

Description of spiritual gifts

Administration

You have the special ability to strategize a plan of action from goals to completion. You like tasks that can be measured and derive satisfaction in seeing your work done well. You are able to identify and communicate key components of a project, breaking out and prioritizing tasks for optimum efficiency. You are not easily distracted and can focus attention on objectives as you patiently facilitate the daily work and details. Others may have the idea, but you are the one who can make it happen.

This gift is almost always found in combination with other gifts. Make a careful study of your companion gifts to learn where Jesus Christ may be calling you to serve.

Gifts of administration are valuable assets to the Body of Christ. Persons with this spiritual gift understand the mechanics of executing many tasks and details. They see ahead to the next step and can forecast obstacles that others may not recognize. The service they provide allows others to do their work more smoothly (2 Corinthians 9:12).

Administrators are not always natural leaders. Look to others for any relational strengths that you may lack. Don't be afraid to offer your excellent planning skills when you see the need. People with the gift of administration are sometimes content to stay in the background and offer advice only when something has failed or proved inefficient. You have a talent for anticipating obstacles as you work out the details. Offer this skill to the glory of God and be confident in the value of this much needed gift as you work to enhance the efficiency of a plan or project.

Creative Ability

When we think of creative ability, we usually think of the arts, such as music, writing, painting, or drama. These talents serve the body of Christ and honor God by calling attention to His creation, love, and divine purposes (Exodus 31:3–5).

Persons with a gift for being creative may also have a talent for solving problems. This ability, combined with a gift of leadership, can have significant impact on ministry. Those who think creatively are often innovative thinkers. They shed new light on old ideas or ways of doing things and are often original thinkers. Those with this gift can take the mundane and communicate brilliance, inspiring others to reach beyond limitations to fulfill God's will and purpose.

Creative thinkers may also have a valuable talent for making the most of limited resources. They contemplate a project and see the possibilities in terms that are solution driven. When others throw up their hands and call a task or project "impossible," they are more likely to imagine success.

Creative energy enhances every other gift, infusing the challenge of living for Christ with beauty, wonder, and freshness. Creative ability takes ministry in new directions and communicates a faith that is optimistic. How this impacts individuals and groups cannot be measured or overestimated.

Be intentional about utilizing your talents for Christ. In order to see the broader application of this gift and what it can mean for the Body of Christ, take a close look at your companion gifts. If teaching is a companion gift think how valuable you would be working with small groups or children. If hospitality or service is among your primary gifts think how your combined skills can enhance ministry in related areas.

Because your gifts may be highly visible to others, you might be called into service often. You have permission from God to set appropriate boundaries, which will facilitate your effectiveness and unique calling to serve the body of Christ. If you tend to be undisciplined in your walk with Christ commit to change that now. Invite your spouse, small group, or a good friend to hold you accountable so that your energies are not wasted.

Deliverance

Deliverance can be a confusing topic. Various denominations define related terms differently. For the purpose of this discussion, deliverance is **NOT** exorcism. Instead, the following components may be present: confidential discussion, time for confession, prayer, and fasting.

Follow-up and a mentoring relationship, including the possibility of counseling with a Christian professional, may be necessary. Sin that has resulted in entrenched and unhealthy behaviors may require a serious commitment to bring about significant change. Christian friends, church attendance, and especially the reading of God's Word are necessary for any who are seeking genuine deliverance and victory.

All those who share Christ, and pray with or for unbelievers to be saved, are doing the work of deliverance. They are turning the lost from the dominion of Satan to God. They are inviting prayer for forgiveness of sins and for an eternal, life changing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Those who embrace deliverance as a calling and ministry take the supernatural seriously. They have an inner sense, a God-given intuition, of Satan at work in the lives of both the saved and the unsaved. They know that all unsaved persons

need deliverance from sin and from oppression by satanic forces. They also know that once saved, individuals may need deliverance, not for salvation, but for freedom from evil that persists in maintaining a hold on them. Prayer for deliverance is not usually offered unless invited by a believer who recognizes that oppression or harassment by evil spirits is a component of a conflict, struggle, or suffering (Ephesians 6:12).

Those with a prior history of involvement with the occult may need special prayer for deliverance. If one's family has strong generational ties to occult beliefs and practices, deliverance and healing for damaged emotions and for the freedom to stand in Christ may be necessary. Believers should not hold on to books or related artifacts or continue to indulge in practices used in support of their previous life.

Satan works through the consequences and hurts generated by the sin we inflict on ourselves. He also exploits childhood trauma. Children are ill equipped to understand and process trauma. Adult victims of such trauma may have confused or even absent memories. Our enemy will exploit unreasonable and misplaced emotions, gaining influence through festering wounds. Those who actively pursue deliverance as a ministry should network with one or two Christian counselors to whom they can feel confident in making a referral as part of the mentoring and follow-up process. When the need for deliverance goes unrecognized, counseling is often stymied (1 Peter 5:8).

What happens as a lost individual steps from darkness to light? What is it that we are saved from as we call upon the Savior of the universe in repentance and grief, seeking a solution to sin and exchanging spiritual estrangement for adoption into the family of God? Paul describes this moment with great eloquence in Acts 26, as he quotes Jesus Christ and describes his salvation experience. All unsaved persons, knowingly or unknowingly, overtly or passively, by intention or omission, are operating as enemies of God. Any Christian who expects to use this gift must understand and feel burdened by the reality of this concept.

Much of the sin in our lives, and especially hidden sin, results from a failure to forgive. The practice of deliverance requires spiritual maturity and a willingness to trust the sovereignty of God as we allow forgiveness to work in and through us.

