

If God Has a Plan for My Life, Where Can I Get a Copy? (Spiritual Gifts)

(appropriate for high-schoolers or older)

2 sessions, 45 minutes each - Michael R. Daily January 2015

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Reference #1: John MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, Nelson Books, 2013.

How many of you have heard people say that God has a plan for your life? How many of you believe that this is true? How many of you are not sure this is true?

For those of you who believe that God has a plan for your life, how many of you know what the plan is? So, God has a plan for your life but He's not telling, is that what I'm hearing?

The truth is God does have a plan for your life and tonight we're going to talk about how to figure out what it is.

Romans 8:29 - For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Of course, one part of the plan that is common to all of us is that God wants us to grow up and mature in all aspects of the character of Christ. But the path that each of us will take will be different.

So, where can you get a copy of the plan? Its in your spiritual DNA.

Its kind of like asking, where is the plan on how to construct my physical body. Well, its in your DNA. The cells of your body each have a copy of the plan on how to construct YOU that was put there by God. Your job is to eat, sleep, exercise, and practice good hygiene (keep yourself clean) and the DNA will make sure the plan gets executed in combination with God's intervention in the circumstances of life that are outside your control.

Spiritual DNA

Just like physical DNA, spiritual DNA is kind of complicated. You can think of it as the combinations of all the strengths and weaknesses God has intentionally given you. Some of these things include:

Spiritual Gifts
(supernatural)

Work Capacity
(people/tasks)

**Natural Talents
& Aptitudes**

**Developed
Skills**

**Physical
Presentation**

The strengths and weaknesses you have in each of these areas (and there are probably others) cause certain doors to open for you and certain doors to close for you when combined with God's intervention in the circumstances of your life. Spiritual Gifts dominate God's plan for you (your spiritual DNA) but the other areas listed above play a role in customizing or tailoring the application of your spiritual gifts. So, most of what we will talk about tonight will be in the context of spiritual gifts.

Key point: Spiritual gifts are areas of supernatural effectiveness given to each Christian and energized by the Holy Spirit. They are characterized primarily by uncommon results rather than by uncommon methods, approaches, or abilities. Spiritual gifts cannot be earned and they cannot be given or taught to others. Their purpose is to build up and strengthen the body of Christian believers – the church.

Physical Presentation

The way you look, sound, and act (personality) is not an accident. God designed you with a certain physical presentation that will help direct you in the plan He has for you. Some of us have "the look" that opens certain doors. For example, there is a certain "military look" that is valued by the armed forces for their members. There is a certain "business look" that is valued by businesses in their executives. If you have these looks or mannerisms then certain doors will open for you. If you are like me you have a very plain, ordinary look. This is intentional as well. It is God's way of removing the pressure of doors opening for you that would take you in directions that are not part of God's plan for you. It may not feel as nice as having "the look" but it gets the job done in terms of keeping you on the plan.

Natural Aptitudes & Talents

These are the “natural gifts” that God has given everyone born on the Earth. They include your intelligence level, athletic abilities, musical talents, etc. These talents will open certain doors for you and close others. (I'm still waiting for the professional baseball player door to open)

Developed Skills

These are the skills you have developed through hard work and training. They include your level of education, training in the arts, craftsmanship of various types (mechanic, painter), public speaking skills, etc. Natural talents combined with developed skills in related areas are a powerful combination.

Work Capacity

This represents your capacity to handle multiple tasks and the number of people you can comfortably interact with effectively. Some of us can work with thousands of people at a time, some hundreds, some tens, and some just one or two people at a time. Some of us can handle many types of tasks at once, some of us only one thing at a time. God uses these capacities to open and close certain doors for us. In the spiritual realm your capacity will interact with your spiritual gift. For example, two people may have the supernatural gift of Evangelism, one has a capacity to work with tens of thousands (Billy Graham), and the other may have the capacity to work with only one person at a time – but every month he's leading one or two to Christ. One of the things that is interesting about work capacity is that God tells us that He does not reward capacity (quantity of work, size of ministry) since it is part of our design. Instead He rewards the quality of our work. In other words if you have a small capacity but are diligent and faithful in your service your reward in heaven will be as great as the person with a high work capacity who was equally diligent and faithful.

I Corinthians 3:13-14 - each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

In addition to Spiritual Gifts, work capacity, natural talents & aptitudes, developed skills, and physical presentation, God also provides us with confirmation that we are on plan through Desires & Satisfactions and Confirmation from Other People.

