 'Google Translate' on the Internet and to 'Bible Gateway', using them for translating to and from other foreign languages. 'Google Translate' will even vocalize the words.

POSSIBLE SOURCES:

- - Much of the controversy surrounding the temporary and 'sign' gifts today originates from many well-meaning people who claim that contemporary charismatic phenomena are indeed manifestations of these temporary and 'sign' gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- - But, believers cannot correctly assume that everyone who claims to have acquired one or more of these temporary and 'sign' gifts of the Holy Spirit has actually acquired a genuine one from the Holy Spirit, as clearly declared and warned in 1 John 4:1, "**Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**"
- - Our attitude and the direction of our response towards the exercising of the ceased temporary and 'sign' gifts should always be: skepticism; testing; investigating to determine if there is valid verification; and if verification fails, then enforcing termination, even though they are claimed to be genuinely of the Holy Spirit.

-- Believers and ministry leaders should consider that there are at least 3 possible sources for occurrences that manifest as temporary or 'sign' gifts: 1. God or the Holy Spirit; 2. demonic activity; or 3. human psychological experience or faking.

1. GOD or the HOLY SPIRIT:

- - Unquestionably, God does answer prayer and He answers it in regard to physical or medical problems. Individual isolated happenings of a miracle or a healing do certainly occur in our time.
- - But, God's acts of healing or doing miraculous things are usually through the prayers of a believer and are apart or unattached to the exercise of the 'sign' gift of miracles or healings.
- - God's supernatural response to prayer should not be confused with the sign-gift ability to heal everyone or perform a miracle at will, as Jesus and the apostles did.
- - Care must be taken not to regulate God by insisting that He must give all gifts in every age.
- - God is quite capable and free to change when and how He accomplishes actions of His power, for example in James 5:14-16 is a prescribed manner in which God's healing power can be manifested for believers today.

2. DEMONIC ACTIVITY:

- - Scriptures record events in which humans were allied with and/or empowered by demonic forces to produce imitations of divine miracles.
- - For examples, the magicians in Egypt were able to imitate the plagues up to a certain point (e.g. Exodus 7:8-12); and the Antichrist, "**in accordance with the work of Satan**", will "**display all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders**" (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
- - Today, similar kinds of demonic phenomena may be occurring as well. Many spiritualists, being endowed with demonic power, may appear to be performing healings and/or miracles, with their supposedly-healed person furthermore in reality unwittingly acquiring an inner demonic presence and influence.
- - These spiritualists selectively use the Scriptures in a counterfeiting manner to confuse and mislead believers and unbelievers alike.

- - People and believers who are being misled by counterfeit phenomena give evidence of the most infantile faith because they inherently want more and more miracles or supernatural events.
- - Sadly, they do not exercise sufficient discernment to question and discover what the real source of power behind those miraculous events is - whether of the Holy Spirit or of demonic activity.

3. HUMAN PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE OR FAKING:

- - Without a doubt, in our modern times much of the exercising of the supposedly-authentic spiritual gifts of tongues and healings and miracles and prophecies is either faked and/or manufactured by people for self-serving reasons.
 - - These people may want to gain attention, acceptance, popularity, prestige, status, authority, money, power, or employment in the church or ministry.
 - - Or, they may seek visible verification that they have reached spiritual maturity, even though in reality they are attempting to find a shortcut to spiritual maturity.
 - - So they fake an experience of supernatural empowering from the Holy Spirit by mimicking what they have seen other people do in the church or ministry events.
 - - Or they thoughtfully invent a detailed story line and carefully manufacture and weave together descriptions of what they thought was a supernatural experience, in order to easily and securely convince the other people in their church or ministry that they have experienced a supernatural encounter with the Holy Spirit and consequently a supernatural empowering by the Holy Spirit.
 - - But whatever their reasons or methods are, the Holy Spirit definitely would not cooperate with nor supply any supernatural power to activities that attempt to counterfeit the spiritual gifts that He has ceased giving millenniums ago.
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Steps To Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s):

If you have sincerely placed your faith in Jesus Christ, the perfect God-man, that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for **your** sins and that He rose from the dead on the third day (Romans 3:20-25b; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4), then listed below are 10 steps that you may find helpful in discovering your spiritual gift(s). By following these steps and studying the spiritual gifts as described above in this document, you should be able to more easily identify and develop any spiritual gift(s) that you may have.