All Christians can pray for deliverance, but some are gifted to do this work as a calling. A characteristic of those who most effectively use this gift is that they tend to be pragmatic. They do not jump to conclusions. An investigative bent, knowledge of God's Word, and a strong faith are necessary prerequisites. Sometimes this gift may seem like an unwelcome burden, because of the commitment to others that it requires.

Discernment

Persons with the gift of discernment use intuition balanced by knowledge of Scripture to spot a disingenuous person or false teaching, especially when the body of Christ is threatened. Some persons with a spiritual gift of discernment may be called to a deliverance ministry.

Study and pray over your companion gifts for a more individual application. For example, often the gift of giving is paired with that of discernment. This seems entirely logical since there are many competing interests for our dollars, and many people try to profit from fundraising pleas.

Those who develop this gift might know when someone is claiming power that only belongs to God. Throughout history the church has needed to be on guard against false teachers and false teaching. Those who have the companion gift of knowledge are adept at discerning falsehood. For this reason, they are needed in the church to distinguish sometimes very subtle errors in teaching Scripture that pervert the intent of God's Word.

There are many examples in Scripture that teach us about this gift. Barnabas exercised his spiritual gift of discernment shortly after Paul was blinded during his encounter with the risen Savior on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:26–28). Although he had no more objective evidence than the other believers, Barnabas used his gift of discernment to investigate for himself. Despite prevailing opinion and opposition, he facilitated Paul's acceptance as a true believer. In doing this he displayed courage in the face of risk. He also assisted in Paul's future ministry to the gentiles by defending him and speaking the truth about Paul's deliverance.

In the same way, "discerners" are often called to be investigators. They balance the gift of discernment with knowledge of Scripture and stay open to God's leading through prayer. They understand whether a person or claim is from Jesus Christ, from Satan, or egotistically centered on man's agenda.

People who have this ability sometimes wonder how they have arrived at certain conclusions before others. They question their right to judge, which is especially undermined by a culture steeped in situational ethics. Your gift requires you to be courageous and brave. Pray for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, your teacher and comforter. Humble yourself before God in prayer, understanding that you may sometimes be wrong and that only God is infallible. Above all, be disciplined to study and know God's Word.

Evangelism

Evangelists reap what others have sowed. Many saints will faithfully persist in prayer and scatter seeds through their various gifts, but evangelists will arrive on the scene just at that juncture when the Holy Spirit is about to infuse a lost soul with saving grace.

Acts 8:26–39 gives us an inspiring example of the gift of evangelism. Evangelists are often prompted to witness to strangers in impromptu circumstances. Evangelists must develop sensitivity to these inner promptings, inspired by God.

Evangelists share the gospel with the unsaved in such a way that men and women are brought to the foot of the Cross in repentance, seeking forgiveness of sins and a personal relationship with a living and holy Savior. These persons never tire of delivering the same clear and simple message of Jesus Christ crucified and sinners saved through faith. They have the ability to speak to all persons, regardless of status or lack thereof, about the joys of knowing Christ juxtaposed with the deadly consequence of rejecting him.

Those who actively use this gift may have the experience of altering their plans due to inner promptings from the Holy Spirit. They will converse with strangers or make unplanned hospital or home visits. Preachers with this gift might alter a planned sermon because of a special sensitivity from the Holy Spirit for the souls that God has placed before them. If you are not a preacher you will have similar experiences of sharing Christ, sometimes in circumstances you have never imagined. For you, sharing Christ is a joy, and your faith sustains you through opposition. You trust God and not your own efforts.

Because there is great spiritual opposition to the exercise of your gift, you will benefit from joining a committed prayer group. If you have this gift and have not often used it, join a prayer group and attend on a regular basis. Ask God to make you alert and sensitive to those opportunities (divine appointments) to share Christ (2 Timothy 4:1–2).

Evangelists may be called, on many occasions, to share the message of salvation without knowing the outcome. The invitation has been given, but the person has declined the opportunity to trust Christ. Many evangelists will be surprised, when they get to heaven, to meet the “strangers” whose lives they have eternally impacted. Evangelists should continue to share Christ as the Holy Spirit leads, without giving in to discouragement. God calls you to faithfully implement your gift, entrusting the eventual outcome to God. Your blessings are many.

Circumstances will conspire to keep you from exercising this gift. You need people around you who will support your burden for sharing Christ. Be intentional about using this gift. Beware of self-talk and self-doubt that impede your best intentions to share Christ. It may seem easier to share Christ with strangers than with loved ones. Become comfortable in telling your personal salvation story.

Exhortation

Many Christian professional or lay counselors have the gift of exhortation, which has sometimes been called the gift of encouragement. Those with the gift of exhortation have the special ability to offer a rebuke or challenge in such a way that others are inspired to change. They can also encourage those who are despondent or struggling to persevere in their faith, offering the hope of Christ in dealing with life’s difficulties. Others often confide in them; if they can keep a confidence and exercise healthy boundaries for themselves and others, they can have an effective and powerful ministry to the body of Christ. For this reason knowledge of Scripture is important so that they can share advice that is inspired from God’s Word.

Persons with this gift sense when others are discouraged. They are sensitive to the frustrations of others, especially when self-doubt or damaging self-talk is an issue. At these times, exhorters are burdened to pray and often have companion gifts of faith and intercession. Exhorters are adept at identifying the causal impetus for change. Preparation and knowledge are prerequisites for effective ministry. It is also important to understand your authority in Christ to implement this gift, despite prevailing opinions or constraints of political correctness.

