

The Gifts of the Spirit – We Need You  
1 Corinthians 12  
Dr. Jerry Nelson  
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Are you good for anything? For the person with so-called “low self-esteem” that is a terrible question. They already think they are unnecessary in the world and the question only brings the perception of worthlessness back to mind. But most people know they have contribution to make somewhere. Most employees know they are making some contribution at work. Most parents have some sense of their importance as fathers or mothers. Most of us know that we matter somewhere.

But what if I asked, “Are you good for anything in the Kingdom; are you good for anything in the work of God in the world?” I’m afraid that the number of people with “low self-esteem” would rise dramatically compared to number responding that way to my first question. Too many Christians have no sense of their importance to the Kingdom, no sense of their importance to other Christians. Part of the reason for this is that Evangelicalism has placed an emphasis on the personal and the individual nature of becoming a Christian. It is true that we don’t become Christians simply by being part of a group, either a family or a church. We become a Christian one at a time by faith in the cross-work of Jesus. But that emphasis on the individual nature of becoming a Christian has unfortunately led many to think that living the Christian life is not only personal but especially individual and so some of us are “lone ranger” Christians. Or to use Richard Lovelace’s metaphor we are like deep-sea divers. We can look around and see each other but we each have a hose connected to an air supply and we don’t need each other. We see ourselves as self-contained systems cut off from those around us. We think Christianity is just God and me. We don’t need others to help us in our relationship with God and we don’t even think of our part in helping others in their relationship with God and God’s work in the world.

For others of us, it isn’t that we haven’t thought of helping others or making a contribution to God’s kingdom work; the problem is we can’t imagine we have anything to offer. We compare ourselves to others who seem to be so gifted and we conclude we have nothing that anybody needs.

And of course there are always some of us who have an over-inflated sense of our importance in the kingdom. We think we are God's gift to the church and we are the first to hint at or outright tell you how much we give, or how good we are at teaching or whatever.

Well God through the Apostle Paul has a word for all of us – instruction for the self-sufficient and selfish, correction for the proud and encouragement for the self-labeled “loser”.

1 Corinthians 12 (NIV):

*Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.<sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.<sup>3</sup> Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.<sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.<sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.<sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,<sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,<sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.<sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.<sup>12</sup> The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.<sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.<sup>14</sup> Now the body is not made up of one part but of many.<sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.<sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.<sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?<sup>18</sup>*

*But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, but one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup> while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. <sup>28</sup> And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> But eagerly desire the greater gifts*

In verse 1 Paul says his subject is spiritual gifts: "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant." Pollster George Barna writes that at least 80% of church-goers have heard of "spiritual gifts". I began by asking, "Are you good for anything in the kingdom of God, God's work in the world? That is exactly what the Apostle Paul is going to answer.

I want you first of all to see an outline of Paul's instruction. In verses 1-6 Paul gives an introduction. In these verses Paul not only tells us what the subject is, but he simply states that every gift, all spiritually effective service to others, is God's Spirit working in and through us.

*1 Corinthians 12:4-6 "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men."*

Notice he uses several words to describe the same thing and the Holy Spirit is the source of all spiritually effective service.

Having given that introduction, he states his main thesis – the thesis around which the rest of the chapter is built:

*1 Corinthians 12:7 “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

That word “manifestation” simply refers to how the Spirit shows or reveals himself. Eugene Peterson in The Message paraphrases the verse this way,

*“Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits.”*

Stated differently, the Spirit of God shows himself, or works in and through each of us for the good of all of us. This “manifestation of the Spirit” in each of us for the good of all of us is Paul’s definition of spiritual gifts. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:1 “Now about spiritual gifts...” with 1 Corinthians 12:7 “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”

In this, his thesis statement (verse 7) Paul makes two primary points:

1. Every Christian is given a manifestation of the Spirit, a spiritual gift.
2. And two, those manifestations or gifts are for the common good.

The Holy Spirit gives every Christian spiritual gifts so that they will be spiritually effective in the lives of others.

In verses 8-11 Paul emphasizes the first of those two points: that EVERY Christian is given spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12: 8-11 “**To one** there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, **to another** the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, **to another** faith by the same Spirit, **to another** gifts of healing by that one Spirit, **to another** miraculous powers, **to another** prophecy, **to another** distinguishing between spirits, **to another** speaking in different kinds of tongues, and **to still another** the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them **TO EACH ONE**, just as he determines.”

