

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

WIND & FIRE

CITY
ONAHILL

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**"WHEN THE DAY OF PENTECOST ARRIVED,
THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE
AND SUDDENLY THERE CAME FROM HEAVEN
A SOUND LIKE A MIGHTY RUSHING WIND,
AND IT FILLED THE ENTIRE HOUSE WHERE
THEY WERE SITTING AND DIVIDED TONGUES
AS OF FIRE APPEARED TO THEM AND RESTED
ON EACH ONE OF THEM AND THEY WERE ALL
FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BEGAN TO
SPEAK IN OTHER TONGUES AS THE SPIRIT
GAVE THEM UTTERANCE."**

- ACTS 2:1-4

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INTRODUCTION

“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

– Acts 2:1-4

When the person, presence and power of the Spirit came at Pentecost there was **Wind and Fire**.

Pentecost was a new beginning.

Filled with Wind and Fire the disciples launched a movement that changed the world. The Spirit filled church of Christ was born. At Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the Spirit and began preaching the gospel and building the church.

Derek Prince once observed that “church history is full of attempts to create systems so safe we no longer need to rely on the Holy Spirit”.

With our hands open, our eyes fixed on Jesus and our hearts full of love, we are going to study the Scriptures, encourage one another and ask the Holy Spirit to empower us with gifts and abilities to advance the kingdom of God.

Our desire is not to replicate the exact experiences of the early church, but to share their posture of faith, obedience and dependence on the Holy Spirit for faithful ministry today.

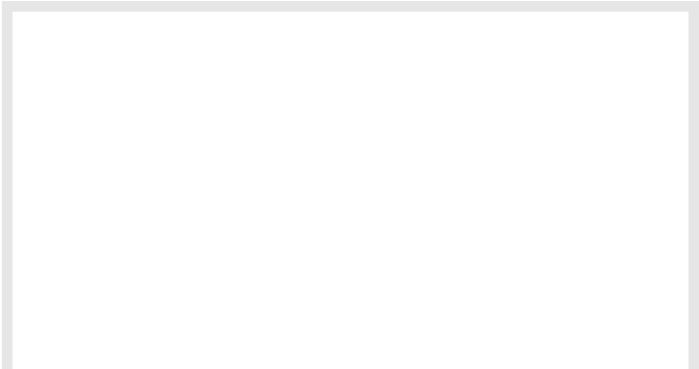
This booklet is a tool to help you submit to the Holy Spirit and ask for fresh Wind and fresh Fire.

Each part will contain:

1 Biblical Teaching

2 Individual Exercises

3 Group Discussion Questions



HOLY SPIRIT



PART 1

DEFINITION

"BUT YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT
HAS COME UPON YOU, AND YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES
IN JERUSALEM AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO
THE END OF THE EARTH."

ACTS 1:8

Spiritual gifts are divine abilities given by the Holy Spirit, after conversion, for the mission of the church.

The phrase “*spiritual gifts*” comes from the Greek word *charisma*, meaning “*grace gifts*”. If you are a follower of Jesus, you have spiritual gifts. As the apostle Paul says, “*to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good*” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

You have received the gift of salvation, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual gifts to empower you for the mission of God.

When God created us, He blessed us with different genetic abilities for our good. Over time, we also develop natural abilities through training, education, and experience. *James 1:17* reminds us that “*every good gift and every perfect gift is from above*”. All natural abilities are therefore God-given and can be used by the Holy Spirit for mission and ministry. But it is important to be clear. Natural abilities are not the same as spiritual gifts.

Spiritual gifts are given to those who are born again as new creations in Christ. And they are given for a specific purpose: to build up the church. As the apostle Peter writes, “*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace*” (1 Peter 4:10).

Discerning spiritual gifts is not always easy, but it’s helpful because ministry cannot be done in our own strength. Too often, we attempt to serve God relying on personality, skill, or experience rather than on the power of the Holy Spirit. Learning to discern the difference between natural abilities and spiritual gifts drives us to prayer, dependence and faith. It brings us to our knees, pleading with God to empower us, not for our sake, but for the sake of the church.

Spiritual gifts can remain dormant and undiscovered if they are never exercised or explored. Fear, hesitation, and spiritual immaturity keep many of us from stepping into the ministry the Spirit is inviting us into. But when we take time to reflect on our gifts, pray and listen to God, we move from passivity to obedience, and from self-reliance to Spirit-empowered action.

**"TO EACH IS GIVEN THE
MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT FOR
THE COMMON GOOD" –**

1 CORINTHIANS 12:7

**"EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY
PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE"**

JAMES 1:17

**"AS EACH HAS RECEIVED A GIFT,
USE IT TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER,
AS GOOD STEWARDS OF GOD'S
VARIED GRACE"**

1 PETER 4:10

PETER VS PAUL

“Trying to do the Lord’s work in your own strength is the most confusing, exhausting, and tedious of all work. But when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then the ministry of Jesus just flows out of you.”

– Corrie Ten Boom

STEP 1: STUDY TWO GREAT MEN

Read the following passages slowly and prayerfully.

PETER

- *Matthew 4:18–20*
- *Acts 2:1–17*
- *Acts 4:13*

PAUL

- *Acts 22:3*
- *1 Corinthians 2:1–5*
- *1 Thessalonians 1:5*

STEP 2: SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

- When it comes to natural and spiritual gifts, what differences do you see between Peter and Paul?
- Do you tend to undervalue what God could do through you because you feel inadequate?
- Or do you tend to rely too heavily on your natural strengths without deep dependence on the Holy Spirit?

STEP 3: FAN INTO FLAME

Read **2 Timothy 1:6** and **1 Thessalonians 5:19–20**.

- What small step of obedience or practice is God inviting you into right now?
- Where have you been passive, fearful, or distracted?
- What gift/s might God be calling you to fan into flame?

Spiritual gifts are given by grace and stewarded through discipline.

STEP 4: DEEPEN YOUR DEPENDENCE

Paul had natural teaching ability. Peter did not. Yet both depended entirely on the power of the Holy Spirit. Natural gifts given at birth and spiritual gifts given at new birth can both be used for the kingdom of God, but only when they are surrendered to and empowered by God.

If you can, get down on your knees and pray:

Father, I offer you everything I am and everything I am not.

Use all of me and my abilities for your glory.

Fill me with your Spirit and empower me with more gifts.

Teach me dependence and discipline to build your church and honour your Son.

