

BLURB: *What's the big deal with spiritual gifts? Do you know what gifts God has given to you? The Greek word charis (grace) is closely related to charisma/charismata (gift/gifts). So, when the New Testament speaks of spiritual gifts we are talking about grace-gifts. Paul says that the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to each of us, as He determines. Whatever grace-gifts God does give us, Paul is clear that they are given for the common good. Peter says that with these giftings, we are stewards of God's grace. In this 'IN' session, we will consider which ones God has given to each of us and how we can use them to bless others.*

Introduction: Gifts of Grace

“Paul’s use of *charisma*; In the NT, the term is found 16 times in the Pauline writings, and one in Peter (1 Pet 4:10). Clearly cognate with *charis* (grace), at its simplest it refers to something grace has bestowed, a “grace-gift” if you will. It is not that Paul coined the term: that is most likely going too far, although admittedly pre-Pauline occurrences are textually uncertain. But for the apostle who so delights to discuss grace, it is eminently appropriate that he should devote attention to the things or grace, to the concretisations of grace, to grace gifts.”

Don Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, © 1987 Paternoster Press, pg. 19.

1. Overview of the Gifts:

- Lists of spiritual gifts in the NT – Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Cor 12:7-11, 12:28-31, 14:6; Ephesians 4:7-13.
- The lists in the New Testament are not exhaustive but address the circumstances of the recipients.
- There were issues about the use of these gifts within the early church. Paul first letter to the Corinthians explicitly seeks to address such issues (spiritual one-up-man-ship).

Discussion: *What surprises you about what is or what was not included within these lists of ‘grace-gifts’? What do you know about the context within which the instructions on these ‘grace-gifts’ were given?*

2. Purpose of the Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-13:3):

“We may define spiritual gifts as follows: *A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church.* This broad definition includes both gifts that are related to natural abilities (such as teaching, showing mercy, or administration) and gifts that seem to be more “miraculous” and less related to natural abilities (such as prophecy, healing, or distinguishing between spirits). The reason for this is that when Paul lists spiritual gifts (in Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 7:7, 12:8-10, 28; & Ephesians 4:11) he includes both kinds of gifts. Yet not every natural ability that people have is included here, because Paul is clear that all spiritual gifts must be empowered “by one and the same Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:11), that they are given “for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7), and that they are all to be used for “edification” (1 Corinthians 14:26), or for building up the church...Spiritual gifts are given to equip the church to carry out its ministry until Christ returns.”

Wayne Grudem, pg. 396-7, *Bible Doctrine*

a) Many gifts, but one Spirit (v4-11)

b) Many gifts, but one body (v12-30)

c) Many gifts, but one way (v12:31-13:3)

Discussion: What stands out to you about what Paul is communicating in these verses? How do they help us to understand the purpose of why God has given us these 'grace-gifts'?

3. Identifying your Gifts: Complete the test at <https://giftstest.com> and note what are your top gifts

Discussion: What do you observe about the results? Was there anything surprising or unexpected here? To what extent do you think that you are putting your gifts into practice?

4. Sharing our Gifts (1 Peter 4:9-11):

- To serve others
- As faithful stewards of Grace (1 Peter 4:10)
- With the strength God provides (1 Peter 4:11)

Discussion: What steps do you need to take in order to use these gifts to be a blessing to others? What opportunities do you see for doing so? What dangers do you foresee that could be a hindrance to such blessing?

Other Resources

D.A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 1987, Paternoster Press

J.I. Packer, *Keep in step with the Spirit*, 1984, IVP

The Network Course, 6-week programme developed in partnership with Willow Creek Community Church

Discovering your SHAPE (Tom & Judi Walsh, Navigator Representatives)

Administration

Literal Meaning: To pilot or steer a ship.

Description: The divine ability to organise information and things for himself and others to work efficiently in the body of Christ.

Common Traits and Functions: Organizing, systematizing, efficiency oriented.

Best Use: Organise information, materials and people in an efficient manner for a particular task.

