

# Discovering Your Motivational Spiritual Gift

# BIBLICAL LISTINGS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

**“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.” I Corinthians 12:4-6**

Motivational Gifts  
(Romans 12:6-8)

1. Prophecy
2. Serving
3. Teaching
4. Exhortation
5. Giving
6. Leadership
7. Mercy

Manifestation or Impact  
(I Cor. 12:7-11; 27-31)

1. Message of wisdom
2. Message of knowledge
3. Faith
4. Healing
5. Miraculous powers
6. Prophecy
7. Distinguishing between spirits
8. Speaking in tongues
9. Interpretation of tongues
10. Apostleship
11. Teaching
12. Helping
13. Administering

Ministry/ Vocational Roles  
(Eph. 4:11)

1. Apostles
2. Prophets
3. Evangelists
4. Pastors/Shepherds
5. Teachers

## WHY PRIORITIZE ROMANS

Is Romans 12:6-8 an exhaustive list of motivational spiritual gifts? Here are 3 reasons to consider.

- Romans is Paul's most complete book of fundamental Christian doctrine.
- The number of gifts listed is seven—often viewed as the number of completion throughout Scripture.
- The context clarifies that the reader knows their gift and gives “operating instructions” for them. By implication, there are no other gifts suggested. There is no “or whatever else your gift may be” statement. As there is in 1 Corinthians 12.

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Read Romans 12:1-8, so you are familiar with the text. Then pray and ask God to reveal your motivational spiritual gift believing that He wants you to know and to use you to build up the body of Jesus Christ.

Once you have read the text and prayed, prayerfully review each gift, the descriptions, and the characteristics of each gift. Try to identify the characteristics and misunderstandings that most fit you.

## WHAT IS A “SPIRITUAL GIFT?”

A Spiritual gift is God working through a believer to give divine unction, strength and power to accomplish His will in the believer's life so that Christ's life and His kingdom may continue to be made manifest as a channel of God's grace.

## THE NEED TO KNOW YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Knowing one's Spiritual gifts will help him to:

1. Know God's will for his life
2. Discover his spiritual “*job description.*”
3. Take his appropriate place in the Body of Christ
4. Begin to see himself as a channel of God's grace
5. Avoid over-commitment and burn-out
6. Become more appreciative of what others are called, and anointed, to do
7. Be a part of maintaining the true purpose of the Body of Christ

# The Gift of Prophecy

**Prophecy:** *propheteia*: *pro* = forth; *phemi* = to speak. “to speak forth the mind and counsel of God.”

**Motivation:** to reveal unrighteous motives or actions by presenting God’s truth.

**Instructions on use:** “If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.” Rom. 12:6. “If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.” I Peter 4:11

## Characteristics:

1. A need to express his message verbally.
2. The ability to discern the character and motives of people.
3. The capacity to identify, define and hate evil.
4. The willingness to experience brokenness in order to prompt brokenness.
5. The dependence on Scriptural truth to validate his authority.
6. A desire for outward evidence to demonstrate inward conviction.
7. A directness, frankness, and persuasiveness in speaking.
8. A concern for the reputation and program of God.
9. An inward weeping and personal identification with the sins of others.
10. An eagerness to have others point out their blind spot.

## Misunderstandings:

1. Frankness may be viewed as harshness.
2. Interest in groups may be interpreted as disinterest in individuals.
3. Efforts to gain results may be seen as using gimmicks.
4. Focus on right and wrong may be judged as intolerance of partial good.
5. Emphasis on decisions may appear as neglecting spiritual growth.
6. Public boldness and strict standards may hinder intimate personal relationships.
7. The strong desire to convey truth may be interpreted as little interest in listening to another person’s point of view.

## Biblical Examples for Further Reading:

- John the Baptist – in Matthew 21:32; Luke 3:2-20 and 7:18-29
- Anna – in Luke 2:36-38
- Mary – in Matthew, chapters 1 and 2; Mark 6:3; Luke 1:26-56; John 2:1-5 and Acts 1:14
- Ananias – in Acts 9:10-17 and 22:12-16
- Hosea – in Hosea, chapters 1 through 14
- Jeremiah – in Jeremiah, chapters 1 through 52
- Isaiah – in Isaiah, chapters 1 through 66
- Jonah – in Jonah, chapters 1 through 4

# The Gift of Serving

**Serving:** *diakonia*: religious and spiritual ministrations of believers. (English word “deacon” comes from this.) A servant or attendant who does tangible work or duties.

