

Spiritual Gifts

Small Group Discussion Materials

Fall 2010



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References

The Journey: Your Walk With God. FEBC Inc.

Trenton Spiritual Gifts Analysis. The International Centre for Leadership Development and Evangelism.

Lifekeys: Discover Who You Are. Jane A.G. Kise, David Stark, and Sandra Krebs Hirsh.

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible. Walter A. Elwell, editor.

The Moody Handbook of Theology. Paul Enns.

Week 1 (September 19th - 25th)

What Does “Spiritual Gifts” mean?

Passage: Ephesians 4:1-16, I Corinthians 12:1-7

This is the first of a three-part series on Spiritual Gifts. The following studying are (hopefully) complementary to the messages that Pastor Rick will be doing on the topic. We hope that you will be able to listen to the messages on Sundays to help give some more depth to the discussion, but it is by no means necessary to have been there on Sunday mornings. We will have the message up on our church’s website as soon as possible, so please check it out if want to hear it online!

Connecting

Have you ever thought about a skill or ability that you wanted to learn? What was it? Why did you want to learn to do it?

Comic book superheroes are really popular these days. Have you ever thought about what sort of superpower you would like? What was it? Why did you want that ability?

Do you think that people enjoy doing things they are good at? Is there any connection between what you are good at and the things you like to do?

Looking Into the Bible

What is a “spiritual gift”? (If you were there on Sunday, can you remember how Pastor Rick defined it?) Need some help? Check out 1 Corinthians 12:1-7.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13.

What types of roles are there listed in this passage? What do you think each type of person does (we will look further into this question next week, so right now we’re just thinking about what we *think* they might be)?

Why do people receive these abilities?

What is supposed to be the result of these peoples’ work?

Read Ephesians 4:1-6.

What qualities should we demonstrate as we do work for the church?

Why do you think that Paul talk about “oneness” before talking about different roles?

Read Ephesians 4:7-11.

Who gives us people the ability to do the things listed in verse 11?

In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 11, we also read about the work of the Holy Spirit. Look at those verses. What do they tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit in Spiritual Gifts?

Summing It Up. One definition of spiritual gifts talks about it this way:

“Two concepts are involved in spiritual gifts. First, a spiritual gift *to an individual* is God’s enablement for personal spiritual service (1 Cor. 12:11). Second, a spiritual gift *to the church* is a person uniquely equipped for the church’s edification and maturation (Eph. 4:11–13).” (The Moody Handbook of Theology)

Digging Deeper

If you heard the message on Sunday morning, what struck you as particularly interesting? What was something that you learned? Didn’t understand? Appreciated?

The work of the Holy Spirit is something that is often misunderstood in Churches and in our talking about God. Here are two helpful sections of the New Testament that talk about the Holy Spirit. While you read them, think about two questions: Who is the Holy Spirit? and What does the work of the Spirit look like in our lives?

Read. John 15:26-16:15. Jesus is teaching his followers about things to come after his death.

Read Galatians 4:21-5:25. The Apostle Paul gives an analogy of living by the Spirit from the Old Testament and then writes about how life by the Spirit looks.

Applying It To Our Lives

Can you describe what a spiritual gift is in your own words?

For further study, take a look at some of the four sections of the Bible that talk about most about the idea of Spiritual Gifts. We will also be looking at these passages over the next two weeks.

Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12-13; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 4:8-11

Start thinking about where God has given you special strengths. Share with your group ways in which you think God has given you a special ability to use for ministry.

In which areas of our lives should we show the evidence of God’s grace to us. What area did Ephesians specifically talk about? How can you look for it in the next week?

Prayer Ideas

Think of ways that God has used people to make a difference in your life because of their abilities. Thank God for them.

Pray that God would help us to know how to use the natural abilities and spiritual gifting that he has given to us.

Pray that God would give us courage in our actions and work. Think about ways that maybe you haven't lived life in God's power and ask him to correct you in that way.

Ask God to give us clarity in our thinking over the next weeks as we study on this topic.

Week 2 (September 26th - October 2nd)

What are my Spiritual Gifts?

Passage: 1 Corinthians 12

Today we are going to look at what types of spiritual gifts are defined in the Bible. We will also look inward and see where we match up. We will also look at the lengthiest text in the Bible that describes Spiritual Gifts.

Connecting

What is one way that you have seen people use specific skills or abilities contribute to a church community?

What is one way that you have used a skill or ability to contribute to a church community?

In one word (or one phrase), how would I describe my attitude toward life?

Looking Into the Bible

Remembering from last week, what is a “Spiritual Gift”?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31.

