

# discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership  
Leader's Guide

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

### LESSON 3: THE SERVING 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](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org).

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# SPIRITUAL GIFTS

## LESSON 3: THE SERVING GIFTS

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to explore the spiritual gifts of serving the Church. These include craftsmanship, giving, hospitality, helps and mercy.

### LEADER'S NOTE

Each and every one of us is called to be a servant, and to put the needs of others before our own. When there is work to do, we must do it out of love for one another, whether or not we feel we have a specific gift in that area. However, some Christian believers are uniquely equipped to serve in extraordinary ways. Every person is called to give to God's work, but some have a special ministry of joyful and sacrificial giving. When teaching this lesson, help your participants see that having different gifts does not exempt them from serving, nor are the gifts of serving 'lowly'. They are vital to the Church and should be encouraged just as much as leadership roles or miraculous gifts. Remember the high calling of servant hood that Jesus placed on all of us!

## INTRODUCTION

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

- ❖ To review, what is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
- ❖ What are some ways that people serve behind the scenes at your Church? What would happen to Church programs without them?
- ❖ What is something that needs to be done around your Church or community that no one seems to be doing? What skills or abilities would someone need to accomplish that task?
- ❖ Do you know anyone who makes you feel welcome in their home and serves people's practical needs very well? What is it that they do? What benefit is this ministry to the life of the Church?

## STUDY

*Instruct the participants on the following points*

### TEACH

- ❖ **The Serving Gifts:** As a Christian, we are to follow all of Jesus' teachings and His example of serving. While society might look down on those who do menial tasks or those who give up something in order to have more to share with others, Jesus clearly taught and demonstrated



what it means to be a servant. He told us, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve...” (Mark 10:45), and, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35). At the heart of serving is putting aside our own comforts, needs and desires in order to fulfil someone else's. While all of us are called to serve one another, some people are spiritually equipped to serve in special ways (2 Corinthians 4:5, Galatians 5:13).

- **Why it is Needed:** The serving gifts meet practical needs that arise within the Church, helping the Church accomplish its mission. These gifts are needed for serving the Church as a whole, as well as serving individuals. The focus is on needs being met.
  - The Church often makes use of physical space or a building that requires design, construction and maintenance.
  - When people come together someone needs to take care of practical needs of the event and location.
  - The work of the Church must be financed by giving, and some people are called to sacrificial giving.
  - Those in leadership require joyful servants to help with their tasks.
- **When Used Lovingly:** People who have the gift of serving will be drawn to opportunities that meet needs in meaningful ways. When serving gifts are used lovingly, the people serving will:
  - have a Spirit-driven capacity to invest their time and energies in helping others.
  - love seeing people welcomed and comfortable in the Church community.
  - have a genuine love for people they serve.
  - be fulfilled in their work behind the scenes without applause.
  - clearly identify needs around them without needing to be asked.
- **When Used Selfishly:** When a person with these gifts is not acting out of love, they are no longer able to see needs clearly, and may feel invisible or unappreciated. This can result in:
  - offers of help where no help is needed in order to manipulate or control.
  - threats to ‘quit’ helping in order to get attention.
  - resentment that they have received a ‘lowly’ gift or job to do.
  - inability to complete tasks with care or excellence.
  - losing sight of the importance of serving joyfully.

❖ **A List of the Gifts:** The following is a list of some of the serving 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*



| <b>THE GIFT OF GIVING</b> |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| What it Is                | This is the gift that enables an individual to share resources generously and joyfully in order to see God's work accomplished. This may take the form of someone being blessed with wealth which they give to God's work, or a desire to give sacrificially when a need arises.  |
| Core Motivation           | <i>To See The Work of God Unhindered by Providing Financial Resources</i>   |
| You Might Say             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I manage my finances well so I am always able to give money to God.</li> <li>• I have an ability to make enough money to give some away.</li> <li>• I get great joy from giving in secret.</li> <li>• I see financial needs that others don't see.</li> <li>• I read financial reports and want to see money spent wisely.</li> <li>• I sometimes find out that my secret gift was an answer to prayer.</li> <li>• Giving a gift of any kind brings me joy, and I often think of gifts to give.</li> <li>• I am quick to support a project or ministry that I believe is of value.</li> <li>• I feel urged by God to give what I have.</li> <li>• I want to be involved in the ministries my money goes to support.</li> </ul> |
| Some Weaknesses           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can sometimes resent those who give less than I do.</li> <li>• I must protect against an urge to control others with my giving</li> </ul>  |
| Uses in the Church        | Giving to sustain necessary ministries or mission efforts   |
| Biblical References       | <i>Luke 3:11, Romans 12:8, 2 Corinthians 9:5-15, Philippians 4:15-19</i>  |
| Biblical Examples         | Matthew ( <i>the book of Matthew speaks the most about giving money</i> )   |

