

SPIRITUAL GIFT DESCRIPTIONS

*“Think of yourself with
sober judgement, with
the measure of faith
God has given you...we
have different gifts,
according to the grace
given us.”*

Romans 12:3 and 6

BODYBUILDING

ADMINISTRATION

Literal Meaning: *To pilot or steer a ship*

Description: *The ability to organise and see a project through to completion. Someone who can manage others in a team, and keep everyone informed and supplied with resources..*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Develop strategies or plans to reach identified goals*
- Assist ministries to become more effective and efficient*
- Create order out of organizational chaos*
- Manage or co-ordinate a variety of responsibilities to accomplish a task*
- Organise people, tasks, or events*

Traits:

- Thorough*
- Objective*
- Responsible*
- Organised*
- Goal-oriented*
- Efficient*
- Conscientious*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to be open to adjusting their plans, so that they don't stifle a leader's vision*
- Could use people simply to accomplish goals without being concerned for their growth in the process*
- Could fail to see God's purposes being fulfilled in the process of meeting a goal*

References: *1 Cor 12:28, Acts 6:1-7, Ex. 18:13-26*

APOSTLESHIP

Literal Meaning: *To be sent with a message*

Description: *An advanced ability to pioneer new churches or ministries in areas where the gospel has not reached. This is often coupled with an ability to face real suffering for the gospel.*

NOTE: While the "office" of apostle that the original disciples of Christ held is unique and no longer exists, the "role" of apostle continues today and functions through the Spiritual Gift of Apostleship.

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Pioneer and establish new ministries or churches*
- Adapt to different surroundings by being culturally sensitive and aware*
- Desire to minister to un-reached people in other communities or countries*
- Have responsibilities to oversee ministries or groups of churches*
- Demonstrate authority and vision for the mission of the*

Traits:

- Adventurous*
- Entrepreneurial*
- Persevering*
- Adaptable*
- Culturally sensitive*
- Risk-taking*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Should be aware that misusing their authority can quench the Spirit in others*
- Need to be affirmed and sent by the church*
- Can be demanding and pessimistic*

References: *1 Cor 12:28-29, Eph. 4:11-12, Rom. 1:5, Acts 13:2-3*

CRAFTS

Literal Meaning: *To craft, design, build*

Description: *The ability to make effective and/or beautiful things for use in the church or Christian ministry. Making things that increase the effectiveness of others' ministries.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Work with wood, cloth, paints, metal, glass and other raw materials*
- Make things which increase the effectiveness of others' ministries*
- Enjoy serving with their hands to meet tangible needs*
- Design and build tangible items and resources for ministry use*
- Work with different kinds of tools and are skilled with their*

Traits:

- Creative*
- Designer Handy*
- Resourceful*
- Practical*
- Behind-the-scenes*
- Helpful*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Could fail to see that their gift is significant and one that make a spiritual contribution to the body*
- Could use people to get things done instead of helping them grow in the process*
- Should remember that the things they produce are just a means to the end and not the end itself*

References: *Ex. 31:3, 35:31-35, Acts 9:36-39, 2 Kings 22:5-6*

CREATIVITY

Literal Meaning: *To communicate artistically*

Description: *The ability to help others to worship through a variety of art forms (drama, art, writing, music, etc.) – finding fresh ways to express the Lord’s ministry and message.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Use the arts to communicate God’s truth*
- Develop and use artistic skills such as drama, writing, art, music, etc.*
- Use variety and creativity to captivate people and cause them to consider Christ’s message*
- Challenge people’s perspective of God through various forms of the arts*
- Demonstrate fresh ways to express the Lord’s ministry and message*

Traits:

- Expressive*
- Imaginative*
- Idea-oriented*
- Artistic*
- Creative*
- Unconventional*
- Sensitive*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to remember that art is not for art’s sake, but it’s to glorify God and edify others*
- Could find evaluation and constructive criticism difficult to accept*
- Might be uncooperative (because of ego, pride, or individualism) and need to work at being a team player*