Confirmation from Desires & Satisfactions

In **1 Samuel 2:30** God says, “.....those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed”

Few things embody this truth better than the story of Eric Liddle, depicted in the 1981 movie, *Chariots of Fire*, winner of 4 academy awards including Best Picture.

Eric Liddle, a member of Britain's 1924 Olympic team and one of the fastest runners in the world in the 100 meter dash became an international spectacle when he refused to run in his best Olympic event because of his Christian conviction that Sunday was a day committed to the Lord. Instead he spent that Sunday speaking at a Paris church. He told the crowds who came to hear him, "I don't need explanations from God. I simply believe him and accept whatever comes my way." That same day, Eric's team mate, Harold Abrahams, won the 100 meter race and the title of, “fastest man alive”.

Although disqualified for the 100 meter race, Eric did run in the 200 meter and the 400 meter events. He was not expected to medal in either event. His gold medal victory and world record in the 400 meter was considered a stunning upset. He finished 5 meters ahead of his nearest rival. He also unexpectedly won a bronze medal in the 200 meters.

Two years after the Olympics Eric became a missionary to China. When World War II started the Japanese, who controlled China at the time, put all foreigners, including Eric, in a primitive prison camp. Some of Eric's greatest moments as a minister occurred during his time in the prison camp. He died in the camp in 1945 at the age of 43 from a brain tumor just a few months before the war ended.

Eric once said, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure".

Although running is not a spiritual gift it is not uncommon for people to sense something similar when they are using their spiritual gifts and fulfilling the plan that God has for them.

I am very cautious when it comes to emotions and decision making. **Jeremiah 17:9** says that our hearts are deceitful. It is also easy for satan to manipulate emotions for deceptive purposes. Nevertheless, part of God's direction in the plan for our lives includes a deep sense of satisfaction or of "being in the right place" when we are exercising our spiritual gifts, natural talents, skills, etc. as He intended.

Like Eric, many of us could report, "And when I _____ I feel His pleasure". This is one type of confirmation from God that we are executing His plan for our lives, including our spiritual gifts.

Confirmation from Other People

For some reason it seems to be much easier for other people to identify our spiritual gifts than it is for us. If we are doing our part then our spiritual gifts will become evident to others and they will tell us what they are.

Youth is a time to try out all kinds of ministries. You have more time and physical energy now than at any other time of life. Take advantage of every type of service opportunity you can. Teach bible studies, share the gospel, help out with set up and tear down for ministry functions, help organize and administrate a church event, volunteer to work part-time with a church secretary, do some food preparation for a church group, whatever is available.

I Timothy 4:12-15 - Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

This is the "exercise" part of growing and uncovering God's plan for you. As you "exercise" others can begin to see your spiritual gifts and give you that feedback.

Its kind of like directing a motorboat. If the engine is not running the rudder will be useless for keeping the boat on course but if the engine is running and engaged the rudder (your spiritual DNA combined with God's intervention in circumstances) can keep you on course.

Spiritual Gifts – common attributes

With all of this as a foundation we can now talk more specifically about the spiritual gifts. There are things about the spiritual gifts that are clear but there are many things that are not clear.

For those things that are not clear we can discuss them but we cannot be dogmatic about specifics. If God has not been clear and specific about a spiritual gift issue it is not something that we should give undue importance to. With that in mind let's look at the gifts.

Ephesians 1:13 - In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation--having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

Spiritual gifts are given to each Christian at the moment of their conversion when they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Since this was completed at the moment of salvation there is no additional "filling of the Spirit" or "Baptism of the Spirit". You got all there was to get at that moment.

Romans 11:29 - for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

The spiritual gifts are irrevocable. The word, "irrevocable" means "impossible to revoke, unalterable, incapable of being changed". Your spiritual gifts were given to you when you became a Christian and will be in effect in your life until you die. You will never lose the spiritual gifts you were given and you will not get any new ones.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 - Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 7But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Peter 4:10 - As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Ephesians 4:4-8 - There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. 7But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."

Every Christian is given at least one supernatural gift by the Holy Spirit, often more than one. These gifts are determined by the Holy Spirit, not by us, and they are given as gifts of grace, we don't deserve or earn them.

The most important thing to remember about the spiritual gifts is that they are unnatural. In fact, they are literally supernatural powers. The effects of the Gifts cannot be explained naturally. Everyone who is a Christian has at least one of these supernatural powers energized by the Holy Spirit.

