



Gifts for You

Opening your spiritual gifts



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Introduction

Christian discipleship is a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ so that others may believe. Jesus invited the disciples, and many others along the way, to embark on a faith journey as they learned about his ministry. A lifelong journey means lifelong learning. The more we discover about who we are and *whose* we are, the more we can appreciate the journey and the ministry to which we have been called.

Discovering who we are includes discovering our spiritual gifts.

Each one is given gifts by the Holy Spirit, gifts that shape who we are and how we operate in the body of Christ. Discovering or recovering your spiritual gifts and exploring how you can better use them is part of growing in faith and life and discipleship. These gifts are part of your DNA. Spiritual gifts are as unique to you as your fingerprints and dental records.

Since 1953 when scientists James Watson and Francis Crick announced to the world (in an English pub) that they had discovered “the secret of life,”

that is, DNA, we have acquired the language to describe and the human understanding of who we are physically. Many leader-disciples subconsciously have equated DNA with only our physical being, thereby diminishing our capacity to see ourselves as spiritual beings with spiritual gifts.

Gifts for You: Opening your spiritual gifts will assist disciples in increasing their capacity for ministry by embracing the spiritual gifts they have been given and then discerning God’s plan as to how those gifts will be used in the body of Christ.

Our DNA controls our physical make-up, and the Holy Spirit is the power that allows us to use our physical make-up to actualize the spiritual gifts with which we have been blessed.

Spiritual gifts are

- biblical;
- given to everyone;
- essential to discipleship; and
- exciting to discover and reveal.

How to Use This Resource

This resource is designed to support participants in their calling to be disciples by enabling them

- to understand God's purpose for spiritual gifts;
- to discover or recover their spiritual gifts; and
- to see how their gifts are needed in God's mission.

This resource can be used by everyone. Every woman should begin this learning experience from wherever she is on her faith journey.

The resource can be used:

- as a self-study or group study;
- as a complement to daily devotions;
- as a Bible study or in focus groups;
- as a weekend retreat; or
- as a one-day retreat. (Using it in this setting would require taking and scoring the assessments ahead of time.)

You might also consider using this resource as a devotional series to begin a circle meeting or unit meeting to introduce the unity in spiritual gifts.

If this resource is to be used in a group, the leader needs to remember the following:

- Some participants may be hearing about spiritual gifts for the first time.
- Some participants may be familiar with spiritual gifts but hesitant to embrace the language and the power of using them actively.
- The ultimate goal is to take the spiritual gifts assessment as part of this faith journey.

Each section of this resource is designed to be a guide and is not time bound. Once the group leader has determined whether to present the material over the course of several gatherings or in one lengthier

gathering, she is able set up a more specific schedule and determine how long each section of the resource will be allotted. For example, for a one-day event, there generally are two to four hours before lunch and two to four hours after lunch. The leader can plug in the main presentations and suggested activities, leaving small- and large-group discussion as the variables to fill out the schedule.

Some final notes for the group leader or individual doing this assessment:

- Remember that this is a complete work and should be presented as such.
- Do not use the terms *spiritual gifts* and *talents* interchangeably; they are not synonyms.
- Allow the Holy Spirit room to work.
- Be creative when engaging the material.
- Remember to pray to open each session and again to close each session with prayers of thanksgiving to God for providing new insights and other blessings that were experienced in the group.
- Read the assigned biblical texts aloud before looking for the focus verses. (If leading a group, assign readers in advance so that they may become familiar with the text.)
- Be honest with your answers. (If leading a group, remind participants of this at appropriate points during the event.)

BIBLE STUDY 1: From the Beginning

A BIBLICAL REFLECTION

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,
“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you; I
appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

Jeremiah 1:4–5

Jeremiah 1

We have been part of God's plan from the beginning. This concept is as mind boggling as the concept of spiritual gifts. In Psalm 139 the Psalmist says, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it."

God is designer and creator of all of life, and to understand where we fit in the process, we must start from the beginning. When we realize what makes us who we are and just how intricate and complex God has made each of us, we only can echo the Psalmist's response later in the same psalm, "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well."

Read Jeremiah 1. Note how much of the chapter is in the form of a conversation between God and Jeremiah. Pay close attention to what God says and how Jeremiah responds. It is clear that we are part of God's plan.

