

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

SERIES: DOCTRINE | WEEK 9 | 10.24.2021

[Teaching today: Pastor Lee Wiggins]

Good morning. I'm so happy to see all of you here, welcome. Those of you up on the balcony, I can sort of see you up there, wave at me, say hello. Those of you online, good morning, welcome, so glad that you're with us, so happy that you jumped on, I hope that you interact with the people online there today. Wow. I feel like we ought to start out with a word of prayer. Does anyone need prayer this morning? A couple of you, two or three of you, yes, let's just take a moment, let's bow our heads, let's just go before God.

Lord God,



We come before You this morning, thank You that You are our God, that we have You in our lives, that we can turn to You, that this morning we can call upon your name, that we can trust You. Lord Jesus, I pray that You would minister to each person in this room, to those who are watching online, meet them in a very special way right now. Allow the words of your Book, the Word of God, to drill deep down to the very places each of us needs right now. For those who need peace in their life, I pray that that would fall upon them today; for those who need answers to things going on, I pray that You would provide those this morning; for those struggling with relationships, Lord Jesus, I pray that even what we share this morning may help them to sort that out. Now may your Spirit have free reign in this place to train us in your Word and what You want us to know. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right, we're in a series called DOCTRINE – what Christians should believe. When we go to our Bibles and we say what are the major things about God that we need to know? – that's theology. And we have said that theology, good theology, right theology leads to right living. So knowing who God is leads us to following Him in the right way.



Last time I spoke with you we had the opportunity to talk about God the Holy Spirit. We've shared that there is a Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three in one, one God, three distinct equal persons. We talked about the Spirit of God. We talked about that when we put our trust in Jesus the Spirit of God comes into our lives and indwells us so that we have the Spirit of God living with us on an everyday basis guiding us, directing us, taking us in the paths we're supposed to go on in life. And we said there's something else the Holy Spirit does for us that we're going to talk about this morning, so here we are. When we receive the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation He gives us what the Bible calls "spiritual gifts," and a spiritual gift is given by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation to help us to minister to others in the body of Christ.

And so Scripture describes everyone who knows Jesus as the body of Christ. We talked about the local body of Christ, those who gather here in this place, we are all gathered together and we comprise this metaphorical picture of the body. And when he talks about gifts he talks that each one of us are given a spiritual gift, something way above and beyond just a natural gift that you were born with, that you've developed over the years, that has grown up within you. He gives you a spiritual gift, something used to accomplish the task of ministry of doing God's work that is over and above just any other old normal gift. It is a gift supercharged beyond anything you could imagine that God gives you to serve others within the body.

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Spiritual Gift

Given by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation to minister to others in the body of Christ.

And so the picture of the body is if you picture every part of the body being a gift and all of us together making up this complete body, there are gifts that are brought by each one of you making up this complete body. And when those gifts are all working in order this is a really healthy, effective body for moving forward the spiritual things that God wants to

move forward. When a part is missing off the body, it starts to get a little bit awkward. So you miss an arm, that's like a really bad thing. You miss a little finger, you think it's no big deal until you're missing it. Miss a big toe, it's not a problem until, well, all of a sudden it changes the way you walk and how you do life.

The Bible even talks about other parts of the body that aren't as impressive; like, we don't think much about our armpit, it's not something that we like to talk about and think about in this room. And yet when you talk about all the parts of the body the Bible even addresses those that aren't as pretty, that God uses all of them for a purpose and a role. And what I would like to do today is share that every one of you that has put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ has a spiritual gift. It's super powered, it is from God, it is given to you by His Holy Spirit that lives within you to help you accomplish God's work and you want to use it. It's a great thing.



Armpit...
not as pretty

Now the fun thing that I have coming to you today is sometimes messages like this get preached because a church like ours is struggling to get people to volunteer and that kind of thing. I don't even like that word volunteer. You see, if you volunteer for things like, you know, a local school program or for a pet shelter or for a blood drive or something like that, that's just volunteering, people do that all the time. They're nice people, they're good people, they do good things. In the church it's way different than just volunteering, it's you know everything inside of you is reminding you—because it's God's Holy Spirit—that He's given you a gift and that gift is given to serve someone else; that you're part of this body and this body doesn't operate in its fullness today or any day because it's an everyday thing if you aren't actively using that gift. So that's what we want to talk about today. The end result is just to say to all of us—**know your gift, use your gift**—that's the message.

Find and use your God given
Spiritual Gifts!

Two passages in Scripture tell us about these gifts, easy to remember because they're both in Chapter 12 – Romans and 1st Corinthians Chapter 12, back-to-back books; Romans and 1st Corinthians Chapter 12 tell us about gifts, I'm going to start by reading from 1st Corinthians 12 this morning. It's going to tell us a little bit about those gifts, it's going to tell us a little bit about how we're to use them as a whole, and then it's going to list down the gifts. I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about each of the gifts this morning because what I want you to do is I want you to hear the different gifts that these two Scriptures mention, and when you hear all of these gifts I want you to be sort of alerted to – *that's me*.

