

# USE THAT GIFT!

## A Study of the Spiritual Gifts



Revised With Bible Study Guide

By Rev. Jon Byler

### ***About the author***

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Published by Leaders Serve

In Kenya, published by Centre for Christian Discipleship  
Box 59115 Nairobi Kenya, East Africa

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## Introduction

God's plan for his people is exciting! He has a tremendous vision for his church and you are a part of that vision. **GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOU IN THE CHURCH AND HE WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT IT!**

An important part of that plan is for you to learn about the spiritual gifts that he has graciously given to the church. As you recognize his plan and begin to walk in it your walk with Christ will take on new and dynamic dimensions. You will find that you have an important role to play in the life of the church. You are not a “nobody” in the kingdom of God; you are a special part of the body of Christ.

These teachings were originally presented to Juja Joy Christian Church at the beginning of 1994 and were later revised in seminars. It is my prayer that you also may benefit from them and that along with the brethren there will begin to “Use that Gift.” You will benefit more if you open your Bible and read the passage being discussed. Please feel free to read, study and take notes. However, I request that you do not photocopy the booklet.

I acknowledge the blessing that many people have been to my life through books and through their teaching. I wish to give credit to the following sources for their insight and blessing to my life in the understanding of spiritual gifts:

The Holy Spirit and You, by Dennis and Rita Bennett; You and Your Spiritual Gift, by Kenneth O. Gangel; How to Develop Your Spiritual Gift, published by Eternity Magazine; Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, Advanced Seminar Textbook, “How to Understand Spiritual Gifts”, by Bill Gothard

May God Bless you and give you insight as you read.

Pastor Jon Byler  
Revised 1997, 2001

## Part One UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

God's plan for the church is dynamic. He wants the entire church to be actively involved in some form of ministry. There are so many things that a church can do if only the members will be involved. The Sunday School ministry can be developed, drama clubs can be organized, hospital and prison ministries begun, evangelistic teams sent out, follow-up teams busy discipling new converts, choirs ministering in the church and schools, home cell groups led and nurtured, deacons ministering to the physical needs of the church, ushers active in ministry, and so many more. How will all this be done?

I believe that the secret lies in God's plan for the church and it involves the spiritual gifts that God has given to the church. This booklet is written to help you understand the mighty plan that he has for you and your church.

**Bible passage: Read Ephesians 4:7-16**

### **I. The Definition of Spiritual Gifts.**

What is a spiritual gift? A spiritual gift is **an ability given by God to each believer which enables the believer to do a special work in the church.**

This gift may be similar to a natural talent which every person possesses; however it is unique in that it is given and used by the Holy Spirit for a special work. Sometimes it is completely opposite or different from a person's natural talent; some gifts are incompatible with human talents, e.g.. gifts of knowledge, word of wisdom, etc. In other cases it may be a divine strengthening of a natural talent.

The word used here in v. 7 is translated "Grace" in English. ("neema" in Swahili.) In this place it has the meaning of divine enablement, e.g.. God's strength or power given to the believer, and clearly refers to one's spiritual gift.

### **II. The Distribution of Spiritual Gifts.**

#### **A. Spiritual gifts are provided to every believer. v.7**

**Vs. 7** says that grace (gifts) have been given to **"Each one of us."** We all have a spiritual gift. No believer has been overlooked in the distribution of gifts. You may not have yet discovered what it is, you may not be developing and using it but you have been given a spiritual gift.

It is so important that you recognize this simple but revolutionary idea. You have been given a gift by Jesus Christ. It then becomes extremely important to learn what it is and how to use it.

**We all have  
a spiritual  
gift.**

#### **B. Spiritual gifts are provided by Christ. v.7**

Notice that these gifts are not purchased by believers and they are not distributed by the pastors; they are given by Christ. It says, "As Christ apportioned it." Your spiritual gift is a gift from Christ especially for you! The pastor may be able to help you discover your gift or train you to use it but he cannot give you the gift and he cannot choose which gift you will get. Christ himself does this.

### C. Spiritual gifts are given in variety. v.11

In v. 11 we are told that there are different kinds of gifts. This is very important for us to understand. God does not give to everyone the same gift. He gives a variety. We have a need for many different gifts in every church. If we were all teachers we would have problems. If we were all prophets we would also have problems.

This list of gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers) is only one of several lists of gifts that are mentioned in scripture. (see Rom. 12 and 1 Cor. 12). We will not take at this point to study all of the gifts mentioned in scripture but as we continue we will study 19 of them. This list is specifically mentioning the leadership gifts that God has place within the church.

Realize that we have a variety of gifts. God has planned it this way so that we need each other and so that as we properly use our gifts in the church the church will be united and built up properly.

### D. Spiritual (Leadership) gifts are given for equipping the believers. v. 12

I want you to think for a moment about the work of pastors. If I asked you “What is the job of the pastor?” most of you would respond, “The pastor is to preach, counsel the members, visit the members, pray for the members, make plans for the church, help the youth, attend the meetings of the church, pray for the sick, witness to the unsaved, plan the crusades of the church, etc.” THIS IS NOT THE SCRIPTURAL WORK OF A PASTOR.

Notice why it says that these leadership gifts are given to the church. It is not so that the leaders can do all the work! It is so that they can “prepare God's people for works of service.” PASTORS ARE NOT TO DO ALL THE WORK OF THE CHURCH! The work of pastors is to help members do the work of the church! In the living church of Jesus Christ, each member has an important part to play. God's plan is for every member to be involved in some aspect of the work whether teaching, evangelism, counseling, or serving. The pastor is only to equip them so that they are able to do it well. That is why the pastor trains some to teach Sunday School, some to be youth leaders, some to lead prayer cells some to do follow-up, some to counsel, some to lead worship some to take care of the building, etc.

This is something we must see and understand. Each of us has a work to do in the church if the church is going to function properly. The work of leaders is to help you do the work you are called to do.

A church that fails to recognize this will always be a weak church. The pastor can work 90 hours per week as a leader and the work will still not all get done. This is not God's plan! He has a plan for you. It is not just to come to church on Sunday morning and say that you are a member of the church. You may very well have joined the church officially but **unless you are actively using your gift in the church you are missing God's plan for your life.** Church membership is not a gift!

**PASTORS  
ARE NOT TO  
DO ALL THE  
WORK OF  
THE  
CHURCH!**

## III. The Direction of Spiritual Gifts.

What direction will the proper use of Spiritual gifts take us? Notice three things that will happen when we are really using our spiritual gifts.

### A. The body is built up. v. 12

Paul says, “so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Spiritual gifts are given to us, not for personal gain, but to build up the body of Christ. They are not given just so that we

can feel good, but to build up the body of Christ, the church. The total needs of the church cannot be met unless you are doing your part to build up the body. There are areas where your church is weak and it is because someone is not doing his or her part.

Verse 16 says, **“From him the whole body,... grows and builds itself up as each part does it's work.”** What does this imply? Very simply, IF YOU ARE NOT DOING SOMETHING IN THE CHURCH, SOMETHING IS FAILING TO BE DONE. You do matter! You leave a hole; you leave a gap when you don't do what God has called you to do. On the positive side, it means that when you are using your gift the body will grow up and be strong. The strength of the body is determined not so much by the strength of the pastor but by how well the members are using their gifts.

### **B. Unity is attained. v. 13**

Verse 13 says, that we will, **“Reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God...”**

The beautiful thing about spiritual gifts is that it causes us to be interdependent. We really do need each other. My gifts are not all that the church needs. Your gifts are not all that the church needs. We need all of our gifts. God has designed this in a marvelous way so that for the body to function properly we all need each other.

You can see from this that when we are properly using our gifts we will come together. Our different gifts when properly used will help us attain unity. The “foot” and the “hand” will need to cooperate. The evangelist will come to the teacher for help, the prophet will ask counsel from the person who has the gift of mercy, etc. This is why Paul says in v. 13 that we will reach unity. Again in **v. 16** he talks of the body being held together by **“every supporting ligament...”** We are one and we belong together. I need you. You need me. We come together and support each other.

Recognizing and using our spiritual gifts will encourage unity because as we realize that we need each other we will stop talking negatively about each other and begin to appreciate that God has brought us together. Yes, we are different, but precisely because of that we need each other and when we recognize that need we will reach out to each other and embrace each other and thus experience unity.

This is also why **it is crucial that our gift is developed and used within the church.** If you leave the body and go off somewhere else to exercise your gift it will not produce the unity that Paul is talking about. The gift is given for the sake of the body so use it within the body. There is a place for other expressions of our gifts but I believe that the beauty of the church is marred when people come for Sunday service and then go out to join a ministry to exercise their spiritual gifts. There is a weakness in that model and scripture doesn't encourage it. If God calls you to a ministry; then the church should be able to bless you and send you to do that work. Then your work becomes an extension of the church and builds the church and strengthens its unity.

### **C. Maturity is expressed. v. 13b**

The third thing Paul says will happen as we properly exercise our spiritual gifts is that we will become mature (v. 13).

We cannot become mature as Christians or as a church until we are using the gifts that God has given us. This is a natural part of life even in the physical world. A baby doesn't learn to become a runner just by watching races on television. He must get up and try to walk. And when he has mastered walking he will learn to run and he becomes better and better thru practice.

Likewise spiritual maturity is not measured by how many wonderful sermons you have listened to, nor by how many seminars you have attended, how many people you have watched being prayed for, or how many prophecies you have heard. **Maturity is measured by how you are using your gift!**

Maturity also implies **growth**. We don't just start using our gift as fully mature persons. We will grow. Our gift must be developed. It is not given to us fully perfected. If you have the gift of prophecy you will make some mistakes. If you have the gift of teaching you will need to do some study and learn how to use that gift. If you have the gift of encouraging you will slowly learn how to effectively encourage others. If you have the gift of evangelism you will learn more things about how to effectively communicate the gospel.

So don't expect that just because you have been given the gift of teaching that you should be leading the whole service straight away. You may be given other work as you are learning. The pastor may suggest books for you to read to develop your gift. He may correct you as you develop your gift; another brother may do the same. That is good and healthy for it is helping us to grow.

Maturity is not just an individual thing. Paul says, **“The whole body...grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”** The church is maturing; the church is growing. As you and I learn to exercise our spiritual gifts the church will grow in maturity.

This is an exciting picture that Paul paints of the church. He sees a living group of people all actively involved, each growing individually and growing together. He sees each member actively using the gift that God has given to him or her. Some are giving, some are serving, some are teaching, some are prophesying, some are working miracles, some are doing evangelism, some follow-up, some are leading prayer cells, etc. But everyone is actively involved.

How about you? Are you a member of such a church? Are you such a church member? Know for certain that God has a job for you to do in your church. He has called you to belong there and to do a special work.

There are many areas of involvement that you can consider in your church.

- Prayer cells need leaders, assistants, and worship leaders.
- Outreach ministries: crusades, prison ministries, hospital ministries, etc.
- Drama ministries
- Evangelism. Person to person. Door to door. Crusades. School ministries.
- Follow-up. Help a new believer grow in the Lord.
- Choir.
- Serving as an usher, deacon or Sunday School teacher.
- Cleaning the church
- Giving
- Encouraging

Pray seriously and think about your gift and how God wants you to use it beginning right now.

**Maturity is  
measured by  
how you are  
using your  
gift!**



**Part Two**  
**GOD'S DESIGN FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

**Bible passage: Read 1 Corinthians 12. (also Rom. 12:3-8)**

**I. GOD'S DESIRE FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**

**A. Gifts are given to be known. v.1**

Paul says that concerning spiritual gifts he does not want the brethren to **“Be ignorant.”** God doesn't want us to be confused when it comes to spiritual gifts. He desires for us to know about them and how to use them. Ignorance of our gift produces ineffectiveness, confusion, division and misunderstandings in the church.

There are three stages that we can be at in our knowledge of spiritual gifts:

- a. To know that we have a gift.
- b. To know what it is.
- c. To use it without recognizing it as a gift.
- d. To use and develop it.

Don't feel bad if you don't yet know what your gift is, but be searching for it. It is possible that you exercising your gift without consciously being aware of what it is. Know that God delights in what you are learning as you read this material. He doesn't want you to be ignorant.

**B. Gifts are given in variety. v. 4-6**

Again, realize that we each have been given different gifts. Verse 4 makes it very plain, **“There are different gifts.”** The giver is the same, they belong to the same body, but the gifts are given in variety. As we saw in part 1, this is God's plan to make us dependent on each other. We should not expect or desire to have the same gift as someone else.

**C. Gifts are given to each one. v. 7**

Paul says, **“Now to each one...”** Each believer has been given a spiritual gift. There is no one who was accidentally missed or overlooked. Paul is quite confident that each of his readers possessed a special gift. Don't let Satan rob you of this vital fact. Even if you don't yet know what your gift is hold to this fact and fully believe it; God has given a gift to you!

<p><b>God has given a gift to you!</b></p>
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**D. Gifts are given for the common good. v. 7**

Paul says that **“to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”** Spiritual gifts are not given just for your personal enjoyment. They are not given for you to look at and admire. They are not given to you for others to marvel at. **THEY ARE GIVEN TO YOU AS A GIFT TO THE CHURCH.** They are given for the good of all. My gift is not really “my gift.” It is the gift that God has given to you thru me! We don't own our gifts, they are for the use of the body.

Therefore if you are not using your gift you are cheating us! If I don't use my gift I am cheating you. This is not just a personal issue, it is a corporate issue. We saw in part one that our gifts are given **“So that the body of Christ may be built up.” (Eph. 4:12)**

## II. GOD'S DESIGN FOR SPIRITUAL GIFTS. vs. 12-27.

Now let us turn our attention to the image that Paul gives to us in vs. 12-27. He compares us, the church, to a body. He compares the gifts that we have each received to the different parts of the body. His main point is that we are all different! Initially being different doesn't sound like such a good thing but in Christ's plan there is a beauty in diversity.