| <b>THE GIFT OF HELPS</b> |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| What it Is               | This is the gift that enables someone to see what is overlooked by others, and put their hand to whatever needs to be done. They also help others use their gift and multiply the effectiveness of their service to God. This person finds opportunities to serve in many areas of ministry.  |
| Core Motivation          | <i>To Meet Practical Needs and See Others Enabled to Use Their Gifts for God</i>  |
| You Might Say            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see what needs to be done around me, even if no one else does.</li> <li>• I feel very fulfilled when I can love someone by supporting them and coming alongside them in their work.</li> <li>• I like to be behind the scenes rather than in front of others.</li> <li>• I am happy to do tasks for others to free them to do greater things.</li> <li>• I am a pretty flexible person and am able to change direction easily.</li> <li>• I would rather do a task than sit around planning it or talking about it.</li> <li>• I can be disappointed if my offer to help is not accepted.</li> <li>• I know there are eternal purposes to ordinary tasks of life.</li> </ul> |
| Some Weaknesses          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can become bitter, weary or unappreciated for all my work.</li> <li>• I sometimes neglect my own needs because I am busy responding to urgent requests from others, and may feel overworked.</li> <li>• It is sometimes difficult for me to say 'no' to a request for help.</li> </ul>   |
| Uses in the Church       | Church secretary or office assistant, assistant for children's classes, committee member, assistant to ministry leaders, usher, serving the community, visitation,  |
| Biblical References      | <i>Romans 12:7, 14:18-19, 2 Timothy 1:16-18, Titus 3:14, Galatians 6:2, Acts 6:1-7</i>  |
| Biblical Examples        | <i>Seven Men in Acts (Acts 6:1-7), Eliezar, Ruth and Abigail in the Old Testament</i>   |



| <b>THE GIFT OF HOSPITALITY</b> |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| What it Is                     | This is the gift that enables someone to care for people, especially visitors, strangers and guests, and welcome them into the Church. They uniquely connect with people on a relational level and meet their needs. They are especially able to reach out to the lonely or outcast.  |
| Core Motivation                | <i>To See Every Person Feel Loved and Included in the Family of God</i>   |
| You Might Say                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I love to meet new people and feel drawn to new faces.</li> <li>• I want to see people at ease in unfamiliar places.</li> <li>• I notice when someone is left out and want to help them belong.</li> <li>• I'm the one who plans parties and get-togethers.</li> <li>• People know they always have a room at my house.</li> <li>• I enjoy using my home to serve others, preparing food or giving people a place to stay. My home feels empty without guests.</li> <li>• It is important to me that people feel known and loved for who they are.</li> <li>• When you visit me, I will offer you something to eat and drink. I am usually prepared for visitors. I will offer you my best.</li> </ul> |
| Some Weaknesses                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I sometimes neglect practical tasks to be with people, or neglect people to attend to practical tasks – balance can be difficult.</li> <li>• I sometimes wish my home was larger, or I had more to share.</li> <li>• I sometimes begrudge others not inviting me to their home.</li> <li>• I am exhausted from the work if I am not walking in the Spirit.</li> </ul>  |
| Uses in the Church             | <i>Welcoming newcomers, hosting people in their homes, preparing meals, visiting those in prison, caring for the elderly, serving the poor, befriending people in the community, reaching out to neighbours, helping refugees</i>   |
| Biblical References            | 1 Peter 4:9, Matthew 25:35, Hebrews 13:2, Romans 12:13, Leviticus 19:34, Mark 9:41,   |
| Biblical Examples              | Martha ( <i>Luke 10:38-42</i> ), Timothy ( <i>Philippians 2:19</i> )  |

| <b>THE GIFT OF MERCY</b> |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| What it Is               | This is the gift that enables someone to feel genuine empathy and compassion for those who suffer. This person doesn't run away when there is sorrow or pain, but rather shows love through actions and being present with those in need. They display the love of God to a world that needs the hope of salvation.  |
| Core Motivation          | <i>To Show Compassion and Love in the Name of Jesus</i>  |
| You Might Say            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am sensitive to the suffering of others.</li> <li>• I am sometimes deeply aware when someone around me is lonely, feeling fear, pain or anger, even if they don't express it outwardly.</li> <li>• I will comfort the suffering even if they don't deserve it.</li> <li>• I believe the sick, disabled, displaced and outcast people should have their God-given dignity maintained.</li> </ul> |



