

Exploring our Spiritual Gifts

Midweek Seminar, June 2023.

1 Peter 4v10-11

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

A few opening comments...

a) What Spiritual gifts are and aren't

Some things are true for every disciple (like the call to trust Jesus, to devote ourselves to fellowship, God's word and prayer (Acts 2v42-47), to love God and neighbour (Matt 22v36ff), to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4v15),...). We don't get to say "I don't have to do that. That's not my gift."¹

Spiritual gifts are not those. Spiritual Gifts are where Christians are gifted by the Spirit in ways that other Christians aren't, so that we can play a particular part in the body of Christ that others can't do, (or would struggle to do, to enjoy or to be fruitful in).

b) Why we need to be clear on the difference:

We don't want to make a particular Spiritual gifts into something every Christian must have or do (e.g. *The mistake around speaking in tongues at the start of 1 Corinthians 12*). That imposes a requirement on disciples that God doesn't and undermines assurance (because people worry that because they don't have the celebrated gift, they aren't really Christians).

We don't want to suggest something that Jesus asks of every disciple is 'optional' or only for 'gifted' Christians and so avoid or disobey Jesus' call to live or grow as disciples. For example:

- Receiving and passing on the truth about Jesus in a Jesus-like way (Ephesians 4v15) isn't something that Christians can say "that isn't my gift. I'll leave that to other Christians". The challenge is to find out what it looks like to do that as the people we are in the places God has put us.

There are some things that every Christian is called to be and to do in response to Christ being Lord.

Being clear on the difference is made harder because some Spiritual Gifts are heightened experiences of God's general grace to Christians. Some people are gifted at certain kinds of praying (e.g. praying in tongues, praying for healing). But all Christians are granted access to the Father through Jesus, enabled by the Spirit to pray, and are commanded to express their dependence on Jesus by praying.

¹ (They are a matter of obedience, although we are each called to live out the obedience that comes from faith (Romans 1v5) in our God-given circumstances with our unique experiences, gifts, resources, and personalities. It won't always look the same)

(Aside: We might in some circumstances need to bear in mind [the difference between spiritual gifts and gifts that non-Christians have](#). God is generous to non-Christians as well as Christians. People who don't acknowledge Jesus as Lord have God-given abilities, but those aren't the same as Spiritual Gifts. Someone who doesn't recognise Jesus as Lord does not have the Spirit, and isn't directing their gifts for his glory, and therefore isn't empowered by the Spirit in the way that Christians are. For that reason, there are roles in church life that we will not ask people to play until – through seeing their life and godliness – we can be confident that someone knows and is following Jesus in repentance and faith. I don't know if Eric Clapton is a Christian. If he walked in tomorrow and offered to play the guitar in church, we wouldn't invite him to play on a Sunday until we were confident that he was).

c) Lies we believe

“I can do everything”

You can't and you aren't supposed to. (1 Cor 12v11-14)

No Christian has every Spiritual gift.

“I can't do anything”

Everyone can do something. (1 Peter 4v10, 1 Cor 12v7)

No Christian is without a Spiritual gift.

“Believe in yourself”

vs. ‘Believe in the one with infinite resources, almighty power, & perfect wisdom. Who knows you, others and your situation fully, and who is guided by love’.

“I can be/do anything”

vs. “I can be/do what God wants you to do.”

d) Recognise our fears of messing up

We fear that trying new things might spoil Christ's reputation, my reputation, my friendships... God's sovereignty and grace are the antidote to all our fears.

e) Helping each other put our Spiritual gifts to work

Our gifts are ‘**tools not toys**’. We want to use them for the purpose for which God has given them to us (Ephesians 4v7). So as we think about Spiritual gifts, we are thinking about ourselves as stewards of what God has given us. As adopted members of God's family and participants in the family business we want to use all the resources that we have to serve our King Jesus.

We want to help each other to

– **recognise** our spiritual gifts .

– **develop and use them well** in God's service.

