

DISCOVERING YOUR GIFTS

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are divine abilities distributed by the Holy Spirit to every believer according to God's design and grace for the common good. Our gifts make us unique. They are key to our very identity as people. Gifts are about our very personhood.

Why do we need to know about spiritual gifts?

1. We are told to be aware of them (I Corinthians 12:1). The emphasis on gifts is dramatic and critical to a proper understanding of the church and our role within it and is a key component of us leading the abundant life Jesus came to give us.
2. We are expected to use them (I Timothy 4:14). A leg will atrophy if not used. The rest of the body has to compensate and carry the "dead weight." The rest of the body must work extra hard. This compensation is unnatural, and it is clearly not the way the body was originally designed to function. If every believer was using his or her spiritual gifts there would be greater joy, appropriate commitments and energized service. To refuse to work in partnership with God or to be unwilling to put our gifts to work in God's global vineyard would be to fail in the very purpose for which we were created.
3. We are stewards and will be held accountable for the use of our gifts (I Peter 4:10). Our divine endowments or spiritual gifts are not given for us to keep them to ourselves. They are ours to use as we further the kingdom of God in the world today (Matthew 25:14-30).

Benefits of Spiritual Gifts

1. Once you know and use your spiritual gifts, you will know your spiritual job description. You will be better able to accomplish God's purposes for your life.
2. When you know your spiritual job description, your ministry will be more focused. Otherwise, it is easy to get involved with other activities to the neglect of your specific area of contribution. Your spiritual gift defines your best expression/your best work.
3. Your ministry will be more fruitful and fulfilling when you know your spiritual gifts (John 15:8,11).
4. Gifts call forth gratitude on our part. When we recognize and name the richness of our gifts, we come to be more self-accepting. We realize it is "okay to be who I am". Sharing our gifts is our thank-you.

Looking At My Gifts

1. Take a piece of paper and markers and draw a picture of yourself complete with head, body, heart, hands and feet, etc. Then add, in a word, what you love doing with each part of yourself. For example, by your feet you might put “hiking and skiing”, by your hands, “carpentry work.”
2. Then above the figure draw circles representing the places in which you offer yourself; i.e. family, friends, church, self, work, local community.
3. Then consider this question: If you had enough time and could do anything, give anything, or be anything in one of these places, what would you like to give, be, or do, and in which place?
4. When you have answered, draw a circle around one thing you love doing and connect it with a circled place (family, friends, etc.) where you most want to use it now.

Life Review

1. Make a list of good experiences you have had in your life. Divide your life into four quarters (i.e., if you are forty, you will have four periods of ten years each).
2. For each quarter, list five experiences, using this definition of the term: something you enjoyed doing; something you felt you did well; something that made you feel satisfied or proud. You may list any sort of thing: learning to whistle, building a tree house, taking a trip, learning a new skill. Make sure they are things that have meaning for you personally. It is not important that others recognized their value.
3. Look at the four columns to discover patterns that have been there throughout your life. What part of your history would you like to see in your present? Commit to bringing that back into your life.

Discovering Your Passion

The fact is, we can't care about everything equally. There are some things we care more about than others. That does not diminish the importance of any issue or concern. It simply means that your heart is drawn toward certain involvement.

Do you know what your passion is? If you do not, you are more than likely fulfilling the passions of others. And that is never as satisfying as investing our own God-given passion. A way to discover your passion is by answering the following questions:

1. What do you care about most?
2. For what do you have a passion?
3. Where would you like to see your life make a difference?
4. For what would you like most to be remembered?