

5 STEPS TO DISCOVERING AND DEVELOPING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Spiritual gifts are not optional to the Christian life but absolutely necessary as together we live out our purpose to glorify God.

1. PRAYER

Ask God daily to reveal your gifts. Acknowledge that He has gifted you and that He wants to use you in a special way. Let God know that you're open and willing to be used by Him to bring glory to His name. Set your heart on making a difference for God's Kingdom.

Remember, God's purposes to work through you are based upon His strengths, not yours alone. He may choose to take you into areas of service in which you're naturally weak, to reveal His strength and bring glory to Himself.

2. ASK OTHER CHRISTIANS.

Those closest to you can give you insight and discernment into your spiritual gifting that you might not even see. For instance, you might think that your tendency to show mercy to others is just natural and that everyone should have it. Those close to you might recognize that it's not natural but a spiritual gift. On the other hand, you might aspire to the spiritual gift of leadership but those close to you could disabuse you of that notion if they have never seen a leadership trait in you. Whether it's your parents, close friends or members of a small group that you're a part of, ask those around you!

3. START SERVING

Using our gifts are about action. We will never develop them without engaging in ministry. As we begin to serve, both within and outside the church, our gifts and passions will begin to emerge. Ask yourself, where did you see your service bearing fruit? Is God using you to lead? To walk alongside someone? To share the gospel? To administrate? In what ways are those serving along side you affirming your gifts?

4. FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHERS WHO HAVE YOUR GIFTING

One of the best ways to develop your gifts is to be intentional to place around your life other people who have your gifts. Get to know them. Be intentional to learn from them and allow what God has taught them about their gifts to instruct you in how to develop yours. If you can teach, get around other teachers. If you are about evangelism, join a group of those who love to share the gospel. Like most skills, spiritual gifts can be developed and improved, so be sure to develop yours!

5. LEVERAGE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO GLORIFY GOD.

Our spiritual gifts are given for a very specific purpose. Spiritual gifts are not given for our pleasure or our amusement. They are not given so that the church can be entertained when they gather together. They are a means to an end. They are given to shine a light on God's Kingdom and to reach people for Jesus. So, in the back of your mind, always be thinking, "how can my spiritual gifts be utilized to grow the Kingdom of God? How can my gifts be utilized to lead people to Jesus?"

A WORD ABOUT “SPIRITUAL GIFTS TESTS”

A “spiritual gifts test” is a manmade tool meant to help believers discern their spiritual gifts. The believer answers a series of questions designed to discover his or her specific gifts. When kept in the proper perspective, the test can be a helpful tool, but we must remember it is limited. How can a human tool effectively measure the infinite workings of the Spirit of Christ?

At their best, spiritual gifts tests may identify spiritual gifts *and* natural talents and abilities. But at their worst, since they cannot distinguish between them, the tests could actually encourage believers to “serve” according to our natural talents rather than relying on the power and equipping of the Holy Spirit.

So, while spiritual gifts tests can be useful, we must remember their limitations and proceed with caution. The following three cautions can help us properly use this tool:

1. SPIRITUAL GIFTS TEST CAN ENCOURAGE US TO PUT OUR PURPOSES IN PLACE OF GOD’S PURPOSES.

Since spiritual gifts tests tend to reveal our own strengths and talents, we may use the assessment to find ways to “serve” that can be undertaken in our own power. We may hesitate to step out in ways that require the Spirit’s power, thus missing out on God’s greater purpose. Serving in our own strength brings us credit. Serving in God’s strength brings Him glory and honor.

2. SPIRITUAL GIFTS TESTS CAN LIMIT THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Even when the test does reveal a true spiritual gift, we may find ourselves only serving in ways that use that specific gift. We may forget that as a believer we have the entire person of the Holy Spirit residing within us. We have access to all of His power to follow and obey God in any way He leads. Yet we may hear God’s call but reject it because “that’s not in our area of gifting.” With the presence of the person of the Holy Spirit, God can do anything through our life He chooses to do.

3. SPIRITUAL GIFTS TESTS CAN BECOME AN EXCUSE.

It’s a big temptation to follow something concrete and “human” like a test rather than depending on the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit. It’s much easier to pull out that pat answer – “That’s not my gift” – than to lay aside our own plans and seek God’s will and direction. It also gives our “no” a “spiritual” reason.