

I. Spiritual Gifts

Among spiritual gifts, I think we would all recognize from the list given that there are many different types. I've grouped them together. And I what I hope we can do is look at each gift, ask how we can know if this is a gift God has given us, talk about some ways the gift is used and also some downsides to be aware of.

Trans: First, there are...

A. Gifts which are a greater measure of what every believer has/pursues:

1. Word of Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)

2. Word of Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)

i. What are these gifts?

The tricky part is that this is the only place in Scripture that these two gifts are mentioned. Wisdom and knowledge are mentioned throughout the Bible, but this particular gift of a word, or the ESV says, 'utterance of wisdom' or 'utterance of knowledge' is only mentioned here. When something is mentioned only once, it is more difficult to define.

It could be spectacular in the sense of having knowledge of something or wisdom for someone that God imparts totally aside from natural means. But when it is defined like this it sounds akin to prophecy.

On the other hand, these gifts could function in the sense of a person having the right knowledge and wisdom for a given moment and that the knowledge and wisdom are acquired over time.

I really can't come down and say that it is one or the other because we just don't know.

Trans: But you may have this gift and how would you know?

ii. Do you have this gift?

The book I recommended by Mark Driscoll has this pattern and asks this question for each gift.

- a. Does God give you spectacular insight to speak into people's situations which are previously unknown to you?
 - b. Has God give you a mind to remember and discern wisdom from his Word and bring that to bear when speaking to others?
- iii. How might this gift be used?
- a. Counseling
 - b. Coaching or consulting
 - c. Giving input in a general sense when prompted or unprompted.
 - d. Prophecy

Illus: Once Charles Spurgeon was preaching and he suddenly interrupted his sermon, pointed in a certain direction, and said, "Young man, those gloves you are wearing have not been paid for; you have stolen them from your employer!"¹ After the meeting the young man came and confessed that he had stolen the gloves he was wearing!

That could be prophecy or it could have been word of knowledge.

- iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?
- a. Knowledge can puff up (1 Corinthians 8:1)
 - b. Spiritual pride and wise in one's own eyes (Proverbs 26:1-12 esp. v. 12)

3. Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography: Volume 2, The Full Harvest 1860-1892* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1973), 60.

i. What is this gift?

Mark Driscoll writes,

“Faith is the ability to envision what needs to be done and to trust God to accomplish it, even if it seems impossible for most people.”²

Now faith, in general, is something for each and every believer. Just like wisdom and knowledge. That’s why I put this under the category of gifts, which are of a greater measure of what every believer has or pursues.

We are all called to be people of faith. In fact, no one can be saved without it. It’s that essential and we’re all called to walk by faith. But there is a gift, a spiritual gift of faith that is of a greater measure than what all believers are called to exercise.

And we need people like this who look at what seems to impossible, and who pray big prayers and dream big dreams and who are undaunted by what things look like because of their convictions about the power of God. This is the gift of faith!

ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. When others see something impossible are you convinced of the power of God?
- b. Does it bother you when people pray small prayers or view things as impossible?
- c. Has God used you to stir faith and vision in others for what God can do in them and through them?

iii. How might this gift be used?

- a. Prayer and Healing (James 5:15)
- b. Conversion of Souls (Luke 18:27)

² Mark Driscoll, *Who Do You Think You Are? Finding Your True Identity in Christ* (publication place: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 126.

c. Words of Encouragement (Acts 11:22)

Barnabas was called a man full of the Holy Spirit and of faith and he was renowned for his encouragement of others.

d. Bold witness for Christ (Acts 6:5)

Stephen is also called a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

Illus: I think Danny Jones has this gift and continuing to this day I see him trusting God for things and calling others to trust God for things that seem impossible. I love this and I often come away seeing more of how God is at work and my confidence in God boosted through interacting with him.

iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?

a. Judging others

This is one I have a particular burden for today. When we are operating in a gift that is a greater measure of what we all supposed to have or pursue as believers, it's important that we recognize this. Because with these kinds of gifts like faith and mercy and helps and service and generosity—we can actually take our experience of these things as the norm and find that many people fall far short of our standard. A person with the gift of faith may find themselves often asking, "Where are these peoples' faith?" And the result can be that I have this gift and other people don't and now I am judging them, thinking "What's wrong with them."

