

# Spiritual Gift Definitions

## Some General Information About Spiritual Gifts

- All the gifts are for today when used in the proper order and context.
- Spiritual gifts are given for building up the Body, not for personal gain or glory.
- The proof of our salvation does not depend on the demonstration of any gift.
- Every believer receives at least one gift and often has more than one.
- The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts as He wills. We cannot earn a gift.
- There is a difference between the spiritual gifts of pastor and apostle and the offices or roles of pastor and apostle.

**The Bible does not lock us into tight restrictions as to the number of spiritual gifts or even their definitions. This list is not meant to be exhaustive or the only way that the gifts are defined. The four major lists of gifts are found in Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 27-31, and Ephesians 4:11-12 and 1 Peter 4:9-11, but there are other passages that mention or illustrate gifts not included in these lists.**

- 1. Prophecy** *1 Corinthians 14:3, Acts 2:10-11 (example)*  
The ability to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people. It is not always a message about the future. The message is always in agreement with the Bible and speaks God's heart about certain situations, such as the moral and spiritual decay of people. A person with this gift demonstrates moral boldness and uncompromising commitment to social and spiritual righteousness.
- 2. Evangelism** *Acts 8:26-40 (example), Ephesians 4:11-14*  
The ability to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to unbelievers in a positive, non-threatening way. This person feels an affinity with lost people and has an intuitive sense about how to stir the hunger for God. The ability to sense opportunities to share Christ and lead people to respond with faith.
- 3. Discernment** *1 John 4:1-6, Acts 16:16-22 (example)*  
The ability to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error and to give an immediate evaluation based on God's Word. The ability to discern whether the source of an experience is Satan, self, or God's Spirit.
- 4. Apostle** *Romans 15:20*  
The ability to start new churches and oversee their development. They have a desire to extend the work of the church, opening fields to the gospel, and overseeing larger sections of the Body of Christ. There is a difference between the office of Apostle (only held by the 12 Apostles) and the gift.
- 5. Teaching** *Ephesians 4:12-13, Acts 18:24-28 (example)*  
The ability to educate God's people by clearly explaining and applying the Bible in a way that causes them to learn. The ability to equip and train other believers for ministry. Different from the ability to teach because the students supernaturally learn more than

the teacher planned on teaching. May use a variety of methods such as music, artistic expression, drama, or writing.

- 6. Encouragement/ Exhortation**    *Act 14:22 (example), Romans 12:8*  
The ability to motivate God's people to **apply and act** on biblical principles, especially when they are discouraged or wavering in their faith. The ability to comfort, console, counsel, bring out the best in others and challenge them to develop their potential. Exhortation literally means to call aside for the purpose of making an appeal.
- 7. Wisdom**    *1 Corinthians 2:1, 6-16*  
The ability to understand God's perspective on life situations and share those insights in a simple, understandable way. The ability to explain what to do and how to do it. Spiritual intuition in problem solving. Having a sense of divine direction.
- 8. Service**    *Acts 6:1-7, Romans 12:7*  
The ability to recognize unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work, and take the initiative to provide practical assistance cheerfully and without a need for recognition. Often a "behind the scenes" person who has specific skills they use to serve the Body or a specific individual with sustained commitment.
- 9. Helps**    *1 Corinthians 12:28, Philippians 2:25 (example)*  
The ability to respond quickly to special or crisis situations where help is unexpectedly required by providing physical help, comfort or aid, especially to the needy.
- 10. Pastoring/Shepherding**    *John 10:1-18 (example), 1 Peter 5:2-4*  
The ability to care for the spiritual needs of a group of believers and equip them for ministry. The ability to nurture a small group in spiritual growth and assume responsibility for their welfare. There is a difference between the office of pastor and gift of pastoring/shepherding.
- 11. Giving**    *2 Corinthians 8:1-7 (example), Romans 12:8*  
The ability to generously and joyfully contribute material resources and/or money beyond the 10% tithe so that the Body may grow and be strengthened. The ability to earn and manage money so it may be given to support the ministry of others.
- 12. Healing**    *James 5:14-16, Acts 3:1-10 (example)*  
The ability to serve as human vessels through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore physical, emotional, or mental health apart from the use of natural means. May include divinely assisted application of medical means of treatment.
- 13. Tongues**    *1 Corinthians 14:13-19, Mark 16:17 (example)*  
The ability to speak to God in a language they have never learned (often as a "prayer language") and/or to receive and communicate an immediate message from God to His people in a language they have never learned, such as at Pentecost. The language may or may not be identifiable.
- 14. Interpretation of Tongues**    *1 Corinthians 14:26-28*  
The ability to make known in their language the message of one who speaks in tongues. Speaking in tongues only edifies public worship when it is interpreted.
- 15. Miracles**    *Acts 9:36-42, Mark 11:23-24*  
The ability to serve as a human vessel through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by others to have altered the ordinary course of nature, such as averting a tornado or raising someone from the dead.