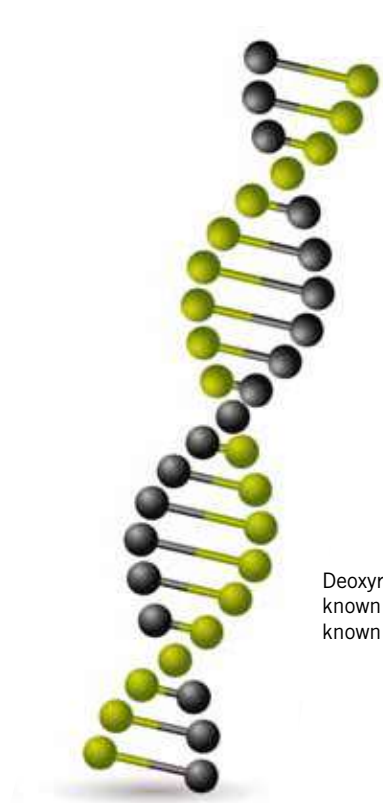
Reflect on each phrase from verses 4 and 5.
 ...Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,
 ..."Before I formed you in the womb
 ...I knew you,
 ...and before you were born I consecrated you;
 ...I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Record your first thoughts and insights in reaction to each phrase. Which phrase or combination pushes you out of your comfort zone? What is your response to that discomfort?

Remember, as we continue to explore spiritual gifts, God is spirit. And we are, too. Even though our scientist friends Watson and Crick proved, after years of research, that DNA is at the core of our physical

make-up, that does not preclude DNA from holding the keys to our spiritual make-up as well. DNA is a set of blueprints—like a recipe or a code—which contains two maps that tell who each individual is. One map holds the genes containing the instructions needed to construct physical attributes, not only hair texture and eye color but every aspect of how a human body is built and operates. The other map holds the spiritual gifts and the instructions needed to form the spirit being. The two maps are fused to make you "you."

Read again the last verse of that first chapter of Jeremiah. These last words of verse 19 are the familiar ones on which we've learned to rely. "...For I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you." Jesus again was telling his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come to be our constant companion.



Deoxyribonucleic acid, better known as DNA, is found in all known living organisms.

The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

The purpose of spiritual gifts is two-fold: to unify the body of Christ/Christians in their faith and to produce within the church growth that is both numerical and spiritual.

The unity spiritual gifts bring is not uniformity; in fact, these gifts can be explained just like fingerprints. We all have them, yet no two sets look alike. Each spiritual gift fused with personality and physical attributes manifests differently in each individual. Now that we are aware of the gifts, it is crucial to God's plan that we use them.

Let's describe our mission as a 5,000-piece puzzle. Each piece is a set of spiritual gifts given to individuals. The puzzle is not complete until all of the pieces are in place. The image may be recognizable without all of the pieces, but it is still incomplete.

God has given the body of Christ an awesome task in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) and the great command (Act 1:8). Could you imagine approaching these tasks knowing that only you are working at them? They would be impossible. But with the body of Christ working together, we can obey God's command more fully than we could alone.

Again, spiritual gifts are biblical, given to everyone, essential to discipleship and exciting to discover and reveal. But there's more to spiritual gifts.

- You cannot choose or trade the gifts you receive.
- Spiritual gifts are gifted through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Spiritual gifts are not about you!**

God has a greater use for these gifts, and they are not exclusively for your edification.

So what's the next step? Have you taken a spiritual gifts assessment?

If the answer is yes, make a list of the six core gifts you have been given. Your gifts do not change, although they may heighten in intensity with use. So it is not necessary to take the inventory again. However, if you feel the gifts you have identified previously are not how you naturally operate, consider taking the assessment again, following the instructions carefully. You also may wish to re-take the assessment if you cannot articulate the six gifts with ease.

If you haven't taken a spiritual gifts assessment before, you are ready to take it now.

Opening Your Gifts

This inventory is designed to begin your journey toward spiritual gifts discovery. This assessment is not a scientific instrument. However, it can be accurate if you remember that it is not a test or competition. When questions are answered quickly, without deep thought but honestly, it will better the chance for true answers to surface.

Perceptions about spiritual gifts will shape how you embrace and use them. Before you take the assessment, make note of unsettled questions you have. Make a list of gifts you think you have and reflect on why you are drawn to them. Reflect on how you will react if the gifts on your list are not the gifts with which you have been blessed.

Your gifts will be validated by others and confirmed through prayer and by their use over time. Confidence in your gifts comes when you have recognized, accepted, embraced and celebrated them yourself.

Descriptions and explanations of spiritual gifts are scattered throughout Scripture.* Over time, Bible scholars have studied God's Word and the universal patterns and divine way these gifts show up in individuals.

*There are 20 spiritual gifts listed in this assessment but not all that are recorded in Scripture. See detailed descriptions of those 20 gifts in the *Appendix*.



Although there are many spiritual gifts assessments available, the one provided here contains a list of 60 questions that will help you discern, discover and/or recover your spiritual gifts using self-discernment.

Some advice for taking the assessment: First, it is not a test! Take your time. It is not a competition. And, for the over-achievers, there is no perfect grade to make. There is no pressure. This is about discovery rather than a finish line.

A note about discerning: Stay in the moment. Don't think too long or hard about your answers. Be as honest as you can about your answers. It is not what you wish your answer should be; it is what it is. High scores don't count; they will not give you an accurate read of your spiritual DNA.