It's a call for generous discernment. Some people will need a rebuke, some people will be lacking in faith just like the disciples did with Jesus and after Jesus ascended. But if you have this gift, be careful

not to set yourself as the standard of faith for all believers. You can build others up in love by using your gift of faith to stir up faith in God in others.

Trans: Those with this gift can also be...

b. Difficult to reason with

They just have so much faith it can become hard to accept things in reality especially when key decisions need to be made.

-- Session 2 --

4. Discerning of Spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10)

i. What is this gift?

This is another gift that Scripture does not go into a lot of detail about. We are all called to distinguish between the things of God and the things of Satan. This could be people's motives or certain types of teaching or even miraculous things being done of Satan rather than the Lord.

Things that come right out and say that they are demonic don't require this kind of discernment. This would be for things that are veiled or being represented one way, but really another.

ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. Does it bother you when others seem to take things at face value and embrace them while ignorant of their error or effect?
- b. Do you find yourself searching the Scriptures to help weigh your response to a certain person, situation, or teaching?
- c. Have you made evaluations of these things that have proven correct and thereby helped protect others in the church?

iii. How might this gift be used?

- a. As a unifying voice of warning or protection.

I'll come back to this word 'unifying.' You are helping warn and protect the church and its leaders.
- b. Providing insightful feedback on issues of character.

This is especially helpful when there is someone who is taking on a role of leadership in the church.

c. Identifying false teaching and counterfeit miracles.

Illus: I would actually cite the recent Reinhard Bonnke evangelistic crusade in Orlando last year. We had some folks that really took themselves to looking at his website, listening to some of his teaching and hearing the reports of conversions and miracles and trying hard to discern what was best, what was of the Lord.

I thought that this was a great example of the Lord helping the church as a whole be discerning.

iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?

a. Critical judgments

I'll be honest, I don't know exactly how to draw the line between what is this gift of distinguishing spirits and what is possibly judging others or thinking the worst of them.

I think I would be put back (and actually, I have) been put off by people who have a hunch about something, whether character or teaching and they go so far as to accuse. It's a mess and I while I want this gift operating, critical judgments are something we all have to be careful to avoid, especially those with this gift.

b. Divisiveness

If this person thinks of themselves as a voice of warning and protection, it has to be very carefully used. A person like this could do some great damage to the church especially if they think the leaders are teaching falsely or poor in character. 1 Timothy 5:19 tells us not to admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of 2-3 witnesses. The charge comes from actual witnesses and not

just a hunch from someone. This has to be used very carefully and with accountability.

c. Closed off to change

The idea of something new or unfamiliar can be deemed as dangerous. This could be a person or a new author.

d. Dogmatic

People who distinguish between spirits can be very black and white and have difficulty realizing that all things: all people, all teaching, all good forms of God's miraculous work in the world are affected by sin and therefore imperfect. Using this gift calls for humility.

5. Helps/Service (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:7)

I've lumped these two gifts together because I think there is considerable overlap between the two.

i. What is this gift?

The gifts of helps and service means coming alongside others in practical ways and serving where there is need. The gift of helps seems more of a behind the scenes gift. Service can be either behind the scenes or even organizing other people. Both aim to meet needs.

ii. Do you have this gift?

a. Are you naturally drawn to and desire to be aware of the needs of others?

b. Do you find joy in serving in practical ways that are often behind the scenes?

- c. When someone asks for your help, do find a hard time saying “No”?³
 - d. Do other describe your help as “faithful and hardworking”?
- iii. How might this gift be used?
- a. Trustworthy service of the church

This could have varied expression, across many different ministries but a person serves faithfully in a task and oftentimes owns and task that in turn benefits the church.

- b. Taking initiative to find and address needs with individual people.
- c. Making yourself available even when no set need identified.
- d. Making yourself available to the deacons.

