



Unit 2: Blessing Others

Bless others by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples

Lesson 4 Spiritual Gifts

Day One

Purpose and Pride of Spiritual Gifts

In Unit 2: *Blessing Others*, our primary objective is to share the gospel and make disciples. While every Christian is called to this mission, God equips each of us in unique ways to fulfill it. There is one gospel message, but many ways to communicate and illuminate it, utilizing various mediums and our individual abilities. This is where spiritual gifts come into play.

Spiritual gifts are abilities, talents, characteristics, or qualities given by the Holy Spirit to followers of Christ to fulfill God's purposes in the world. The Holy Spirit endows us with a variety of these gifts to communicate God's plan and purpose of restoring creation to its intended glory through Jesus Christ. These gifts are meant to be used in love and unity, both for building up and expanding the Christian community.

1. Define spiritual gifts?

Read 1 Peter 4:10–11 and answer questions 2–8:

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10–11 (A steward is a manager.)

2. How should Christians use the gift(s) they have received from God (v. 10a)?

3. Why should *you* serve others with the gift(s) God has given *you* (v. 10b)?

4. What are the two broad categories of gifts that Peter mentions (v. 11)?

5. If one has a gift of teaching, preaching, prophesying, evangelizing, witnessing, encouraging or any other gift involving speaking, what are their instructions (v. 11a)?

6. Do you think a disciple of Christ should always speak as one speaking the very words of God? Yes No (Underline One) Explain your answer.

7. If one has the gift of serving, how should they serve (v. 11b)?

8. What is the ultimate purpose of spiritual gifts (v. 11c)?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #1–8 with your discipleship team.

In Lesson 1, we learned that some believers are specially gifted and called by God to be evangelists. They are endowed with the spiritual gift of evangelism, enabling them to effectively communicate the message of God’s salvation and mercy to sinners. However, even if we do not possess the gift of evangelism, we are still commanded to share the gospel and make disciples. Similarly, those who may not have specific gifts like encouragement or giving are still called to support others and offer their resources to God. While we may spend most of our time serving God through our unique gifts, this does not mean we can neglect other biblical responsibilities.

With the goal of glorifying God in mind, we use our spiritual gifts to bring people to faith and help strengthen their faith, making disciples in the process. Believers are on a journey of maturity and sanctification; being a disciple is not a one-time decision but a lifelong commitment. Therefore, believers need each other and the gifts the Spirit provides through us.

Read Romans 1:11–12 and answer questions 9–10:

I [Paul] long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—¹² that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith. Romans 1:11–12 (In verse 11, the Greek word *pneumatikon* (πνευματικόν) translated spiritual in English is an adjective describing gifts that are influenced by the Spirit of God. The Greek word *charisma* (χάρισμα), translated gifts, is a noun meaning divine gifts that are freely and graciously given; favors bestowed (granted).

Definition: *Impart* means to give, share, or communicate something, especially knowledge, wisdom, or a particular quality, to someone else. It involves transferring or conveying something, often with the intention of influencing or benefiting the recipient.

9. Paul was writing to the believers in Rome. What does Paul mean when he said that he wanted to impart some spiritual gift to make them strong?

10. Explain the meaning of the phrase, “mutually encouraged by each other” (v. 12)?

Spiritual gifts are given to believers by God through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit may bestow completely new abilities or enhance existing ones to a greater level of strength and effectiveness. However, people do not have the capacity to give a spiritual gift to another person. Therefore, when Paul writes about using his spiritual gifts to benefit the Roman believers, he is not suggesting that he can empower them with supernatural abilities; distributing gifts is solely the Spirit's domain.

Paul possessed an abundance of spiritual gifts, such as teaching, prophecy, evangelism, miracles, faith, leadership, wisdom, and knowledge. He used these gifts to encourage, equip, and benefit others, hoping to bring them closer to God in knowledge, wisdom, faith, love, reassurance, and joy. Paul desired to be used as an instrument of God to strengthen believers.

Despite his wealth of gifts, including apostleship, Paul recognized that the Roman believers were also spiritually gifted. In an act of humble piety, Paul expressed a desire to benefit from and be encouraged by their faith and gifts, demonstrating his willingness to learn from others.

When we lack humility, we become prideful—a vice that God detests (Proverbs 6:16–17; James 4:6). Pride has many harmful dimensions, and while we may keep it in check in some areas, we may overlook it in others. This sinful behavior can manifest in connection with spiritual gifts, so it's important to be aware of its dangers and remain vigilant. To help in this regard, we will explore five harmful aspects of pride.

Five Aspects of Pride

(1) Self-exaltation

Description: Elevating oneself above others and, implicitly or explicitly, above God.

11. Read Isaiah 2:12. What will happen to those who proudly exalt themselves?

The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled) . . . Isaiah 2:12 (To be humbled is to bring down; put in a lower position.)

