

**DISCOVER
MY GIFT**
BIBLE STUDY

HARVEST BIBLE CHAPEL

This Bible study was created by Harvest Bible Chapel in Chicagoland,
under the leadership of Founding and Senior Pastor James MacDonald.

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GIFT **DISCOVERY**

Bible Study



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INTRODUCTION

I know that as Christians we're not supposed to believe in the Easter Bunny, but as a child my favorite part of Easter was searching for the eggs. I still remember the thrill of the hunt and knowing there was a treat hidden inside.

Sadly, many Christians view spiritual gifts like I viewed Easter eggs. There is a great treasure out there; I just wish I could find it. But God hasn't hidden your spiritual gift somewhere. He's not sending you on some cosmic egg hunt to watch you try to find your gift. He wants you to discover it.

However, as we set out to discover our gift, I've come to see two barriers that often keep us from discovering or using our gifts. The first barrier is confusion regarding gifts. There are a lot of opinions and interpretations about this subject. Who's right? Who's wrong? In fact, I've found the topic of spiritual gifts to be one of the most divisive elements in the church today. But spiritual gifts don't have to be confusing or divisive.

The second barrier I have seen is selfishness. We have a tendency to focus on MY spiritual gift. As in, "Once I know MY spiritual gift, the church has to find a place where I am comfortable using MY gift. This thinking is not biblical. Although

God gave the spiritual gift to you, it really isn't for you. Rather, He gives spiritual gifts for Himself and His people. When I came to understand the Scripture's teaching on gifts, I quickly realized it has very little to do with me, and everything to do with Him and His church.

Let's cut through the confusion and selfishness that so often surround spiritual gifts and get to the heart of why these gifts are given. This study was written for that purpose. Not just to help you discover your gift but to help you use your gift in your church. Over the next three lessons you will dig into the Bible to understand spiritual gifts. After the final lesson, you will be directed to take a gift assessment using Discover My Gift online, if you haven't taken it already. This is directly connected to our church's ministry website. You will not only learn what God's gift is in your life but also where our church needs that gift!

As you will see, the focus of this study is not so much about you. Instead, it's about God and His Church. It's about what He is doing through you. And as you begin to grasp the power of God working through you will begin to experience the joy of serving Him!

The Pastors of Harvest Bible Chapel



SESSION ONE

YOU'VE GOT A GIFT!

PRINCIPLE

Every follower of Christ has a spiritual gift that needs to be used.

MEMORIZE

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

INTRODUCTION

It wasn't my first time flying, but it was definitely the weirdest. I hadn't flown much but I knew very quickly, this wasn't good. Like always, I had found the cheapest ticket I could buy. I'd never heard of the airline but it was a bargain, so it fit the bill. It didn't take long to realize why this airline was so cheap. After stowing my luggage and finding my seat, we prepared for takeoff.

"Good morning and thank you for joining us today," said the pilot over the speaker. Then he continued, "If you look out the windows you will notice two powerful engines hanging from the wings. Although it would be easy to turn the engines on and utilize the thousands of horsepower of thrust to get this aircraft to our destination, we believe all that horsepower is a little dangerous."

Now I was starting to get worried. He continued. "And if I don't make a perfect takeoff and landing, some people might laugh at me. Plus, there are a lot of pilots out there that are better than I am. In fact, I'm really much better at telling others about airplanes that actually flying them."

So here's what we are going to do. I need everyone to unbuckle their seat, follow your flight attendant to the exit, and make your way to the tarmac. We're going to need your help to push the plane down the runway and we should be able to take off and glide into our destination. Thanks again for flying with us today, and I'll see you on the tarmac."

You can only imagine my outrage-no matter how cheap the tickets! The old lady behind me almost had a heart attack and the business guy in first class just laughed and ordered another drink. This airline wasn't just cheap; it was ridiculous.

A plane with two huge jet engines and all the power to get the job done, and we're stuck with a pilot who doesn't want to use them because he is scared and uncomfortable.

As you would hopefully guess, this story is a complete farce.

The Holy Spirit's power working through the spiritual gift He gave you is more powerful than any jet engine. Yet

how often are we like the pilot, not wanting to utilize that power because it's a little dangerous? "And if I don't use it perfectly, some people might think badly of me, and there are others who can do it better, and ..."