Illus: We have dozens of people like this and the church could always use many more. Al Kubik leads the ushers. It has to be done and he owns it and gets a lot of joy out of leading this team. Betty Vallery comes in and sorts the donations for the homeless outreach so that they are ready each month. We have those serving with children’s ministry so that when you walk into a classroom everything is stocked and ready to go, anything that happens with the church building requires people to set up and tear down and cleanup. There’s audio and visual and website—people using their skills in practical service and ownership.

And beyond that there is the simple person-to-person service of others. And that there are people who simply

³ Adapted from Mark Driscoll, *Who Do You Think You Are? Finding Your True Identity in Christ* (publication place: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 130.

thrive under finding and addressing needs, structuring your life in such a way that you ready to serve.

iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?

a. Self-pity

People who serve faithfully, and often behind the scenes, can find themselves wondering if what they are doing is really that important. This is one of those lonely gifts I was talking about earlier. It can be lonely and difficult and lack recognition or appreciation of others. Sometimes people even take advantage of those serving. People who serve for a long time will find themselves often fighting for joy.

Trans: Self pity can lead to...

b. Bitterness

Appl: So if you are say, cleaning up the building, it can be very easy to just be fed up with people's messes and the constant nature of the task. You can become bitter at certain people. You're moving chairs and other people are just standing there talking. Folks with the gift of helps or service really have to guard their heart.

6. Mercy (Romans 12:8)

i. What is this gift?

The gift of mercy is a unique capacity to have compassion for those who suffer and to want to do something about it. Again, we are all called to be merciful. Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the one who showed mercy is the one who exemplified the heart of God. Unmerciful people don't understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. But this gift is an extra measure or capacity to move towards suffering and alleviate it.

- ii. Do you have this gift?
 - a. Does your heart break for the sufferings of other people, believers and non-believers?
 - b. Do you find yourself constrained to move towards people to alleviate their suffering?
 - c. Do you more often seek to help suffering people rather than judge why they are suffering?
 - d. Have other people told you that you have a big heart for others?

- iii. How might this gift be used?
 - a. Ministering to those who are sick, bereaved or experiencing great trial.
 - b. Taking initiative to bring hope and practical help to those suffering in the community. (i.e. homelessness, abortion, unemployment, sexual abuse)
 - c. Taking upon oneself things to alleviate the sufferings of others.

Illus: I think a wonderful example of this would be Allura Lightfoot and Julia Corbett. There are obviously others, but these ladies are serving in some of the ways that they are precisely because of their heart of mercy towards the unborn, towards moms who seek abortions and towards the homeless. Through their gift they help our church with a great heart of mercy towards these people.

- iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?
 - a. Easily overwhelmed

It doesn't take a person with this gift long to quickly find themselves overwhelmed with the sufferings of others. And especially if they are providing practical help it can be very costly very

quickly. Oftentimes people with this gift find themselves sharing a lot in the sufferings of others and therefore suffering themselves.

Look at what it says in Romans 12:8, "...the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." Paul warns those with this gift not to lose their joy.

b. Judgmental of others

Because we are all called to be merciful, a person with this gift and often think that there is something profoundly wrong with others that they are not moved to help in the same ways and this can come out through being judgmental of others. A person with this gift has a big hard and thick skin and has to work to keep this tenderness going which only the spirit of God can do through his Word.

7. Encouragement (Romans 12:8)

i. What is this gift?

This gift is one that motivates, inspires and breathes courage through timely words and deeds. ESV calls it the gift of exhortation.

ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. Are you keenly aware of the power of words to motivate and help other people?
- b. Are you able to see and communicate where God is at work in people's lives, which they may be unaware of?
- c. Do you get joy out of seeing other catch fresh vision for what they are doing and think about thoughtful ways to convey this?
- d. Have others cited your words as a reason they have vision to continue in something?

- iii. How might this gift be used?
 - a. Counseling
 - b. Home Group Leader
 - c. Personal encouragements (i.e. words, notes, gifts)
 - d. Availability to respond to those who are discouraged
 - e. Can correspond with prophecy

Illus: This would be a gift that I believe God's given me and as I've stepped out others have shared that they think so too. I love bringing hope to people from God's Word. When something looks like it's worth giving up on, I can at times see that as a challenge to see a person infused with hope and courage not to give up.

- iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?
 - a. Insensitive to the sufferings of others

Words of encouragement have their place, but sometimes there are heavy hearts and a person with this gift can try for an instant turn around. Other times something more than words is needed; practical help is needed.
 - b. Difficulty allowing things to change for the better

Sometimes people are discouraged not simply due to lack of vision, but because something does need to change. A person with this gift can sometimes have a hard time recognizing when change is needed.

8. Giving (Romans 12:8)

- i. What is this gift?

It is the unique ability to give to others and for the mission of the church in joyful and sacrificial ways. We are all

called to give, but this person seeks out needs and gives generously to them. This gift is not a function of someone's resources, but a work of the Spirit in someone's heart and life.

- ii. Do you have this gift?
 - a. Do you take special interest the financial situation of others and the church as a whole?
 - b. Do you even find yourself prioritizing the financial needs of others and the church above your own?
 - c. Do you get a special joy out of using the resources (financial or otherwise) to meet needs and see kingdom work expand?
- iii. How might this gift be used?
 - a. Regular, generous giving to the church and other ministries.
 - b. Seeking out needs in the church and through the witness of the church and giving financial and material contributions.
 - c. Giving gifts, no matter how big or small to others for appreciation and just to bless them
- iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?
 - a. Giving begrudgingly or with strings attached

One of the downsides comes directly from the passage, "...the one who contributes with generosity." It's a sincere type of giving that is not begrudging or having a list of "Here's who owes me."
 - b. Undiscerning giving

A person with this gift might give to people and causes and be taken advantage of.

Trans: These eight gifts that we have just looked at all fall under the gifts that are of a greater measure of what each believer is called to have for pursue.

B. Gifts which may or may not be apart of a person's natural ability

9. Teaching (Romans 12:7)

i. What is this gift?

Teaching is the gift by which God's Word is explained and brought to bear accurately upon people's lives. There are many different settings of the Christian life that this can find expression in. Someone may say, "I'm no teacher to get up and share God's Word to 1,000 people," but what about a hundred or ten or two or one or youth or children.

ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. Do you find joy in studying and explaining God's Word?
- b. Are you able to understand things that others find difficult to understand and convey them in a simple fashion?
- c. Do others tell you that the way you explained things helped them to understand an aspect of God's Word?
- d. Do people come to you when they have questions about God's Word?

iii. How might this gift be used?

- a. Teaching opportunities in the church provided for children, teenagers, women, men and the entire church

Women can have this gift and while 1 Timothy 2:12 says that women should not teach or have authority over men, we would be remiss not to see

the gift of teaching finding expression among children and other women.

- b. Leading of a Bible study or book study
- c. Individually opening up God's Word with another person and teaching them the truth about what it says
- d. Answering questions and defending the faith (apologetics)

Illus: I'm going to harp on Emily Jessee. Here's a woman who teaches other women. She takes the initiative to make contexts, whether one-on-one or in small groups or larger groups. She studies and reads and communes with God in his Word and then teaches other ladies. It's not uncommon for us as pastors to be looking over something: a book or a teaching that she is going to use.

iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?

- a. Spiritual pride

This again is the reality that knowledge puffs up. A person is not more spiritually mature because they know more or because they can teach. Paul Tripp writes,

*"...maturity is not merely something you do with your mind (although that is an important element of spiritual maturity). No, maturity is about how you live your life. It is possible to be theologically astute and be very immature. It is possible to be biblically literate and be in need of significant spiritual growth."*⁴

- b. Neglect

⁴ Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 25.

Because there is the role of teacher in the church and particularly, since the pastors are called to teach, people with this gift can think themselves inferior (i.e. because I am not a pastor I shouldn't be teaching) or unnecessary (i.e. there are so many other people who can teach, I don't need to).

10. Administration (1 Corinthians 12:28)

i. What is this gift?