You are interested in the motivations of others and value sincerity and honesty in your interactions. If you decide to fully exercise this gift, others will seek you out because you are not inclined to be superficial. In fact you become impatient and even suspicious when others offer thoughtless advice, because you understand the significance of extending God’s love and truth to hurting persons.

Others know and sense your attentive concern. Sincerity invites trust, and so those who need the truth seek after your advice. You have a talent for sharing yourself in such a way that persons are inspired to change or to persevere despite conflict and obstacles. Although you may not always be appreciated, you are the person with a talent for saying the right thing at the right time so that God’s people can be victorious. You dispense hope and healing, and in the process your own life is touched by that love from God that you so willingly share.

Caution: Let your advice be firmly centered in God’s wisdom. Because others are drawn to you, it will be important for you to set healthy and appropriate boundaries. You must also avoid becoming overly involved in the lives of others.

Because your advice must be firmly rooted in Scripture, you need to read and study God's Word, seeking depth of understanding. Don't take credit for what God can accomplish through your gifts.

Many apologists/teachers have the gift of exhortation. Those with the gift of prophecy may also have this gift. Make a study of your companion gifts to learn more about your calling. If companion gifts are weak, set about studying Scripture in order to grow in your faith so that this gift can be fully operational, with a friendship/counseling application. Exhorters can help others understand concepts of healing through forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Seek this healing for yourself first if you harbor personal wounds or sin related to forgiveness.

When you feel inclined to reach out to someone you don't know, don't be afraid. Your gift is much needed and others are hungry for God's love exercised through your gift of exhortation and encouragement. Look for opportunities to help others either reaffirm their faith or come to new faith in Jesus Christ.

Faith

Corrie Ten Boom wrote the following description of faith: "Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible."

The Christian life does not exist without faith, and while God has allotted a measure of faith to all his children, He has given this powerful force in greater measure to some (Romans 12:3). It is our faith in God that gives us authority in Christ to heal, pray, and to live a godly life firmly fixed in the center of his will.

The exercise of faith through prayer or interaction with those around us must be accompanied by love. Love is the characteristic that differentiates true faith from false religions or individuals (1 Corinthians 13:2). Faith is that valuable assurance of God's sovereign will and purpose despite overwhelming odds and against all logic.

Persons with this gift trust Jesus Christ with great certainty, which allows you to see his hand and purpose in circumstances that baffle others. You do not need to know everything in order to trust. Trusting God is part of who you are. In trusting God, through the mystery of faith, you can become a great prayer warrior, and it is likely that you have the companion gift of intercession.

The prophet Daniel is an example of a man who possessed the gift of faith. Many of his prayers were prophetic in nature, and this ability to pray in the spirit is a characteristic of prayer rooted in the power of faith. Daniel never saw the majority of his prayers answered during his lifetime, and yet we have proof in Scripture that many came true after his death, while we still await the fulfillment of others. Like Daniel, your faith allows you to persist in prayer despite lack of immediate answers. Your gift of faith is a rock that can sustain ministry, change lives, and alter events.

Individuals with this gift communicate great hope and comfort to others in the midst of storms, conflicts, trials, and suffering. Whatever your companion gifts, faith will enhance them all. Faith is a powerful supernatural force that supports ministry, opposes evil, draws the lost to Christ, and confirms God's will in others. Those with this gift often feel the prompting of the Holy Spirit to reach out to others, even strangers, offering encouragement and prayer. You are especially capable of forming genuine, long lasting friendships. Your faith trusts in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform the most sin burdened life.

Those with the spiritual gift of faith communicate optimism in the power of God to work in all circumstances. You are quick to point those who are disillusioned and weary back to the Cross, reminding others of God's unfailing love. In this you are the friend that is needed at pivotal times.

Your faith is meant to be a beacon of light to other Christians and the lost. Be intentional about exercising your gifts. Take no credit for yourself because Jesus your Savior and Lord has richly blessed you for a divine reason and purpose.

In these words of Saint Augustine we sense the joy of discovering this very great truth: "Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe."

Giving

Those with the gift of giving have a freedom from material constraints. Ownership does not determine your identity. Those with the gift of giving live with the underlying awareness that life is temporary and are more firmly focused on eternity than others are.

Those with this gift have a special responsibility to be intentional about stewardship. It may be that you have a natural talent for stewardship or that this is another spiritual gift. Possessions and riches hold less temptation for you. For this very reason, you must be connected to ministry and stay open to God's call to support his work.

Another avenue for this gift is in inspiring others to give. You can do this better than others because you long to give in the same way. You derive great joy in being part of a successful ministry. You want to facilitate God's work so that the lost can be won to Christ in greater numbers, so that the poor and hurting are ministered to, and so that God's Word can go out into the world unhindered by Satan. There are many blessings associated with giving to God's kingdom. All of them have eternal significance (Luke 16:9).

Rich or poor persons can have the gift of giving. The Macedonian church was very poor and yet they sacrificed to give to the suffering saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8:2–4). This kind of giving provides a compelling testimony of God's grace. When poor persons give out of their poverty, they are a source of conviction to rich persons who give from their abundance and somehow imagine it is the same. This sacrificial giving is always a significant challenge to the body of Christ.

Those with the gift of giving usually have a companion gift of discernment. This is because giving sustains ministry. We need those who give to be smart about their giving, to investigate and pray about the best places to give. If you have this gift you may want to read the gift description for discernment. A priority in giving must be the church, which is described in Scripture as God's household and the body of Christ.