**Motivation:** to demonstrate love by meeting practical needs

**Instructions on use:** “If it is serving, let him serve.” Rom. 12:7. “If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.” I Peter 4:11

## Characteristics:

1. The ability to recall specific likes and dislikes of people.
2. The alertness to detect and meet practical needs. Especially enjoys *manual* projects.
3. The motivation to meet needs as quickly as possible.
4. Physical stamina to fulfill needs with disregard for weariness.
5. The willingness to use personal funds to avoid delays.
6. The desire to sense sincere appreciation and the ability to detect insincerity.
7. The desire to complete a job with evidence of unexpected extra service.
8. An involvement in a variety of activities with an inability to say “no.”
9. A greater enjoyment of short-range goals with frustration over long-range goals.
10. A frustration when limitations of time are attached to jobs.

## Misunderstandings:

1. Quickness in meeting needs may appear to be pushy.
2. Avoidance of red tape may result in excluding others from jobs.
3. Their disregard for personal needs may extend to their own family’s needs.
4. Eagerness in serving may prompt suspicion of self-advancement.
5. May react to others who do not detect and meet obvious needs.
6. Insistence on serving may appear to be rejection of being served.
7. Desire to sense sincere appreciation may result in being easily hurt.
8. Quickness in meeting needs may interfere with spiritual lessons God is teaching.
9. Meeting practical needs may be judged as lack of interest in spiritual matters.
10. Their stamina may be interpreted as insensitivity or impatience with others helping.
11. Enjoyment of short-range goals may result in frustration or disorganization with long-range objectives.
12. Inability to avoid others’ needs may result in sidetracking employer’s directions.
13. May have a hard time discerning what is really on their heart to do for themselves.

## Biblical Examples for Further Reading:

- Martha – Luke 10:38-42 and John 11:1-40 and 12:2
- Phoebe – Romans 16:1-2
- Stephen – Acts 6:1-15 and 7:1-60
- Philip (the “*Deacon*”) – John 1:43-45; 6:5-7 and 12:21-22; Acts 6:5; 8:5-40 and 21:8-9
- Onesimus – Colossians 4:9
- Peter’s Mother-in-law – Matthew 8:14-15
- Jacob – Genesis, chapter 25 through 30

# The Gift of Teaching

**Teaching:** *didasko*: to give instruction. (didactic)

**Motivation:** Clarifying truth; to search out and validate truth which has been presented.

**Instructions on use:** “If it is teaching, let him teach.” Rom. 12:7.

## **Characteristics:**

1. The belief that their gift is foundational to other gifts.
2. An emphasis on the accuracy of words.
3. A testing of the knowledge of those who teach them.
4. A delight in research in order to validate truth.
5. The validating of new information by established systems of truth.
6. The presentation of truth in a systematic sequence.
7. An avoidance of illustrations from non-Biblical sources.
8. A resistance to Scriptural illustrations out of context.
9. A greater joy in researching truth than presenting it.

## **Misunderstandings:**

1. The emphasis on the accuracy of Scriptural interpretation may appear to neglect its practical application.
2. The research of others may appear to be dependent on more than the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.
3. The use of knowledge in testing others may appear to be pride of learning.
4. The concern to impart details of research may appear to be unnecessary to those listening (i.e. boring.)
5. The need to be objective in research may appear to lack warmth and feeling when speaking.

## **Biblical Examples for Further Reading:**

- Apollos – Acts 18:24-28 and 1 Corinthians 3:6
- Aquila and Priscilla – Acts 18:1-3; Romans 16:3-5 1 Corinthians 16:19 and 2 Timothy 4:19
- Timothy – 1 & 2 Timothy; Acts 16:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:17 and 16:10-11
- Thomas – John 20:24-28
- Luke – The Gospels of Luke and Acts

# The Gift of Exhortation

**Exhortation:** *paraklesis*: *para* = the side; *kaleo* = to call. “to call to the side; to entreat; to urge one to pursue some course of conduct, always looking to the future rather than the past.”