|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I know when someone around me does not have genuine love and is just pretending to care – I see right through their act.</li> <li>• I know both pain and joy are a part of life, and will make time to cry or laugh with people.</li> <li>• I enthusiastically champion the causes of others and make needs known.</li> <li>• I have compassion and empathy for others, not pity.</li> <li>• I use words and actions to meet needs, show love and bring relief.</li> <li>• I care for people's physical, mental, financial and spiritual health.</li> <li>• I love to be around people.</li> </ul> |
| Some Weaknesses     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am sometimes angered at how people can be forgotten by others.</li> <li>• I sometimes feel exhausted by the work I do for others.</li> <li>• I sometimes see more needs around me than I can help with, and fall into hopelessness or depression.</li> </ul>   |
| Uses in the Church  | Visitation, ministry to elderly, prison ministry, serving the poor, providing material needs for community, community outreach ministries, delivering meals or material goods, raising money, medical ministry, caring for orphans  |
| Biblical References | <i>Romans 12:8, Luke 6:36, Matthew 5:7, Colossians 3:12, Matthew 25:40</i>  |
| Biblical Examples   | Jesus ( <i>Matthew 20:29-34</i> ),  |

| <b>THE GIFT OF CRAFTSMANSHIP</b> |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| What it Is                       | This is the gift than enables an individual to work with their hands to design and create objects to the glory of God. This gift may be used to build, repair, beautify or maintain buildings, spaces, tools or equipment. It can also include creative and visual arts, including music, drama, painting, cooking, sewing, as well as mechanical and computer skills.  |
| Core Motivation                  | <i>To Create and Maintain Physical Objects used to Glorify God</i>  |
| You Might Say                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I like to work with my hands and make physical objects.</li> <li>• I see potential in materials such as wood, paint, cloth, or electronics.</li> <li>• I like to meet the needs of others by repairing something if it is broken.</li> <li>• I love to leave something more beautiful than the way I found it.</li> <li>• It is important to me that my work is high quality.</li> <li>• I am energized by using the resources at my disposal to finish a project.</li> <li>• I dream of how buildings, facilities or equipment could be improved.</li> <li>• I am creative, resourceful, and focused.</li> <li>• I am the first person to be called when something needs to be fixed.</li> <li>• I see how what I do enables others to do their work better.</li> </ul> |
| Some Weaknesses                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have to guard against feeling under appreciated.</li> <li>• I sometimes have too much sense of 'ownership' over finished projects.</li> <li>• I can be very task oriented and see people as a means to an end goal.</li> </ul>   |
| Uses in the Church               | Building churches, construction of pulpits, baptismal fonts, pews or other objects, operating technology, maintenance, decoration of worship space, preparing music for worship, producing media for use in church, cooking for special ministry events   |
| Biblical References              | <i>Exodus 28:3-6, Numbers 21:4-9, 2 Chronicles 34:9-13, 1 Chronicles 4:14 and Ezekiel 27:4-9, Acts 9:39</i>   |
| Biblical Examples                | Bezalel ( <i>Exodus 31:1-5</i> )  |



- ❖ **Conclusion:** There are many gifts given to the Church, but the serving gifts are of special value because they enable the vision of the Church to be carried out. Great plans and Biblical teaching are important, but if we don't actively love those around us, we are not a Church! The body of Christ must care for the needs of each member, and those with the serving gift are able to serve lovingly, and inspire others to do the same. Each of us must consider ourselves a servant. These serving gifts are not lowly or less important than other gifts; they are highly valued in the Kingdom of God!

### **TASK:**

*As a group, identify several individuals who exhibit the serving gifts and pray for them. Pray specifically for areas of weakness outlined in the teaching charts above. If your Church or community has active serving ministries, ask how your participants could get involved.*

## **DISCUSSION**

- ❖ Why are the serving gifts particularly prone to self-pity, loneliness, resentment and envy?
- ❖ Do people look down on servants in your community? According to what we are taught by Jesus, what should our view of servants be? How could you demonstrate this in your daily life?
- ❖ What is one way that you could use whatever gifts you have been given to selflessly serve others?
- ❖ Which of these serving gifts is your Church or community in most need of today? How can you identify people with those gifts?

## **PRAYER**

*Close the lesson in prayer. Thank God for those who give of their time, money, talents, possessions, heart and life to better the people of God. Thank God for those who put others first, following Jesus' example of servanthood. Pray that God would raise up people who give, are full of mercy, are hospitable, who love charity, who create beautiful and useful objects for the glory of God, and who see every small need and meet it without being asked. Pray that God would give all of you a deep abiding love for His people and desire to serve them.*