



1. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GIFTS

Can you remember a great gift you got when you were a kid? What was it? How did you react initially? How did you respond to that gift a year later?

Can you recall discovering a talent you had? How did you feel when you discovered that particular talent? How are you using that talent today? (You are using it, aren't you?)

Can you recall first discovering a spiritual gift?

Study

Read 1st Corinthians 12:1-11

- * What is the source of the gifts?
- * Where does the power of the gifts come from?
- * What is the purpose of the gifts?

Read Ephesians 4:10-13

- * What is the source of the gifts?
- * Where does the power of the gifts come from?
- * What is the purpose of the gifts?

Pay special attention to the purpose of these gifts.

Read Romans 12:6-8,

What are the Gifts of the Spirit? Make a list from 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and Romans 12.?

Are there others?

Use the Self Evaluation form at the end of the notes for each person.



2: THE GIFT OF HELPING

The dictionary's definition (Oxford American Dictionary) is...

- * To do part of another person's work for them.
- * To make it easier for a person to do something
- * To do something for a person in need

What are some examples of help you have experienced?

Can you think of any helpers in the bible? Who were they? (Hint: Caleb, Andrew, Barnabus)

Do you think help is undervalued by others? Somehow we always refer to helping as "just helping".

Paul did not undervalue it. And God valued it enough that he made it one of a select group of specific gifts and set people apart to serve, and to help by giving them this gift.

The Value of the Gift of Helping

- * Why do you think God gave us the Gift of Helping? (Remember his purposes for the gifts!)
- * What is our responsibility if we have it?
- * How can you develop the gift (if you have it)?

Notice that there are aspects to the gift that go beyond the action. All of us are called to help from time to time. But some people get a particular happiness from helping. Some of us have a joyful attitude about helping. And some of us have the knack of knowing just what kinds of help is needed. These people are often the ones we say have the spiritual gift of helping, something far beyond duty.

Use the Helping questionnaire for each person. Share your results

Does the questionnaire make you re-think helping. Do you realise the value of helping more than before? Who has this gift?

Do it

Let them know that you recognise the gift of helping in their lives. Helpers often undervalue their gift, and need encouragement to continue do God's work. Your kind words may be just what they need to be re-energised.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



3: THE GIFT OF MERCY

How would you define Mercy?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as “Forbearance and compassion on one who is in his power and who has no claim to his kindness; a disposition to show compassion or forgiveness. Strong's Bible dictionary says: “God’s forbearance towards his creatures and forgiveness for their sins.

Read Luke 10:30-37 and Matthew 18:23-34 What do people find hard and what do people find encouraging?

In all of these examples, there was someone in a position of power, who could make a decision about how a person might be treated. Perhaps the person in power had the right to punish or harm the other, but a decision was made to treat the weaker person kindly, with mercy.

This is, after all, how we were treated. Jesus' mercy, and his proclamation of mercy to sinners, was a core part of his ministry:

Read Matthew 9:10-12. What do people find hard and what do people find encouraging?

How important is mercy? Why do you feel that way?

Read Matthew 9:13 and 12:1-8

'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' What could this mean?

Read Matthew 23:23

For some, the forgiveness of others come easier, and those are the people who have the Gift of Mercy. For a few, the spiritually gifted, mercy comes naturally, like the gift it is.

How do we use the gift of mercy if we have it? Read 1 Timothy 1:13-15

Mercy and kindness can draw a soul back to God in a way rules and laws cannot. It gets people's attention in the deepest part of their hearts.

Use the Mercy questionnaire for each person. Share your results

Does the questionnaire make you re-think mercy. Do you realise the value of mercy more than before? Who has this gift?

Do it

Let them know that you recognise the gift of mercy in their lives.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



4. THE GIFT OF GIVING

Giving needs no definition does it? Or does it? What does it mean to you? What do we give?

Money is not all we give, is it? What other sorts of things do we give? Make a list of those things.

When we think of God's gift(s) to us what do we think of? Make a list.

Typically people list, peace, strength, courage, faith, and a few list Jesus himself as a gift: (John 3:16). What God gives is most precious, and can serve as a reminder that giving involves much more than a cheque or bank transfer.

Who do we give to? Matthew 5:42; Matthew 6:2; Matthew 11:28

How should we give? Read Matthew 10:8 and Matthew 6:2-3, 1 Corinthians 13:3

Is it ever wrong to give? Matthew 4:8; Matthew 7:6.

