

The Gifts That Keep on Giving

Learning your own spiritual gifts will 1) help you understand how and where you fit into the body of Christ, 2) help you set priorities for service, and 3) give you direction for developing a personal ministry.

Spiritual gifts are a blessing. Therefore, the exercise of your gifts will necessarily bring enjoyment, fulfillment, and produce fruit. If your service doesn't, you probably are not serving in the right area.

If you have never studied or don't understand your own spiritual gifts, follow these five suggested steps:

1. Study—Study the four passages of Scripture which deal with spiritual gifts: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:11-13; and 1 Peter 4:9-11. You may want to study the context by examining the verses before and after these specific references.

Your gifts will usually be related to the following, so examine yourself in these areas:

- Your natural abilities
- Your motivated interests
- Your previous successful ministry involvement (if applicable)
- Positive feedback you receive from other Christians
- The burden, or calling, you sense.

Additional suggested reading: A current survey of Amazon shows books by these orthodox authors: Kay Arthur, Charles Stanley, Peter Wagner, and Henry Blackaby. Two books I used in my own study are *Unwrap Your Spiritual Gifts*, by Kenneth O. Gangel, Victor Books; and *19 Gifts of the Spirit*, by Leslie B. Flynn, also from Victor Books.

2. Narrow—Once you have studied this material and the Scripture passages, it is time to narrow the list to those spiritual gifts, which you “think” you possess or “possibly” may possess. How do you do that?

Make a photocopy of the three lists of spiritual gifts above: 1. Service Gifts; 2. Speaking Gifts; 3. Signifying Gifts. Mark each gift in the adjacent blank space based on the following legend:

- Y = Yes, I think I possess this spiritual gift
- M = Maybe. I may possess this spiritual gift
- N = No. I do not possess this spiritual gift
- ? = Don't know. I don't know if I possess this spiritual gift

3. Rank—Now that you have sifted through the lists of gifts you should have one or more “Y” and “M” notations. On a piece of paper, write down each of those spiritual gifts:

Now, rank these in order of priority based on what you know at this time. Put a 1 next to the gift with which you most identify, a 2 by your second choice, and so on. This is provisional—you are still exploring.

4. Feedback—An excellent way to help determine your spiritual gifts is to ask your Christian friends for help. Ask a few friends to rank you using the same legend you used in Step 2 above, Narrowing.

Make enough copies of the spiritual gifts above: 1. Service Gifts; 2. Speaking Gifts; 3. Signifying Gifts for each friend. Compare the results thoughtfully to your own assessment. Should you add any spiritual gifts to your exploratory list?

5. Exploration—Now it is time to explore the possibilities. Take special training in your potential areas of giftedness. Get involved with different ministries. Which

ones help you feel fulfilled? In which ones do you feel you are making a contribution? Which ones are drudgery? In what areas are you being affirmed by other people?

Discovering your spiritual gifts will inevitably open up a whole new realm of joy in the Lord. To know Him is to serve Him, and the happiest people in the world are those whose spiritual gifts are fully employed in that service.