(2) Disregard for others

Description: This aspect of pride often results in treating others with contempt or as inferior. A disregard for others involves a strong sense of disrespect for someone, often accompanied by a sense of superiority or arrogance.

12. Read Philippians 2:3. What attitude should we adopt towards others?

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves. Philippians 2:3

(3) False confidence

Description: This aspect of pride places confidence in one's own abilities, wisdom, or righteousness rather than in God.

13. According to Proverbs 3:5, where should we place our trust instead of relying on our own wisdom?

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5

(4) Spiritual blindness and resistance to correction

Description: This is an aspect of pride that blinds individuals to their own faults and sins, making them unaware of their true spiritual state.

Read Revelation 3:17 and answer questions 14–15:

"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." Revelation 3:17

14. How does self-reliance and perceived wealth contribute to spiritual blindness?

15. What are the dangers of being unaware of your true spiritual condition?

(5) Independence from God

Description: Lastly, this facet of pride reflects an attitude of self-sufficiency and a denial of one's need for God. It is mostly found in nonbelievers or as described as the wicked below.

16. Read Psalm 10:4. How does pride lead to an attitude of self-sufficiency and exclusion of God from one's thoughts?

In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.
Psalm 10:4

17. Which aspect of pride do you need to work on, and how will you improve it?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #9–17 with your discipleship team.

—End Day One—

Day Two

Self vs. Love

We ended day one discussing pride. Pride can be especially problematic concerning spiritual gifts. Those with more visible and powerful gifts may become prideful and treat others with less obvious gifting as though they were inferior.

Before we think—*I would never treat anyone with contempt*—we must be honest and acknowledge our sin nature. We are not immune to the sin of pride in any of its forms. Recognizing this truth, we must be diligent in rooting it out of our lives.

Missionary and Bible teacher, Wetherell Johnson, provides a case in point. She was tempted to think that she was too “spiritually accomplished” to teach the Bible to just a few ladies. However, the Holy Spirit helped her recognize her pride and repent. She wrote about this experience in her autobiography, *Created for Commitment*.

Audrey Wetherell Johnson (1907–1984)¹ *Created for Commitment* (Part 1 of 2)

Audrey Wetherell Johnson trusted the Bible as God’s Word. She believed it with every fiber of her being. She committed her life to sharing God’s wisdom and plans through His Word.

Audrey was born in Leicester, England, and raised in a Christian home. After she trusted Jesus as her Savior, Audrey enjoyed a personal relationship with God and allowed Him to lead her life. In fact, God led her to join the *China Inland Mission* as a missionary.

Before leaving for China, Audrey and other missionaries were taught how to study and teach the Bible. She was a serious student of the Bible and diligently put God’s Word into practice. Audrey took great pleasure in her studies and in later years attributed her success in teaching to the principles she learned in preparation for missions,

Audrey, who became known as Miss Johnson, served in China during the Japanese invasion of China in 1942. She was placed in a crowded Japanese prison camp that had been a horse stable and given little food. Nevertheless, Miss Johnson’s memory of those days was of God’s daily provision and loving kindness.

After the war, Miss Johnson returned to England for a brief furlough (leave of absence from duty). Then she returned to China where she began training teachers at the Bible Seminary in Shanghai. Miss Johnson had hoped to reach the millions of unsaved Chinese by instructing others—with every person trained and sent out, the kingdom would be advanced.

¹ A. Wetherell Johnson, *Created for Commitment* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1982.) The following story about A. Wetherell Johnson is summarized from this resource.

The Japanese were gone, but now China was fully communist—Miss Johnson was put under house arrest for her beliefs and work for Christ. In 1950, after eighteen months of imprisonment, she was forced to leave China permanently.

At an invitation, she traveled to the United States. While she continued to pray and seek God's plan for her life, she received invitations from churches eager to hear of her experiences as a missionary. She included the importance of studying the Bible in all her presentations. The Bible was crucial to all, not just the unsaved in China.

In Southern California, she spoke at a church where a few of the women's hearts were stirred. Afterward they approached Miss Johnson and asked her to teach them the Bible in the way she had described. Miss Johnson admits in her autobiography that her first thoughts were sinful and prideful: *Why should I teach a few ladies the Bible when I have been a missionary and teacher in China? I'm too important for that.*

The Holy Spirit immediately convicted Miss Johnson and she fell before the Lord in confession. She told the Lord that she would do anything that He wanted. The Lord made it known to Miss Johnson that He did indeed want her to teach these few ladies.

18. From reading the above story about Miss Johnson, what was her primary spiritual gift?

19. How was Miss Johnson tempted regarding spiritual pride and what did she do about it?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #18–19 with your discipleship team.