Worst Use: Counseling people regarding personal problems.

Developmental Ideas: Observe how others with this gift have organised for efficiency. Understand available organizational tools (computer, accounting systems, etc). Study the value of relationships versus organisation.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:28; Ex.18:13-26; Acts 6:1-7

Apostle

Literal Meaning: To be sent with a message.

Description: The God-given enablement to start churches and oversee their development.

Common Traits and Functions: Envisioning, building, deciding, practical and conceptual.

Best Use: Pioneer new and innovative ministries. Overhaul existing ministries which have lost a sense of purpose and direction. Train others in ministry by mentoring.

Worst Use: Maintain an existing ministry with little opportunity for changing it.

Developmental Ideas: Network with others who have this gift. Work in conjunction with others with the gift of wisdom and knowledge.

Scripture: Eph.4:11-12; 1 Cor.12:28; Rom.1:5

Discernment (Discerning Spirits)

Literal Meaning: To separate, distinguish, differentiate good and evil, right and wrong.

Description: The divine aptitude to distinguish between truth and error. Also to perceive whether a person ministering in God's name is really from God, Satan or acting out of human power; and the ability to perceive whether a person is unique, authentic and honest.

Common Traits and Functions: Perceptive, sensitive to moral issues, personally steadfast, rightly evaluating.

Best Use: Interviewing people seeking ministry positions. Evaluating the quality and maturity of a ministry. Identifying insincere and dishonest people.

Worst Use: Designing solutions for improvement and implementing them.

Developmental Ideas: Work through personally difficult issues where self-righteousness and defensiveness often breed. Understand the biblical difference between judging to condemn and judging to correct with mercy and truth.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:10; 1 John 4:1-3; Gal.1:6-9; Acts 5:3; Matt.16:21-23

Encouragement/Exhortation

Literal Meaning: To come alongside of.

Description: The divine capacity to identify the deep needs of individuals and guide them to meaningful resolution of those needs through comfort, encouragement, confrontation, and instruction; and/or the ability to motivate people to meaningful growth through instructing them in the biblical truths regarding growth processes.

Common Traits and Functions: Relationally perceptive, empathetic, process and growth oriented.

Best Use: Guiding another individual or small group through difficult personal problems. Motivating groups of people to apply biblical truths which lead to maturity.

Worst Use: Become overloaded with too many people. Required to lead a group of people.

Developmental Ideas: Understand what God's Word says about the nature of man, the attributes of God, evil and pain, confession, repentance and sanctification (i.e., the process of growing more Christ-like).

Scripture: Rom.12:8; John 16:7-11; Acts 2:40; 11:22-24; 15:32

Evangelism

Literal Meaning: To bring good news.

Description: The God-given ability to drive and communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to those who are not believers.

Common Traits and Functions: Bold, confident, deep concern about eternal issues, deep concern for the eternal well being of others.

Best Use: Serve on a mission team. Initiate conversations about Christ with non-believers. Special outreach ministries. Train others in sharing Christ.

Worst Use: Too much involvement with Christians so as to severely limit contact with non-Christians.

Developmental Ideas: Understand and appreciate the pressure points for non-Christians. Understand how to defend the Gospel through truth and relationships. Have a clear understanding of what the Good News of Jesus is.

Scripture: Eph.4:11; 2 Tim.4:5; Acts 8:26-40; 21:8; Luke 19:1-10

Faith

Literal Meaning: To trust, have confidence, believe.

Description: The divine enablement to trust God's promises and to confidently believe God for changes and spiritual growth which will enhance God's purposes.

Common Traits and Functions: Future oriented, biblical values, change oriented.

Best Use: Involved in new ministry initiatives where resistance from Satan is encountered.

Worst Use: Tasked with maintaining the status quo in a ministry.

Developmental Ideas: Study faith from the Scriptures. Pray with others with the gift of faith. Understand faith, intuition and presumption.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:9; 13:2; Heb.11; 12:1-3; Matt.17:19-21

Giving

Literal Meaning: To give a part of or share.