Have you ever taken one of those personality inventories and real quickly you're like, "I know which one's me. Yeah, I'm not that and I'm not that, but yep, that's me." And then you do your score and *boop!* up it pops and you're like, "Of course, I knew that." And so today as we go through these gifts some of you are going to say, "Aha! That's me." And so we're going to talk about how to know those gifts and how to drill down on those gifts. And then at the end of the day my goal will be to just say to you: Use those gifts.

If you're looking in your Bible it's 1st Corinthians Chapter 12, verses 1-11, and I would love to read those here this morning. They're in your notes that you pulled down online on the [Doctrine page](#) as well.



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¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

² You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

– I CORINTHIANS 12:1-11 (ESV)

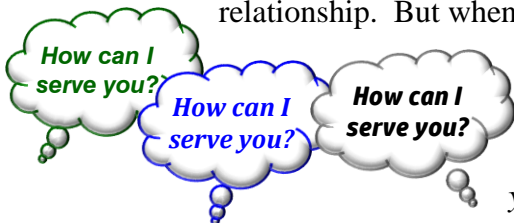
The passage started out saying, *Hey, listen, we're going to talk to you about spiritual gifts*, and it addresses brothers, brothers and sisters in Christ, those who are in the same family. We are a family, we're the family of God, and because of our salvation, because we are walking with Jesus we look at each other and we call each other brother, we call each other sister. And he says here there are a variety of gifts, there's a variety of service, there's a variety of activities. So there are gifts that you're going to be given, there's different ways in which you can use that gift in service, there's different activities that you can get involved in in using those gifts. In other words, what you're going to have is—I'm going to give you a list of gifts, in fact, we're going to throw this chart up on the screen right now with the list of the gifts on there. These are the main gifts mentioned in 1st Corinthians 12 and in Romans 12, and you can see them. Some of them actually overlap, but the idea to understand is these gifts can be mixed and matched and God uses them to create varieties of activities doing different things that we do to minister the body and to others in the power and the name of Jesus through God's Holy Spirit, so it's a really exciting thing.

1 Corinthians		Romans 12	
Wisdom	Tongues	Encouragement	Teacher
Knowledge	Interpretation	Generosity	Service
Faith (vision)	Apostle	Mercy	Leadership
Healing	Teacher	Prophecy	
Miracles	Helps		
Prophets	Administration		
Discernment			

Spiritual Gifts

It says here that it is "**for the common good**" [v. 7], this is not for me, this is for you, this is for others. This is the thing serving others is going to change your mindset. The problem we have in most church settings is people come in and the thought process is *I want something for me, what can I get out of this?* And oftentimes the thought process is *I want to serve myself, I want to please myself*, and as a result we become very frustrated with others, judgmental towards others, and pretty soon it becomes a really ugly relationship. But when we say it's not about me, I'm a servant. I've been given a gift and

all I need to do is discharge that gift, discharge that gift, give away that gift, serve others, care about others—game changer. When you look around this room and everyone in this room is thinking – *How can I serve you? How can I serve you? How can I serve you?* – and they're using the gift that God has given them, this



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becomes an absolutely amazing place. This will be a place that *will* attract people and when they see that you're using their gift they're going to start using their gift, and all of a sudden that really begins to build and it changes everything about who we are. That's why this topic here this morning is so incredibly important. It will change our church if every one of us is using our gift.

If you didn't know about this subject, in fact, it's interesting how he says, "**I do not want you to be uninformed.**" [v. 1] In other words, we gotta bring you some new information here. The Holy Spirit's in you, the Holy Spirit's given you gifts. If you didn't know the Holy Spirit gave you a gift used to accomplish ministry and accomplish what God has given you and that it's supercharged, if I said to you "Hey, I could provide for you something so you can get this job done a whole lot easier and that you could do it at a lot higher level and we can give that to you," you'd go, "Wouldn't that be nice." The fact of the matter is He has.

Unfortunately, because other parts of the body are not active, other parts of the body have said, "I'm going to sit this one out, I'm tired right now, I just need to recover..." "I had a bad church experience..." or "Everything that's going on in my life they don't want me right now, they don't need me right now..." "I'm not good enough..." "I'm not far enough along..." – because of that we're operating without certain parts of the body today in the church. And when we're operating with different parts, without those parts of the body, what we have to do is others of us have to substitute in; and if any of you have ever lost an arm and you're having to use a substitute arm, it's not like the real thing that was made to be there. If God's made you and chosen for you to serve in your area of giftedness, we need you. God has chosen you for that. He has given you a special gift and His Holy Spirit right now is just pushing you saying, "Now's the time, now's the time to step up." And he says here in this text, "**I do not want you to be uninformed.**" So I'm just, as I told you, I'm going to go through a bunch of these gifts, you can see them on the chart there, my hope is that as you hear some of them you'll go, "Hey, that's not quite me."