While spiritual pride involves a sense of superiority regarding one's own gifts, envy of spiritual gifts involves a desire for and resentment toward others' abilities. Closely related is jealousy, which involves fearing that someone might be gifted in a more recognizable or powerful way. Pride, envy, and jealousy are all equally sinful and can disrupt the unity of God's people.

Definition: *Jealousy* occurs when someone perceives a threat to something they already possess, typically in a relationship or status. It involves the fear of losing something valuable to oneself due to someone else's actions. For example, Saul's jealousy of David (1 Samuel 18:7-9) where Saul feared losing his position and respect due to David's anointing by God and his rising popularity with the people.

20. How can jealousy towards others' spiritual gifts impact our relationship with God and fellow believers, and what steps can we take to overcome such feelings?

Definition: *Envy* occurs when someone desires something that another person has and feels discontented or resentful because they lack it. It's about wanting what someone else possesses, whether it is a trait, possession, or status.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, we encounter the older brother's reaction to his sibling's return and the father's compassionate response. This passage not only highlights the older brother's struggle with jealousy, envy, and anger but also provides profound insights into our own tendencies towards envy and feelings of unfairness.

Read Luke 15:28–30 and answer questions 21–23:

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’” Luke 15:28–30 (A fattened calf was given to eat.)

- 21.** What was the real reason the older brother became angry and refused to join the celebration for his younger brother?
- 22.** When another Christian, who we perceive as undeserving, receives God's favor, how might we react similarly to the older brother in the parable?
- 23.** What does the older brother's reaction reveal about his understanding of his relationship with his father and his own sense of worth?
- 24.** Luke 15:31–32 . How does the father's response to the older brother's complaints reflect God's perspective on spiritual gifts and grace?

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’” Luke 15:31–32

In Luke 15:31–32, the father's response highlights the generosity and grace towards both sons. He emphasizes that everything he has is available to the older brother, just as the fattened calf was for the younger son's return. This mirrors God's abundant grace, which is not limited by human standards of merit or reward. Similarly, God distributes spiritual gifts just as He determines (1 Corinthians 12:11).

The father's willingness to celebrate the return of the younger son, despite his past mistakes, underscores that God's grace is available to all, regardless of their previous actions. This

contrasts with the older brother's view that rewards should be based solely on adherence to rules and perceived fairness. Spiritual gifts are free and unearned, given by God's grace.

The father's reassurance to the older son about his inheritance reflects how spiritual gifts are distributed by God. These gifts are given according to God's wisdom and purpose, not for comparison or envy among believers. Each person's gifts are valuable for the overall good of the community.

25. Read Philippians 2:3–4. How does focusing on the needs of others help counteract pride, jealousy, and envy?

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.
Philippians 2:3–4

26. Read Colossians 3:23–24. No matter what we do, who are we truly serving?

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23–24

Action Step

27. This week, reflect on any spiritual pride, envy, or jealousy you have felt toward others' gifts or roles in ministry. Ask God for forgiveness and a humble heart that celebrates their strengths. As a practical step, encourage someone with different gifts, appreciating their unique contributions. How did you feel after taking this step?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #20–27 with your discipleship team.

Be aware of and confess pride, jealousy, and envy, but do not let the dangers of these sins keep you from walking bravely and triumphantly in the gifts God has given you. It would be just as sinful to refuse to seek and use spiritual gifts out of fear of mishandling them. If we focus on glorifying God and using our gifts to bless others, we will keep our motives pure.

God has endowed each of us with unique spiritual gifts meant to serve and build up the church. As we eagerly desire to utilize these gifts, we must remember to do so with a heart full of love and a desire to glorify God. The following scripture highlights the diversity of gifts within the body of Christ and encourages us to pursue them earnestly.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:28–31 and answer questions 28–30:

And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way. 1 Corinthians 12:28–31

28. Why do you think the apostle Paul ranks these particular gifts (vv. 28, 31)?

29. In verses 29–30, Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions. What is he emphasizing about the distribution and purpose of spiritual gifts in the church?

30. How can we understand Paul’s instruction to eagerly desire the greater gifts (v. 31) in the context of his broader teaching on love and unity in the body of Christ?

When Paul urges believers to “eagerly desire the greater gifts,” he is not contradicting other teachings on the equality and grace-based nature of spiritual gifts (1 Peter 4:10–11). Instead, he is guiding the church to seek out gifts that are most effective in building up the body of Christ. The “greater gifts” are those that have a broader and more profound impact on the church’s edification and mission. Paul clarifies this by transitioning to 1 Corinthians 13, where he emphasizes that love is the highest and most essential gift. Without love, even the most remarkable spiritual gifts lose their value and purpose.

31. Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 13:1–8. What did the Lord impress upon you?