Then in verses 12-26 Paul emphasizes **the second of his two points: spiritual gifts are given for the common good.**

God has given every Christian spiritual gifts because no Christian is complete in and of him/herself and we need the help of others so that together we can become more like Jesus.

According to the Bible, God's grace is conveyed not only along vertical lines from God to us but God's grace is more often conveyed along horizontal lines through each other. God's Spirit works in and through you to effect change in me. Christians who don't understand that and who live in isolation from each other will not grow strong but will continue to be anemic in their Christian faith and ineffective in their service.

And how does Paul make this point? He uses the analogy of the human body.

*1 Corinthians 12:12 "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body."*

There may be many parts of our physical body but it is one body. And then Paul makes the comparison:

*1 Corinthians 12:12b-13*

*"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. **So it is with Christ.** For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."*

Using metaphors and analogies, Paul makes his point that just as our physical body is one with many parts, so the church is one body with many parts – all of us – because we were all brought into that "body" by the same Holy Spirit.

Now continuing to use the physical body as an analogy, Paul makes several more points about how the church, the people of God, should relate to each other. The first thing he says is that every believer is a necessary part with no inferior or unnecessary parts.

*1 Corinthians 12:15-16 "If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body."*

How many of you have placed such importance on certain people or abilities in the church that you have effectively ruled out your own contribution to the work of God? Because you can't sing or teach a large group you assume you have nothing significant to contribute. What would God say to such an idea? Nonsense! Well, he doesn't exactly say,

“nonsense” but he suggests it is nonsense by the weird and dysfunctional physical body it would be if parts were missing:

*1 Corinthians 12:17 “If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?”*

Likewise it is a weird and dysfunctional church that lives and attempts to minister with only some of the members contributing their spiritual gifts.

Speaking of the physical body (though clearly with the people of the church in mind) Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:18 “In fact God has arranged the parts **in the body**, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.” And the implicit is made explicit in verse 28 when Paul says, 1 Corinthians 12:28 “And **in the church** God has appointed” the gifts.

Many Christians live year after year with no sense of their importance to other believers. The Bible says that God placed you in this church for a specific purpose. Every Christian is APPOINTED BY GOD as a functioning part of the church. God’s word teaches that you are crucial to the proper functioning of the church and to the work of God in this world. Do you believe that?

**In verse 21** using the same analogy of the physical body, **Paul makes another point**: Just as there are no inferior or unnecessary parts of the body so there are **no SUPERIOR parts of the body**.

*1 Corinthians 12:21 “The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don't need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don't need you!”*

If the rest of us don’t have your contribution, whether it is a public contribution or not, we are all impoverished.

Now in verses 24-25 mixing the analogy of the physical body with the truth about the church, Paul says,

*1 Corinthians 12:24-25 “But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.”*

No inferior, no superior and no “deep-sea diver” Christians - just God’s people living in open relationship with each other and available to the Spirit to serve one another.

**These verses clearly declare that God intends to make a difference in others' lives through you.** A church can grow as an institution with only your attendance, some of your money and some of your time. **But a church cannot grow as a spiritual force in the lives of its members and this community and world without your spiritual gifts.**

I wish to correct a possible misunderstanding. Some may still think of talk about spiritual gifts as a “churchy” way of “guilting” people into serving in the organization’s programs. Too many of us still see church as an organization in which we use people to get things done. But the church as God designed it, is a group of people to whom he has given spiritual gifts not first of all to get things done but to get people done – to help each other become more like Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 4, speaking also of spiritual gifts, God through Paul makes it explicit that the purpose of gifts is until we all become mature in our faith.” When spiritual gifts are being used by God’s people, they aren’t just getting things done, they are effective in producing spiritual change in people. For example, when you use the gift of mercy, the people you help see the goodness of God in you and are attracted to him and may learn to trust him – that is a spiritual change in them because you exercised that gift. Or another example, when you use the gift of teaching, the people you teach grow in their understanding and application of the Bible to their lives – there is a spiritual change in them because you exercised that gift.

I think we have finally come to the place where we can look at a working definition of spiritual gifts. **“A spiritual gift is a special work of the Holy Spirit whereby he grants a Christian grace for effective service.”** Another way of saying that is this: A spiritual gift is the Spirit of God working in us in order to work through us to produce spiritual change in another.