Now I get it, all of us should be having these things. We – let's just use, let's jump over to Romans 12, the one under there, "encouragement." Just because you don't have the gift of encouragement, that doesn't come naturally, God hasn't supercharged that in your gift, doesn't mean you're not supposed to be an encourager. I, you know, the last thing we want to say is, "Well, I'm not an encourager so I'm not going to do that." No, we all should be encouragers. The Bible would be clear about that. We all should be generous, so we all should be serving, but there are some people that for them that gift – you just see it. If you talk to someone and they have the gift of encouragement, you know it and you're like, "Wow! That is a great thing."

Romans 12

Encouragement	Teacher
Generosity	Service
Mercy	Leadership
Prophesying	

WISDOM

So let me talk about wisdom real quick. Wisdom, the first gift that is mentioned in 1st Corinthians Chapter 12, wisdom is what do I do with knowledge; someone that knows what to do with the information that we have. I heard it said here recently we have more information today than we have ever had in the history of the world and we know less today about what to do with that information than we've ever known. So it's one thing to have it, it's another thing to do something with it. There are people in our world who have wisdom and it's more than just living a lot of years, and there are people that have the gift of wisdom where they know how to take that which they know and they know how to apply it to your life in a powerful way.

Information
OVERLOAD



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KNOWLEDGE

The second one on that list is knowledge, we're talking here about factual knowledge. There are some people that they study and they remember it and they retain it and they know how to work with that knowledge and it's just their gift, and they're the people who have this spiritual ability to communicate on just about any topic in a powerful and knowledgeable way. You need those people around you. I was actually at a church last weekend and someone was using their gift along this line in the lobby, it was awesome. They had a table there and I forget what the name on it was but it sort of reminded me of the Genius Bar at Mac years ago where you had someone to tell you how to fix your computer or how to run a program.



Mac Genius Bar

This person, their main job was just to stand there and answer questions of people. And so people were reading something in their Scripture that week they could walk up to – and it was a lady – they walked up to her and said, "Hey, I saw this and I don't know what it means," or "I'm trying to figure this out and I just wonder..." This is someone with the gift of knowledge. And they as soon as one would leave or one couple would leave, this woman—I stood back and watched because I was just mesmerized by it because she was using her gift in a powerful way—more people would walk up. She was always with people. I saw her at the end of the morning and I said, "You must be just exhausted," because she's just all morning just poured out knowledge but that was her gift and she had an outlet for her gift to share with people. Wouldn't it be cool to have someone that was really gifted in the Word of God and information to do with the Word of God that could share with you?

FAITH

The next one is faith, someone who has the ability to see what isn't and who just believes that God's got this and that God's gonna take care of it. There's some of you in this room here today where you have zero faith, you're convinced everything's gonna fail, everything's going down, that it's a good idea but it's not gonna work. And then there's that person that comes up alongside of you, "Guys, God's got this. I know He does," and they just keep on believing despite what's going on around and no matter what the scenarios are that are happening. They're just confident in God and they just have faith God's given them the gift of faith way above what the average person has when they just think I need to have faith.

HEALING

The next one is healing. Probably some of your ears perk up at that point, we want to know – *How do I get some of that?* Listen to the definition that I have in front of me for that. Healing is the ability to supernaturally and instantaneously heal organic diseases as a confirmation of the Gospel. Keywords – *organically, supernaturally, instantaneously*. We see in Scripture when this very thing happens when Jesus heals someone and they get up, they have never walked or they haven't walked in many years, and they start running around. It's instantaneous. It is real. It's verifiable, something that you can see. One of the things that's fascinating about the wording here, that if you have time to look into it later, it says "**gifts of healing**," which we tend to believe makes it very clear that you aren't the *healer*, but rather there are gifts of healing that get distributed where certain people are healed.

MIRACLES

The next one is another one that's interesting, you hear a lot about this one – miracles. Let me give you a definition of miracles. This is where God suspends the natural order of the world to accomplish His will. And when a miracle is done because the natural order of this world is suspended for a moment what takes place is obvious and observable. You look at it and say, "That didn't just happen. That couldn't have happened outside of..."

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So remember, we read in the gospels about Jesus turning the water into wine. They didn't just say, "Well, that sort of tastes like wine, I guess, I don't know, um, maybe the water's a little bit red, I'm not sure. Yeah, you see that, don't you?" No, they say it was the best wine that they had ever drank. And so what we realized with this thing called miracles that it's a very rare thing, does not happen all the time or it would rewrite the laws of nature and pretty soon it wouldn't be a miracle. And it affects change that has, in such a way, that has a distinct purpose.