Guard against the temptation to control what you give beyond what is healthy. Develop the "grace of giving," recognized in Scripture. Ask Jesus to allow you more opportunities to give. Just as valuable may be your talent for facilitating ministry through the giving of others whom you inspire or network with for kingdom purposes. You can accomplish this by making the financial needs of a ministry known to other persons, and might even be employed in a non-profit organization or a church. Make a concerted effort to stay connected and involved in a church body.

Be discerning about your giving and about those causes you decide to network for. God tells us that during the judgment some of our acts will be burned up as useless chaff, despite our best intentions. Give to kingdom purposes and do not allow a generous heart to lead you down another path.

Healing

The most significant healing that takes place is the healing of the heart from the ravages of sin and death (Romans 5:6–8). Only Jesus Christ can give us eternal life. In this context, all Christians who share the message of salvation and point the lost to Christ participate in the ministry of healing. Since our common calling is to point the lost to Jesus Christ, there is a strong and vital healing component in the exercise of God's grace through all the spiritual gifts.

Those with the gift of healing are called to the ministry of reconciliation. What is this ministry of reconciliation/healing?

The exercise of this gift requires a commitment to intercessory prayer, frequent accountability and repentance from known and hidden sin, sometimes fasting, and an ongoing search of Scripture. It is our faith through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit that allows us to be God's ambassadors, "as though God were making his appeal through us." Because this is true, we can pray with confidence for both physical and emotional healing.

Physical illness is made up of various symptoms, and some of these symptoms come from complex and multiple sources. A person could need "healing prayer" for physical illness, for emotional pain, or for spiritual sickness. It has long been understood that emotional pain, from whatever source, can trigger or worsen physical illness. The person who prays for the healing of another should ask God to help him or her discern what kind of healing prayer is needed.

1. God rescues the ungodly, healing them from the ravages of sin and death.
2. God heals through the work of medical professionals.
3. God heals through the body's natural immune system.
4. Our Savior heals through the prayer, fasting, and "laying on of hands" of God's believers. Sometimes He chooses to heal miraculously and instantaneously (James 5:14–15).
5. God heals through intercession. In Numbers chapter 12 Aaron's wife Miriam had leprosy, which resulted from the sin of speaking against God's servant. Moses interceded on her behalf. Also James 5:15.
6. God heals through the words we speak. Some persons are particularly gifted to speak godly words of encouragement and counsel to others.
7. God heals through the process of confession and repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Throughout the gospels, Jesus and his apostles identified sickness and death as Satan's work, related to the temptation of Adam and subsequent fall of man. They were quick to offer healing prayer. Healing and other miracles were signs that pointed to the authenticity of Jesus' claim that He was the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

The ministry of healing drew people to the teachings of Christ in the first century, just as the need to be healed brings people to church today. Some seek physical healing. Some are attracted to the church in their search for God. They need healing for the heart and soul through the person of Jesus Christ. Others will cross the threshold of a church hoping to find a solution for loneliness or personal conflicts. Despite their faith they feel unfulfilled and hope to find significance and change as members of God's family. These people are drawn to those with healing gifts of mercy, faith, intercession, and hospitality. They need to be taught, counseled, or befriended. If we can be deliberate about using our healing gifts we will have a truly worthwhile and needed ministry.

Sometimes God will choose to heal miraculously and instantaneously, but more often He works through a process that includes medical intervention. Those with the gift of healing have a companion gift of faith. Our need for healing draws us closer to the person of Jesus Christ, as we learn what it means to depend on him and call him “Father.”

Many imagine a healing ministry in the context of emotionalism and manipulation or believe that the miracles described in Scripture are not applicable for today. Others believe that we should demand instant healing from God, and if healing doesn't come as we expect, something is wrong with us. Making a study of this gift allows us to bring clarity. A commitment to intercessory prayer and a deep abiding faith in God's sovereign right to work as He chooses is a necessary component of exercising the gift of healing. Healing takes place through the power of the Triune God and in the name of Jesus Christ. Healing comes by no other name (including that of angels). God allows suffering (Psalm 119:71), and our suffering will often point others to Jesus Christ. How we view suffering is significant to our Christian walk (1 Peter 2:20–21).

Every kind of illness can be traced to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. The kind of sorrow that leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10–11) is contrition that comes from a conviction of sin. God tells us that this kind of sorrow brings no regret. It frees us to live for Christ despite our many inadequacies. Through the healing and counseling gifts, we often assist persons through a process of being restored to Christ. In the interest of not offending people, we sometimes fail to suggest repentance, and yet this is a vital component of a healing ministry (Hebrews 12:7–13).

Hospitality

Persons with the gift of hospitality have a special ability to make family members, guests, or coworkers feel welcome and comfortable. Hurting persons are more likely to share their thoughts and insights when someone is exercising this gift.

Those with the gift of hospitality are sensitive to the feelings of others. They sense the emotional climate of groups and have an intuitive desire to ease tensions. They bring out the best in individuals, groups, and institutions. Those who fully develop this gift can be valuable leaders and administrators. They are astute observers of human nature and intuitively sense the underlying dynamics around them. When a change is needed or a different response is called for, they may be the first to notice and are quick to respond. This gift can be a powerful force for Christ in breaking down barriers and generating a spirit of fellowship and cooperation.

Those with this gift can be effective peacemakers and natural diplomats. The application for this gift may change with your life circumstances, so stay sensitive to how God may be calling you.