Oh, but Mr. Daily, Mr. Daily, there are hundreds of Christians at my church but I am not seeing very many supernatural effects so it must be that the spiritual gifts are not really supernatural.

Be careful. The gifts are supernatural. But we have to do our part or the gifts will not be seen or demonstrated. Go back to the DNA analogy. We have to eat right, sleep, exercise, and practice good hygiene otherwise the plan for our physical bodies, encoded in our DNA, will not be fully realized.

Exercise: We have already talked about "exercise" but we also need to do the other things.

Eat right: We need to feed on God's Word – study, meditate, and apply God's Word to our lives

Sleep: We need to keep balance in our lives, putting God's kingdom first, not getting consumed by the worries of the world and the desire for other things.

Hygiene : We need to keep our lives free from intentional sin (purity & wholeheartedness)

Our job is to spiritually "eat, sleep, exercise, & practice good hygiene" so as to not block God's plan for our life.

Romans 12:1-6a - Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. 3For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly.

Jeremiah 15:16 - Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

1 Peter 2:1-3 - Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

Mark 4:14-20 - "The sower sows the word. 15"These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. 16"In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; 17and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. 18"And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, 19but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20"And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

II Corinthians 11:1-3 - I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. 3But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Time – there is also a time element involved. It takes time to do all the things mentioned above. As a result you may not fully realize your spiritual gifts and God's plan for you until you are in your 20's.

The reason you may not be seeing much in the way of the Spiritual Gifts being demonstrated is we have an awful lot of Christians who don't do these things. They do not spend time in God's Word, our spiritual food and drink. What would happen to you if you only ate 2 meals a week and the only thing you ate at those meals was candy? You would be in really bad shape. You have to be able to study the Bible on your own and learn from God. Other Christians have put other things first in their lives other than God. Worries of this world, desires for riches and other things – God is not first in their lives. Others have favorite sins they love and cling to. These things inhibit the spiritual gifts from being demonstrated.

Spiritual Gifts – The Spectacular Gifts (Healing, Miracles, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues)

Let's start by discussing what some people call the Spectacular Gifts. These are the gifts of Healing, Miracles, Speaking in Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues.

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 - For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 11But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

These gifts have caused much confusion and controversy in the church.

One of the issues of disagreement is, "Are these gifts active today?" Some say yes, some say no.

There is nothing in the Bible that says that all the spiritual gifts are given to men at all times in history. Therefore, it is possible that some gifts were given in the past that the Holy Spirit does not give today but that He might once again give in the future.

This does not mean that God is not performing miracles and healings today, He certainly is, but some argue that the frequency and pattern of such events does not appear to be consistent with the idea that certain people have a supernatural gift that enables them to routinely heal people and perform miracles the way you see Peter doing in the early chapters of the Book of Acts.

Acts 3:5-8 - And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene--walk!" 7And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. 8With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

Acts 5:14-16 - And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, 15to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. 16Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

Acts 9:32-35 - Now as Peter was traveling through all those regions, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed. 34Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed." Immediately he got up. 35And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

Acts 9:40-42 - But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Others would argue this point by saying that there are people like this. The problem here is that miracles, healings, and tongues can be counterfeited by men pretending to have these gifts as well as by satanic powers, which adds confusion to the issue. As a result we need to approach claims of such gifts with caution making sure that such claims are verifiable with objective evidence and are done in such a way as to not contradict the Word of God, our ultimate authority on such matters.

People who argue that the spectacular gifts are not active today will say that the purpose of the spectacular gifts was to demonstrate to Israel that God was truly with the Christians. Israel had experienced many miracles from God on their behalf. Why would they be willing to believe that the same God was now also the God of the Christians? One purpose of the spectacular gifts was to demonstrate to Israel that the rules had changed and that God was now the God of the gentiles as well as Jews, through Christ.

Some people also point out that at the beginning of the book of Acts there is a large frequency of miracles. The frequency of miracles slowly decreases as you continue through the book of Acts until, at the end, few miracles seem to be occurring.

Hebrews 2:1-4 - For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. 2For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, 3how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, 4God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Key Point: Because the spectacular gifts can also be counterfeited by men and satan we need to make sure that such claims of gifting are verifiable with evidence and are executed in such a way as to not contradict the Word of God, our ultimate authority on such matters.