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 1 Corinthians 13:1–8

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #27–31 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Two—

Day Three

Old Testament Gifts

Prior to the New Testament, did God give spiritual gifts to His people? Yes. These gifts were bestowed upon certain individuals to advance God's divine plan and fulfill His purposes. From the wisdom of Solomon to the prophetic visions of Isaiah—from the craftsmanship of Bezalel to the miraculous strength of Samson, and including Daniel's extraordinary ability to interpret dreams—each of these gifts played a vital role in glorifying God while He led and guided His people. Understanding these Old Testament gifts provides a foundation for appreciating how God equips His people for His work today.

Definitions: *Prophets* are persons inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak for God and His purposes. A *prophet* may or may not be given insight into the future. When prophets speak God's truth, their words are known as prophecy. The gift of *prophecy* is given to instruct, encourage, warn of judgment, and speak on current events.

In the past God spoke to His people through prophets, therefore the Old Testament has a number of men and a few women (Exodus 15:20–21; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14–20) who were granted the gift of prophecy. Zechariah was such a prophet and was given foreknowledge about Jesus.

32. Read Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 21:4–7. What was Zechariah's spiritual gift and what did he prophesy about the Messiah?

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion [Israel]! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
Zechariah 9:9

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵ "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶ *The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.* Matthew 21:4–7

Read Exodus 31:1–11 and answer questions 33–35:

Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills— ⁴ to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, ⁵ to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. ⁶ Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you: ⁷ the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent— ⁸ the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its

accessories, the altar of incense, ⁹ the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand— ¹⁰ and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, ¹¹ and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you.” Exodus 31:1–11

33. How did Bezalel receive his spiritual gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and all kinds of artistic skills (vv. 1–4)?

34. How did Oholiab and all the skilled workers receive their abilities to help Bezalel make the tent of meeting, all the articles to furnish it, the priest’s sacred garments, the anointing oil, and fragrant incense for the Holy Place (vv. 6–11)?

35. When are artistic abilities and craft skills spiritual gifts and not just talents (vv. 2–3)?

Read 1 Samuel 16:14 and answer questions 36–37:

Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. 1 Samuel 16:14

36. Who departed or left King Saul?

37. When the Spirit left King Saul, who was given permission to torment him?

When God chose Saul to be king of Israel, the Holy Spirit endowed Saul with the gift of prophecy, followed by wisdom, courage, and leadership skills to lead the Israelites according to God’s will. However, Saul’s pattern of disobedience, lack of faith, and failure to adhere to God’s commands led to the withdrawal of His Holy Spirit, and consequently, Saul’s spiritual gifting.

Not only did God withdraw His Spirit from King Saul, but He also allowed an evil spirit to torment him. As discussed in Unit One: *Who Is God?*, Lesson 4, God is sovereign and controls all things. Evil spirits or demons cannot act without God’s permission or directive (Job 1:9–12). They are all under His authority. It is possible that God actually sent the demon as a form of punishment for Saul’s disobedience—a messenger of judgment.

The evil spirit stirred up negative emotions in Saul, transforming him from his former godly self into someone quite the opposite. Where he had once been connected to God, he became disconnected and foolish. His wisdom gave way to folly, his courage turned into fear, and his leadership abilities deteriorated into tyrannical incompetence. In contrast, the Spirit came upon David, equipping him with the gifts needed to fulfill God’s will and bring Him glory.

Read 1 Samuel 16:23 and answer questions 38–39:

Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

1 Samuel 16:23 (A lyre is a stringed musical instrument resembling a small harp.)

38. How did Saul get relief when the evil spirit came on him?

39. What kind of spiritual gift might David have had that caused the evil spirit to leave?

David had been anointed as the future king of Israel, and the Spirit of the Lord was upon him (1 Samuel 16:13). This anointing signified God’s favor and presence in David’s life. When David played music, it was not merely his talent but also the power of the Holy Spirit that repelled the evil spirit tormenting Saul.

David’s musical talent exemplified a spiritual gift used to glorify God and edify others (Colossians 3:16). Worshipful music can usher in God’s presence, drive away evil spirits, and even lead to miracles (2 Chronicles 5:13–14). For instance, when Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns, a violent earthquake occurred, shaking the prison and opening the doors (Acts 16:25–26).

40. Read 2 Samuel. 23:1–2. How did David have the ability to speak, write, and sing God’s words (v. 2)?

These are the last words of David: “The inspired utterance of David son of Jesse, the utterance of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, the hero of Israel’s songs: ² “The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.

2 Samuel. 23:1–2 (Utterance is defined as prophetic inspiration.)

The Spirit of the Lord spoke through David—He placed God’s words in his mouth. Whether David was prophesying, writing, singing, or leading the Israelites, it was God’s Spirit who enabled and empowered him to do so. David was an ordinary man, chosen and gifted by God.