### A. The distinction (beauty) in diversity.

#### 1. Diversity produces unity. v. 12-14; 24-25

Paul talks of us as a body. He says in v. 12, **“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body.** And in v. 14, **“Now the body is not made up of one part but many.”** Again in v. 19, **“If they were all one part, where would the body be?”** It is impossible to have a body that is made up only of one part. Imagine a bunch of mouths together or a collection of toes. That cannot be a body! It takes diversity to make a body. This brings us together, just because we are different! The point is that because we are different we come together. Instead of going in different directions we join together.

#### 2. Diversity provides effectiveness. v.17

Paul says in v. 17, **“If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be?...”** In our physical bodies each part has a role to play. This makes us very effective. When I want to eat, I use my hands and my mouth; when I need to walk, I use my feet. When I want to write I use my hands to grasp a pen. The variety of physical parts I have ensures that many tasks can be done.

It is the same way with our spiritual gifts. When we need evangelism, we have a person with the gift of evangelism. When we have a baptism and desire to eat together we have people with the gift of serving. When we need teaching we have teachers. Paul is pointing out that the church would be chaos if we were all evangelists. Likewise we would not get much done if we were all prophets. Let us learn how to use the gifts to bring balance to the church. We should not walk like a dizzy person who has lost his balance. When all parts are functioning properly and respecting one another we will walk confidently and tall, balanced by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is so much work to be done in the church. If we all had the same gift not much of the work would be done. But in God's design more work gets done through diversity. Each one has a part to play.

#### 3. Diversity procures dependence. v. 21

Our diversity makes us depend on each other. In our human body the hand cannot function alone; it needs the arm, the elbow and the shoulder to function. The foot needs the leg to help it move. The foot cannot decide to go on a walk all alone! The eye needs the head to hold it in place. When we want to eat our eyes see the food, our feet bring us to the table, our hand brings the food to our mouth, our teeth chew it, our throat swallows it, our stomach digests it, and our blood stream takes it to all parts of the body! Each part is dependent on the others for its usefulness. Paul says in v. 21, **“The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don't need you!”** And the hand cannot say to the feet, **“I don't need you!”** Because we are different, we need each other.

The foot  
cannot decide  
to go on a  
walk all alone!

Likewise with spiritual gifts, we need each other. The evangelist can't say to the teacher, "I don't need you. I will just go off and exercise my own gift." The prophet can't say to the server, "I don't need your little gift, all we need is a word from the Lord." All of us need the gifts of the others. Find a brother or sister and confess to him, "I need your gift." This dependence is as God intended it and we need to rejoice in it instead of fighting against it.

#### **4. Diversity provides different priorities.**

If you could tell me what is the most important thing for the church to be doing I would learn something about your gift. Stop for a moment and ask yourself, "What is the most important work of the church?" Your response indicates your priorities and your priorities are often based on the gift you have.

Your gift will often determine what you feel is important in the church. If you have the gift of serving you will think the church should work hard to meet people's physical needs, but if you have the gift of healing you will want to see the church develop a healing ministry.

A person with the gift of evangelism will have different priorities than a teacher. The first will want to always be planning crusades. The latter will say, "Stop and let's teach the people that are already saved."

The point is that we are different and we should not argue and fight over what is most important. We need balance. We need evangelism and teaching; we need serving and healing.

#### **5. Diversity provides different perspectives.**

People that have different gifts will look at the same situation from much different perspectives and therefore respond in very different ways. Suppose there is a family in the church that is having serious financial problems after their business failed.

The person with the **gift of mercy** will be there giving comfort to the family and saying, "I know exactly how you are feeling."

The **server** will be going around the church asking people to contribute money so that the family can be helped.

The **teacher** will want to sit down with them and explain the biblical teaching on finances.

The **prophet** will barge right in and say, "I told them not to start that business, now see what has happened!"

Our gift will often determine our perspective on a problem.

Or take another situation. Suppose there has been a rebellious child in a certain family and one day in an act of defiance he takes a match and lights a fire that seriously damages the house. Several people come to visit them immediately after the fire. The **administrator** sees all the needs and begins to delegate tasks. "John, you go and tell the pastor what has happened; Susan call some of the youth to come and clean up this mess; Kamau, go and ask the chief if there is any empty house we can put the family in tonight...". Again the person with the **gift of mercy** will come and with a big hug (they like to touch!) offers sympathy to the family. The person with the gift of **giving** will run over with his last coins to help. The **servant** is busy knocking on doors to raise money that is needed and to get clothes and shoes for the child. The **prophet** comes in with the report, "I have been warning you about the sin of rebellion and now God has brought his judgment upon you." At this the person with the gift of mercy bursts into tears!

Our gifts are like glasses or spectacles through which we see the world. Each of us will see things differently because of our unique gifts. We must realize these differences and learn to respect it. We need to know why we respond a certain way and we also need to understand why another brother is responding a certain way. Again we need balance in the exercising of our gifts.

## 6. Diversity produces different potentials.

Each gift that God has given brings balance to the church because it has a unique potential for good.

A teacher has the potential to develop a good teaching ministry and to strengthen the Sunday School program.

An evangelist has the potential to develop a strong outreach program, plan successful crusades, and train others in evangelism.

The server may have the vision to start a program to help needy children in the area.

The person with the gift of administration has the potential to develop the organization of the church and make sure that are properly planned and carried out.

Our gift will determine our different potentials . We need to realize that when we using our gifts properly the church will be strengthened. But if we don't use them properly the church will be damaged.

Each gift has with it its own strengths but at the same time it has potential weaknesses. The person with the gift of mercy has a problem confronting sin in someone's life while the prophet has a problem in showing mercy. The evangelist might be weak in teaching while the teacher is normally weak in evangelism. Our gift will determine our natural potential and our potential weakness.

Our gift will  
determine our  
different  
potentials

feeding

things

are

## B. The danger in diversity.

While there is beauty in diversity there is also a danger. Paul mentions two common dangers when it comes to thinking about our spiritual gift.

### 1. Thinking too lowly of oneself. vs. 14-20

The first danger is to think too lowly of oneself. Paul says in v. 15, **“If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.”** In the church if the person who has the gift of serving says, **“Because I am not in the front leading the service, I am not really a valuable part of the church,” he/she would not for that reason cease to be a part of the church.**

**EACH GIFT IS IMPORTANT.** In fact Paul says that some of the seemingly insignificant parts of our bodies are especially valuable. Think about your toes. They are a very small part of your body but without them we would all fall down! You may think that your gift is small. Maybe you are cleaning the church. It seems to be a small thing. In fact when you do your job probably no one notices it. But when you don't do it we all suffer!

The people who have “service” gifts usually suffer from this danger of thinking too lowly of themselves. Maybe you are giving generously in the offerings. Maybe you are ushering, cleaning the church, lighting the lamp, doing follow-up, encouraging, or

showing mercy. If you have one of these gifts you likely think that you are not important. Paul would say to you, “That is a sinful view of the gift God has given you. See yourself as important.”

## **2. Thinking too highly of oneself. vs. 21-26**

The other danger affects those with leadership type of gifts, the prophets, evangelists, teachers, miracle workers, worship leaders, committee members, etc. The danger is that they think they are so much more important than the others. They can easily look down on the other gifts as unimportant and think, “Because you aren't a dynamic speaker, I don't need you.” People with these gifts feel self-sufficient and need to be reminded that they need the “lowly” gifts.

If this is your temptation Paul would also say to you, “It is a sin to look down on the others. You need to repent and begin to acknowledge that you need them.” Realize that we have a variety of gifts. God has planned it this way so that we need each other and so that as we properly use our gifts in the church the church will be united and built up properly.

Realize also that it isn't wrong to think about yourself. Some people believe that it is a sin to think about oneself. However, Paul encourages us to think of ourselves with “sober judgment.” (Rom. 12:3) In light of what we have learned about spiritual gifts we should be sober in our self-evaluation. After all, what we have is a gift, something that we didn't deserve or work for so why should we boast? In addition, it is a gift given to us for the sake of the others in the church, not just to make us feel good about ourselves. When we recognize our gift we must think of ourselves in a balanced way, not too highly nor too lowly. God has a special design for us and as we recognize what it is we will see ourselves in that design and have a proper perspective of ourselves.

God's plans are always so good. He has a marvelous design for you and your church to work together as a body.

These first two parts have laid the scriptural foundation for us to now begin to look at the specific gifts that God has given to us.

For the purpose of this teaching I have divided the gifts into three categories: “Leadership gifts”, “Service gifts”, and “Supernatural gifts”.

The listings of gifts mentioned in Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12 and Eph. 4 will be combined and presented in order of the categories in which they fall. In some cases therefore the gifts will be presented in a different order than you read in the scripture. (See the appendix for a complete listing of the gifts as they appear in scripture.)

Each of the gifts has within it strengths and also potential weaknesses. For the purpose of honesty, I will include the potential weaknesses along with the strengths. The weaknesses are not given by God, his gift is perfect. However, as we use the gifts our human weaknesses are uncovered and we must allow the Holy Spirit to help us correct the areas that keep the gift from being most effective.

## Part Three LEADERSHIP GIFTS

**Bible passage: Read 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11**

In this chapter we will look at the gifts of leadership which Christ has given to the church.

### **I. God's design for leadership gifts.**

What is God's plan for the leadership positions mentioned by Paul in these passages?

#### **A. Leaders are given to equip the church for ministry.**

God's plan for the church includes a special role for those with leadership gifts. As we saw in part one the role of those with leadership gifts is to **“Equip God's people for works of service.” (Eph. 4:12)** Contrary to what most people believe, it is not the work of the leaders to do all of the work of the church, it is their work to enable or equip the members to do the work.

This is an exciting concept that we need to fully grasp! God's plan is so much richer than ours. If each member of the church would take seriously the call that God has given to him/her imagine all the things that would be done instead of waiting on the pastor to do the same things. That this is actually the plan of God can be demonstrated from scripture in three crucial areas.

#### **B. The work of equipping demonstrated in the life of Jesus.**

Much of Jesus' ministry was done in the public eye and received great attention. However, the most significant work that Jesus did during his three years of ministry was that of equipping the twelve disciples and others who would carry on his ministry.

His desire to train others is clearly seen in **Luke 9:1-6** when he sent out the Twelve to heal and to preach the gospel. They had seen him doing the same and now it was time for them to be involved. They went, did what was requested of them and then they reported back to him when they finished (see v. 10). This greatly increased the effectiveness of his ministry.

**Jesus was more interested in equipping than equipment!**

His ministry was further expanded a short time later when he sent out 70 disciples. We find this account in **Luke 10:1-24**. More and more people were equipped to do this crucial work. Jesus was more interested in equipping than equipment! Too often we focus on the equipment and forget about equipping.

#### **C. The work of equipping demonstrated in the life of the early church.**

The early church also recognized that the work of the leaders was to train others. In **Acts 2:42** we read that one of the characteristics of the early church was a seriousness in receiving teaching from the apostles.

In **Acts 6:1-4** a great problem was solved when the apostles delegated the work of serving to the newly appointed deacons. They wisely recognized that if they tried to do everything in the church some very important things would not be done properly.

Also in **Acts 13:1,2** we find the account of Paul and Barnabas being sent out. The church had prepared them and at this point they were ready to be commissioned to the work to which God had called them.

From the New Testament we can see that **the true measure of a church is not the number of members, but the number of ministers.**

#### **D. The work of equipping demonstrated in the life of Paul.**

Paul is a good example of a leader who equipped others for ministry. Whenever he traveled he had a group of disciples with him, both for helping with the work and at the same time receiving training for further service. (See Acts 13:5; 15:40; and 17:14,15 for a few examples of this.

In **2 Tim. 2:2** we find Paul's leadership philosophy clearly spelled out. He says, **“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”** This is the special task of leaders, to train and to pass on to others the teachings they have received.

There are four specific leadership gifts that are mentioned in Eph. 4 and 1 Cor. 12 and we can now turn our attention to them. These four are actually offices or positions within the church, but each office also reflects the gift associated with the office.

## **II. Apostles**

Apostles are those who were especially used of God to establish the church. Originally they were those that were witnesses to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-22). In this sense there will never be other apostles like the “Twelve”. But the word “apostle” literally means **“one who is sent.”** The apostles were “sent” by God for a special task, to lay the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20) Even today there are those that function in this role. They have **a special gift for starting new churches, giving birth to new works and new visions.**

Apostles help the church to grow by “giving birth.”

#### **A. Strengths of the gift.**

Present day apostles are visionary persons usually with a **strong drive to keep moving on.** Paul, the apostle, gives this vision in **2 Cor. 10:15,16** **“Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.”**

Another strength of an apostle is his **ability to move forward in spite of much opposition.** They are able to keep their eyes fixed on the goal and continue on no matter what obstacles come in the way.

#### **B. Potential weaknesses of the gift.**

The corresponding weakness of the apostle is **a tendency to trample over people** in the process of accomplishing the goal. The goal becomes most important, relationships become secondary.

Persons with this gift also tend to be very **weak on details.** They look at the whole picture but usually need someone to execute the plan.

### C. The gift illustrated from scripture.

We have already noted the apostle Paul as a biblical example of someone with this gift. His burning vision was to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth and nothing could stop him.