The gift of Speaking in Tongues is of interest today. There are some who claim that there is a higher level of Christian experience one can attain after the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit". The evidence for this Baptism being that the person speaks in tongues. The Bible not only doesn't support this but Paul counters this.

1 Corinthians 12:28-31 - And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. 29All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? 31But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

What is striking is that Speaking in Tongues, a gift that Paul had, is the only spiritual gift that Paul spent an entire chapter of the Bible on in order to put limits and constraints on its use and to explain why it should not be given undue importance. He also said we are not to forbid speaking in tongues but there are rules for its proper use.

1 Corinthians 14:1-40 - Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 2For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. 3But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. 4One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. 5Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying. 6But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? 7Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? 8For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? 9So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. 10There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. 11If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. 12So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church. 13Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. 14For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. 16Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? 17For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified. 18I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; 19however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue. 20Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. 21In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord. 22So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. 23Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? 24But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; 25the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you. 26What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation Let all things be done for edification. 27If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; 28but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. 29Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. 30But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. 31For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; 32and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; 33for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. 34The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. 35If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. 36Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? 37If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. 38But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. 39Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. 40But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

END OF PART 1

PART 2

Desiring & Seeking Gifts?

There are a few passages of scripture that indicate some gifts are greater or more important than other gifts and therefore should be sought after.

I Corinthians 12:28-31 - And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. 29All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? 30All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? 31But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

I Corinthians 14:1 & 39 - 1Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.....39Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

This seems to contradict the idea that Spiritual Gifts are given at the discretion of the Holy Spirit and are unchangeable. However, in the context of these verses Paul is addressing churches, not individuals. It would not make sense for Paul to tell individuals to earnestly desire or seek a particular spiritual gift for themselves and he is not doing that. What he is saying is that in terms of the needs of a church body some gifts are more critical than others. If your church has people with all the spiritual gifts active and engaged except there is no one in the church with the gifts of teaching or prophecy your church will quickly fall apart due to lack of maturity of the people and doctrinal problems. People will either leave and go to other churches or your church will become something else – some kind of social club.

Therefore, when Paul says to earnestly desire or seek the greater gifts he is saying that it is good to pray that God would bring people with certain spiritual gifts to your church for the good of the church. In other words it is inappropriate to pray that God would give you a specific spiritual gift as a person but it is quite appropriate to pray that God would bring the right mix of people to your church with the spiritual gifts needed by that church.

Spiritual Gifts – Developing The List

A complete list of the spiritual gifts is not found in one location in the Bible so we need to look at multiple passages to assemble a list of the gifts. So far we have: *Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Distinguishing of Spirits, Teaching, Helps, Administration, Apostle, Prophecy, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Healing, Miracles*

Romans 12:6-13 - Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 9Let love be without hypocrisy Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. 10Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; 11not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, 13contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

This passage adds the following gifts: *Service, Exhortation, Giving, Leading, Mercy, Hospitality*

Ephesians 4:11-16 - And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

This passage adds the following gifts: *Evangelism, Pastoring*

1 Peter 4:8-11 - Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 9Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 10As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This passage adds the gift of: *Speaking (Preaching)*

1 Corinthians 7:1-9 - Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. 3The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6But this I say by way of concession, not of command. 7Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. 8But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. 9But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

This passage adds the gift of: *Celibacy*

The combined list of gifts then is:

<i>Pastoring</i>	<i>Leading</i>	<i>Faith</i>	<i>Exhortation</i>	<i>Speaking</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Teaching</i>	<i>Apostle</i>	<i>Prophecy</i>	<i>Evangelism</i>
<i>Administration</i>	<i>Wisdom</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Helps</i>	<i>Distinguishing of Spirits</i>
<i>Giving</i>	<i>Mercy</i>	<i>Hospitality</i>	<i>Celibacy</i>	<i>Tongues</i>
<i>Interpretation of Tongues</i>	<i>Healing</i>	<i>Miracles</i>		

All of the gifts are equally important to God. Some gifts a church can get along without but its effectiveness will be degraded. Other gifts such as teaching and prophecy are critical – a church cannot survive without them.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 - For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14For the body is not one member, but many. 15If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. 19If they were all one member, where would the body be? 20But now there are many members, but one body. 21And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; 23and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, 24whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

Spiritual Gifts – The Non-Spectacular Gifts

Pastoring – The gift of Pastoring literally means Shepherding. This is a highly relational gift in that people with this gift know and care deeply about a group of Christians that they feel a responsibility to watch over, lead, guide, and care for. Not everyone with this gift has the position of pastor and not every pastor has this gift. In fact, many pastors of large churches (more than a few hundred people) may not have this gift – it tends to be more common among pastors of small churches. This is because there is an inherent limitation in the number of people one can personally know and shepherd just due to the number of hours in the day. In larger churches much of the pastoring is done in Sunday School classes or other small fellowship groups. Some churches use a structure where a small group not only has a teacher but also a class administrator. Lay people with the gift of pastoring are very effective in these positions. Both full time ministers and lay people with this gift have the supernatural ability to make people feel cared for and important to the group.

