

Spiritual Gift Descriptions

The spiritual gifts from the inventory are described below in alphabetical order. Once you have taken the inventory, find the gift(s) you scored highest on and review them below to understand them more completely.

Administration

“The special ability to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.”

In Acts 27:11 reference is made to the pilot of the ship. The Greek word for pilot also means administrator. The administrator of the ship understands clearly the goal and destination of the owner, and then devises the details of how to get there or how to accomplish the goals.

Other References:

Luke 14:28-30, Acts 6:1-7, I Corinthians 12:28

Apostleship

“The special ability to assume and exercise general leadership over a number of churches, with an extraordinary authority in spiritual matters which is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches.”

Other References:

Acts 15:1-2, I Corinthians 12:28, II Corinthians 12:12, Galatians 2:7-10, Eph. 3:1-9, Ephesians 4:11-14

Discernment

“The special ability to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human or satanic. The purpose of this gift is to prevent confusion and false teaching from infiltrating the church.

Other References:

Matthew 16:21-23, Acts 5:1-11, Acts 16:16-18, I Corinthians 12:10, I John 4:1-6

Exhortation

“The special ability to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel to other members of the Body in such a way that they feel helped and healed.”

“The ability to minister words of encouragement, consolation, comfort, and motivation from God’s Word to help others complete their tasks and be all that God wants them to be.”

Exhortation means “a calling to ones side”. An exhorter gets alongside others and shares, mostly one-to-one. With this gift a person must exercise faith that God will use his or her words or efforts. Titus 1:9 “Exhort in sound doctrine...”

Examples:

Barnabas had the gift (Acts 4:26, 11:21-26)

Paul and Barnabas encouraged the believers (Acts 14:19-22)

Other References:

Acts 4:32-37, Acts 14:22, Romans 12:8, I Timothy 4:13, Hebrews 10:24-25

Evangelism

“The special ability to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus’ disciples and responsible members of the Body of Christ.”

Everyone is to help share the good news, to simply tell what you know; God is the One who does the convicting, the regenerating and the spiritual gifting. We are all to witness, but some have the extra ability to witness and see extra results. (I Cor. 3:5-9)

Examples:

Phillip in Acts 8:4-6, 12; 8:26-40, 21:8

Other References:

Acts 14:21, Ephesians 4:11-14, II Timothy 4:5

Faith

“The special ability to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purpose of God, and to propel the body of believers into actively claiming the promises of God.”

All Christians must have faith and live by faith...

Saved by grace through *faith* (Eph 2:8)

Without *faith* it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6)

The definition of faith is not wishing for something real hard, nor is it forcing God to act because you believe He will, but rather faith is “knowing what God wants, doing it, and confidently leaving the results up to Him.”

The person with faith can see God do mighty things:

Faith as a mustard seed can move mountains (Matthew 17:14-20)

Ask believing and you will receive (Matthew 21:18-22)

Caution:

This gift is to be used to help the body, with an attitude of love. One must be careful not to judge others who don't have this gift to the same degree.

Other References:

Acts 11:22-24, Romans 18-21, I Corinthians 12:9, Hebrews 11

Giving

“The special ability to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.”

All Christians are to give as a response of love and thankfulness to God, but some are extra motivated in that area, and when used properly it brings extra results beyond what others see.

Romans 12:8 uses the term “*liberality*” which can also mean “*in singleness*”, describing giving that is generous, but not frivolous. It is thoughtful or determined giving which maintains its commitments and accomplishes its intended results.

II Corinthians 8:1-7 may describe some with the gift of giving.

They were motivated to give even though they didn't have much to give.

They committed themselves to the Lord and His work first.

II Corinthians 9:6-14 tells us more about giving.

You receive back in relation to what you give.

You are to give according to plan, not be being forced.

God will supply you with things to give if you are faithful with them.

Other References:

Mark 12:41-44, II Corinthians 9:2-8

Hospitality

“The special ability to provide open house and warm welcome for those in need of food and lodging.”

This gift is not specifically named in Scripture although it is certainly described there.

Hebrews 13:1-2 tells of the importance of hospitality:

It is showing love to brothers and sisters.

One never knows who is being ministered to (See Genesis 18:1-5).

Matthew 25:31-40 reminds us that in being hospitable to the least of our brothers and sisters, we are doing it to Jesus.

I Peter 4:9 warns of having a complaining attitude with this gift.

Other References:

Acts 16:14-45, Romans 12:9-13, Romans 6:23

Knowledge

“The special ability to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas that are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the body.”

In II Corinthians 12:1-7 Paul gained special knowledge and insight into spiritual things. To protect Paul from one of the dangers of much knowledge- *pride*- God gave Paul some kind of thorn in the flesh.

The gift of knowledge must be used in two ways:

1. Without pride (1 Corinthians 8:1-2)
2. With love (1 Corinthians 13:2)

The person with the spiritual gift of knowledge is often the student-type who loves to investigate, question, and “dig into” matters of spiritual application. This person would make a great resource person.