No more excuses.

THINK ABOUT IT

What excuses have you used for not utilizing your spiritual gifts?

God has given each of His followers a spiritual gift. You may already know that, but the obvious fact is more important than you may realize. Through the Holy Spirit, you are provided all the power and strength you need to follow Him and enjoy the spiritual wealth He purchased for you on the cross. God gave you a spiritual gift so you and those around you can be blessed.

Yet the modern idea of spiritual gifts has created a lot of debate and confusion in the Christian world.

When you found out you were doing a study on spiritual gifts, what was your first thought? What comes to mind when you hear the term "spiritual gifts"?

Even in the early church, spiritual gifts were a source of competition and debate. In the church at Corinth, some people felt proud to have the "more important" gifts, while others felt they had very little to offer.

How do you see these attitudes about spiritual gifts still present today?

Paul tells us he doesn't want us to be "uninformed" concerning spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12 we read that spiritual gifts weren't meant to make us arrogant or embarrassed. God gave spiritual gifts for a purpose.

READ: 1 CORINTHIANS 12

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it

any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

INTERESTING

A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability empowered by the Holy Spirit to display the glory of God to grow the church. The English words “spiritual gift” comes from the Greek word “charismata”, which is related to the noun “charis”, meaning “grace.” Translated literally, the Greek means “grace gift.”

DISCUSS

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1. Paul doesn't want us to be uninformed about spiritual gifts. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your knowledge of spiritual gifts? _____

2. Where did you learn about spiritual gifts? Why is the source of your knowledge important regarding this topic?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:2-3. Paul reminds the Corinthians of their former life when they were led by mute and dumb idols. The Holy Spirit is nothing like those idols. The Holy Spirit leads people in a specific way to worship Jesus, not curse Jesus. What idols can come in the way of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6. The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to all believers. Why do you think there are such a variety of gifts? What are the positives of having a variety of gifts in a variety of people? How does variety make things difficult?

5. Read 1 Corinthians 12:7. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? How do we often get led away from God's purpose for our gifts?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-13. Though there are different gifts, there is only one God. Paul goes out of his way to emphasize this throughout this passage. "According to the same Spirit." "Empowered by the same Spirit." Why do you think this is important to remember?

7. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-20. Paul sees jealousy and individualism as some of the greatest foes against God's purpose in spiritual gifts. Answer Paul's question: "If all were a single member, where would the body be?" What would happen to your church if everyone had the same spiritual gift?

8. Read 1 Corinthians 12:21-26. Have you ever felt like your gift was dispensable? Why do some people feel as though their gift is not necessary to the body?

9. How does the body metaphor help explain the interaction that is supposed to occur between the gifts? Maintaining the body metaphor, what happens when members start utilizing their gifts apart from the rest of the body?

10. Paul explains, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." If suffering and rejoicing together is to happen, what type of attitude must every member of the body maintain?

CROSS REFERENCE

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11. What insights does Peter add to the doctrine of spiritual gifts? In what ways is Peter's teaching similar to Paul's teaching? Based on Peter's writing, who has spiritual gifts and what is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

11. How do the gifts from the Spirit interact with the fruit of the Spirit?

STUDY

In the church at Corinth, there was great division between social classes and ethnicities. Well-to-do Christians were concerned about what their social peers would think of their teachers. They expected their teachers to be gifted orators and to depend on the financial support of their listeners. Instead, the apostle Paul seemed to embarrass them by being a second-rate speaker, unlike Apollos (see 1 Corinthians 1-4). Plus, Paul worked a blue-collar job during the day (1 Corinthians 9). In addition to these problems, there were sexual issues (1 Corinthians 5-7), and women were forsaking the traditions of the church (1 Corinthians 8-11).

APPLY

God commands us to zealously pursue spiritual gifts and emphasizes that spiritual gifts are necessary for the health of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

12. How can you use your gifts in a way that draws attention to the glory of God? Conversely, how can you use your gifts to draw attention to yourself?

13. When have you been jealous of another person's spiritual gift? How does jealousy among the members of a body cripple your spiritual growth?