– **celebrate** and honour God whenever He works through them! 😊

Some examples of Spiritual Gifts:

Tim Keller in an article “Discerning and Exercising Spiritual Gifts” suggests the wide-ranging spiritual gifts the Bible speaks about can be organised into three broad groups:

Prophetic gifts are abilities based on understanding and articulating truth.

They represent God to others and are marked by boldness and clarity. Biblical examples of these gifts are **evangelism** (Eph. 4:11—*euaggelistês*), or the ability to help people believe; **teaching** (1 Cor. 12:29—*didaskalos*), to be a teacher, or the ability to help people learn; **speaking** (1 Pet. 4:10-11—*lalein*), or the ability to articulate in a compelling way, probably publicly; **knowledge** (1 Cor. 12:8); **discerning spirits** (1 Cor. 12:10), or insight, the ability to tell the authentic from the false; and **prophecy** (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:10—*prophetas*), or unusually dynamic and illumined truth-telling.

Priestly gifts are abilities based on understanding and supplying basic needs.

They represent others to God and the world and are marked by sympathy and sacrifice. Examples of these gifts are **encouraging** (Rom. 12:8—*parakaleo*), a cross between the prophetic and priestly, having to do with motivating and counseling; **helping** (1 Cor. 12:28—*antilempseis*), or the ability to give true assistance without usurping; **healing** (1 Cor. 12:28—*iamaton*), or facilitating emotional and/or physical healing; **pastoring** (Eph. 4:11—*poimenos*), or knowing and providing what a person needs to grow; serving (Rom. 12:7—*diakonia*), or the ability to meet practical needs effectively; **sharing** (Rom. 12:8—*metadidou en aplotati*), or discerning and refreshing others by giving; and **mercy** (Rom. 12:8—*eleon en ilarotati*) or ministry through deep empathy yet joy (literally “mercy in hilarity”).

Kingly gifts are abilities based on understanding direction and group needs.

They represent Christ’s vision to others and are marked by wisdom and practicality. Biblical examples of these gifts are **apostles** (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28—*apostolous*), or a founder gift, plowing new ground; **leadership** (Rom. 12:8—*proistamenos en spouda*, literally “leading in zeal”), or uniting toward a vision; **administration** (1 Cor. 12:28—*kuberneseis*), or the ability to organize a task and get it done; **wisdom** (1 Cor. 12:8—*logos sophias*), or problem-solving, especially for personal or group guidance; and **faith** (1 Cor. 12:9—*pistis*), which is not saving faith, but the ability to envision a goal clearly.

(Perhaps you can recognise some of those gifts in yourself, or in other people? 😊).

Spiritual Gift Inventory

To help us identify, develop and steward our gifts, we're going to try a 'quiz'. It's heavily based on the S-H-A-P-E resources produced by Saddleback Church in the USA. We've shortened it a little, and tweaked it to apply to our circumstances a little more.

f) A few things to be aware of in doing a 'quiz' like this:

To quote Tim Keller again: "Remarkably little appears in the Bible about the process by which someone "discovers" his or her spiritual gifts. Problems abound with almost any prescribed, definitive set of "steps" toward this end" So a few caveats and disclaimers first:

- **We don't always have an accurate view of ourselves.** (We can puff up our abilities or do ourselves down). Try and think about helpful comments people have made to you in the past, or insightful encouragements you've received. [It might help to check your conclusions with a Christian who knows you well, who is discerning, and whom you trust to be honest.²](#)
- **The New Testament pattern is that spiritual gifts are generally identified and tested by the church community.** This kind of exercise begins with the individual, but hopefully doesn't end there. It's designed to prompt and speed up conversations about how we can look after our gifts, test them out, and put them to work to serve Christ. After the 'quiz' there are further questions to think about, and you are encouraged to prayerfully reflect on them with a mature Christian whom you trust.
- **Spiritual gifts aren't unchanging and are sometimes given for 'seasons'** You may have enjoyed a season in the past when you were fruitful and gifted in a particular way. That might not be the case anymore. That can be hard, but it is OK because no particular spiritual gift is what makes you a Christian. Your identity as a Christian comes from being in Christ not from being gifted at something. Recognising a gift might have been given you in the past for a time, might mean being open to stopping something or trying something new. What goes for the past, goes for the future too. These kinds of quizzes inevitably look back at past experiences that have shaped us, or that show evidence of giftings. But God is dynamically active in the world by his Spirit, bringing change in the lives of his people, and through his people. It might be that in the coming season God intends to gift you in a new way to meet a new need or opportunity. [So we want to be open to praying for new gifts, or to recognising ways you have changed, grown or been gifted in the more recent past.](#)
- **Nowhere in the Bible will you find a single exhaustive list of giftings.** Lists are often illustrative – demonstrating the variety of gifts with which God gifts his people at different times and in different places. It's possible that some (or even all) of your spiritual gifts aren't listed here. [Hopefully the breadth of gifts here will mean that for all of us, it will help us identify some gifts that we can develop and use. 😊.](#)

