

REVIVALIST MINISTRIES

# WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

NELSON PAINTER



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# CULTIVATE REVIVAL BIBLE STUDY SERIES

A Bible study series designed  
to cultivate revival  
and to grow stronger, together.



Nelson Painter, along with his wife Greta are the founders and directors of Revivalist Ministries. Together they are focused on raising up passionate worshipers who take hold of their true identity and pursue intimacy with God above all else. They reside in North Carolina with their son and daughter.





WEEK 1

# WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

For as we have many members in one body,  
but all the members do not have the same function,  
so we, being many, are one body in Christ,  
and individually members of one another.

### **ROMANS 12:4-5**

As we look into a new year, we as a ministry, are looking forward to exploring the topic of spiritual gifts. This entire year we will focus on covering what each specific gift is, misconceptions about that gift and what it looks like in the life of a Believer. By this, we hope to encourage or perhaps unlock one of the most vital aspects of the Christian faith, and God's true intent when He established these gifts so long ago.

As each series is unpacked, we will see examples, stories and illustrations that will bring these gifts to light, yet initially there is a foundation that needs to be laid. Unfortunately, these gifts are not only the most vital, but are likely the most controversial teachings in Scripture. The global church has differing interpretations as to whether these gifts are still in existence today, or how they look in a real life setting. In this first series, we want to explore the foundation of what the Bible says, and what we can learn from its context; thus, establishing a base that our other series will stand on.

Spiritual gifts are given to the Believer to better build up the church, evangelize to the lost and glorify God above all else. There are several places in Scripture that list spiritual gifts. Perhaps you have heard of a few of them before: administration, evangelism, discernment, exhortation, apostle, faith, helps, healings, giving, leadership, mercy, knowledge, serving, speaking in tongues, teaching, shepherding, wisdom, and prophecy. As you look at this list you may remember a time that you used one of these gifts, or know someone who operates in one of them. Perhaps you find that there are gifts that you are stronger in than another.

er. Think of a moment where you utilized one of these gifts to help others. Do you serve in your church? Have you ever shared the Gospel with someone? Have you ever donated items to someone who didn't have anything? You were utilizing one of the gifts that the Godhead has given to the Believer.

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The ultimate goal in utilizing these gifts is to help others develop their relationship with God.

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Keep in mind that the ultimate goal in utilizing these gifts is to help others develop their relationship with God; and we, by using the gifts, draw closer to Him as well. There are several places in Scripture that spiritual gifts are listed, and each brings about a different reason or context for which the gift is given.

- **Romans 12:6-8:** In this passage, Paul lists different gifts and associates them with specific actions: prophesying in proportion to one's faith; serving; teaching; encouraging; giving generously; leading diligently; showing mercy cheerfully.
- **Ephesians 4:11-13:** This text explains that Christ gave gifts to people, appointing some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.
- **1 Peter 4:10-11:** Peter talks about using whatever gift one has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. He mentions speaking and serving as broad categories of gifts.
- **1 Corinthians 14:1-40:** While primarily focusing on the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues, this chapter provides guidance on how these gifts should be used within the church to ensure order and edification.

Each of these gifts are represented in one of the three passages above (1 Peter 4 does not list specific gifts.) With them is a definition that best describes that specific gift.

### **SPIRITUAL GIFTS:**

#### **Romans 12 (7 Gifts)**

- **Prophecy:** proclaiming the Word of God with boldness.
- **Service/Helps:** helping those in need of practical assistance.
- **Teaching:** instructing in truths and doctrines of God's Word.
- **Exhortation:** enthusiastic about the Lord and motivates others.
- **Giving:** gives freely and with joy to further His Kingdom.
- **Leadership:** a divine ability to cast vision, set goals, and direct others to accomplish it.
- **Mercy:** shows acts of compassion.

#### **1 Corinthians 12 (9 Gifts)**

- **Wisdom:** supernaturally deposited information about a decision or direction.
- **Knowledge:** supernaturally deposited information about a person, situation, or solution.
- **Faith:** supernatural trust in God to fulfill His plan.
- **Gifts of Healing:** supernatural recovery of the body, soul or spirit.
- **Working of Miracles:** supernatural events unrelated to healing.
- **Prophecy:** proclaiming a supernaturally deposited word with boldness.
- **Discernment:** recognizing the spirit/motivation behind a decision or reaction.
- **Speaking in Tongues:** speaking in an unfamiliar language.
- **Interpretation of Tongues:** the translation of tongues in a public setting.
- **Administration:** helping with long term goals and remaining on task.