14. Reread 1 Corinthians 12:25. This is God's goal in giving various gifts: "That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another." How are you caring for one another? What are some additional ways you can care for others in your church?

15. Thinking again of the body metaphor, how can your spiritual gift bless the rest of the body? Why is it important to use your spiritual gift to "care for one another" rather than simply using your gift however you desire?

16. Do you suffer when another member of the body of Christ suffers? Do you rejoice when another member of the body is honored?

17. When is it hard for you to suffer or rejoice with other members?

18. When have you experienced the blessing of suffering or rejoicing with other members?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Write each small group member's name on a 3x5 card and randomly disperse the cards to everyone. Have each member consider the person whose name is on the 3x5 card they received and write how they are "indispensable" to the small group. Have each small group member share what they wrote with the group.

2



SESSION TWO

UNDERSTAND YOUR GIFT

PRINCIPLE

Your gift is meant to build up the church.

MEMORIZE

Romans 12:3

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

INTRODUCTION

Sports were an important part of my life. As a youngster, whenever I faced the question, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" I would always answer, "I'm going to play professional baseball."

I didn't get very close to my dream, but I learned a lot playing baseball. I played on a small suburban team with several players who had a lot of potential. We won a lot of games. One of the valuable lessons I learned from baseball, and sports in general, was the priority of teamwork.

One of my baseball coaches referred to our team as "The Machine."

"When all the players are doing their part, our team is a well-oiled winning machine," the coach would say to us. Inevitably, something would always happen to one of those teammates. A player would get injured or grades would make someone ineligible. The machine would struggle. The team would lose.

A baseball team needs nine players, and losing one player has great impact on the rest of the team. The team would suffer. But when another player stepped up or the injured player returned, the team would again be a winning machine.

I have seen the same qualities in the church. When each "player" is doing his or her part, it is a winning machine. The church is growing. People are coming to Christ. Men are being disciplined. Women are becoming more Christlike. Lives are changing.

But when the church is missing a "player"...

THINK ABOUT IT

Based on this baseball analogy, how important is each player in the church?

READ

Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

DISCUSS

1. Read Romans 12:1. Paul begins chapter 12 with a call for believers, in view of all God has given, to give themselves fully and completely—body, mind, and will—to God.

According to Paul, what is involved in doing this?

INTERESTING

Some wonder if an individual believer can receive more than one spiritual gift. The answer is yes. Paul encourages us that it is okay to “desire the greater gifts” (1 Cor. 12:31). We can assume that we can also receive additional gifts.

2. What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? What are the implications of a living sacrifice versus a dead sacrifice?

3. Read Romans 12:2. Why does Paul emphasize a renewal of the mind as a key part of being transformed?

4. Read Romans 12:3. Paul encourages us to think of ourselves with “sober judgment.” He is literally telling us to have a realistic view of ourselves. Why is having a realistic view of ourselves important to Christian life?

5. What does Paul mean to think of ourselves “according to the measure of faith that God has assigned”?

CROSS REFERENCE

Read 2 Timothy 1:6-7. Paul’s protégé, Timothy, was struggling with his responsibility as pastor. Timothy doubted himself and his calling to ministry. He didn’t think he had what it took to serve the church. It is in this context that Paul writes Timothy and reminds him of what he needs to do. What does Paul mean when he tells Timothy to “fan into flame the gift of God”? How are you fanning “into flame the gift of God” given to you?

6. Read Romans 12:4-5. The Christian life is not to be lived in isolation. Although we are often tempted to be very private in our spiritual walk, Paul tells us that we are to be members of one another. When are Christians sometimes tempted to isolate themselves? What does Paul mean when he says we are “individually members one of another”?

7. What happens in a human body when certain parts or organs stop working? What is the parallel to this in the body of Christ?

8. Read Romans 12:7-8. According to Paul, the grace we have obtained in receiving our spiritual gift should then pour through the use of our spiritual gift. Consider the list of spiritual gifts Paul offers here. What attitude does Paul relate with each spiritual gift and why is that attitude important to the use of that specific gift?