During the process of completing the assessment, you may discover a pattern. Don't be tempted to second-guess the questions or to manipulate the process. This discovery process is to help the gifts surface. By sticking to the process and remaining as honest as possible, you will discover or recover the best gifts just for you.

Spiritual Gifts Assessment

As with other gifts, it is impossible to fully appreciate and make use of our spiritual gifts until they have been opened. This tool will help you begin to open your spiritual gifts by guiding you through a self-assessment inventory. These 60 questions will help you identify which gifts you have received in greatest measure.

Instructions: For each of the 60 questions which follow, shade in the box to the right of the question

corresponding to the number of the response that most closely matches how you perceive yourself.

Categories are presented across the top of the inventory.

- 4 consistently true
- 3 frequently true
- 2 occasionally true
- 1 infrequently true
- 0 rarely true

	4	3	2	1	0
1. When presented a goal, I immediately think of steps that need to be taken in order to achieve the desired results.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I express myself through artistic means.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. My faith requires me to seek out God's will and purpose in all circumstances that arise in my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I am able to convey the gospel message to non-believers in ways that they are able to easily understand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I am moved by those who, through conflict or sorrow, are wavering in faith.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I am certain of the Spirit's presence in my life and in the lives of others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I am blessed by God each day and gladly respond to these blessings by giving liberally of my time and money.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I enjoy meeting new people and becoming acquainted with them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I know that God hears and responds to my daily prayers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I feel compelled to learn as much as I can about the Bible and faith.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I am a take-charge person. When others follow my direction, the goal or task will be completed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. When I see a person in need, I am moved to assist him or her.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I love to sing and enjoy inspiring others through song.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. I find joy in and express myself by playing a musical instrument.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I am motivated to provide spiritual leadership to those who are on a faith journey.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. I like working behind the scenes to ensure that projects are successful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	4	3	2	1	0
17. I enjoy working with my hands in a trade or skill that requires considerable experience to perfect.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. My great joy is to communicate biblical truth in such a way that it becomes real and understood by others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. When a challenge is presented, I am usually able to identify an appropriate solution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. I am able to take a thought or idea and put it into a clear and inspiring written form.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. I enjoy organizing thoughts, ideas, hopes and dreams into a specific plan of action.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. I can translate into artistic form what I first see in my imagination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. I have assisted others as they sought to discern whether or not their personal decisions were helpful and in accordance with God's will for their lives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. I enjoy being with non-believers and like having the opportunity to encourage them to faith and commitment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. When I know someone is facing a crisis, I feel compelled to provide support and care.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. My trust in the Spirit's presence, when I encounter times of personal crisis, is a source of strength for others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. I manage my time and money so that I am able to give much of it to the work of the church or other organizations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. I am often asked to open my home for small-group gatherings or social occasions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. I often become so absorbed in my prayer life that the doorbell or phone can ring and I will not hear it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. Not one day would be complete without biblical study and thought.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. When I am in a group, others will often look to me for direction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. I feel an urgency to provide housing for the homeless, food for the starving, comfort for those in distress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. I have sung before groups and felt a real sense of God's presence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. By my playing a musical instrument, inspiration has been provided for both myself and others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. I have responsibility for providing spiritual guidance to an individual believer or group of believers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. People tell me that without my willingness to do the unnoticed jobs, their work would be more difficult.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. I am good at building, repairing or restoring things, and I find satisfaction in doing so.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. I want to express my faith by assisting others to discover the truths contained in the Bible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	4	3	2	1	0
39. People come to me for help in applying Christian faith and values to personal situations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. I often feel moved to write about my thoughts and feelings so others may benefit from them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41. I have been successful in organizing, directing and motivating people to achieve a goal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42. My artistic work has given spiritual strength to both believers and non-believers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
43. In the congregation, I am often asked if a direction being discussed is in accordance with God's will and purpose.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. I do not find it difficult to share what Jesus means to me with non-believers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
45. Those who are struggling with life questions have come to me for guidance and help.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
46. I can see great things happening in my congregation and am not derailed by the pessimism of others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
47. When I receive money unexpectedly, one of my first thoughts is to share this gift through the church.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
48. I enjoy welcoming guests and helping them to feel at ease.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
49. Believers have asked me to pray for healing in their lives and have evidenced God's healing power.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
50. My study of the Bible has proven helpful to others in their faith journey.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
51. People have said they like to work with me because the task will be successfully completed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
52. People have been surprised by how at ease I am while working with those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
53. I am grateful and humbled that my singing has provided inspiration and hope for others on their faith journey.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
54. Others have told me they were moved by my playing a musical instrument.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
55. People have come to me for spiritual help, and it has developed into a long-term relationship.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
56. When I turn out the lights, take tables down, work in the kitchen or put chairs away, I feel that I have served the Lord.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
57. My knowledge of building, maintenance or repair has been a special value to the church and others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
58. Students have told me that I can take the most difficult idea or concept and make it understandable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
59. When direction is needed at work or in the congregation, I am generally asked for my opinion.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
60. My written work has been helpful to others in understanding life's truths.					