What follows are several illustrations of how spiritual gifts function:

The Spirit of God prompts my friend to call a woman to whom she hadn’t spoken in several weeks. My Christian friend feels compelled to call, not even knowing what the need of that woman might be. After exchanging pleasantries, my friend tells the woman why she called – just because Jesus had laid her name on her heart. The woman immediately begins to cry softly relating an immediate urgent need in her family. They cry together, my friend shares some words of Scripture that speak to

perseverance in difficulty and they pray together. The woman tells me later how my friend's call, words and prayer were just what she needed to make it through that day.

What was happening in that relationship? The Spirit of God was working **in** my friend in order to work **through** my friend to produce spiritual change in the other woman. The Spirit prompts, he provides and he produces – my friend was available, willing and obedient.

Mike wrestles with a problem for days before it comes to mind to call Bob. He and Bob meet for lunch and Mike lays out the situation at work that is putting his Christianity to the test. If he does the right thing, it will cost him his job and if he just keeps quiet somebody else will get hurt. Bob share a similar experience from his own life and then takes him to the books of Proverbs, Hebrews, and Romans and encourages Mike to trust God with the results of doing the right thing. Mike tells me later that Bob's empathy, wisdom and prayer were just the insight and encouragement that Mike needed to take the risk of doing the right thing. What was happening in that relationship? The Spirit of God was working **in** Bob in order to work **through** Bob to produce spiritual change in Mike. The Spirit prompts, he provides and he produces - Bob was available, willing and obedient.

Dan stood up on Sunday morning in his class and taught from the Scriptures. He had no idea that the passage of Scripture he taught that day spoke directly to the present life-situation of one of the class members. All through the teaching and discussion that class member wrestled with God about whether and how to apply the Word to his situation. Dan's ability to clearly explain the text, his willingness to speak to how it applied, his sensitivity to how hard living the truth can sometimes be, all moved the class member to take action. Dan never heard how his teaching impacted that man's life that day. What was happening in that relationship?

In the grocery store, Fran saw a woman from church that she didn't know well. Fran was in a hurry but felt compelled to stop and visit for a minute. Only later did we learn that the woman had decided there was no place for her at her church and was ready to quit trying to find a church home. But that act of friendship by Fran encouraged the woman to attend the Sunday School class Fran is in and it opened up a whole new spiritual community for the woman. What was happening in that relationship?

Several inconvenient times a week, John treks over to the county jail to be with and lead a Bible study with a group of inmates. He listens to the sad stories of some of them and attempts to meet the needs of their impoverished families on the outside even as he tells them of Jesus' love. What's happening in those relationships?

There are at least two problems with the way some of us understand spiritual gifts – we may tend to overstate them or understate them. Some of us overstate spiritual gifts so that we think of them only or mainly as those spectacular demonstrations of power in miracles or eloquence. Some people think of high-profile Christian leaders as having spiritual gifts but not them. Others understate spiritual gifts so that we think of “gifts” as any effort we make to do something good. But spiritual gifts are a special, supernatural work of the Spirit in us in order to work through us to help others grow spiritually.

So what are the gifts of the Spirit? Several times spiritual gifts are listed: 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4. All the gifts named in those passages are listed at the end of this article. So our temptation is to look at the list and ask, what gift or gifts do I have? But I want you to notice several important things about these lists.

- Some of the definitions of the gifts overlap so that you can't distinguish between them clearly.
- Some of the definitions are very broad covering whole ranges of ideas.
- None of the lists are the same.

For those and other reasons, I, and others, don't think the lists of gifts are meant to be complete, even when combined. There may be nearly an infinite number of ways that the Spirit of God ministers to us to minister through us. I'm convinced that the lists in the Bible are meant to illustrate the variety of ways the Spirit will work. **I don't think it is important that a Christian necessarily be able to put a label, a name to their gifts.**

In fact I am convinced that using the biblical names for gifts has caused a great deal of confusion and has limited our understanding rather than increasing it. I don't fault the Holy Spirit for that, I fault those who would try to pigeonhole people into one of the gifts that are listed. I think there is very little value in being able to name your gift and great value in serving others in dependence on the Spirit. But even if I don't label it, how do I know what my gifts are? I'm convinced we don't sit around with a list of the gifts and

take an inventory trying to see what we are good at and then assuming that is our gift. Nor do we look at the list and imagine which one we would most like, supposing the gift will be ours if we ask for it.

If not that, **how do I know** and use my gifts for effective service? Appended to his article is a paper entitled “Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s).” In terms of application, thinking through the ideas on this paper is the most important thing you can do.

Do you want to know what you are “good for” in the Kingdom?

1. Begin by praying – ask God to give you sensitivity to the needs of people and sensitivity to God’s direction and “gifts” in your life.

