

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership Study Guide

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

LESSON 6: SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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. You will be given guidance in how to identify the spiritual gifts you and others around you possess. The focus of these lessons is unity in the Church while we actively love and serve one another. You will be encouraged to put your spiritual gifts into practice, in fulfillment of God's purposes, by serving each other and worshiping in spirit and in truth.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.



SPIRITUAL GIFTS

LESSON 6: SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The purpose of this lesson is to explore how the spiritual gifts interact with one another within the local Church.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

It is a beautiful thing that spiritual gifts are given to individuals, and those individuals are given as gifts to the local Church. Spiritual gifts are meant to be used in community to bless one another, and for the growth and health of the Church. Can you imagine the extent of God's blessing if everyone in your local Church desired, prayed for, and nurtured their spiritual gifts? If you are still unsure of what your particular gifts are, you may need the help of a more mature Christian or spiritual leader. The accompanying worksheet may be of some help. Take your time and consider the answers, then look for ways to 'fan into flame' your gifts and put them into practice.

GETTING STARTED

1. Think back on the spiritual gifts we have studied. Can you think of two or three that complement each other, or one that is needed for the other to be successful in accomplishing some task?

2. The Almighty God can do anything He desires, and yet He often chooses to work through ordinary people. Why does He do this?



STUDY

❖ **SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH:** While we may feel very ordinary and unexceptional, each of us has been given gifts to bless one another. This is the beauty of the body of Christ. God grants us the joy and privilege of sharing our gifts with each other! At any moment, the words that come from our mouths can be used to heal, encourage, give direction, delight, or speak truth to people in need! Our actions can be blessings that grant life-changing understanding of who God is and how He loves us. To not use our gifts, and not be open to what God wants us to give others, is to miss the riches of Christian fellowship.

- **The Common Good:** When each of us knows our God-given gifts, we become aware of our responsibility to the body of Christ. These gifts contribute to a vital interdependency of all members of the Church. We need one another to accomplish the work before us. Each of these gifts are entrusted to individuals who, though far from perfect, are given the responsibility to guard, nurture, and effectively put them to good use. For this reason we must all be in unity with other believers whenever possible.

Read 1 Corinthians 12 and make note of what it says about the end goal of all the gifts. To what does this passage compare a Church where a spiritual gift is not used? How should we view all the gifts?

- **Orderly Conduct:** When these gifts are used properly, it is like a healthy body with all its functions in order. The members of a church must work together in unity for a common purpose in order to achieve God's will. Two feet must work together with the legs, knees, and other parts of the body in order to walk. So it is with those using their gifts. This is possible through the Holy Spirit who empowers every gift!

Read 1 Corinthians 14 and make note of the teaching given for the orderly use of spiritual gifts within the Church. Why are these instructions given?



- **Unity:** Working together in unity is echoed in many places in God’s Word. It is clearly God’s desire that we work with one another rather than against one another. This is an area where individuals and groups of Christians can be spiritually attacked, and we must be vigilant not to let disunity seep in. Read the following verses and make note of what you learn.

Psalm 133:1	
Ephesians 4:1-15	
1 Peter 3:8	

What are the consequences if our gifts are not used with order and unity? Consider the witness to those outside the Church, the effectiveness of our gifts and the glory given to God. What structures are in place at your local Church to allow for orderly use of gifts in a worship setting?

- ❖ **EAGERLY DESIRING THE GIFTS:** When we are given the Holy Spirit at salvation, we receive at least one gift to use. The Bible points to some people being given more than one gift and, in fact, encourages us to desire more gifts for the good of the Church. Read the verses below and answer the questions.

Does everyone receive a gift? <i>1 Corinthians 12:7</i>	
Does anyone have all the gifts? <i>1 Corinthians 12:17-20</i>	

Because we are each a part of the whole Church, we must not think we can effectively do God's work all alone – we must cooperate with other Christians to accomplish it! By God’s design, we are only given part of the tools that are necessary, but it is always a very important part!



- **Praying for Additional Gifts:** There is some evidence in the Bible that we can pray for gifts that are lacking, and God may choose to give them if we're asking for the good of the Church and in response to needs. We might be moved when we see an obvious need, and pray for wisdom. God has promised in James 1:5 to give us wisdom, but He may choose to send someone to us with the gift of wisdom. We are often told to pray for what we need – resources, discernment, etc. However, we must always remember that it is God, not us, who chooses to bestow spiritual gifts. The gifts we are given will become more effective as we mature in our faith. As we use what we are given, God may choose to give us more. Write down what you learn from the following verses.