² *If you are a Grandchild, don't ask your Grandma. She is almost probably one of your biggest fans and almost certainly biased!*

A 'quiz' to help you identify your gifts...

<i>Desire/practice/experience/desire...</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Lots</i>
1. You like to organize resources, people and time to accomplish projects. (A)	0	1	2	3
2. You find yourself connecting people's lives to what the Bible says in conversation. (B)	0	1	2	3
3. You enjoy designing brochures and illustrating text. (C)	0	1	2	3
4. You enjoy supporting Christians and helping them to take steps towards maturity in Christ. (D)	0	1	2	3
5. You look forward to opportunities to share Christ with strangers. (E)	0	1	2	3
6. You respond generously and enthusiastically when confronted with real financial needs. (G)	0	1	2	3
7. You like providing practical care or help to people that makes a difference to them. (H)	0	1	2	3
8. You enjoy being God's instrument in making people well, physically, emotionally or spiritually. (Hg)	0	1	2	3
9. You pray often for other people – for their spiritual life and ongoing growth, as well as for their felt needs and presenting circumstances. (I)	0	1	2	3
10. You enjoy hospital/home visiting or similar ways of serving the sick or disadvantaged. (K)	0	1	2	3
11. You enjoy playing an instrument or singing to the glory of God. (M)	0	1	2	3
12. You sometimes prayerfully recall and speak God's word into situations where God's will is unclear or in doubt. (P)	0	1	2	3
13. You like it when people ask you to do things to help them and you do it cheerfully and humbly. (S)	0	1	2	3
14. You enjoy teaching Bible stories and helping other people understand them better. (T)	0	1	2	3
15. You enjoy an ability to communicate with God and others in extraordinary languages. (To)	0	1	2	3
16. You enjoy making visitors or guests feel at home when they visit the church building. (X)	0	1	2	3
17. You enjoy coordinating teams so that others can use their gifts and serve others. (A)	0	1	2	3
18. You find yourself writing notes or and saying things to share Christian encouragements with people who are discouraged, or suffering from shame/addiction. (B)	0	1	2	3

<i>Desire/practice/experience/desire...</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Lots</i>
19. You like doing work that that helps make the world more beautiful. (C)	0	1	2	3
20. You like being involved in the spiritual nurture of others and helping them grow. (D)	0	1	2	3
21. You often find yourself empathising how unchurched people would experience or engage with church activities or teaching, and wishing we were more 'outsider friendly'. (E)	0	1	2	3
22. You enjoy giving time, talent or money to make Gospel ministry possible because you want to see the more people grow to know Jesus better. (G)	0	1	2	3
23. You enjoy doing office work such as typing, filing, and answering phones. (H)	0	1	2	3
24. You are humbled to think that God has worked through you in the past to bring real healing into the lives of suffering people. (Hg)	0	1	2	3
25. You really enjoy times set aside for extended prayer, both in your personal devotions and with others. (I)	0	1	2	3
26. You find yourself reaching out to support the homeless, maringalised or people with visible (mental) health challenges when you meet them (in the church building). (K)	0	1	2	3
27. You enjoy taking part in a church or other community musical group, (and others have commented you are good at it) (M)	0	1	2	3
28. You find it easy to take a meaningful stand for the truth when others seem to ignore it. (P)	0	1	2	3
29. You enjoy doing fix-it jobs around the church, or working on garden and outside maintenance. (S)	0	1	2	3
30. You like helping other people learn new truths from the Bible. (T)	0	1	2	3
31. You enjoy speaking to God in an unknown but very expressive language. (To)	0	1	2	3
32. You find yourself moving towards people who aren't like you, and showing an interest in them. (X)	0	1	2	3
33. You enjoy planning programs or events to enable church life and ministry to flourish. (A)	0	1	2	3
34. When other Christians heads go down, you find yourself quick to speak about the hope the gospel gives, and to raise other people thoughts to Jesus. (B)	0	1	2	3