Are you willing to be used by the Spirit in the lives of others?

2. Become exposed to the needs of people. No one will discover what grace God has given them to serve others if they remain isolated from the needs of others or ignore those needs when they appear.

Listen to people describe their struggles, their hurts, their sorrows, aspirations and dreams.

Get exposed to the needs of people.

3. Ask “What human hurts or needs do I have a longing to help with?”  
What needs do I see in others that I feel a desire to respond to?

4. Ask, “What strengths do I already have to help meet those needs?”  
God didn’t allow your background of experiences for nothing. He sovereignly ordered your life so that you are who you are, and he will most often use your education, experiences, relationships, temperament and talents, as a vehicle for the spiritual gift he has given you.

5. Start meeting needs.

Look around you, see a need and start responding to that need. What will happen is that over time you will begin to get a sense of whether that ministry to people is effective in their lives.

6. Listen carefully to the advice and feedback of others who know you well.  
What do others say are the ways that you are most effective? If only you think you are effective, you probably aren’t. Spiritual effectiveness

is confirmed by others.

7. Look for evidence of results.

The greatest evidence of what your spiritual gifts are is in the fruit that it bears in others' lives. The purpose of spiritual gifts is not to have them and claim them but to use them to help others spiritually. When others are loved, cared for, prayed for, encouraged, healed, taught, equipped, or helped spiritually in some other ways by your actions, that is the greatest evidence that you have that particular gift.

God has "gifted" you to make a difference for the kingdom. He has given you special grace to be effective in service to others. Please don't be concerned about naming it or claiming it, just act. Act on what the Spirit has said, he has gifted YOU! Start serving in prayerful active dependence on him – and let him work through you to make a difference for the kingdom. Are you good for anything? Oh, yes you are! 1 Corinthians 12:7 "Now **to each one** the manifestation of the Spirit is (or the gifts of the Spirit are) given for the common good."

Appendices:

"The Gifts of the Spirit" listed in the Bible. P12-13

"Discovering Your Spiritual Gift(s)" P13-14

**THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**  
**(A Definition and Explanation)**  
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“A spiritual gift is a special work of the Holy Spirit  
 whereby he grants to you grace for effective spiritual service.”

What follows are the words used by the New Testament in describing some spiritual gifts. The words used are sometimes very general in nature and often overlap in definition. There is no indication that the Scriptures list all of the gifts of the Spirit. Noting the following gifts will, however, be helpful to you in seeing the range of gifts that the Holy Spirit grants and the way that they are used by believers to build each other up in the faith.

**ABILITY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SPIRITS** - The ability to discern the difference between the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of demons by immediate insight granted by the Spirit or by insight into the Scriptures.

**ADMINISTRATION** (The word is used primarily of steering a ship) - The ability to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a group (small or large) and to devise means to help people accomplish those goals (probably largely synonymous with “leadership” listed below).

**APOSTLE** - There is serious question as to whether this gift extended past the original 12 disciples and Paul who were selected personally by Jesus. (See Carson, p 90-91)

**EVANGELISM** - The ability to assist unbelievers to become Christ's disciples **and/or** to equip believers in effectively witnessing to their faith.

**EXHORTATION** (Encouragement) - The ability to stir people to action, to so encourage, stimulate, counsel, and comfort people that they are enabled to grow and serve.

**FAITH** - A special work of the Spirit enabling "a believer to trust God to bring about certain things for which he or she cannot claim some divine promise recorded in the Scripture..." (Carson, p 39, especially note "prayers of faith")

**GIFTS OF HEALING** (note the plural) - That special ability to be used as God's intermediary to cure illnesses and restore health apart from the use of natural means. (Wagner, p 261) The plural may suggest that not everyone was getting healed by one person but that certain persons could heal certain diseases and others were needed for other diseases. (See especially “Expectant and Accepting” under “special topics” at SoundLiving.org).

**GIVING** - The ability to use with liberality, cheerfulness, and without ulterior motive, one's temporal possessions for the good of others and the glory of God.

**HELPS AND SERVING** - An ability to meet the needs of others. These are very general words to describe all kinds of assistance. It may include helping, serving, giving, hospitality, etc.

**HOSPITALITY** - The ability with generosity and willingness to provide an open home and warm welcome to those in need.

**INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES** - The ability to make known in the common language the message spoken in tongues (see “tongues” below).