Of course, David had to choose to follow God and obey His commands. The Spirit could have left David as He left Saul when he had failed to obey God or repent of his sins. Unlike Saul, who never repented of his sins, David was broken and contrite because of his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11–12).

Action Step: Memorize Psalm 51:10–12 and answer questions 41–43:

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Psalm 51:10–12

41. How does this prayer of David's reveal a heart of repentance (vv. 10, 12)?
42. What does David recognize about the gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 11)?
43. How can David's prayer serve as a model for our own prayers when seeking forgiveness and restoration from God?
44. Memorize Psalm 51:10–12.

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #32–43 and memory verses #44.

In the Old Testament, God empowered His people to fulfill His purposes through the Holy Spirit, though not everyone received this anointing, and it wasn't always permanent. Today, spiritual gifts are special abilities given by the Holy Spirit to followers of Christ to accomplish God's purposes. These diverse gifts are meant to be used in love and unity to build up and expand the Christian community.

Spiritual gifts are evidence of the Spirit's indwelling and active work, demonstrating that we belong to Jesus and are part of His family. *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children* (Romans 8:16). This is our identity and one that will help us embrace our supernatural calling and spiritual gifting (Ephesians 1:13–14).

In addition, the Holy Spirit guides the operation of spiritual gifts. He gives wisdom on how to use the gifts effectively and in alignment with God's will, ensuring that they are exercised in love and order. By understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in the distribution and operation of spiritual gifts, we recognize our dependence on Him for effective ministry and the building up of the body of Christ.

In seeking to identify our spiritual gifts, we must remember that we are called to serve God in all ways. This may include tasks beyond our special anointing and comfort zone. A disciple follows God—not a predetermined idea of what our service will be. The Holy Spirit is always our guide.

45. Can you share a time when you felt called to serve in a way that was outside your special anointing or comfort zone? How did you respond?
46. What are some practical steps you can take to ensure you are following God's lead rather than your own predetermined plans?
47. Read 2 Corinthians 5:7. In what ways does living by faith challenge you to step out and serve in areas you might not fully understand or feel comfortable with?

For we live by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Discovering our spiritual gifts involves several factors. While spiritual gifting assessments can be useful, they should not be solely relied upon. These tests may not list every potential gift and can sometimes confuse personal interests with spiritual anointing. For these reasons, we have not included an assessment test in this lesson. Instead, we offer action steps that focus on prayer, reading Scripture, engaging in ministry and service opportunities, reflecting on past and current serving opportunities, and seeking input from Spirit-filled Christians. This approach provides a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of how God has uniquely equipped you.

Action Steps for Discovering Spiritual Gifts

Prepare Your Heart: Humble yourself before God, trusting and submitting to His will. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance to recognize and understand your spiritual gifts, and to seek opportunities to use them for God's glory and to build Christ's church.

48. I have prepared my heart and prayed regarding my spiritual gifting. Yes No (Underline One)

49. Prayerfully read through the following actions and bible verses. What do you feel God revealing or impressing upon you regarding your spiritual gift (s)?

Read Your Bible: Ask the Lord to speak to you regarding your gifting as you read His Word. All Scripture is beneficial in this regard, however the following passages address spiritual gifts: 1 Samuel 15:14–23; Exodus 31:1–6; Numbers 27:18–23; Romans 12:4–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, 14:1–5; Ephesians 4:11–13; 1 Peter 4:10–11.

Reflect on Your Past and Current Service: What gave you the greatest satisfaction, even joy? Where were you the most effective? What kind of ministry or service were you doing when you felt the Spirit's leading and God's presence?

Engage in Ministry and Service Opportunities: Be sensitive to the needs of others. How we respond to those needs can indicate how we are gifted. As we apply our gifts in real-life situations, we gain further clarity and confirmation of how God has uniquely equipped us.

Input from Spirit-filled Christians: Ask for feedback and observations about your gifting. Here is an example of a question you might ask: Can you provide any examples of times when you noticed me using my gifts to benefit others or contribute to a ministry?

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #44–49 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Three—

Day Four

New Testament Gifts

Although scholars offer differing totals, we are going to list 20 distinct spiritual gifts from the New Testament. Alphabetically, the list includes apostleship, distinguishing between spirits, encouragement, evangelism, faith, giving, gifts of healing, guidance, helping, interpretation of tongues, leadership, mercy, message of knowledge, message of wisdom, miraculous powers, pastoring/shepherding, prophecy, serving, speaking in different kinds of tongues, and teaching.

Notice that neither artistic ability nor craftsmanship are mentioned. Does this mean they are no longer spiritual gifts to be used for God's glory and for the good of the church? Of course not.

We serve an incomprehensible, infinite, and omnipotent God. This means we cannot fully grasp His nature—He is boundless and all-powerful. God's ways and the gifts He bestows on His people are not confined to a set list. Thus, the lists in the New Testament are illustrative of the many gifts God may provide.