Is it hard to give? Matthew 19:20

Jesus did not routinely ask those who followed his way to give up everything. But when the things of life become a barrier to following God's way, it is time to shed them. And for many it is hard to give back the gifts they have themselves been given.

Why do we give?

For some it is just their nature. For others it is a tough duty. For some it seems that we give because we have been given to. Some give as a commandment as per Luke 6:38 –

How do we know if we giving is our gift?

- * If you have a desire to give generously...
- * If you have a strong sense that possessions and talents are things to be shared
- * If giving brings as much (or more) joy than gaining or having....
- * If you are able to sense just what a person needs to be able to give them the right things.
- * If you are happy to do without things in order to be able to help others (sacrificial giving)
- * If it seems natural to give, rather than being something you have to work at....

Does the list make you re-think giving. Do you realise the value of giving more than before? Who has this gift?

Do it

Let them know that you recognise the gift of giving in their lives.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



5. THE GIFT OF HEALING

Healing comes into its own only in the New Testament. There are more instances of healing in Matthew than the entire OT. Why do you think that may be?

Look at these stories of Jesus and his healing. What do you learn?

Matthew 9:21-22; Mark 6:2-5; Acts 9:32-34; Luke 17:12-14; Revelation 22:2

Healing may be of something physical, or it may be spiritual, mental or emotional. It may even involve the healing of relationships.

And some people have an ability to heal that goes beyond medical science, self-help books, or any natural law.

It may be that you have the gift of healing, even if you haven't performed any miracles lately. How can we recognise our gift(s) of healing? Ask yourself some questions.

Are you...

- * Concerned about and sensitive to those who suffer physical, mental, emotional or even spiritual anguish?
- * Able to believe that God wants to, and is able to heal.
- * Eager to be the instrument of the healing?
- * Do you see yourself as the instrument, not the doctor?
- * Do you have the faith to ask for healing?
- * Do people turn to you to heal their spirits, hearts and relationships.

... If so, you may well have the gift of healing.

Does the list make you re-think healing. Do you realise the value of healing more than before? Who has this gift?

Do it

Right now pray for people in your group to be healed. What happens? Whose prayers seem to answered? Who may be discovering a gift of healing

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



6. KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

When do you go to people for advice? What sorts of situations do you need advice for?

Why do we choose the people we choose to give us advice? We choose them because we trust them.

- We trust their caring spirit
- We trust what they know
- We trust their insight
- We trust their confidentiality
- Perhaps we trust them not to judge

Wisdom as a spiritual gift

How can we call wisdom a spiritual gift? Isn't it just something we just get with experience?

Or do some gain it easier than others?

And do some seem to have it early on?

And do some seem to glean lessons from life the rest of us miss?

Look at Paul's purposes for spiritual gifts, and figure out how we can best use them for the proper purposes.

The spiritual gift of knowledge

Read 1 Cor 12:8; 1:4-7; 1:18-31. What is the gift of knowledge?

It is an understanding of the things in this world and in our lives that is founded in the Gospel and rooted in the Scriptures and brings about understanding to inform the church or individual believers. The person with this gift can retain the truth and communicate it effectively at the appropriate times.

Does the list make you re-think wisdom and knowledge. Do you realise the value of these gifts more than before? Who has this gift?

Do it

Right now create space for God to speak into your life for others present. Try it. What quietly for a few minutes and see what happens? Who has a word or picture for someone else present? Who may be discovering a gift of wisdom or knowledge?

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



7. THE GIFT OF TEACHING

Jesus taught from personal knowledge. Jesus knew scripture and study, but his relationship with God was direct. The most spiritually gifted teachers will have a personal spirituality that is real, deep, and unmistakable.

How do you like to learn?

Jesus used a variety of methods. Not everyone learns things the same way. Jesus knew this and so we see him lecturing, teaching, preaching, telling parables and teaching by example. At one point he even sends his disciples on a field trip!. Likewise, a gifted teacher knows that his students all learn differently, and will bring a variety of methods to his or her teaching.

Jesus was a genius at taking complex theological subjects and making them understandable.

Who do you know who can do this? Can you?

Jesus taught for the student. His was no canned curriculum. He knew his students, be they the disciples, the Pharisees, the rich young ruler, Nicodemus, or the woman at the well, all needed something different. He took the time to know his students and then gave them just what they needed.

Who do you know who can do this? Can you?

Jesus loved his students. Don't dismiss the power of love to motivate and teach.

Does the list make you re-think how we are taught and by whom? Who has this gift in the group?

Do it

How can you give space for people to teach in your group? Who is discovering their gift and needs an opportunity to exercise it more widely.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



8. THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP

Name some leaders today you respect and are willing to follow?