#### **Ephesians 4 (5 Gifts)**

- **Apostle:** this person is a motivator, church planter and looks beyond the walls.
- **Prophet:** this person proclaims the Word of God with boldness.
- **Evangelist:** this person is outreach focused, missionaries leading others to Christ.
- **Shepherd:** looking out for the spiritual welfare of others.
- **Teacher:** instructing in truths and doctrines of God's Word.



As we continue to dive deeper into the gifts and how they operate, allow God to reveal to you the gifts that He supernaturally deposited into the fabric of your being. We can all develop spiritual gifts in our lives, but without question, the Lord has developed a tendency within you to lean on certain gifts to build His Kingdom.

## THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

Describe a moment where you utilized one of these gifts to help others:\_\_\_\_\_

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Do you serve in your church? In what way or in what department?\_\_\_\_\_

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A rustic brick barn with a red roof and a gabled structure, set against a dramatic sky with large, white, billowing clouds. The barn is made of weathered bricks and has a small window with a diamond-patterned leaded glass. The foreground is filled with tall, golden grasses. In the background, there are more green fields and a wooden fence.

WEEK 2

# WHO ARE THEY FOR?

But to each one of us grace was given according  
to the measure of Christ's gift.

## EPHESIANS 4:7

What is the difference between these lists? Who are they for? As we continue to explore the spiritual gifts that we find throughout Scripture, let us turn our attention to these sections of Scripture and what we can learn from the context in which they are mentioned. Each of these lists of gifts can be distinguished by the One that gives the gifts.

The list of gifts mentioned in Romans 12 are gifts from **God the Father**. “In His grace, **God** has given us **different gifts for doing certain things well**. So if **God** has given you **the ability to prophesy**, speak out with as much faith as **God** has given you. If your gift is **servicing others**, serve them well. If you are a **teacher**, teach well. If your gift is to **encourage others**, be encouraging. If it is **giving**, give generously. If **God** has given you **leadership ability**, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for **showing kindness/mercy** to others, do it gladly.” Romans 12:6-8. This section of Scripture is grounded in the context of giving your bodies as a, “living sacrifice,” (Rom. 12:1). These gifts are setting the tone that we as children of God should utilize these gifts to give of ourselves sacrificially to the agenda of our Heavenly Father. We are to be servants not solutions.

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Each of these lists of gifts can be distinguished by the One that gives the gifts.

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The list of gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 are gifts from **the Holy Spirit**. “A **spiritual gift** is given to each of us so we can help each other... to one there is given through **the Spirit** a message of **wisdom**, to another a message of **knowledge** by means of the **same Spirit**, to another **faith** by the **same Spirit**, to another gifts of **healing** by that **one Spirit**,

to 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**. All of these are the work of one and the **same Spirit**, and He distributes them to each one, just as He determines.” 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. All of these gifts that are listed above center around the Holy Spirit’s empowerment. The Holy Spirit is the one who distributes these gifts.

The list of gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4 are gifts from **Christ the Son**. “Now these are the gifts **Christ** gave to the church: the **apostles**, the **prophets**, the **evangelists**, and the **shepherds** and **teachers**. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do His work and build up the church, the **body of Christ...**” Ephesians 4:11-12. Take note that these gifts were given to the church by Christ. God the Father nor the Holy Spirit are mentioned in relation to these gifts, but Christ is. In addition to this, it is important to mention that these gifts are not “motivational gifts,” as seen in Romans 12, nor are they “manifestation gifts,” as we see in 1 Corinthians 12. They are not “motivations” or “manifestations” they are “people”.

In the first verse of this chapter it makes mention of the calling of every believer, and in the seventh verse it says, “He has given each one of us a special gift [grace] through the generosity of Christ. So we all have a calling, but each one has been given a special grace gift. This is an important distinction between what many of us see in the American church. Some operate in a 5-fold ministry style of leadership and others don’t, but rarely do we hear teaching that everyone carries one of these gifts. So we all have been called and we all have been given a special gift; either an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a shepherd, or a teacher.

This is a tremendous amount of information to take in one sitting, so I have created a graph in an attempt to make things more palatable.