For instance, with technological advances, new talents and spiritual gifts continue to emerge. Artistic ability can now be used to serve others through social media, video production, visual storytelling, worship, designing churches, painting, or graphic design. Similarly, the gift of craftsmanship can be used to help others by repairing or building homes, furnishing churches and ministry buildings, or enhancing any space. Additionally, software development plays a role in creating Christian apps and digital resources for ministry.

Efforts have been made to classify spiritual gifts in various ways. For instance, artistic ability could be seen as part of the gifts of evangelism, encouragement, teaching, helping, or serving, depending on how it's used. Similarly, producing videos for doctrinal clarity might align with the spiritual gift of wisdom. The key is to recognize that God may have given you a gift not explicitly listed, and it is essential not to overlook it. Stay open to how God may be working in your life, using even unconventional talents to honor Him and serve the church.

Some scholars, like author and speaker Danielle Bernock, have grouped spiritual gifts into categories such as ministry gifts, manifestation gifts (supernatural demonstrations of the Spirit's power), and motivational gifts.² While categorization can be helpful for understanding, it is not necessary for our purposes here. If you are curious, there are various classifications available online, or you might even consider creating your own.

Some gifts in the New Testament are self-explanatory, while others may require further understanding. For clarity, we will define and provide biblical references for each gift. Some will be explored in depth, while others will be just listed alphabetically for reference.

² <<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-life/what-are-spiritual-gifts-understanding-the-types-and-discovering-yours.html>>(accessed 7/24/2024)

Empowered for Service: Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament

Apostleship [Church Planter] (Ephesians 4:11): The ability to establish and oversee churches and spread the gospel with missionary zeal and foundational leadership.

The term “apostle” can signify a historical role limited to the first-century church or a contemporary office within church leadership, depending on the denominational context. Understanding the usage and theological basis for this term requires examining each denomination’s traditions, teachings, and interpretations of the New Testament.

In most Christian denominations, the term “apostle” is reserved for the original twelve, Matthias (Judas’ replacement), and Paul. However, some Christian denominations with a charismatic or Pentecostal perspective believe in the continuation of the apostolic ministry. In these traditions, the term “apostle” may also be applied to individuals who establish and oversee churches or spread the gospel with missionary zeal and foundational leadership. (See Unit 3: Lesson 8, *Filled with the Holy Spirit*, regarding the charismatic and Pentecostal viewpoint.)

While the role of establishing and overseeing churches remains crucial, it might be helpful to consider using another term for this spiritual gift today, reserving “apostle” for the original twelve and Paul. Consider Scripture that states an “apostle” was commissioned directly by Christ (Matthew 10:5), possessed supernatural gifts (Matthew 10:8), was required to have seen the Lord (Acts 1:22), and had a global mission (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15).

Read Ephesians 4:11–13 and answer questions 50–52:

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11–13

Definition: The Greek word *apostolos* (ἀπόστολος) translated *apostle* in English is defined as one who is sent on a mission with full authority such as a messenger, envoy, or ambassador. In the New Testament, it is generally used as a messenger for God and more specifically as a person who tells the gospel message. *Apostle* is also used of persons who have the task of founding and establishing churches and especially of the Twelve chosen by Jesus.

50. Who gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, and teachers as gifts to the church and why were they given (vv. 11–12)?

51. Christ gave spiritual gifts (v.11), yet 1 Corinthians 12:7–11 says gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit, and James 1:17 states that every good gift is from God. How can we reconcile these scriptures to understand the source and distribution of spiritual gifts?

52. Why are Christians to be equipped for works of service (vv. 12–13)?

While specific roles can be attributed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it is essential to remember that the Godhead works in unity. The distribution of spiritual gifts is a collaborative effort of the Trinity, emphasizing their distinct yet harmonious roles (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

Distinguishing between spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10): The gift of discerning or judging whether a message or spirit is from God, a human, or a demonic source. *Distinguishing between spirits* also includes identifying false doctrines. The Bible warns us to “*test the spirits . . . because many false prophets have gone out into the world*” (1 John 4:1).

53. What are some signs that a message or spirit might not be from God, according to biblical teachings (See Matthew 7:15–20; Galatians 1:8; 2 Peter 2:1)?

Encouragement (Romans 12:8): The ability to provide comfort, motivation, and support to others in their faith.

54. Read Acts 11:23–24. When Barnabas arrived at Antioch, how did he use his gift of encouragement?

When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.
Acts 11:23–24

Encouragement, whether a special gift or not, should be used daily. What a difference we can make in other people’s lives by supporting and building them up in the Lord! Plus, there are so many ways to encourage others through speech or actions. Our words can be communicated in-person, by card, email, text, phone, and even regular mail. Actions can be as simple as a warm smile, actively listening, sharing a Bible verse, preparing a meal, or taking someone to church.

Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11): Passionately and effectively leading others to saving faith in Christ.

Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9): The gift of *faith* is extraordinary trust and confidence in God and His promises. All Christians have some *faith*, but this is a persevering and powerful *faith* that inspires others and often results in exceptional outcomes.

Giving (Romans 12:8): The ability to generously share resources and blessings with others, often with joy and without expectation of return.

Guidance (1 Corinthians 12:28): The ability to offer wise direction and counsel to help others make decisions aligned with God's will.

Healing (1 Corinthians 12:9): Persons with the *gift of healing* are supernaturally endowed with the ability to cure another person of specific ailments. As with all the gifts of the Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit working through the person and doing the healing. The *gift of healing* should not be considered the same as medical intervention.

55. Read Luke 9:1–2. Why do you think we need Jesus to give us the gift of healing today?

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Luke 9:1–2

Helping (1 Corinthians 12:28): The gift of assisting others in practical ways to support their needs and advance the work of the church.

56. Read Acts 9:39. How did Dorcas use her gift of helping others?

Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Acts 9:39 (See also Acts 9:36–41)

Interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10): This is a controversial gift in the body of Christ. Some say it is the ability to translate a foreign language into the language of the hearers while others say it is the ability to translate or interpret messages spoken in unknown languages during prayer or worship. (See Unit 3: Lesson 8, *Filled with the Holy Spirit*, for a discussion on tongues.)

Leadership (Romans 12:8): The ability to guide, inspire, and direct others effectively in achieving goals and missions.

57. Read Mark 10:43–45. What does Jesus expect from those with the gift of leadership?

“Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:43–45

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #49–56 with your discipleship team.

—End Day Four—

Day Five

New Testament Gifts Continued

We've reviewed the spiritual gifts of music, art, and craftsmanship from the Old Testament, along with eleven gifts from the New Testament. These gifts are not just for personal enrichment but for serving God's kingdom. As we prepare to explore the remaining New Testament gifts, take a moment to reflect on what you have learned previously in the action step below.

Action Step

58. Prayerfully review the New Testament gifts from "Day Four," as well as the Old Testament gifts of music, art, and craftsmanship. List any that resonate with you or stir your spirit, considering how they could be used for God's glory and to bless others.

Empowered for Service: Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament (continued)

Mercy (Romans 12:8): The gift of showing compassion and empathy to those in need, with a genuine desire to relieve their suffering.

59. Read Luke 10:33–34. How did the Samaritan show mercy to the man attacked by robbers?

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. Luke 10:33–34 (See Luke 10:29–37 for the complete parable.)

Message of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8): The *message of knowledge* is ability to receive and communicate divine insight or understanding about God's will or a situation. People with this gift are given insight and understanding of biblical truth. They have the ability to acquire facts and present them clearly to others. Specifically, their knowledge revolves around the gospel. *Knowledge* comes from spending time with Jesus and the Word.

60. Read Acts 18:26. How were Priscilla and Aquila using their gift of knowledge?

He [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. Acts 18:26

Message of wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8): The gift of applying deep insight and understanding to make godly decisions and solve complex issues. Those with this gift receive *wisdom* from the Holy Spirit to encourage others with biblical truth. They discern the right time and manner to apply this truth in various contexts, such as defending the faith, handling persecution, solving

problems, interacting with unbelievers, navigating daily life, interpreting God's truth, and sharing it with others.

61. Read Acts 15:10. Previous to this verse, Peter was at the Council of Jerusalem. He argued that Gentiles should not be burdened with the Jewish law which led to the decision that Gentiles could join the church without being circumcised. Explain how Peter displayed the message of wisdom.

Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? Acts 15:10

Miraculous powers (1 Corinthians 12:10): The ability to perform supernatural acts that defy natural laws, demonstrating God's power. Miracles are events or occurrences happening outside of nature or scientific law. The gift of *miraculous powers* involves the Spirit working *miracles* through a specific individual to draw attention to God.

Pastoring/Shepherding (Ephesians 4:11): The gift of shepherding and nurturing a congregation, providing spiritual care, and guidance.

Prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:1): The ability to receive and communicate messages boldly and fearlessly from God, often involving future events or divine revelation.

62. Read Acts 21:9. Who had the gift of prophecy?

He [Philip] had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. Acts 21:9

Serving (Romans 12:7): The gift of *serving* others selflessly and effectively, meeting practical needs and contributing to the work of the church.

Speaking in different kinds of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10): This is another controversial gift in the body of Christ. Some insist this is an ability to speak a foreign language and others describe it as the ability to *speak in languages* not previously known, often as a form of prayer or praise. (See Unit 3: Lesson 8, *Filled with the Holy Spirit*, for a discussion on tongues.)