SPIRITUAL GIFT	NECESSARY ATTITUDE	WHY IS THAT ATTITUDE NECESSARY FOR THIS SPIRITUAL GIFT?
Prophecy		
Service		
Teaching		
Exhortation		
Contributer		
Leadership		
Acts of Mercy		

STUDY

In Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome, he addresses a church experiencing tension between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Within the context of unity, Paul discusses spiritual gifts. He exhorts the Christians to act as priests offering up sacrifices (Romans 9-11). The sacrifices they offer are lifestyle choices in line with their worship of Christ.

A renewed mind recognizes God's purpose and knows what is good in His sight (Romans 12:2). The renewed mind thinks not of oneself (Romans 12:3) but recognizes all have special functions in Christ's body (Romans 12:4-8). The living-sacrifice way uses the gifts God has given to build up Christ's body and respects others' gifts. The gifts are essential for building up Christ's body, and as long as Christ's body needs to be built up, the gifts must continue to function for the body to be healthy.

APPLY

9. How does Paul's call to be a "living sacrifice" and "not to think of [ourselves] more highly than [we] ought" influence the way you view your spiritual gifts?

10. How do you know the Holy Spirit lives in you? How has your way of thinking (renewal of your mind) changed since you came to Christ? What are you doing to renew your mind on a weekly basis?

11. What is keeping you from thinking and acting like a unified part of the body?

12. Paul opens this passage about spiritual gifts by emphasizing the demand for sacrifice and humility. Yet too often we view our spiritual gifts as a very personal thing. Where have you been tempted to consider your spiritual gift as a “me” thing rather than a “we” thing?

13. Take another look at the spiritual gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8.

a. Of the spiritual gifts listed, which gift do you see most active in your life?

b. Of the spiritual gifts listed, which gift is needed most in your church?

14. What attitudes of the heart is God working on in your life that will glorify Him?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

On a piece of paper, have each small group member write the name of every person in their small group. While looking at a list of spiritual gifts, write next to each person what you think their spiritual gift is. If time allows, have each small group member write what led them to their answer. How can the insight of those around you offer greater understanding of your gift?

3

SESSION THREE

USE YOUR GIFT

PRINCIPLE

With each spiritual gift comes the responsibility to use it.

MEMORIZE

Luke 19:26

I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

INTRODUCTION

Do you remember your first job? My first job was working as a janitor at a church. I was 14-years old and desperate to make money—desperate enough to clean toilets and floors for eight hours every Saturday.

As you can imagine, it wasn't a high-paying job. I made minimum wage, but I worked that job as though my life depended on it. I wanted to impress my boss, and I didn't want to let the church down. I worked as though one error would get me fired. I showed up ten minutes before work started. I often cleaned things two or three times, just to make sure I did it right.

Unfortunately, my hard work didn't last. It wasn't long before my excitement for pleasing my boss and my sense of responsibility to the church was overshadowed by complacency and comparison. In my immaturity, I realized I got paid the same amount no matter how hard I worked. I started to compare my pay with my friends. The quality of my work began to reflect my new selfish attitude.

It didn't take long until my boss sat me down for a talk. I came prepared with all my justifications: "I should get paid more!" "Why can't I do the easier jobs?" "I work as hard as everyone else!"

My boss listened, and then he responded: "The work you do is not just about you. You've taken your focus off of the purpose of your work and put it totally on yourself. You're an important part of the work, but you aren't the only purpose of the work. I'm counting on you to work hard. Your church is counting on you to work hard. The Lord is calling you to work hard."

I wasn't expecting that response, but as you can imagine, it stuck with me a long time. I also see the application to spiritual gifts. When my service becomes about me and not about the church and my "Boss," I have a tendency to get self-centered and lazy.

THINK ABOUT IT

What was your first job? What was your work ethic like when you first started to work? How can our work ethic before the Lord slowly dwindle as we continue in our journey with Christ?

READ

Luke 19:11-27

11 As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. 12 He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. 13 Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' 15 When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. 16 The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' 19 And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' 25 And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' 26 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'"

DISCUSS

1. Jesus tells this parable in order to communicate a biblical truth. In order to understand the biblical truth, we have to understand the meaning of each of the following aspects in the story.

Who does the nobleman represent?

What does the distant country stand for?

Who would the slaves be?

What is the mina?

What does it mean spiritually to "engage in business"?