<i>Desire/practice/experience/desire...</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Lots</i>
35. You find great joy in making or repairing things. (C)	0	1	2	3
36. You find people often open up to you about (spiritual) challenges, and look to you for Biblical advice. (D)	0	1	2	3
37. You enjoy introducing non-Christians to Jesus Christ, and actively pray and look for opportunities to do that. (E)	0	1	2	3
38. You find you are good at making and/or looking after money, and enjoy giving it to the church and other Christian projects. (G)	0	1	2	3
39. You frequently find yourself meeting the practical needs of individuals during the week. (H)	0	1	2	3
40. You sometimes sense God's leading to lay hands on a person and pray for them because God is going to heal them. (Hg)	0	1	2	3
41. You often feel a burden to pray persistently for particular needs or issues connected to church life, mission or God's world. (I)	0	1	2	3
42. You often find yourself visiting people when they are sick or housebound to care for them. (K)	0	1	2	3
43. You find your heart and mind particularly engaged to worship through songs. (M)	0	1	2	3
44. You have sometimes been given insight to see and be convicted of 'blindspots' that a group of people or culture has. (e.g. systemic 'sins' or shortcomings that others don't see). (P)	0	1	2	3
45. You often find yourself running errands for people, or checking that they have what they need. (S)	0	1	2	3
46. You enjoy the challenge of teaching children or adults so that their view of Jesus grows bigger. (T)	0	1	2	3
47. Occasionally you've had your prayers (spoken in an extraordinary language) interpreted into English (or another widely spoken language) so that other people could benefit from them. (To)	0	1	2	3
48. You (would) like to spend time with people from other cultures or backgrounds. (X)	0	1	2	3
49. You like converting goals and aims into concrete steps processes that 'make things happen'. (A)	0	1	2	3
50. You enjoy encouraging people with truths about God and his promises when they are discouraged. (B)	0	1	2	3

<i>Desire/practice/experience/desire...</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Lots</i>
51. You (would) like to see gospel truth communicated visually and effectively. (C)	0	1	2	3
52. When you read the Bible, you often think how it applies to other people, and how you might pass on what God has said to you. (D)	0	1	2	3
53. You like to help other Christians reach their non-Christian friends (e.g. by fielding questions from those friends, or helping them prepare to share a 'piece of the gospel jigsaw'). (E)	0	1	2	3
54. You find you can hold your possessions with an open hand, and are quick to share or give away what you have. (G)	0	1	2	3
55. You like helping as part of a team, ideally 'behind the scenes' in a way that helps things happen, but without being in the spotlight. (H)	0	1	2	3
56. You regularly feel a burden to pray for the sick – for their wholeness and flourishing. (Hg)	0	1	2	3
57. You are very aware that your prayers are heard by God and that He acts on them. (I)	0	1	2	3
58. You have experience of serving through different mercy ministries bringing care to the vulnerable (or would like to serve in that way). You find yourself praying for those kinds of ministries. (K)	0	1	2	3
59. You like to give other people enjoyment by doing something musical. (M)	0	1	2	3
60. You are bold in speaking up for the ways of God to challenge worldly injustice or immorality. (P)	0	1	2	3
61. You like doing the 'small' practical things around the church building that other people might not notice or do. (S)	0	1	2	3
62. You seem able to gently correct people's misunderstandings of God's word with grace and clarity. (T)	0	1	2	3
63. You have sometimes been gifted to interpret another Christian's prayers so they could benefit others. (To)	0	1	2	3
64. You enjoy hosting people in your home and/or sharing your time/things with them. (X)	0	1	2	3

