

Text: 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:3–8; Ephesians 4:7–16

We've been talking the past couple of months about the roles and responsibilities of pastors. One responsibility that I think is often overlooked is the responsibility to help people discover and put to use their spiritual gifts. Yet doing just this is key to having a growing and thriving congregation.

Every believer has been given something by God—not simply for themselves, but for the church, for the world, and ultimately for the glory of Christ. Spiritual gifts are not optional accessories to the Christian life; they are essential equipment for God's mission.

Yet many Christians live unaware, uninterested, or uninvolved in the gifts God has placed within them. When we neglect the gifts, the church becomes lopsided. But when each member operates in the Spirit's power, the church becomes a living, breathing testimony to God's presence.

Today, we'll consider three truths: The Source of Spiritual Gifts, The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts, The Use of Spiritual Gifts

### 1. The Source of Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4–7)

Paul writes: "There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

#### A. Spiritual gifts come from the Triune God

The Spirit gives gifts (1 Cor. 12:4). There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all.

The Lord Jesus assigns ministries (1 Cor. 12:5). There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord

The Father empowers their effectiveness (1 Cor. 12:6). God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

The entire Trinity is engaged in equipping believers. This means:

Your gift is not a random talent.

Your gift is not self-made.

Your gift is a divine entrustment.

Every believer has at least one gift Paul says “to each is given...” (v.7).

Not just pastors, not just mature Christians, not just the extroverts—each.

You may feel ordinary, but God has placed something extraordinary in you.

There's some debate over exactly how many spiritual gifts there are.

Some say there are as few as nine and I've seen others who claim there are more than thirty. I tend to take the middle ground and see 18 clearly laid out in scripture.

**Leadership:** encouraging and helping others to build the kingdom of God  
([Romans 12:8 NIV](#))

**Administration:** helping with long term goals and remaining on task ([1 Cor. 12:28 NIV](#))

**Teaching:** instructing in truths and doctrines of God's Word

**Knowledge:** teaching and discipleship. The ability to learn, know and explain God's Word

**Wisdom:** the ability to discern works of the Holy Spirit and apply teaching and actions

**Prophecy:** knowing and proclaiming the Word of God with boldness  
([Romans 12:6 NIV](#))

**Discernment:** being able to recognize the truth about a situation

**Exhortation:** people with this gift are enthusiastic about the Lord and they can motivate others

**Shepherding:** looking out for the spiritual welfare of others

**Faith:** trusting God to fulfill His plan. People with this gift are encouragers

**Evangelism:** the building up of the church so others will be led to Christ

**Apostleship:** motivators, church planters, missionaries: people who look beyond the walls

**Service/Helps:** helping those in need of practical assistance ([Romans 12:7](#) NIV)

**Mercy:** The person with this gift shows acts of compassion

**Giving:** People with this gift will give freely and with joy to further His kingdom

**Hospitality:** Making people feel welcome, appreciated, and wanted ([1 Peter 4:9](#) NIV)

**Speaking in other languages:** tongues

**The interpretation of other languages.**

2. The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts (Ephesians 4:11–16; Romans 12:3–8)

A. Gifts build up the body of Christ

Ephesians 4:12 says they exist: “for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

Spiritual gifts are not for self-promotion but church edification. If gifts are used selfishly, they hurt. When used selflessly, they heal and strengthen.

B. Gifts help produce maturity

Paul says the church grows into “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

C. Gifts display God’s diverse beauty

Romans 12 lists prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership, mercy.

No one person has them all. And again, no person has none.

Paul’s metaphor of the body (1 Cor. 12:12–27) reminds us:

A body needs eyes and ears Hands and feet Strong bones and soft tissues

Some churches teach that one gift is more important than other gifts. Paul doesn't say this at all. Unity does not require uniformity.

### 3. The Use of Spiritual Gifts (1 Peter 4:10–11)

Peter writes: "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another."

A. Gifts must be discovered

B. Gifts must be developed Paul told Timothy to "fan into flame" the gift God gave him (2 Tim. 1:6). A gift is like a seed—it must be cultivated. It's like a muscle—it grows through use.

C. Gifts must be deployed

No matter how gifted someone is, gifts left unused do nothing.

The Spirit gives gifts "for the common good"—so if they're not used, people miss out on the grace God intended to send through you.

Conclusion: A Church Alive in the Spirit

Imagine a church where: Every believer knows their gifts. Every gift is valued. Every ministry is empowered. Every member serves with joy.