References: *Ps. 150:3-5, 2 Sam. 6:14-15, Mark 4:2, 33*

DISCERNMENT

Literal Meaning: *To separate or make a distinction, differentiate*

Description: *The ability to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil whether applied to motives, prophecy, teaching or the presence of evil.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Distinguish truth from error, right from wrong, pure motives from impure*
- Identify deception in others with accuracy and appropriateness*
- Determine whether a word attributed to God is authentic*
- Recognise inconsistencies in a teaching, prophetic message or interpretation*
- Are able to sense the presence of evil*

Traits:

- Perceptive*
- Insightful*
- Sensitive*
- Intuitive*
- Decisive*
- Challenging*
- Truthful*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- May struggle with how to express their perceptions, feelings or insights*
- Could be harsh when confronting others, instead of speaking the truth in love*
- Need to confirm their perceptions before speaking*

References: *1 Cor 12:10, Acts 5:1, Matt. 16:21-23*

ENCOURAGEMENT

Literal Meaning: *To come along side of*

Description: *Ability to strengthen, comfort and lift up the discouraged or doubting. Motivating others to overcome difficulties and setbacks.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Come to the side of those who are discouraged to strengthen and reassure them*
- Challenge, comfort, or confront others to trust and hope in the promises of God*
- Urge others to action by applying biblical truth*
- Motivate others to grow*
- Emphasise God's promises and to have confidence in his will*

Traits:

- Positive*
- Motivating*
- Challenging*
- Affirming*
- Reassuring*
- Supportive*
- Trustworthy*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Can sometimes be overly optimistic, too simplistic or flattering*
- Should first take time to understand where others are and what they really need*
- May want to just say "positive" things to others and avoid being confrontational when it's needed*

References: Rom. 12:8, Acts 11:22-24, Acts 15:30-32

EVANGELISM

Literal Meaning: *To bring good news*

Description: *The ability to enjoy explaining the gospel to people who do not yet believe and seeing people believing as a result.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Communicate the message of Christ with clarity and conviction*
- Seek out opportunities to talk to unbelievers about spiritual matters*
- Challenge unbelievers to faith and to become fully devoted followers of Christ*
- Adapt their presentation of the gospel to connect with the individual's needs*
- Seek opportunities to build relationships with unbelievers*

Traits:

- Sincere*
- Candid*
- Respected*
- Influential*
- Spiritual*
- Confident*
- Commitment oriented*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to remember the Holy Spirit, not guilt, is the motivator in a person's decision for Christ*
- Should avoid becoming critical of others by remembering that we are all "witnesses," but we are not all "evangelists"*
- Need to listen carefully, because the same approach is not appropriate for everyone*

References: *Eph. 4:11, Acts 8:26-40, Luke 19:1-10*

FAITH

Literal Meaning: *To trust, have confidence, believe*

Description: *The ability to express faith in impressive ways, for example in enduring hardship for the gospel. Can pass on this confidence to others who are wavering.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Believe the promises of God and inspire others to do the same*
- Act in complete confidence of God's ability to overcome obstacles*
- Demonstrate an attitude of trust in God's will and his promises*
- Advance the cause of Christ because they go forward when others will not*
- Ask God for what is needed and trust him for his provision*

Traits:

- Prayerful*
- Optimistic*
- Trusting*
- Assured*
- Positive*
- Inspiring*
- Hopeful*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to act on their faith*
- Should remember that those who speak with reason and desire to plan do not necessarily lack faith*
- Should listen to and consider the counsel of wise and spirit-filled believers*

References: *1 Cor 12:9, 13:2, Heb. 11:1, Rom. 4:18-21*

GIVING

Literal Meaning: *To give part of, share*

Description: *The gift of Giving is the divine enablement to give money or other resources so that others can get on with their ministries.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Manage their finances and limit their lifestyle in order to give as much of their resources as possible*
- Support the work of ministry with sacrificial gifts to advance the Kingdom*
- Meet tangible needs that enable spiritual growth to occur*
- Provide resources, generously and cheerfully, trusting God for his provision*
- May have a special ability to make money so that they may use it to further God's work*

Traits:

- Stewardship-oriented*
- Responsible*
- Resourceful*
- Charitable*
- Trusts in God*
- Disciplined*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to esteem their gift, remembering that giving money and resources is a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ*
- Need to remember the church's agenda is determined by leaders, not by the giver's gift*
- Need to guard against greed*

References: *Rom. 12:8, 2 Cor 6:8, Luke 21:1-4*

HEALING

Literal Meaning: *To restore instantaneously*

NOTE: The word is actually plural, "healings," which indicate that different kinds of healings are possible with this gift (i.e., emotional, relational, spiritual, physical, etc.).