2. In the parable, the nobleman goes to a far country to receive His kingdom and then return. Why is it important to remind ourselves that Jesus will one day return? How should the return of Jesus influence the way we think about the “mina” or gift we have been given?

3. Luke 19:14 says, “But his cities hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, “We do not want this man to reign over us.” This sentence almost seems out of place in the passage. In fact, the parable makes sense even if it was left out. However, every word of Scripture is profitable. Jesus wants us to know there are those who oppose His reign. Why do you think this opposition to Jesus’ reign is included in the passage? How should this influence our thinking as the faithful servants of Jesus?

4. Consider the third servant who was fruitless. Notice the warning. Connection to a Christian community is not what makes a Christian, even if that person has stewardship responsibilities in that community. This third servant doubted the Master’s character in slanderous ways and remained fruitless. Although he had a gift and a connection to the nobleman, he was left empty-handed. What implications does this have for us in the modern church?

5. This passage shows that some people use their spiritual gift better than others. How does this fact sometimes negatively influence the church? Have you ever felt like someone else can “do it better?”

CROSS REFERENCE

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22. There is danger in both denying the power of spiritual gifts and overemphasizing spiritual gifts. Some keep spiritual gifts in a tightly packed box that is safe and by doing so they “quench the Spirit” and “despise prophecies”. Others are so focused on the spiritual gifts that it consumes their time and energy and by doing so they are unable to “test everything” and “hold fast what is good.” How can we maintain a balance between quenching the Spirit and testing everything?

INTERESTING

What does Paul mean by “the higher gifts”? Are some gifts more important than other gifts? In one way, the answer is yes. The greater gifts seem to be the spiritual gifts most needed by the church. For the church at Corinth, the higher gift that was needed was the spiritual gift of interpreting tongues, because no one had that gift. What gift is most needed in your church? That’s the “higher gift.” What are you doing to pursue that gift?

6. In what ways is the conclusion of the story similar to the judgment Christ will one day bring to both believers and non-believers? Also see Romans 2:4-10 and Matthew 25:41-46.

STUDY

While we do want to serve God with excellence, what He really asks is for our personal best, not our competitive best. Discuss this idea with your small group. How many gifts require practice to increase skill in using them? If we don’t practice using our gifts, they don’t ever get any better.

As we see from this passage, the gift we have received from Christ is not a possession; it is a trust. Our spiritual gift does not belong to us; it belongs to Christ. Our responsibility is to be good stewards of what He has trusted us with.

7. Did you notice that each servant received a gift of equal value? If all the spiritual gifts are equally important, why can we feel we are less important and less useful?

8. When the nobleman returned, each servant was called to give an account of how they utilized their gift. If you were to give an account to Jesus Christ today, what would you hear? (Circle one)

- a. Be encouraged in your faithfulness. You have been faithful with a little and I will give you more.
- b. Be educated in your fruitlessness. Now that you know better, do something with your gift.
- c. Be enlightened in your foolishness. You knew what you should be doing, but you aren’t doing it.

When we don't use our spiritual gift, our spiritual life has a tendency to plateau. You may remember a time in your spiritual life when your walk with Christ was on fire. You were growing. You were eating up God's Word. And then...you didn't have that same fire you once had. You stopped growing and your spiritual life began to decline. You may have asked yourself, "What am I missing?"

The key is utilizing your spiritual gift in personal ministry!

STUDY

This parable is the final parable in Luke's record of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. It comes at a critical point at the conclusion of Jesus' earthly ministry. As Jesus comes to this story, expectations are rising that the kingdom will be decisively brought to fruition. The disciples literally believed the kingdom would "appear immediately." Little did they expect that He would be leaving before the kingdom would be established. Jesus uses this parable to explain to His followers what He will expect during the interim.