Interestingly, the story of his conflict with Barnabas over the issue of John Mark in Acts 15:36-40 gives some practical insight on the different gifts. Paul, the apostle, didn't have time for a second chance while Barnabas, the encourager, wanted to allow him to try again.

## III. Prophets

Prophets are **those who have a message from God for a particular situation**. At times this is a prediction of the future (foretelling) but at other times it is simply expounding or explaining the word in a way that speaks to a particular situation (forth telling). This at times is done in a “supernatural” way, i.e. thru a special message for the church given during a time of prayer or speaking in tongues. We will look more closely at the supernatural aspect of this gift when we focus on the supernatural gifts. At other times this gift is exercised thru a teaching or preaching ministry in which the word of God is proclaimed. (See examples of this gift in operation in Acts 11:27-28;21:9-11 [foretelling] and 15:32 [forth telling])

The primary work of prophets in the early church was to build up and strengthen the church founded by the apostles. (See esp. Acts 15:32)

They helped the church grow by being “strengthened.”

### A. Strengths of the gift

Prophets are people who are very **sensitive to the Spirit of God**. They are able to hear the voice of God for a particular situation. The person with this gift is often a **prayerful** person.

This gift has the power to **bring great encouragement to the body**. A word from the Lord can provide hope to the discouraged and give courage to continue on to a battle worn saint. It can provide direction to the church or an individual. Prophecy can be used of God to reveal sin which can convict sinners of their need for God or bring believers to repentance.

With the tremendous potential of the gift of prophecy it is little wonder that Paul encourages us to seek it. (1 Cor. 14:1)

### B. Potential Weakness of the gift

The gift of prophecy is an easily misused gift. The prophet tends to **see things in black and white**, that is there is no middle ground. Things are either completely right or totally wrong. The prophet can easily see the wrong and **judge a person** without considering the motive behind the action which may have been right. Thus, the prophet **often comes across as harsh and judgmental**. In confronting sin the prophet **often damages relationships** without realizing it or meaning to do so. By alienating people the prophet often finds him/herself with very few close friends.

It is **difficult** for a person with the gift of prophecy **to submit to spiritual authority**. After all, the prophet has heard from God himself, who is the pastor to tell him anything? This can make it difficult for the prophet to be corrected.

Another potential weakness of the gift is **manipulation**. The prophet can use the information God has given to him/her to manipulate others and seek to control them.



### C. The gift illustrated in scripture.

In Acts 15:32 we are told of two prophets, Judas and Silas, who “did much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.” This shows clearly the positive effect that prophets are to have on the church. Paul was warned of coming danger by the prophet Agabus in Acts 21:11.

## IV. Evangelists

Evangelists are **those with a special calling to win others to Christ**. We are all called to be witnesses of what Christ has done and to bring others to Christ (see Acts 1:8,8:4) but there are some with a special gift in this area.

### A. Strengths of the gift

These persons are especially gifted and able to be **effective in seeing people respond to Christ**. Their primary focus is to “win souls” and in this work they are very effective. They have a **great concern for the lost** and often challenge others to share this burden.

The strength of the evangelist is this focus on bringing people into the kingdom of God. Evangelists enable the church to grow by “addition.”

### B. Potential weaknesses of the gift.

The corresponding weakness is **a failure often times to properly care for those who have been saved**. It is crucial for an evangelist to work along side others with nurturing gifts. The evangelist may bring someone to salvation and then immediately after praying with the person he runs off to another person to again share Christ. The first convert may be left without any nurture and die spiritually before taking the first step.

Another potential weakness of the evangelist is his **tendency to run off and do his own thing**, ignoring the rest of the body and seeing all others as “cool” or “carnal” believers. He may leave the church to start an evangelistic ministry with others of the same gift. This often results in a ministry that is weak on follow-up and produces converts that may have difficulty being committed to a church. It also leaves the church weak in evangelism since the person strong in that area has gone away from the church.

Another danger that the evangelist needs to take care to avoid is the tendency to be so committed to his calling that he **neglects family** and other responsibilities as he goes out.

### C. The gift illustrated from scripture.

The story of Philip in Acts 8 is a good example of this gift in operation. In the early church the evangelist was often an itinerant preacher, nearly a missionary, in contrast to the pastor who was stationed at one location. Philip was a deacon who used his gift of evangelism to bring many people into the kingdom.

## V. Pastors/teachers

Pastors/teachers is really one office with two applications. (We will look more closely at the gift of teaching in another section.) They are **those who God uses to “shepherd” the church**. They are especially gifted in the area of teaching. They give oversight and spiritual guidance to a local body.

In scripture the term “elder” is used to refer to this office in the church. (see Acts 20:28-31 and 1 Pet. 5:1-5). This gift is particularly used to bring the other gifts together and to strengthen them. It is particularly the work of the pastor to “equip the saints.”

The “office” of the pastor is often filled by persons who may have a different gift. For example a person may be in the position of a pastor but his primary gift is evangelism. This is particularly true in areas where the church is young and fast-growing.

When this happens it is quite likely that the church will be very weak in teaching. At other times the church may be pastored by someone with the gift of the prophet. When this happens many people may be hurt or offended with his harsh approach and his quickness to judge the weak. The pastoral gift may be exercised by others in the church who are not given a title of “pastor.” For example a prayer cell (or home church) leader may have this gift.

Pastors/teachers enable the church to grow in “stability”.

### A. Strengths of the gift.

The strength in the pastor/teacher is his **concern and care for the flock**. This is particularly the gift of nurturing. Just as the shepherd is concerned for the welfare of the sheep so the pastor is concerned for the welfare of the flock of Christ under his care.

The focus of the pastor is normally on the persons within the church. He desires to see them built up and to reach maturity.

The true pastor will often have the gift of **teaching**. His primary desire is to teach and train the church. His heart is broken with the needs of the people; he is **sensitive to the needs of the flock** and guides them with a tender hand.

### B. Potential weaknesses of the gift.

The corresponding weakness is often his internal focus and difficulty to look beyond what is happening within his sphere of work. He will see the continued need for seminars and teaching but **may neglect reaching the lost**. He needs the gift of the evangelist to balance him in this area.

He may also be **weak in rebuking sin** in the church. His pastoral heart tends to sympathize with the weak and to give them time to change. He may tend to exercise the gift of mercy more than the gift of prophecy and this can lead to tolerance of sin in the church.

The pastor may also be tempted to **“lord it over”** the others. His role as a leader will easily lead him to pride and an abuse of his authority. (See 1 Pet. 5:3)

His desire to serve the church may also lead to **overwork**. He **may fail to delegate** to others what they should do and, like the evangelist, he can easily **neglect his family** or other important duties as he serves the Lord. If he misunderstands his call he may also **fail to equip the saints**.

### **C. The gift illustrated in scripture.**

Timothy is a biblical example of one who served as a pastor. (1 Tim. 1:3). He was sent by Paul to pastor the church at Ephesus. He had to be urged to “command” false teachers to abstain from their teaching and exhorted several times not to be shy or timid in his approach to leadership. Paul gives the marks or qualities of a pastor to Timothy the pastor in **2 Tim. 4:2**.

### **CONCLUSION**

These gifts form what I call the Leadership Gifts. There is also the general gift of leadership mentioned in Rom. 12:8 which can be exercised in any of the above positions. The church needs the leadership gifts and the leaders need the others.

I believe that God has also planned that leaders work together as a team precisely so that they will benefit from the beauty of their different gifts. Scripture talks of “elders” in the church but never “The elder (pastor).” (See Acts 14:23; 20:17; and 1 Tim. 5:17.) There is real beauty when several brethren with different gifts can join together to lead a local body, recognizing and affirming the different gifts among themselves.

It is possible to have a gift of leadership without an “office” of leadership. You may not be called “The pastor” but you can do the work of pastoring if you have that gift. This gift is exercised can be exercised by the prayer cell leaders. There can be other teachers as well in the church besides the pastor. You may have the gift of evangelism without being called “The evangelist.”

Perhaps you have one of the leadership gifts. It may be undeveloped or possibly developing. The church needs these gifts on many different levels.

## Part Four SERVICE GIFTS

**Bible passage: Read Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Cor. 12:28**

There are six gifts that I have classified as gifts of service. They are beautiful gifts and so much needed within the church. It is my personal conviction that all of us have one of these gifts. Many refer to these gifts and possibly others as “motivational gifts” i.e., the gift that motivates us to do certain things. (This can include the gift of prophecy that is listed here but I have included under leadership gifts and supernatural gifts.) Paul lists 7 gifts in Rom. 12:6-8. We have already looked at prophecy and leadership briefly so they will be omitted in this list.

### **I. Serving (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28 “able to help others.”)**

The first gift that we will mention as a gift of service is the specific gift of serving mentioned here in Romans and also in 1 Cor. 12:28 where it is the gift of being “able to help others.” The gift of serving is a gift that **recognizes and finds joy in meeting a physical need.**

#### **A. Strengths**

The person with the gift of serving is **very quick to recognize a physical need and is motivated to do something about it.** This involves many types of service which the body of Christ needs. It may be hospitality in the home. All of us should be inviting people to our homes for meals but the servant will find great joy in doing so and desire to do so more and more.

Service may involve physical work at the church such as cooking, cleaning, preparing the room, washing the table clothes, or improving the compound. The ushers are servants (although this does not necessarily mean that all who are working as ushers have the gift of serving.) The gift of serving is needed in counting the money, preparing food for special events, etc.

The gift of serving often **reaches out to the poor and disadvantaged** in the church and in society. The person with this gift is quick to notice that someone's shirt is not good and they want to help solve the problem. Or they may notice that an old lady is not receiving proper medical attention and they will want to take her to see the doctor. When the server sees or hears about a sickness his/her mind will quickly go to the physical needs that person will have: housework that is undone, meals that need to be prepared, the shamba that needs weeding, etc. The giver will try to meet a financial need; the person with the gift of mercy will try to meet the emotional needs while the server will try to find things that can be done for the person in need.

The servant receives great joy in serving. Usually the person with the gift of serving is very quick to volunteer to do a work for the church. If there is work to be done the person with this gift will often just start working without waiting to be asked. The servant finds **joy in doing work which will allow another person to be free to do other work which God has called him to do.**

## B. Potential weaknesses

One of the potential weaknesses of a server is an **inability to say, “No”**. It is very difficult for the servant to refuse to do a task that he/she sees is needed. This can at times lead to **weariness** and a feeling of **discouragement** especially if the server feels a lack of appreciation from the one being served.

Another problem that the server may encounter is that his/her focus can be on the work that needs to be done to the point that **other duties are neglected**, even his/her own spiritual life. We can see this in the life of Martha when she was so concerned about the meal that was to be served that she missed the opportunity to be with Jesus.

Another potential weakness is that the server often **does not want to work with committees which deal with physical needs**. He/she will see a need and want to meet it immediately without going through established channels. The server would rather get the job done him/her self than to discuss with the church committee about how to meet the need.

The servant also has difficulty delegating tasks. He has the feeling that “I saw the need and I will meet it.” Again, this can quickly lead to overwork or exhaustion.

## C. Biblical example

Dorcas was an example of a person with the gift of serving. The account of her life is very short, in fact if she had not died we probably would not know about her! Acts 9:36-39 gives the testimony of her life. She was **“Always doing good and helping the poor.”** She had noticed the physical needs of the widows and had made clothing for them. Her death was a real blow to those who had benefited from her ministry.

## II. Teaching Rom. 12:7

The teacher possesses **an ability to present the truths of God's word in a clear and understandable way to people**. In the exercise of his gift the teacher helps the body to grow strong and stable and to become mature. Godly character is formed in the lives of people as they properly understand and apply the word of God in their lives. It is no accident that the Bible tells us that the disciples were first called “Christians” immediately after having been taught for one year by Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 11:25-26) The person with this gift finds great joy in seeing others grasp and apply truth to their lives. His insight comes through study and illumination in contrast to the message that the prophet receives without study.

### A. Strengths

The teacher is strong in **study** and delights in **discovering the hidden truths** of God's word. The teacher keenly strives to be **completely accurate** in all that is taught and makes much effort to confirm truth. The teacher is an **organized** person who enjoys presenting truth systematically, in a clear and logical pattern.

The teacher is an **organized** person who enjoys presenting truth systematically, in a clear and logical pattern.

## B. Potential weaknesses

The teacher, in his desire for accuracy, is often **critical of others** who disagree with his views. This can quickly lead to an **argumentative spirit** which Paul warns Timothy against in 2 Tim. 2:24,25.

The teacher can often be a **perfectionist** and can spend more time than is profitable dealing with minute issues or revisions.

The power of a teacher to present truth in a clear and convincing way can become deadly when he begins to teach error. **False teachers** are powerful and lead many people astray as this gift is distorted and misused.

## C. Biblical examples

Ezra is a biblical example of a teacher. The Bible speaks of him, **“Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.”** (Ezra 7:10) In **Neh. 8** the exercising of his gift is evident as he conducts an open air teaching seminar and brings teaching that produces change in the lives of the people.

## III. Encouraging

The gift of encouraging is mentioned in **Rom. 12:8**. This word is also translated “exhorting” and carries with it two meanings. One usage is to **comfort or encourage**. In another way it means to **admonish or to correct gently**. I will focus primarily on the former usage of encouragement.

### A. Strengths

The encourager is a **sensitive person**. He/she is quick to notice someone that is tired or pressed down and the first response of the encourager is to go and comfort the person or to bring a word of encouragement. The work of the person with this gift is **to lift others up**. This person is one who will likely say, “Did you notice brother so and so this morning. He looked so tired.” Or, “I can imagine that this sister is really burdened down because of caring for her sick mother and a fussy child day after day.” Then the person with this gift will try to find ways of encouraging the person.