1 Corinthians 12:31	
James 1:5	
1 Corinthians 14:13,28	
Luke 19:12-27	

- ❖ **HONOURING THE GIFTS IN OTHERS:** There is evidence in the Bible that we can pray for God to bless another believer with a gift. This is depicted in several verses that describe ‘laying on of hands’ (placing your hands on another person as you pray for them).

- This rite is often seen when a special gift or office is given to someone in the Bible, or a special blessing is conferred. It is a public act or symbolic gesture of community in which a spiritual gift is recognized and honoured in another person, and they are set apart for a special ministry. It also can take place when some believers desire God to bless, use, or heal someone. It holds no power in itself. God alone gives gifts. Read the Bible references and write down what you learn about this practice:

Acts 6:1-6 Mark 6:5 Acts 13:2-3 1 Timothy 4:14 James 5:14	
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- ❖ **PUTTING THE GIFTS INTO PRACTICE:** Each one of us who belongs to a Church community will find many ways to serve. When we are serving in an area of our giftedness, the work becomes fulfilling, joyful, and almost effortless! This doesn’t excuse us from the ordinary work all Christians are called to, but if we are not serving in an area of our giftedness, we are lacking a blessing and withholding a blessing from the world!



- Worship services, missionary activity, ministries and programs should be structured so that as many people as possible can serve in their area of giftedness. The goal is unity and mutual support where no one is left without a place to serve.
- From time to time we may all serve in areas which are not specifically our area of gifting, just because the work needs to be done.
- We must continually guard against:
 - thinking that our gifts are superior and make us special in some way.
 - using our gift for selfish purposes rather than with love.
 - denying that any of the gifts have a place in the service of God.
 - not relying on one another.
 - not choosing to find opportunities to use our gift.
- What are some ways you can support others as they use their gifts? What opportunities are there where you can serve in areas you are not gifted in? What are some ways you should be using your gifts, experiences and passions?

- If you are still not sure what your gifts might be, spend some time prayerfully working through the chart that follows this lesson.

IN SUMMARY

- Each of us has been given spiritual gifts to be used for the common good.
- Biblical instruction for using the gifts includes orderly conduct and unity among believers. Gifts should not divide us, but rather motivate us to depend on one another and work together.
- Each person has at least one gift, but no one has all the gifts. We can eagerly desire gifts and pray to receive them ourselves, or pray for them to be given to others.
- We should honour and recognize the gifts given to others.
- When we put our gifts into practice within a Christian community, we receive a blessing, we are able to bless others, and we fulfill the call of God on our lives.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What is something you learned from this module on spiritual gifts that will change how you serve God in the future?

2. What is one thing you can do this week to nurture the gifts given to you? What can you do this week to encourage the gifts given to others?



WHAT ARE MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Answering the following questions may help you determine your spiritual gifts if you are not already sure of what they are. Remember that gifts will allow us to be fulfilled and fruitful, and will be confirmed by others. When this chart is completed, prayerfully consider the answers and go over them with a spiritual mentor or pastor. Ask God to reveal to you your spiritual gifts, and then find ways to develop and use them.

1. In what areas am I already serving in my local Church?	
2. What functions of the Church am I most passionate about?	
3. What are my motivations for serving – what do I want to do?	
4. What brings me a great amount of joy?	
5. I feel close to God when I am ...	
6. I feel burdened to pray for...	
7. What gifts do the above answers suggest?	

<p>8. Our personality and temperament sometimes point to our gifts. For each pair, circle your answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ I prefer to: work independently work with others ➤ I enjoy: working with my hands thinking or speaking ➤ I would rather: support my leader lead others ➤ I like to: work behind the scenes be front and center ➤ I am drawn to: those within the Church outsiders 	<p>What spiritual gifts do your selections suggest to you?</p>
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9. For the next section, ask people who know you well or who have served with you, to identify where God has gifted you. List their name and the gift or gifts they identify in you. Confirmation from others is very important in identifying spiritual gifts!

<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Gifts: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Gifts: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Gifts: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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10. Read through the description of each spiritual gift. What gifts are things you do and say?

<p>11. From the above information, what are your spiritual gifts?</p>	<p>12. How can you use these gifts?</p>
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