Now just a side note because I said these miracles are rare. I want to focus us on something, there's another word it's called *providence*, this is where you see God working and intervening in the affairs and in our daily lives. I am one who believes strongly in providence. Again, the Holy Spirit is living within us and the Holy Spirit if we will allow Him to live in our lives and we have a relationship with God the Holy Spirit, what's happening is God's Holy Spirit is moving around the pieces on the playing board of life so as to take you where He wants you to be to accomplish what He wants you to accomplish. Oftentimes we see something like that happen where all of a sudden we just "happen" to meet this person or we "happen" to be at the right place at the right time and we go, "That was a miracle." I don't know that it was a miracle, the laws of the universe were not suspended for a moment to have that happen. What you see taking place there is providence, and I believe that providence is something that ought to be happening all the time in our lives where God is intervening with the functions of everyday life.

I like to use this "image" because it's sort of the image that's in my head, is my head on a swivel, you know those little bobble heads, you know, just float around, like a head on a swivel all the time going, "What's God doing? Where's God in all of this? Why does God want me to here this morning?" Did you think about that coming in here today? And when you walked in here to church today—this is the body of Christ, God has ordained the body of Christ to get together—you've been obedient today to join in on this thing. He does amazing things when His people are gathered together in praise. He does amazing things when you have the opportunity to use your gifts and serve. *What's He going to do today? What's He going to do?* And there's anticipation, there's expectation.

What if we were to wake up every day and just start out our day going, "God, I know You have something for me today. I'm watching for it, I'm waiting for it," and just waiting for it as He moves and He works in our world. And I'm so excited about that.



PROPHECY

Let me go to the next one, prophecy. Prophecy is not about foretelling the future but rather it is to speak forth the Word of God. Praise God we have that Word, it's what we're doing right now, we're just proclaiming God's truth, what God has said. It's like at the beginning of Chapter 12 there where he says, "**I do not want you to be uninformed**" about these things. So we're prophesying, we're speaking, we're bringing forth the truth of the Word of God.

DISCERNMENT

The next one, distinguishing between the spirits, this is discernment, being able to tell between one thing or another thing what is right. By the way, this is a complicated little gift. I meet a lot of people that say they have the gift of discernment who I'm pretty convinced they actually have the gift of discouragement. [LAUGHTER] They're wanting to come just sort of beat up on you and they love to use this, "Well, I have the gift of discernment," and normally I just know what's coming next is I'm about to get blasted. If you have the gift of discernment you need to have the gift of wisdom to go along with that so that you know how to

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express that discernment to someone. And if you don't have that gift of wisdom just keep that discernment to yourself. But seriously, you and I know people that we can come alongside that if we just say, "Hey, listen, I'm dealing with these two things and I'm trying to figure it out." I mean, how many of you have two things right now that are, like, they both look pretty good, you just don't know which one to choose, you know, do I go left, do I go right, which one is it?" That person with discernment, "Can you talk to me? I'm not sure which way to go." We need that person who brings us discernment.

TONGUES

The next one is the gift of tongues. Listen to the definition of this: The supernatural ability to speak a foreign language that you have never learned. I want that one. That is awesome. And remember, this is really a good picture to help us understand what spiritual gifts are for. This would be so that we could communicate the Gospel to someone that can't understand us in their language, and I have spoken with missionaries who have told me they have actually seen this at work. I have never personally seen this at work, but that is an incredible gift to have. Listen to how that worked itself out in the early church, in the very earliest days where the Gospel needed to spread quickly. Acts Chapter 2, verses 6-8, listen to these words:

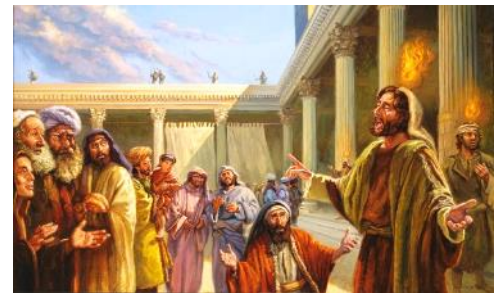
⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?"

– ACTS 2:6-8 (ESV)

So you can picture this, at the beginning of the church the Gospel needs to get out quickly, a whole group of people are coming together, they speak different languages, someone like myself gets up to speak. The text will say they had tongues of fire, a ring of fire around them:

³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

– ACTS 2:3-4 (ESV)



Day of Pentecost

I mean, this was a crazy moment in church history, but when they spoke you looked to the person next to you that you know didn't speak the same language and they were hearing in their own language.