Leading – The gift of leading gives a person the supernatural ability to identify something important that needs to be done and to inspire a majority of people to follow them and use their gifts and energies to achieve a common goal. If you are going into full time ministry this is a nice gift to have because it takes a lot of support from a lot of people in order to sustain a full time ministry over the long run. Many pastors of large churches or Christian organizations likely have the gift of leading. Of course lay people also have the gift of leading and often are effective at starting ministries within the church that might not otherwise exist.

Faith – People with the gift of faith can scare the rest of us. They have a supernatural understanding of knowing when God wants to do something unusual and a fearless desire to be a part of it. This is more than just a blind faith or lack of prudence. It is a supernatural ability to know when a “crazy idea” is actually God’s will and when it is not. These are the people who always seem to “get away” with thinking big spiritually when others get burned. People with this gift often have a hard time understanding why the rest of us seem so fearful and hesitant.

Exhortation – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to motivate others to obey God through personal appeals. This gift may be executed in the context of public preaching and speaking or it may be manifested in a one to one situation. They have the ability to see what the most critical need of the moment is and are motivated to speak about it in a way that addresses the issue appropriately (encouragement, correction, etc.)

Speaking (Preaching) – This gift enables someone to be supernaturally effective in speaking to groups about spiritual issues. This gift is not a stand alone gift in that it must be combined with other spiritual gifts in order to have spiritual effectiveness. For this reason it is often not considered a separate spiritual gift but as a modifier of the other gifts. In other words it is viewed as an issue of quantity or size of ministry. The word preach means, “To proclaim or put forth in a sermon, to advocate, especially to urge acceptance of or compliance with, to deliver a sermon”.

Knowledge – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to take apart the Word of God and display the subtleties of its revelation. It is important to understand that this gift, like all the gifts, do not result in new revelation from God. Revelation was closed with the Book of Revelation. People with this gift have the ability to uncover truths that are already in the Bible but are not obvious to the casual observer. People with this gift tend to have a scholarly style and make good seminary professors and Bible translators. Pastors with this gift often appear to have an academic style in their preaching and teaching. My pastor enjoys taking apart the Greek and Hebrew sentence structure and explaining the nuances of word meanings and their linguistic tenses which gives us insights we would otherwise not get. Perhaps he has the gift of knowledge. Since this gift is not always combined with the gifts of teaching or preaching a good way to benefit from the knowledge revealed by people with this gift is to read their books.

Teaching – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to understand the more difficult things of God and explain them in a way that is easy to understand and apply in daily life. Many pastors have the gift of teaching as well as Sunday School teachers and small group leaders and missionaries. This is one of the few gifts that are required for a church to survive as a body of believers.

Apostle – I have waited to discuss this gift until after a few of the others have been discussed because this gift, along with the gift of Prophecy, are sources of disagreement. The position of apostle certainly ended with the death of the last apostle (John). According to Wayne Grudem, charismatic professor of theology at Phoenix Seminary, “since no one today can meet the qualification of having seen the risen Christ with his own eyes, there are no apostles today” (ref #1, page 93). The question is, did the gift of apostleship also end at that time? Yes. This gift came to an end once the foundations of the church were laid by the 12 apostles (**Revelation 21:14**) and the canon was closed.

Ephesians 2:19-22

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Prophecy – Like the position of apostle the position of prophet ended in the early church, specifically with the completion of the Book of Revelation. What is also clear is that the gift of prophecy either stopped or significantly changed at the close of the canon otherwise we would have to continue to add new books to the Bible. Some people feel that the gift of prophecy is no longer active during the church age. Others define this gift as the supernatural ability to communicate a spiritual message from the Bible with unusual authority. This gift includes the ability to understand God’s divine will and purpose, to expound on it, and to communicate it through public speaking in an authoritative way. The word “expound” means “*to give a detailed statement of; set forth, to explain in detail*”. On the other hand those that do not believe this gift is still active could argue that such people just have a gift mix that includes leadership, preaching, knowledge, and exhortation. In either case the result is the same.