Administration is the ability to lead by coordinating people and tasks towards a common end. The word here is related to that of shipmaster or pilot or guide. They manage people and tasks for the good of the church. They can see the big picture and how the details need to fit together.

ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. Are you aware of and affected by things among the church that are administrated poorly?
- b. Are you able to bring order to many different things and people to serve a common end?
- c. Do people tell you that you are organized, timely and efficient?

iii. How might this gift be used?

- a. Taking on responsibility for an event or ministry
- b. Deacons
- c. OCAC – Operating and Communications Advisory Committee.
- d. Coming alongside others who are serving and helping them to see how things can be run smoother.

- e. Taking on administrative responsibility that helps free others to serve according to their primary gifting. (Acts 6:1-7)

Illus: I think a great example of this is JP Pereira. He helped with the Corner, he's helped me with The Conversation. He realized that there were a lot of details needed to make that happen and at the end of a course he provided with a 30+ page document that captured all of the administrative things that need to happen. I've used it and passed it along to others. It's a real gift. The OCAC is an outworking of that as well as a small team of administratively minded people collaborate to help improve the operations and communication of the church.

- iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?

- a. Pride

An administratively gifted person can convey that there is one right way of doing things and that is the way. Efficiency can be seen as near godliness and inefficiency as sin. People with this gift have to work to be humble in the face of inefficiency.

- b. Losing Sight of the Gospel Mission

Sometimes a person can be so wrapped up in the details of how things can be done better that they lose sight of the gospel mission and people's lives.

11. Leadership (Romans 12:8)

- i. What is this gift?

Leadership is the ability to influence other people into God's will for their lives.

- ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. Does God Word stir your heart with vision for what his people could be?

- b. Do you find joy in having the responsibility to lead people along God's purposes for the whole?
 - c. Do you usually take leadership in a group where none exists?⁵
 - iii. How might this gift be used?
 - a. Home Group or Bible Study Leader
 - b. Working in concert with an administrator to lead a ministry to event for the good of the church.
 - c. Finding new area(s) of church life and ministry that would require leadership to really take off.
 - iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?
 - a. Half-heartedness.

This comes from the verse. Those who lead are called to do so with zeal, that is with an earnest devotion or diligence. A temptation when things get hard is to ease off the leadership commitment.

Have you ever realized, those of you who have not led a home group or small group of some sort, as a home group leader you don't get to choose who shows up and plops down in your group. And if you are the leader, you are stuck. You don't get to move on to another group, you have to lead. It's a call for earnest devotion.

- b. Self-sufficiency

Leaders have to beware of the trap of self-sufficiency. Leaning on God and leaning on the gifts of others is essential.

Trans: So gifts 1-8 were gifts, which are of a greater measure of something that all believers are called to have or pursue. Gifts 9-11 are

⁵ Mark Driscoll, *Who Do You Think You Are? Finding Your True Identity in Christ* (publication place: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 133.

gifts that may or may not be apart of a person's natural ability. Now we get into...

C. Other Gifts

These have typically been called 'miraculous' or 'spectacular gifts.' I don't like the 'miraculous' term because, really, they are all miraculous. But these are the other gifts.

12. Gifts of Healings (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30)

i. What is this gift?

Gifts of healings includes the healing of physical ailments and demonic oppression. It is doubly plural. It is not a single gift and not a single healing, but multiple gifts of multiple types of healing. I think this means that different people may find different effectiveness depending on the ailments they are praying for.

ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. Do you desire to pray regularly for the physical healing of others?
- b. Have others been healed through you intercession for them?

iii. How might this gift be used?

Very simply for the healing of others in corporate gatherings and personal interactions. A person with this gift is given to prayer.

