



DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

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Overview

Discovering and understanding what your spiritual gifting is has several phases. First, pray for understanding and openness so you can be made aware of the gift the Holy Spirit has already placed inside you. Remember, you don't ask for the gift, you ask to be made aware of the gift.

Learn by doing. Get involved in different situations where you have to be dependent upon the Holy Spirit; consider ministries inside and outside your church. Branch out and try something new at school, work, in your community, or on a summer mission trip. You don't need to do things all at once, just be sure you try many different things.

Get ongoing, honest feedback from spiritually mature friends and leaders. Make an appointment with your pastor, youth leader, coach, close friend, your friend's parents, or teacher who knows you well, and ask them what they see in you.

Finally, take this Spiritual Gift Inventory. Read through the seven descriptions listed below. Mark all the statements (no matter which list they're on) you think seem to fit you well with a double "XX". Mark the statements you think may fit you with a single "X".

Some of the statements have a negative tone to them. These statements don't describe the gift itself, rather, the personality of a person in whom this gift is housed. As imperfect human beings, we often display both mature and immature behaviors, either of which may help you in assessing what your gifting is.

If you want, after you've thought over all the descriptions, have another person who knows you well⁰², and you trust to be honest with you, mark the statements they think seem to fit you well with a double "OO". Have them mark the statements they think may fit you with a single "O". You can do this now or at any later time you choose to.

When you've gone through all seven lists, add up the statements on each list you marked and enter the number at the bottom of each page. Give yourself one point for each statement whether you marked it "XX" or only "X". Then, figure out the approximate percentage of total statements marked. Do the same with the marks the other person gave you.

LIST NUMBER ONE

Distinctive Characteristics:

- _____ Very articulate in verbalizing truth, spoken, written or in song.
- _____ Boldness—particularly in relational interactions. May even be perceived as frightening at times.
- _____ Talks straight and standards are straight.
- _____ Uses Scripture to back up the truth proclaimed.
- _____ Has the capacity to identify/pinpoint and define evil.
- _____ Has the ability to discern the motives and character of people.
- _____ Burning desire to confront another's selfishness and break it.
- _____ Insists on behavioral evidence not words, of life change.
- _____ Direct, frank and persuasive in speaking.
- _____ Feelings don't matter as much as choices, facts, and the truth.
- _____ Hardheaded and uncompromising.
- _____ Confrontational more than relational.
- _____ Good talker but a poor listener.
- _____ Burning purpose is to proclaim truth and the consequences if it's rejected.
- _____ Doesn't compromise with sin.
- _____ Individualistic, strong self-image.
- _____ Strong sense of duty.
- _____ Concern for the reputation and character of God.
- _____ No particular care what anybody thinks about what they do.
- _____ Probably a strong opinionated person—may be stubborn.
- _____ Willing to take an underdog role.
- _____ Cannot tolerate hypocrisy.
- _____ Has an inward weeping and personal identification with the sins of those they talk with.
- _____ More prone to be depressed than be light-hearted about life and its problems.

_____ Total number of statements you marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

_____ Total number of statements the other person marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

This is the gift of _____ (to be described and filled in later)

LIST NUMBER TWO

Distinctive Characteristics:

- _____ Burning desire to meet physical needs.
- _____ Real insight into practical needs of others and the church.
- _____ Ability to recall specific likes and dislikes of people.
- _____ Is drawn to the details and specific things that need to be done.
- _____ Very hard to say “no” to things that need to be done.
- _____ Tendency to get involved in too many things.
- _____ Focuses on physical needs and may overlook people’s deeper needs.
- _____ Inevitably expects everyone to be just as dedicated and energetic as they are.
- _____ Wants to push others into jobs.
- _____ Wants to get the job over with ASAP so they can get on to the next one.
- _____ Desire to sense sincere appreciation and ability to detect insincerity.
- _____ Preoccupied with the immediate goal.
- _____ Tremendous physical stamina.
- _____ Extremely sacrificial. Involves others in sacrifices too.
- _____ More concerned about getting things done than getting along with others.
- _____ Inclined toward having a low self-image.
- _____ Frustrated by time limitations—when they can’t do that extra little bit.
- _____ Usually, easy going.
- _____ Loyal.
- _____ Listens to others uncritically.
- _____ Publicly more inhibited than expressive.
- _____ More submissive than dominant.
- _____ More tolerant of people than hostile to them.
- _____ Good mechanical mind.