Description: *Sometimes used to bring physical healing to people through prayer.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Demonstrate the power of God*
- Bring restoration to the sick and diseased*
- Authenticate a message from God through healing*
- Use it as an opportunity to communicate a biblical truth and to see God glorified*
- Pray, touch, or speak words that miraculously bring healing to one's body*

Traits:

- Compassionate*
- Trusts in God*
- Prayerful*
- Full of faith*
- Humble*
- Responsive*
- Obedient*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to remember that it is not always their faith or the faith of the sick that determines a healing, but God who determines it*
- Need to realise that God does not promise to heal everyone who asks or is prayed for*
- Should remember that Jesus did not heal everyone who was sick or suffering while he was on the earth*

References: 1 Cor 12:9, 28, 30, Acts 3:1-16, Mark 2:1-12

HELPS

Literal Meaning: *To take the place of someone*

Description: *The ability to support the ministry of others, able to see what needs doing and get on with it, even if others feel it may be a menial job.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Serve behind the scenes wherever needed to support the gifts and ministries of others*
- See the tangible and practical things to be done and enjoy doing them*
- Sense God's purpose and pleasure in meeting everyday responsibilities*
- Attach spiritual value to practical service*
- Enjoy knowing that they are freeing up others to do what God has called them to do*

Traits:

- Available*
- Willing*
- Helpful*
- Reliable*
- Loyal*
- Dependable*
- Whatever – it - takes attitude*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to esteem their gift, remembering that doing practical deeds is a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ*
- Find it difficult to say "no"*
- Need to be responsive to the priorities of leadership instead of setting their own agendas*

References: *1 Cor 12:28, Rom.12:7, Acts 6:1, Rom. 16:1-2*

HOSPITALITY

Literal Meaning: *To love strangers*

Description: *Someone who loves having people in their home and looking after them. Enjoys being part of a team providing food and sustenance for others!*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Provide an environment where people feel valued and cared for*
- Meet new people and help them to feel welcomed*
- Create a safe and comfortable setting where relationships can develop*
- Seek ways to connect people together into meaningful relationships*
- Set people at ease in unfamiliar surroundings*

Traits:

- Friendly*
- Gracious*
- Inviting*
- Trusting*
- Caring*
- Responsive*
- Warm*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Should avoid viewing their gift as just "entertaining"*
- Need to remember to ask God who he wants them to befriend and serve*
- Should be careful not to cause stress in their own family when inviting others into their home*

References: *1 Peter 4:9-10, Rom.12:13, Heb. 13:1-2*

INTERCESSION

Literal Meaning: *To plead on behalf of someone, intercede*

Description: *The gift of Intercession is the divine enablement to consistently pray on behalf of and for others, seeing frequent and specific results.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Feel compelled to earnestly pray on behalf of someone or some cause*
- Have a daily awareness of the spiritual battles being waged and pray*
- Are convinced God moves in direct response to prayer*
- Pray in response to the leading of the spirit, whether they understand it or not*
- Exercise authority and power for the protection of others*

Traits:

- Advocate*
- Caring*
- Sincere*
- Peacemaker*
- Trustworthy*
- Burden-bearer*
- Spiritually sensitive*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Should avoid feeling that their gift is not valued, by remembering that interceding for others is their ministry and spiritual contribution to the body of Christ*
- Should avoid using prayer as an escape an escape from fulfilling responsibilities*
- Need to avoid a "holier than thou" attitude sometimes caused by extended times of prayer and*

References: *Rom. 8:26-27, John 17:9-26, 1 Tim. 2:1-2, Col. 1:9-12, 4:12-13*

INTERPRETATION

Literal Meaning: *To translate, interpret*

Description: *The ability to translate a message given in tongues to edify others and glorify God*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Respond to a message spoken in tongues by giving an interpretation*
- Glorify God and demonstrate his power through this miraculous manifestation*
- Edify the body by interpreting a timely message from God*
- Understand an unlearned language and communicate that message to the body of Christ*
- Are sometimes prophetic when exercising an interpretation of tongues for the church*