16. **Mercy** *Romans 12:8, Matthew 25:34-40 (example)*  
The ability to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds which reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.
17. **Leadership** *Hebrews 13:7+17, Acts 15:7-11 (example)*  
The ability to clarify and communicate the purpose and direction ("vision") of a ministry in a way that attracts others to get involved. The ability to motivate others by example to work together in accomplishing a ministry goal. The clarification and/or motivation may come through many different styles of leadership: planning, shepherding, casting vision, managing, team building, or re-engineering.
18. **Administration/Organization** *Acts 6:1-7 (example), 1 Corinthians 14:40*  
The ability to understand the goals of a Body and organize and manage people, resources, and time to accomplish those goals effectively. The ability to coordinate many details and execute the plans of leadership. The ability to recognize the gifts of others and recruit them to a ministry.
19. **Faith** *1 Corinthians 12:9, Romans 4:18-21 (example)*  
The ability to trust God for what cannot be seen and to act on God's promise, regardless of what the circumstances indicate. The willingness to risk failure in pursuit of a God-given vision, expecting God to handle the obstacles.
20. **Knowledge** *Acts 18:24-28 (example), 1 Corinthians 12:28*  
The ability to discover, collect, analyze, and organize information that is vital to individual believers or the entire church family. The ability to comprehend a large amount of information and provide it when needed for effective decision-making.
21. **Voluntary Poverty** *Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-37 (examples)*  
The ability to renounce material comfort and luxury and adapt a personal life-style equivalent to those living at the poverty level in a given society in order to serve God more effectively.

***The following are not listed specifically in the lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible, but are referred to by example and may be considered spiritual gifts as well:***

22. **Craftsmanship** *Ex. 31:1-5, examples: 2 Sam. 5:11, Acts 9:39*  
The special ability that God gives to certain members of the body to use hands and minds to creatively design and construct items (can be wood, cloth, painting, metal working, glass, etc.) to be used for ministry.
23. **Music** *Ps. 33:1-3, Col. 3:16, examples: Deut. 31:19-22, 1 Sam. 16:14-23*  
The special ability that God gives to certain members of the body to play a musical instrument or use their voices in the singing of praises and joy to the Lord, thus enhancing the worship experience of the local congregation.
24. **Creative Communication** *Jeremiah 18:1-6, examples: 11 Sam. 6:14-15, life of Hosea*  
The special ability that God gives to certain members of the body to communicate God's truth through a variety of art forms such as drama, dance, photography, creative writing, communication design.
25. **Hospitality** *Acts 16:14-15 (example), Romans 12:9-13*  
The ability to make others, especially strangers, feel warmly welcomed, accepted and comfortable in the church family. The ability to coordinate factors that promote fellowship.

- 26. Celibacy**                      ***Matthew 19:10-12, I Corinthians 7:7-8***  
The ability and desire to remain single for life and enjoy it without suffering undue sexual temptations.
- 27. Exorcism**                      ***Matthew 12:22-32 (example)***  
The ability to cast out demons and evil spirits.
- 28. Intercession**                      ***Colossians 1:9-12 (example), James 5:14-16***  
The ability to pray for the needs of others in the church family over extended periods of time on a regular basis and to see frequent and specific answers to their prayers to a degree much greater than that which is experienced by the average Christian.
- 29. Missions**                      ***1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Acts 13:2-3***  
The ability to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture. Connotes an inner compulsion to lead the whole world to an understanding of Jesus Christ. Has a love for other cultures.