

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership
Leader's Guide

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

LESSON 2: THE SHEPHERDING GIFTS

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Spiritual Gifts. The module examines a broad range of spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture, and how believers can use these gifts in serving God and His people. Participants will be given guidance in how to identify the spiritual gifts they and others around them possess. They will be encouraged to put their gifts into practice, in fulfillment of God's purposes, by serving each other and worshiping in spirit and in truth.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is Christians who are maturing in their faith and desiring to serve God sincerely. The lessons will also benefit church leaders who wish to encourage people in their Christian service, and identify spiritual gifts in those they are discipling.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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SPIRITUAL GIFTS

LESSON 2: THE SHEPHERDING GIFTS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to explore the spiritual gifts given to people who are shepherding the Church, so that it can minister effectively to one another and the world. These gifts include Pastoring, Teaching, Leadership and Administration.

LEADER'S NOTE

It might cause confusion to talk about the spiritual gifts of pastoring, teaching, and leading when we humanly appoint offices, such as pastor or elder. The office of pastor is different than the gift. A pastor may or may not have the spiritual gift of *pastoring*, but instead have abilities such as evangelism, knowledge, prophecy, or prayer. Pastors often make use of a wide range of gifts. But no person possesses all of them! That is why the body of the church must serve one another. This lesson looks at a specific group of gifts. It is important to remember that every gift is only effective if used with love and empowered by the Spirit of God. This study and the ones that follow should help your participants identify their own gifts and the gifts of others, so that they can use them effectively to serve God.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ What is the role of a shepherd? How can a person be a spiritual shepherd to someone?
- ❖ What are some of the leadership positions at your Church? These might be voluntary or paid. What skills are necessary for carrying out these roles?
- ❖ All spiritual gifts must be used with love. What would happen if a leader did not act lovingly with those he leads?
- ❖ Are you more focused on people or on projects? How can you correct an imbalance in your life in this area?

STUDY

Instruct the participants on the following points

TEACH

- ❖ **The Shepherding Gifts:** The role of a shepherd is to guide, protect and care for his sheep. A spiritual shepherd cares for a group of believers; this includes teaching them, rescuing those



who have strayed, spending time with those they lead, and humbly serving the group with love. Read 1 Corinthians 13, 1 Peter 5:1-5.

- **Why it is Needed:** The shepherding gifts carry great weight. They are perhaps the most vital for the health of the Church, yet the most likely to be imitated by those who crave power. God knows we need leaders, guides, and teachers. Jesus Himself modelled shepherding for us.
 - Without leadership, the church cannot accomplish its mission.
 - Without teachers, knowledge of God's Word can be shallow.
 - Without pastors, people can wander from the faith.
 - God chooses individual men and women to receive these gifts, not to make them feel superior, but to serve the Church.

- **When Used Lovingly:** When shepherding gifts are used with love, leaders exhibit the character of Christ, and act as servants rather than harsh rulers. They will:
 - have a humble spirit enabling them to invest their time and energy in leading people.
 - love seeing the potential in others realized.
 - have a genuine love for people and sharing the Gospel.
 - be fulfilled in their work with people and see fruit for their labour.
 - be fruitful in their ministry.

- **When Used Selfishly:** When a person with these gifts is not acting out of love and is not walking in the Spirit, their gifts are distorted and bear negative fruit. Unloving leaders are often rejected by others, and may attempt to regain their lost status through manipulation and control. This can result in:
 - an attempt to wield power and control people for selfish purposes.
 - carelessness in handling God's Word.
 - a lack of personal integrity.
 - distrust and disrespect from those they lead.
 - lies, fear, and feeling threatened by the gifts and abilities of others.
 - an overall unfruitful ministry.

❖ **A List of the Gifts:** The following is a list of Shepherding gifts that are found in the Bible.