Totalling up the 'scores' you gave to different gifts

Each question had a letter in brackets at the end. Add up the 'scores' you gave for each of your answers grouped by the letter in brackets at the end. *(There should be four scores for each letter code).*

Letter Code	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Total	Area Gifting
A						Administration
B						Encouragement & Building up
C						Artistry & Craftsmanship
D						Discipling
E						Evangelism
G						Giving
H						Helps
Hg						Healing
I						Interceding in Prayer
K						Mercy Ministry
M						Music
P						Prophecy
S						Serving
T						Teaching
To						Tongues
X						Hospitality

What are the three or four categories that you gave the highest combined score to?

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Remember this is a human tool, not an infallible guide for how God has gifted you! 😊

Reflecting more on your giftings...

There is a list on the next two pages briefly describing each area of gifting. *(n.b. These are brief descriptions of just some spiritual gifts the Bible talks about. It is not a complete or exhaustive list).*

Have a look at the descriptions for the four categories that you gave the highest combined score to.

- **Are you broadly happy that some or all of these are a fair indication of how God has gifted you?**
 - **Are you surprised by the areas that you gave the highest combined scores to?**
 - **Are there any others you think belong on your list? (Or higher up on it?)**
(Either because the quiz under-emphasised them, because you think you have a new gift which you haven't had much opportunity to express yet, or because some of your gifts don't appear in the summary list,...)
 - **Would people who know you well agree with what is here?**
 - **Are any of them similar or 'bunched together' in ways that complement each other or that fit well with particular roles or responsibilities?**

g) So what now?

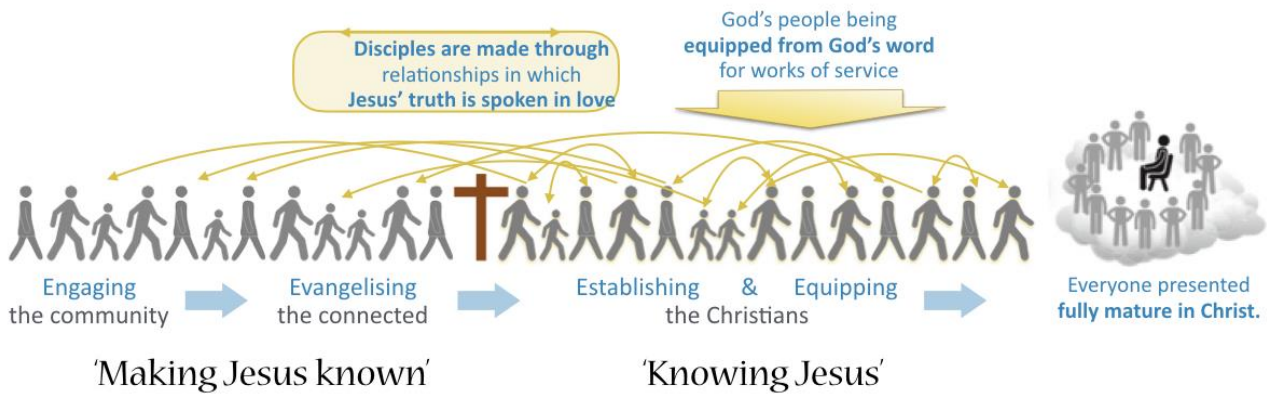
It's great to be able to answer these three big questions, being open to how God might have arranged things so that our answers fit in some way into all three.

- **What are you gifted at?**
- **What do you enjoy?**
- **What are the presenting needs?**

It is likely that the gifts you have highlighted are areas where you already think you are able and that you already enjoy doing. Are there any where that is not the case?