The encourager **looks for practical ways to strengthen people**. Perhaps a genuine “Thank you” is used as a way of strengthening the server who has done a good job. Some will write a small note or buy a card to send to someone who is going through a difficult time.

With the idea of admonishing, the goal of the encourager is to help the person do what is right. The teacher explains what action is needed; the encourager (exhorter) will urge the believer to act in the right way. The motive of the encourager will be to help the person grow up in their faith and to be strengthened.

The encourager is usually someone who doesn't make a lot of noise but is quietly looking around for people that need to be lifted up. He/she receives great joy to see a person who was burdened smile again, or to see someone who was weak being strengthened. When this person does speak publicly or privately it is done in such a way that we are all encouraged to continue on with the good fight. Have you ever said of a certain brother or sister, “Whenever that brother comes to visit I always feel encouraged!” He probably has the gift of encouragement. He may even be correcting or admonishing but is able to do it in a way that brings positive results instead of condemnation.

## B. Potential weaknesses

The encourager is often tempted to **overlook the root** causes of discouragement and to provide encouragement in every situation even where it is not needed. For example, there may be a sin in someone's life that is causing him to look discouraged and the encourager will just try to lift him up without dealing with the real problem.

The encourager may also find it **difficult to really confront sin**, just as the person with the gift of mercy.

The person with this gift may also **easily become discouraged** and it is usually very difficult for him/her to receive encouragement from anyone else.

## C. Biblical example

Barnabas is a good example of a person who had the gift of encouragement. His name means **“Son of encouragement.”** (See Acts 4:36,37) Imagine being so much of an encourager that people called you “encouragement!” Barnabas was the one that encouraged the church to accept Paul (Acts 9:27). When Paul, the apostle, wasn't interested in working again with John Mark after he had failed on the first missionary journey it was Barnabas the encourager who was ready to give him a second chance. (See Acts 15:36-41)

## IV. Giving Rom. 12:8

The NIV says, **“...if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously.”** The person with the gift of giving is one who **joyfully gives from his own resources to meet needs within the kingdom of God.** He/she also looks for opportunities to multiply resources for the glory of God. He/she is eager to do this and receives much joy in doing so.

### A. Strengths

The giver generally is a **good manager** of his own resources. He is careful how he spends money in order that he may have more to give to others.

The person with this **gift will look for ways to make money for the kingdom.** When he/she asks God to bless the business it is not just for personal gain, but so that more can be given! This person may suggest that the church develop some money-generating projects so that we can support more missions.

Givers are not always rich people! Many with great wealth give very reluctantly while others who have very little give freely and with great joy. Many persons with the gift of giving are people of moderate or low incomes.

The person with this gift is not giving just to be seen by others or to be recognized. This is the person who willingly will reach into his pocket and produce what he has because of a need that has been brought to his attention.

We are not talking here about tithing. That is not giving, that is paying! We are looking at giving that goes beyond obligation and flows out of a joyful heart. The giver is one who gets excited about giving. In the case of a harambee there are some who will give reluctantly because this is what the church is doing and they are a part of us. But others will give cheerfully, willingly and even look forward to the day when we can give. They will be faithful to do all that they can do to help the church. They are the ones with this gift. They may also find ways to give that do not involve money and they are able to stir others up to give.

We need to recognize that this is a gift and we need to pray that it will be developed more in our church. We have much to learn about God's plan for our finances. Giving is not a glamorous gift, but where would we be without it?

## B. Potential weaknesses

One potential weakness that the giver has is that while busy meeting the needs of others **his/her personal and family needs may suffer**. If the giver hands over the money that was supposed to pay for his house rent it may be an act of faith that God can bless. But it also may be an act which creates much resentment at home and brings problems with the spouse and/or children. The giver should have good communication with his/her spouse and they should be in agreement on what is done with their money. The giver should not be the family treasurer!

The giver  
should not be  
the family  
treasurer!

The giver may also face a **temptation to control others with his money**. The person who gives is often in a position to give rules or guidelines about how it is to be used. This may be healthy or it may become a means of controlling and manipulating people.

The giver **can also misuse his gift with finances to benefit himself**. If God has given the gift and he is able to manage his money well it is possible to begin to just accumulate more resources for oneself rather than giving them away. The giver must be very sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in order to keep this in balance. He should not feel guilty for what God has blessed him with if it is being used properly.

The giver is also **susceptible to being taken advantage of**. When a person is recognized as having a generous spirit many people will try to use that person for their own personal gains. The giver will need much wisdom to know how to properly respond to all the appeals for money. He may also be **tempted to divert all his giving outside the church** in response to many requests for giving and thus fail to really strengthen the local church.

The giver **may allow his gift to remain stagnant**, especially if he has experienced hurt through giving. Therefore, Paul's instruction is for him to give "generously."

## C. Biblical example

The women who supported Jesus from their own means are good examples of givers. Mary, Joanna, Susanna and others are mentioned in **Lk. 8:3**. They gave generously so that Jesus was able to continue his ministry. They receive very little notice but without their support the ministry would have suffered.

The Macedonian churches mentioned in **2 Cor. 8:1-7** are an example of collective giving. These churches challenged others with their generous spirit even in the midst of poverty. It is possible for a church to be characterized as a giving church. Perhaps this happens when those with the gift of giving are active in stirring the church to give.

## V. Showing mercy Rom. 12:8

**"...if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."**

The person with the gift of mercy, like the gift of encouragement, is a very sensitive person. This person has **a special ability to be able to know when someone**



**is hurting or feeling any kind of pain and a desire to relieve the pain.** This produces a feeling of closeness with that person and an identification with their problem. (The same may be true on the positive side when the person is feeling excitement, the person with the gift of mercy can also rejoice with them. (See Rom. 12:15)

The person with this gift will try to remove the source of the difficult situation so that the person affected can 'feel' better. The encourager will try to enable the person to benefit from the problem; the person with the gift of mercy will try to remove the problem.

#### A. Strengths

The merciful person will be drawn into **close relationships with others** . He/she will be involved in visiting those who are in distress and offering sympathy and a listening ear. He/she will be able to nod in agreement and to **feel the pain of the person with problems**. This person will often use **touch** as a means of expressing closeness with the person in need.

The merciful person will be drawn into close relationships with others

#### B. Potential weaknesses

This person with this gift carries the potential to **become burdened** with the cares of others. This person may try to carry all the burdens of everyone who is in distress. Paul says therefore, to show mercy “cheerfully”. When the cheerfulness is gone it is time for self-examination and some changes.

Another danger that the person with the gift of mercy faces **is to rescue people too quickly**. Perhaps God is bringing some chastisement to a person's life and the person with the gift of mercy quickly tries to make them feel good. It is easy for the person with this gift **to tolerate sin** in someone's life since they are so understanding of the person's weakness. Here they need a prophet!

#### C. Biblical example

John is a good example of someone with the gift of mercy. He was usually close to Jesus and people with this gift often value touch. (See **Jn. 13:23-25**) He is known as the “Apostle of Love” and his epistles are filled with exhortations to love one another. Interestingly, he spent much time with Peter, a prophet thru and thru! Opposites attract even when it comes to spiritual gifts. Look for it in marriages!

### V. Administration 1 Cor. 12:28

The Bible also mentions the gift of administration in 1 Cor. 12:28. The person with the gift of administration is **one who can organize and direct the programs of the church**.

#### A. Strengths

The person with the gift of administration is a person who is able to pay much **attention to the details** required in organization. On a committee this person is the one

who will say, “Who is going to get the permit? Where is the list of ushers? What is our primary objective in this task?”

This person may not enjoy standing in front of the church but he/she delights in making sure that many details are taken care of. He possesses **a special ability to look at a task and to see it in terms of many small steps.** For example if the task is building a church the person with this gift will be thinking, “We need to hire 4 fundies which will require seeing the treasurer to get the money. Someone will need to go and get the lorries of sand so that it is here by 9:00 and then we will need to ensure that the cement is already here.....”

The administrator **is able to delegate tasks** to other people. This is the person who will organize the church for a special event like a harambee. He will have the overall plan in his mind and be able to say, “You cook the rice, you wash the plates, you set up the table outside, you clean the hall, etc.” Many people are set into action because of his delegation.

### **B. Potential weaknesses**

The administrator can easily **focus on projects rather than people.** He may tend to **drive people rather than lead them.**

He **may not take adequate time to explain to people what he hopes to accomplish** and therefore they are not so willing to cooperate with his instructions.

It is also possible for the administrator to use his gift of delegation **to avoid working himself.** He must see that his motive is to help get the work done, not to avoid being involved.

The person with this gift, like the teacher, **often is a perfectionist** and is never satisfied with work. He can waste much time redoing and striving for perfection which he never reaches.

The administrator may also tend to **overlook “spiritual needs”** with a focus on the practical physical needs that concern him.

### **C. Biblical example**

Nehemiah, the organizer, is an example of someone with this gift. **Nehemiah 3** gives the record of some of his organizational skills. He kept lists of names and assignments, typical of an organizer. He was able to accomplish a tremendous task quickly because of his good ability to delegate people and motivate them to do the work.

## **CONCLUSION**

We desperately need all of these gifts in the body of Christ. Service is so important and in fact is the essence of leadership! These gifts may not make much noise, but let them be missing and you will soon notice some big holes in the church. One author notices that 4 of the 7 gifts in Rom. 12 deal with service.

There is a sense in which we are all called to do these things. We are all called to give, to serve, to encourage etc. Don't feel that because giving is not your gift you don't need to give. No! But we are trying to discover what God has given to us in a special way for the building up of his body. When we have the gift we will find a special joy in doing it and it will be the focus for our ministry in the body of Christ.

There may be times when we exercise a gift that is not really our gift. In this case our motive will be different than the person who has the gift. The teacher may

clean the church but his motive is so that the teaching will not be distracted; the servant cleans just for the joy of doing the work.

Our challenge again is to find our gift and use it in the building up of the body of Christ.

**Part Five**  
**THE SUPERNATURAL GIFTS**

**Bible passage: Read 1 Cor. 12:8-11; 14:1-40**

We have already learned much about the gifts that the Holy Spirit has poured out on the church. In this section we will look at the final category of spiritual gifts, supernatural gifts. In our final chapter we will learn how to discover and develop our spiritual gift.

The gifts mentioned in this passage of scripture I call the “supernatural gifts.” In a sense all the gifts are supernatural since they come from God. But these gifts in a special way are supernatural **since they cannot be learned or developed in any natural way** as some of the other gifts can. For example a person can have a natural ability in speaking that the Lord can use as a gift of teaching but no one can have a natural ability to work miracles.

These gifts are also supernatural in the sense that **they display the power of God in unusual or supernatural ways**. They can be manifested in the life of any believer but they are generally evidenced only after the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The other gifts that we have studied very much affect our priorities and perspectives. Many call those gifts “motivational” gifts because they affect us in all that we do and provide motivation for ministry. These gifts are given to each one and determine our outlook on life and ministry.

The supernatural gifts are different in several respects. They are very flexible and can be released at any time in the life of any Spirit-filled believer. It is less likely that these gifts will form the motivation for our ministry. Some may exercise and develop one of these gifts and then we say that the person has, for example, a “healing ministry” or a “prophetic ministry.” (1 Cor. 12:28-31 seems to indicate this when it places gifts of healing and miracles right alongside administration and helps.) But often a believer may exercise one of these gifts in a particular situation and at another time a different gift will be in operation in his/her life. These gifts “flow” as the Holy Spirit leads and we must “flow” with Him if we are to exercise these gifts.

We will look at the potential and the pitfalls of these gifts in a general way and then look at each one individually instead of looking at the strengths and potential weaknesses of each one separately.

Our primary text for these gifts is 1 Cor. 12:8-11 but Paul actually teaches many things about these gifts in chapters 12-14. These chapters should also be read for a more complete understanding of the concepts discussed here.

**I. THE POTENTIAL OF SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.**

The supernatural gifts have much potential for good. There are several things that they are able to do.

**A. They are a special sign of God's presence. (1 Cor. 14:24,25)**

Paul says that the manifestation of the supernatural gifts (particularly the gift of prophecy) brings a testimony that “God is really among you.” When God is manifested in a way that is clearly supernatural it is a sure sign of his presence. These manifestations are especially powerful as a sign to unbelievers and can be useful in evangelism.

### **B. They release God's power to work in a certain situation.**

The supernatural gifts in a special way work to release God's power in a given situation. When healing is needed, the gift of healing brings God's power to the sick individual. When there is need for special knowledge or wisdom, those gifts release God's power to work. Of course to a certain extent all of the gifts are an extension of Christ's power but these seem to be so in an especially visible way.

## **II. THE PITFALLS OF SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.**

Although the supernatural gifts have tremendous potential for good, there are also several potential dangers associated particularly with them.

### **A. They can easily be given priority. (1 Cor. 12:28-31)**

Paul is writing to the church at Corinth that was blessed with all the spiritual gifts. But there were problems. One of the problems was that they were giving too much attention to the spectacular gifts, especially the gift of tongues.

There is a real temptation in the church to think that these spectacular gifts are more important and can be elevated to a very high position. If you find someone exercising the gift of healing people will run there. If you go to a kesha and the speaker is giving a word of knowledge people will say, "That was a tremendous kesha." There comes a real temptation to follow people because of the gift and to forget about the giver.

Again we need to realize that we need each other. We need the spectacular gifts and it should be our prayer that they will be more exercised in the church. But we must stop thinking only of the supernatural gifts. Allow them to flow as the Spirit leads and also use the other gifts you have.