TASK:

You may choose to provide these charts for your participants. Find a way to present this material creatively. Some possibilities include:

- *use of visuals or technology*
- *storytelling focused on the Biblical examples of these gifts*
- *dividing your participants into smaller groups to study, then describe for the group an individual who possesses this gift*



THE GIFT OF LEADERSHIP	
What it Is	This gift enables a person to set a vision for what God desires for a community, and lead or direct members to accomplish those purposes. This gift may be used to lead a church, a ministry, organization or even a school or business. People with this gift are good at giving direction to people, are energetic, and easily inspire people to follow them.
Core Motivation	<i>To See The People of God Move In Unity Toward a Common Goal</i>
You Might Say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am not afraid to make difficult decisions when needed. • When a group has no leader, I usually end up taking on that role. • I can usually see what a group should do and can communicate a vision (a mental picture of what could be) for their future. • When people don't know what to do, I feel urged to give them direction. • I have a deep concern to see people achieve their goals. • I can easily motivate others. • People ask for my advice and follow my example. • My relationships with people are very important to me. • I am able to stay focused on the end goal or big picture. • I see needs around me and work to fill those needs. • I am not afraid to take risks to accomplish God's will. • I jump into a crisis to help where I can and am not afraid of difficulty. • I am deeply satisfied to see a project through to completion. • People describe me as trustworthy, decisive, and responsible. • I feel deeply burdened when things are not as they should be.
Areas of Weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to communicate an outcome, but may not know the steps needed to achieve it. • I am sometimes bogged down with too many details and may need people to assist me with administration if I don't also possess that gift. • I must fight against pride and arrogance which are natural pitfalls. • I can sometimes be more idealistic than realistic.
Uses in the Church	Official roles such as Pastor, Elder, Deacon or Bishop, Director of a ministry or organization, committee or board member, leader in community, affecting positive change in workplace
Biblical References	<i>Romans 12:8, Hebrews 13:7-17, 1 Timothy 5:20, 1 Corinthians 2:4-6, Matthew 20:25-28</i>
Biblical Examples	James – half brother of Jesus (<i>Acts 15:13-29</i>), Moses (<i>Book of Exodus</i>)



THE GIFT OF PASTORING	
What it Is	This gift enables a person to take spiritual responsibility for a group of believers over a period of time, helping them to grow closer to God and to fulfil God's desires for their life. This gift may be used to guide, teach and care for the spiritual needs of people under their care in a church, small groups or other ministry settings (although it is not limited to those active in professional ministry).
Core Motivation	<i>To See God's People Grow in their Faith</i>
You Might Say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I truly love being at Church, and in fellowship with God's people. • I feel deeply concerned for people who are not following God. • I have an ability to give spiritual direction and help people grow in their faith. • I take on the initiative to disciple and train others. • I arrange my day so that I can be available to those who need me. • In a position of authority, I am primarily concerned with people's spiritual lives and growth, not tasks or goals. • People feel comfortable talking to me about their problems. • I take on some responsibility for the spiritual growth of others, and rejoice when they take courageous steps of faith. • I am regularly in prayer for others. • There is a specific group of Christians that I care for and feel called to serve and guide.
Areas of Weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may not always balance the needs of my family and the spiritual care of the group I am pastoring. • I can be weighed down with the troubles of other people.
Uses in the Church	<i>Pastor, Elder, Small Group Leader, Sunday School Teacher, Youth Leader</i>
Biblical References	1 Peter 5:2-3, Ephesians 4:11, Titus 2:3-5, Acts 20:28
Biblical Examples	Paul (2 Corinthians 2:1-4, Philemon 1:1-25)