	<b>Romans 12</b>	<b>Ephesians 4</b>	<b>1 Corinthians 12</b>
<b>Gift- Which?</b>	Prophecy Serving Teaching Exhorting Giving Leading Showing Mercy	Apostle Prophet Evangelist Shepherd Teacher	Word of Wisdom Word of Knowledge Faith Gifts of Healing Working of Miracles Prophecy Discernment Tongues Interpretation of tongues
<b>Gift- What?</b>	Gifts as an activity of the Father. These gifts are therefore nouns expressed in a verb action.	Gifts as identities of Jesus and expressions of calling, vocations, extensions of the ministries of Jesus. These gifts are nouns, people.	Gifts as manifestations of the Spirit. These gifts are therefore nouns, expressions of the Spirit.
<b>Source- Who?</b>	Father God	Jesus	Holy Spirit
<b>Timing- When?</b>	Given at birth as we are created in God's image; yet, after salvation, used for selfless, Kingdom purposes instead of selfish purposes.	Given originally as part of Jesus' ascension, so received at birth as we are created in Jesus' image (who is the image of God). They're exhibited in individuals' pre-salvation life via natural skills and abilities. Then, at salvation, those natural skills are supernaturally activated and empowered by the Holy Spirit.	Given according to the timing and the will of the Holy Spirit.
<b>Purpose- Why?</b>	To display the Father's character in the world.	To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.	Situational- to meet the need of the ministry situation.
<b>Effect- To What End?</b>	Diverse effects: Others are served through an ongoing living sacrifice, to the glory of the Father	Unifying effect: "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.	Diverse Effects: Displaying love by meeting the present need of the situation, to the glory of God.

In this weeks conclusion, I want to encourage you to read over these gifts and discussion questions to decipher who you are in Ephesians 4, what gifts motivate you in Romans 12, and what gifts you have seen manifest in your life in 1 Corinthians 12; keeping in mind that the function of these gifts are paired with love, sacrificially presented, for the betterment of the Church as a whole.

## THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

What gifts of the Spirit do you tend to manifest for the common good?\_\_\_\_\_

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What gift of Jesus are you to the Body of Christ?\_\_\_\_\_

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What gift of the Father motivates you on a daily basis as you go about your work?

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WEEK 3

ARE THE  
GIFTS OF  
THE SPIRIT  
FOR TODAY?

Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-10

This week we want to take some time to unpack the two viewpoints that make spiritual gifts so controversial. It simply boils down to this: you either believe that the spiritual gifts are still in operation today or you don't. As we dissect these two belief systems I am encouraged to know that God does not require perfect theology for salvation. We can interpret Scripture differently and still honor one another in love.

Continuationists believe exactly that: the spiritual gifts of the Spirit continue today. They believe that these gifts have not stopped as the Spirit is still working through gifts such as prophecy, knowledge, tongues, and healings in various ways. Often times a Continuationist will be labeled as a Charismatic or Pentecostal.

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We can interpret  
Scripture differently  
and still honor one  
another in love.

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Within the Continuationist belief, there is a variety of interpretation on the teaching of these gifts and how the gifts are practiced. The more conservative viewpoint would expect order in their worship services. A freedom to see the gifts operate, but within the structure and close oversight of church leadership. In this environment, church leaders are in the position to discern where the Holy Spirit is moving and where He is not. Scripture also plays an important role in discerning if something is, "in decency and order," or not. Other Continuationists are more open when it comes to claims of promises, bold prophecies, and declarations of healing in their services which lead to a less structured and more individual freedom to express gifts in various ways. Examples of this would be speaking in tongues

without interpretation, giving personal prophecies, and other public actions.

The flip side of this would be Cessationism. Cessationists are quick to point out the spiritual excesses of the above belief system and look at things like unfulfilled prophecies, abuse of spiritual authority, and preference for new revelation over Scripture to call into question the validity of these evidences. This suspicion causes them to feel that much of these “signs,” are actually from the flesh or demonic rather than a move of the Holy Spirit. These concerns are sometimes validated as we see in Matthew 12:39, as Jesus says, “an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” This is truly the danger with a Cessationist viewpoint. You become so focused on the gift that you lose sight of the Giver of the gift.

Continuationism emphasizes the unchanging nature of God, suggesting that His methods remain constant (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). Additionally, the Scriptures caution us against actions that may grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) and advise us not to suppress the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19). It is also noted that “stiff-necked people,” tend to resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). It is important to recognize that failing to be fully submitted to the Spirit may result in missing the complete blessings that God intends for us.