Persons with this gift can host small or large groups, welcome visiting missionaries, and support the efforts of others in the exercise of their gifts. In fact, every small group or Sunday school class needs someone with this gift to help create an inviting and caring atmosphere where participants can feel safe to share honestly. The potential of this gift to bring healing is significant.

Do people confide in you? This is often the case because brothers and sisters with this gift are especially warm and genuine in their personal interactions. Persons who may struggle under a personal burden feel “at home” and comfortable in your presence. Exercise your gift of hospitality in cooperation with your companion gifts. Seek that unique application that is part of your divine calling to bring healing to the body of Christ (Romans 12:11–13).

Those with this gift stand out in the secular workplace for their genuine and caring spirit. Look for opportunities to model the love of Christ to those who are unsaved or hurting. You have a divinely appointed ability to influence the secular work place, to heal hurts, and facilitate God's plan.

Take this natural, God-given ability seriously and apply it strategically as a gift from your Savior. Make a conscious effort to be worthy of the trust that others place in you when they ask your advice, confide an issue, or depend on you to facilitate ministry. Think beyond the narrow definition of the word and consider the many ways this gift can be utilized in your daily walk with Jesus Christ. As your path intercepts those of family, strangers, friends, or acquaintances, consider the need of others to feel significant and affirmed. You are especially equipped to model the love of Jesus Christ.

Intercession

Nothing happens in the kingdom of God without prayer, and because of prayer great and marvelous wonders are accomplished through believers. God desires, above all, a personal relationship with us, and through this special gift of intercession, you can develop that.

Intercessors may have the experience of being wakened from sleep to pray. They feel a supernatural burden to petition God for purposes and people not intimately known to them, and yet the Holy Spirit gives words and imparts knowledge that is sometimes surprising (Romans 8:26–27).

You feel a great burden for the unsaved, for those who are emotionally wounded, for the sick, and for those in the midst of spiritual battle. Feeling this burden is only the beginning for those who embrace this gift. Practicing intercession as a

way of life will change, grow, and mature the character of the inner person. E. M. Bounds writes: “Our praying advances in power just as much as it rectifies the life. A prayerful life will grow in purity and devotion to God.”

You have the ability to pray for extended periods of time. You are called to set aside time for the relational significance of interacting with your Savior through prayer. If you ignore God’s call to pray, none of your gifts can be fully developed.

It is said that intercessors see more frequent and faster answers to prayer. This statement is misleading. Because intercessors pray more often, they are more likely to pray within the scope of God’s will as He lays a burden or a call upon their heart and mind.

Above all, remember that your gift of intercession must be intentional and disciplined. Imagine yourself a soldier in the army of God. Victory has already been determined, but because of sin, many battles remain and lots of blood will be shed. You are among the frontline troops, honored for your bravery and courage. Your prayers affect the outcome of many bloody and fierce battles to defend by faith the purposes and will of a holy God, against the very real and utterly malevolent forces of evil. Your gift of intercession is identified as an important piece of battle equipment in the “full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:10–20).

Intercessors have great faith and pray in expectation of a godly outcome. This allows you to thank God in advance for his answers. Those who are committed to intercession develop an awareness of the supernatural components of faith that others may miss. Daniel is an example of a powerful intercessor. Many answers to his prayers came within his lifetime, but even more were realized after he had gone home to be with the Lord. Intercessors who develop their gift have the divinely inspired potential to pray prophetically for God’s purposes.

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You may want to make a study of the Book of Daniel, in particular Daniel 9:20–23 and 10:12–14. Through the Book of Daniel, we have a glimpse of the unseen spiritual warfare that is affected by prayer and especially by disciplined and committed prayer intercessors.

When we intercede in prayer, we are not alone. We seek the leading of the Holy Spirit. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Our prayers rise like incense as we kneel before the throne of grace. Angels and departed saints pray with us in the general assembly of heaven.

Caution: You must be sensitive to your conscience and not reluctant to ask for God’s forgiveness or admit when you are wrong. Notice how many prayers recorded in Scripture begin with words of repentance. You must also be sensitive to circumstances that may conspire to keep you from prayer. Prayer is so very powerful that evil forces oppose it whenever possible.

Knowledge

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Leadership

Good leaders inspire others and articulate a vision of what could be. Fully effective leaders stay centered on Scripture as the foundation of all they seek to accomplish for God’s kingdom. Leaders naturally inspire others to imagine success.

They understand that success can only come by many parts accomplishing many tasks, and so they bring together multiple talents and strengths for a common purpose.

Leaders communicate effectively and can break down challenges into more easily accomplished parts, which they then delegate and oversee. They create an environment that nourishes creativity and is unafraid of innovation. Good leaders notice when others are spinning their wheels or likely to become unproductive, and are not afraid to change course or require a different model as they redefine goals and realign thinking.

Leaders inspire a unity of purpose so that when change is needed, others trust. Integrity is the watchword of all good leaders. They model the way by practicing those same qualities they prize in others. In doing this they lead by example, creating an atmosphere that values progress, builds confidence, and provides momentum, even as they inspire others to reach their full potential.

Leaders take the time to recognize the gifts of others, delegating responsibility with accountability at various levels. They do not have authority to abuse others, taking improper advantage of their position. At some point they will stand before God to give an account of how their leadership hindered or furthered God's purposes.

Leaders need to have a humble appreciation of their need to stay accountable to God. Equally important is a responsibility to view their position over others as no accident. Persons who have leadership as a spiritual gift, rather than a talent, have a strong sense of fairness. They are willing to share the limelight and remain committed to a personal standard of honesty. Because good leaders are naturally loved and respected, they can share Christ with great effectiveness and should not hesitate to do so.