THE GIFT OF TEACHING	
What it Is	This gift enables a person to teach God's Word with authority and effectiveness in order to see lives changed. This gift allows someone to understand and communicate God's Word with great skill and accuracy. They want to see people develop a renewed love of God's Word.
Core Motivation	<i>To See God's People Know God's Word</i>
You Might Say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I learn something new, I immediately think about how I could teach that to someone else. • People regularly comment on how much they have benefited from what I taught them, or how they were changed. • I love spending time in God's Word and discovering new truths. • I enjoy speaking in front of others. • I want people to not just know the facts of the Bible, but to really understand it and let it change their lives. • It excites me to research a new topic. • I have the ability to simplify complex ideas.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can see when someone misuses Scripture, has made a factual error, or has a flaw in their understanding. • I have the ability to develop curriculum or plan group learning. • I am concerned that people have accurate knowledge, because what we know dictates what we believe and how we live.
Areas of Weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can sometimes burden people with too many facts and details. • I sometimes put more time into research than relationships. • I am tempted to be proud because I know more than others.
Uses in the Church	Teaching Pastor, small group teacher, Children's Pastor, Sunday School teacher, classroom teacher, curriculum developer, writer, journalist
Biblical References	<i>Titus 2:7-9, James 1:22, Ephesians 4:12-13, Matthew 23:8-10, Malachi 2:7, James 3:1-2</i>
Biblical Examples	<i>Luke (Luke 1:1-4)</i>

THE GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION	
What it Is	This gift enables a person to organize and facilitate the use of all the gifts God has given the Church in the best possible way. This gift may be used to manage people, projects, finances, information and duties. They want to see plans carried out, goals accomplished, and order maintained.
Core Motivation	<i>To See the Gifts of God Managed with Good Stewardship</i>
You Might Say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am not burdened by being assigned multiple tasks at once. • I am energized by organizing the details of a project or event. • I will assign tasks to others to accomplish a job if necessary. • I am an organized person and look for efficient ways to do things. • I identify gifts in others and help those people find meaningful service. • I feel satisfaction when others are in the right job. • I am able to organize people to complete a task joyfully. • I prefer to work behind the scenes making sure everything runs well. • I can set out the plans needed to accomplish a goal or vision. • I think strategically and logically. • I give good attention to detail and memory.
Areas of Weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I sometimes find myself too busy with many tasks. • I sometimes get so lost in details that I cannot see the needs of people. • I get easily frustrated when people are off task, meetings are disorganized, and time, money or other resources are wasted.
Uses in the Church	Church Secretary, Administrator, Office Manager, Sunday School supervisor, project manager, committee work, church finance, organizing events, etc.
Biblical References	1 Corinthians 12:28, 1 Corinthians 14:33,40, Titus 1:4-5, Luke 14:28
Biblical Examples	Joseph (Genesis 41-47), Nehemiah (Book of Nehemiah)

❖ **Conclusion:** There are many gifts given to the Church, but the Shepherding Gifts are of great importance because they give direction and instruction to the people of God. Those who feel they have these gifts will have them confirmed by others who will place them in positions of leadership. Shepherding gifts can be exercised in many places – leadership in your home, teaching your children, pastoring a small group or specific people, administration of details of a



ministry. While these are wonderful gifts, they can make people vulnerable to feelings of pride, isolation, stress and criticism. Remember to pray for those who shepherd God's people.

TASK:

As a group, identify several individuals who exhibit the shepherding gifts and pray for them. Pray specifically that they will overcome the areas of weakness outlined in the teaching charts above.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Why are the Shepherding gifts particularly vulnerable to pride, isolation, stress and criticism?
- ❖ How can you support those who shepherd you? What specific things can you pray for regarding their ministry? How can you make their ministry easier?
- ❖ How would you identify the shepherding gifts of someone who is not in a formal leadership position? What traits would they exhibit?
- ❖ Do you think any of these gifts have been given to you?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Thank God for leaders, administrators, teachers, and pastors who have been called to serve the Church of God. Pray that God would raise up new shepherds for His flock who would lead with integrity and be a blessing to those they serve. Pray that shepherds in your community would be protected from selfishness and pride, and would instead serve with love. Pray that God would give all of you a deep abiding love for His people and a desire to serve them.