What are some of the Spiritual Gifts? Why do you think there are so many different types of people listed in these verses?

It seems like the Christians in the city of Corinth were having some trouble understanding the point of God’s work to give them special roles.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-14.

What is the emphasis in these verses?

If a local church is like a body, what does that mean about different roles that people play within the church community?

Why do we need people who are gifted in specific ways in a local church? Pick one of the examples that we discovered earlier in 1 Corinthians 12 and think about what a church would be like with or without that type of person.

What sorts of attitudes should we expect to see if people were following these verses as they served? What attitudes would we not see?

Does God give the same gifts to everyone? Why do you think God works like this?

What is supposed to happen with God's gifts to us?

The Apostle Paul describes the church like a body with many parts. How does he say that this is true? How have you seen that happen (or not happen)?

Digging Deeper

Keep reading 1 Corinthians 12:15-26.

This is a very lengthy metaphor about the local church being a body. Talk about why Paul would go to such trouble to make a comparison like this.

Are there some spiritual gifts that are more important than others?

Continue reading in 1 Corinthians, chapter 13.

This is the second half of the instructions on spiritual gifts and life together in the church. How does chapter 13 relate to the section on spiritual gifts in chapter 12?

Do you think that God could bless a person with a particular skill or ability that is not listed in the Bible?

Applying It To Our Lives

Maybe you are not completely sure what your strengths, abilities, and spiritual gifts are. What do you think might be some good steps forward in serving God?

How can I work to have a better attitude when I do things because I believe God wants me to do them?

What is one way I can show my unity with the local church body in the upcoming week?

The rest of our section will be devoted to the list of Spiritual Gifts listed in the Bible. We'll do our best to help you think about how God may have given you special gifts. The next couple of pages will help to list and define some of the words in the Bible and give you some ideas about how to think about them. Talk about it with your group.

Homework: Spend the week thinking about you! Talk to people! Think! Where has God specifically gifted you?

Biblical List of Spiritual Gifts (source: Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible)

Rom. 12:6-8	I Cor. 12:8-10	I Cor. 12:28	I Cor.12:29-30	Eph. 4:11	1 Peter 4:11
prophecy	prophecy	prophets	prophets	prophets	
ministry					ministry
teaching		teachers	teachers	pastors-teachers	
exhortation					
giving					
ruling		governments			
showing mercy					
	word of wisdom				
	word of knowledge				
	faith				
	healing	gifts of healing	healing		
	miracles	miracles	miracles		
	discerning of spirits				
	tongues	tongues	tongues		
	interpretation		interpretation		
		apostles	apostles	apostles	
		helps			
				evangelists	
					speaking

Short Definitions

These are just to give some clarity to what these various words mean. There is some debate over a couple of them specifically, but hopefully this gives a reasonable idea about what each one is.

Prophecy. Looking at the world and speaking about how God would want it be instead.

Ministry. Generally, the ability to serve.

Teaching. Communicating the Bible and truths about God to others effectively and resulting in changed lives because of it.

Pastoring-Teaching. Ability to teach and care for people's spiritual needs and growth.

Exhortation (Encouragement). Comforting and motivating people both by listening and giving counsel.

Giving. Giving material wealth with great joy and ease. Contributing in other ways with much generosity.

Ruling (Leadership or Administration)

Leadership. Ability to lead other people in serving God and others.

Administration. Ability to organize information or people to serve God effectively and efficiently.

Mercy. Caring for people who are in need financially, emotionally, relationally. Giving comfort, both practically and emotionally.

Wisdom. Ability to use biblical knowledge and spiritual understanding to speak into situations in order to produce a changed way of living.

Knowledge. Strong ability to know large amounts of information, often specifically relating to biblical knowledge, and use it to contribute to discussions in serving God.

Faith. Noticing where God is leading and being willing to step out and take risks to follow Him.

Healing. Ability to bring healing from God.

Miracles. God acting in supernatural ways through a person.

Discernment. Recognizing the difference between what is from God and what is not.

Tongues. Ability to speak languages, either known or unknown.

Interpretation. Ability to interpret language, either known or unknown.

Apostleship. Leading new churches in a way that is cutting-edge.

Helps. Doing work that is practical, and often behind-the-scenes. It may include very small details that often go unnoticed, but are extremely important and service-oriented.

Evangelism. A deep passion and ability to tell people about Jesus and to help others to begin to follow Him.

Speaking. (See teaching or other “speaking” gifts).

Hospitality. (not included in the list above) Hosting in way that helps people feel cared for.