- **Matching up your gifts with needs and opportunities**
 - Are there opportunities you see in the life and ministry of the church family that would enable you to put your spiritual gifts to work?
 - Who could help you identify those?
 - Are there things you could stop doing in order to create time and energy to put your gifts to make the most of a gift you have?

Ephesians 4v11-12: Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up... attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.



- **What equipping or support would help you to develop and use your gifts?**
 - Are there was you can be helped to clarify what your gift is? Or training/coaching to help you use it well?
 - (Are there other people in the church family who have developed and practiced using the same gift? How could you learn from them?)
 - Who could you talk to to get the help you need?

- **Are there any gifts that you would like to receive and put to work?**
Having examined your motives, perhaps pray and ask God for that gift?

Drawing the threads together

What do you want to do or to go away and think/pray about on the back of these evening?

Who can continue to support you from here?

How can you pray for yourself and church family life, ministry and mission as we close?

Summary description of giftings

n.b. These are brief descriptions of some spiritual gifts the Bible talks about. It is not a complete or exhaustive list.

(A) Administration: The particular gift to be plan and steer process through to completion. The special ability to plan and execute procedures that increase the church's organizational effectiveness. *(An example can be found in Acts 15).*

(B) Encouragement & Building up: The particular ability to comfort and strengthen others spiritually with God's truth in timely ways. (e.g. Acts 9:26-30).

(C) Artistry & Craftsmanship: The particular gift to be able to visualise and create what will look good or communicate visually. (See Exodus 31:3-11), or to create and repair physical objects. (e.g. 2 Chronicles 34:9-13).

(D) Discipling & Pastoring: The special ability to guide, nurture, and care for individuals and groups in the church so that they grow in their faith and spiritual maturity. (e.g. 1 Peter 5:1-9).

(E) Evangelism: The pronounced gift of being able to share the gospel with non-Christians (and equip and enthuse others Christians to do the same) in a way that leads to a new commitment to Christ. (e.g. Ephesians 4:11ff. Philip in Acts 8:1-7).

(G) Giving: The pronounced gift of contributing significant material wealth, time, or talents to support gospel ministry. People with this gift seem to be able to create resources more easily than others and contribute them unselfishly. (2 Corinthians 8:1-7).

(H) Helps: The particular gift of being able to assist others in much needed practical ways. Often this gift complements other ministries and makes them more effective. (e.g. Romans 16:1-2).

(Hg) Healing: The particular gift of being a channel of God's power to restore human brokenness and relieve suffering. (e.g Acts 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 12:27-30).

(I) Interceding in Prayer: This is the particular gift of interceding faithfully and persistently before God for the needs of people and ministries. Often these "prayer warriors" see God answering prayer in exceptional ways. (e.g. Colossians 4:12).

(K) Mercy: The pronounced ability to express deep concern and loving compassion towards people who are discouraged, mistreated or marginalised. Mercy is the gift that finds a way to minister appropriately to people who suffer. (e.g. Acts 9:36 or Romans 15:1).

(M) Musical: The ability to use one's voice or an instrument to bring glory to God and communicate effectively with people. (e.g. 1 Chronicles 16:41-42)

(P) Prophecy: The special ability to proclaim and stand for God's truth in the face of confusion or disobedience and in a way that leads to correction, repentance or encouragement. (e.g. Acts 11:27-30, 21:7-12).

(S) Serving: This pronounced ability to meet the physical and practical needs of people inside or outside of the church. The gift of service meets those needs with humility and takes joy in being helpful to others. (Acts 6:1-6).

(T) Teaching: The ability to teach, train, and encourage Christians in the way of Christ with clarity and faithfulness to the Bible. (e.g. John 21:15-17, 1 Timothy 4:6,11 and 5:17).

(To) Tongues: The particular ability to communicate effectively with God or others in a language not learned in conventional ways. Tongues may be a gift for personal encouragement or it may be a gift for the building up of the whole church (when interpreted). (e.g. Acts 2:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-19)

(X) Hospitality: The special ability to open one's home to strangers in a way that makes them feel comfortable and to make visitors to church events feel welcome and appreciated. (e.g. Acts 16:15).