Spiritual Gifts Assessment Scoring Grid

Note: Even though the term *scoring* is used, it is purely so that you can determine where your gifts are strongest. No other value is placed on the gifts you have or don't have. Remember, all gifts are given by the Holy Spirit.

The grid you will use is on page 14. Before you enter your responses, however, look at this sample grid.

After you complete the grid on page 14, you will have the opportunity to explore your own “gifts cluster.”

Sample Grid

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Questions 1, 21, 41													Administration
Questions 2, 22, 42													Artistry
Questions 3, 23, 43													Discernment
Questions 4, 24, 44													Evangelism
Questions 5, 25, 45													Exhortation
Questions 6, 26, 46													Faith
Questions 7, 27, 47													Giving
Questions 8, 28, 48													Hospitality
Questions 9, 29, 49													Intercession
Questions 10, 30, 50													Knowledge
Questions 11, 31, 51													Leadership
Questions 12, 32, 52													Mercy
Questions 13, 33, 53													Music (Vocal)
Questions 14, 34, 54													Music (Instrumental)
Questions 15, 35, 55													Pastoring
Questions 16, 36, 56													Service
Questions 17, 37, 57													Skilled Craft
Questions 18, 38, 58													Teaching
Questions 19, 39, 59													Wisdom
Questions 20, 40, 60													Writing

Sample Assessment

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
												Administration
												Artistry
												Discernment
												Evangelism
												Exhortation
												Faith
												Giving
												Hospitality
												Intercession
												Knowledge
												Leadership
												Mercy
												Music (Vocal)
												Music (Instrumental)
												Pastoring
												Service
												Skilled Craft
												Teaching
												Wisdom
												Writing

My Spiritual Gifts Assessment Scoring Grid

Instructions: Total the rating numbers for the three questions in the column on the left. For each gift there is a set of three questions, which could have a potential score of 0 to 12. The rectangular blocks will total your score as you shade in the number 0 1 2 3 4 for each of the three questions. For example, in the category of Administration, the answers to the three questions equal the numbers 2+4+3 total 9. The bar will be shaded in up to the number 9. Once the grid is completed, note that the longer the bar the stronger the corresponding gift.

The strongest gift(s) will generally have a total score of “7” or more. If you have more than one gift with a total of seven or more, then all of these gifts can be referred to as your “gift cluster.” Notice how each gift within the cluster has the potential to compliment and support another. The gifts within the cluster will need to be further explored to determine which ones you have truly been blessed with.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Questions 1, 21, 41													Administration
Questions 2, 22, 42													Artistry
Questions 3, 23, 43													Discernment
Questions 4, 24, 44													Evangelism
Questions 5, 25, 45													Exhortation
Questions 6, 26, 46													Faith
Questions 7, 27, 47													Giving
Questions 8, 28, 48													Hospitality
Questions 9, 29, 49													Intercession
Questions 10, 30, 50													Knowledge
Questions 11, 31, 51													Leadership
Questions 12, 32, 52													Mercy
Questions 13, 33, 53													Music (Vocal)
Questions 14, 34, 54													Music (Instrumental)
Questions 15, 35, 55													Pastoring
Questions 16, 36, 56													Service
Questions 17, 37, 57													Skilled Craft
Questions 18, 38, 58													Teaching
Questions 19, 39, 59													Wisdom
Questions 20, 40, 60													Writing