Teaching (Romans 12:7): The gift of explaining and applying God's truth in a clear and impactful way to edify others.

63. Prayerfully review the eleven New Testament gifts above. List any that you feel particularly drawn to or stirred in your spirit to use for God's glory and the good of others.

Audrey Wetherell Johnson (1907–1984)³ *Created for Commitment* (Part 2 of 2)

Recall Miss Johnson was a missionary in China, spent eighteen months imprisoned for her faith, and was a gifted Bible teacher. When a few ladies asked her to teach them the Bible Miss Johnson had prideful thoughts about teaching just a few women. However, when she was convicted by the Holy Spirit, she repented and arranged to meet with the ladies.

Miss Johnson made it clear to the women that this was going to be a serious Bible study. She expected a firm commitment. They would be expected to complete homework and study purposefully. She asked them to pray about their decision to join the Bible study under the conditions that she outlined and told them to return with their answer.

In 1952, Miss Johnson began teaching five ladies from her friend's living room. It was not long before all she saw were the tops of their heads as they studiously and furiously wrote notes from her teaching. It was important for them to be listening and not writing, so she decided to type her notes each week. Thus, the ladies would have the notes *and* pay attention in class.

Soon others heard of her excellent Bible knowledge and teaching. More and more women joined the group until they outgrew the living room. They moved to a church to accommodate all the participants.

In 1958 Billy Graham was holding revival meetings in San Francisco and asked Miss Johnson to conduct Bible classes for those saved during these large gatherings. With the growth of her studies and God's leading, Miss Johnson formed her nonprofit ministry *Bible Study Fellowship* (BSF) in 1959. She led this ministry until her retirement around 1980.

Miss Johnson wrote, "My aim had always been to ensure that *every* member of the class *was living by the reading of God's Word*. God gave me a profound conviction that the way to know Him intimately as a Person related to me was through the study of His Word with the help of the Holy Spirit."

BSF is still a serious Bible Study and has helped millions of men and women grow deeper in the Word. Currently there are over 1,000 BSF classes worldwide in 39 nations and across 6 continents. They all study the same book of the Bible at the same time. For example, if you are enrolled in BSF in Raleigh, North Carolina, and have to travel to San Francisco, California, you may go to the class in San Francisco and you will have the same lesson that is being taught in Raleigh. The classes and locations are listed on their website. BSF launched online groups in 2016 and currently have 2,304 discussion groups.⁴

³ A. Wetherell Johnson, *Created for Commitment* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1982.) The following story about A. Wetherell Johnson is summarized from this resource.

⁴ <<https://support.bsfonline.org/en/support/solutions/articles/60000673539-how-is-bsf-online-different-from-an-in-person-bsf-class-#:~:text=BSF%20Online%20offers%20a%20flexible,Discussion%20Groups%20in%20BSF%20Online>>(accessed 7/22/2024)

64. What did God impress upon you or what interested you while reading about Miss Johnson?

Action Steps

65. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your spiritual gifts. Reflect on the gifts discussed in this lesson, as well as your own skills and interests. What are your gift(s) or which ones are you particularly drawn to? (Refer to “Discovering Spiritual Gifts” at the end of Day Three.)

66. If you are not already using your spiritual gifts now, what will you do to put them into practice?

67. How might we quench the Spirit by not using the spiritual gifts we have been given?

Do not quench the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 (Quench is used sense of stifling or suppressing.)

Accountability: Be prepared to share your answers to #58–67 with your discipleship team.

Spiritual gifts are not always given in full bloom. The journey of discovering and using your gifts is one of continuous growth and learning. Just as Paul encouraged Timothy to “*fan into flame the gift of God*” (2 Timothy 1:6), we too are called to nurture and develop the gifts God has given us. This involves an ongoing process of training, studying, and practicing, while also being open to how our understanding of these gifts may evolve over time.

Be attentive to the fruit of your efforts, but also recognize that visible results may not always be immediate. God’s timing and the impact of your gifts may not always align with our expectations. Like Miss Johnson, who was asked by *just a few ladies* to teach them, seek the Spirit’s guidance in recognizing and igniting the gift within you. Embrace the opportunities God provides and trust that He will use your gifts for His purposes and the benefit of others. To God be the glory—He has a plan for you and it includes using your spiritual gifts.

—End Day Five and Lesson 4—

Congratulations on completing Unit 2: *Blessing Others*! Well-done!! We pray that you will share Christ and use your gifts to honor Him. Let us not only proclaim Christ’s message, but may we strive to live it out as well. Our next unit, *Christian Leadership*, will teach and encourage us in influencing others for Christ.

Next—Unit 3: Christian Leadership, Lesson 1: A Leadership Model

Rev 4-12-25