



## *The Spiritual Gifts*

### *By Beth Jones*

This past week I wanted to go by the flower shop and buy myself some pretty daisies – just because! But I got busy, and to my surprise Ray came home a few days later with a vase filled with a long stemmed, red rose and daisies! When I asked how he knew I wanted some (I hadn't told anyone!), he said he just thought maybe I would like some daisies! God had seen the desire of my heart, even unspoken, and blessed me with some beautiful flowers just to bring a smile to my face!

**Dear friend, God has “surprises” in store for you and me – gifts He has given us, some which we don't even know about yet! These spiritual gifts are for the purpose of edifying the Body of Christ and glorifying God.** They are not about us. We didn't earn them, and we certainly don't DESERVE them. Yet in His grace, God has given these wonderful gifts to finite, weak human vessels to further His kingdom, to bless others, and to glorify His son Jesus.

### **A very special present**

Imagine that it's your 25th anniversary. You can hardly believe that you and your husband have been married this long, and have made it! You've seen some good times, some bad times, and times when you thought you weren't going to make it! You want to be sure to buy something really special for your husband to let him know how

much you love, respect, and appreciate him, and are thankful that he's been faithful to you all these years. You have been secretly saving money every month for the last two years to buy him a VERY nice watch – the Cartier men's Must 21 Chronoscaph Stainless Steel and Black Rubber Chronograph for \$3,130.00!



On the night of your anniversary, you and your husband go out to dinner at one of the nicest restaurants in Kansas City, and order the five-course, prime rib dinner. There are candles and soft music. He gives you a box and inside is a gift that brings you to tears – two plane tickets to Africa, the desire of your heart!

You laugh and cry with joy, and then wait in expectation as you give him his present. You can hardly wait to see the expression on his face when he opens it. He just won't even believe you got this for him! He smiles happily, comments on the beautiful way you wrapped it with the gold, curled ribbon (you curled it yourself with the scissors!), and sets it beside his plate at the table.

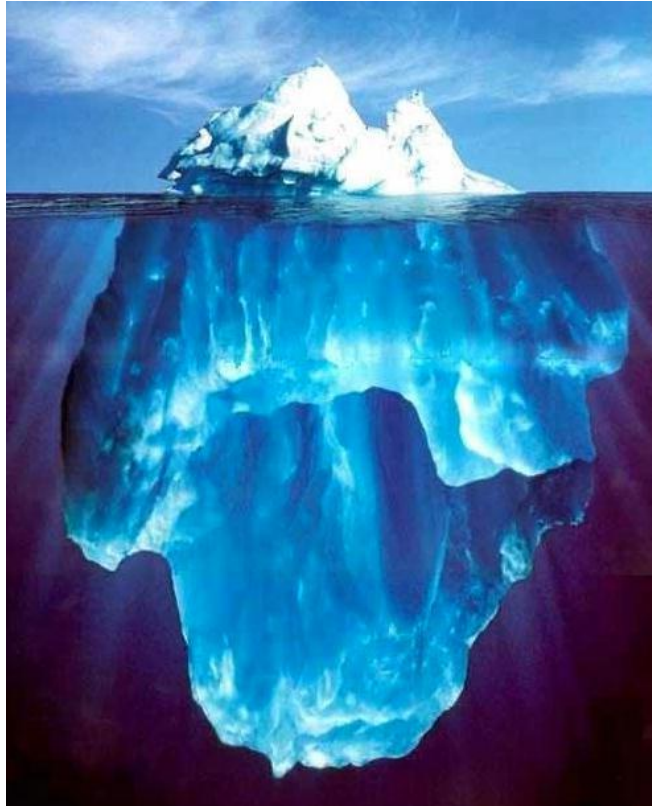
You look over at him with a puzzled expression, and he says, "I know you gave the best gift possible. One day I'm really going to enjoy it. Maybe on our anniversary in 10 years."

### **The gifts are to be used for God's glory!**

This story sounds a little ridiculous, doesn't it? Yet so often that is what God's people do with the spiritual gifts He has given them. They sit on the shelf for years, unused and

going to waste. I believe that there is so much more potential lying inside every one of us – **that we have only seen the tip of the iceberg in what God desires us to do and to be!**

**The best is yet to come!** All we need to do is believe, discover those gifts and those possibilities, and begin to use them, walking out our calling and great destiny in Christ!