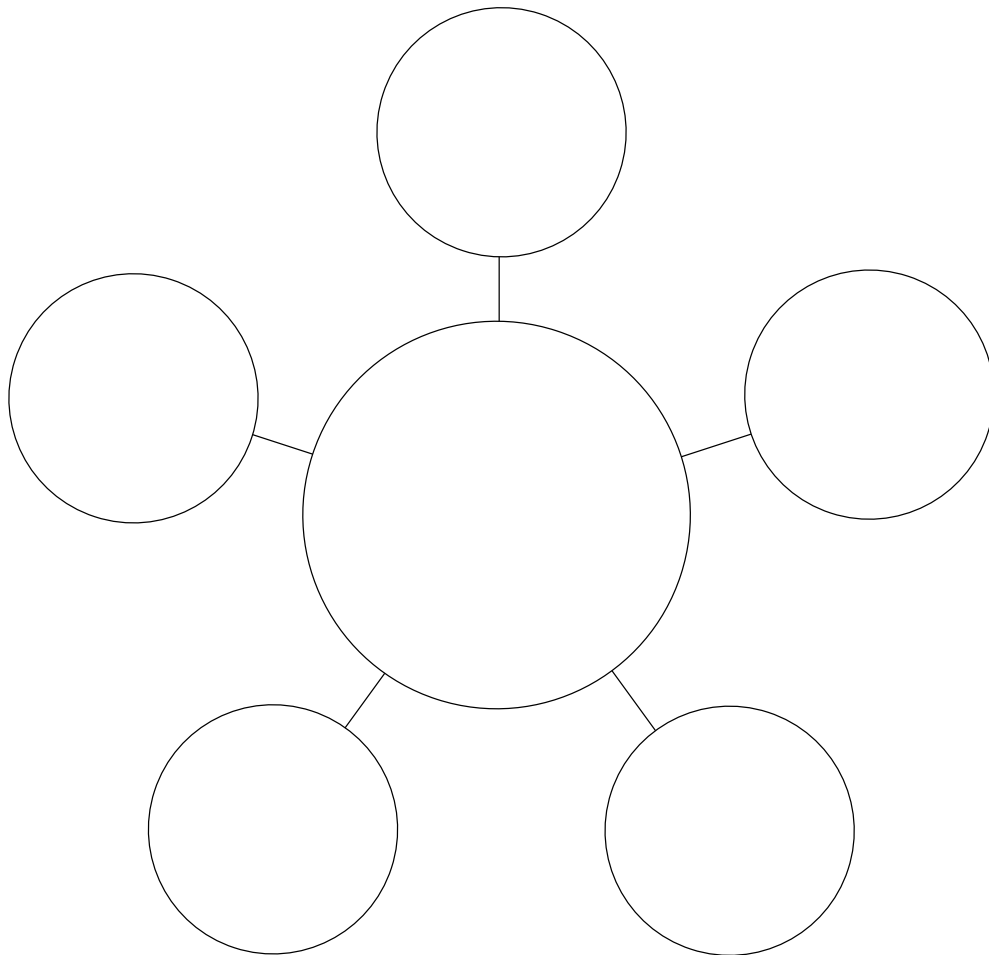
Spiritual Gifts Cluster

Now that you've completed the scoring grid, let's examine your spiritual gifts cluster. In the center circle of the cluster chart, write the spiritual gift that had the highest rating. In the remaining circles, write the other gifts which you rated a 7 or more. This is your gifts cluster.

Note: If you have several gifts with the same score, you will need to discern further which gift is most natural for you and best complements the other gifts that will make up your gifts cluster. In this case you also might ask a person who is close to you to review your inventory with you. That person's perception of your strengths may be useful in identifying the gifts with which you have been truly blessed.

Look at your completed gifts cluster and ask yourself these questions.

- How will I use this information?
- What surprises lie in my gifts cluster?
- How does my gifts cluster explain the way I have been operating as a Christian?
- How will my ministry/my congregation be affected now that I am aware of my gifts?



These next steps are to explore what the Holy Spirit is up to in blessing you with these gifts. Taking these steps often will help you approach the answers.

Pray as you seek the Holy Spirit's guidance as you explore your gifts.

Study to provide a solid foundation from which to use your gifts effectively. Study Scripture references, definitions and how each gift functions in the body of Christ. Remember, the mission is ultimately what's important.

Take time and make space to examine how you feel about each of the gifts in your cluster. Traditionally, the next step in some assessments after identifying your spiritual gifts would be to receive a list of tasks assigned to a particular gift. For example, if you have the gift of hospitality, the list might include greeter, usher or fellowship hour host. These are important tasks and should not be ignored or left undone. However, the Holy Spirit is calling the body of Christ beyond the church walls for the sake of the world. To begin to think outside the box, start with questions like "Where is my passion?" "Where is the greatest need?"

Celebrate and use your spiritual gifts. The mystery of these gifts is that, the more you use them, the more confident you become in them and the more effective your ministry is. Pay close attention to what happens when you are fully engaging your gifts and when you are not.

Listen! As you use your spiritual gifts, others may provide affirmation. The Holy Spirit finds many ways to speak, so listen when others recognize your gifts and express thankfulness for a job well done. The Holy Spirit is not the type to give a gift with no strings attached, and those affirmations are a kind of string. These are not strings to control you or your gifts, however, but strings to assist you in using them.

Spiritual Gifts Cluster Exercise

This exercise will help you to explore what gets in the way of your ability to use your gifts. Follow these instructions:

1. Take a few minutes to look closely at your scoring grid and cluster diagram.
2. If you are in a group, find your "Gift Mates." These are people with the same center gift. Record the group's answers on newsprint. (If no one else has the same center gift or you are doing these activities alone, skip to step 4.)
3. Share with the group the other gifts in your gifts cluster. Listen for the diversity in the combinations.
4. Begin a discovery process with the following discussion starters.
 - Did you know this gift (in the center circle) was your strongest gift?
 - Were there any surprises?
5. Now turn to these questions about your strongest gift.
 - How have I used this gift?
 - What gets in the way of my using this gift effectively?
 - What do I/we put in the way of this gift being used to its fullest in the community of faith?
6. Answer these bonus questions if you have time.
 - How do I make room in my life so that all my gifts can be used?
 - How do I enable others to make room to use all their gifts?

