

Transcribed from
Stir Up The Gifts
Empowering Believers for Victorious Living and Ministry Tasks
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Session Five: Discovering Your Spiritual Gift and Ministry Profile

KEY FACTORS IN DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

What are the key factors in discovering your Spiritual Gifts? In order to fulfill the process of discovering your Spiritual Gifts you must have a spirit of discernment, a burning desire, a willing attitude and the right motive.

Discernment –

God has promised us that He would give us our heart's desire (Ps. 37:4). The first step in discovering our Spiritual Gifts is to ask God to give us a fresh anointing of spiritual discernment. Discernment involves praying to God and listening for God to speak to you. God has said we should put all our petitions before Him, ... *by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* (Phil. 4:6-7). God will help you discover your Gifts.

Remember, God works in mysterious ways. Often He works through other people and His Spirit testifies with our spirit. Other people can help you discover your Gifts by affirming what you do best. Once we learn the various Spiritual Gifts listed in the Bible and their descriptions, it will become apparent to us which Gifts we can affirm among friends and other church members. I am reminded of a player on a basketball team I once coached. He was short and not a particularly good player. He simply was not a good prospect for a basketball player, yet I remember always making sure he made the team by giving him the last suit. Now that I am no longer ignorant concerning Spiritual Gifts, I know why he never got cut from the team. He had the Gift of encouragement. It was good to have him on the bench, in the locker room, in the van or bus traveling to and from the games. He was a very important part of the team. Once we know the biblical listing and descriptions of Spiritual Gifts, we will be able to affirm Spiritual Gifts in others and others will be able to affirm our Spiritual Gifts.

The Holy Spirit, also, testifies to our spirit what our Spiritual Gifts are. Begin asking yourself questions like, "What do I enjoy doing best?" "In what area of ministry have I been most effective?" "What affirmations have I received from others related to my service in the Church?" "What is my briar patch?" Remember, the nursery story of Brer Rabbit? When they threw him into the briar patch supposing it to be his dislike, what they had actually done was put him in his element, his most effective environment. Where do you excel?

Also, sin blocks our communication with God. We may need some additional cleansing before we can discern our Gifts. We may need some more deliverance before God will reveal the specific Gifts. Remember, God would not have given you Gifts if He did not want you to discover them and use them. God did not hide them. Satan has taken advantage of our ignorance and fear and hidden them. God will help you discover your Gifts, revive them, use them and stir them. Ask God and He will supply you with a spirit of discernment and you will not only know what your Spiritual Gifts are, you will know where they fit into the Body of Christ.

Desire -

How many times have you watched an athletic contest and it seemed the winner was determined by sheer desire? One team simply wanted to win more than the other team. Such is life. Likewise, such is our desire to discover our Spiritual Gifts. You've got to want to know and want to serve and want to do God's will. King David did not build a temple for God. But He wanted to do it. He purposed in his heart to do it, but his son, Solomon, built the temple (1 Kings 8:17,18).

Like David, we must have the burning desire to accomplish our task. We must become sick and tired of being ignorant relative to our Spiritual Gifts. We must become heavily burdened for the limp, weak condition of the Church. We must get fed up and ticked off with living less victorious lives than God would have us live. A burning desire to achieve in our calling to fulfill God's purpose is necessary. So, simply ask yourself, "What do I want to do?" God gave you a specific Gift and He gave you the desire to use it. I ran from the call to preach for 19 years. It wasn't because I had no desire. I ran because I felt I was unworthy. Others affirmed the Gift for the duration of the run. Your desire or hunger to discover your Spiritual Gifts should also lead you to experiment with working in various church positions and evaluating your effectiveness. Look for something to do in the Church. Ask what needs to be done. Be available for any assignment. Afterward, evaluate your effectiveness. Gifted people get results. Also, examine your feelings. Gifted people enjoy working their Gifts.

A biblical example of desire:

Parable of the goodly pearls – Matt. 13:44-46

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: 46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and brought it.

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven as a hidden treasure and a good pearl that is worth the greatest pursuit for the joy of finding. The parable of the good pearl speaks of a man whose desire was so strong that when he found what he was looking for he sold all he had to buy it. Likewise, our Spiritual Gifts are hidden treasures and good pearls and we should desire to discern them with a relentless pursuit for the joy of service and glorifying God.

Willingness -

If we are to discover our Spiritual Gift, not only must we have a discerning spirit and a desirous heart, we must also have a willing attitude. God is not in a hurry to reveal your Gifts to you if you are not willing to use them in service. God's word tells us: *For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward:* (1 Cor. 9:17a). God rewards a willing attitude. In the book of Exodus, Moses was giving the command to establish worship by building a tabernacle. Those who had a willing attitude brought so many Gifts that Moses had to restrain them from giving more. *And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments (Exodus 35:21). And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed through-out the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing (Exodus 36:6).*

God is able! Are you willing? Are you willing to study, pray, search, serve? To discover your Gifts and your place in the Body of Christ? If the answer is "yes," then you are indeed stirring up the Gifts of God.

