

**HOOK |** What is your understanding of spiritual gifts? What do you think of when you hear the term “spiritual gifts”? What were you taught about them?

*The goal here is to generate a lot of discussion around previous experiences and understanding. Much of this course will be refuting and reshaping what most ‘evangelicals’ (not just charismatics) have been taught about spiritual gifts, so it’s important to get a lot of preconceived notions out on the table early.*

**BOOK | Romans 12.3-8**

“3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same **function**, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having **gifts** that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

*This is one of the key passages that will be discussed at length (others being Eph. 4.1-16 and 1Cor. 12) in our study of spiritual gifts. In our next lesson, we will look more carefully at this and other passages toward the reconstruction of a biblical view of spiritual gifts. For the present, we want only to consider two different interpretations representing the “conventional” and “Biblical” view respectively.*

General Observations: Notice the description “grace is given” which begs the question, what exactly is the “grace given?” Two Options, both [pertaining to the trajectory in the passage related to:

*Function.... Gift... grace given... list of ???*

**Option 1**—Discern the trajectory as related to “spiritual abilities”.

**Option 2**—Discern the trajectory as related to “spiritually empowered ministries”.

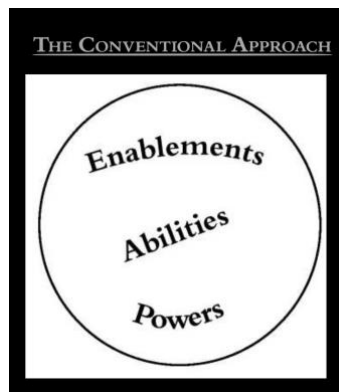
e.g. Does the list “*service... teaching... exhortation... generosity* represent special Spirit given abilities/aptitudes relative to the person him/herself? Or does it represent spiritually empowered ministries given to the person based on his/her naturally/providentially given aptitudes?

Again, we will address the biblically argued view in our next lesson. For now, it is important to discern the difference.

## LOOK | Rethinking the Conventional View vs. Biblical View

**Conventional View:** “Charismatics and non-charismatics share the conventional view; they both agree that spiritual gifts are special abilities given by the Holy Spirit to individual believers that should be used to build the church. And both agree that somehow these special abilities must be discovered by each individual believer.”

Key Words:



- Key Question: “God, how can I discover the special abilities that you have given me?”

**Biblical View:** “Every believer has been assigned by the Holy Spirit to specific positions and activities of service, small and large, short-term and long-term. These ministry assignments have been given by the Holy Spirit to individual believers and, in turn, these individuals in their ministries have been given as gifts to the church. God deeply desires that his glory be declared to the world through the community he has brought together by his grace, a community that Paul often refers to as the body of Christ.”

- Key Words:



- Key Question: “God, where do you want me to serve?”

**Discuss:**

\*\*Quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from Kenneth Berding, *What are Spiritual Gifts: Rethinking the Conventional View*

- What are the similarities and differences in the 2 views?
- Have you always considered the “conventional view” to be the right one?
- What are some implications you can already anticipate in shifting our mindset away from the conventional to the biblical view?

**TOOK | So What? Ways in which the conventional view can abuse the gospel**

*Discuss these examples of how the conventional view can become so oppressive VS. the good news of the gospel and gospel-centered understanding of spiritual ministries.*

1. What is the focus of spiritual gifts in the conventional view?

“Spiritual gifts” can often become about my own self-expression—I need the space and community to allow for my identity to shine, which easily leads to other prideful entitlements.

VERSUS: A whole new outlook based in being a member of the communion of saints, expressing not self but team, and being willing to serve where needed.

2. As a special ability—how might this lead to a false confidence in the use of my spiritual gift—what really would I be reliant upon in my discernment and use of myself in the life of the body of Christ?

I would be focusing on myself, my perception of some new gift after I have become a Christian even, less my whole person and how it might best serve my particular local church as empowered by the Holy Spirit in Christian love and character.

3. Other examples?