Traits:

- Obedient*
- Responsive*
- Devoted*
- Responsible*
- Spiritually sensitive*
- Discerning*
- Wise*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to remember that the message being interpreted should reflect the will of God and not man*
- Should remember that this gift is to provide edification, it's to build up the church*
- Use it in conjunction with tongues and it should be used in an orderly manner*

References: *1 Cor. 12:10, 14:5, 14:26-28*

KNOWLEDGE

Literal Meaning: *To know*

Description: *One who has an unusually good knowledge of scripture and knows how to use it. Often has a knack of identifying the important issue in a problem.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Receive truth which enables them to better serve the body*
- Search the scriptures for insight, understanding, and truth*
- Have an unusual insight or understanding that serves the church*
- Organise information for teaching and practical use*
- Gain knowledge which was not attained by natural observation or means*

Traits:

- Inquisitive*
- Responsive*
- Observant*
- Insightful*
- Reflective*
- Studious*
- Truthful*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to be careful of this gift leading to pride ("knowledge puffs up")*
- Should remember that it's God message, not theirs, when they give a word of knowledge to the church*
- Need to remember with the increasing of knowledge comes the increasing of pain*

References: *1 Cor 12:8, Mark 2:6-8, John 1:45-50*

LEADERSHIP

Literal Meaning: *To stand before*

Description: *The ability to get a team moving forward and direct it's activities. This person can see clearly where the group needs to go, and is good at getting them there..*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Provide direction for God's people or ministry*
- Motivate others to perform to the best of their abilities*
- Present the "big picture" for others to see*
- Model the values of the ministry*
- Take responsibility and establish goals*

Traits:

- Influential*
- Diligent*
- Visionary*
- Trustworthy*
- Persuasive*
- Motivating*
- Goal-setter*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Should realise their relational credibility takes time and is critical for leadership effectiveness*
- Should remember that servant leadership is the biblical model, the greatest being the servant of all*
- Do not need to be in a leadership "position" to use this gift*

References: *Rom. 12:8, Heb. 13:17, Luke 22:25-26*

MERCY

Literal Meaning: *To have compassion*

Description: *A cheerful and spontaneous love of ministry to the sick and needy. A willingness to act for the relief of suffering.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Focus upon alleviating the sources of pain or discomfort in suffering people*
- Address the needs of the lonely and forgotten*
- Express love, grace, and dignity to those facing hardships and crisis*
- Serve in difficult or unsightly circumstances and do so cheerfully*
- Concern themselves with individual or social issues that oppress people*

Traits:

- Empathetic*
- Caring*
- Responsive*
- Kind*
- Compassionate*
- Sensitive*
- Burden-bearing*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to be aware that rescuing people from their pain may be hindering God's work in them*
- Need to guard against feeling "unappreciated" since some of the people helped will not show or express any appreciation*
- Should guard against becoming defensive and angry about the sources of others' pain*

References: *Rom. 12:8, Matt. 5:7, Mark 10:46-52, Luke 10:25-*

MIRACLES

Literal Meaning: *To do powerful deeds*

Description: *The gift of Miracles is the divine enablement to authenticate the ministry and message of God through supernatural events (acts of divine power) that glorify God.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Speak God's truth and have it authenticated by an accompanying miracle*
- Express confidence in God's faithfulness and ability to manifest his presence*
- Bring the ministry and message of Jesus Christ with power*
- Claim God to be the source of the miracle and Glorify him*
- Represent Christ and through the gift point people to a*

Traits:

- Bold*
- Venturesome*
- Authoritative*
- God-fearing*
- Convincing*
- Prayerful*
- Responsive*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to remember that miracles are not necessarily caused by faith*
- Should avoid viewing this gift as a personal responsibility, remembering that God determines the location and timing of his deeds*
- Need to guard against the temptation to call on the Lord's presence and power for selfish purposes*

References: *1 Cor 12:10, 28-29, John 2:1-11, Luke 5:1-11*

PROPHECY

Literal Meaning: *To speak before*

Description: *The ability to reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance or edification. Occasionally receives supernatural insight, though this needs to be tested by others.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Expose sin or deception in others for the purpose of reconciliation*
- Speak a timely word from God causing conviction, repentance, and edification*
- See truth that others often fail to see and challenge them to respond*
- Warn of God's immediate or future judgement if there is no repentance*
- Understand God's heart and mind through experiences he*