There is a real temptation in the church to think that these spectacular gifts are more important

### **B. They can be used as a measure of spirituality. (1 Cor. 13:12; 14:20)**

One of the real dangers with any of the gifts, but especially with these awe-inspiring gifts, is that they can quickly become a measure of a person's spirituality. We look at a person and say, "Wow, did you see him prophesy?" or "Did you see how he laid his hands on someone and they were healed?" We conclude that the person is spiritually mature because he has exercised a gift. Remember that God can speak through donkeys so do not assume too much!

Therefore Paul warns the Corinthian church in **14:20** to "**Stop thinking like children.**" Their overemphasis on these gifts was just covering their spiritual immaturity. He also says in **13:12**, "**Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.**" So just because you have a certain gift that makes people stop and marvel, don't assume that you are spiritually mature, you may well still be a baby in Christ!

The spectacular gifts can be a source of spiritual pride. We have already looked at Paul's instructions to the church in 1 Cor. 12:12-26 that emphasize that we must not think we are too special because we have certain gifts. When you are tempted to

become proud remember that God has given you this gift to use within the church to build up the body.

### **C. They can be exercised without love. (1 Cor. 13:1-3)**

Paul also points out that it is very possible to exercise a spiritual gift and yet be a person without love. He says in **13:1**, **“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal...”**

No matter how gifted you are spiritually, if you don't have love for the brothers and sisters in the church you are just wasting your time. God is not only concerned about you using your gift but he wants you to do it properly in the context of LOVE.

When these gifts are exercised without love and consideration for the other believers confusion results. This is what happened in the church at Corinth and Paul had to correct some errors in 14:26-40.

To exercise our gift in love certainly eliminates pride and a looking down on those who have not been given “our” gift. It will also mean that we attempt to exercise the gift in a manner that builds up the body of Christ.

## **III. THE PROVISION OF SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.**

We will look at the 9 spiritual gifts mentioned in **1 Cor. 12:7-11** in 3 groupings: gifts of knowing, gifts of doing and gifts of saying.

### **A. Gifts of knowing.**

These three gifts all have to do with God revealing something to the person that cannot be naturally known.

#### **1. The gift of the message of knowledge**

The gift of the message (or “word”) of knowledge is **a gift that enables the believer to know something that could not be known from a natural source.**

If someone is able to say to a stranger, “You are suffering from a toothache,” this is the gift of knowledge in operation. God reveals truth supernaturally to the person. Sometimes this knowledge may come before the exercising of another gift such as the gift of healing in the example above. The gift of knowledge enables the sick person to be strengthened in faith and healing can occur. At other times this knowledge is revealed to bring conviction of sin in the life of an unbeliever or even a believer.

#### **The gift illustrated from Scripture.**

Jesus used this gift when he was speaking with the woman at the well in Jn. 4:17-18. He told the woman, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband...” Jesus knew this not through natural means but through supernatural revelation.

Peter used this gift with Ananias and Sapphira in **Acts 5:1-11**. He was able to know that Ananias had withheld some of the money from the sale of the property.

#### **2. The gift of the message of wisdom**

The message of wisdom is closely related to the message of knowledge. The message of wisdom is **an application of truth in a real life situation.**

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The word of knowledge may reveal a truth; whereas the message of wisdom will make a relevant application of the truth. This is deeper than knowledge. However, it is fruitless to make too much effort to distinguish between the gift of knowledge and wisdom. Both are needed and may very often work together in the same person or situation.

Both of these gifts may be recognized in different ways. Sometimes the believer may hear an audible voice; at other times it is simply a strong impression in the spirit; at times it may be through a dream or vision or even an angelic visitation.

### **The gift illustrated from Scripture.**

Jesus demonstrates supernatural wisdom on several occasions. One is found in Jn. 7:6-8. Here Jesus was able to know what needed to be done (or not done) and he was able to clearly advise the disciples. His wisdom is also displayed when he disputes with the leaders of the people in Mt. 22:15-46.

The early church used this gift to solve a difficult issue recorded in Acts 15. The Bible records that their decision was, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." (Acts 15:28) This was the ability to apply God's wisdom in the situation at hand.

### **3. The gift of distinguishing between spirits.**

The gift of distinguishing between spirits is **a special ability to discern the source or motive of an action or situation.**

This gift is often activated in a public meeting where the person with this gift is able to sense whether the speaker is "in the Spirit" or not. Or there may also be uneasiness in the Spirit of a believer around a certain individual and he/she can sense that something is wrong in that person. An oppressive spirit may be discerned in a place. All of these reflect the gift of discernment in action.

You may be present in a meeting and you sense that there is a strange spirit in a certain person or in someone who is speaking. There seems to be a dryness in the meeting. The gift of distinguishing between spirits is needed in such a situation. (If you are not the leader you should appropriately let the leader know your feeling about the issue and allow him/her to take any action.)

### **The gift illustrated from Scripture.**

Jesus exercised this gift in **Mt. 22:18** where the Bible says, that he knew their evil intent. He rebuked Peter in **Mark. 8:33** when he discerned that Peter was speaking under the influence of Satan.

Paul did a similar thing in **Acts 16:18** where he discerned that the spirit of prophecy in the slave girl was not the Spirit of God.

## **B. Gifts of doing.**

We can now turn our attention to gifts of doing: healing, miraculous powers and faith.

### **1. The gift of healing.**

(Literally the meaning is "gifts of healings." This implies that there may be different areas in which this gift operates or areas of specialization.)

The gift of healing is a **supernatural ability to minister healing to the sick.**

This is not just a gift for the pastors to use. It should be exercised in small groups and from house to house. God may at any time give you this gift and it is to be

used in combination with faith to free his power to work. God may also give you a “ministry” of healing and you may use this gift regularly. Begin to pray for people to be healed and develop the gift.

This gift often operates in connection with the gift of knowledge. The message of knowledge will bring the need out into the open and indicate God's plan to heal the individual. The gift of healing can then be released.

### **The gift illustrated from Scripture.**

Jesus demonstrated this gift on many, many occasions. (See Mt. 8:1-17 for several examples.) It was carried on in the lives of the apostles beginning with the first recorded healing in the early church, the crippled beggar in Acts 3:1-10.

### **2. The gift of miraculous powers.**

This gift is **the ability to do extraordinary things that would be humanly impossible**. This gift is closely related to the gift of healing. The gift of healing however, is more restrictive and deals with the human body. Miraculous powers is a broader term and can also refer to miracles in the “physical” world. For example, when someone prays earnestly for rain and it begins to rain immediately the gift of miraculous powers is in operation.

### **The gift illustrated from Scripture.**

Jesus illustrated this gift when he walked on the water in Mt. 14:25. Again, when he caused the storm to cease (Mark 6:45-52) and when he caused the money to be found in the mouth of the fish (Mt. 17:27) this gift was in operation. Paul exercised this gift in Acts 13:11 when he caused the eyes of Elymas the sorcerer to go blind. The most dramatic illustration of this gift is in the raising of Lazarus from the dead found in Jn. 11. Two accounts of the dead being raised to life are also recorded in Acts; Dorcas in Acts 9:36-42, and Eutychus in Acts 20:7-12.

### **3. The gift of faith.**

The gift of faith is **the ability in a given situation to believe without a doubt that God will do a certain action**. There is an assurance that whatever is spoken in the name of Jesus will be done. It usually comes intensely and enables the person to act with great confidence.

Faith may produce miracles but it is not the same as miraculous powers. Likewise, it may result in healing but it is distinct from the gift of healing. However, it is virtually impossible for the gifts of healing and miraculous powers to operate without at least a small measure of faith and normally this gift of faith will be present. In fact, it is difficult to conceive of this gift operating in separation from another gift.

### **The gift illustrated from Scripture.**

Jesus exercised the gift of faith when he cursed the fig tree and it withered and died (Mt. 21:19). Paul exercised this gift in the midst of a storm in Acts 27:23-25.

## **C. Gifts of speaking.**

The last three gifts we will look at are some of the most controversial and misused gifts in the church today. They were the gifts about which Paul particularly needed to instruct the Corinthian church. The gift of speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues were gifts that were not present before the Holy Spirit was



poured out at Pentecost. The gift of prophecy was present at least in some form in the Old Testament and in the ministry of Jesus.

### **1. The gift of speaking in tongues.**

This gift is **a message from God given in an unknown tongue**. When Paul talks of the gift of speaking in tongues here he is not referring to a personal prayer language that is an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He is speaking of a public message in the church given in tongues. He says in 1 Cor. 14:27, "If anyone speaks in a tongue, two-or at the most three-should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God."

Apparently in the Corinthian church there was a lot of speaking in tongues but it was being done in confusion and disorder. Often there was no interpretation but people were excited with the babbling noise and felt that it was very spiritual. Paul gives strong words about this and makes it very clear that tongues are for your personal use and edification unless there is an interpretation for the whole church. (See 14:4-19; 27-28)

Does this mean we should not have tongues in the church? No! Paul makes it clear that we should not forbid speaking in tongues (14:39). When everyone is praying and worshipping God, the believer can be personally strengthened by praying in tongues. But when the church is listening to the message in tongues Paul says that there should always be an interpretation with the tongues.

Paul wants there to be order in the church. He says in 14:33, "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace." When the worship leader calls for quiet there should be quiet unless a person has a word to share from the Lord. If a person continues speaking and there is no interpretation the leader has the right to command silence since the person is disobeying the scripture! One cannot say, "The Spirit just came upon me and I couldn't control myself." The Bible says in 14:32, "The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets."

### **2. The gift of interpretation of tongues.**

The gift of interpretation of tongues rightly goes together with the gift of speaking in tongues. According to Paul, they should not be separated. Interpretation is simply **to put in a known language what has been spoken of in tongues**. It is to translate for the body from the unknown language to the known language. When this gift is exercised the gift of tongues actually becomes like a prophecy or a message from the Lord and is then very useful in building up the body of Christ.

In Paul's teaching this gift normally comes to a person other than the one speaking in tongues (see 12:10; but also see 14:13 where it seems to be the same person giving the message and the interpretation). It is possible for the same person to interpret for him/herself but we should expect that the interpretation will at times come from another person. This can be a confirmation that the message is interpreted rightly. If you have ever heard a message in tongues and you knew in your spirit what was being said, that is the gift of interpretation. There may be several persons who have the interpretation of the message and this can also serve as a verification of the message. You may know the entire interpretation at once or you may only know a few words but as you surrender to the Holy Spirit and begin to speak the remaining words will come.

### **The gift illustrated from Scripture.**

There is not an explicit example of these two gifts (tongues and interpretation) in the New Testament. We can only see from Paul's teaching here that it was expected to be in operation in the local church. These gifts were not present in the life of Jesus Christ. Do not be alarmed about that but think about it. To speak in tongues is to speak in a language that is unknown to the speaker. There is no language that is unknown to Jesus! So he cannot speak in tongues. Of course if we were to hear him talk in a language we did not understand it might sound like tongues to us, but from his perspective it is impossible for him to talk and not understand what he is saying. Of course it follows that the gift of interpretation is likewise impossible for him. How can you interpret something that was always known?

### **3. The gift of prophecy.**

The gift of prophecy is **a supernatural ability to speak the mind of God thru the power of the Holy Spirit in a known language.** It is a tremendous gift and one that Paul says we should eagerly desire since it is so helpful in building up the body. (see 14:1) The gift of prophecy is given to “strengthen, encourage and comfort” (14:4) and should therefore normally be of an encouraging nature. Of course at times it is also necessary for God to rebuke or warn us and he can do this thru prophecies.

This gift comes into operation when the believer senses deep within his/her spirit a message from God for the church. This message should then be given to the body at an appropriate time and manner. Again, scripture is clear that the prophet is in control of his own spirit at all times and this must be done in order (14:29-33). If you feel that you have received a message from the Lord privately that needs to be shared with the church it is good to alert the leaders in advance what you feel led to share.

Prophecies must be spoken clearly and in a known language. If you have a word from God then speak it in a way that the listeners can understand. Loud sobbing, muffled voices, and wailing add nothing to the message and make it considerably more difficult for the body to be built up. There also needs to be translation of the message for the church especially if it is given in a tribal language or English which may not be understood by all.

There may also be times when the Lord gives a specific word for an individual that is shared in private with that person. This must be done carefully and received carefully.

If you are on the receiving end of such a prophecy don't rush out and change your job just because of a prophecy given to you! Take it and prayerfully consider it. Share it with those in authority over you and give God time to confirm the truth of it. (Also don't listen to prophecies when you are withdrawing money from the bank! Many believers have been conned with these so-called “prophets”.)

The prophet needs much discernment of what to do with the message that God has revealed. Perhaps God wants it to be spoken, especially if it is received in a public meeting. When you receive a message from the Lord in private pray that God will help you to know what to do with it. He may want you to only pray about it; perhaps he wants you to go to the person involved; or perhaps it is a message to be shared publicly. When in doubt, wait for God's direction or seek guidance from the pastor.

**Don't listen to prophecies when you are withdrawing money from the bank!**

Those who exercise this gift need a strong character of humility. Especially as you are learning it is good to say, “I feel God saying...” or “I have a burden...” etc. This recognizes the possibility of making mistakes and allows room for discernment to be exercised as Paul instructs in 14:29.

Prophecy needs to be tested. Paul says, “others should weigh carefully what is said.” (14:29) In other words we do not just accept what is said in prophecy because it is spoken with great conviction. It must be tested and confirmed. There is a temptation for us to feel that when a person says, “God is saying...” that it must be true. Remember that God is exercising a perfect gift through imperfect vessels!

There are several **tests for prophecy**:

**1. First of all, the prophecy must be consistent with scripture.** There may not be a specific scripture on the subject but it cannot violate scriptural principles.

