

I now want to get into the topic of spiritual gifts. There's a lot of confusion about spiritual gifts and I hope to clear some of that up today. Let me begin with a story.

The year was 1934. A poor prospector named Jacobus Jonker, walked across his small farm in South Africa. The recent heavy rains had washed away loads of silt, and he searched tirelessly for any small treasures the torrents might have turned up.

He scurried about, looking high and low for the fortune that would change his life. As he slogged through the mire, Jacobus caught a glimpse of an oddly shaped stone, roughly the size of a hen's egg. As he wiped away the mud, it began to look more and more like a diamond in the rough.

Three days later, Jacobus Jonker sold his "rock" for a fortune. It was a huge diamond that became known as the "Jonker diamond." It became one of the most famous gems in history.

That story got me thinking. What do you think Jacobus did for the three days before he sold the diamond? Obviously, he must have known he had something of immense value. Why did he keep it to himself? We can never know the answer to those questions, but here's another one. What would you have done? You would have treated it very carelessly, right? Absolutely not. Instead, you would hide it away in the safest place you could find.

When it comes to our spiritual treasures, we can often be careless. We end up living impoverished spiritual lives, when a fortune in spiritual treasure lies hidden from us just waiting to be discovered. That is why I think it is important to spend some time talking about the gifts of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit give spiritual gifts to every believer so the work of God may be accomplished. It's very important that we understand this. Spiritual gifts are not for such a certain few. Perhaps you've heard of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in which only the Spirit is given only to a chosen few. The fact is the term, baptism of the Holy Spirit isn't found anywhere in the Bible. The fact that every believer receives a gift of the Spirit is repeated in scripture.

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT

Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. 1 Corinthians 12:7 MSG

There is a difference between life gifts or talents and spiritual gifts. There are many very gifted non-believers and when we see their talents in action, we may be amazed at what they can accomplish. Spiritual gifts are given only to all who put their faith in Jesus Christ. The reason God gives spiritual gifts are for the common good, so we can help each other, so that the work of God may be accomplished.

Some say, I'm not so sure I have any spiritual gifts. But the Bible says you do, "A spiritual gift is given to each of us." It can't get much plainer than that. If you have any doubt about that, then you're faced with a choice. Which will you believe, your doubts or the word of God?

I'm going forward trusting that you believe you have gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Now it may well be that you haven't discovered what your SG are or that your SG have remained dormant from lack of use. If that's that case, I hope today's message will help you unwrap your gift and that you will be encouraged to use it.

Terrible thing to go through life and not accomplish what God has created you to do.

"There are two great moments in a person's life: the moment you were born and the moment you realize why you were born." Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell

Knowing your spiritual gifts is essential to understanding why you were born and why you were born again. God has created and gifted you uniquely and if you don't use your uniqueness in service to others there will be some of God's work which will not be accomplished.

We have a sign that hangs by our front door that says, The world needs who you were made to be. For me that means I don't have to be a world famous preacher or the next Dr. Livingston, it means I need to be the me I was created to be. The only way I can truly be the person I was made to be is to claim and use the spiritual gifts I have been given. It is the same for you.

God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us to do good works, which God planned in advance for us to live our lives doing. Ephesians 2:10 NCV

This is really an awesome thing to consider. We have within our power the ability to decide whether or not we will discover the gifts God has given us and use them according to God's plans and our decision will either slow down or advance God's plan for the world. You have been given spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit so that through you God can accomplish his work in our world.

Spiritual gifts are given according to God's will.

All these things are produced by the one and same Spirit who gives what he wants to each person. 1 Corinthians 12:11 CEV

The Holy Spirit has given you the gifts that he wants you to have. Two dangers: Thinking our gifts are not very important, thinking our gifts are the most important. The truth is all spiritual gift are of the same importance.

We see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it. 1 Corinthians 12:18 MSG

Just God designed the human body so that the body needs all its parts to fully do what it was created to do, so God gifts different people within the church and the church needs all its part to do what it was created to do. Because of that, all gifts are of equal importance. All spiritual gifts are supernatural, though gifts are more sensational and visible, while others are more behind the scenes. And just as different parts of the human body rely on other parts, so different parts of Christ's body must rely upon others.

Someone has broken down the Spiritual gifts listed in Roman 12 and 1 Corinthians 12 into 4 broad categories

Gifts of the Heart Faith Giving Helps Hospitality Mercy

Gifts of Action Administration Apostleship Leadership
Pastoring/Shepherding Encouragement/Counseling

Gifts of Proclamation Discernment Evangelism Knowledge Prophecy
Teaching Wisdom

Gifts of Inspiration Healing Miracles Tongues Interpretation of Tongues

I want to tell you a story that may help you understand the Spiritual gift you have. As you listen to this story, what specific needs of this family do you pick up on? What might you do to meet these needs?

Leah & Mark are members of your congregation. They have 2 daughters are ages 6 & 4. They're expecting their third child in 3 months. Leah just learned that to prevent early delivery, she'll be hospitalized for the next 4 – 8 weeks, with total bed rest. Her previous pregnancy ended in a stillborn child and she's extremely anxious over the health of this baby.

Mark's job requires that he travel occasionally. In addition, he has sole responsibility for his elderly grandmother.

Assuming the baby is delivered successfully, Leah and her newborn will face a lengthy recovery period at home.

If you picked up on the fact that this family will need childcare for their daughters, you likely have a gift of helps.

If you picked up on the grief and anxiety Leah is facing, you likely have the gift of encouragement or shepherding.

If you picked up on the cost involved in a lengthy hospital stay and thought you would like to help share those cost, you likely have the gift of generosity.

If you picked up on the physical needs of Mark and the daughters; laundry, meals, so forth and thought you could organize some people in the church to take turns providing food or helping out in some other way, you likely have the gift of leadership or administration.

If you picked up on the responsibility to care for the grandmother, you likely have the gift of mercy.

If you thought about how you could use this story as an illustration of a life lesson, you likely have the gift of teaching.

You might have picked up on something else. However, you thought you could help this family, it reveals something about your Spiritual gifts. There are many different gifts and each and every one of them benefits the family.