Illus: Let me just give you a brief testimony of how this worked in my wife's life. Since the age of 3 she had asthma very badly and when we met she regularly was having trouble breathing, taking an inhaler and having to go at times to the emergency room. In the time we dated and then got married, we prayed together at least a hundred times. Every time healing was called for she said, "pray for me." I was leading the precursor to The Conversation, it was called Alpha, and we had a time where we prayed for

folks to be filled with the Holy Spirit and this woman was filled and began speaking in tongues. And she came to me and said, "I believe God has given me the gift of healing." And very quickly Crystal said, "Pray for me. Pray for my asthma." And while it was not visible or dramatic at that moment, in the days following we saw a huge turn around to the degree that Crystal has been totally healed of her asthma. We are talking about people praying for years and the Lord gave this gift and for the very first act of it being used to really change our lives. I was so grateful this woman stepped out in her gift.

iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?

a. Potentially unbiblical optimism

Sickness and death are on account of the fall. People with this gift will likely find themselves praying for people who get sick and eventually die.

b. Discouragement.

They may also get discouraged at times if they pray for people and they are not healed.

Illus: I once heard of John Wimber, he was a man who God used mightily to heal others, and he said that when he prayed not every time would a person be healed, but if he never prayed then none of them would be healed.

13. Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 29)

i. What is this gift?

This is the ability to call on God to do supernatural acts that reveal his power.⁶ This is alive and for today and while we don't want to chase signs and miracles in and of

⁶ Mark Driscoll, *Who Do You Think You Are? Finding Your True Identity in Christ* (publication place: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 127.

themselves, they can be used to stir our faith and act as a witness to those who are without Christ.

- ii. Do you have this gift?
 - a. Do you trust God to reveal supernatural acts of power through you?
 - b. Have you been used by God to see things come to pass that seemed virtually impossible?
- iii. How might this gift be used?
 - a. Often accompanied by prayer, casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead

Illus: I spent time as a missionary in China about 12 years ago. And I was paired up with another young guy and we did all of our missionary work together. He was a man of great faith and would pray for some of the most seemingly impossible things. And one time we were stranded out in the middle of nowhere, with no place to sleep and he prayed that car would come and pick us up. I remember thinking he was crazy because the road on which we walked didn't have cars and besides it was too rough for them to even drive on. And within a minute we hear a Jeep making its way towards the fork in the road ahead. If we had been a minute behind we would have missed it. And so we ran to the Jeep and it was a 4-seater and there were two empty seats and we got a ride ten miles into town.

I hope this all encourages you. God wants to do amazing things through his people. That is why I am cataloging each gift. They are all absolutely amazing, they are from God and he gives them freely to his people.

- iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?
 - a. Miracle seeking

Jesus made it clear in John 6 that there were people who simply sought after power and signs and totally missed the one that they were meant to point to. People wanted proof and they didn't want Jesus. A person with this gift has to be careful that they are not chasing after signs and wonders in and of themselves.

14. Tongues and Interpretation (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30)

i. What is this gift?

I am not going to get into what 1 Corinthians 14 talks about as the person use of tongues as an expression of prayer. This gift is the ability to speak of the wonderful works of God in a real or spiritual language this is unknown to the speaker.

ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. Has God given you the ability to praise him in a language unknown to you?
- b. Are you or others able to interpret what God has given you or others in order that the church be built up?

iii. How might this gift be used?

Corporate gatherings when an interpretation can follow (1 Corinthians 14:26)

iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?

a. Subjectivity

Since it is unknown to the speaker or hearer, a person's faith can very easily become lived out in the subjective of what they feel and what they sense the Spirit of God saying. It needs the objective nature of God's written word.

15. Prophecy (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 14:1, 39)

i. What is this gift?

It is likely the most detailed gift in the New Testament and yet it still has a shroud of mystery that surrounds it. A lot can be said on this gift that time does not allow for today. But one key thing to know is that prophecy in the Old Testament does differ from New Testament prophecy. In the Old Testament, prophets spoke the Word of the Lord with infallible authority and prophecy happens in the New Testament when a revelation of God is reported in a prophet's own words. It's to be tested according to God's Word.

ii. Do you have this gift?

- a. Does God stir your heart with impression that are revelatory, exhortative, or even predictive?
- b. Have others commented that they have found your impressions encouraging or convicting?

Please note that this is a gift that we are all called to earnestly desire. (1 Corinthians 14:1, 39).

iii. How might this gift be used?

