

What Spiritual Gifts Does God Give?

How can we discover our individual spiritual gifts? How can we use our God-given gifts?



A genuine spiritual gift aids a Christian in the service of the Church.

The Bible indicates that God gives Christians special help through His Spirit to serve His Church and to accomplish His work. The New Testament mentions numerous gifts, some that helped the ministry in their tasks and some that helped the lay members of the Church in their Christian service. One of many helpful scriptures on the subject is [1 Corinthians 12:1-11](#).

The Bible addresses the gift of “tongues” (the ability to speak in different known languages of the day) in the books of Acts and 1 Corinthians. What many churches call “speaking in tongues” today is nothing like what the

Bible records. The miracle that occurred on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 (Acts 2:4-8) was one of communication—apparently both in the speaking and the hearing. The Greek word translated “tongues” is *glossa* and means “languages.” The miracle of speaking in tongues meant that every member of the audience could hear in his or her native tongue (language, see Acts 2:9-11).

Also, some in the early Church, particularly in Corinth, had the ability to speak in different languages. In that case, it seems that people were showing off their abilities, speaking every language they could, regardless of whether the people who heard them could understand. They were caught up in their vanity, having lost sight of the fact that one should always use spiritual gifts to serve others. Paul wrote chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians specifically to deal with this problem. He pointed out that the proper use of the gift of languages would be to speak the language or languages that the congregation could understand. It would be like speaking Spanish to a Spanish-speaking audience or French to a French-speaking audience.

Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth that speaking different languages was of no real value if an audience could not understand the words. He admonished them to concentrate more on understandable communication than on their linguistic abilities.

All biblical examples of speaking in tongues stand in stark contrast to the type of “speaking in tongues” done in some churches today, where the speaker utters a “language” that sounds like gibberish, not an actual human language.

We see that spiritual gifts did not control the person who had them, forcing themselves to the fore. Rather, every individual was responsible for how he or she used those gifts (1 Corinthians 14:32).

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A lesson we learn from the mistakes of the Corinthians is that Christians should be on guard against becoming vain over their individual abilities. Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 that godly love must inspire the person using a gift. That is, an authentic spiritual gift is not for the sake of enhancing one’s personal standing or reputation.

How can we know and use what gifts we have? Most should be self-evident. Others may become apparent by looking into our natural abilities. Matthew 25:15 indicates that God enhances our innate abilities with His power. The principal point is that, as we become aware of our gifts, we should seek God’s help to use those talents to serve others.



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