



Spiritual Gifts

Knowing our God-given spiritual gift helps us to serve one another in community

THICK COMMUNITY: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Romans 12:1-10 ESV

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

When we begin to consider Spiritual Gifts, we must keep a couple of things in mind. One, spiritual gifts are always addressed and engaged in in the context of community. It must always be treated in the context of community. It's a gift to the community, the body of Christ, the very thing that is in opposition to the body of sin. Two, spiritual gifts are different from the 5-fold APEST gifts of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd, and Teacher (from Ephesians 5). The APEST gifting are more like, person or calling gift versus the spiritual gifts are more like function or doing gift. For instance, a Shepherd APEST-gifted person who happens to have a spiritual gift of prophetic word, then he/she will use the spiritual gift to guide and heal others. An Evangelist APEST-gifted person with a spiritual gift of teaching would most likely love to teach and equip those on the outside of God's family and use story to engage with others. An Apostle APEST-gifted person with a spiritual gift of administration will help to organize systems and people in a movemental direction. Third, spiritual gifts, in my mind, is not more important than the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5). A person in community who is growing in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control will be more of a light to a broken world than the most spiritually gifted person in the room. Remember Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Discovering your spiritual gifts can be an exciting and frustrating thing. It's exciting because you are unlocking what God has placed inside of you. It's frustrating because sometimes this takes time and work to figure out! Below are 3 methods in which we help people discover their spiritual gifts. They are listed from the least effective to most effective method.

1. Spiritual Gift Test

The spiritual gift test is a great starting place for people to begin the journey in discovering what abilities God has given them. The test can be found online (<https://enewhope.org/resources/spiritual-gifts-test/>) and can be taken in about 10-15 minutes. There are 100 multiple-choice questions. At the end of the test you will get a suggested list of spiritual gifts you may have.

Here are a couple of notes about the Spiritual Gift Test:

- This test will give you a snapshot of what gifts you MIGHT have. (These questions are answered from your perspective so it can only use what experiences you have already had.) This test should be used to tell you where to start your journey rather than where your journey should end. In other words, this test is not the authority on what gifts you do and don't have. The other 2 methods below will be more effective at telling you what gifts you actually have.
- Look more at the groupings of your gifts rather than just saying you only have one gift. This is more of an art than a science. You don't want to just take the top gift or the ones on which you scored the highest. The greatest test will be what you actually see happen in your life.
- Pay attention to what's low on your list. This doesn't mean these are areas that you can't function in. It just means that you will likely not excel here like you will in areas at the top.
- For a fuller description of each of the Spiritual Gifts, please refer to this Kuleana Page (<https://www.mkao.community/kuleana>) resource

2. Trial and Error

Usually this is the next step after taking a spiritual gifts test. You jump in and see what happens! If it says you have the gift of administration – the easiest way to find out if that is true is to have you administrate something. If it turns out this comes naturally to you, and you excel at it – Congratulations! You have likely found one of your spiritual gifts. If you try to administrate something and you find it unnatural and frustrating – Congratulations! You are one step closer to discovering your spiritual gifts (and guess what – it's not administration!). Experience is the true test.

As you try out different areas ask yourself the following questions along the way: Does this come natural to me? Does it just, kind of, make sense to me?

Does it look like this produces good results for other people? (i.e. When I teach, do people learn? When I lead, do people follow?)

Here are a couple of notes about trial and error:

- Don't base this solely off your first try. You want to try something a few times before you start to ask yourself these questions. There is a natural learning curve for everyone – even the ones who have the spiritual gift. I'd try something out for a few months before I really evaluated myself.
- Put yourself out there! In the world, it is scary to try new things because people will judge you if you fail or don't perform up to their standards. For us in the church – the only way to fail is to not try. By not putting ourselves out there, we are surrendering to fear and won't be able to discover who God created us to be. So go ahead, jump in and discover who God made you to be!

3. The Body Test

This is the best way to discover who God created you to be but takes the most time. The greatest way to know what your spiritual gifts are is to be active in a community of disciples and receive feedback from them. Over time, they will be able to observe you and see where God uses you. It's one thing to think you are a good teacher. It is another thing altogether to have 3 or 4 people come up to you after you teach and say, "I really learned a lot today. You are a great teacher." If you will surround yourself with people who will give you feedback about what they see in you, then, for sure, this will be one of the most accurate ways to discover your spiritual gifts.

Here are a couple of tips for this method.

- You want to be able to trust the people that give you feedback in this arena. Everyone will have an opinion about you, but there will always be a select few in your life who God will use to speak to you about yourself.
- You want to make sure these people are able to tell you what you are good at and as well as what you may not thrive at. There is nothing worse than someone who thinks they have a gift they don't have because people didn't have the heart to tell them. This isn't edification. It's like letting someone walk on stage with their zipper down. (At the same time - we should be way more apt to point out what's right than what's going wrong.) If we tell someone that they may not have a gift too early we could be wrong. They might be just developing it.
- You need to make sure the people who give you feedback in the body test have actual intersections with you. They need to be able to see you in action. If they are people you know and respect but have never seen you play - I wouldn't necessarily trust their feedback.