

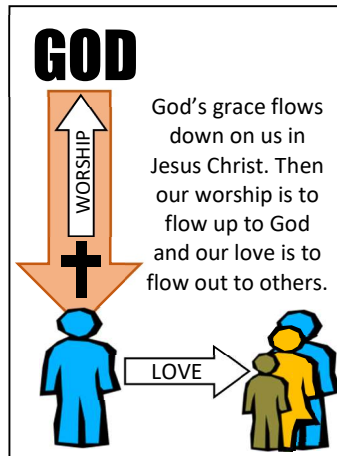


Lesson 8

# GIFTS: SERVING IN THE BODY

*Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities enabling us to serve the body of Christ in order to build it up into spiritual maturity. This means that your spiritual gifts are like your spiritual DNA—they define your unique characteristics as one born of your heavenly Father, just like your biological DNA defines who you are when you are born of your earthly father.... The fruit of the Spirit is worked out in our individual sanctification, whereas spiritual gifts are tools the Spirit uses through us to build up and sanctify the corporate body of Christ. Thus, the fruit of the Spirit is the character of the Spirit being seen in us, while spiritual gifts are ways He works through us to serve others. The distinction here is not a trivial one: Paul is telling us that character is more important than service, and that service without the character of the Spirit permeating the service is of no value (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3).*

—Ray Stedman



The God-Centered Life is a life of loving God and loving others (Matt. 22:36-40). Our love toward others begins with our physical family and our spiritual family (the church). God has created us each uniquely and has given us each unique gifts, abilities, passions, experiences, and opportunities in order to serve others through love in the body of Christ. All of us have a role and ministry in the church!

## YOU ARE UNIQUELY CREATED BY GOD!

- You have a wondrously, incredible design (Psalm 139:14).

*I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Marvelous are Your works,  
And that my soul knows very well.*

- You have a divinely-appointed purpose (Ephesians 2:10).

*For we are His workmanship,  
created in Christ Jesus for good works,  
which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

## YOU ARE UNIQUELY GIFTED BY GOD!

*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another,  
as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Peter 4:10)*

*What you are is God's gift to you;  
what you become is your gift to God.* —Hans Urs von Balthasar

*Who can gaze upon a model of  
our anatomy without wonder  
and awe? Who could dissect a  
portion of the human frame  
without marveling at its delicacy?  
We need not go to the ends of  
the earth for marvels...they  
abound in our own bodies.*

—Charles H. Spurgeon

*Without a doubt, the most complex  
information-processing system  
in existence is the human  
body. If we take all human information  
processes together, this involves  
the processing of  $10^{24}$  bits daily.  
This astronomically high figure is  
higher by a factor of 1 million than  
the total human knowledge of  
 $10^{18}$  bits stored in all the world's  
libraries.*

—Dr. Werner Gitt

*We are a divine work of art.*

—C. S. Lewis

*Each of our lives is the papyrus  
on which the Master is producing  
a work of art that will fill the  
everlasting ages with His praise.*

—S. D. Gordon

## What is a spiritual gift?

A special empowerment by the Holy Spirit given to each and every believer to perform a certain task for the building up of the church.

- It may be a \_\_\_\_\_ talent (Apollos, Acts 18:24).
- It may be an \_\_\_\_\_ talent (Bezaleel, Ex. 35:30-33).
- It may be a \_\_\_\_\_ talent (Timothy, 2 Timothy 1:6).

## When do I receive a spiritual gift?

- At salvation (1 Corinthians 12:18).
- At a time when it is specifically needed (2 Timothy 1:6).

## How many different gifts are there?

### What about the sign gifts?

- The biblical data is limited (Acts, 1 Corinthians 12-14).
- Their purpose is narrow (Eph. 2:20; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4).
- Their importance is downplayed (1 Cor. 13:1-13; 14:1-25).
- Their usage is restricted (1 Cor. 14:26-40).
- Their duration is temporary (1 Cor. 13:8-13).
- Their over-emphasis is dangerous (Matt. 7:22, 16:4; 2 Th. 2:9-10).

## Why do I receive a spiritual gift?

- For the \_\_\_\_\_ of God (1 Peter 4:11).
- For the \_\_\_\_\_ of the church (Eph. 4:11-16).
- For the \_\_\_\_\_ of believers (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

### Walking the God-Centered Path This Week

- *Discover your gift.* Seek the input of others. Consider where God has used you in the past. Use a spiritual gift inventory.
- *Use your gift.* Find ways to serve others at CBC with your gift.
- *Appreciate the gifts of others.* Realize the importance of each person and each gift in the body of Christ. We need one another!
- Complete the Lesson 9 study on *Good Works: Shining the Light.*

*Spiritual gifts are divinely given capacities to perform useful functions for God, especially in the area of spiritual service.*

—John F. Walvoord

*The gifts listed [in 1 Cor. 12:7-11] should not be reckoned as permanent abilities but possible ways in which the Spirit may choose to work at a particular time in a particular individual.* —D. L. Baker

*One person alone, no matter how gifted, can play a Beethoven symphony, act a Shakespearean tragedy, or compete against another team. The same is true in the church. It can never be a solo performance.* —David Garland

*The essence of prophetic ministry was forth-telling God's present Word to His people. ...Therefore, any verbal enforcement of biblical teaching as it applies to one's present hearers may properly be called prophecy today.*

—J. I. Packer

*Test the man who has the divine Spirit by his life. The false prophet exalts himself and wishes to have first place, and he is instantly imprudent and shameless and talkative, and lives in great luxury and in many other deceits, and accepts rewards for his prophecy and, if he does not receive them, he does not prophesy.*

—Shepherd of Hermas (~AD 150)

*A Christian who does not have a ministry is a contradiction... Because a hand is not doing its job, a foot is called on to do that work, and so on. ...The only way the church can function properly is by using the Spirit's gifts in the Spirit's power as it should.*

—John MacArthur, Jr.