As with all gifts, we can shirk or misuse our strengths, allowing them to become weaknesses manipulated by our Enemy. Leaders in the secular workplace must stay faithful to Christian principles despite challenges and temptations to do otherwise. The very qualities that make for an effective leader can be a powerful force for Christ in any environment. Those with the spiritual gift of leadership must remain aware of the high standard God will hold them to. God has entrusted to leaders the progress and accomplishments of his children. Leaders must not take for granted the power they have been given to influence outcomes, efficiency, and progress, as well as the personal accomplishments and growth of individuals and organizations.

Make a careful study of your companion gifts. This may provide direction and insight into the uniqueness of your calling. If you have this gift and are not in a position to use it, begin praying for your Savior to mature your faith and develop your companion gifts so that you can be fully used to impact his kingdom. Remember also that many gifts of leadership are needed in volunteer service to the church and other Christian non-profit agencies. Allow God to use your gifts in surprising and creative ways for his glory. Make a careful study of the life of Christ and seek to emulate his qualities of leadership.

Mercy

This valuable spiritual gift empowers God's children to model the unconditional love of Jesus Christ. Those with this gift demonstrate true empathy (sharing the feelings and hurts of others). Mercy is greatly enhanced by cheerfulness (Romans 12:8b). The root of this cheerfulness is great faith, which trusts optimistically in the power of God's promises for hurting persons. Because you possess such faith, you can see beyond the constraints of sin and suffering to glimpse the eternally blessed possibilities. Your willingness to communicate the joy of your faith to those who have lost hope is significant.

You see beneath the façade of a brave front. For this reason it is important to trust those inclinations which prompt you to reach out to others. An encouraging word or act of kindness from you, the cup of cold water (Matthew 10:42), is powerful and significant, since it is often the gift of mercy that makes a difference in the life of another.

You understand emotions of helplessness, isolation, fear, and anger, and can offer great hope of change to others. The empathy you feel usually comes from personal suffering, so you can offer spiritual advice for those undergoing similar difficulties. Those who are most impacted by your gift are described in Scripture as the physically ill, those possessed by demons, the mentally impaired, the lame, the dumb, the lepers, as well as those who are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins. Like Jesus, you are "moved to compassion" for all who suffer and for all who are lost.

Mercy is a Healing Gift, and through this gift you can offer the hope of change to those who are most burdened by sin. You are also "response" oriented. You want to see solutions realized in the lives of others, and may sometimes strive with an individual beyond what is healthy. Learning when to retreat in prayer and when to be less available requires discernment. On the other hand, your desire to "never give up" is a picture of God's desire that none of his children should perish (Matthew 18:14).

One of your greatest assets is your ability to love the sinner, inviting repentance and confession. You have a gift for doing this without devaluing the person. You are sometimes called to say hard, but true, words as you challenge others to change. The love that God has planted in your heart shines forth in genuine faith.

You possess powerful qualities of empathy and compassion that draw hurting persons to you. For this reason you need to fully understand when “help” is a hindrance, giving yourself permission to set limits without guilt. In doing this, ask the Holy Spirit to give you an additional gift of discernment or become accountable to a friend or spouse who has this gift. In the full operation of this gift, you model the principal of loving your brother or sister as yourself. Jesus identified this as the second most important commandment and very like the first, since only through the work of the Holy Spirit can we be instruments of true love (Matthew 22:37–39).

Hurting persons are less likely to be defensive in your company. You share Christ with courage. When others are daunted by the challenge to love the unlovely, you step forth since you are not intimidated by suffering or sin. Mother Teresa said about mercy: “You can not comfort the afflicted without afflicting the comfortable.” As you exercise the gift of mercy, you might at times challenge others to love, to risk, and to give more. You may also decide that you will strive with someone over time, persisting in love, but remembering that love fails without honesty.

Your overwhelming desire is to see hurting persons saved and rescued. The influence of your gift greatly impacts ministry at all levels, and in an increasingly narcissistic culture, you are needed more than ever before.

Caution: You may have a tendency to be codependent. Some have had the experience of failing needy persons by being too enmeshed—especially with loved ones. Understand your boundaries and the limitations of your responsibility in regard to the emotional and physical safety of yourself and others. Resist the temptation to rely on feelings, turning to Scripture as your authority. Maintain perspective by understanding where your first responsibilities lie, staying accountable to a spouse or friend.

Prophecy

The gift of prophecy edifies the body of Christ, which is the church (1 Corinthians 14:1–4). True prophets have a sensitive conscience, which calls them to model godly love. Many are called into full-time Christian service. They have an urgent sense of God’s timing in the life of sinners and feel genuine grief when moral consequences impact the body of Christ. Read the story of the prophet Micaiah in 1 Kings 22. True prophets point the lost to Christ and seek to lovingly restore those Christians who have strayed.

God gives every true prophet a platform. This platform may exist in the Christian or secular arena and is always a voice for righteousness. Prophets are called to be defenders of truth and need a companion gift of discernment. It is not uncommon for them to feel ambivalent over potential risks demanded by their calling. When others are confused, they have crisp, decisive insight and can convey God’s intent with authority. This persona of authority is significant and can be abused if not surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

The exercise of this gift is extremely valuable when social norms and biblical values are held in low esteem and are under attack by social and political agendas. Prophets of old spoke the truth and had a finely tuned awareness of right and wrong. They boldly and with great eloquence confronted kings and common citizens, as well as the religious establishments of their day, leaving us an indelible record of how God views sin and false religion: as a caustic and deadly agent capable of polluting the generations.