Description: The divine ability to determine the physical needs of people and provide physical resources to help meet those needs. To contribute money and material resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality.

Common Traits and Functions: Resourceful, caring, and generous.

Best Use: Contributing material resources beyond their natural ability for the work of God.

Worst Use: Under challenged. Restricted to give to one ministry.

Developmental Ideas: Be exposed to a variety of ministries. Pray with those with the gift of giving and the gift of faith. Understand the biblical teachings on possessions and material resources.

Scripture: Rom.12:8; Acts 5:1-11; 2 Cor.8:1-9, 15; Eph.4:28; Luke 3:11; Jas.2:15-1

Healing (NOTE: The word is actually plural, 'healings', which indicates that different kinds of healings are possible with this gift—emotional, relational, spiritual, physical, etc)

Literal Meaning: To restore instantaneously.

Description: The divine empowering to be God's means for restoring people to wholeness. The ability to call on God to heal the sick by supernatural means.

Common Traits and Functions: Deep concern for the sick. Desire to glorify God.

Best Use: Healing the sick as a means of demonstrating the power and glory of God.

Worst Use: Seeking self-glorification.

Developmental Ideas: Understanding the healing ministries of Jesus and Paul.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:9, 28, 30; Acts 3:1-8; Mark 2:1-12

Helps

Literal Meaning: To take the place of someone.

Description: The God-given capability to work alongside another and help that person complete the task God has given him/her. To attach spiritual value to the accomplishment of practical and necessary tasks which support the body of Christ.

Common Traits and Functions: Servant attitude, loyal, detail oriented, responsive to the initiatives of others.

Best Use: Serve as a detail person for a leader of a ministry.

Worst Use: Leading a ministry.

Developmental Ideas: Understand the value God places on serving. Understand the limits and dangers of complying with another person's wishes.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:7, 28; Rom.12:7; Matt.17:55

Interpreting Tongues

Literal Meaning: To translate, interpret.

Description: The divine enabling to understand and communicate the meaning of an unknown language spoken by one who is speaking in tongues.

Common Traits and Functions: Finds ordinary language restrictive in prayer and worship, feels a sense of liberation and deeper communication with God.

Best Use: Interpret an unknown tongue within corporate worship.

Worst Use: Public worship where use of tongues is restricted.

Developmental Ideas: Understand the biblical teaching on the value and dangers of tongues.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:10, 30; 14:1-19, 26-28

Knowledge (Word of Knowledge)

Literal Meaning: To know.

Description: The divine skill to seek out and remember a myriad of facts on various subjects and to analyze effectively.

Common Traits and Functions: Analytical, objective accumulates information, researching.

Best Use: Delineating a detailed plan for a ministry vision, project or activity.

Worst Use: Leading and implementing the plan.

Developmental Ideas: Exposure to information relevant to his/her ministry of interest. Exposure to decision makers who will use this knowledge. Understand the benefits and dangers of knowledge.

Scripture: 1 Cor. 8:1; 12:8; 13:8; John 4:16-19; Mark 2:6-8

Leadership/Ruling

Literal Meaning: To stand before.

Description: The God-given enablement to serve by overseeing, coordinating and motivating others in the work of God.

Common Traits and Functions: Purposeful, destiny driven, comfortable with power, views leading as a service.

Best Use: A primary leader of ministry.

Worst Use: Detail implementation.

Developmental Ideas: Understand God's perspective on leadership, power, and submission and serving. Understand the limits of authority of a spiritual leader.

Scripture: Rom.12:8; Heb.13:17; Matt.23:10; Luke 22:25-26; Acts 18:8, 17; Num.33:1

Mercy

Literal Meaning: To show kindness.

Description: The divine aptitude to minister cheerfully and appropriately to people who are suffering, to perceive the hurts of people and console them without condemnation.

Common Traits and Functions: Perceptive, consoling not condemning.

Best Use: Consoling those with emotional scars from sin.