STEP 1:

- - Realize that God has given each true believer at least one spiritual gift. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- - He wants every true believer to know what their spiritual gifts are and to use them frequently and in a God-honoring manner, for His purposes. (1 Corinthians 12:1,7)
- - From observable evidence, most spiritually-mature believers have several spiritual gifts, rather than only one.

STEP 2:

- - In prayer, daily confess your sins (1 John 1:9) and then daily distinctly yield control of your life, your thinking, your words, your behaviors, and your actions to the control of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:12-13; 12:1-2).
- - This daily confessing of sins with daily yielding control are vitaly necessary for the Holy Spirit to bring out and achieve maximum empowering, effectiveness, and extent of His usage of spiritual gifts in and through your life. (e.g. Galatians 5:22-25)
- - These activities of the Holy Spirit in your life will be further and significantly enhanced if you also feed on God's Word daily (Psalms 1:1-3) and actively oppose and refrain from indulging in sinfulness or indulging in any areas of bondage to sin that you have (Romans 6:12-14,16; 2 Corinthians 10:5).

STEP 3:

- - Prayerfully ask God to show you or cause to be revealed to you which spiritual gifts you have.

STEP 4:

- - In prayer, start volunteering to God that you want Him to give you ministry work to do.
- - And then over time and as opportunities arise, appropriately try different types of ministry functioning.
- - This trying of different types of ministry functioning gives the Holy Spirit opportunity to bring out, help you identify, and help you develop spiritual gifts that you did not know that you had.

STEP 5:

- - Examine, study, and prayerfully meditate on the descriptions of each of the spiritual gifts again, as described above in this document. And then occasionally review them.

STEP 6:

- - After you have sufficiently tried a type of ministry functioning, evaluate yourself as you proceed doing it. Do you see any indications that God has given you an inclination or propensity to do that type of ministry functioning well, or you are 'naturally' good at it (so to speak)?
- - Also evaluate what else you have been doing well for the Kingdom of God.
- - What do you enjoy doing in relation to interacting with or ministering to other believers? What do you do best?
- - It may be that you have been exercising your spiritual gift(s) perhaps for years without consciously realizing it.

STEP 7:

- - Acknowledge and consider the evaluation of other true believers.
- - If you have a particular spiritual gift, other believers should realize it and be blessed when you exercise it.

STEP 8:

- - Develop your spiritual gift(s).
- - Like any other ability, a spiritual gift must be developed through use. **"Do not neglect your gift"** - 1 Timothy 4:14.

- - Read books about your spiritual gift(s), study, and observe the techniques of other believers with the same spiritual gift, in order to fine-tune your skills in using your spiritual gift(s).

STEP 9:

- - Humbly and gratefully accept the spiritual gift(s) that God has given you, and use it/them as fully as possible. (Romans 12:3-6a)

STEP 10:

- - Make a list of your spiritual gift(s) as you discover them.

- - As confidence of the Holy Spirit's ministering through your spiritual gift(s) grows, you can diligently seek situations in which to exercise your spiritual gift(s).

- - Actively using your spiritual gift(s) will undoubtedly stretch, test, and refine you in order to build character and produce greater results for the kingdom of God.

- - Jesus certifies in John 15:2 that God will "**prune**" those believers (branches) that are bearing fruit so that they "**will be even more fruitful**".

- - Furthermore, Jesus states in John 15:8 that God the Father is glorified when a believer is bearing much fruit and thereby proving to be Jesus' disciple.

- - But, it is crucial to note that you cannot effectively use your spiritual gift(s) or "**bear fruit**" unless you are "**remaining**" in Christ. (John 15:4-5)

- - Conversely, appropriately utilizing your spiritual gifts should result in drawing you into a closer walk with the Lord.

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