BIBLE STUDY 2: The Plan—God’s Word about Gifts

A BIBLICAL REFLECTION

...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Ephesians 4:12–13

Romans 12 • 1 Corinthians 12 • Ephesians 4

It is God's plan to use us and our spiritual gifts to build up God's church. We live in a culture that honors facts—what can be seen and proven. Because of that cultural context, it is sometimes hard even for Christians to articulate the purpose and plan for spiritual gifts. Also, our cultural view of leadership and differences complicates our ability to embrace God's plan. Two things are important in this plan: everyone has spiritual gifts and God has need of them.

This study will concentrate on references to the purpose and plan for spiritual gifts in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. Examining these texts will give the “gifted” a foundation and vision for effectively using the gifts received.

Before beginning the study, gather several Bible translations (including a good study Bible or access to a good online study reference), a Bible commentary, notebook and pen.

This study uses the READ IT method to quickly get to the meaning of the text in order to build a frame of reference for spiritual gifts. The READ IT method is easy to do alone or to use in a group setting, but be aware that a group will need a facilitator so that all will be heard in the lively conversation that ensues. It is not necessary to keep group notes, but individuals should be encouraged to keep personal notes of questions or thoughts for further exploration. Note that there are no guide questions or reflection thoughts, so the conversation begins where the group or the individual is. With this method, there is no need to have all the answers, simply to work through the steps and stir up the questions that will keep the participant engaged in the search for God's intentions.

Start with prayer. Because this study is to help you connect to spiritual matters, ask for openness to spiritual understanding, insight, wisdom and revelation. You can begin by praying verse 130 of Psalm 119: *The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.*

Decide if you will study all three texts (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4) together or take them one at a time. The READ IT approach outlined below assumes that you will study the three texts together. To adapt it to study the chapters one at a time, work through the READ IT approach completely for Romans 12, then again for 1 Corinthians 12 and a third time for Ephesians 4.

Read the full chapters; i.e., Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4. If time allows, read the same chapters from several translations.

Examine what you have just read. Pay attention to words or phrases that need clarification.

Analyze what the speaker is saying and why it is being said. Reread these specific verses: Romans 12:1–8; 1 Corinthians 12:1–6; 27–30; Ephesians 4:11–13.

Discern what is historical and cultural from what is contextually and currently relevant today.

Internalize what you have discerned, and make note of at least one action you can take because of your new insights.

Take action!

Spiritual Gifts, Mission and Community

Spiritual gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of fostering unity in the body of Christ. What does this mean today?

We start in community. And in order to start there, we need a clear understanding of the concept. Community just is. It is both a gift and a mystery of God. Community is a reality—always present whether we recognize or acknowledge it. However, it is the *unity* in *community* that we have responsibility for. Unity does not just happen; it has to be a constant part of our work together.

We have to begin to rethink our culture's definition of *different*, *diversity*, *other* as we learn to embrace and appreciate the fact that “difference” is a big part of God's plan. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul introduced the image of a body with all its different parts working together in harmony for the sake of the body. We need to think about the faith community as a body, working together in harmony with the gifts we each bring to it.*

The way in which we view these gifts and appreciate how God expects them to be used will help us to stay focused on our plan to use them.

Spiritual gifts can be put into three categories.

- **The Miraculous Gifts.** The gift of tongues, interpretation of tongues, healing, bold proclamation and prophecy are generally known today as charismatic gifts.
- **The Enabling Gifts.** These four gifts—discernment, faith, knowledge and wisdom—are embedded in all disciples and, through the work of the Spirit, are heightened with use.

- **The Team Gifts.** The other 16 gifts in the assessment included in this resource are awakened in community for the sake of the body. One mystery of God is how spiritual gifts are revealed in community and how they work together to enable us to accomplish mission and ministry.

The Miraculous Gifts, as the name indicates, are a true mystery of God. There are no patterns or traits that are identifiable in the people who possess them. Therefore, there are no true indicators to determine these gift traits in an assessment. Furthermore, if these gifts are manifested in someone, that person would be aware without the use of an assessment. Because humans cannot explain these gifts, many, even Christians, are suspicious of them. However, the gifts are real and needed in God's plan for spiritual gifts.

All three kinds of gifts are needed for the community to achieve full unity. As disciples, we each hold our gifts in trust for use in the community. Picture our bodies as gift boxes, entrusted to our care to bring forth when the community has need. The needs of the community are met—**Miraculous Enabling Team**—when all gifts are used for the body of Christ.

Two final questions:

- How would the community of faith be different if each disciple were using all of his or her spiritual gifts and engaging in faith practices effectively?
- How do you impact community when you use or do not use all of your spiritual gifts?