_____ Total number of statements you marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

_____ Total number of statements the other person marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

This is the gift of _____

LIST NUMBER THREE

Distinctive Characteristics:

- _____ Always presents material in a systematic manner that fits together in context.
- _____ Stimulates others to learn.
- _____ Insists on using words accurately.
- _____ Arranges material simply so others can learn and remember.
- _____ Believes that their gift is foundational to other gifts and without teaching the Christian faith would fall apart.
- _____ Quotes a lot of Scripture and other sources to validate the truth.
- _____ Fits new knowledge into existing body of knowledge.
- _____ Tends to be more theoretical than practical.
- _____ Genuinely loves learning and studying.
- _____ Tests the knowledge of those who teach them.
- _____ Insists upon knowing the authority before accepting new knowledge.
- _____ Resists Scriptural verses or illustrations that are used out of context.
- _____ Can easily become proud of own knowledge and insight.
- _____ Relies more on own research than what others say in order to validate the truth.
- _____ Can rely on own teaching abilities and neglect the working of the Holy Spirit.
- _____ Thinks more analytically (information) than relationally (people-minded).
- _____ Creative and imaginative.
- _____ More objective (facts, figures, data) than subjective (feelings, perceptions).
- _____ Greater joy in researching truth than presenting it.
- _____ Self-disciplined.
- _____ Authoritative when explaining things.
- _____ Makes decisions based upon facts.
- _____ Tendency to talk more than listen.
- _____ Tends to have an accurate self-image.

_____ Total number of statements you marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

_____ Total number of statements the other person marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

This is the gift of _____

LIST NUMBER FOUR

Distinctive Characteristics:

- _____ Practical in everything that is done.
- _____ Painfully bored with theoretical teaching.
- _____ Constant theme is what is impossible with men is possible with God.
- _____ Faith is an acceptance of God's grace for every situation in life.
- _____ Able to visualize what a person can be through God's sanctifying love.
- _____ Delights in personal conferences which lead to new insights.
- _____ Prone to view man's suffering and trouble as an opportunity to grow and produce new levels of maturity.
- _____ Very aware of listeners and craves their acceptance and approval of the message.
- _____ Gives specific projects and prescriptions for others to overcome daily problems.
- _____ May tend to take Scripture out of context to support own teaching.
- _____ Very persevering as long as others listen.
- _____ Never satisfied with just stating a theoretical truth—must be practical.
- _____ Failure is hard to accept.
- _____ May write off those who cause personal failure.
- _____ Being successful is thrilling and exciting.
- _____ Emphasizes prescriptions rather than relationships.
- _____ May be success or outcome-oriented rather than personal, need-oriented.
- _____ More expressive in a group than inhibited.
- _____ More impulsive than self-disciplined.
- _____ Empathic, able to emotionally identify with others.
- _____ More subjective (feelings, perceptions) than objective (facts, figures, data).
- _____ Tendency to avoid formal structure and procedures if they lack practical application.
- _____ Motivated by positive reaction from their audience.

_____ Total number of statements you marked = _____ out of 23.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

_____ Total number of statements the other person marked = _____ out of 23.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

This is the gift of _____

LIST NUMBER FIVE

Distinctive Characteristics:

- _____ A stickler for following the rules.
- _____ May make enemies because seen as “using” people.
- _____ Authoritative.
- _____ Steps forward and takes leadership.
- _____ Has the ability and willingness to delegate authority.
- _____ Has the ability to see the overall picture and long-range goals.
- _____ Tendency to stand on the sidelines until those in charge turn over the responsibility to them.
- _____ Gifted in organizing what they are responsible for.
- _____ Gets more criticism than all the other spiritual gifts combined.
- _____ Able to sit quietly and listen before making comments.
- _____ Is eager to complete a task quickly and get on to the next one.
- _____ Able to discern people-resources that are available.
- _____ Will endure reaction from workers just to complete the goal.
- _____ Thrives on pressure—the more the better.
- _____ More doing oriented and may lose relational sensitivity.
- _____ Finds fulfillment in seeing all the pieces come together and enjoys the results.
- _____ Tempted to react negatively when treated negatively and to get back at others.
- _____ Skilled in detail.
- _____ Thorough and careful.
- _____ Makes decisions based strictly on facts and proven data.
- _____ Interested in the welfare of the group rather than own desires.
- _____ More composed than nervous.
- _____ Tends to accept others based on “loyalty” or ability to “finish a task.”
- _____ More objective (facts, figures, data) than subjective (feelings, perceptions).

_____ Total number of statements you marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

_____ Total number of statements the other person marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

This is the gift of _____

LIST NUMBER SIX

Distinctive Characteristics:

- _____ Has the ability to make money and accumulate assets.
- _____ Supports and undergirds the ministry.
- _____ Has the ability to make wise purchases and investments.
- _____ Has great faith in fellow men and their ministry.
- _____ Wants to have an active part and be included in any ministry they give to.
- _____ Very discerning about ministries proposed to them.
- _____ Concerned their gift be of high quality.
- _____ Absolutely refuses to be pressured into giving.
- _____ Attempts to use their giving as an encouragement to motivate others to give.
- _____ Wants to avoid public recognition and wants to give quietly.
- _____ Wants to be led by God in giving.
- _____ Extremely upset when seeing others waste money.
- _____ Affluent.
- _____ Personal frugality—may sacrifice self-needs to give quality to others.
- _____ Wants confirmation by mate and church before giving.
- _____ Natural temptation is to first say “no” to requests.
- _____ Accurate self-image.
- _____ More light-hearted than downhearted.
- _____ Wants people to like them.
- _____ Conscientious.
- _____ Receives joy when their gift is an answer to specific prayers.
- _____ More sympathetic than indifferent.

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_____ Total number of statements you marked = _____ out of 22.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

_____ Total number of statements the other person marked = _____ out of 22.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

This is the gift of _____

Note: This gift may not become prominent until middle age.

LIST NUMBER SEVEN

Distinctive Characteristics:

- _____ Extremely sensitive to others and self.
- _____ Very empathic, able to emotionally identify with others.
- _____ Own feelings can be easily hurt.
- _____ Very interested in people personally.
- _____ Attracted to people in distress.
- _____ Emphasizes healing and prayer.
- _____ Deeply concerned about inner struggles of people.
- _____ Will go to any length to help others—can't be firm with others when needed.
- _____ Tends to ignore those who don't have obvious needs.
- _____ Bottled up feelings leads them to retreat from others—have a hard time trusting others for fear of being hurt.
- _____ Basic tenderness and kindness—touches babies and others.
- _____ Interrupts at wrong times.
- _____ Very sacrificial to alleviate other's pain and suffering.
- _____ Very aware of persons with kindred spirit.
- _____ Turned off by others who aren't sensitive.
- _____ More feeling oriented than rational.
- _____ May easily become discouraged—can easily say "poor me."
- _____ Inclined toward a low self-image.
- _____ Patient.
- _____ Talks well with people and easy to talk to.
- _____ Able to discern sincere motives in other people.
- _____ More subjective (feelings, perceptions) than objective (facts, figures, data).
- _____ Tolerant of others.
- _____ Sensitive to words and actions which may hurt other people.

_____ Total number of statements you marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

_____ Total number of statements the other person marked = _____ out of 24.

Percentage of statements marked = _____

This is the gift of _____

WHAT ARE YOU?

Start by looking to see if there's one list that stands out above the rest with the greatest number of points. This is likely your primary spiritual gift. Also, make note if there's a second list that seems to stand out above the remaining five. The list with the second greatest number of marks may be what we call your secondary gift.