Traits:

- Discerning*
- Compelling*
- Uncompromising*
- Outspoken*
- Authoritative*
- Convicting*
- Confronting*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Need to be aware that listeners may reject the message if not spoken with love and compassion*
- Need to avoid pride which can create a demanding or discouraging Spirit that hinders the gift*
- Should remember that discernment and scripture must support and agree with each*

References: *Rom.12:6, 1 Cor 12:10, 28, 13:2, 2 Peter 1:19-21*

PASTORING

Literal Meaning: *To shepherd a flock*

Description: *One who nurtures, cares and guides people in their Christian walk. A good role model for others. People find it easy to trust and confide in these people.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Take responsibility to nurture the whole person in their walk with God*
- Provide guidance and oversight to a group of God's people*
- Model with their life what it means to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus*
- Establish trust and confidence through long-term relationships*
- Lead and protect those within their span of care*

Traits:

- Influencing*
- Nurturing*
- Guiding*
- Discipling*
- Protective*
- Supportive*
- Relational*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Should remember that God judges those who neglect or abuse their oversight responsibilities*
- Need to be aware that the desire to feed and support others can make it difficult to say "no"*
- Should realise that some of those being nurtured will grow beyond the shepherd's own ability and need to be freed to do so*

References: *Eph. 4:11-12, 1 Peter 5:1-4, John 10:1-18*

TEACHING

Literal Meaning: *To instruct*

Description: *The ability to understand, clearly explain and apply God's word causing people to grow in Christ-likeness.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Communicate biblical truth that inspires greater obedience to the word*
- Challenge listeners simply and practically with the truths of scripture*
- Present the whole counsel of God for maximum life change*
- Give attention to detail and accuracy*
- Prepare through extended times of study and reflection*

Traits:

- Disciplined*
- Perceptive*
- Teachable*
- Authoritative*
- Practical*
- Analytical*
- Articulate*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Should avoid pride that may result from their "superior" biblical knowledge and understanding*
- Could become too detailed when teaching and fail to make life application*
- Should remember that their spirituality is not measured by how much they know*

References: *Rom.12:7, 1 Cor 12:28-29, Acts 18:24-28, 2 Tim. 2:2*

TONGUES

Literal Meaning: *Tongue, language*

Description: *The ability to speak, worship or pray in a language unknown to the speaker – receive a spontaneous message from God which is made known to his body through interpretation.*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Express with an interpretation a word by the Spirit which edifies the body*
- Communicate a message given by God for the church*
- Speak in a language they have never learned and do not understand*
- Worship the Lord with unknown words too deep for the mind to comprehend*
- Experience an intimacy with God which inspires them to serve and edify others*

Traits:

- Sensitive*
- Prayerful*
- Responsive*
- Trusting*
- Devoted*
- Spontaneous*
- Receptive*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Should remain silent in the church if there is no interpreter*
- Should avoid expecting others to manifest this gift which may cause inauthenticity of the Spirit*
- Should remember that all the gifts, including this one, are to edify others*

References: *1 Cor 12:10, 28-30, 13:1, 14:1-33, Acts 2:1-11*

WISDOM

Literal Meaning: *To apply truth practically*

Description: *The ability to apply spiritual truth effectively to meet a need in a specific situation, one who is good at finding thoughtful solutions to difficult problems*

Distinctives: *People with this gift*

- Focus on the unseen consequences in determining the next steps to take*
- Receive an understanding of what is necessary to meet the needs of the body*
- Provide divinely given solutions in the midst of conflict and confusion*
- Hear the Spirit provide direction for God's best in a given situation*
- Apply spiritual truth in specific and practical ways*

Traits:

- Sensible*
- Insightful*
- Practical*
- Wise*
- Fair*
- Experienced*
- Common Sense*

Cautions: *People with this gift*

- Could fail to share the wisdom that God has given them*
- Need to avoid having others develop a dependence upon them, which may weaken their faith in God*
- Need to be patient with others who do not have this gift*

References: *1 Cor 12:8, James 3:13-18, 1 Cor 2:3-14, Jer 9:23-24*