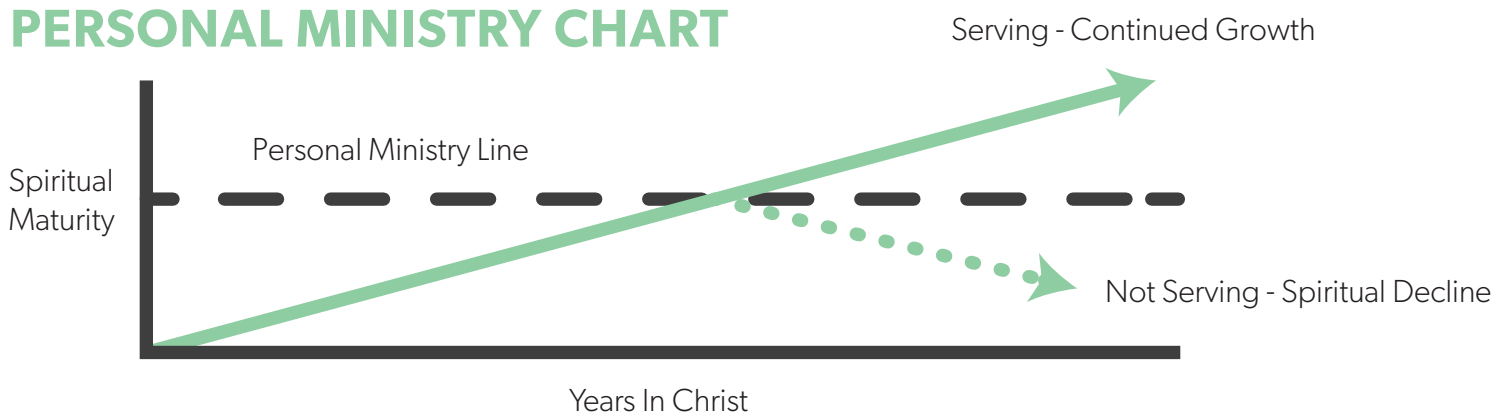
The story actually has a strong parallel to an incident at the time of its telling. In 40 B.C., Herod left Jerusalem to travel to Rome in order to receive ruling authority from the emperor. Herod received the "kingdom" from Rome and returned. While he was gone, he left specific "servants" in charge to care for the kingdom. When he returned, Herod rewarded the faithful with positions of power during his reign. The similarity between the stories must have excited the followers of Christ.

Now, some 2000 years later, we see the meaning more clearly. Gifts would be given. Power would be dispensed. But gifts and power of a different type – a higher type.

APPLY

We can see the need to use our gift more clearly in the Personal Ministry Chart. As our years in Christ progress, our spiritual maturity also progresses. But we eventually hit a point where we have to take all that has been entrusted to us (knowledge, spiritual gifting, wisdom), and we have to use it.

PERSONAL MINISTRY CHART



9. Have you experienced the reality of the Personal Ministry Chart? If so, how?

10. What are some of the things people try (other than serving) to re-ignite their spiritual life?

11. Each follower of Christ has a spiritual gift and either you are making good use of it or you are not. How are you doing with using the gift you have been given? What are you doing to be a good caretaker of the gift given to you?

12. The third servant was given a gift, but in the end, didn't use it. The result was fruitlessness. Where have you seen fruit in your life? Recount some of the places you have seen your spiritual gifting produce fruit.

13. Consider the first servant who not only was fruitful with his gift, but also received further gifts. In what ways does God bless those who are fruitful with their gifts? How has God blessed you after serving?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Draw your Personal Ministry Chart. Give each small group member a blank piece of paper. Have them complete their Personal Ministry Chart marking down: (1) Year of salvation, (2) years in Christ, (3) season of initial spiritual growth, and (4) influential time of serving. As a small group, discuss what serving opportunity caused them to mature most.

14. We are all accountable to God for how we use the spiritual gift we have received in the absence of the Master. If Jesus returned today, would you be excited to show your fruit? How are you preparing yourself for the Master's return, specifically in the way you are using your spiritual gift?

BOUNDARIES

Spiritual gifts have boundaries. Though some in the modern church believe spiritual giftedness trumps all, God's Word tells us that spiritual gifts are subject to two authorities.

First, spiritual gifts are subject to God's Word. In every instance in Scripture, God's Word exercised the dominant role in the life of the church. We cannot forget that the same Spirit who gives us spiritual gifts also gives us His Word. Both are meant to equip the people of God for action.

1 Timothy 4:13-16 says, "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things; immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers."

15. Why is it important to maintain the authority of God's Word revealed in the Bible over what may be revealed through a spiritual gift?