Modern prophets are no different. They are alarmed when false teaching threatens to pollute God’s Word, or when those in positions of authority abuse power or privilege. Today we have the biblical record, and so prophets have no need to receive divine revelation, predicting future events. They are, however, visible in calling attention to social ills, injustice, and sin and predicting consequences as they agitate for change. Old Testament prophets were often not appreciated or fully understood until after future events or consequences had confirmed the message they were called to deliver. Sometimes this occurred fairly soon, but sometimes not until long after the prophet had died. We have many examples of this principle being played out in the events of history via the inspired words of Old Testament prophets. Because we have God’s Word, prophecy today is not about predicting future events, but about having the discernment to warn against the obvious consequences of sin. A more contemporary example can be seen in the writings of Christian apologist Francis Schaeffer, whose warnings and predictions have found fruition in the late 20th and now the 21st century.

Those who choose to embrace and exercise this gift are often rugged individualists who have a strong internal compass, allowing them to rely less on outside influences and more on the voice of the Holy Spirit.

God has set some aside as modern-day prophets. Through the courage and clarity of these individuals we are challenged to live as we should. We are inspired to right wrongs for the sake of Christ and to radically change our lives in order to serve him in those dark places that God is most needed. The Holy Spirit has anointed true prophets to communicate in powerful and significant ways, offering us the opportunity to examine our defensiveness, repent, and change.

The test of a true Old Testament prophet was that they could never be wrong in predicting the future. This standard would certainly disqualify those television prophets who make outrageous claims, often repeated by Christians who are

blinded by theatrics and manipulated by emotion. Knowledge of Scripture is an essential component of this gift being effective, since guarding against false teachings is a vital responsibility of modern-day prophets.

Prophets make effective preachers/teachers. Prophets sometimes lack worldly credentials and have come to faith out of profound brokenness. Those with this gift have insight to interpret God's will and Word with great spiritual depth. Those who exercise this gift are never comfortable or able to ignore the signs and symptoms of culture in relation to sin. This concept extends from the immediate environment to the broader societal stage. Prophets relate well to the words of Jeremiah, who describes a supernaturally blessed compulsion to speak for Christ and against evil (Jeremiah 20:9).

Paul was warned by a prophet about an upcoming trip to Jerusalem (Acts 21). The prophet Agabus most certainly knew that Paul's trip would be dangerous since the persecution of Christians in that city was no secret. Agabus communicated a divine warning which armed Paul more specifically for the task ahead. As you read the passage you will notice that Agabus spoke against prevailing opinion. While others wanted Paul to stay safe, Agabus had the courage to convey God's message. The message of a prophet will often evoke conflict. Jesus said, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). It is often the task of a prophet to wield that sword.

Prophets have divine insight to pray within the will of God and confirm or reject prevailing opinion as God directs. Prophets attract criticism. As they teach and challenge the misconceptions of others, they can become objects of satanic opposition. The influence that prophets are called to exercise, and the territory they claim for Christ, will dismantle enemy strongholds. Prophets need the prayerful support of other believers. Many pastors exercise this gift in the church. All church members should pray for their pastor and his family.

Some believe that prophecy, as evidenced in the Old Testament, is no longer a gift for today. Others confuse the gift of prophecy with that of knowledge or wisdom. Still others think of prophecy in the narrow context of predicting future events. In any case, prophecy is under debate in many Christian circles, with some ascribing it too much significance and others too little. Like all gifts, that of prophecy balances and contributes needed directives to the body of Christ.

Make a careful study of your companion gifts. Some with this spiritual gift may be lawyers, writers, teachers, pastors, missionaries, or evangelists. Prophets are sometimes in the secular workplace standing in the gap for Christ: defending the helpless and the weak, righting wrongs, and deconstructing evil. Prophets speak Christ crucified and sinners saved; they predict future events, call attention to false teaching, point the finger at destructive societal and cultural trends, and always call the lost to the foot of the Cross, proclaiming the gospel with courage and insight.

Knowledge of Scripture is essential to developing the gift of prophecy and guards against a potential to abuse God's intent for this gift (1 Thessalonians 5:19–22).

Service

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:12–15).

These verses describe the great impact of the spiritual gift of service on the body of Christ. Those who possess this gift are humble in nature. They do not seek attention or praise from men and are content to be about God's work.

It is true that too often faithful acts of service go unrecognized as the work of Christ is supported in many areas, in diverse ways, and through willing commitments. Those with this gift have a keen sensitivity to the needs around them. They anticipate tasks, value continuity, and attend to details that others may miss. The gift of service is proactive. While the rest of us are still talking and planning, you may have stepped forward to fix and facilitate.

The gift of service has great healing potential. Through acts of kindness, you reach out to those who are in want or hurting. Those with this gift like to feel needed, especially when they know God has called them to accomplish something for his kingdom. The joy of your salvation is realized in supporting ministry, and you do not value the thanks of people over the love of your Savior. This attests to strength of character realized through your spiritual life as you work behind the scenes and feel personal satisfaction in knowing that you have played a part.

You have a servant's heart and may want to make a study of the word "servant" in the context of our being bondservants by choice through faith. There are many wonderful verses that identify us as servants of Jesus Christ, including these words of Paul: "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

Because of your obedience and loyalty to God through acts of service, people respect you and look to you as an example. You are not all "talk," but live out the reality of a genuine faith. Your humble heart is evident so that when you share your testimony, witnessing to your love of Jesus Christ, your integrity is trusted.