INTERPRETATION

By the way, the next gift is the gift of interpretation. It's so cool. I think most of you know that it's happening, but even as I'm talking and I'm probably talking way too fast right now, this message is being interpreted into Spanish. Someone using their gift to be able to speak to people who don't understand the language that I'm speaking today to minister to other people. Again, I just love in this church how so many people are using their gifts. And do you know why that happens? Because a whole bunch of people who speak Spanish said, "There's a whole lot of people that want to hear these messages but they can't understand English, Pastor Lee." They said, "We have a solution," and shortly thereafter we've had translation every week. You can even download the sermon in Spanish. If you know someone that speaks Spanish, that, too, is on our website every week.

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So let me talk to you for a moment about tongues. Tongues is one of those things, it's a little bit unfortunate, and so I gave you the definition of speaking in a foreign language that you had never learned. I gave you the example of how that was used in the early church for people to understand in their own language. But 1st Corinthians Chapter 13, verse 8, indicates that tongues and these sign gifts of like miracles and healings they will cease, and so there are a bunch of people that would say, "Hey, they have ceased so, like, we don't believe in all the gifts, and so just because 1st Corinthians 12 lists them all we don't necessarily believe in all of them here." And those folks are called *cessationists* meaning that because 1st Corinthians 13:8 says they'll cease the tongues have ceased. It goes on to clarify a little bit there in that verse, it says, "**when the perfect comes.**"

⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

– 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-10 (ESV)

And there's some that say, well, what that means is that the grammar itself says those tongues will cease in and of themselves. So at some point they were no longer needed to validate the Gospel message that the early church was putting out and they ceased on their own. Others will say, well, "**when the perfect comes**" actually refers to when the Word of God, the Bible, the canon of Scripture – that we've talked about a lot in this series – "when that is completed so maybe it's at that point." There are others who I've read who've said when we come to full maturity, we need these gifts until we come to a place of full maturity. And then there's others who say yet that place of perfection is when Jesus comes back, "**when the perfect comes**" – when Jesus returns to this earth.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:8 (MSG)

Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. **But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.**

Here's what we know for sure, the gift of tongues is a real and intelligible language, it should be used to communicate God's truth to someone and it should be done in an orderly way. And by the way, I take this from 1st Corinthians Chapter 12, 13 & 14. If what I'm talking about right now about the gift of tongues you go, "Oh, that's interesting. I want to learn a little bit more about this" or "I want to dive into this a little my own," go to 1st Corinthians 12, 13 & 14. I also went into greater depth on it in our [video](#) on Bible Study Hub this past Thursday night, which is located on the Doctrine page of our website. If you just go to the website and just go to the Doctrine page we have all the transcripts there, we have the podcast, we have the small group notes, and we have the Bible Study Hub videos that my wife and I are doing together. What we're trying to do in this series is deliver you this information from as many different angles as possible because I just believe that it is so important that we know this stuff, and some of these things we don't get to completely drill down on completely. This is one that is just really hard to understand. So there's those who believe cessationism, that it ceased, that it ceased on its own or it ceased when the Scriptures were finished. There's others who would say no, I believe in *continuationism*, that these gifts continue on, and they'll go so far as to say that they're normative.

To throw another monkey wrench into this, there is the discussion of *praying* in tongues, and some would come from Romans 8:26. We talked about this, we talked about this a couple weeks ago, we talked about the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit gives us groans when we don't know to pray, He groans on our behalf. We can say, "Holy Spirit, I don't know what to pray right now," and the Holy

Romans 8:26 (ESV)

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.



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Spirit groans utterings that we can't even groan and prays on our behalf, which is really cool because there are just many times when I just go, "God, I don't know what to say. I don't even know how to pray. I don't even know what You want. I'm at a loss." And it says the Holy Spirit will pray on our behalf. But it says the Holy Spirit's groaning, it's not us, and it's not our words, so I'm not sure if that's that.

Ephesians 6:18 talks about praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication:

¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

– EPHESIANS 6:18a (ESV)

Well, I believe when the Holy Spirit is, when we're praying in the Spirit, that doesn't necessarily mean that all of a sudden different words are coming out of our mouth or foreign languages or tongues are coming out of the mouth, so I'm not sure that's there. The passage that does give us some – *Hmmm, what's that mean?* – on this subject is 1st Corinthians 14, verse 14, where it says:

¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue,

— *so Paul says if I pray in a tongue:*

my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

– 1 CORINTHIANS 14:14 (ESV)

And this verse opens up a whole conversation. You know probably of people who go into their prayer closet who pray in another tongue. I have never had that in my life so I have never experienced that. Some have told me that they have experienced that and I just, I just don't know a lot there. I would just say to all of us let's not be reactionary based on abuses we've seen, abuses on any or all of these sign gifts and miraculous gifts. And we've seen those abuses and we're just going, "Wow, I don't want to have anything to do with that." So, oftentimes what I believe we do as a church is we run away from the Holy Spirit rather than say, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, God's given these gifts for a purpose."