What is it about them that makes you willing to follow them?

Do they all do things the same way? Then what sets them apart?

Are all leaders spiritual? There is an intangible quality that sets a gifted leader apart. They touch something in our spirit that make us willing to follow them, even anxious to follow them.

But we can misuse this gift, for it comes with a real temptation: Power. There is a real temptation to think it is ours, not a gift from God.

If we have this gift, we probably realise it. People come to you. People look to you for guidance, inspiration, direction and leadership.

Who has this gift in the group?

Do it

How can you give encourage leadership in your group? Who is discovering their gift and needs an opportunity to exercise it more widely.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



9. THE GIFTS OF MIRACLES, PROPHECY AND TONGUES

Read Matt. 13:57-58 and Galatians 3:5

- * Make a list of some miracles in the New Testament.
- * What happened?
- * Who performed the miracle?
- * Who was it performed on?
- * What were the circumstances?
- * How was faith involved?
- * What were the results?
- * did the miracles make anyone mad or upset?
- * How was the miracle-worker received after the fact?
- * were there false miracle workers?

Read Romans 12:6

- * What were the times like?
- * do you think the prophets enjoyed their roles?
- * What part does faith play in prophecy?
- * What were the results?
- * did the prophets ever make anyone mad?
- * were there false prophets?

Read Acts 2:3-11; Acts 10:44; Acts 19:5-6

- * When did tongues happen?
- * What was accomplished by the tongues?
- * Did they ever upset anyone?

Do you see anything in common between these three?

Are there rewards for these gifts? Matthew 11:20; John 7:3-5; Matthew 13:57-58; Acts 7:52

What can we do to test the things we hear and see?

- * listen to their actions, not their words John 10:25



* Look for love. If they're inspired by the Holy Spirit, the things they do will be inspired by love. 1 Corinthians 13:2

* Do we run a risk of dismissing true miracles, etc.?

Who has these gifts in the group?

Do it

How can you give encourage the exercise of these gifts in your group? Try it now! Who is discovering their gift and needs an opportunity to exercise it more widely.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



10. THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT

The dictionary defines Discernment as being to be able to distinguish between things, or to be able to make out things over a long distance, or to be able to make out separate elements of a thing or concept

Read Genesis 41:33-39; 1 Kings 3:9; 1 Kings 3:10-12; Job 6:30

What's going on here?

Proverbs 10:13 Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment.

Why do you think he says a rod is for him who lacks judgement?

What do you think you can do to prepare yourself to have discernment? Proverbs 16:21 (NIV)

Discernment is a special kind of wisdom. What separates it from the garden variety of wisdom is that it focuses on knowing God; his will, his right and wrong, and his directions. It comes from the heart, not the mind.

Proverbs 17:24 A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth.

A discerning person understands that they too have a lot to learn, and do learn.

Who has these gifts in the group?

Do it

Who is discovering their gift and needs an opportunity to exercise it more widely.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



11. THE GIFT OF ENCOURAGEMENT

What is encouraging?

If you begin with dictionary definitions you will read that encouraging has changed a little over the ages. In the 1400's it meant "to inspire with courage." In the 1500's it mean "to inspire with courage sufficient for any undertaking, to embolden." By the 1600s, it had also come to mean "to stimulate a person or a person's efforts by approval, reward or assistance."

How have you been encouraged through your life? Think back not just on who encouraged you, but what they did that provided you with encouragement. Make a list of their actions.

If encouragement is one of your gifts, these actions probably come easily to you.

If encouragement is one of your gifts, you probably have a knack for knowing what will encourage certain people.

If you are an encourager, you probably encourage people often, almost as a second nature.

So, if you are an encourager, how can you put this to work spiritually?

Who has this gift in the group?

Do it

How can you release encouragement in your group? Who is discovering their gift and needs an opportunity to exercise it more widely.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



12. THE GIFT OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism (noun) the preaching or spreading of the gospel; one who brings the Gospel to others.

Pretty different, aren't they?

Can you think of specific people from the Bible who had the gift of Evangelism? How did they use the gift? What needs did they meet?

Evangelism - you might think of Jesus, John the Baptist and Paul

Have there been specific instances when a person with the gift of Ministry or Evangelism has made a difference to you? How? Why was it or evangelism?

For some people, the term evangelist has a bad connotation. Why is that? Is there anything we can do to change that view of evangelism?

Who has this gift in the group?