In Jesus name, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

POWER

CHAPTER REFLECTIONS

- What did you feel was the main point or takeaway of the teaching?
- Was there anything from the teaching and exercises that stood out to you - something that challenged or clarified your thinking?

READ

Acts 1:1-8

1. What stands out to you personally about this passage? What is the Holy Spirit drawing your attention to?

**Ephesians 3:16, Col. 1:29, Romans 15:13, 2 Thessalonians 1:11,
1 Corinthians. 4:20, Acts 6:5-8, 2 Tim. 1:7, Luke 24:49,
1 Corinthians 2:2-5, 2 Corinthians 12:9**

2. What stands out to you personally after reading all these passages?
3. How can we discern the difference between human strength, the power of the Holy Spirit, and demonic or counterfeit power?
4. What prevents you from asking the Holy Spirit for more power and more gifts?
5. Why do you think it's important that we rely upon the Holy Spirit for life, ministry and mission?
6. Read the quotes below and discuss practically, what could you do tomorrow rely more on the power of the Holy Spirit?

“If you make any attempt to pursue Christian ministry apart from a conscious prayer for more of this power and a conscious dependence on it to enable you to do what otherwise you could never hope to do, you will never enter into the fullness of what God has designed for you and for those to whom you might minister”

- Sam Storms

A missionary called David Livingstone visited Charles Spurgeon and asked him, ***“How can you accomplish so much in one day?”*** To which Spurgeon replied, ***“You forget, Mr. Livingstone,” “there are two of us working.”***



PRAYER

Spend time praying with others asking the Holy Spirit for fresh wind and fresh fire and fresh power to do the Lord's will.

PART 2

INVITATION

PURSUE LOVE, AND EARNESTLY DESIRE THE SPIRITUAL
GIFTS, ESPECIALLY THAT YOU MAY PROPHECY.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1

A few years ago, I met a church planter, who shared a crazy story about a church he planted.

After moving into a new city, he started sharing the gospel and tried to form a launch team. And by God's grace people responded to the gospel and a new church was born. And this church was beautiful but crazy. The church loved Jesus, was missional, hospitable and filled with the Holy Spirit. But the pastor also shared, emotionally, how people in the church were drinking too much, suing one another, sleeping with one another, constantly having conflict with one another and to top it off the Sunday gatherings were disordered and chaotic. People got on the stage to declare prophecies, while others spoke in tongues.

Curious, I asked him, ***“what was the name of his church?”***. To which he replied ***“the church in Corinth”***.

When I read 1 Corinthians I am baffled by what Paul doesn't say.

In response to a crazy chaotic charismatic church, Paul doesn't say ***“Put on the brakes! Stop praying for gifts. Can't you see that people are abusing their gifts?”***

No, Paul didn't say this, because spiritual gifts were not the root of their problems, immaturity was. Most of us have seen, heard or experienced spiritual gifts being abused in the church.

I know stories of people feeling manipulated and pressured to pray in tongues.

I know stories of people prophesying unbiblical and insensitive words.

I know stories of people who pursue love to be healed but were faking it.

And these stories grieve me like they grieve you. And in response it's natural for us to be sceptical or cautious about spiritual gifts.

But in first Corinthians Paul doesn't say avoid the mess of spiritual gifts, instead he invites us to pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts! The Greek word for “pursue” here is **διώκω**. This is a very strong verb, which all can be translated to chase, to hunt down, to pursue with intensity. In many places in the New Testament this same verb is used for persecution! And interestingly the Greek word here is a present imperative, meaning Paul wants us to pursue love constantly!

Now think about this, in response to church hurt, trauma and mess Paul is commanding the Corinthians, and us to intentionally, passionately, persistently pursue love! He's saying don't retreat, don't become hard hearted. Learn what it looks like to love like Jesus, to do ministry like Jesus. Learn what it looks like to live in response to the gospel. Yes, this love is not easy, which is why Paul commands us to do it and he unpacks what love looks like in **1 Corinthians 13**.

But also notice what Paul says in **1 Corinthians 14** Pursue love AND earnestly desire the spiritual gifts!

The Greek word for "Earnestly desire" here is **ζηλώω** and this is another strong verb, which can be translated desire intensely, burn with eagerness, passionately pursue or be zealous for! Actually this Greek word is where our English words zeal, zealous and jealous come from. And like **διώκω**, this verb is a present imperative, meaning Paul wants us to earnestly desire spiritual gifts constantly!

Our heart posture should be like the disciples on the day of Pentecost. We should have our hands open, our eyes fixed on Jesus, asking, waiting and pleading for the Holy Spirit's power and gifts to do ministry. But a common mistake Christians make is that they read the book of Acts, are amazed by

the Spirit's work back then and think if only we could be filled with the Holy Spirit and do exactly what the early disciple did, then we would see the church we long to see today. And the reason why this thinking is flawed, is that the early church was just as broken and flawed as the church is today.

What drove the early disciples to keep on pursuing love and the power of the Holy Spirit was the gospel; that Jesus called the church his bride and loved her so much that he was willing to die for her. What drove the disciples to pursue love and desire spiritual gifts was their desire to be like Jesus and for others to know him.

The invitation before us is not to retreat in fear, nor to chase power without wisdom. It is to become a people who relentlessly pursue love and eagerly desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

REFLECT ON THE PAST

STEP 1 - PAST

Take a few moments of quiet and consider the following questions. Be honest. There is no right or wrong answer. God knows your story.

- What positive experiences have you had with spiritual gifts?
 - What negative experiences have you had with spiritual gifts?
 - How have these experiences shaped your expectations, fears or desires today?
 - What have you learned from these experiences?
-

STEP 2 - POSTURE

Now reflect on your current posture toward the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts.

- Are you genuinely pursuing love as Paul calls us to, or overprotecting yourself?
- Are you zealous for spiritual gifts or hesitant and closed off?
- Are you open and curious, or resistant to the Holy Spirit giving you new gifts?

STEP 3 - PROTECTION

Do not rush this step.

Ask yourself:

- What am I trying to protect myself from right now?
(Disappointment, confusion, loss of control, being hurt again, looking foolish, being disappointed by leaders or the church etc.)
- What am I longing for beneath that protection? (Safety, clarity, healing, assurance, belonging, power, usefulness, closeness to God etc.)
- In what ways might my desire for protection be limiting my openness to the Holy Spirit?
- What would it look like to entrust both my fears and my longings to Jesus?