**2. Secondly, it should be clear and specific.** General or vague prophecies are of very little value and are nearly impossible to test. If someone says, “God is unhappy with us” it is not clear with what God is unhappy.

**3. Finally, it should strengthen and build up the body.** This is what the Bible says is the purpose of prophecy and all true prophecy must do so.

It is very important for the prophet to be under authority. The person with this gift can quickly feel that since God speaks directly to him/her that no human authority is necessary. But the human authority can help to safeguard against some of the abuses of the gift.

Anyone can exercise the gift of prophecy and should desire to do so. Some however will be given the ministry of prophecy and will be recognized as prophets.

**The gift illustrated from Scripture.**

There are many examples of prophecy in scripture. Jesus spoke words of prophecy about himself and his future in Mt. 20:18-19. The early church had many prophets. (See Acts 13:1; 15:32; 21:10-11, etc.)

## **CONCLUSION**

We should desire and covet the supernatural spiritual gifts and we should see them exercised in the church. Be aware of the dangers and exercise caution, but do not forbid them. Allow them to accomplish the great good that God desires.

**Part Six**  
**HOW TO DISCOVER AND DEVELOP YOUR GIFT**

**Bible passage: Read 1 Pet. 4:10,11; 2 Tim. 1:6,7**

We have spent a lot of time looking at the subject of spiritual gifts. We have established that each believer has a spiritual gift that is to be used within the church for the building up of the whole body. We have looked closely at three major categories of gifts: Leadership gifts, gifts of serving and supernatural gifts.

In this final section we will look at two practical questions: “How can I know what my gift is?” and “How can I develop my gift?”

**I. How to discover your gift.**

There are five steps you can take to discover your gift.

**A. Know that you have a gift.**

We have emphasized over and over that each believer has a spiritual gift. We must be fully convinced in our mind that God has given to us a gift. If you are not fully persuaded of this truth meditate again on 1 Cor. 12:7, “Now to *each one* the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” This includes each believer. You are a child of God if you have accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior. Know for sure that as his child God has given you a gift. Because he has given you a gift you have great potential to do something significant in the kingdom of God.

**B. Ask God to reveal it to you.**

When you are convinced that God has given you a gift you can begin to prayerfully ask God to reveal it to you. The Bible tells us that God does not want us to be ignorant about spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:1). God desires that we know about the gifts that he has given to us and surely he will be happy when we are seeking to know what it is.

Satan is always busy to change the truth of God's word and we must stand upon the testimony of scripture on these first two steps. Satan will tell us first of all that we don't have a gift. If we become convinced that we do have a gift then he will tell you that God doesn't want you to know what it is so that you won't be proud! He may also try to keep you from openly acknowledging your gift. Satan is simply a liar (see Jn. 8:44) and we must refuse to believe what he says.

A simple prayer of faith will enable you to take these first two steps. “God, I believe that I am your child and according to your word I know that you have given to me a spiritual gift. I ask that you reveal to me what it is so that I may be more useful in the work of your kingdom.”

**C. Get busy! (1 Pet. 4:10)**

If you have taken the first two steps you are ready for the third, get busy! Do something for the Lord! Offer your services to the Lord; take advantage of any opportunity that you find to serve the Lord.

As you are busy God can direct and guide you to the right area. Many people simply sit and wait for God to reveal to them their spiritual gift. Know this, **GOD DOESN'T GUIDE SAINTS THAT ARE SEATED; BUT SAINTS THAT ARE SERVING!** He directs those who are active in working for the Lord. It is very difficult

to guide a stationary object. Even in the natural world we know that this is true. For example, it is very difficult to turn the steering wheel of a car that has stopped. But when the car is moving it is very simple to turn it.

God is calling you to get off the bench and start moving. You may not fully know your gift yet, but start to move. Join a ministry team, try door to door evangelism, go visiting with a member of a follow-up Team, go to your place of worship early and help arrange the church, write someone a note of encouragement, accept an offer to teach or to lead a meeting, accept the challenge to lead singing in your prayer cell, visit the sick and pray for them, or open your mouth to share with God's people when you feel the Lord speaking to you.

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#### **D. Observe yourself.**

As you are active in the work of the Lord take the next step: start to observe yourself. Remember that it is not wrong to think about yourself as long as we don't think too highly or lowly of ourselves. Rom. 12:3 urges us to "Think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith (spiritual gift) God has given you." What can you observe about yourself?

##### **1. Observe your interests.**

What things in the church interest you? You may find that when an announcement is made about the need for follow-up you get excited, but when a similar announcement is made for people to clean the church you don't have any interest. You may find that when a financial need is announced you have a strong desire to give. You may feel attracted to the Sunday School program; or you may get excited about evangelism. Your interest will often indicate the area in which your gift lies.

##### **2. Observe your priorities.**

What do you feel is most important in the church? Do you see the need for evangelism? You may have a gift of evangelism. Do you feel we really need more teachings? You may have the gift of teaching. Do you feel that we need to have more miracles happening? You may have the gift of healing or the gift of miraculous powers. Do you feel that the church should be helping the needy more? You may have the gift of giving or the gift of serving. Do you look at the Sunday School or Jr. youth and feel, "I wish the pastor would do more with them. They are the future of this church." You may be called to teach Sunday school or work closely with the Jr. Youth. Your priorities will often be another indication of where you have a gift.

##### **3. Observe your annoyances.**

Observe the things that annoy you! You may always come and look at the notice board and think to yourself, "I wish the pastor would learn how to arrange things nicely on the board." Or you may be very annoyed when we have a special function and there is a lot of confusion. You can think of better ways to organize people. If these things annoy you it is likely that you have the gift of organization!

When you know of a financial need in the church and no opportunity is given for people to give you may feel annoyed because it is something that you feel should be done. You may have the gift of giving!

There may be a case involving sin in a brother or sister and you see that the pastor is taking weeks instead of hours to excommunicate the brother and it annoys you. You may have a gift of prophecy! On the other hand you may hear the pastor

make a very strong announcement condemning a certain action in the church and you feel very upset in your spirit and hurt for the people involved. You may have the gift of mercy!

Think of which people you have a hard time loving and ask yourself, “Why don't I like that person?” Quite often he/she may have a completely different gift that you do. The interests and priorities of that person are going to be different than yours and without recognizing it you may find that they annoy you. When you recognize the gift that they have you will be able to understand them more and ask God to help you love them and appreciate their gift.

#### **4. Observe your satisfactions.**

Observe the things that bring satisfaction. When you exercise your gift you will receive a deep sense of satisfaction. You will come away from that activity with a good feeling like the purring of a contented cat. You may find that you do some jobs in the church but they don't really bring joy. Others, however, make you excited to continue using them more and more. That excitement may well be an indication of your gifts.

#### **5. Observe your results.**

Finally, observe the things that bring positive results. In which areas are you a blessing to other people? If you have the gift of evangelism you will see many people coming to the Lord. If you have the gift of teaching you will find that your teachings bring blessing to many people. If you have the gift of prophecy you will find people built up and strengthened through the use of your gift.

So carefully observe yourself; your interests, your priorities, your annoyances, the things that bring satisfaction and the things which bring positive results. They will teach you a lot about your gift.

When you  
exercise your gift  
you will receive a  
deep sense of  
satisfaction.

### **E. Observe one another.**

The final step we can take in discovering our gift is to help one another. Often it is difficult to see a certain gift in your own life but it will be quite obvious to another person. It is difficult to really be able to see ourselves with “sober judgment” but we can easily see something in another brother or sister.

We must learn to encourage one another in the use of our spiritual gifts. The Bible challenges us to “...consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” (Heb. 10:24) One way to spur someone on is to affirm the gift that he/she has. We should not be afraid to say, “Brother I really appreciated by what you shared, I think you have a gift of teaching.” Or, “Sister I am encouraged by your faithfulness in cleaning the church, you must have a gift of serving.” This will encourage a brother or sister to continue exercising his gift more and more.

When we have a proper perspective of spiritual gifts we realize that we all need each other. Your gift should not threaten me, and my gift should not threaten you. So let us encourage one another to recognize and use our gifts.

In the same light we should not be ashamed of the gift that we have. Some people feel that to acknowledge openly the gift that he/she has is being proud. Certainly it is possible to be proud and to look down on other gifts as we have seen in our study of 1 Cor. 12:12-31. But when we have a proper perspective we will simply give glory to God who has given the gift! God has prepared a special work for each of

us to do and when we do it we have the sense of satisfaction of doing what we were created to do. (See Eph. 2:10). How can we really be proud of something that has just been given to us and it is not even for our benefit but for the “common good”? (1 Cor. 12:7)

Acknowledging the gift that we have often frees us to really feel good about what we are doing. It helps us understand our motivation, our strengths, and our weaknesses. It also helps us to say a sanctified “no” to things that are not what we are called to do.

So as we walk with each other and fellowship together make a point of recognizing the gifts and affirming gifts in other persons. Especially in small groups like prayer cells where we are able to learn to know one another well we should be able to identify and affirm the gifts of the other.

## **II. How to develop your gift.**

If you have identified your gift you should be excited to recognize the opportunities God has given to you. Your task now is to develop your gift to its God-given potential so that it will be most effective in the work of the Lord. There are three important steps you can take in developing your gift.

### **A. Recognize the need for growth.**

The first step in the development of our gift is to recognize that it needs developing! Some people get so excited about their gift that they think it is perfect. God gives perfect gifts to us but we are imperfect and therefore the gift must develop in us.

Paul tells Timothy in 2 Tim. 1:6 “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

Notice what Paul is saying. The gift was given very properly but Timothy was given the responsibility to fan it! Your gift is given as a spark; you need to blow on it, encourage it, add more fuel until it becomes a steady, glowing flame throwing its heat in all directions. Developing our gift is not the work of God, although he is very much involved in the process. It is our work! We are given a command to do this vital work of nurturing the spark into a flame. Think of lighting a charcoal fire. It begins with a small spark and needs a lot of blowing to start burning. With time and effort it becomes a powerful source of heat that can do good things. Our gifts are like that. We are responsible to do the practicing of the gift, learning more about it and correcting any deficiencies that surface in our use of the gift.

**Developing our  
gift is not the  
work of God...It  
is our work!**

You should not fear this work or shy away from it as though you are not able to do it. You need to hear the words which Paul wrote to Timothy immediately after the verse above: “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7) These words immediately follow his instruction to fan into flame the spiritual gift. When it comes to spiritual gifts we should not have a spirit of timidity but of power. We should exercise it with love. And we should use self-discipline to avoid the abuses of the gift and develop it to become all that God planned for it to be.

## **B. Have a teachable spirit.**

If our gift is going to develop it is imperative that we have a teachable spirit. We need to be taught how to develop the gift that God has given to us. This may come through a formal teaching, or through opportunities to go to school where the Word of God is being taught. But it also may come in daily life as you walk and talk with the brothers and sisters in Christ. Allow yourself to be corrected, rebuked, and encouraged by your brothers and sisters.

If the pastor or someone else says to you, "That was not done in a proper way" don't be offended. Rather, be encouraged because God is helping to shape your gift. Try it again and do it better! Remember that it is the role of the leaders and pastor to equip you for ministry (Eph. 4:12). Allow them to do their work in your life! Rejoice in each opportunity that God provides for your gift to become more useful in his hands.

This is the step where many people fail to benefit from God's training program. God is delighted for us to use our gift, but he is more concerned about our character. Any time that our gift is used without the proper foundation of character it cannot realize it's full benefit. That is why Paul took a whole chapter in 1 Cor. 13 to emphasize to the church at Corinth that gifts without love are of no value to the church. The gifts of the Spirit without the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23) are of little value.

You may very well be a gifted individual, but if you are not "correctable" the church cannot fully benefit from your gift. You may have very excellent prophecies or you may be capable of preaching a fiery sermon that attracts crowds but without humility you will benefit little. God wants your character to develop ahead of your gift. Perhaps this is why our gifts are not given to us in perfected form, to give us time to grow and develop in character.

So be teachable. Look for opportunities to strengthen your gift. Study the Bible for more teaching about your gift; find books in a bookstore or library that will help you develop it; take advantage of seminars and teachings that will help you to be all that God wants you to be.

## **C. Use it!**

It may seem like an obvious point but you cannot develop your gift in the classroom! You must put it to work in the real world.

1 Pet. 4:10, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ." Notice that Peter says to "use" our gift. It is not given just to admire. If you have a gift, use it for the glory of God.

Peter says that "Each one.." should use his gift. God did not bring you to the church to observe what is happening. He gave you a gift and is waiting for you to use it. Gifts are not just for the leaders to use or for a special group within the church, **THEY ARE GIVEN TO EACH OF US TO BE USED!**

Notice that we are called to "**serve others**" with our gift. Again, the gift is not ours alone but is given for the sake of the entire body. I need your gift and you need my gift. Don't cheat the body of Christ by refusing to use your gift.

That is the purpose of this whole study, to put your gift to use. Without this final step everything you have learnt will not benefit you at all.

It is possible to know what your gift is but to fail to actually use it. Maybe you feel that you are too busy to use your gift. Could God give you a gift and then not



allow you enough time to use it? I think not. Perhaps it is time to adjust some priorities to make time to exercise the gift that God has given to you.

Peter challenges us to “faithfully” administer God's grace (gifts) in their various forms. There is no question that you have a gift. The only question is, “Are you willing to use it faithfully?” Are you ready to put it into action? Are you willing to take the time and energy to develop it and make it strong?

Jesus tells the parable of the talents in Mt. 25:14-30 to emphasize the point that we need to use our gift. Each servant had been given something.

