

What Are Spiritual Gifts and How Do You Use Them?

God does not want you to be unaware of the gifts He has placed inside you. That is not a vague spiritual idea. It is a direct statement from Scripture, and it puts the responsibility squarely on each of us to get informed, step out, and start discovering what God has called us to do.

Does God Want You to Know Your Spiritual Gift?

Sometimes we carry a quiet belief that God is keeping secrets from us, or that He moves in ways too mysterious to understand. But Scripture pushes back on that idea directly.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware." - 1 Corinthians 12:1

The word "unaware" in that verse means to be ignorant, uninformed, or to simply not have a clue. God is not hiding your gift from you. He wants you to find it, develop it, and use it for His glory.

Think about it from a parent's perspective. Most parents want their children to grow up, succeed, and function well on their own. God is the same way. He wants you to succeed. He wants you to flow in the areas He has designed for you.

Why Understanding Spiritual Things Does Not Come Naturally

Spiritual gifts are supernatural by nature, which means they do not line up with how the world system operates. In the world, you climb over others to get ahead. In God's kingdom, you serve and lift others up, and that is what moves you forward.

We each live two lives at once: a natural life and a spiritual life. When we stay connected to what the Spirit of God is saying, it helps us navigate the natural challenges we face every day. Spirituality is not separate from real life. It is essential to living a balanced one.

There is also no benefit to being emotionally strong while being spiritually dead. To connect with a God who is Spirit, we need to be spiritually alive. That happens when we surrender our lives to Christ.

What Happens Before We Know God

Before coming to faith, we are all being led by one false guide or another. Whatever we yield to is what we are serving. The world system is constantly trying to pull us away from spiritual truth and keep us uninformed.

This is also why we should be patient with people who do not yet believe. They are not being stubborn for no reason. They simply cannot see what has not yet been revealed to them. Once you are born again, you can look back and understand what the old life was doing to you. Before that, you do not know what you do not know.

Three Categories of Spiritual Gifts

First Corinthians 12:4-6 lays out a framework that is worth paying close attention to:

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord, and there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all these in all persons." - 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

This passage points to three distinct categories of gifts, each connected to a member of the Trinity:

- Gifts of the Spirit: These are the charismatic gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, such as healing, prophecy, and tongues. They are given by the Holy Spirit.
- Gifts of the Son: These are the ministry offices found in Ephesians 4:11, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These gifts exist to guide the body of Christ toward maturity and help others develop their own gifts.
- Gifts of the Father: These are the motivational gifts described in Romans 12:6-8. They reflect how you are wired to see and engage with the world. Examples include prophecy, mercy, serving, teaching, administration, and giving.

What Are Motivational Gifts and Why Do They Matter?

Your motivational gift is essentially your default setting. It shapes how you perceive situations and how you respond to people's needs.

For example, someone with a prophecy motivational gift tends to see things in black and white. They are driven by a desire to see people turn from what is hurting them. Someone with a mercy gift leads with compassion and tends to love people through their struggles.

Neither approach is wrong. They are just different. And when two people with different motivational gifts are working together, friction can arise if they do not understand each other. But when they do understand each other, they complement one another beautifully. All the bases get covered.

This is also true in marriage. Many people marry someone with a very different motivational gift. That difference can feel like conflict, but it can also mean that together you bring a fuller picture of God's love to the people around you.

Every Part of the Body Matters

Scripture is clear that no gift is more important than another. The body needs every part to function.

"For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot says, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any less a part of the body." - 1 Corinthians 12:14-15

Think about something as simple as picking an apple from a tree. You need your eyes to see it, your legs to walk to it, your hands to reach for it, and your mouth to eat it. Remove any one of those, and the task falls apart. The church works the same way.

God also gives special honor to those who serve in the background. Those who are not in visible roles are not overlooked by God. He gives an extra portion of grace to those who serve quietly and faithfully.

"God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked." - 1 Corinthians 12:24

Never say you are "just" doing this or "just" doing that. Everything done for God is a service of honor.

How to Avoid Division in the Body of Christ

One of the greatest threats to a healthy church is division, and it often starts when people do not understand why others approach things differently.

"That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." - 1 Corinthians 12:25-26

Division enters when we compare ourselves to others, look down on different gifts, or fail to appreciate how God has wired the people around us. The enemy is the author of division. There is a big enough battle against him without fighting each other.

You Have to Step Out to Step Into Your Gift

You will not discover your gift by waiting for a complete download of information. It takes stepping out, experimenting, paying attention, and being willing to try. You yield to the gift rather than trying to control it.

The most fulfilling thing you will ever experience is being in the center of God's will, doing exactly what He has called you to do. There is a sense of completion that comes with that. It is worth pursuing.

Life Application

This week, take one concrete step toward discovering or using your spiritual gift. If you do not know what your gift is, take a spiritual gifts assessment, ask someone who knows you well, or simply try serving in an area you feel drawn to. If you already know your gift, look for one opportunity to use it intentionally, whether inside your church or out in the world.

Ask yourself these questions as you reflect:

- Have I been treating my spiritual gift as something to discover, or have I assumed it is hidden from me?
- Am I serving in a way that reflects how God has wired me, or am I sitting on the sidelines waiting for a perfect moment?
- Is there someone in my church or life whose gift looks different from mine, and have I been dismissing or undervaluing what they bring?
- What is one area where I can step out this week, even imperfectly, and begin to flow in what God has placed inside me?

God is not keeping your gift a secret. He wants you aware, active, and walking in the fullness of what He has placed inside you. The only question is whether you will step out and let Him use it.