Do it

How can you encourage your evangelists? Who is discovering their gift and needs an opportunity to exercise it more widely.

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



13. THE GIFT OF FAITH

Faith may be one of the easiest gifts to define. The dictionary definition is a reliance or trust in something or someone. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:7 We live by faith, not by sight.

What do we have faith in? When we talk about trust in God, what are we trusting him to do, or what are we trusting him for?

Read Matt 6:28-30; 8:6-10; 8:24

What can we have faith in? How does faith help us heal? It provides help in times of trouble.

What happens to us when we have no faith, or loose faith? Matthew 13:58 ; Matthew 17:19-20.

All gifts are tested, is a test of faith harder than most tests?

How hard is it for us to gain faith?

For some it comes naturally. For others it is a journey. And for others of us, it is a real struggle. The answer to that questions says a lot about whether or not is our gift.

Questions you may ask to rate your faith:

- * Is it easy to believe and trust that God can, will, and does intervene in history?
- * Are you convinced that God is concerned about, and is active in the affairs of individual believers?
- * Do you feel assured that any event can be turned to the glory of God?
- * Do you find it easy to have faith even when things are going badly for you or those you care for?
- * Do you have a strong tendency to see God's hand in events around you?
- * Are you willing to accept what happens to you without always questioning why?

If you answer was yes to these questions, faith is probably a strong gift in you.

Who has this gift in the group?

Do it

Who is discovering faith as their gift and needs an opportunity to exercise it more?

Get those with high giftedness to commit to doing something about using their gift and then review next time you meet.



14. USING GIFTS

We must use the gifts

Remember the purposes of the gifts? 1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:12-13; Romans 12:6-5

We must not misuse the gifts

Make a list of how you might possibly misuse each of the gifts? Do you see a pattern developing as to how gifts can be misused?

We must not overrate our gifts

Where we would be if we all had one major gift, the same major gift? No matter how powerful that gift might be, the church would be a mess without a full complement of gifts.

We must not underrate our gifts

Now, do the self-evaluation from the beginning of this course again. Compare the two self-evaluations, the one you took at the start of this course, and the one you took just a few minutes ago. Any changes?



INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Do the following self-evaluation as you start the course on spiritual gifts.

Simply look at each gift and rate yourself based on what you know about the gifts at this point. We will do this again at the end of the series after we have learnt and practiced more to see what has changed.

A "1" means the gift is weak, and a "10" means the gift is strong.

HELPING 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PROPHECY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

MERCY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

GIVING 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEALING 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

DISCERNMENT 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EXHORTATION 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

MINISTERING 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

FAITH 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

TEACHING 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

KNOWLEDGE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EVANGELISM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

WISDOM 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

LEADERSHIP 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

APOSTLESHIP 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



HELPS QUESTIONNAIRE

Try the following questionnaire. A "1" means the indicator is rarely in your life. A "5" means the indicator is strong in your life.

- 1 2 3 4 5 I take action to meet physical and practical needs instead of merely thinking, talking and planning to help.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am quick to see and recognise valid needs of other people.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am oriented towards the practical rather than the emotional needs.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I would rather do the helping task than to get someone else to perform the service.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I make an effort to help without being asked.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I have a continuing desire to help, even when the one helped gives an ungrateful response.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I often have a greater concern for the well-being of others than for myself.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I am just as happy doing the less-recognised service as the high-profile service.

Now look at the list. Are there a lot of fours and fives? If so, you may have the gift of Helping.



MERCY QUESTIONNAIRE

THIS IS NOT A TEST. This is a tool to help you discover if you have the gift of mercy in your life. The following questions are indicators of the gift of mercy in your life. A score of one means this is rare in your life. A score of five means this is common.

- 1 2 3 4 5 You are sensitive to the needs of others, even those who do not tell you what is happening in their lives.
- 1 2 3 4 5 You find it easy to forgive, even those who hurt you or those you care about. (remember, forgiving is not the same as forgetting)
- 1 2 3 4 5 You tend to be able to see and understand other people's points of view and feelings.
- 1 2 3 4 5 Even when you have the opportunity to hurt a person (who may deserve it), you go out of the way to avoid doing so.
- 1 2 3 4 5 You avoid talking about people who harm you or others.
- 1 2 3 4 5 When you talk to a person who has hurt or offended you, you tend to speak to them in a conciliatory manner rather than in a confrontational manner.
- 1 2 3 4 5 You find yourself wanting to help someone who offends you instead of wanting to "get even"

Now look at the list. Are there a lot of fours and fives? If so, you may have the gift of Mercy.