Worst Use: Evaluating the intentions of others.

Developmental Ideas: Understand the mercy and justice of God from the Scriptures. Be exposed to the exhorting gift. Understand the benefit of mercy with cheerfulness.

Scripture: Rom.12:7-8; Jas.5:11; Matt.5:7; 10:46-52

Miracles

Literal Meaning: To do deeds of power.

Description: The divine empowering to call on God to do supernatural acts which glorify him and give evidence of his grace.

Common Traits and Functions: Indifferent to rational definitions of what is normal and possible. Open to supernatural acts.

Best Use: Believing God for miracles which will bring glory to God and cause others to consider God's will for their lives.

Worst Use: Seeking self-glorification.

Developmental Ideas: Understand from Scripture God's purposes for doing miracles and withholding miracles.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:10, 28-29; Acts 10:17-20; John 2:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

Pastor/Shepherd

Literal Meaning: To shepherd a flock.

Description: The God-given capability to oversee, guide, care for and nurture the spiritual needs of individuals and groups of people in the body of Christ as they grow in their faith.

Common Traits and Functions: Sensitive to group needs, caring of people, guiding others.

Best Use: Pastor a local group of believers. Train others by mentoring them.

Worst Use: Pioneer a new ministry. Heavy load of personal counseling.

Developmental Ideas: Understand God's dealing with groups of people and biblical principles of group conflict resolution.

Scripture: Eph.4:11-13; 1 Pet.5:1-4

Prophecy

Literal Meaning: To speak before.

Description: The divine enablement to speak out God's truth with power and clarity in a timely and culturally relevant manner for edification or correction or repentance.

Common Traits and Functions: Sensitive to sin, bold, high value on biblical behaviour.

Best Use: Influence believers and society toward biblically moral behaviour. Train others by mentoring them.

Worst Use: Leading a group.

Developmental Ideas: A broad study of biblical teachings. Understanding of moral absolutes and relatives from Scripture. Understand the role of faith in prophecy.

Scripture: Rom.12:6; 1 Cor.12:10, 28; 14:1; Eph.4:11; 2 Pet.1:20-21

Service

Literal Meaning: To render any kind of service/ministry.

Description: The divine capacity to identify and the desire to help meet the physical needs of others.

Common Traits and Functions: Perceptive of physical needs, eager to serve, empathetic towards those in need.

Scripture: Rom.12:7; 2 Tim.1:16-18; Acts 6:1-7; Titus 3:14; Gal.6:2, 10

Speaking in Tongues

Literal Meaning: Tongue, language.

Description: The divine ability to speak, worship or pray in a language (known or unknown) without prior knowledge of that language.

Common Traits and Functions: Finds ordinary language restrictive in prayer and worship, feels a sense of liberation and deeper communication with God.

Best Use: Private worship of God for personal edification. Sharing Christ to non-Christians in language they can understand.

Worst Use: Public worship without interpretation.

Developmental Ideas: Understand the scriptural teachings on tongues: the benefits and dangers to the furtherance of the Gospel.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:10, 28-30; 14:5-6, 23; Acts 2:1-13

Teaching

Literal Meaning: To teach.

Description: The divine skill to understand and communicate the truth of God in a clear and relevant manner.

Common Traits and Functions: Learning, researching, communicating, illustrating truth.

Best Use: Speaking to various sizes of groups of believers. Speaking on subjects with personal conviction. Train others by instructing and mentoring.

Worst Use: Expecting all teachers to be good evangelists and prophets.

Developmental Ideas: Exposure to other teachers and teaching methods. Systematic study of the Old and New Testaments.

Scripture: Rom.12:7; 1 Cor.12:28-29; Eph.4:11; Acts 20:20-21

Wisdom (Word of Wisdom)

Literal Meaning: Wisdom (to speak appropriate truth at the right time).

Description: The God-given aptitude to discern applicable principles from God's Word to complex situations, to apply spiritual knowledge effectively.

