

The material below is not covered in the weekend service. It is meant as extra study material for your Life Group and personal walk with the Lord. The spiritual gifts are not specifically listed and individually studied in this Bible study. It is meant as an overview of all the spiritual gifts listed in the Bible and how they function as a whole in the church.

There are four New Testament passages which describe spiritual gifts. These four passages are:

- Romans 12:1-13
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-31
- Ephesians 4:1-15
- 1 Peter 4:7-14

Romans 12:1-13

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual^[a] act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. ⁴Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

⁹Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

¹³Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Background Information:

Though Paul had not yet visited the Christian community in Rome, he felt compelled to write a pastoral letter to that congregation. The resulting correspondence, the New Testament book of Romans, contains challenging and provocative instructions for Christians who wish to understand and to grow in their relationship to God through Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS:

- Read Romans 12:1-2. In practical terms, what does it mean to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice"?
- In verse two, we read, "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God." Restate this phrase in your own words.

- In verses 3-4, Paul encourages his readers to use sound judgement, not to think too highly of themselves. Paul also uses a particular image of the church to describe the interrelatedness of all Christians. What image does Paul use to describe the nature of the church?
- Read verses 6-13. Which spiritual gifts are listed in these verses?
- After reading the entire passage, what is your assessment of the relationship between understanding the will of God and using your spiritual gift(s)?
- In general, what have you learned about spiritual gifts based on this passage?

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

¹Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ²You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

¹²The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are 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 But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.

Background Information:

The first century city of Corinth was a major Roman sea port. It was a bustling, raucous town, filled with merchants, traders, and sailors. The town was also a noted center of pagan worship. A temple dedicated to a goddess of sex was located in the city. Sacred prostitution and ecstatic forms of worship were conducted in the area around this temple. Local craftsmen also produced and sold idols associated with the worship of this goddess.

Into this chaotic, heathen city came Paul preaching the Gospel. Several Gentiles in the city responded to his message and became Christians. A fledgling church was established. After working to establish a solid faith foundation for these former pagans, Paul moved on to other cities.

From time to time, Paul heard disturbing reports about the church at Corinth. Most biblical scholars believe that the letter we call 1 Corinthians was written in response to one of these reports. Paul penned these words of advice and correction to address a number of important issues that faced the congregation.

One of these issues was *glossolalia*--commonly known as speaking in tongues. It seems that, in their previous pagan services of worship, forms of ecstatic speech were interpreted as a sign of special favor with the gods. The Corinthian, when converted, brought these forms of ecstatic speech into their Christian worship. The undisciplined use of *glossolalia* was causing disruption in the fellowship. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul attempted to address this inappropriate display and the disruptions that it caused. But rather than focusing exclusively on the misuse of *glossolalia*, Paul provides the longest, most complete teaching on the topic of spiritual gifts in the entire New Testament.

QUESTIONS:

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-31. As you read the passage, answer the following questions:

- Why are spiritual gifts given? (Verses 4-7)
- Who receives a spiritual gift? (Verse 7)
- What is the source of all spiritual gifts? (Verse 11)
- What image of the church is used in this passage? (Refer specifically to verses 13-26.) In light of the controversy in the Corinthian church, what is the significance of this image with regards to giftedness?
- Which spiritual gifts are identified in this passage?
- How does this teaching about spiritual gifts in Chapter 12 relate to the famous Love Chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, which follows?

Ephesians 4:1-15

¹As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one

Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism;⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."⁹(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up¹³until 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.

¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Background Information

In his teachings about spiritual gifts in the book of Romans, Paul gave individual Christians advice about how to discover the will of God. In that book, he encouraged the reader to present his or her entire life as a living sacrifice. He urged the reader to avoid a life based on the principles of this world; rather, he counseled the individual to come to a new understanding of God's principles and how they can be played out in this world. His advice to the individual Christian: to discover the will of God for your life, discover and use your spiritual gifts!