Evangelism – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to lead others to make decisions for Christ. These people are the reapers while others of us are the sowers and the waterers. We all share the gospel but the reapers see decisions made for Christ on a routine basis – they come to expect it as a normal consequence of sharing your faith. I do not have the gift of evangelism. Over the last 30 years I have shared the gospel face to face with hundreds of people. Although I have led people to Christ over the phone as part of the Billy Graham ministry I have never once had anyone receive Christ when I shared the gospel face to face with them. Unlike those with this gift I am a sower. People I shared the gospel with will tell me months or years later that they became Christians but it did not occur at the time I talked with them. Some sow, some water, some reap – but God causes the growth. Some have estimated that around 10% of Christians most likely have this gift. This is also a good gift to have if you are a full time minister for an evangelistic organization like Campus Crusade for Christ.

Administration – People with this gift have a supernatural ability that enables them to formulate, organize, direct, and execute plans necessary to fulfill a purpose. While leading is more focused on strategic issues administrating is more focused on tactical issues and logistics. The word, “logistics” means, “The management of the details of an operation”. I do not have the gift of administration. Two or three times in my life I have been responsible for the administration of Christian conferences with hundreds of people attending. I reserved the facilities, arranged for child care, ordered the food, got the materials printed, did the advertising, managed the money and paid the bills, and I did a good job. Nevertheless, although I found the results satisfying I did not at all enjoy the administration itself. I found the task to be difficult. In comparison someone with the gift of administration would have done the same things I did, plus they would have gone beyond what I did, and would have found the whole thing energizing. They would have looked around the conference and said something like, “Look at all these people setting aside their Saturday to hear God’s Word preached, lives being changed before our eyes, and we had the privilege of making it all come together. It just doesn’t get any better than this!”

Wisdom – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to find ways through extremely complex or confusing issues and decisions that would make others feel helpless and unable to know what actions to take. A silly analogy might be how a parent can help a small child clean their room. Looking around the room at everything in disarray may so overwhelm a small child that when told to clean his room he doesn’t know where to start. Mom, having more wisdom than the child, tells him to just pick up only his books and put them on the

shelf – nothing else. This path forward is clear and simple enough that he can take action. Afterward Mom praises him and then asks him to pick up only his Hot Wheel cars and put them in the plastic bucket. Once again this task is simple and clear enough that the child can take action. The process continues until the room has been completely put in order or the child gains the confidence to complete the task without additional direction. In a similar fashion someone with the gift of wisdom can formulate a path forward made up of small gatherings of information (including Bible study) followed by small decisions and actions. They can help people work through extremely unclear or ambiguous situations or issues one step at a time to success. People with the gift of wisdom make good counselors and advisors. If your church has a board of elders or a board of laymen who oversee the church staff and provide accountability for them, this gift is a good one for some of the board members to have.

Service – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to respond to needs and meet them through behind the scenes service. People with this gift find satisfaction in meeting needs without recognition or reward. In fact, they often feel uncomfortable with recognition or reward. They just enjoy being “part of the team” and will do almost anything that is needed if it is within their abilities and resources to do it. Because of the low-profile, behind-the-scenes, whatever-is-needed bent of this gift it is often thought of as less important than other gifts or perhaps even not really a supernatural gift. When I was a young Christian I was listening to a tape of Leroy Eims, a man who often spoke at Christian conferences for college age Christians. He was discussing the importance of excellence in service and used the following illustration. While speaking at a Navigator conference for college students he was talking to some of the students on the last day of the conference. After listening to over 10 hours of talks from Mr. Eims he asked them, “What has been the one thing that most impacted you at the conference this weekend?” He said this expecting them to comment on something he had shared. Instead they mentioned some of the men that had been maintaining the facilities and said, “The thing that most impacted me this weekend was watching the way those guys washed those windows!”. God often uses those with the gift of Service not only to meet needs but to be living demonstrations of the principles of Humility, Faithfulness, and Excellence. It is not uncommon to hear someone say that watching the faithful service of someone with this gift convicted them of their need to be more faithful in spending time with God everyday. Where did that come from? The two things are unrelated. Never underestimate the supernatural power of any of the gifts to be used by God to impact people and change lives.