STEP 4 - PRAYER

“I pray not so much for graces as for the Spirit himself, because I feel his absence and act by my own spirit in everything. Give me not weak desires but the power of his presence, for this is the surest way to have all his graces, and when I have the seal I have the impression also; he can heal, help, quicken, humble suddenly and easily, can work grace and life effectually, and being eternal he can give grace eternally. Save me from great hindrances, from being content with a little measure of the Spirit, from thinking thou wilt not give me more.”

– VALLEY OF VISION

BEAUTY & BROKENNESS

CHAPTER REFLECTIONS

What did you feel was the main point or takeaway of the teaching?
Was there anything from the teaching and exercises that stood out to you - something that challenged or clarified your thinking?



READ

Acts 2:42-47

1. What makes this church beautiful and compelling?

Acts 5:1-11

2. What does this passage teach us about the brokenness of the church?
3. Why is it important to hold both of these pictures together, a church that is deeply beautiful and deeply flawed?

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

4. Paul says it is possible to have spiritual gifts and still lack love, implying gifting doesn't equal maturity. Why is it both a good and bad thing that the Holy Spirit uses imperfect people?
5. As you read 1 Corinthians 13 which description of love do you find most challenging and why?
6. How might love, as Paul describes it, help a church navigate conflict, immaturity and disappointment without withdrawing or becoming cynical?
7. How has this study challenged you personally or changed your perception of the church and the mission of God?



PRAYER FOR EACH OTHER

“that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

(Ephesians 3:16–19)

PART 3

WARNING

"GIVE ME THIS POWER ALSO, SO THAT ANYONE ON WHOM I
LAY MY HANDS MAY RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT." BUT PETER
SAID TO HIM, "MAY YOUR SILVER PERISH WITH YOU, BECAUSE
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD OBTAIN THE GIFT OF GOD WITH
MONEY! YOU HAVE NEITHER PART NOR LOT IN THIS MATTER,
FOR YOUR HEART IS NOT RIGHT BEFORE GOD."

ACTS 8:19-21

Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the mission of Jesus and to mature the church of Christ. They are given so that repentance and revival would take place.

In Acts 8, Philip travels to Samaria, preaches the gospel, and revival breaks out. People give their lives to Jesus. People are baptised. The demonised are set free. The lame are healed. There is ***“much joy in the city”***. Among those who respond is a well-known magician named Simon.

Before Philip arrived Simon was the centre of attention. He amazed the people and was considered great in the eyes of the crowd. But when Simon saw the signs and great miracles performed by Philip, he too was amazed and began to long for the power that Philip had.

This raises a searching question: why do you want spiritual gifts?

Maybe you want spiritual gifts so you can be useful for the kingdom of God. Maybe you want spiritual gifts so you can have an experience that settles your doubts about God. Maybe you want spiritual gifts because you want to be great in the eyes of others.

In Acts 8, Simon offers to buy the Holy Spirit because he wants to be great again. Peter responds with a sharp rebuke. And this story stands as a warning for us all.

Each of us has temptations of the flesh and wounds of the soul that need to be addressed as we approach the topic of spiritual gifts. Peter says to Simon, ***“Your heart is not right before God,”*** and, ***“I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:23).***

This language echoes Old Testament descriptions of idolatry and captivity. Simon believed intellectually in Jesus, but his heart was still ruled by ambition, control, wealth and reputation. His desire for spiritual gifts was not that Jesus would be great, but that he would be great.

Which raises the question again:

Why do you want spiritual gifts?

**"I WONDER IF SOME OF US DON'T
—'FEEL'—THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT
BECAUSE WE'RE NOT ON THE
FRONTLINE - WE'RE NOT ON THE
FRONTLINE OF THE BATTLE
AGAINST SIN OR WE'RE NOT ON
THE FRONTLINE OF THE BATTLE
FOR MISSION."**

— TIM CHESTER

EXAMINE THE HEART

“The degree to which a person can grow is directly proportional to the amount of truth he can accept about himself without running away.”

– Leland Val Van De Wall

STEP 1: SLOW READING

Read Acts 8:4–25 slowly.

As you read, notice Simon’s words, motives and response to Peter’s rebuke. Pay attention to what stirs or unsettles you.

STEP 2: NAME YOUR DESIRE

Sit quietly and ask yourself:

- Why do I want spiritual gifts?
- Or why don’t I want some spiritual gifts?
- What do I desire more right now: the revival of my city or a personal spiritual experience?

Be honest. Do not rush this.

STEP 3: PICTURE REVIVAL

Imagine what genuine revival would look like:

- in your own life,
- in your workplace,
- in your family,
- in your suburb.

Hold that picture before God. Spend time praying for this to become reality.

STEP 4: EXPOSE THE HEART

Simon believed intellectually, but his heart still clung to greatness and recognition. Ask the Holy Spirit to search you.

- What fleshly desires might be limiting God's work through you?
Ambition? Control? Approval? Comfort? Fear?

Unlike Simon, do not resist repentance. Confess honestly. Repent fully. Surrender afresh.

STEP 5 - PRAY FOR SURRENDER

Pray this prayer slowly and deliberately:

“Father, may the Holy Spirit have full dominion over me: in my home, in my character, in every word of my tongue, in every thought of my heart, in every feeling towards my fellow men. May the Holy Spirit have entire possession.”

– Andrew Murray

GIFTS & MINISTRY

CHAPTER REFLECTIONS

- What did you feel was the main point or takeaway of the teaching?
- Was there anything from the teaching and exercises that stood out to you - something that challenged or clarified your thinking?



READ

Ephesians 4:1-16

1. What makes this church beautiful and compelling? What stands out to you personally about this passage? What is the Holy Spirit drawing your attention to?
2. Why does Paul begin with humility, gentleness, patience and love before he talks about spiritual gifts? What happens when gifting runs ahead of character?
3. Why does Paul emphasise unity so strongly? What happens to spiritual gifts when unity is not the goal?
4. What does this passage teach us about the purpose of spiritual gifts?

If we think of the gifts not just as abilities God gives but as roles or assignments — ministries — to which we are called, it will change the way we think about the gifts.

– Sam Storms

5. Gifts are given not only to fulfil ministry, but to equip others for ministry. What does this teach us about how spiritual gifts are to be used or not used?
6. How can misused or self-centred gifts keep a church childish rather than mature?
7. How does knowing that the Holy Spirit sovereignly gives and withholds gifts bring us peace and freedom in ministry?



PRAYER

Spend time praying with others, asking the Holy Spirit for Christlike character and unity. Pray that the Holy Spirit would equip you to equip others.

PART 4

DISCERNMENT

"NOW CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, BROTHERS,

I DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE UNINFORMED."