- a. Corporate gatherings
- b. Personal one-to-one impressions
- c. Associated with prayer for others

iv. What are some potential downsides to this gift?

- a. Subjectivity

Again, impressions are subjective and a prophet needs to be anchored in God's Word and submit impressions according to their limited and carefully circumscribed authority.

D. Role Gifts

1. Apostles (1 Corinthians 12:28, 29; Ephesians 4:11)

The gift of apostle is likely that of an elder who also serves beyond a local church for the establishment and care of new gospel works.

There were original apostles. There were the 12 and Paul was added to them. They wrote Scripture. They saw Jesus raised from the dead. They are in a class by themselves. But beyond them, there are others identified in Scripture as apostles. The word apostle literally means, "sent ones." Barnabas, James the brother of Jesus, and Silas are all identified as apostles (Acts 14:4, 14; Galatians 1:19; 1 Corinthians 15:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:7).

These are people whom God has given the ability to start and nurture new gospel works. They plant and assist in the planting of churches, even on international level in the missionary sense.

2. Prophets (1 Corinthians 12:28, 29; 14:29; Ephesians 4:11)

We talked about prophecy. People don't simply have the gift; it is a recognized office. Ephesians 4:11 tells us that it is not just those who prophesy, but do so and equip others.

3. Evangelists (Ephesians 4:11)

We often think of Billy Graham or in the case of a local church someone who is very evangelistic and sharing the gospel with everyone. That may be the case. This is an equipping role as well. It's not the gift of evangelism, of sharing one's faith, it's the gift of equipping the church in the work of sharing the gospel among the lost. It is a powerful gift.

4. Pastors/Overseers/Elders (Ephesians 4:11)

These are three terms or images used to express the same office. Pastors literally means "shepherds." This is the care and feeding image. Overseer talks is a slightly different image of care and management. Elder is the word that speaks to wisdom. This is a gift given for the equipping of the saints to do the work of ministry. Pastors are not paid clergy doing the ministry, they are

just like everyone else, a part of the body equipping other parts to minister God's Word in the power of his spirit.

5. Teachers (1 Corinthians 12:28, 29)

There are recognized teachers. Paul and Barnabas, before they were apostles, were among the prophets and teachers at Antioch (Acts 13:1). Ephesians 4 says pastors and teachers and I think the grammar in the Greek points to a single office of pastor-teacher. But the gift is recognized aside from the pastors. These are people who teach God's Word.

6. Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Philippians 1:1)

And then finally, there are deacons, which are the recognized role of servant in the body of Christ. Deacons come to serve when there is a recognized need that would otherwise distract pastors from devoting themselves to God's Word and prayer.

These are the gifts that God has given for the good and upbuilding and encouragement of his church. God loves his church and he wants the gospel mission to go forward and he has given many people many different gifts. We can have more than one. We are told to earnestly desire all of them. And by God's grace, I see these gifts operating for the good of Metro Life Church and I pray all the more, that he would stir up and impart more gifts.

II. Timothy 4:14

As a close, please turn with me to 1 Timothy 4:14,

"Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you" (1 Timothy 4:14).

A. Do not neglect

He tells him, do not neglect the gift you have. We can have gifts and those gifts can fall into neglect. We can have gifts and fail to use them. Paul encouraged Timothy and God's Word encourages us, don't neglect the gifts he's given. Sometimes they are hard to use, sometimes it's discouraging, but we must not neglect them.

Let's settle this: we are going to mess up. We are working out these gifts. As long as we are not on a divisive rampage with our gift or sitting on our

hands no matter how many times the Spirit prompts us to act, let's have Metro Life Church as safe place to work out the gifts God has given among us.

B. Role of prophesy in imparting

Also in the verse, Paul reminds Timothy of what he received he gift. Likely it was that of being a pastor. Timothy received it by prophecy. Prophecy can also be used by God to impart gifts to other people.

So, I want to end this time in prayer and let's ask God. I've got a few categories for us to consider.

1. Revive gifts that are in neglect
2. Help some to recognize/discover the gifts God has already given them
3. Impart more/new gifts