But I think we also have to be careful that we don't become part of a social construct that's sort of just drawn along on this path. Example: You ever hang around someone that has an accent and all of a sudden you're sort of taking on a bit of that accent? Or there's a word they use every other word because it's the cool word of the moment and all of a sudden you're using that word? You've seen it in your kids, I know you've never done that before, [LAUGHTER] but there's that tendency to become like the people that you're hanging out with. And so be careful that this isn't one of those things where you want to just do it because someone taught you.

By the way, gifts are not something that is taught. Now the Scripture says that Paul said to Timothy fan it into flame:

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, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

– 1 TIMOTHY 1:6 (ESV)

But it isn't one of those things where it's like, okay, I'm going to teach you how to speak in a tongue. If there is a tongue, it's something that God has given as a gift to you so that the very major one here is that you can take another language and speak it to someone that's not going to hear the Gospel otherwise. If Paul is speaking here about some sort of prayer situation, then that would fit that kind of thing. He does say in 1st Corinthians 13 at the beginning of it, he says hey, if I speak in the tongues of men and angels,



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but I don't have love, and then he says, I become a clanging gong – you know the passage there in 1st Corinthians 13:

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

– 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1 (ESV)

— and we see it sort of separate from all of this. But he's saying listen, all of these gifts need to be used in the context of love. I love you so I'm going to serve you. This isn't about something that I get for me. So I'm always suspicious when a gift is for building up me so that I can feel better about myself; I'm always aware when the gift is being used to minister the body, that's what God intended it to be.

By the way, I said there are two passages—Romans 12, 1st Corinthians 12—that talk about gifts. When you get to the end of each of these sections where it's listing out the gifts, in each place, Romans and in 1st Corinthians, it resolves into talking about love. Because, again, all of this is about me loving you, you loving [HE POINTS AROUND THE AUDIENCE] you, you loving each other, and love builds up in the church through the growth of gifts. We've gotten love all wrong in our society. Love is this feeling, love is based on how you treat me, how I behave back to you, and it's this weird thing in our society. It's affirming to me that everything I said was right and good and that's love. And here we read in Romans 12 and 1st Corinthians 12, he keeps on saying well, I'm going to give you these gifts so you can serve each other, it all wraps up in this bow of saying and in doing that you're loving each other.

Let me quickly take you to a few more of these gifts.

APOSTLE An apostle, so back to that gifts list, can we pop that gift list back up on the screen? Apostle – one who is sent forth. God sends us out.

TEACHER A teacher, someone who is there to explain truth, help you know what God wants to do.

1 Corinthians		Romans 12	
Wisdom	Tongues	Encouragement	Teacher
Knowledge	Interpretation	Generosity	Service
Faith (vision)	Apostle	Mercy	Leadership
Healing	Teacher	Prophecy	
Miracles	Helps		
Prophets	Administration		
Discernment			

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HELPS This one's important, the gift of helps, someone who's been given the unique ability to identify with those who are struggling, those who are hurting, those who have fears, those who are spiraling down, they just have a way of finding that person. And when they speak to that person they have this gift of helps and it's a game changer.

All of us, I mentioned earlier on, we need to use these gifts. So a gift of helps, all of us need to help other people. "I'll help you in any way I can" – that's how I need to treat you, that's love, that's serving each other. It's disadvantaging myself for your purposes. But there are some people in this room right now that when you see someone that's hurting your response is unbelievable. I've seen it before, I've stood back and watched in awe as someone with this gift just looks a person in the eyes and I just see that person just start crying, and then they have salve to put on that wound and care for them and help them in a way that – and, like, I try to listen to what they say and I try to copy it but, like, when I do it it's like [HE PROJECTS AN AWKWARD, UNCOMFORTABLE APPEARANCE], I don't know, they stop crying. Now they're crying for other reasons, I think. It's just like... I don't have that gift. Oh, wow, do we need you. I need



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you on speed dial here all week long. I need you to come sit at our front desk. I can't tell you how many people walk in that front door and just hurting. I need that person who has the gift of helps.