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1

The church in Corinth was confused and divided about the work of the Holy Spirit. And in many ways, nothing has changed. Christians today need discernment on what is and what is not the work of the Holy Spirit.

In **1 Corinthians 12** we find four truths that help us discern the work of the Holy Spirit.

FIRST TRUTH - NOT ALL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES ARE FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led (1 Corinthians 12:2).

Paul reminds the Corinthians that before they knew Christ, they were pagans who were “led astray to mute idols.” In **1 Corinthians 10:20**, he teaches that demons were behind these idols, leading, deceiving and enslaving people. In **2 Corinthians**, Paul goes on to warn that *“Satan disguises himself as an angel of light”* and that his servants *“disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Corinthians 11:14–15)*. To be clear, not all supernatural manifestations or supernatural gifts are from the Holy Spirit, and many works of the Spirit are imitated or counterfeited by evil spirits. And it’s for this reason that the

topic of spiritual gifts can easily become a playground for demonic deception and church division.

SECOND TRUTH - THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ALL ABOUT JESUS.

No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3).

The Holy Spirit always glorifies Jesus. No one speaking by the Spirit of God can curse Jesus, and no one can truly confess “Jesus is Lord” apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. Discernment, then, begins not with analysing experiences but with recognising allegiance. When the Holy Spirit is genuinely at work in someone, they will be centred on Jesus. *Most of the time, a person filled with the Spirit of God will display the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5)*. They will use their spiritual gifts in Christlike ways.

And yet, at the same time, we need to remember and be thankful that the Holy Spirit works through broken people, not perfect people. A mature follower of Jesus longs for both spiritual gifts (power) and spiritual fruit (piety). History, however, is filled with stories of gifted men and women whose character did not match their anointing, often leading to deep pain and trauma. Experiences like these can shape us in ways that make us sceptical or closed to the work of the Holy Spirit altogether. Writing on this

very issue, Jonathan Edwards reminds us that spiritual gifts do not change a person's heart. Spiritual gifts, he says, are like precious jewels that adorn a body but do not transform it. Only the grace of God, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, can truly change a person.

THIRD TRUTH - THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone (Corinthians 12:4–6).

Because no-one has all the spiritual gifts, we need to keep in mind that each of us has spiritual blind spots. And all of us are more sceptical of gifts that we don't have or understand. Yet Paul teaches the Corinthians, and us, that the Holy Spirit works in a variety of ways. Which means the gifts themselves are not uniform. Prophecy can look different, just like preaching or evangelism can look different. And so as we seek to discern what is from the Holy Spirit and what is not, don't automatically ignore what is different or unknown to you. Discernment requires humility, awareness and openness.

Make sure your theology is primarily shaped by Scripture, not by your experiences or your lack of experiences. No one has all the spiritual gifts, and therefore there will be gifts and expressions you do not fully understand and may be tempted to judge or doubt. Be discerning, but also be aware of your blind spots, and allow the Bible to continually shape your theology.

FOURTH TRUTH - THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GOAL IS TO BUILD THE CHURCH.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good

By now you may be wondering how do we actually discern what is the work of the Holy Spirit and what is not. The truth is there is no simple formula. Discernment requires us to open the Scriptures and prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.

And yet it is helpful to know that the Holy Spirit's goal is to build the church. Therefore discernment is not meant to be done in isolation. Together, the church weighs and tests what is claimed to be from the Holy Spirit. And this is why as we pursue and discern spiritual gifts we need to do so in the context of a church community, where others can encourage us and lovingly warn us when needed.

A SURVEY

Below is a list of spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament. These are not the only spiritual gifts but they are clearly identified and emphasised in Scripture. As you read through this list and the definitions, it is important to remember that many of these gifts overlap and can take a variety of forms. It is also important to recognise that evil spirits can imitate these gifts in order to deceive and divide the church. For this reason, Scripture calls us to test the spirits, weigh prophecy, and discern what is and is not the work of the Holy Spirit.

Read through these definitions and answer the questions at the end.



PROPHECY

1 Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:11;

Acts 13:9-11; Acts 15:32

Prophecy, words of knowledge, and words of wisdom are messages from the Holy Spirit intended to correct, strengthen and encourage the church. They can take the form of Scriptures, verbal messages, images and on rare occasions include glimpses of the future. Unlike the Old Testament “thus says the Lord” prophecy, they are subject to the authority of the Bible and should be carefully weighed and given. The Apostle Paul teaches that *“the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation”* **1 Corinthians 14:3**

ENCOURAGEMENT / EXHORTATION

Romans 12:8

Those with the gift of encouragement or exhortation guide others towards their full potential in Christ. The word encourage means “to inspire courage”. Those with this gift empower others to have faith, to hope in God, and resist the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13). This gift is similar to prophecy but is more focused on action and implementation rather than revelation.

GIVING

Romans 12:8;13, 1 Peter 4:9–10

This gift refers to sacrificially giving time, talents and money to build up the church. Givers find joy in giving beyond the norm and believe Jesus’ words that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

HOSPITALITY

Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9–10

This gift refers to a Spirit-empowered love for the stranger. Hospitality creates space for those who are unfamiliar, overlooked, or in need of welcome, and receives them with generosity, warmth and care. Those gifted in hospitality joyfully open their lives, homes and resources so that others might experience belonging, dignity and the love of Christ, often without recognition or return.

LEADING

Romans 12:8

Elder, shepherd, pastor, overseer are some terms that describe the gift of leading. Leaders model, influence, equip, cast vision, make wise christlike decisions and unite God’s people to be on mission.

MERCY

Romans 12:8

The gift of mercy is showing extraordinary compassion to the broken and less fortunate. Those with this gift find joy in feeding the poor, helping the homeless and caring for those in need.

SERVICE

Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28

Those with this gift often have a strong desire to meet the practical needs of others. They love that Jesus was the servant king who washed people's feet and are eager to help others in a similar way.

TEACHING

1 Corinthians 12:28-29; 14:26; Romans 12:7; Ephesians 4:11

The gift involves sharing biblical truths in a way that is understood and fruitful for listeners. Teachers help us see and feel that God's word is alive and active, and reveal to us the nature and glory of God.

MIRACLES / POWER

1 Corinthians 12:10

The Bible often classifies driving out demons as healing or miraculous (*Matthew 15:21-28; Acts 8:7*). The gifts of miracles are used in the plural sense as God gives grace to certain believers to perform specific miracles. There is an important relationship between the gifts of miracles and the gift of faith. Miracles are a clear display of God's power, but like all gifts, they must be discerned. The Greek word for miracles means power.

