

Your Gifts Reveal God's Presence and Power



The apostle Paul wrote, "There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:4,7). But what are these spiritual gifts? How do you know if you possess them? And, if you do, how do you use them?

In *The Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Gifts*, Sam Storms will help you answer basic and foundational questions about the what, why and how of the unique gifts God gives to each of His children. You will discover the purpose of spiritual gifts in the Church and learn how to identify your special mix of gifting. In addition, you will find out how the Holy Spirit uses the supernatural manifestation of gifts to demonstrate God's presence and power among His people.

God has gifted you . . . now learn how to use His good gifts for His glory!



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Spiritual Gifts

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— The — Beginner's Guide to

Spiritual Gifts

Discover Your Own Unique Gifting

Grow in Your Understanding of Spiritual
Gifts and the Power of God

Explore Nine Extraordinary
Spiritual Gifts



SAM STORMS

Chapter Ten

Letting Your Gift Find You

If you've come to this chapter having read the previous nine, congratulations! I say this because it demonstrates your concern for spiritual gifts and the role they play in your life as a believer and in the life of the Church. It also demonstrates your commitment to the authority of Scripture. There are far too many Christians who just don't believe this issue is important enough to warrant the investment of time and energy to read another book. They ask, often with a pained look on their faces, "Are spiritual gifts really that important?" I'll answer that question by asking a few of my own, each of which is drawn directly from what Paul says in Ephesians 4.

Do you think it's important for Christians to get along with each other? Do you value Christian unity? I assume that you believe oneness and mutual love and a common mind are crucial for the life of the Church. Yet, Paul said that if we hope to experience this "unity of the faith," we must have spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:13a) functioning in the way God designed them.

Do you believe it's important that Christians be spiritually equipped to do the work and fulfill the service apart from which the Church cannot be built up (see Eph. 4:12)? If so, spiritual gifts are essential.

Is knowing Jesus a vital part of the Christian life? I know, it's a stupid question! But few realize that God "gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8), such as prophecy and teaching and the like, "until we all attain to . . . the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4:13). God has graciously given spiritual gifts to help us grow and deepen and expand and increase in our knowledge and enjoyment of "the unfathomable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8).

Most believers long for maturity and theological integrity, and encouraging speech and growth. But few realize that these things are all tied to the proper exercise of spiritual gifts in the life of the Church (see Eph. 4:13-16).

Simply put, there is little hope that the chasm I referred to in chapter 1 will ever be bridged if we continue to neglect spiritual gifts or relegate them to a secondary status in the Body of Christ. So, if you persevered long enough to reach this point in the book, I say again, congratulations!

So, What's My Gift?

The answer to our final question is not found in a spiritual gifts inventory or personality profile. If I sound a bit skeptical about such things, I am. I think Scripture would have us take a far more practical, almost pragmatic, approach to discovering our spiritual gifts, an approach that is at its heart need-based. Let me give you some examples of what I mean.

The next time you're in church or in a small group, or just hanging out with other believers, pause momentarily and ask: Is anyone physically hurt or suffering from chronic pain? If so, take your hands out of your pockets,

lay them on your brother or sister and pray for God's healing power.

Is anyone you know distraught or discouraged? Are some finding life too frustrating to bear? If so, take them out for a cup of coffee and listen to their story. You don't have to theologize about their predicament. They're not looking for explanations. They just want someone who cares enough to spend a few minutes with them. Just listen to them. Then love them.

Is anyone struggling financially with few prospects to get them out of the hole? Do something courageous. Give them your last \$50 and trust God to supply your need.

Do you know people who are confused about some verse of Scripture they just read in their devotional time? Perhaps you're just as befuddled as they are. Pull out a concordance, a study Bible, perhaps a commentary from the church library, and study a bit. Then sit down with your friend(s) and put your heads (and hearts) together and pray for the Spirit to shed light on your thinking.

Is anyone struggling with sin? (Well, of course they are!) Offer to pray for them. But before you do, sit quietly together and ask the Lord to guide your thoughts and speak words of wisdom to your soul. If you sense something, or a thought comes to mind, share it with them. It might be the key that opens the door to their hearts and brings freedom from bondage.

Does the person you just prayed for report hearing voices in his or her head? Does this person struggle with paralyzing shame, virtually bombarded on a daily basis by accusing thoughts and self-contempt? If so, speak the Word of God over him or her with authority. In the name

of Christ, command any demonic spirits to leave and never to return. Pray for this person to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit.

Do you know anyone overwhelmed by the clutter in their garage and that ever-increasing mountain of dirty laundry? Offer to spend Saturday with them, helping out, picking up, washing, drying, folding and putting away clothes.

None of this sounds especially spectacular. (Well, maybe some of it does.) So what am I getting at with these questions? Simply this: If we spend less time searching to identify our spiritual gift(s) and more time actually praying and giving and helping and teaching and serving and exhorting those around us, the likelihood greatly increases that we will walk headlong into our gifting without ever knowing what happened. God will more likely meet us with His gifts in the midst of trying to help His children than He ever would while we're taking a spiritual gifts analysis test.

I earlier raised the question of whether there might be spiritual gifts beyond those explicitly mentioned in the New Testament. I'm inclined to believe there are potentially as many gifts as there are needs in the life of the Church and in the experience of individual Christians.

So, look for a need and meet it. Find a hurt and heal it. Be alert to the cry for help and answer it. Listen for the voice of God and speak it. Identify someone's weakness and overcome it. Look for what's missing and supply it. When you do, the power of God—the energizing, enabling, charismatic activity of the Holy Spirit—will equip you, perhaps only once, but possibly forever, to minister

hope and encouragement to those in need. So, if you're still wondering what your gift(s) might be, act first and ask later.

Do You Understand?

1. What spiritual gift(s) do you presently have from God? When and how did God impart this to you?
2. What spiritual gift(s) do you presently not have but wish you did? What are you prepared to do in the pursuit of such gifts?
3. How might you identify your spiritual gifts? Should you look inwardly and take stock of your own soul or look outwardly to the needs around you? Explain your answer.