*The spiritual gifts assessment tool that is part of this resource evaluates only the gifts that enable or serve community in fulfilling the mission to unify the body of Christ/Christians in their faith and to produce growth within the church, growth that is both numerical and spiritual.

Appendix

Spiritual Gifts Descriptions

The work of the Holy Spirit is an awesome mystery for us. Because of the way these spiritual gifts are given to us and manifested in individuals, it is better to provide a description rather than a narrow, one-size-fits-all definition. These descriptions will give you a picture in words that will lead you to an image of your spiritual gifts.

Each entry contains a description, general characteristics, cautions and biblical references. Like the spiritual gifts assessment, these descriptions are not definitive but paint a beautiful tapestry of the Holy Spirit at work in God's people.

The gifts are listed in alphabetical order for easy reference.

ADMINISTRATION: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to formulate, direct and carry out plans necessary to fulfill a purpose.

People with this gift are usually: organized, goal-oriented, thorough, objective, efficient, responsible, conscientious.

Cautions for people with this gift: being open to adjusting their plans so that they don't stifle a leader's vision; not using people simply to accomplish goals without concern for their growth in the process.

Biblical references: 1 Corinthians 12:28, Acts 14:23

ARTISTRY: The spiritual gift that gives the receiver the skill to create artistic expressions which produce a spiritual response of strength and inspiration.

People with this gift are usually: expressive, imaginative, artistic, creative, unconventional, sensitive, idea-oriented.

Cautions for people with this gift: remembering that art is not for art's sake, but to glorify God and edify others; finding constructive criticism difficult to accept; being uncooperative and needing to work at being a team player.

Biblical references: Exodus 31:1–11, Psalm 149:3a

DISCERNMENT: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to seek God's will and purpose and to apply that understanding to individual and collective situations affecting the faith community.

People with this gift are usually: perceptive, insightful, sensitive, intuitive, decisive, challenging, truthful.

Cautions for people with this gift: being harsh when confronting others instead of speaking truth in love; confirming perceptions before speaking.

Biblical references: John 16:6–15, Romans 9:1, 1 Corinthians 2:9–16

EVANGELISM: The spiritual gift that moves the receiver to reach nonbelievers in such a way that they are baptized and become active disciples in the Christian community.

People with this gift are usually: sincere, candid, respected, influential, spiritual, confident, commitment-oriented.

Cautions for people with this gift: remembering that the Holy Spirit, not guilt, is the motivator in a person's decision for Christ; needing to listen carefully, because the same approach is not appropriate for everyone.

Biblical references: Matthew 28:16–20, Ephesians 4:11–16, 2 Timothy 4:1–5

EXHORTATION: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to encourage others so as to strengthen, comfort or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith.

People with this gift are usually: positive, motivating, challenging, affirming, reassuring, supportive, trustworthy.

Cautions for people with this gift: being overly optimistic, too simplistic or flattering; being aware where others are in their faith journey and what they really need.

Biblical references: 2 Timothy 1:16–18, John 14:1, 3 John 1:5–8

FAITH: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to see the Spirit at work and to trust the Spirit's leading without indication of where it might lead.

People with this gift are usually: prayerful, optimistic, trusting, assured, positive, inspiring, hopeful.

Cautions for people with this gift: remembering that those who speak with reason and desire to plan do not necessarily lack faith; jumping to action.

Biblical references: Mark 5:25–34, Genesis 12:1–4a, 1 Thessalonians 1:8–10

GIVING: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to recognize God's blessings and to respond to those blessings by generously and sacrificially giving of his or her resources (time, talent, and treasure).

People with this gift are usually: responsible, resourceful, trusting in God, charitable, disciplined, sensitive, stewardship-oriented.

Cautions for people with this gift: remembering that the church's mission is guided by its leaders and not determined by the giver's gift; greed.

Biblical references: Luke 21:1–4, 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

HOSPITALITY: The spiritual gift that causes the receiver to joyfully welcome and receive guests and those in need of fellowship, food, lodging or care.

People with this gift are usually: friendly, gracious, inviting, trusting, caring, responsive, warm.

Cautions for people with this gift: viewing their gift of hospitality as just “entertaining”; remembering to ask God whom to befriend and serve.

Biblical references: Romans 12:13, Romans 16:23a, Luke 10:38

INTERCESSION: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to pray consistently on behalf of others with the certainty that prayer is heard and that, when requests are made, answers will come.

People with this gift are usually: caring, sincere, trustworthy, advocating, burden-bearing, spiritually sensitive.

Cautions for people with this gift: feeling that their gift is not valued; diminishing the spiritual contribution to the body of Christ that comes from this ministry; using prayer as an escape from fulfilling responsibilities.

Biblical references: Matthew 6:6–15, Luke 11:1–10, Ephesians 6:18

KNOWLEDGE: The spiritual gift that drives the receiver to learn, analyze and uncover new insights with regard to the Bible and faith.