**We've only been seeing the tip of the iceberg of God's potential within us!**

### **Is a spiritual gift a talent or skill?**

Are spiritual gifts the same as natural talents and skills? Not exactly, although your talents may complement your spiritual gifting, working hand in hand with them. **There are different types of spiritual gifts, as well as different types of functions.**

### **What are these gifts?**

The spiritual gifts are generally divided into 3 categories:

- **ministry gifts** (a governmental office and special calling; Ephesians 4:7-13);
- **manifestation gifts** (Placed in us before we were born; Jeremiah 1:5; Romans 11:29; 1 Corinthians 12:4-12);
- **motivational gifts** (Can be seen in children; Proverbs 22:6; 1 Peter: 4-10, Romans 12:3-8)

## I. The five-fold ministry gifts

The five-fold ministry gifts are governmental offices or callings in the Body of Christ, and they are found in **Ephesians 4:4-13**:

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.” Now this, “He ascended” –what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. **And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers**, for the equipping of the saints’ for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

We will discuss the other spiritual gifts later, but for now let’s break down this passage. These are **the five-fold ministry gifts**:

- **Who gave these gifts?** Verse 11: “**He Himself gave** some to be...” . To understand scripture properly, you have to study scripture in light of scripture. The previous verses in verses 7-8 are referring to the Lord Jesus Christ as He was ascending into heaven. The gifts come from Jesus Himself.
- **Why?** Verse 12: “...for the **edifying of the body** of Christ...”
- **How long will we have them?** Verse 13: “...**till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God** to a perfect man...”
- **What is their purpose?** Verse 13 – 15 - “...**to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every word of doctrine...but speaking the truth in love, **may grow up in all things into Him who is the head.**”

These gifts are special callings from God – gifts which not all believers have. They reveal the plan of God. A brief summary of each of these offices are:

- **Apostle** – (From the Greek, “delegate, one sent with orders”) - Establishes a new church or work; church builder/planter;
- **Prophet** – (From the Greek word, “to speak forth”) - Speaks God’s word as His messenger; foretells future and points out sins of God’s people.

- **Evangelist** – (From the Greek, “bringer of good tidings”) - Witness for Jesus; brings people into the church to be discipled in the faith.
- **Pastor** – (From the Greek, “herdsman; shepherd”) – Shepherds the flock, oversees, guides, protects, counsels the body of Christ.
- **Teacher** – (From the Greek, “a teacher of the things of God and man’s duty”) – Sometimes shared duty with pastor but not always. Is concerned with accuracy of the truth of God’s word; teaches body of Christ.

These gifts are to fire up (equip, build up) God’s people, so we’ll hang out every day enjoying God, and go out and do what God wants us to do and to be (unity and knowing God), until we all become like Jesus! (just knock it off and grow up). That was my paraphrase of Ephesians 4:4-13!

- II. **There are also other kinds of gifts in the body of Christ – the manifestation gifts which flow from the power of the Holy Spirit at His will.** Everyone doesn’t have the same function in the church; God has given each of us unique gifts and abilities:

**Romans 12:6-8** says, “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. <sup>7</sup> If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. <sup>8</sup> 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 to others, do it gladly.”

**No one gift is more important than the other.** That person who God chose to heal someone sick isn’t just “special.” You have great gifts, too! Don’t compare your gifts with others, or be jealous of others! Thank God for the gifts He has given YOU.

Even the office gifts aren’t more important than the gifts of people who don’t have an office gift. Everything is level at the foot of the Cross of Jesus!

On the other hand, we should never be puffed up in pride about our gifts. We can never take credit for these gifts, because they all came from God. The gifts should always be used to POINT TO JESUS, and to exalt and to glorify HIM – not SELF!

EVERY GIFT, EVERY PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, IS NECESSARY! What would our physical body be without a hand, a foot, an eye? God wants to use everyone – men, women, teens, and children!



The manifestation gifts in believers that flow from the power of the Holy Spirit at His direction are: (From the website [http://www.learning4liferesources.com/motivational\\_gifts.html](http://www.learning4liferesources.com/motivational_gifts.html))

- **Prophecy** – speaking the inspired word of God;
- **Tongues** – supernatural language for the body’s encouragement and edification; also a sign to unbelievers;
- **Interpretation of tongues**- supernatural revelation of tongues so that the body will understand the tongues, and will be encouraged and edified;
- **Faith** – special faith to receive miracles or believe for miracles;
- **Healing** – supernatural healing by God;
- **Miracles** – supernatural intervention of God into the laws of nature;
- **Word of wisdom** – supernatural knowledge or insight (knowledge of God’s ways)
- **Word of knowledge** – supernatural knowledge or information for the purpose of applying truth (knowledge of God’s thoughts);
- **Discerning of spirits** – Supernatural ability to distinguish between evil and good in the human spirit, discerning truth or deception.

The foundation of all the spiritual gifts is God’s agape love. The spiritual gifts are never to be used to control, manipulate, mock, humiliate, or do any harm to God or people. Even in God’s correction, He extends His love, forgiveness and mercy to restore and reconcile people to Himself.

God also would never say or do anything that **CONTRADICTS** His own word, so if someone is giving a “prophecy” that contradicts Scriptures, they are not giving the true, inspired Word of God.

Lester Sumrall said in his book *The Gifts and Ministries of the Holy Spirit*, “We must not go astray. We must not misuse what God has provided. As long as we keep the gifts in the place that God wants them, they will function today just as they did in the Acts of the Apostles.” (*The Gifts and Ministries of the Holy Spirit*, Whitaker House, Kensington, PA, p. 44)

God wants these gifts to manifest in your life, for God’s glory and to bless the body of Christ!