If no list really stands out strong, is there a list with more than 75% of the statements marked? With more than 60% of the statements marked? Look at that list.

If you have several lists where the percentages are close to the same, look over all the descriptions and see if any list begins to stand out above the rest.

Remember, other issues such as a pattern of poor choices and stress may block your ability to see your spiritual gift. They may even block the gift from being displayed right now.

The verses in Romans 12:3-9 list what has been called the "Seven Motivational Gifts." Rather than attempt to describe and assess every gift mentioned in all the passages of Scripture, this passage can be seen as describing seven main categories under which all the specific spiritual gifts fall. For example, the gift of hospitality would fall under the broader categories of either mercy or service. The gift of encouragement would fall under the category of exhortation.

Here's a brief overview of those seven motivational gifts. Read over the descriptions and compare it to the list of statements referring to that gift. Take your time. Make note of what characteristics seem to fit you and which ones don't. Use the short descriptions below to see what your spiritual gift may be. Don't make any final decisions yet. Read over it, talk about it with another person, and let it be in your thinking for some time.

Prophecy

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If you have the gift of prophecy, you're likely very sensitive to sin and others' will, and whether they're OK spiritually. This may not be noticeable early in life, it does however, become clearer as you age and mature. You tend to expose the secrets of other peoples' hearts, which may come across as bossy or intrusive at times. A prophet is one who receives direct messages from God and gives it to others with supernatural power. This doesn't mean you always hear God's audible voice talking to you. It means you're able to understand, discern God's message, and be aware of those who need to hear that particular message.

WHAT ARE YOU?

You may have the gift of prophecy if list number one has a high number of checks.

Service

If you have the gift of service you want to meet the practical, physical needs of others. You can identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work more easily than other people. A server is one who assists the leadership in ministering to the weak and needy. You're probably involved in a lot of hands-on activities.

You may have the gift of serving if list number two has a high number of checks.

Teaching

If you have the gift of teaching, you tend to clarify truths and concepts and have a real passion for the truth. You can communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the body in a way that others will learn. You find it easy to teach (or coach) things to other people—it doesn't matter what the subject or topic is.

You may have the gift of teaching if list number three has a high number of checks.

Exhortation

If you have the gift of exhortation you're motivated by practical living and the how-to's of life. Your friends are likely to see you as the encourager or cheerleader of the group. You can minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel to others in such a way as to bring help and healing.

You may have the gift of exhortation if list number four has a high number of checks.

Administration

If you have the gift of administration, you enjoy organizing people so they will work together. If your friends are planning a major activity, you're likely the one who ultimately gets them and everything else organized. Sometimes your friends may think you're a little bossy in the process.

WHAT ARE YOU?

You guide and direct the local church. Administrators can understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular part of the body of Christ and devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

You may have the gift of administration if list number five has a high number of checks.

Giving

You may have the gift of giving (and yes, it's a real gift) if you seem to have a knack for making money and you enjoy helping other people out financially. You can contribute your material resources for the work of the ministry liberally and cheerfully. This gift may not make itself visible until adulthood where you're into a career position which allows you to earn money and make major financial decisions. By the way, if you're secretly (or not so secretly) wishing for the gift of giving, you probably don't have it.

You may have the gift of giving if list number six has a high number of checks.

Mercy

The gift of mercy is not "feeling sorry" for people. If you have the gift of mercy, you have a strong internal desire to heal physical and/or mental wounds. You feel genuine empathy and compassion for other people (both Christian and non-Christian) who are hurting. You often stick up for the underdog. You tend to translate your compassion into cheerfully done deeds which show love and help alleviate the suffering.

You may have the gift of mercy if list number seven has a high number of checks.

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Remember, this is not a scientific test with absolute answers. It's only a beginning to help you become aware of what the different spiritual gifts are and what they may look like in your life. Continue to ask God to direct your search and continue getting honest feedback from spiritually discerning adults.

Once you're sure of your spiritual gift, it's time to find out how, when and where you can exercise it. Consult with your pastor or church leadership to discover how you can use your spiritual gift to help the body of Christ and to further His kingdom in this hurting world.