In his letter to the Christians at Ephesus, Paul shifts his attention from the commitment of the individual Christian to the life of the church, a unique community established by God through the work of Jesus Christ. While Romans 12 focuses on the individual and giftedness, Ephesians 4 focuses on the church and giftedness.

QUESTIONS:

Read Ephesians 4:1-15. As you read, consider the following questions:

- According to verses 1 and 2, describe the "calling to which we have been called."
- In verses 3-6, how is the theme of unity described?
- Who receives a spiritual gift? (Verse 7)
- Which spiritual gifts are listed in this passage? (Verse 11)
- Why are spiritual gifts given? (Verse 12)
- What image of the church is used in this passage?
- What does this image of the church have to do with the idea of "Christian body building"?

1 Peter 4:7-14

⁷The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.⁸Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.⁹Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.¹⁰Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.¹¹If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it 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.

¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Background Information

While Paul often wrote to specific churches with whom he had some associations, this epistle from Peter was probably circulated among a number of churches in rural Asia Minor. It is further believed that the letter was written in response to a local or regional persecution of Christians. As a respected leader of the church in Jerusalem, a letter under the signature of Peter would have carried much weight with these persecuted Christians. They would have been comforted and challenged by his words of advice.

So, one passage about spiritual gifts was written to settle a church fight; a second was written as words of advice in the face of persecution.

It is also important to note that two of the major leaders of the New Testament church wrote about spiritual gifts--Paul, writing to three, separate and prominent congregations, and Peter, writing a general epistle with a wide circulation. These key leaders felt that an understanding of giftedness was important to discover the will of God, to settle a church controversy, to describe how the church should function, and to provide stability in the face of persecution. As important as giftedness was to those first century Christians, it is equally important for twenty-first century Christians.

QUESTIONS:

Read 1 Peter 4:7-14 and answer the following questions:

- Describe the overall tone of this passage.
- Who receives a spiritual gift? (Verse 10)
- Which spiritual gifts are identified in this passage? (Verse 11a)
- Why are spiritual gifts given? (Verse 11b)
- Based on this passage, what have you learned about spiritual gifts?

Integrate The Results of Your Inductive Study

- What **common themes, images, and words** did you find in these four passages? List them.
- **List all of the spiritual gifts** that you discovered in the four New Testament passages. Depending on the version(s) of the Bible that you used, you should find around 22 gifts.
- Incorporating everything that you have learned about spiritual gifts, write **your definition of a spiritual gift**.

Based on your current understanding of giftedness, respond to the following statements:

- Assuming that talents are abilities received at birth, or skill developed after birth--capacities which are possessed by all people--what is the difference between talents and spiritual gifts? Are the two related? If so, how?
- Is it possible for a Christian to deny the fact that he or she has at least one spiritual gift? Why or why not?

- Is this statement consistent with your understanding of spiritual giftedness:

Spiritual gifts are congregational, not personal. Through these gifts, the Church and the local congregation are equipped to function as worshiping, discipling, community-building, witnessing, serving, and ministering family of faith.

This study of spiritual gifts is based on the following definition of a "spiritual gift":

A **spiritual gift** is an ability, skill, or talent given through the activity of the Holy Spirit working in the life of each individual Christian. Collectively, the spiritual gifts possessed by the members of a local congregation enable that congregation as the body of Christ to perform the mission and ministry to which it has been called by God.

How does your definition compare with this definition?

NOTES FROM WEEKEND MESSAGE ARE BELOW:

John 14:16-17 NKJV

QUESTIONS:

1. "Why does the church have so little impact when we are the body of Christ on earth?"
2. "Why are so many Christians frustrated, sensing there has to be more?"

If we seek the **GIFTS** of the Spirit and not the **SPIRIT** Himself, we will always focus on **SELF**.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

John 16:7 NKJV

Romans 8:11 NKJV

Zechariah 4:5 NKJV

1 Corinthians 12:7, 11 NKJV

2 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV

QUESTIONS:

1. "What is God's Spirit saying to you?"

2. "Are you seeking on your own to do good things for God?"
3. Do you allow Him to do His will through you?"