People with this gift are usually: inquisitive, responsive, observant, insightful, reflective, studious, truthful.

Cautions for people with this gift: being cautious of this gift leading to pride, remembering that it is God's message, not theirs, when they speak.

Biblical references: 1 Corinthians 12:8; 1 Corinthians 14:6, Romans 12:2

LEADERSHIP: The spiritual gift that gives the receiver the confidence to step forward, give direction and provide motivation to fulfill a vision or complete a task in advancing ministry.

People with this gift are usually: influential, visionary, diligent, trustworthy, persuasive, sensitive, goal-setting.

Cautions for people with this gift: remembering that servant leadership is the biblical model - the greatest leader being the servant of all; waiting for a “leadership position” to use this gift.

Biblical references: Romans 12:4–8, John 13:12–17, Luke 22:24–26

MERCY: The spiritual gift that moves the receiver to feel deeply for those in physical, spiritual or emotional need and then to act to meet that need.

People with this gift are usually: empathetic, caring, responsive, kind, compassionate, sensitive, burden-bearing.

Cautions for people with this gift: feeling “unappreciated” when the people they have helped don’t show appreciation in expected ways; becoming defensive and angry about the sources of others’ pain.

Biblical references: Luke 7:12–15, Luke 10:30–37, Matthew 25:34–36

MUSIC (VOCAL): The spiritual gift that gives the receiver the capability and opportunity to present personal witness and inspiration to others through singing.

People with this gift are usually: expressive, imaginative, insightful, inspiring, reflective, sensitive, creative.

Cautions for people with this gift: remembering that music is not for music’s sake but to glorify God and edify others; finding evaluation and constructive criticism difficult to accept.

Biblical references: Psalm 96:1–9, Psalm 100:1–2, Psalm 149:1–2

MUSIC (INSTRUMENTAL): The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to express personal faith and to provide inspiration and comfort through the playing of a musical instrument.

People with this gift are usually: expressive, imaginative, insightful, inspiring, reflective, sensitive, creative.

Cautions for people with this gift: failing to see that their gift is significant and one that makes a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ; remembering that music is not for music’s sake but to glorify God and edify others.

Biblical references: Psalm 33:1–5, Psalm 150, 1 Samuel 16:14–23

PASTORING (SHEPHERDING): The spiritual gift that gives the receiver the confidence, capability and compassion to provide spiritual leadership and direction for individuals or groups of believers.

People with this gift are usually: discipling, supportive, protective, relational, influencing, guiding, and nurturing.

Cautions for people with this gift: passing judgment when they feel others are neglecting or abusing their responsibilities; finding it difficult to say “no” because of the desire to support others.

Biblical references: 1 Timothy 3:1–13, 2 Timothy 4:1–2, 1 Timothy 4:12–16

SERVICE (HELPS): The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to work gladly behind the scenes in order that God’s work is fulfilled.

People with this gift are usually: available, willing, helpful, loyal, reliable, dependable, having a whatever-it-takes attitude.

Cautions for people with this gift: remembering that doing practical deeds is a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ; finding it difficult to say “no” because of the desire to support others.

Biblical references: Luke 23:50–54, Romans 16:1–16, Philippians 2:19–23

SKILLED CRAFT: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to create, build, maintain or repair items used within the church.

People with this gift are usually: creative, resourceful, helpful, design-oriented, practical, handy, and used to functioning behind the scenes.

Cautions for people with this gift: failing to see that their gift is significant and one that makes a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ; using people to get things done instead of helping them grow in the process.

Biblical references: Exodus 30:1–6, Exodus 31:3–5, Ezekiel 27:4–11

TEACHING: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to communicate a personal understanding of the Bible and faith in such a way that it becomes clear and understood by others.

People with this gift are usually: analytical, disciplined, perceptive, teachable, authoritative, practical, articulate.

Cautions for people with this gift: becoming too detailed when teaching and losing sight of the reason for teaching; remembering that their spirituality is not measured by how much they know.

Biblical references: 1 Corinthians 12:28, Matthew 5:1–12, Acts 18:24–28

WISDOM: The spiritual gift that allows the receiver to sort through opinions, facts and thoughts in order to determine what solution would be best for the individual believer or the community of believers.

People with this gift are usually: sensible, insightful, practical, wise, fair, experienced, possessing common sense.

Cautions for people with this gift: failing to share the wisdom that God has given them; being patient with others who do not have this gift.

Biblical references: 1 Corinthians 2:6–13, James 3:13–18, 2 Chronicles 1:7–11

WRITING: The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to express truth in a written form, a form that can edify, instruct and strengthen the community of believers.

People with this gift are usually: expressive, studious, insightful, inspiring, reflective, truthful, and observant.

Cautions for people with this gift: remembering that it is God's message, not theirs; being proud.

Biblical references: 1 John 2:1–6, 12–14, 1 Timothy 3:14–15, Jude 3