HEALING

1 Corinthians 12:9–10, 28; James 5:13–18

The gifts of healing are always referred to in the plural. It could be that some are gifted to heal specific areas in the body, similar to medicine, or that those with this gift will see more healings than others. All believers are encouraged to pray for healing and, when needed, go to the elders as James prescribes. These gifts of healing could be similar to evangelism in that it is something we should all pray for, but some will see more fruit than others.

TONGUES

1 Corinthians 12–14; Acts 2:4; 8:17–18; 10:46; 19:6

This gift can be a personal prayer language useful to build up a believer (*1 Corinthians 14:2*) or a never-studied human language given to the speaker to preach the gospel (*Acts 2:11*). In *1 Corinthians 12:10*, Paul says there are different kinds of tongues. Not everyone receives this gift, and when communicated in the public church gathering there must be an interpreter and order.

At City on a Hill, we don't believe speaking in tongues is a sign of being baptised in the Holy Spirit. We do believe tongues is a beautiful gift that should be desired and prayed for.

INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

1 Corinthians 12:10, 30

Interpreters in the gathering are empowered by the Spirit to decipher messages delivered through the gift of tongues. These believers can comprehend tongues whether they are spoken in an unstudied human language or a coded heavenly language, ensuring public understanding through interpretation.

DISCERNMENT

1 Corinthians 12:10

This gift looks like supernatural insight to distinguish between the work of the Spirit of God and the work of an evil spirit or human flesh. This gift is useful to weigh prophecies.

EVANGELISM

1 Corinthians 12:9-10, 28

This gift is the ability to proclaim the gospel and lead more people to Christ than normal. All believers are called to share the gospel, but those who regularly and joyfully lead people to the Lord have this gift.

APOSTLESHIP / MISSIONARY

Ephesians 4:11

The original twelve disciples, minus Judas and plus Matthias, who were part of the initial church were apostles. In the New Testament, to be an apostle was not a spiritual gift but a person who had a divinely given commission and ministry. The twelve Apostles are irreplaceable. However, the word apostle means “sent one”. Therefore, it is appropriate and helpful to name missionaries or church planters as lowercase “a” apostles who have the gift of pioneering new ministries.

FAITH

1 Corinthians 12:9

This gift trusts in God’s word and character, even when they defy human expectations. It is a supernatural confidence that believes in God’s presence and power despite the circumstances.

ADMINISTRATION

1 Corinthians 12:28

This gift involves guidance and bringing order, unity and clarity. This gift complements and works alongside others to maximise the gifts of others to benefit and build up the church.

PASTORING

1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11

Those with this gift want to protect, care for, counsel, guide and coach others toward holiness. Not everyone with this gift will have a teaching gift, but they will convey biblical teaching and long to see others healed and comforted by it.

QUESTIONS

- *Which gift/s do you think you have? And why?*
- *Which gift/s would you like to have? And why?*
- *What gifts does your church body need right now?*

DISCERNING GOOD VS EVIL

CHAPTER REFLECTIONS

- What did you feel was the main point or takeaway of the teaching?
- Was there anything from the teaching and exercises that stood out to you - something that challenged or clarified your thinking?



READ

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 holds two commands together: do not quench the Spirit, and test everything. Why do we tend to drift toward one extreme or the other?

1 John 4:1-3

2. What does it mean to “test the spirits”? What should we be testing, and how?

Matthew 7:15-23

3. What does Jesus teach us about fruit, obedience and the danger of spiritual performance?

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

4. How do we discern between an angel of light and a demon that disguises himself as one?

1 Corinthians 14:29-33

5. What does this passage teach us about discernment?

**PRAYER**

Pray that God would help you not to quench the Spirit and not to be deceived, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good.

PART 5

GRACE

"TO EACH IS GIVEN THE MANIFESTATION OF THE

SPIRIT FOR THE COMMON GOOD"

1 CORINTHIANS 12:7

Spiritual gifts are not first about self-discovery or personal fulfilment; they are about grace received and grace given.

The apostle Peter writes, ***“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10).***

Notice the assumption: each has received. Spiritual gifts are not reserved for the especially mature, the unusually talented or the visibly platformed. ***They are given to every believer*** Paul tells us that ***“God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).***

The same Spirit who assures us of God’s love also equips us with grace to serve. If you belong to Christ, the Spirit has been poured into your life and with Him come spiritual gifts to bless others.

Importantly, these gifts are not accessed by effort or self-improvement but by faith. Paul reminds us that ***“through [Christ] we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand” (Romans 5:2).***

Spiritual gifts are an expression of standing in grace, not striving for status. They are not rewards for obedience; they are provisions for obedience. We do not earn them, we receive them.

Spiritual Gifts are personal, but they are never private. Spiritual gifts are not merely for every believer; they are also for something - the common good. The Spirit does not gift individuals in isolation, He gifts the church through individuals. Detached from community, the desire for gifts and fruit withers into self-expression or pride. Embedded in community, they become channels of grace to grow our affections for Him and edify the body.

This means spiritual gifts find their proper context in ordinary, committed Christian communities. Not in the spotlight, but through humble and often unseen acts of service, for the common good and the upbuilding of the body. When exercised rightly, gifts point away from the gifted person and toward the gracious God who gives. As Peter continues, whether we speak or serve, we do so ***“by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 4:11).***

Ultimately, spiritual gifts are about Jesus, they flow from His finished work, they are sustained by His grace, and they exist for His glory.

The question is not ***Do I have a gift?*** but ***Am I stewarding the grace I’ve already been given, for the good of Christ’s people?*** In the economy of the gospel, grace received always becomes grace shared.

**"YOU ARE PART OF
A BODY WHEN YOU
CHANGE, THE WHOLE
BODY CHANGES"**

- HENRI NOUWEN

STEWARDS OF GRACE

STEP 1: READ AND RECEIVE

Read **Ephesians 2:8-9** and **1 Peter 4:10-11** slowly.

Pause and receive what God is saying:

- You have received grace. You have received a gift. It is given for the good of others.

Sit with this truth for a moment.

- What emotions surface as you realise God's grace is undeserved, unearned and freely given?
-

STEP 2: SPEAK THE TRUTH OUT LOUD

If possible, kneel with open palms facing upward. Slowly speak these words, even if they do not yet feel true:

By God's grace...