ADMINISTRATION

Administration, now there's a lot of administrators in here, but oftentimes that's not seen as like some godly thing, you're able to make systems and processes work really, really well. This, in this case, is talking about being able to do that for the ministry of God's work. When the disciples had come to this place where they had become overwhelmed with all of the responsibilities of the church, they were told to set aside those filled with the Spirit who would wait on tables, who would take care of all of the details, so that the apostles could study the Word and pray. Again, it's a grand example of how using our gifts makes a difference. Let me read 1st Peter 4, verses 10 & 11:

¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

– 1 PETER 4:10-11 (ESV)

When you use your gifts you're glorifying God. That's what we want to do. You want to say, "How would I glorify God today?" Is it through singing? Is it through praising? Is it through serving? When you're serving others you're bringing glory to God. It says here in this verse that you have a gift, it says "use it to serve one another." Same theme, it's just gonna keep saying the same thing—use it, serve, serve each other, find someone to serve. If you walk out that front door today without serving someone with your gift, you've missed a phenomenal opportunity. If you will use that gift and serve someone with that gift before you leave here today, you are going to leave the most fulfilled person in this world. You're like, "Oh, I feel a little bit awkward. I feel like sort of depressed. I feel like I'm just trying to do what the pastor said." No. The Holy Spirit, it's the Holy Spirit moving in your life. Pray right now, "Lord, let me use my gift before I walk out of here today. Let me use it, give me an opportunity, point me that way." You've got the gift of helps, you've got the gift of mercy, point that way and use it.

It says we are stewards of God's varied grace. God's grace—something we didn't earn, something we didn't deserve—it's a gift that God has given us, we're now a steward of. We're not an owner of that gift, we are being given that gift for a specific period of time for a specific purpose. Can you imagine getting to Heaven someday and God going, "How'd that go? Did you use it?" "Yeah, you know what, I was hurting..." "We had a bad church experience and people [GROANS]..." "Yeah, I just wasn't able to, sorry about that. It just didn't work out." I offered it to you, I gave it to you because I knew you could do amazing things with it, people needed you. There's going to be someone leaving here today that's hurting—those of you with mercy, those of you with helps, I need your help, I don't have much mercy. It's terrible, it's terrible, [SHAKES HIS HEAD] terrible, you ought to fire me. [LAUGHTER]

Romans 12, verse 6:

⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us,

— *what's it say? Okay, let's read that:*

let us

[AUDIENCE: "USE THEM"]

— *I probably ought to just shut up and leave, it's all – like, that's the message, know your gift and:*



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use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

– ROMANS 12:6-8 (ESV)

ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement, coming alongside. Someone in this room needs encouragement this morning. Anyone down? Go ahead, put your hands up. Anyone need encouraging this week? You encouragers, you see those hands going up? Put them back up again. There's some encouragers, I saw them look and I saw their little heads pop up. Go encourage them afterwards.

GENEROSITY

Generosity. Yeah, you know, we talked about this earlier, we all should be generous. We'll put the QR code up here after I'm done speaking here this morning. Yeah, we all should be generous, we ought to all give to the church, we ought to all be part of giving graciously what God has given to us, giving a portion of that back on the first day of the week. That is just what we all should be doing and we should be doing so joyfully. But you know what, there are some of you in this room today God has given you a heart of generosity, you just can't help yourself. When you walk around this church you're like, "This place needs this," and you ask someone about it, "Yeah, it's not in the budget this year." And you're like, "It is now, check's written." "Well, we don't just put things towards that thing." "All right, I'll call the place up, Amazon's delivering it tomorrow," because you just can't help yourself, you're generous.

You see someone in the church with a need and you're like, "That need's gone." All of a sudden everyone is taken care of, the ministry work is taken care of because you have the gift of generosity. And there are people in this church that have that gift, that gift of generosity, and they just can't stop giving. And the more they give the more God gives them because He knows He can get it to other people, He can get it to ministries, He can get it to this ministry through them. And because He knows that they are a faithful funnel of that He keeps on giving the gift of giving and He keeps on giving them the funds and the finances to give. It's just a really cool thing. Barnabas did that, he sold a field, he said I want that to be used for the church in Acts Chapter 4.

³⁶ Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

– ACTS 4:36-37 (ESV)

MERCY

Mercy, we talked about this a moment ago, the gift of caring for those who are physically, emotionally, and spiritually helpless, to the downtrodden. It's just a joy to help them. Um, when I'm done helping like that I have a splitting headache and I'm exhausted. Should I help like that? Absolutely. Do I need to practice it more? Absolutely. But there's some of you when you're done doing that you just feel like you're on cloud nine, you are flying high, you are high-fiving everyone because you just did what God called you to do. There's someone here today that needs mercy given to them.