Other References:

Acts 5:1-11, I Corinthians 12:8, II Corinthians 11:6, Colossians 2:2-3

Leadership

“The special ability to set goals in accordance with God’s purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish those goals for the glory of God.”

It is often possible that a person may have a position of leadership but not the spiritual gift of leadership which would make, this is OK. We are called to do many things, but only are gifted in one or a few areas. The apostle Peter may have had this gift as he served in leadership over the church. (Acts 15:4-11)

Other References:

Romans 12:8, I Timothy 5:17, Hebrews 12:17

Mercy

“The special ability to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals, both Christian and non-Christian, who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully-done deeds that reflect Christ’s love and alleviate suffering.”

Luke 10:30-37 shows an example of this gift (“The Good Samaritan”)

Feeling compassion isn’t enough; it requires action

James 2:15-16, Faith without works is dead.

Two special qualities:

Feeling genuine compassion, ability to identify with the need.

Focusing on distressed people, bringing them up to par.

Prophecy

“The special ability to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance.”

“The ability to proclaim the Word of God with divine anointing, which brings conviction to the hearers so they recognize that it is truly the Word of God and they must do something about it.”

In the Old Testament, prophecy involved both:

Foretelling: Speaking a message of something to happen in the future.

Forth-telling: Speaking a message God wants people to know in general.

Examples:

Foretelling:

Israel to be gathered and to have a new heart within them (Ezekiel 11:17-21)

Acts 11:22-24, 27-28

Acts 13:1

Forth-telling:

False Prophets judged (Ezekiel 13:1-7)

Forth-telling as encouragement (Acts 15:32)

Use (I Corinthians 14:3-4, 24-25):

Prophecy speaks to men for edification, exhortation, and consolation.

Calling unbelievers to faith

Cautions:

Don't blindly believe everyone (I John 4:1-3)

You'll know them by their fruit in life (Matthew 7:20-22)

Listen to these words from God (I Thessalonians 5:20)

We need to be open to hearing (tender hearts)

We have to be careful to avoid extremes.

A word from God will never contradict scripture!

Other References:

Acts 2:37-40, Acts 7:54, Acts 26:24-29, I Corinthians 14:1,3; I Thessalonians 1:5

Service/Helps

“The special ability to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God’s work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals.”

II Timothy 1:16-18 may be an example of this gift.

Onesiphorus apparently provided for what Paul needed, and what might have been lacking in the church at Ephesus.

Another example: From Jesus’ life and teaching in Matthew 20:25-28

Two Dangers for the person who has this gift:

1. Being taken advantage of because of being willing to do whatever is needed.
2. Becoming discouraged, feeling that he or she doesn’t have a specialty or area of exper-tise.

However, people with service are essential!

Other References:

Acts 6:1-7, Romans 12:7, Galatians 6:2, Titus 3:14

Shepherding

“The special ability to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.”

Literally means “one who tends flocks, a shepherd” (John 10:1-18)

Other References:

Ephesians 4:11-14, I Timothy 3:1-7, I Peter 5:1-3

Teaching

Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God’s Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28).

Other References:

(Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

Wisdom

“The special ability to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the Body of Christ.”

“The ability to apply spiritual truth to a specific issue in an especially relevant fashion, and to make proper choices in difficult situations, based on sufficient information.”

James 3:13-18 describes what the person with God’s wisdom acts like. It gives the difference between worldly wisdom and Godly wisdom.

Pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

James 1:5-8 says all believers should ask for wisdom. This is not for the gift of wisdom, but for specific situations.

Major Caution:

Avoid relying on oneself rather than God, as King Solomon did who eventually fell away from God.

Example:

The church is going to begin a new mission work in the inner city. Much knowledge is uncovered about what the Bible teaches on ministry to the poor; much is also learned about cost of building or renting, the success of soup lines or work projects. With all this knowledge, the decision as to which way to go still requires God’s wisdom. The person with this gift may have special insight from God on how given knowledge may best be applied to this need.

Other References:

Acts 6:3, 10, I Corinthians 2:1-13, I Corinthians 12:8, II Peter 3:15

How to Tell Similar Gifts Apart

Mercy or Service/Helps?

These gifts appear quite similar but there may be a distinction in the following way:

1. **Mercy** deals with troubled people, those in a pit, and tries to bring them up to ground level again.
2. **Helps** deals with people who are basically at ground level, but could go further if some-one would set them free to spend more time in their specialties.
3. **Service** looks at tasks in God's work which aren't getting done and attempts to do them as well as possible, even though not especially gifted in those tasks.

Leadership or Administration?

These gifts appear quite similar but there may be a distinction in the following way:

1. Leadership involves seeing where the group should be going and getting the group to head that way.
2. Administration works out the details of how to get the group there.
3. An example might be that a leader sees that a group should put up their own daycare building and gets people motivated to work in that direction: an administrator would work out the details of financing, plans, and contractors.