Right Motive -

As mentioned previously, if you do not have the correct motives, everything is canceled. Be sure about your motives. Your desire for service may be only a desire to be seen and recognized by others. This was the problem in the Corinthian church and it is the problem in the Church today. James speaks to this problem in James 3:1 wherein he commanded us that we should not all try to teach. Much prominence was given to teachers and many wanted the honor associated with the position. The desire for prominence is not the right motive. The right motive is to do God’s will by serving others in the most fruitful manner.

WHAT IS THE WAGON?

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) Ephesians 4: 8-10. A picture can be visualized as Christ, the victor, rewarding Gifts to the Church. Christ the King comes home from war as victor with the enemy in bondage pulling a wagon full of Gifts. As part of the victory ritual or celebration, the Gifts in the wagon are given to the hometown fans who represent the believers, the Church. Much like a trophy is given to the student body after a team has won a state championship, a wagon full of Gifts is given to the saints after a spiritual war has been won.

The question is, “What is in the wagon?” What in the wagon represents the various Gifts listed in the Bible? Depending on various interpretations, there are twenty to twenty-five Spiritual Gifts mentioned in the New Testament. The following chart lists the Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament according to the four scripture references mentioned earlier. Using the factors mentioned in this chapter, begin discovering your Spiritual Gifts by studying this chart.

<u>Romans 12:6-8</u>	<u>1 Cor. 12:8-10</u>	<u>1 Cor. 12:28-30</u>	<u>Ephesians 4:11</u>	<u>1 Peter 4:8-11</u>
Prophecy Serving Teaching Exhortation Giving Leading Showing Mercy	Word of Wisdom Word of Knowledge Faith Healings Miracles Prophecy Discerning of Spirits Tongues Interpretation of Tongues	Apostle Prophets Teachers Miracles Healings Helps Administrations Tongues Interpretation of Tongues	Apostle Prophets Evangelists Pastor Teachers	Hospitality Speaking Gifts Serving Gifts

A composite list of Spiritual Gifts and a detailed description of each Gift is listed in Appendix A. Also listed in Appendix B is a Spiritual Gifts Inventory that will determine, to a fair degree of accuracy, your Spiritual Gifts.

Your Ministry Profile

Just discovering your Spiritual Gifts is not enough to effectively fulfill God's purpose for giving you the Gifts. We must continuously keep in our remembrance that the ultimate goal is service. Discovering your Spiritual Gifts only answers the question of what you do best. To be most effective, the question of where you serve best and how you serve best should be identified. The answer to all three questions, "What do I do best?" "Where can I serve best?" "How can I serve best?" will determine a composite snapshot of your ministry profile.

One writer has coined the acronym S.H.A.P.E. describing a ministry profile:

- S *Spiritual Gifts*, that answers the question, "What am I Gifted to do?"
- H *Heart*, that answers the question, "What do I love to do?"
- A *Abilities*, that answers the question, "What do I do well now?"
- P *Personality temperament*, that answers the question, "Why do I act the way I do?"
- E *Experience*, that answers the question, "Why do I perceive as I do?"

YOUR HEART'S DESIRE

Your heart's desire will determine where you serve best. This is what you eat, sleep and drink. Your heart's desire often preoccupies your mind. It is the bee buzzing in your bonnet. It is your deepest desire to make a difference in the world. It is your desire to make a major contribution to the kingdom of God. It is what you don't get tired of talking about. It is what energizes you. It is what Bruce Bugbee² calls "your passion." Bugbee mentions three specific areas where passions are found and seven indicators for determining your passion.

The three areas of passions are:

- 1) *People*- Passions are often about people (like homeless, teenagers, etc.)
- 2) *Roles and Functions* – Examples of passions in the area of roles and functions are evangelizing or discipling.
- 3) *Causes*- Passions for causes are often found in examples (such as human rights, environmental concerns, etc.)

To identify the seven indicators for determining your passion, ask yourself

- 1) What would cause you to eagerly jump out of bed in the morning?
- 2) What image strikes an emotional chord with you?
- 3) What are your enjoyable achievements?
- 4) What do you become preoccupied with, or focus on most?
- 5) What's happening when you feel you are making a difference?
- 6) What energizes you?
- 7) Does your passion glorify God and edify others?

If you have not already done so, this is a good time to pause and identify your heart's desire. Regardless of what your Spiritual Gifts might be, they will not be used effectively if you are not serving in the area of your heart's desire.