- I am fully known and deeply loved by God.
- I am forgiven through Jesus, who died and rose so that I might have life.
- I have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- I have received grace and gifts to serve others.
- I am strengthened to serve, so that God may be glorified.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY THE LIE

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what is shaping your heart.

Spiritual gifts reveal how God uses us, not who we are or what we are worth; our identity and value was settled at the cross, where God declared we were worth the life of His Son.

Which of these feels closest to the battle in your heart right now?

- I am not gifted enough.
- Others are more needed than me.
- I will be seen as unimpressive.
- I do not want the responsibility.
- I am afraid of failing.
- I am tired and want to stay comfortable.

Name the lie clearly. Then reject it in prayer.

STEP 4: GIVE THANKS FOR GRACE IN OTHERS

Think of at least three people who serve you, your church or your community.

Thank God specifically for the grace He has given them and for the way He strengthens them to serve.

STEP 5: PRAY FOR STRENGTH AND GOD'S GLORY

Pray:

*Father, thank you that I stand in grace through Jesus.
Thank you that you have entrusted me with something for your church.
Free me from inadequacy, comparison, fear and self-protection.
Show me who to serve and how to serve.
And as I speak or serve, supply your strength, so that in everything you are glorified through Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

A BODY OF GRACE

CHAPTER REFLECTIONS

- What did you feel was the main point or takeaway of the teaching?
- Was there anything from the teaching and exercises that stood out to you - something that challenged or clarified your thinking?

READ

Romans 5:1–2, 5, and 1 Peter 4:10

1. What evidence do these passages give that every believer has received grace in Christ?
 - » How does Paul describe our standing before God and how does that shape the way we think about spiritual gifts?
2. What temptations might cause us to doubt, minimise or compare our gifts?

Note: Heart Check

Consider how fear, pride, insecurity or comparison might quietly distort the way you view your usefulness in God's church.

1 Corinthians 12:4–7, Romans 1:11–12, and 1 Peter 4:10–11.

3. According to these verses, what is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
 - » What words or phrases stand out that shape the purpose, direction and outcome?

4. How do these passages guard us from treating gifts as personal achievements rather than grace to be stewarded?
5. In what ways are we tempted to make spiritual gifts about identity, status, visibility or self-worth?
 - » How might spiritual gifts subtly become tools for self rather than service?

Gospel Reminder:

Paul's desire in Romans 1 is not to impress but to strengthen faith, both theirs and his. Gifts are given not to elevate individuals, but to deepen mutual dependence on Christ.

6. What do these passages reveal about the necessity of community for the healthy use of spiritual gifts?
 - » Why do gifts wither when isolated from the body but flourish when embedded in loving relationships?
7. Together, describe what a community shaped by grace looks like.
 - » What marks a church where gifts are exercised with humility, love and joy?
 - » How would such a community respond to weakness, difference and need?



PRAYER

- Praise God for the grace given to us in Christ, by which we stand forgiven and secure.
- Thank God for the way He uses ordinary people and varied gifts to grow our love for Him and one another.
- Ask God to empower your community with the Spirit's strength and grace, so that together you may build one another up for His glory.

PART 6

DISCOVERY

"AS EACH HAS RECEIVED A GIFT, USE IT TO
SERVE ONE ANOTHER, AS GOOD STEWARDS OF
GOD'S VARIED GRACE"

1 PETER 4:10

For many Christians, discovering spiritual gifts can feel like solving a puzzle, just take the right test, make an inventory of accounts, find the right label and clarity will follow. But Scripture gently reframes the question. ***Spiritual gifts are not discovered primarily through analysis, but through participation.***

God reveals His gifts as we direct our attention away from ourselves and toward His grace at work through us; as we make ourselves available to love, serve and build up others.

Scripture points us to three principles through which gifts are most often discovered: passion, observation and affirmation.

1. PASSION: A HEART THAT LONGS TO BUILD UP OTHERS

Paul exhorts believers to ***“earnestly desire the spiritual gifts”*** (1 Corinthians 14:1).

This desire is not about ambition, but intention. This desire is not self-promotion, but a love-driven longing to see the body of Christ strengthened. God is attentive not to our competence, but to the posture of our hearts.

This means one of the primary ways ***we discover our spiritual gifts is by paying attention to where our Godly passions lie***, where our hearts are drawn to build up others, strengthen faith, and serve the body of Christ. Often, when God calls us to something, it feels so clear and compelling that we assume everyone else should see it and do it too. What burdens us, what stirs compassion, what repeatedly moves us toward action often reveals where God is already at work. Yet when that burden is especially acute, it can tempt us toward frustration or even anger when we do not see the same passion reflected in the church, forgetting that God distributes gifts differently for the good of the whole body.

Such passion must be paired with a humble openness to the Holy Spirit. ***“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies”*** (1 Thessalonians 5:19–20).

Therefore, we can ask for gifts not as consumers seeking spiritual experiences, but as servants longing to build others up. If you sense a growing desire to share the gospel, ask the Spirit for greater boldness, wisdom, and clarity. If your heart is stirred toward evangelism, pray that God would grant the gifts needed to proclaim Christ faithfully and fruitfully. If you long to comfort the hurting, ask for deeper compassion and words that strengthen faith. In all of this, we ask not to control outcomes, but to be used to build up others.

2. OBSERVATION: FRUIT REVEALS GOD'S GRACE AT WORK

Spiritual gifts are not discovered in isolation, but in action. Jesus reminds us, ***“You will recognize them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16).***

As we step into real opportunities to serve, love, warn, encourage or comfort, we begin to observe whether God bears fruit through those efforts.

This means gifts are not personal possessions, they are manifestations of grace given for specific needs. This is why gifts may change as needs change. Paul sometimes speaks of roles of apostle, prophet and teacher ***(1 Corinthians 12:28-29; Ephesians 4:11)*** and at other times of manifestations such as healing or tongues ***(1 Corinthians 12:28,30)***, showing that God supplies what the moment requires ***“so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known...” (Ephesians 3:10).***

Our calling is not to identify ourselves, but to observe the need before us and respond in love.

We should not bend our minds endlessly trying to name our gift before using it. The better question is: ***Whose faith needs strengthening, and how can I help?*** If faith is encouraged, hope restored, or love deepened then grace has been at work.