Common Traits and Functions: Synthesizing, intuiting, designing, studying.

Best Use: Consulting and advising regarding the foundations, direction and design of a ministry.

Worst Use: Detailed implementation and leading.

Developmental Ideas: Broad study of Scripture in order to understand a biblical world view. Broad exposure to people and ideas. Exposure to decision makers.

Scripture: 1 Cor.12:8; 2 Pet.3:14-16; Acts 6:8-10

Additional Gifts Mentioned

Celibacy

Literal Meaning: The state of being unmarried, and chaste.

Description: The God-given capacity to remain single and enjoy it; to be unmarried and not suffer undue sexual temptations.

Common Traits and Functions: Marriage not a priority or particular desire, aware of the benefits of being single. Rarely struggling with sexual temptation.

Scripture: 1 Cor.7:7-8; Matt.19:10-12

Craftsmanship

Literal Meaning: To craft, design, build.

Description: The God-given skill to creatively design and/or construct items for ministry.

Common Traits and Functions: Enjoys creative work. Looks for God's handiwork in nature and man made things. Seeks to point people to God through beauty.

Scripture: Ex.31:3-5; 2 Sam.5:11; 2 Kings 22:4-7; Mark 6:3

Creative Communication

Literal Meaning: To communicate artistically.

Description: The God-given talent to communicate God's truth through a variety of art forms.

Common Traits and Functions: Desire to glorify God through artistic means. Participates in artistic endeavours. Finds self expression and ability to communicate relationship with God in various art forms.

Scripture: Psalm 150; 2 Sam.6:14; Mark 4:1-2

Exorcism

Literal Meaning: One who employs a formula for the expulsion of demons.

Description: The divine empowering to cast out demons and evil spirits.

Common Traits and Functions: Sensitive to the presence of demons/evil spirits. Compassion for demonised people. Sense of courage and authority in the face of demons/evil spirits.

Scripture: Matt.12:22-32; Luke 10:12-20; Acts 8:5-8; 16:16-18

Hospitality

Literal Meaning: To love strangers.

Description: The divine ability to care for people by providing fellowship, food or shelter.

Common Traits and Functions: Happy having guests in the home; relaxed, not house proud; enjoy providing food, willing to share.

Scripture: Rom.12:13; 1 Pet.4:9; Heb.13:2

Intercession

Literal Meaning: To plead for someone, intercede.

Description: The divine capability to consistently pray with faith on behalf of others and/or for social needs.

Common Traits and Functions: Pray for lengthy amounts of time. Intense, persistent prayers, derive great personal satisfaction from praying.

Scripture: Rom.8:26-27; John 17:1-26; Heb.7:25; Acts 12:5

Martyrdom

Literal Meaning: To undergo suffering and death for your Faith.

Description: The God-given empowering to undergo suffering for the faith even to death while consistently displaying a joyous and victorious attitude that brings glory to God.

Common Traits and Functions: Unperturbed by thoughts of suffering and death. Willing to face persecution, suffering, torture and even death.

Scripture: 1 Cor.13:3; Acts 7:54-60

Missionary

Literal Meaning: One who is sent (on a mission.)

Description: The God-given ability to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture.

Common Traits and Functions: Enjoy the challenge of living in another culture while cutting ties with their first culture on a long term basis. Enjoy language learning.

Scripture: 1 Cor.9:19-23; Acts 8:4; 13:2-3; 22:21; Rom.10:15

Voluntary Poverty

Literal Meaning: Choosing to live with deficiency of resources, in destitution.

Description: The divine enablement to renounce material comfort and luxury and adopt a personal lifestyle equivalent to those living at the poverty level in a given society in order to serve God more effectively.

Common Traits and Functions: Attracted to living a simple life style, critical of social and economic policies. Give generously.

Scripture: 1 Cor.13:1-3; Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-37; 2 Cor.6:10; 8:9

NB: The main bulk of this list of gifts came from an old photocopied handout and its original source is not listed or known. It has been added to and amended.