YOUR MODUS OPERANDI

To get a complete snapshot of your ministry profile, you must know how you operate or function best. In other words, your most comfortable mode of operating. Some people operate best in large crowds, whereas others operate best alone or in small groups. For sure, God has made us not only in His own image, but as unique as the snowflakes that fall from the sky. Modern science has advanced genetic study so far that now computers can identify us, not by our fingerprints, but by the retina of our eyes (eye print). God has made us different. The Psalmist declares that we are *fearfully and wonderfully made* (Ps. 139:14).

I must confess that earlier in my life, one of my greatest shortcomings was the lack of patience with others who were not like me. I am an early morning person, so I judged others who were night people. We are not to devalue others because they operate best differently from us. What is your most comfortable mode of getting things done? How do you best relate to the environment? Your answer to the above questions will help you determine your personal style.

Your personality style determines how you can best serve. It is the last part of the *Where, What, How* equation that equals your servant/ministry profile. How you serve best can generally be determined by identifying yourself in a combination of one or two categories. The categories are: (1) People centered vs Task centered and (2) Structure centered vs unstructured centered. Do you prefer working with people rather than to do a task where your Spiritual Gifts could be used in like manner, or vice versa? Are you more at ease working in a structured environment than an unstructured environment where your Spiritual Gifts could be used?

YOUR GIFT MIX AND MINISTRY PROFILE

Remember, you probably have more than one Spiritual Gift; most of us do. Your different Gifts determine your Gift mix. Don't let the mixes mess you up. You may well have different levels of Gifts. Be sure that whatever they are, God has not given you more than you can bear. Your ministry profile will help you sort out the mix. Your ministry profile includes not only your Gift, but also your passion and your God-given personality style.

For example, just because you have the Gift of teaching does not mean that you can best teach anywhere or any subject. You may not teach best in the children's Sunday School department because you have not yet considered where you operate best. If your burning desire is spiritual growth, your modus operandi is to work solo and you are task-oriented, your best assignment would be to do one-on-one or small group teaching in the Church discipleship ministry.

Now that you have discovered your Spiritual Gifts and identified your ministry profile, the only thing left is the serving and stirring. The Nike commercial says, "Just do it." How many times does God have to tell us to do something before we just do it? Prayerfully, only once. The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but the power of love in action. God has said, *Stir up the Gift* (2Tim. 1:6). So let's stir it up.

Checkpoint

Q1. List the four prerequisites for discovering your spiritual gifts.

- A1.
- ◆ You must be a Christian.
 - ◆ You must believe the Word of God that says that God has given spiritual gifts for the Church today.
 - ◆ You must offer yourself to the Lord.
 - ◆ You must pray.

Q2. List the key factors involved with discovery of your spiritual gifts.

A2. Key factors are discernment, a burning desire, a willing attitude and the right motive.

Q3. What is the difference between a burning desire and willingness?

A3. You may have a burning desire, but if you are unwilling to go when God calls because of fear or some other hindrance, you will not go.

Q4. What do the scriptures say about motives as it relates to spiritual gifts?

A4. Without the right motives, everything is canceled. The gifts just will not be effective and God's will will not be done.

Q5. What does the author mean when he refers to "the wagon"?

A5. It represents Christ, the victor, rewarding gifts to the Church. The wagon represents a "wagon load" of gifts that Jesus gave to the Church.

Q6. What does acronym SHAPE stand for?

A6. S- Spiritual gifts, H-Heart, A-Abilities, P-Personal Temperament, E-Experience.

Q7. What are the three areas of passion when it comes to desire?

A7. People, Roles and Functions and Causes

Q8. What is meant by the terms "gift mix" and "ministry profile"?

A8. Your different gifts determine your gift mix. Your ministry profile includes not only your gift, but also your passion and God-given personality style.

Fill In the Blanks

1. Spiritual Gifts are only given to _____ believers. (born) (again)

2. Discernment involves _____ to God and _____ for God to speak to you. (praying) (listening)

3. Gifted people get _____. (results)

Helpful Dialogue

1. Based on what you enjoy doing, what you are successful at, what Spiritual Gifts do you believe you possess? Have others affirmed your conclusions?
2. If God is not hiding our Gifts from us, what hinders our discovery? Sin blocks our communication with God. Self-examination and true repentance may be your first step in discerning your Spiritual Gifts. Ask God for discernment.
3. What is your motive for discovering your Spiritual Gifts and ministry profile? The right motive is not to be seen or admired by men but to serve God.

What If I Don't Believe

If I don't believe...

- ◆ If I don't believe in Spiritual Gifts, I may never enjoy the blessing of being in the perfect will of God and the success that goes with it.
- ◆ I won't desire or be willing to ask God for discernment or to serve God through those Gifts.

A Challenge

Psalms 37:4

Philippians 4:6-7

1 Kings 8:17-18

Matthew 13:44-46

1 Corinthians 9:17a

Exodus 35:21; 36:6

James 3:1

Ephesians 4:8-10

Romans 12:6-8

1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 12:28-30

Ephesians 4:11

1 Peter 4:8-11

Psalms 139:14