Some received more and some less. The servants simply accepted what was given to them by the master. The point of the parable is not how much each one received, but what they did with it.

The good servants were the ones who faithfully used what had been entrusted to them. They faithfully used their talent and its usefulness was multiplied. They received a reward. These are the believers that are actively doing what God has called them to do in the church.

But the servant that simply hid his talent was cursed by the master and thrown out into the darkness. These are the believers that fear to use their gift. They may reason, “If I start getting active I won't have time for my work.” “If I start using my gift my neighbors will think that I have become radical.” Or, “I'm just not normally an active person.” And so the talent goes to waste.

Which kind of servant will you be? Faithful or unfaithful?

“Are you  
willing to use  
your gift  
faithfully?”

## CONCLUSION

God is calling us to put our gifts into use for his glory. There are many opportunities to serve the Lord with the gift that you have received. There are ministries to join within the church, there are people to encourage, people to lead, people to strengthen in their faith. The work is there, waiting for you to rise up and use your gift. You may not be recognized for your work and your name may never appear on any committee, but you will know that you are doing what God has called you to do.

The church today has reached only a fraction of its potential because many are not exercising their gifts. Will you do your part?

Will you be faithful? Are you willing to put your gift into action? If so, pray the following prayer today:

“Lord, take me and use me. Use the gift that you have put in my life to build your church. Forgive me for waiting so long. Today I pledge that I will become active in developing and using my gift for your glory and for the benefit of the your body, the church. I want to fulfill the purpose for which you have uniquely created me. Fill me with your Spirit that I may achieve this goal. Use others to shape and encourage me as I use my gift so that one day I will hear your words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.””

May God bless you as you **USE THAT GIFT!**

## APPENDIX A: Common Questions Answered

There are a couple of common questions that are often asked and deserve to be answered. I will give my personal opinion and allow you to draw your own conclusions for I don't find the answers clearly in scripture.

### A. Is it possible to have more than one gift?

I believe that it is possible for a person to have more than one gift. For example a person may have the gift of serving and also of giving. Or a person may exercise the gift of tongues and interpretation. The teacher may give a word of prophecy.

However, there are some limitations. First, **no one can possess all the gifts**. If that could happen there would be no need for others. Jesus was the only man that perfectly displayed all of the gifts. (Study his life and identify all of the gifts in operation!)

Secondly, I believe that even when different gifts are displayed **there is always a primary gift** that motivates the operation of the others. For example, the teacher may exercise the gift of serving but for a different motive than the server does. The server may give but with a different motive than the giver.

Those who are in leadership positions will be expected and find it needful to operate with different gifts. The teacher may also need to evangelize and administer but his primary calling will be teaching. Also, as we grow in the power of the Holy Spirit we become more and more balanced in the operation of our gifts and other gifts may become very effective in our lives.

### B. Are the gifts listed in the scripture the only gifts?

I don't believe that the lists given in scripture are intended to be comprehensive. They are listed in several different ways in the different passages with some overlap between them and don't seem to be a full listing at any one place.

However, I believe that the lists are adequate for our knowledge and we should look for our gift in the lists that are given. I think that we should especially look for a gift that motivates us from the list of 7 gifts in Romans 12:6-8. The supernatural gifts given in 1 Cor. 12:7-11 should also be in operation in our lives sometimes for a given situation and in other cases they develop into a ministry. The 4 leadership gifts given in Eph. 4:11 are technically positions in the church but are certainly reflective of the gift of the individual. 1 Peter 4:10,11 mentions speaking and serving as gifts. I take this to be a summary statement of gifts of speaking (such as teaching, prophecy, tongues, etc.) rather than another gift. Serving of course is mentioned elsewhere as a gift. Paul also mentions celibacy as a gift. (1 Cor. 7:7).

There are certainly other abilities that are useful in the church today that are not listed in scripture. We use interpreters in multi-language services and I have observed that for many people this is a gift. Other persons are especially gifted in the area of music or ministering in singing. This is not listed as a gift but we can say that a person is "gifted" in singing. We may also recognize that a certain person has a "gift of intercession."

It is pointless to argue over whether or not there is a particular gift of singing or intercession. The crucial thing is that the person is using the gift that has been given by God and people are being built up as a result.

### **C. What is the difference between “gifts” and “talents.”**

There is a lot of confusion about this issue partly because of the way we use the language. Let us say that talents are natural abilities that a person has whether saved or not. Gifts are special abilities given by God to the believer to do a specific work in the church.

Any person may have talents. Some, for example, are talented in music and may excel in that profession. This talent is still given by God since God created the person with that ability and “every good and perfect gift comes from above.” (James 1:17)

At conversion, God gives a spiritual gift to the believer. It may simply be a special anointing on the natural gift that the person already had. Or it may be something completely different than the person already possessed. In the case of the supernatural gifts, it may be something impossible for the unbeliever to do.

Our language however, is tricky for we often interchange the two words. A brother may say, “God has given me a special talent of singing and I want to use it for the glory of God.” He means that God has given him a “gift.”

Know that you may have talents in addition to your gift. But be assured that you have a gift!

### **D. Can Satan duplicate Spiritual gifts?**

Yes, to a certain extent, he can. We must be careful, especially with the Supernatural gifts, that what we are experiencing is really from the Holy Spirit. There are several scriptures that caution us in this area. Mt. 7:15-23 teaches us that many persons who have seemingly operated in the gifts of the spirit and have cast out demons, prophesied, and performed miracles, will be condemned on the day of judgment. This passage says to watch for their fruit. It is possible for Satan to duplicate the gifts of the Spirit, but he cannot duplicate the fruit. Be patient and watch the life of a person.

Acts 16:16-18 gives us an example of a “false” gift of prophesy which was done by an evil spirit. 1 John 4:1 tells us clearly, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Because of this we must continually be on our guard and exercise the gift of discerning of spirits. Again, don't focus on the person exercising the gift, but keep your eyes on Jesus, the giver of the gifts. A true child of God, in good fellowship with Jesus and with the brethren in a good church need not fear the counterfeit “gifts” of the evil one.

**Appendix B:  
Biblical listing of the Spiritual Gifts  
With corresponding gifts on the same line**

<u>1 Cor. 12:8-10</u>	<u>1 Cor. 12:23-31</u>	<u>Rom. 12:6-8</u>	<u>Ephesians 4:11</u>
Prophecy	Prophets	Prophesying	Prophets
Healing	Healing		
Miraculous power	Miracles		
Tongues	Tongues		
Interpretation of tongues	Interpret tongues		
Distinguishing between spirits			
Wisdom			
Knowledge			
Faith			
	Teachers	Teaching	Pastor/Teacher
	Apostles		
	Administration		
	Able to serve others	Serving	
		Encouraging	
		Giving	
		Leadership	
		Showing Mercy	
			Evangelists
			Apostles

## Appendix C: Bible Study Guide for “Use That Gift”

This study assumes that the members doing the Bible Study have heard or read the material from the booklet, “Use that Gift.” The study is for the purpose of digging deeper into the topic and allow the members to discover for themselves what the Bible teaches on this important subject. It is designed to take 6 weeks.

Tips for teachers:

- Questions are in bold print.
- Proposed answers are provided in ( ) but should not be given out by the leader. Allow the members to come up with the answers on their own. Make sure that the answer makes sense to you.
- Involve all members. You may need to direct a question to someone who has been quiet or ask, “Can someone who hasn’t contributed so far answer this question?”
- Prepare by reading the scripture and reading through the questions on your own time.
- Show enthusiasm! This study will change your group!
- Pray throughout the study that God will reveal to each member his/her gift.

### Week One: “Understanding Spiritual Gifts”

Text: Eph. 4:7-16

Booklet: Part One

Introduction:

**Ask, “Who can remember the definition of a spiritual gift that was given in the sermon? (A spiritual gift is “A gift given by God to every believer which enables the believer to perform a special work in the church.” The exact words are not important but it is crucial that everyone understand well what spiritual gifts are.)**

Do a brief survey to find out where your members are when it comes to their understanding of the gifts. There are basically three stages that anyone can be at.

1. How many do not know what their gift is? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many think they know what it is but they’re not using it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many know what it is and are using it? \_\_\_\_\_

Our goal in the next six weeks is to at least move everyone to know what their gift is and for most to be active in using them.

**Read the scripture, Eph. 4:7-16.** Explain that the word “grace” is used here referring to the gifts of the spirit. Then ask the following questions:

1. **Where do spiritual gifts come from according to v. 7? (Christ) Why is it important for us to understand that all the gifts are given by Christ?** (So that we aren’t jealous of another’s gift, so that we don’t think the pastor can give us a gift, and so we will feel responsible to Christ to use “his” gift well in the church.)

2. **Is there any believer without a spiritual gift? Give the scripture for your answer.** (No, every believer has a gift according to v. 7 “each one”. Every believer has a gift, no one has been left out!) **Why do you think that so many believers don’t think that they have a gift and what is the result in the church?** (The devil has convinced many that they are not important in the church. Therefore, a lot of work that could be done in the church is never accomplished.)

3. **Name some of the things that you expect the leaders of the church to do.** (Most of the time we expect them to visit the sick, evangelise, do follow-up, handle needy cases, give counseling, preach, administer, etc.) **From v. 12, Why did God give leaders to the church?** (to equip God's people for service or the work of ministry.) **So who does God plan to do the work of the church, the leaders or the members?** (It is the members who are to do the work. Of course the leaders still have a big job of training and equipping people.) **What difference would it make in our church if we really believed this?** (Let people dream about this for some time. It would make a huge difference. No one would be a spectator; each member would have a job to do. It would bring explosive growth if every member became active. Many more things would be done. People would be excited about what they were doing, etc.)

4. **Look at verses 12-16 and ask, "What are the results of knowing and using our spiritual gifts?"** List as many as possible. (The members will be prepared, the body will be built up, there will be unity in the faith and knowledge, maturity, becoming more Christ like, stability [not tossed back and forth], growing up, we will be joined tightly together, growth and building up!)

5. **The last phrase says, "as each part does it's work." What happens if only one member fails to do what God created for him/her to do?** (Basically, all the positive things above can fail to happen when individual members fail to do their part. This is a strong challenge that each one of us is important in what God wants us to do.)

Prayer/Closing. Encourage each one to pray that they will discover their gift as we do this study and that each member will be ready to use their gift in the church.

### **Week Two: "God's Design for Spiritual Gifts"**

Text: 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12:3-8 Booklet: Part Two

Don't allow the discussion to get into specific gifts yet; we are still laying the foundation and will soon look at the gifts individually.

#### **Read Romans 12:1-11**

1. **What does verse 1 teach us about God's desire for us?** (That he doesn't want us to be ignorant about gifts! He will not keep us in the darkness. He is happy that we are studying the gifts.)
2. **From v. 4-6 what things does Paul say are different among us and what is the same?** (Gifts are different but God is the same.) Why is this important for us to understand? (We should recognize that even with different gifts we are serving the same Christ and that there is more unites us than divides us.)
3. **What does verse 7 teach about spiritual gifts?** (It teaches two things: that each believer has a gift [We have looked at this before.] and that the gifts are given for the good of everyone.) **What is the significance of the fact that they are given for the "common good"?** (The gifts are given to individuals but are for the others in the body to benefit from. My gift is for you; your gift is for me! Therefore, if we don't use our gifts we are cheating each other. It also means that God's plan is for the gift to be used within the church. When we run away from the church to use our gift, the church loses our gift and we lose the gifts that we needed in the church.)

#### **Read vs. 12-31**

4. Here Paul is teaching that the spiritual gifts are like different parts of the body. Allow time to discuss the following:

**In what way do the different parts of our body help us?** (The different parts of our body enable us to do many different things. We can pick up food with our hands, but use our mouth to chew and our stomach to digest. We hear with our ears and see with our eyes, etc.) **How does this apply to spiritual gifts?** (Having different spiritual gifts enable us to do a wide variety of work in the church. If everyone was a preacher where would the listeners be? If everyone was an evangelist, who would teach?)

**What are the dangers that Paul warns about in this passage?** (He warns about several dangers. First, one part (gift) can feel insignificant and unimportant. [vs. 15-16] People with "quiet" gifts are more tempted in this

area. Second, a part can feel overly important and like the rest are not necessary. [vs. 21-26]. People with leadership gifts will be more tempted in this area. All of us will be tempted in one of these two areas.

**What will happen if we allow some to feel insignificant and others to feel too important?** (This will bring division in the body [v. 25] and unhealthy competition.)

**Conclusion/prayer:** Pray this week that each one in the body will learn to appreciate the others. Pray that each one will feel like they are an important part of the body and that no one will feel more important than the others.

### Week Three: July 11<sup>th</sup> “Leadership Gifts”

Text: 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11

Booklet: Part 3

We will now begin to look at the different gifts of the Spirit. For the next three weeks we will focus on specific gifts. Pray for your members that as they study the different gifts they will: 1) recognize their own gift and 2) learn to appreciate and respect the gifts of others.

**Read Eph. 4:11-12.** This passage mentions what are called in our study, “leadership gifts”

**1. Why are the leadership gifts given to the church according to these verses?** (This is a review from week one but it is worth repeating so that it will sink in deeper to each person. The leaders are given to “equip” or “perfect” the saints to do the work of ministry, not to do all the work.) **What can each of us do to be “equipped?”** (We can take advantage of teaching offered by the church; attending prayer cell, workshops, seminars, etc. We can also join the library or other programs to learn more. The leaders have made these programs available to each member. It is the responsibility of the member to take advantage of the opportunities. This answer will depend on what opportunities your church has for growth.) **What happens if we are not equipped?** (The burden of the work will fall on the leaders, work will be done poorly, much work will never be done, the members will live unfulfilled lives, etc.)