**LEADERSHIP** - The ability to help others work together to accomplish appropriate goals for the glory of God. (See also "administration," probably largely synonymous)

**MERCY** - The ability to feel genuine sympathy and compassion for people who are suffering and with cheerfulness, not compulsion, help them.

**MIRACULOUS POWERS** (Literally "workings of powers - note the plural) - An inclusive phrase indicating a host of miraculous acts. The ability to perform powerful acts that alter the ordinary course of nature (eg. exorcism, nature miracles, others displays of divine power). (Carson, p 40; Wagner, p 261)

**PASTOR (SHEPHERDING)** - The ability to assume a long-term responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of God's people.

**PROPHECY** - The reception and subsequent transmission of spontaneous, divinely originating revelation. (see Carson, p 91-99, and especially p 160-164) (See also "Does God Speak Today" Parts 1&2 from 2 Peter 1:16-21 SoundLiving.org)

**TEACHING** - Instructing others in the meaning and moral implications of the Christian faith as learned in the Scriptures.

**TONGUES** - It is the unintelligible expression of a Spirit-led impression on the heart of the Christian that was unplanned and/or the ability to speak to God in a language never learned. (See "prophecy" and "interpretation of tongues")

**WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE** - In some cases this is the same as prophecy (above) or in some cases a special experience by which a message comes to a person from the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures and is communicated to the congregation to meet a particular need. (in this latter case it is much like teaching).

**REMEMBER:** God may grant other gifts as he chooses.

Carson, D.A. Showing the Spirit  
Sanders, J. Oswald The Holy Spirit and His Gifts  
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## DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT(S)

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**A spiritual gift is a special work of the Holy Spirit  
whereby he grants to you grace for effective spiritual service.**

To discover your spiritual gift(s) take the actions listed below. Further instruction regarding spiritual gifts may be found in I Corinthians 12, Romans 12:3-8, Ephesians 4:7-16, and I Peter 4:7-11.

1. **Pray.** Ask God to give you sensitivity to the needs of people and sensitivity to His direction and "gifts" in your life. "God, I know that you have given to me, as you have given to all Christians, certain spiritual gifts so that I might be effective in serving others. Please show me what those gifts are so that I may honor you."
2. **Become exposed to the needs of people.** No one will discover what grace God has given them to serve others if they remain isolated from the needs of others or ignore those needs when they appear. Listen to people as they describe their struggles, their hurts, their sorrows, their aspirations, their dreams. Talk to teachers of the

Word, to disciplers, to those who visit hospitals or prisons, to those who work with youth, to those who take meals to others, to those who help with leading in worship. Ask them why they serve in those ways and what needs they are meeting. Get exposed to the needs of people.

3. **Ask "What human hurts or needs do I have a longing to help with?"** What needs do I see in others that I feel a passion to respond to? Is it to help people understand the Word? Is it to alleviate suffering? Is it to help people organize to accomplish their objectives? Is it to heal the sick? As you see the needs of people around you, what do you feel the need to help with?
4. **Ask "What concrete strengths do I have to help meet those needs?"** God didn't allow your background of experiences for nothing. He sovereignly ordered your life so that you are who you are, and He will most often use your education, experiences, relationships, physical makeup, temperament and talents) as a vehicle for the spiritual gift he has given you. Consider how God has already designed you and sovereignly ordered your life. What strengths do you already have to help meet the needs of people?
5. **Start meeting needs.** Look around you, see a need and start responding to that need. If you think that you have some strengths in communicating, then start with various kinds of teaching or Bible study leading, either in small groups or one-on-one. If you think you have an ability to demonstrate a true caring to someone who is hurting, then visit someone in the hospital, visit a shut-in, or take a meal to a family in need. What will happen is that over time you will begin to get a sense of whether that ministry to people is effective in their lives. You will find that you will grow in your ability and desire to help in these ways.
6. **Listen carefully to the advice and feedback of others who know you well.** What are they saying are your gifts? It will probably not be a gift if only you think you have it. Spiritual gifts are confirmed by others.
7. **Look for the evidence of results.** The greatest evidence of what your spiritual gift is (or gifts are) is the fruit that it bears in the lives of others. The purpose of spiritual gifts is not to have them but is to use them to help others spiritually. When others are loved, cared for, prayed for, encouraged, healed, taught, equipped, or helped spiritually in other ways by your actions, that is the greatest evidence that you have that particular spiritual gift.

God has given you spiritual gifts to make a difference in people's lives. He has given you special grace to be effective in service to others. What are your spiritual gifts? Are you willing to discover them?

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