On the other hand, cessationism often reacts to the misuse of spiritual gifts by dismissing them entirely, which can be an over reaction. The existence of misuse should not lead to the rejection of the gifts themselves. For instance, teaching is frequently misapplied, with many instances of poor instruction that can be more humorous than scriptural. However, this does not warrant abandoning the practice of teaching; rather, it should motivate us to promote sound doctrine and alert others to false teachings.

Evidence from the New Testament indicates that miraculous gifts were present among Christians beyond the apostles. Specifically, many individuals, both men and women,

young and old, throughout the Roman empire actively utilized these spiritual gifts. Notably, figures such as Stephen and Philip demonstrated their ministry through signs and wonders. Additional non-apostolic individuals who exhibited miraculous gifts include: the seventy commissioned in Luke 10:9, 19-20; at least 108 individuals from the 120 gathered in the upper room on Pentecost; Stephen (Acts 6-7); Philip (Acts 8); Ananias (Acts 9); church members in Antioch (Acts 13); unnamed converts in Ephesus (Acts 19:6); women in Caesarea (Acts 21:8-9); the unnamed brethren mentioned in Galatians 3:5; believers in Rome (Romans 12:6-8); believers in Corinth (1 Corinthians 12-14); and Christians in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 5:19-20.)

Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 is significant in this context. In this passage, Paul emphasizes that spiritual gifts will not “pass away” (v. 8-10) until the arrival of the “perfect.” If the “perfect,” refers to the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan, as seen in the new Heaven and new earth following Christ’s return, it is reasonable to expect that He will continue to bless and empower His church with these gifts until that time.

A similar assertion is found in Ephesians 4:11-13, where Paul discusses spiritual gifts, including the role of apostle, and the gifts of prophecy, evangelism, pastoring, and teaching. He states that these gifts are intended to build up the church, “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Given that the church has not yet reached this maturity, we can confidently expect the ongoing presence and efficacy of such gifts until that day comes.

As we conclude, read Ephesians 4:1-3 and remember that we can disagree on these issues and still be friends with other Believers who see this issue differently.

# THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS

Have you ever experienced the gifts of the Spirit in your life? Share some examples with the group:\_\_\_\_\_

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Have you ever experienced one of the gifts of the Spirit operating through you?\_\_\_\_\_

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How can these gifts be used to build the body of Christ?\_\_\_\_\_

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WEEK 4

# HOW DO I USE THE GIFTS?



Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner."

## JOHN 5:19

The last three weeks have been centered around the information of the spiritual gifts and why we believe that those spiritual gifts are functioning today. This week we want to look at some important aspects and misconceptions that take place when we see these gifts in operation. There are a few key factors that I believe need to be present when properly functioning in one of these spiritual gifts.

The first is **humility**. It is very important to remember that every good and perfect gift comes from God. There is nothing about me or in me that controls this gift or dictates how or who these gifts are for. As we have seen previously, we are simply servants not solutions. Humbling myself allows God to work through the gift that He has given to me. In addition to this, there has to be a level of humility to see my need met by God's gift through someone else. For example, Jesus heals many people in the Gospels, but He would often start by asking the question, "What do you need/seek/want from Me?" Humbling yourself to make your need known to God and those around you opens the door for these gifts to operate. God will not be the solution to a problem you don't have.

The second key factor that I believe needs to be present is **faith**. It's important to understand that faith must be present for us to operate in a spiritual gift. Romans 12:3 says that God has given each one a measure of faith. That word "measure," could be translated as metron. To each individual, God has given a measure of faith that is different than others. That is why there is differing gifts within the body of Christ. For instance, you may have a measure of faith in operating the gift of generosity and giving, while someone else may



have a measure of faith to speak the words of the Lord boldly through a prophetic gift. It's important to note that there is a difference between the faith that every Believer should have and a supernatural faith. Every Believer should carry a measure of fundamental faith, but supernatural faith is something different. Supernatural faith is something that is given by the Spirit for a specific need. It is not something that you can turn on or turn off but it

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Supernatural faith has to be present to effectively operate in your spiritual gift.

is dictated by the Spirit, not a person. For instance, when Mary comes to Jesus at the wedding of Canaan, she says to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you to do." Her faith is so strong that she does not even give ear to Jesus' response. Supernatural faith has to be present to effectively operate in your spiritual gift.