Now...let’s look at the leadership gifts

**2. Apostles. What is an apostle?** (One who is used of God to establish the church. The word apostle literally means, “one who is sent.”) **How do people with this gift help the church?** (They have vision and are able to get things started very well. Without them, we might never move!) **What are some areas today that the church uses this gift, even if we don’t use the title “apostle”?** (church planting, missionaries, those who start and initiate great projects) **Read Acts 15:36-40. What was Paul’s gift and what was Barnabas’ gift?** (Paul was an apostle; Barnabas had the gift of encouragement.) **How did their different gifts lead to this conflict?** (Paul was a visionary and focused only on getting the job done. He didn’t have time to “waste” on someone who had failed before. Barnabas, the encourager, felt that John Mark should be given a second chance. Unfortunately, in this case they couldn’t agree and parted company. Nevertheless the gospel was preached and later Paul recognized the gift of Mark, see 2 Tim. 4:11)

**3. Prophets. Read Acts 11:27-28. In what way did the gift of prophecy benefit the church here?** (The prophets foretold a famine and the believers were able to assist those who would be needy.) **Read Acts 15:32. In what way is the gift of prophecy used here?** (This is the sense of speaking forth the word of God, but not necessarily predicting the future. This is the second way prophecy can function.) **What do you think are the strengths of the prophet?** (They are very sensitive to the Spirit; they are often prayerful people and they have the power to bring great encouragement to the body.) We will look more at this gift under the “supernatural gifts” **What are some potential weaknesses of a person with this gift?** (The prophet many times comes across as harsh and judgmental, which often damages relationships, they may also find it difficult to submit to spiritual authority and may be tempted to manipulate people with their gift. Note that these are potential weaknesses and can be overcome. The prophet has great potential to strengthen the church.)

**4. Evangelists. In what way do evangelists help the church?** (They are gifted at bringing people into the church. They have a great passion for the lost. They can stir others to get involved in evangelism) **What potential problems might an evangelist have?** (An evangelist may not see that his converts are properly followed up; he may not feel that the church is active enough and leave to do his own thing or start his own



ministry. He may also neglect his family with zeal for the lost.) **What happens when an evangelist uses his gift outside the local church?** (There will be no proper care of the converts. The church will also lose its zeal for evangelism since those who have the gift are gone. The evangelist also will miss the needed balance from other gifts which are in the church. This is not to say that every evangelist must minister from within the local church for some will be called to interdenominational ministries. But the evangelist must make sure that his gift is actually building the local church.)

5. **Pastors/teachers. How can you identify a person with the pastor/teacher gift?** (He will be shepherding and caring for people, building them up even without an office. Good prayer cell or small group leaders have this gift even if they don't hold the title.) **What is the difference between the position of a pastor and the gift?** (The two should go together but many times don't. People can be in a position of a pastor and be called pastor but his gift is evangelism or another gift. **How does this gift build up the body?** (The pastor/teacher builds the body through caring and teaching. He enables people to grow to maturity. He is an encourager and an equipper. Without this gift the body will be very weak.)

**Conclusion/prayer.** Take time to thank God for the leaders of the church and the different gifts that each one has. Thank God for providing these gifts to the church and also pray that in your prayer cell these gifts will be developed.

#### **Week Four: July 18<sup>th</sup> “Service Gifts”**

Text: Rom. 12:6-8

Booklet: Part 4

Watch your time on this lesson; there's a lot of material to cover! Give equal time to each of the six gifts to be studied.

1. **Read Rom. 12:6-8.** Note that most, if not all, believers have one or more of these gifts that are called by some “motivational gifts” eg. Gifts which form the motivation for all that we do. We will look at each one briefly (except prophecy which we looked at last week and will look at again next week). Remind the members that although we will examine some of the potential weaknesses of the use of each gift, it is not that the gift has a weakness. What happens is that as humans with that gift we will tend to be strong in some areas and weak in others. Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses helps us to become more balanced in ministry and to understand the strengths and shortcomings of others.

2. **Serving.** The person with the gift of serving is very quick to recognize a physical need and is motivated to do something about it. **What are some of the areas in the church that need people with the gift of serving?** (There are so many! Ushers, cleaners, deacons who help with physical needs and finances, cooking for special events, preparing for Holy Communion, baptism, etc.) **What can we do to encourage people with this gift?** (We can thank them with a word of appreciation or a small note. We can help them! [Many times they get tired because they find it difficult to say “no”]. At least notice what they are doing and encourage them to continue. It is not hard to say “thank you” to the person cleaning the floor or ushering. TRY IT!)

3. **Encouraging.** This gift has two aspects: to comfort and to admonish (correct gently). **Why is this gift needed in the church?** (Because we all need encouragement! Imagine what it would be like if no one encouraged us! This is a very important gift in the church and we need to encourage the encouragers to encourage!) **Read Acts 4:36,37. Barnabas was such an encourager that they called him “encouragement.” Can you share an experience in which someone really encouraged you? What did they do to encourage you?** (I hope everyone knows someone like this. Allow a couple of people to share their experience. As they share you can note the practical steps the “encourager” took. Most of the time it is simple things like a small note, a word of encouragement, a special visit when someone was going through a difficult time, etc.) **“Who is the Barnabas in this group?”**

4. **Giving.** A person with this gift enjoys giving and looks for ways to give! **Do you think that the person with the gift of giving is a rich person?** (Not necessarily. Some who have this gift don’t have much materially, but they really enjoy giving.) **What can be some of the problems of the person with this gift?** (They may give away money that was supposed to be for supper or for rent! They may be tempted to control others with the money they are giving. They are also easily conned because they have a readiness to help with needs.) **How can this gift be useful in the church?** (It can be used to stir others to give more. People with this gift have many good ideas about how more money can be generated for the kingdom of God. They enjoy raising money for harambees and make good guests of honors for no matter how much they are able to give their spirit is contagious.)

5. **Showing mercy.** A person with this gift is a very sensitive person and knows when someone is hurting and will try to relieve the pain. **Why is this gift important in the church?** (Because people are hurting and need someone to sympathise with them.) **What are some things that a person with this gift will do well?** (Obviously, showing mercy but look for more. This person will have strong relationships with people; will be a good listener, and often uses touch to convey sympathy and compassion.) **What things will be difficult for the person with this gift?** (It will be difficult for this person to confront sin since he would rather pull the person out of the pain than deal with sin. At times it may be difficult for this person to stay up emotionally since he carries all the problems of others on his shoulders.) **Do you know someone with this gift in this group?**

6. **Teaching.** A teacher has the special ability to present the truth of God’s word in a clear and life-changing way to people. **What would happen in the church if there were no teachers?** (People would not properly understand the word of God; there could be many false beliefs among the people and there would not be proper growth to maturity.) **Read Ezra 7:10. From this passage what is required for a teacher to teach well?** (He must be devoted to studying and obeying the word of God before he teaches others. This is why the gift of teaching often takes longer to develop than other gifts.)

7. **Administration.** The person with this gift is able to organize and direct well the programs of the church. **In which areas will a person with the gift of administration be strong?** (He will have an ability to deal with details. He can see a large task and be able to see the steps needed to arrive at the goal. He will also be a good delegator, eg. he can assign tasks to others.) **What are some tasks in the church that require the gift of administration?** (Projects like harambees, building projects, secretarial jobs such as filing papers and keeping records, planning for events such as crusades, seminars, etc.)

Conclusion/prayer. Remind the members that probably, each one of them has one of these gifts studied (plus prophecy) as a primary gift. Pray that God will help each member to recognize his/her gift as well as be able to see the gifts in others. You may get in groups of two and pray for each other’s gifts or close as the Spirit will lead you. Encourage each member to exercise his or her gift this week and also to affirm the gift of one other person.

## Week Five: July 25<sup>nd</sup> “Supernatural Gifts”

Text: 1 Cor. 12:8-11; 14:1-40

Booklet: Part 5

There are nine gifts to be covered in this lesson that will be difficult in the time allowed. Be sure that the first three questions are properly understood and then move quickly through the three categories of gifts.

- 1. Read 1 Cor. 12:8-11. Why do we call these gifts “supernatural gifts”?** (Because there is no way that these gifts can be learned or developed naturally. A “teacher” for example, can be found even in the world, but tongues cannot. Also they are not normally seen in people who are not Spirit-filled.)
- 2. What potential do these “supernatural gifts” have in the body of Christ?** (They can give special manifestations of God’s presence; they can release God’s power to work in different situations and they can be a sign to unbelievers of God’s presence.)
- 3. What potential problems can come with these supernatural gifts?** (They can be overly emphasised, they can be used as a measure of maturity or spirituality and they can be exercised without love and fail to accomplish the good for which they were intended.)
- 4. Gifts of Knowing: Knowledge, Wisdom, and distinguishing between Spirits. Can you describe what each of these three gifts are?** (Take them one at a time and make sure the people understand each one before moving to the next one. The gift of knowledge enables the believer to know something that could not be known from a natural source. For example, “There is someone here with a toothache.” The gift of Wisdom is the ability to apply truth in a particular situation, in other words, to know what direction God is calling us to take. For example, “The Lord is calling us to move in this direction.” The ability to distinguish between spirits is a special ability to discern the source or motive of an action or a situation. For example, this person can sense when a person is a false prophet.)
- 5. Gifts of Doing: healing, miraculous powers, and faith. Can you describe what each of these three gifts are?** (Again, take time with each one to make sure it is understood. Gifts of healing is the special ability to bring physical healing to the sick. Note that this is not just for pastors, there may be someone in your group who has this gift. It needs to be developed and used powerfully within the body. The gift of miraculous powers is the ability to do extraordinary things that are humanly impossible. Praying for rain and it comes immediately is an example of this gift. The gift of faith is the ability to believe without a doubt that God will do a certain act. This usually enables the person to act with great confidence.
- 6. Gifts of Speaking: Tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy.** Again, look at each one to confirm that the members understand them. (Tongues is the ability to speak in an unknown language. This is a public message given to the church but in tongues. It needs the gift of interpretation which is the ability to put a message in tongues into a known language. Prophecy is the ability to speak the mind of God through the power of the Spirit in a known language.
7. If time allows discuss the gift of **prophecy** further. It is the only gift that we are encouraged to seek. (1 Cor. 14:1) Read 1 Cor. 14:29. How are we supposed to test prophecy? (Allow discussion and then look at the three guidelines below:
  1. The prophecy must be consistent with scripture. It cannot violate scriptural principles. We need to know scripture!
  2. It should be clear and specific.
  3. It should strengthen and build up the body.

**Conclusion/prayer.**

Pray for an outpouring of these supernatural gifts in our body. We are called Pentecostals because these gifts are to be seen among us. However, many times they need to be stirred up and reignited. Sometimes because of sin among us they are not seen. Ask God to bless the church with these gifts more and more.

**Week Six: Aug. 1<sup>st</sup> “How to Discover and Develop Your Gift”**

Text: 1 Pet. 4:10-11; 2 Tim. 1:6-7

Booklet: Part 6

In this lesson we will review the 5 steps to discover your gift and the three steps to develop the gift. Some steps will be easily accepted and understood by the members. If so, move quickly on to the ones that you feel you need to spend more time.

**The 5 Steps to Discover your Gift.**

- 1. Know that you have a gift.** (I hope by now they have accepted this but it's good to remind each one that they have a gift. Ask them to tell their neighbor, “You have a gift.”)
- 2. Ask God to reveal it to you.** (Remind the members that God wants them to know their gift; he does not want them to be ignorant about it.)
- 3. Get busy. Why does God want us to be busy in order for us to discover our gift?** (Because it is easier for him to direct us as we are busy moving than when we are seated. The point is that if we don't know our gift, try different things. Volunteer for a job in the church and see if it fits you!)
- 4. Observe yourself.** Each of us should think seriously about our gifts. Where has God blessed us? What do we enjoy doing? What brings satisfaction to us? (Allow each member a moment perhaps to write down on a piece of paper what they think their gift is.)
- 5. Observe one another.** Get practical here. Assuming that your group members know each other take 15 minutes to go around the circle. With each person, ask the others to state what gift(s) they observe in that person. This can be a wonderfully affirming time for each member although it may make them feel uncomfortable when it is “their” turn to be examined. As a leader make sure that everything is spoken in love. You should think ahead of time of something for every member; but allow others to say it as much as possible.

Before beginning this exercise, read the list of gifts that we have looked at. (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors/Teachers, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, showing mercy, administration, message of knowledge, message of wisdom, distinguishing between spirits, healing, miraculous powers, faith, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues.) This will help remind the members of the gifts that can be mentioned. Some may mention character qualities like “loving or kind”. It is nice to hear such qualities but try to steer the discussion back to the gifts we have studied.

**Three steps to develop your gift:**

1. Recognize the need for growth
2. Have a teachable spirit.
3. Use it.

You may only have time here to encourage people that they need to develop their gift. Every gift can be developed as a person applies himself to become all that God has called them to be.

**Conclusion/prayer.** Spent time praying for each other on this last session of study of the gifts. This should be a very meaningful time as you pray for each other. Lay hands on each other, pray for the release of God's gifts, pray for boldness as we learn to use them, pray for a hunger in our hearts to develop our gifts.

Final note. Much of the “practicals” for this study will be up to you. It is for you to help each of your members find his/her gift and find a place to operate in the body. Begin to utilize the gifts of each member in your group and you will see exciting changes taking place as you grow, they grow and the body grows! **USE THAT GIFT!**