The church is the most obvious place where your spiritual gift of service can be utilized. If you are not already serving in some capacity in the church begin praying about what you might do. Offer your assistance in some area where your spiritual gifts are needed.

Guard the joy of your salvation. Remind yourself frequently that God's love for you is infinite and eternal. Recognize when you are tired and need a break, and be willing to change direction when the Lord speaks. The best way to hear his voice above the busyness of service is through frequent prayer. In order to know where your gift of service will be best applied, pray over and learn about your other spiritual gifts.

Shepherding

It does not surprise us that in Scripture we have the best definition of a shepherd. "He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (Isaiah 40:11).

Those with a shepherd's heart care deeply for others. They are able to take on the responsibility of caring for the spiritual protection and growth of an assembly of believers. Often the gift of shepherding is paired with a talent for leadership or may exist in combination with mercy, revealing a somewhat different application with more of a counseling focus.

Shepherds have varied responsibilities, all with practical applications. Those with this gift could "shepherd" a family, a church, a Sunday school class, a prayer group, a Bible study group, or any other small or large group where the spiritual growth of others is possible. Jesus calls himself "shepherd" and models for us the character and attributes needed for this role to be effective in the body of Christ.

Psalms 23 provides a vivid description of how God relates to us as his flock, as well as a model of vision, purpose, and tasks for those with the spiritual gift of shepherding. Of all the gifts, this one implies a serious level of commitment to prepare oneself to care for the spiritual development and welfare of other believers while evidencing the mind and heart of Jesus Christ.

The duties of a shepherd have an essential spiritual and practical application. In the following passages we see that shepherds:

- Defend the flock (1 Samuel 17:34–36; John 10:11–15).
- Water the flock (Genesis 29:2–10; John 4:10–14; 7:37–38).
- Provide rest to the flock (Jeremiah 33:12).
- Know the flock (John 10:3–5; Psalm 139:1–4).
- Secure pasture for the flock (1 Chronicles 4:39–41; Jeremiah 29:11; Isaiah 25:1).
- Search out wayward Christians, returning them to the flock (Ezekiel 34:12–16; Luke 15:4–7).
- Point the lost to Christ (John 10:7–10).

Shepherds may need to guard against overwork. If necessary, be accountable to another person for issues related to time. If making time for family, recreation, and prayer/contemplation seems impossible, and if you have difficulty delegating to others, pray about overcoming any faulty thinking.

Shepherds who have a companion gift of mercy need to consciously avoid being codependent, while shepherds with a companion gift of leadership need to avoid isolating themselves, making time for peer interaction and refreshment. All shepherds are leaders, and all shepherds need a merciful heart. The role of the spouse in keeping life balanced is particularly important for shepherds.

If shepherding is a gift to develop, it may be that you are using this gift in ways that you are not aware of. Be deliberate about equipping yourself through the study of God's Word so that He can use your talents and abilities in ministering to the body of Christ.

Shepherds can use their gifted abilities in the secular world as long as they are intentional about mentoring fellow Christians. They can do this because of a genuine and caring spirit that draws others to them.

Teaching

If your spiritual gift is teaching, then teaching is more than a talent or ability; it is a divine calling. Your challenge is to know and love the infallible Word of God and to proclaim it clearly and earnestly. In order to teach effectively, it is crucial that the accompanying gift of knowledge be sought and acquired (Jeremiah 9:23–24).

Teachers who are divinely called have the ability to make God's Word come alive. They communicate God's wisdom so that others can grow in their faith. They derive great satisfaction from knowing they have been used by God to assist others to mature in their understanding and appreciation of God's Word.

As you study and prepare to teach, the Holy Spirit speaks to you. Through study and teaching, you often feel you receive more blessings than you give. You can be supernaturally inspired to impart scriptural answers for the difficulties of life. Those divinely called to teach know when they are teaching in the Spirit.

Teachers require a sensitive conscience in order to see clearly when sin prevents them from being used by God. Become familiar with Psalm 51. The honesty of a good teacher enriches the lives of those he or she interacts with through the mentoring components of the teacher/pupil relationship. You are humbled as you realize there is always more to learn in the rich depths of his Word. It is impossible to read the New Testament writings of Paul without realizing that he was a gifted teacher (Colossians 2:2–3).

Teachers must also protect God's Word from misinterpretation and fallacy. The judgment that will fall on false teachers is clearly stated in many Scripture passages, including 2 Peter 2 and James 3:1. Stay focused on speaking and teaching God's truth, even when you are invited to do otherwise. Consider the restraint of culture that may influence or inhibit our willingness to aspire to a higher standard of honesty. Study to show yourself approved. The gift of teaching requires the discipline of study and prayer. Offer your spiritual gift to an organized assembly of believers. Let your love for others communicate and nourish intellect as you point the lost to Jesus Christ and inspire believers to grow, to sacrifice, and to serve.

A byproduct of this gift being fully surrendered to Jesus Christ is acquiring the additional gift of knowledge. The gift of knowledge protects against false teaching and discerns when God's word is being perverted or manipulated. Realize your role as a warrior for Christ in the satanic arena of falsehood. Teaching and creative talents combine very well in ministering to children and teens.

Willing and gifted teachers are always needed in the body of Christ. There is no substitute for the Word of God. The temptation today is to teach too many works written by other Christian writers and utilize Scripture less and less. Teachers who are mature in their gift will dig deeply into God's Word so that the Holy Spirit can communicate through them (2 Timothy 2:15).