**Motivation:** to stimulate the faith of others and guide them toward spiritual maturity.

**Instructions on use:** “If it is encouraging, let him encourage.” Rom. 12:8.

## **Characteristics:**

1. A desire to visualize specific achievement and prescribe precise steps of action.
2. A tendency to avoid systems of information which lack practical application.
3. The ability to see how tribulation can produce new levels of maturity.
4. A dependence on visible acceptance when speaking to individuals or groups.
5. The discovery of insights from human experience which can be validated and amplified in Scripture.
6. An enjoyment with those eager to follow steps of action.
7. A grief when teaching is not accompanied by practical steps of action.
8. A delight in personal conferences that result in new insights.

## **Misunderstandings:**

1. The emphasis on steps of action may appear to oversimplify the problem.
2. The urgency in giving steps of action may appear as having overconfidence in them.
3. The desire to win non-Christians through living examples may appear as a lack of interest in personal evangelism.
4. The use of Scripture for practical application may appear to take it out of context.
5. The emphasis on steps of action may appear to disregard the feelings of those being counseled.

## **Biblical Examples for Further Reading:**

- Joseph – Acts 4:36
- Barnabas – Acts 11:22-26
- Silas – Acts 15:2-40; 16:25; 17, verses 4 and 10-15; and 1 Peter 5:12
- Titus – 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7: verses 6 and 13-14 and 8:6-23
- Galatians 2:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:10 and the book of Titus
- Aaron – Book of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers

# The Gift of Giving

**Giving:** *metadidomi*: *meta* = with; *didomi* = give. “to give a share of, (not the whole amount ) impart.”

**Motivation:** to entrust personal assets to others for the furtherance of their ministry.

**Instructions on use:** “If it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously.” Rom. 12:8. “Generously” or “with simplicity,” *haplotes*: sincerity, singleness of heart (not with mixed-motive), graciously and liberally.

## Characteristics:

1. An ability to make wise purchases and investments.
2. A desire to give quietly to effective projects or ministries.
3. An attempt to use his giving to motivate others to give.
4. An alertness to valid needs which he fears others might overlook.
5. An enjoyment in meeting needs without the pressure of appeals.
6. A joy when his gift is an answer to specific prayer.
7. A dependency on partner’s counsel to confirm the amount of a gift.
8. A desire to feel a part of the work or person to whom he gives.
9. A joy in giving a significant percentage of the project, but not the entire amount, regardless of whether the project is large or small.

## Misunderstandings:

1. The need to deal with large sums of money may appear to imply a love of money.
2. The desire to increase the effectiveness of a ministry through his gift may appear as an attempt to control the work or person.
3. The attempt to encourage others to give may appear as a lack of generosity and unnecessary pressure.
4. The lack of response to pressure appeals may also appear as a lack of generosity.
5. The personal frugality by which he lives may appear to friends and relatives as selfishness in not meeting their wants.

## Biblical Examples for Further Reading:

- Dorcas – Acts 9:36-42
- Cornelius – Acts 10:1-31
- Epaphras – Colossians 1:7; 4:12 and Philemon 23
- Paul – Romans 1:1-20 and Acts, chapters 9 through 28
- Lydia – Acts 16:14 and 40
- Zacchaeus – Luke 19:1-10
- Abraham – Genesis, chapters 13 and 14



# The Gift of Leadership

**Leadership:** *proistemi*: “to stand before,” to lead, attend to (indicating care and diligence.)

**Motivation:** to coordinate the activities of others for the achievement of common goals.

**Instructions on use:** “If it is leadership, let him govern diligently.” Rom. 12:8. “Diligently”: *spoude*: earnestness, care, zeal and haste.

## **Characteristics:**

1. An ability to see the overall picture and to clarify long-range goals.
2. A motivation to organize that for which he is responsible.
3. A desire to complete tasks as quickly as possible.
4. An awareness of the resources available to complete a task.
5. An ability to know what can or cannot be delegated.
6. A tendency to stand on the sidelines until those in charge turn over responsibility to him.
7. A tendency to assume responsibility if no structured leadership exists.
8. A willingness to endure reaction from workers in order to accomplish the ultimate task.
9. A fulfillment in seeing all the pieces coming together and others enjoying the finished products.
10. A desire to move onto a new challenge when a previous task is fully completed.