### **III. The third category of gifts are the motivational gifts, which come from God.**

**These are gifts God gave you before you were even born.** Nobody can take them away from you, and you can’t stop having them – although you can choose to disobey God and not walk in your calling and giftings. Again, we should never compare our gifts with someone else, and feel either less than or superior to others. The gifts come from God, and are to serve Him and glorify the Lord Jesus!

The motivational gifts are found in Romans 12: 4-8. **These gifts reveal the personality of God, are the inner motivations of a person, and are practical:**

“For the gifts and callings of God are without repentance.” (Romans 11:29)

“I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb.before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5, NLT)

**The motivational gifts are (from the website [http://christianity.about.com/od/holyspirittopicalstudy/a/spiritualgifts\\_2.htm](http://christianity.about.com/od/holyspirittopicalstudy/a/spiritualgifts_2.htm))**

- **Prophecy** – The eyes of the body. They have deep insight and speak the truth.
- **Serving/helps-** The hands of the body. They love helping people, and find joy in serving. You will usually see them cleaning the church, setting up tables, doing whatever needs to be done.
- **Teaching** – Teachers love to study the Bible, and research (even the original Greek and Hebrew). They want and teach the accurate truth of God’s word.
- **Giving** – Pastors love givers in a church! They want to give their money, their time, their gifts and talents. They feel happy and joyful when giving and blessing



other people. They pick up on people's practical needs but many times want to give secretly.

- **Exhortation/Encouragement** – The exhorter or encourager wants to see the body grow up in Christ, and they love encouraging people in the Lord. They also challenge people to do and to be their best.
- **Administration/Leadership** – These are the leaders, although they don't actively seek it. They see the big picture, are organized, and are efficient.
- **Mercy** – These people simply love others and are the heart of the body of Christ. They sense when others are hurting – or are happy. They want to see people healed of hurts and to help meet practical needs.

The spiritual gifts – whether they are the office gifts, the manifestation gifts, or the motivational gifts – are to bless God and others. **We shouldn't hold back in our gifts,** because it would be like the husband at the beginning of this article, who admired the lovely wrapping paper of the gift his wife had given him, but simply set it down and didn't open it (or use it).

**To not use your spiritual gifts is actually sin. Repent of fear, intimidation, selfishness, or pride.** Remember the servant who hid his master's talent? The master called him a wicked and lazy servant! (Matthew 25:26) Remember, JESUS was the one telling this story to His disciples! A word for the wise!

We should do everything we can to find out what our gifts are, to develop them, and to use them. Like our muscles, they can be strengthened when stretched and used.

**Be a faithful part of a Bible teaching church whose leadership has a true understanding of the spiritual gifts, desires for God's people to be used and to grow up in Him to maturity, and will allow the Holy Spirit to move as He wills – with all things being done decently and in order. (1 Corinthians 14:40)**

If your church doesn't teach about the spiritual gifts, I encourage you to find a church which does. There are some churches which teach that the gifts are "evil." We must remember that satan always has a counterfeit to everything God does. He will even try to have counterfeit gifts, such as fortune telling and astrology for prophecy, or false teachers or healers.

**Just because there are people out there who are "in left field" doesn't invalidate the spiritual gifts. This is where our discernment comes in. We need to know and study the Word of God. Everything in our lives should be filtered through God's word because it is eternal truth!**



The Bible warns us in Matthew 7:14-16, “Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit.”



Fig tree

**Be a fruit inspector! God’s gifts flow from a foundation of love.** 1 Corinthians 13:1 (NLT) says, “If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.”

**Our example, as always, is Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself operated perfectly in all of the spiritual gifts in His ministry on earth. He embodies all of the spiritual gifts.** (Read the gospels and pay close attention to the way Jesus used the gifts.)

**The gifts did not cease with the death of the apostles or within the early 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.** (which is called *cessationism*.) The Holy Spirit is very much alive and kicking today, and His gifts are still here –in us! **God has a great plan for your life, and He wants to use you – and the gifts He has placed within you – for HIS GLORY and to further His kingdom!**

Maybe you’ve never been taught how to use them, or don’t know what yours are. I encourage you to read the Bible, especially the passages we’ve gone over today, and to find a church which teaches about the spiritual gifts.

You can also find spiritual gifts tests online. Two recommended resources are the one I have used in this article (*The Gifts and Ministries of the Holy Spirit* by Lester Sumrall – available at Amazon) and *The 3 Colors of Ministry: A Trinitarian Approach to Identifying and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts* (by Christian A. Schwarz, also available at Amazon.)

Earth is the place where we will use these gifts. Soon they will pass away. But while we are here, let's use them to bring honor and glory to the God who so graciously bestowed them on us – His beautiful gifts for His Bride.



**“Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages<sup>[b]</sup> and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! <sup>9</sup> Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! <sup>10</sup> But when full understanding comes, these partial things will become useless.**

**<sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. <sup>12</sup> Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity.<sup>[c]</sup> All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.**

**<sup>13</sup> Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”(1 Corinthians 13: 8-13, NLT)**

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