Helps – This gift is closely related to service and some people view them as the same gift. An alternate view is that people with the gift of Helps also enjoy serving behind the scenes without recognition or reward but that the focus is less on the tasks needing to be done than on the person they are helping. For example it is not uncommon to find visionary leaders of large Christian organizations and churches to have secretaries or aides who have been with them for many years or even decades. The person with the gift of helps enjoys serving so that the person they are serving is freed up to accomplish more with their gifts. So, helps appears to have an element of relational loyalty that makes it slightly different from the gift of service. One way the differences between helps and service show up is when there is a leadership change in the ministry. If the tasks needing to be done have not changed those with the gift of service will continue on hardly missing a beat. Those with the gift of helps will have more of a need to pause and re-evaluate if they should continue to support the effort or move on to helping someone else. The opposite is also true. If the leadership of a ministry stays the same but some of the tasks needing to be done change significantly those with the Gift of Helps will continue on without missing a beat but those with the Gift of Service will have more of a need to pause and re-evaluate if they should continue to support the effort or move on to some other task.

Distinguishing of Spirits – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to discern what is from God and what is not. As we have said earlier men and satan have the ability to counterfeit things and present them as if they were from God. People with this gift can spot these counterfeits when the rest of us think everything is fine. They may not always know why but they can tell that something is wrong. Their warnings should be taken as signals to move forward with caution and to examine the situation more closely.

Giving – People with this gift have the supernatural ability to give of their resources well beyond what the rest of us do. While the rest of us give 10% (or less) of our income to God’s ministries they are more likely to live on 10% and give the rest. This gift is sometimes combined with a natural talent for making money but not always. There are some with the gift of giving that have average incomes.

Mercy – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to feel deeply for those in physical, spiritual, or emotional need and then act to meet the need and provide encouragement. They are particularly motivated to help those who are unable to care for themselves and whom no one else would care for.

Hospitality – People at church always seem to be trying to get me to bake something and bring it to church. I jokingly tell them that I do not have the spiritual gift of baking. I'm happy to stop by the store and buy something but I won't be baking anything. It turns out there actually is a spiritual gift related to baking –the Gift of Hospitality. People with this gift have a supernatural ability to joyfully welcome and receive guests and those in need of food and lodging. These people are genuinely happier with visitors in their house than not. If you find yourself getting excited about the opportunity to bake something for a church meeting and your thoughts race as you try to determine what you could make that people would truly enjoy you may have the gift of hospitality. A friend of mine with the gift of hospitality set aside a bedroom in his house for the sole purpose of providing hospitality to traveling missionaries and other ministers. He sent letters to all the major missions organizations explaining who he was and let them know this room was available anytime they had a minister in need of free lodging in his town. His children grew up hearing story after story from the mission field as these ministers shared their experiences around the dinner table.

Celibacy – People with this gift have a supernatural ability to enjoy and find satisfaction in singleness without experiencing undue sexual temptation. Although a small percentage of Christians appear to have this gift it can enable other gifts and resources to be used more effectively since the need to support a spouse or family does not exist.

Key Point: If the thought that you might have the Gift of Celibacy horrifies you, that means that you don't have this gift.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God Has a Plan for My Life, Where Can I Get a Copy? (Spiritual Gifts)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 8:29, I Corinthians 3:13-14, I Samuel 2:30*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 4:12-15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 12:1-6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God Has a Plan for My Life, Where Can I Get a Copy? (Spiritual Gifts)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jeremiah 15:16, I Peter 2:1-3*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Mark 4:14-20, II Corinthians 11:1-3*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 1:13, Romans 11:29*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God Has a Plan for My Life, Where Can I Get a Copy? (Spiritual Gifts)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 12:4-7, I Peter 4:10, Ephesians 4:4-8*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 12:8-11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Acts 3:4-8, Acts 5:14-16, Acts 9:32-35, Acts 9:40-42*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God Has a Plan for My Life, Where Can I Get a Copy? (Spiritual Gifts)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Hebrews 2:1-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 12:28-31*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 14:1-40*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God Has a Plan for My Life, Where Can I Get a Copy? (Spiritual Gifts)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 12:31, I Corinthians 14:1, I Corinthians 14:39*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 12:6-13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 4:11-16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If God Has a Plan for My Life, Where Can I Get a Copy? (Spiritual Gifts)*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Peter 4:8-11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 7:1-9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 12:12-27*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?