3. AFFIRMATION: GIFTS CLARIFIED IN COMMUNITY

Finally, gifts are clarified and strengthened through affirmation. Paul writes, ***“I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you” (Romans 1:11-12).***

Paul is not giving new gifts, but offering the benefit of his own for mutual encouragement in faith. Similarly, Paul later speaks of Mark as ***“useful... for ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11)***, a powerful affirmation that restored a once-failed servant. God uses the church to name grace, to encourage one another, to open doors to serve, and equip believers for ministry ***(Ephesians 4:11-16)***. We discover our gifts not alone, but together, as we affirm and strengthen each other in our faith.

In the end, spiritual gifts are discovered not by self-focus, but by gospel love. They exist so that fragile faith is strengthened, weary saints are upheld and Christ is glorified. If there is someone near you whose faith is threatened, it may be that God has already placed in you exactly what is needed to help them stand.

FOR THE COMMON GOOD

STEP 1: LISTEN TO GOD-S PURPOSE

Read: **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** slowly.

Sit quietly and reflect.

- What does this passage reveal about why God gives spiritual gifts and how He intends them to be used?

—

STEP 2: ATTEND TO GOD-GIVEN LONGINGS

In prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal three things. Do not rush.

- A simple need in your church that anyone could help meet (*Something ordinary, practical or often unseen*).
- A change or growth you long to see in someone or in your church community (*Deeper faith, maturity, care or unity*).
- A hope you have for what the church might be, have or do (*Something you wish were strengthened or more visible*)

Write these down. Pay attention to what stirs compassion, concern, or holy dissatisfaction.

STEP 3: ASK IN FAITH FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Bring these three things that have been revealed back to God in prayer.

Ask the Holy Spirit to equip you with the spiritual gifts needed to serve in these areas. Pray with openness and trust, asking not to control outcomes but to be made available;

Ask Him to:

- Shape your heart with His love
- Empower you with the spiritual gifts to serve in these areas
- Use you in whatever way He chooses, for the good of others

STEP 4: GOD BUILDS OTHERS THROUGH US

Think of three people who have served you:

- Directly, through care, prayer, or truth
- Indirectly, by creating space for your faith to grow

Thank God for each of them.

Then take one simple step this week to encourage them; through a message, a conversation, or a small act of kindness.

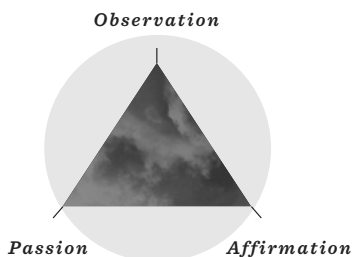
THE CALL TO PARTICIPATION

CHAPTER REFLECTIONS

- What did you feel was the main point or takeaway of the teaching?
- Was there anything from the teaching and exercises that stood out to you - something that challenged or clarified your thinking?

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR GIFTS?

Spiritual gifts are discovered as we participate in God's work of building up the church, through the passions He stirs, the fruit we observe, and the affirmation we receive in community.



READ

1 Corinthians 14:1 and Romans 12:6-8

1. Why does Paul encourage believers to desire gifts before explaining them?
2. How might our longings to serve and build up others reveal where God is already at work?

Note: *God often reveals our gifts by shaping what we deeply care about, especially where we long to strengthen others' faith.*

Matthew 7:15-16 and 1 Peter 4:10

3. What does Jesus mean when He says, “You will recognise them by their fruits”?
- » Why does Jesus point us to fruit rather than labels?

4. Why are gifts more often discovered through obedience than certainty?

Note: We discover them not by waiting but by stepping in. mutual dependence on Christ.

Romans 1:11-12 and Ephesians 4:11-16

5. Why is community essential for recognising and strengthening spiritual gifts?
- » What are the risks of trying to discover our gifts in isolation?
6. How can we as a group create space for people to discern, learn, receive and grow in using their gifts?

**PRAYER**

- Thank God that spiritual gifts are given by grace not earned by effort.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to stir holy desires to love, serve and build others up.
- Pray for courage to step into opportunities before we feel fully ready.
- Ask God to help us affirm and encourage the grace we see in one another.

OPTIONAL EXERCISE

In small groups, spend a few moments in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal any burdens, longings or concerns that consistently surface in your heart for the church or for others.

Take turns sharing what has come to mind. As you listen to one another, help each other discern how these longings might be invitations from God to love, serve or build others up. Consider together what faithful, practical responses might look like, trusting that God often clarifies calling through community.

DISCERNING & AFFIRMING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

This activity is meant to take place during a retreat or an extended period of time. It requires space for prayer, reflection and careful affirmation of one another. Spreading it across a few sessions, a day or a weekend allows participants to listen well, write thoughtfully and receive encouragement without rushing.

Materials Needed

- A list of spiritual gifts with brief definitions (from this booklet)
- Envelopes, one per person, clearly labelled with each individual's name
- Cards or small slips of paper that fit inside the envelopes
- Pens
- A quiet, prayerful space (tables or floor seating works well)

STEP 1: PREPARE THE SPACE AND HEARTS

Begin with a short time of prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to guide the process with humility, love and truth. Remind the group that this exercise is not about assigning identities or labels but about naming grace, affirming fruit and discerning faithful service.

STEP 2: WRITE CARDS FOR ONE ANOTHER

Using the list of spiritual gifts and their definitions, prayerfully write one card for each person in your group.

On each card, include:

- One or more spiritual gifts you see God working through this person
- A brief explanation why (fruit you've seen, ways they've served, moments of care, wisdom, faith or leadership)
- One or two possible opportunities where they might serve or be further equipped

Cards may be anonymous if preferred.

As cards are completed, place them into the envelope labelled with that person's name.

This step can be done across the day or spread over multiple sessions.

STEP 3: WRITE A CARD FOR YOURSELF

Each person also writes one card for themselves reflecting on:

- Spiritual gifts they desire or long to grow in
- Areas where they hope God might use them to serve or build others up

Place this card into your own envelope along with the others.

STEP 4: OPEN, LISTEN, AND AFFIRM

At dinner or another unhurried gathering, come together as a group.

One person at a time:

1. Opens and reads their cards
2. The group briefly affirms what resonates and shares encouragement
3. The individual may read their own card aloud
4. One or two people pray for them, asking the Holy Spirit to strengthen and supply the gifts needed

Move at a steady but unhurried pace, making sure everyone has space to be heard.

PARAT 7

BARRIERS

"APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING"

JOHN 15:5

What keeps us from developing our gifts is not a lack of gifting but the posture of our hearts. Apart from Jesus, our hearts drift from humility to self-centredness, from gratitude to ingratitude, from attentiveness to distraction, and from faith to fear. Yet the gospel calls us to fix our eyes on Christ and rediscover the proper place of our gifts: strengthening others, serving the church and glorifying God alone.