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The final factor that I believe must be present is **obedience**. I believe that Christ encapsulates this key factor so well when He says, "I only do what I see my father doing," meaning, Christ is not doing things because He feels like doing them or because He wants to do them and it's His agenda. In fact He goes against His will to do His father's will. It's imperative that we as Believers hear from our Heavenly Father and do what He asks us to do. **Simple obedience always brings spiritual breakthrough.** I can think of all kinds of creative ways to help someone or give to them what I think that they need, but all of my efforts fall short of simply doing what they would ask me to do. I'll refer back to the story in Matthew, where Jesus is at the wedding feast of Canaan. This miracle hinges on simple obedience. Jesus tells the servants to fill the jars with water, and the servants did as He asked. There's no amount of sacrifice that could ever trump simply obeying what God says. The best part about obedience is that when I simply obey Him, I do not have to burden myself with the responsibility of the outcome. I am free to rest.

Now that we've discussed a few key factors that I believe need to be present when properly functioning in one of the spiritual gifts, I want to address some misconceptions about

spiritual gifts and those that operate in them.

The first misconception that I want to address is that **your experience does not become the method**. There is no cookie cutter method to how spiritual gifts work, just because you experienced something, doesn't mean that you can repeat the same steps and get the same results every time. Let's be honest if it was cookie cutter, then you wouldn't have to rely on the Holy Spirit for anything. Peter's shadow healed but Jesus also rubbed dirt in a man's eyes and he received sight. There is no rule or set of practices that can make a manifestation take place. We are not shaman or witches who cast spells or curses, there's nothing special about me that makes this happen. It is a gift given by God. This gift can be distributed, however, and to whomever He sees fit.

Another misconception that's worth addressing is that **I nor you are the owner of the gift**. The moment that I become the owner of the spiritual gift is when I have to take responsibility for the outcome. That's when we see people start doing weird things to cover their shortcomings. People often use the verse in Genesis that refers to us having dominion over the Earth; but if you or I had the authority to speak to things and they would come into alignment with what we say, then there is a lot of things about myself that I would just speak to and they would be different. Unfortunately, that's not how it works. People that believe that they own the gift say things like "God told me," as if they're the only people that hear from God or that whatever they believe is clearly from God. This is a dangerous road to walk down because you begin having to do things to cover your shortcomings when you are wrong. The reality is that this gift is like a lawnmower without any gas in it. I can have a lawnmower, but if I don't have any gas, I'm never going to be able to mow anyone's lawn. The Spirit of God is the fuel that makes the mower go. Without partnership with the Spirit of God and obedience to Him the gift doesn't work correctly.

The final misconception that I want to address is a belief that once you receive a spiritual

gift, it is permanent. Unfortunately, this perspective leads individuals to get locked into a specific role without fully utilizing spiritual growth and capabilities to best serve the body of Christ. The **spiritual gifts are dynamic, and their expressions can change over time through maturity and the needs within the body of Christ** that you serve. Quite frankly all of these gifts reflect the Godhead and we are to be like our Father and Christ is our example. So the longer we are a Believer, the more difficult it should be for someone to distinguish what our spiritual gifts are. The more like Him we become, the more fluid we should be in the nature of spiritual gifts, and how God uses them through us.

As we step into this year of studies, I hope that we can open our hearts and minds to what the Lord can develop in each of us. The goal of these studies is not to make us more like someone else. At the end of this series we don't want you to think that we are now Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Pentecostal, Traditional, or Assemblies of God. There is no motive in this series to say, "Here is this model we have found, let's be like that." The only model that we are interested in following is the Word of God and the author of it.

Our motive is to dissect God's word on the topic of spiritual gifts, not conform to what some other church, group, movement, or revival is doing. The goal of this series will not become the identity doctrine of this ministry. The spiritual gifts is probably one of the most ignored, controversial, and misunderstood sections that we see in Scripture, yet it is imperative to the spiritual development of every disciple. The thing that we begin to pride ourselves in, will eventually become the thing that divides, distracts and damages us the most. Meaning the minute we latch onto something that becomes our, "identity doctrine," or "this is the thing we're going to be known by," the gifts that we were so passionate about pursuing begin to overwhelm and overshadow the Giver of the gift. Let's keep the main thing the main thing: **It's about Jesus and building a relationship with Him.**



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