## **Misunderstandings:**

1. The ability to delegate responsibility may appear as laziness in avoiding work.
2. The willingness to endure reaction may appear as callousness.
3. The neglect in explaining why tasks must be done may prompt workers to feel they are being misused.
4. The viewing of people as resources may appear that projects are more important than people.
5. The desire to complete tasks swiftly may appear to be insensitivity to the schedule, weariness, or priorities of workers.

## **Biblical Examples for Further Reading:**

- Joseph – Genesis, chapters 30 through 40
- Nehemiah – Nehemiah, chapters 1 through 7
- Deborah – Judges, chapter 4 and 5
- David – 1 Samuel, chapters 16 through 31; 1 Kings, chapters 1 and 2;
- 1 Chronicles 10:13 and 29:30
- Annas – Luke 3:2; John 18:13-24 and Acts 4:5-6
- James, the brother of Jesus – Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Acts 12:17; 15:13 and 21:18;
- 1 Corinthians 15:7 and Galatians 1:19 with 2:9.
- Jairus – Matthew 9:18; Mark 5:22-43 and Luke 8:41-45

# The Gift of Mercy

**Mercy:** *eleeo*: to feel sympathy with the misery of another.

**Motivation:** to identify with and comfort those in distress.

**Instructions on use:** “If it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.” Rom. 12:8. “cheerfully”:  
*hilarotes*: “that joyousness that is ready to do anything to help the hurt,” hilarity.

## **Characteristics:**

1. The ability to feel an atmosphere of joy or distress in an individual or group.
2. An attraction to and an understanding of people who are in distress.
3. A desire to remove hurts and bring healing to others.
4. A greater concern for *mental* distress than physical distress.
5. An avoidance of firmness unless he sees how it will bring benefit.
6. A sensitivity to words and actions which will hurt other people.
7. An ability to discern sincere motives in other people.
8. An enjoyment and unity with those who are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.
9. A closing of his spirit to those who are insincere or insensitive.

## **Misunderstandings:**

1. The avoidance of firmness may appear to be weakness and indecisiveness.
2. The sensitivity to the Spirit and feelings of others may cause some to feel he is guided by emotions rather than logic.
3. The attraction and understanding of those in distress may be misinterpreted by those of the opposite sex.
4. The sensitivity to words and actions which cause hurts may appear to be taking up another’s offense.
5. The ability to detect insincere motives may cause some to feel he is hard to get to know.

## **Biblical Examples for Further Reading:**

- The Good Samaritan – Luke 10:30-35
- Ananias – Acts 9:10-19
- Boaz – The Book of Ruth
- Joseph (the “legal” father of Jesus) – Matthew 1:16-24; 2:13; Luke 1:27; 2:4-5; 3:23; 4:22; John 1:45 and 6:42
- Rachel – Genesis, chapter 29 through 31, 35, 46 and 48:7; Ruth 4:11; 1 Samuel 10:2; Jeremiah 31:15
- Rebekah – Genesis 22:23; 24:29; 35:8; 49:31

# Other Considerations of Spiritual Gifts

- Each Christian is to exercise *all* of the spiritual gifts on a regular basis. Scripture is full of injunctions for all of us to speak God's word, serve others, teach, encourage, give, lead and show mercy. So we can never say: "I'm sorry, I can't serve those in need (or give or show mercy etc) because my spiritual gift is something else."
- Having said that, we should never try to act as though our spiritual gift were other than it is. We shouldn't try to copy another person's gift.
- The above two statements may sound contradictory. However, they really aren't. the solution is we need to look at all ministry opportunities through the eyes of my spiritual gift. For example, if your spiritual gift is serving, and you are asked to teach a class, rather than pretend you have the motivation of a teacher to research and tell others about the exciting details of your study, see the call to teach as an opportunity to serve people in the class by giving them good information. That is motivating!
- As you discern your spiritual gift, look for what brings the most *joy* for you and others.
- Since spiritual gifts are gifts of the Holy Spirit, they only are fully operable to build up the body of Christ when we are walking in the Spirit. When we live for self, we will often show exactly the opposite qualities of our spiritual gift. For example, the giver will be selfish, the server will be lazy or self-centered, the leader will be disorganized etc.
- If you are still unsure of your spiritual gift, pray and talk through the document with others and ask them what they think. Or try a gift a see if it fits. Keep pursuing God and walking in the Spirit, He will reveal your gift to you.