1. SELF-CENTREDNESS: "IT'S ALL ABOUT ME"

One of the greatest enemies of spiritual growth is a heart exiled by pride into an inward-facing life, away from the grace of God and the outward call to build up others in love. Paul warns, ***"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour"*** (1 Corinthians 10:24). Spiritual gifts wither when they are bent toward self-expression rather than self-giving.

Scripture consistently confronts this posture. ***"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought"*** (Romans 12:3). God ***"opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble"*** (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). Even the most impressive gifts, Paul says, amount to nothing without love (1 Corinthians 13:1–3). At its core, self-centredness refuses the way of the cross.

Jesus calls us to deny ourselves (Luke 9:23) and reminds us that whoever seeks to save their life will lose it (Matthew 16:25–26).

2. INGRATITUDE: "NO THANKS"

Another barrier is ingratitude, a failure to recognise that gifts are sheer grace. Paul asks pointedly, ***"What do you have that you did not receive?"*** (1 Corinthians 4:7). When gratitude fades, entitlement and envy grows.

Scripture repeatedly connects ingratitude with spiritual decay. Paul describes the last days as marked by people who are ***"lovers of self... ungrateful"*** (2 Timothy 3:1–5). In Romans, humanity's downfall begins when they ***"did not honour him as God or give thanks"*** (Romans 1:21). Grumbling replaces worship, and gifts are no longer received as mercy but measured against expectation (Philippians 2:14).

Fruitfulness and spiritual gifts flow from a life marked by gratitude. ***"Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him"*** (Colossians 3:17). Gratitude fuels availability. When thanksgiving shapes our hearts, our gifts cease to be about self and become acts of worship. We serve not to be loved, but because we are loved and grace flows freely again.

3. DISTRACTION: "HUH?"

Distraction is rarely about busyness alone; it is about misplaced attention. Spiritual gifts require attentiveness to God and to others, yet we live in an age of relentless noise competing for our hearts. Scripture calls us to ***"lay aside every weight... and look to Jesus" (Hebrews 12:1-2)***. What we consistently neglect, we cannot develop.

The account of Martha in ***Luke 10:38-42*** is revealing because her distraction came in the context of faithful service. Martha was not neglecting ministry, she was immersed in it, yet Jesus exposes her heart: "anxious and troubled about many things", while missing the one thing "necessary." Her activity, though sincere, was distracted from Christ Himself. Gifts go undeveloped not because God is absent, but because our hearts drift away from loving God and building others up.

4. FEAR: "WHAT IF I FAIL?"

Finally, fear often keeps us from stepping forward in the use of our spiritual gifts. Fear of failure, rejection or inadequacy quietly silences obedience. Jesus consistently exposes fear as a faith issue, repeating the phrase "you of little faith" when the disciples fear the storm (***Matthew 8:26***), when Peter sinks while walking on water (***Matthew 14:31***), and even when anxiety about food and clothing reveals hearts slow to trust God's care (***Matthew 6:30; 16:8***).

Fear then, is not merely emotional weakness but forgetfulness of who God is and how near He is. This is why Paul reminds Timothy that ***"God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7)***. When Jesus sends His followers to speak, serve or witness, He promises that the Spirit Himself will supply the wisdom and words they need (***Matthew 10:19-20; Luke 12:11-12***). Fear loosens its grip when we remember that the fruit of our gifts does not depend on our courage or competence, but on God's grace working in and through us.

WHAT KEEPS US FROM DEVELOPING OUR GIFTS?



Self-centeredness



Ingratitude



Distraction



Fear

**GOD ISN'T INTERESTED
IN YOUR ABILITY,
HE'S INTERESTED IN
YOUR AVAILABILITY**

THANKFUL POSTURE

STEP 1: INVITE THE SPIRIT TO SEARCH YOUR HEART

Read **Psalms 139:23–24** slowly.

- Pause and invite the Holy Spirit to search you, not to condemn, but to lead. Ask God to show you anything that may be hindering your willingness or freedom to serve.

Sit quietly for a moment.

STEP 2: REFLECT HONESTLY

Sit quietly and ask yourself:

- In recent weeks has my attention been mostly turned toward myself or toward others?
- Have I been living with gratitude for the grace I have received from God?
- What has captured most of my attention over the last few days?
- What fears or doubts have stopped me from stepping forward in faith and service?

Be honest. Do not rush this.

STEP 3: WRITE A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND REPENTANCE

Write a short prayer of gratitude and repentance to God (you can also read **Psalms 103:1–5**).

STEP 4: TURN OUTWARD IN PRAYER

Ask the Lord to help you love Him and others through your gifts.

- Think of three specific ways you could serve or build others up this week; at church, at home, at work or in your neighbourhood.

Close by reading aloud **John 15:16**.

BARRIERS TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

CHAPTER REFLECTIONS

- What did you feel was the main point or takeaway of the teaching?
- Was there anything from the teaching and exercises that stood out to you - something that challenged or clarified your thinking?

One of the greatest enemies of spiritual growth is a heart exiled by pride into an inward-facing life, away from the grace of God and the outward call to build up others in love.



Romans 12:3-5, 2 Tim 2:1-5, and 1 Cor 13: 1-3

1. What similarities do you notice in Paul's warnings across these passages?
2. In what ways does a self-centred posture hinder the faithful use of spiritual gifts?

Colossians 3:17

3. What dangers arise when spiritual gifts are exercised without gratitude?
 - » How does ingratitude shift gifts from grace to entitlement or burden?

Luke 10:38–42

Like Martha, we can become “anxious and troubled about many things,” allowing even good activity to distract us from the purpose of spiritual gifts which is to serve and build up others for God’s glory.

4. What things, habits or desires, might become distractions from faithful love and service?

2 Timothy 1:7, Mark 13:10–11, Romans 15:13, and Romans 8:15

5. What fears can keep us from exercising our spiritual gifts?
6. Which of these passages do you find most encouraging when fear arises, and why?

REFLECT

7. What have you learned today about the posture of heart God desires when we exercise our spiritual gifts?

**PRAYER**

- Repent from any fear, pride, distraction or passivity that keep us from loving God and serving others.
- Ask God to realign our hearts toward Christ, reminding us that we are chosen, equipped, and sent.
- Pray for discernment to recognise and resist spiritual opposition that seeks to keep God’s people inactive.
- Commit afresh to faithful obedience, trusting God for fruitfulness rather than relying on ourselves.



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