SERVICE

Service, the gift of meeting the needs of people. I see it today, I mean, people out here serving coffee, people standing at the Blue Wall just answering questions. I see people greeting people as they come in, people standing by the New Here Park Here signs. I mean, it's just – what you long to do is serve, you just want to serve, whatever it takes. The person that



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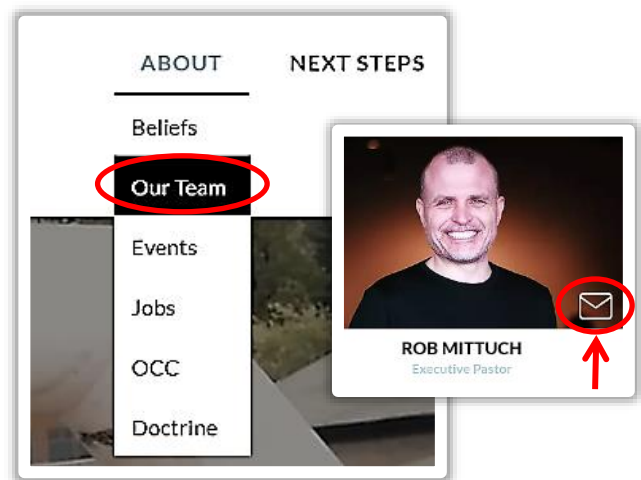
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walks around with just a rag in their hand and wipes down the countertops, I look at them and I say, "Oh, I didn't know we had someone that did that." And they're like, "I don't know, I just bring a rag and I do it every week." One of the things I love in this church is how many people are serving that I don't even know about, that we don't have an "official ministry" of wiping down countertops in the church on Sunday morning. Oh, I want to join that ministry, but the people jump into that.

We have a ministry here, I don't know how you get in it, I don't know where you find it, I don't know who heads it up, but that when you go into a hospital or you're hurting people start bringing meals to your house. It happens all the time. I'm always hearing, "Yeah, we're getting meals from the church." I'm going, "Really?" I asked the staff and they're like [SHRUGS], "I don't know." There's a group of people, ladies in this church I assume, maybe some dude, [LAUGHTER] I don't know, putting together meals and just dropping them off. How cool is that? And it's because you're operating in your position of giftedness.

Yeah, yeah, you can go right now to the website to groups and you can type in under the search bar "serve" and there's some options there. That's cool, you know, I mean, if we haven't said something here today that you're already involved in, jump in there. There's plenty of needs around here. You can go to the Blue Wall afterwards and say, "Hey, how can I serve? I want to use my gift." Or, "I don't know what my gift is," um, jump online, Google "spiritual gift inventory," it's just like all the rest of those inventories. They'll ask you for a bunch of information and name, put fake stuff in, God will forgive you for that, then you won't get spammed with their emails forever. [LAUGHTER] But the bottom line is this: Start serving, use your gift, jump in there, either do it in a formal way, we'd love to know about it.

Pastor Rob told me this morning, he's our Executive Pastor, go on to the website and press staff or leadership or about us or whatever [OUR TEAM], find the pictures of all of us, if you find me he's somewhere there, and just click on him, it'll send him an email. Say, "I want to sit down with you and talk to you about how I can serve," "I want to talk to you about what my gift is." I talked to someone this morning, "I don't have any." I'm like, "Are you kidding me? Are you saved?" "Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, pastor, of course, you know I'm saved. I don't have any gifts though." Yes you do! Yes you do! Let us help you with that.



And just a few little things, how do you find your spiritual gifts? You'll enjoy it when you do it. We talked about that with that mercy person, *Ah, I love this!* You'll enjoy it, you'll feel fulfilled. Second, others will recognize it. We invite different people into our staff meetings once in a while, we have all staff meeting every week, and this week we invited in a pastor from the local area. He sat through all of our meetings and one of the things I just know that this pastor, he has the most tender heart of mercy and serving. And something came up in the meeting when we were talking about this very subject, and I turned to him and I go, "Yep, if you prick him, all he wants to talk about is how he can serve and just care for people." And we just brought that up there, and it's just like you only have to be with the guy like 10 minutes and you know that's his gift.

So ask someone, "What do you think my gift is?" Ask your spouse, "What do you think my gift is?" Ask your kid, "What do you think my gift is?" Read these passages, these Scriptures again and say,

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"God, show me my gifts, show me where You want me to use it, show me how to use it." And I will say this to you, if you're working in your area of giftedness God will bless it. You'll see God's blessing on your gift. You'll see God's blessing on your life. Hey, we said this a few times here today—I'm going to ask the worship team to come up right now—the simplest takeaway from this morning is know your gift and [CUPS HIS EAR TOWARD AUDIENCE; AUDIENCE REPLIES: "USE THEM"] – it sounds to me like you got it.

Let me pray for you.

Jesus,



Thank You for this church. Thank You that this isn't a message spoken out of a lack of people serving but, Lord, we do know that there are many in here didn't know this before today and didn't know that we each need to be using our gifts. So, Lord, I pray that this body will be complete by each and every person in this church using their gift. Help us with figuring that out today. I pray that You'll just use your Holy Spirit to convict each of us where You'd like us to be serving. We love You, Jesus, and we love your people, we love this church, we love each other. And Lord, I pray that this will become a place where we serve, serve, serve all the more in the days ahead. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.



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