Spiritual gifts are subject to the authority of love. The gifts only build the body when they are exercised in love. Thus the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) is distinguished from spiritual gifts, yet love should never be absent in the exercise of our spiritual gifts.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

16. Why is using your spiritual gift without love considered “nothing”? How does using your spiritual gift without love hurt yourself and others?

Spiritual gifting in Scripture complements the commands of Scripture regarding gender roles and character. It is a mistaken assumption that everyone with a spiritual gift should be allowed to use it indiscriminately in the church. In some instances, we are called to limit the use of our gift based on other callings or roles in our lives (e.g., refraining from prophecy, tongues, teaching, etc., when the occasions do not warrant it).

17. How can we protect ourselves from letting spiritual gifts take an unbiblical place in our lives?

TAKE THE ASSESSMENT

Before you complete this week's small group study, go to:

[HARVESTBIBLECHAPEL.ORG/DISCOVERMYGIFT](https://harvestbiblechapel.org/discovermygift)

Complete the assessment to discover your gift.

At the conclusion of the assessment you will learn about your specific gift. You will also have an opportunity to register to serve within our church.

SHARE THE RESULTS

Once you find out what your top spiritual gifts are, share the results with someone in your small group.

Complete this statement. I'm going to share the results of the Discover My Gift assessment with:

Name

Contact Information

APPENDIX: SOCIAL COVENANT

Love One Another – Care Intentionally

John 13:34; 1 Peter 4:8; Ephesians 4:15

Be earnest in my love at all times

Always speak the truth in love

Listen to understand; don't assume or accuse

Pray for one another with compassion

Forgive One Another - Pursue Unity

Ephesians 4:1-32; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Matthew 18:15-20

Be quick to forgive and ask forgiveness

Let personal offenses roll off my back or to God in prayer

Model unity by resolving conflict quickly

Get the whole story, including both sides in personal conflict

Serve One Another – Minister Actively

Galatians 5:13; Exodus 17:11-12; Proverbs 19:20; 1 Corinthians 12:21-26

Be intentional in blessing others

Stay teachable and show deference

Be flexible to meet situational needs

Maximize my strengths and recognize my constraints

Be committed to the whole, not just the part

Submit To One Another – Esteem Others Highly

Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5; Philippians 2:3-4; Matthew 7:3-5

Be the first to lead in humility and honor

Serve others' interests before my own

Check my motives and expectations before speaking

Know my limits and respect the boundaries of others

Encourage One Another – Cultivate Redemptive Relationships

1 Thessalonians 5:1; Romans 1:12; Ephesians 4:29

Be a safe person to get real with

Seek to build up always and never tear down

Complement other's character when I think it twice

Value the person more than their performance

Point to Christ for hope and help

Be Devoted to One Another – Commit Wholeheartedly

Romans 12:5-10; Proverbs 17:17; Proverbs 13:3

Be there in the hard times

Seek reconciliation between others

Guard my relationships with truth and love

Go gently if correction is needed

In order to protect this community, I will avoid both speaking or listening to unhealthy criticism of others and solve conflict biblically. Specifically, I will be discreet in my communication, correct slander and gossip immediately, and speak directly with those involved.

I am committed to living out the values outlined above and will pursue to model Christ-like character and build up the church for Christ's glory.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX: SMALL GROUP CONTRACT

This contract communicates what every small group member commits to maintaining and defines the guidelines for our community.

- I will make my small group meetings a priority, and if I'm unable to attend or am running late, I will call ahead.
- I will come to my small group meeting prepared and ready to participate.
- I will commit to my small group to focus on application of God's Word to my life.
- I will maintain confidentiality of the personal information that is shared within my Small Group. I understand my small group leader may communicate appropriate information to those in leadership as necessary and I trust his or her discernment in this.
- I will be accountable to my small group concerning my personal and spiritual goals.
- I will commit to a small group that is open to new members, and, as it grows, we will seek to multiply to further God's work.
- I will encourage other members to cultivate a daily quiet time with God.
- I will pursue opportunities to share what God has done in our lives to those that do not know Jesus Christ.
- I will pray and support the leadership of Harvest Bible Chapel to continue to seek God's direction for our Small Group Ministry.

Signature

Date