There are also other examples of special “gifting” from God listed in the Bible as being given from God, but are not specifically listed in these passages.

Some ways of figuring out where God has gifted you.

- Pray and ask God.
- Look through the list or think of other types of ministry and decide which ones you think most apply to you.
- Ask other Christians who know you well what they think may be your area of gifting. Give them a few choices if they don't know.
- Do a spiritual gift inventory / analysis / test. Find one online or ask for one at church; the language may be different than listed above (we have some available upon request).
- Think about ways of serving God that excite you or come easily to you.
- Read the biblical passages to do with spiritual gifts and think about them.

Prayer Ideas

Pray that God would help us to understand ourselves better so that we can serve more effectively.

Ask God to help us with having an attitude of joy and thanksgiving rather than one of bitterness and grumpiness. Ask God to help us to identify the reasons for negative attitudes, and to help us to forgive or seek forgiveness where necessary.

Give thanks for specific people who have been faithful to God by serving Him and as a result have been helpful to you or to someone you know.

Pray that as a result of studying the Bible and being more faithful, we would be better at demonstrating and sharing the good news about Jesus with people around us.

Week 3 (October 3rd - 9th)

Using my spiritual gifts

Passage: 1 Peter 4:8-11; Romans 12:1-8

This is our final week on this study, so we'll focus lots on taking action!

Connecting

What is one thing that has happened this week where you can see God at work?

What is something that has surprised or interested you as we have talked about "Spiritual Gifts" over the past weeks?

Some people tend to think about something without taking action, while others tend toward taking action without thinking it through. Which one do you tend to do?

Looking Into the Bible

Among other things, the Apostle Peter reminds the believers about the difficulty of following Jesus, but also that people who have put their faith in Jesus should be living differently than the rest of the world.

Read 1 Peter 4:8-11 together.

According to these verses, who has a spiritual gift? Are there any other thoughts about who has a "spiritual gift"?

What are these gifts used for? When are they used?

Last week we talked about different types of gifts and some of them show up here. Which ones (of the ones listed in 1 Peter or elsewhere) do you think apply best to you?

Ask group members (especially those who know you best) to suggest an area where they think you might be gifted. Spend some time discussing each person in your group.

In the verses we read earlier, Peter seems to put a special emphasis on taking action (v. 10). How do you think you could use your spiritual gifts?

It seems like Peter starts out this section with a short disclaimer: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8, TNIV). How should that shape our discussion about taking action?

How is this way of thinking different than living by human standards?

Digging Deeper

Why do we serve God and the local church? Can you think of any stories or passages from the Bible that talk about this? Can you think of any reasons why we serve in a local church community?

What sorts of rewards should we expect when we serve?

Read Romans 12:1-3.

What words does Paul use to describe how we ought to serve God and serve the people around us?

Why does Paul warn us to have a humble view of our abilities and spiritual gifts?

Read Romans 12:4-8.

There is a list of different types of actions that should be taken depending on what our spiritual gifts are. Brainstorm with the group some examples of ways that each of the gifts could be used; think about our setting (Vancouver and the Lower Mainland in 2010) and be specific. (You could also break into groups and each take one of the gifts, and then discuss your findings with the whole group)

Applying It To Our Lives

Think about your local church (for many of us, Collingwood Baptist Church). How am I serving right now? Does this match up with how God has shaped me through spiritual gifting, natural abilities, and personal passions toward serving?

Should I stop serving in one area? Should I serve in one that I am not involved in right now?

Many gifts are easily used in the structure of the local church, but many gifts also get to be used informally within the church or outside of the church's programs, buildings, or groups. Can you think of a way that you might serve God in other areas of your life? Think of your time with family, friends, work, school, vacation or recreation, at home, etc.

What is one thing that stops you from serving God fully?

Are there any action steps I need to take because of our discussion today?

Are there people in my life who will keep me on track with taking action? Think especially of people who will encourage me and also people who will motivate me when I need it. Who can I ask to keep me moving in the right direction in serving Jesus?

Prayer Ideas

Take turns praying for each other. Specifically, pray that God would give wisdom and clarity about how each person should use their God-given ability to serve Him and to show love to people around us.

Pray that we would be good at taking action as a result of what we learn and that we will work to keep each other accountable to take action.

Think about things that keep us from living a life fully devoted to God. Pray that God would forgive us for living for things other than Him. Ask that He would show us the way out of these obstacles.

Praise God for all the things that he does for us and all the good things that he gives us.

Spend some time in silent prayer, giving us the time to reflect and simply be still before God.