

**The Basics  
about  
Spiritual Gifts**

**Greek Words  
Used to Denote  
Spiritual Gifts**

*charismatos*  
(literally “grace gifts”)  
and  
*pneumatekon*  
(literally “air gifts”)

**New Testament  
Passages  
Which Describe  
Spiritual Gifts**

**Romans 12:1-13**  
**1 Corinthians 12:1-31**  
**Ephesians 4:1-15**  
**1 Peter 4:7-14**

**A Definition**

A **Spiritual Gift** is an ability, skill, or talent given through the activity of the Holy Spirit working in the life of each individual Christian. Collectively, the spiritual gifts possessed by the members of a local congregation enable that congregation as the body of Christ to perform the mission and ministry to which it has been called by God.

**Discovering Our Spiritual Gifts  
A Seminar in Spiritual Formation**

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Welcome to this study of spiritual gifts! This booklet contains practical information and a variety of exercises designed to help you and the members of your congregation to discover and to explore your spiritual3 gifts. In this material, you will find:

# **An Inductive Bible Study of the four New Testament passages which describe spiritual gifts (pages 2-8).**

# **A Spiritual Gifts Inventory (pages 9-16).**

# **Definitions of the 20 spiritual gifts identified in the Spiritual Gifts Inventory (pages 17-19).**

# **An Essay on how spiritual gifts can be used through the local church (pages 20-23).**

# **A Series of Exercises to help you call out the gifts of other people (pages 24-25).**

# **A Bibliography of selected resources about spiritual gifts (page 26).**

Again, welcome to the study! Here we go!

## An Inductive Bible Study

The first step in our process of discovering our spiritual gifts is a careful reading of the four New Testament passages which describe spiritual gifts. These four passages are:

**Romans 12:1-13**  
**1 Corinthians 12**  
**Ephesians 4: 1-15**  
**1 Peter 4:7-14**

In these passages, two Greek words are used to denote “spiritual gifts”-- *charismatos* (which literally means “grace gifts”) and *pneumatekon* (which literally means “air gifts”).

In this study, you will be asked to use an inductive approach. For general instructions about the inductive approach, please read the information in the sidebar.

As you read each passage, you will be asked to respond to several questions. Please jot down your responses to these questions in the spaces provided.

After you have read all four passages, you will be asked to integrate your responses to these questions and your impressions about these passages. As a result of this study, you will:

- # **Identify common themes and images used in these passages.**
- # **Write your own definition of a spiritual gift.**
- # **List all of the spiritual gifts included in these passages.**

**Study Tip:** It is often helpful to read from several different versions of the Bible. Each version will add a slightly different perspective in your study.

### **What is An Inductive Bible Study?**

In an inductive study of the scriptures, you first identify every passage in the Bible which addresses the topic in which you are interested. A good study Bible or concordance will help you to identify these passages.

Next, you read these passages. As you read, you will begin to notice common themes, images, and words which run through these passages. You will also begin to form general impressions and ideas about your topic.

As you reread the passages, take notes, listing these themes, images, words, impressions, and ideas.

Based on your readings and your notes, you should be able to develop a deeper understanding of and feel for the topic that you have chosen to study.

This approach to Bible study is a nice alternative to the deductive approach most often used in Sunday School classes.

**How Do You Discover  
the Will of God?  
Use Your Spiritual Gifts!  
Romans 12:1-13**

The first passage in our inductive Bible study is from this book: Romans 12:1-13.

**Background Information**

Though Paul had not yet visited the Christian community in Rome, he felt compelled to write a pastoral letter to that congregation. The resulting correspondence, the New Testament book of Romans, contains challenging and provocative instructions for Christians who wish to understand and to grow in their relationship to God through Jesus Christ.

Read Romans 12:1-2. In practical terms, what does it mean to “present your bodies as a living sacrifice”?

In verse two, we read, “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God.” Restate this phrase in your own words.

In verses 3-4, Paul encourages his readers to use sound judgement, not to think too highly of themselves. Paul also uses a particular image of the church to describe the interrelatedness of all Christians. What image does Paul use to describe the nature of the church?

Read verses 6-13. Which spiritual gifts are listed in these verses?

After reading the entire passage, what is your assessment of the relationship between understanding the will of God and using your spiritual gift(s)?

In general, what have you learned about spiritual gifts based on this passage?

## Advice to Those Battling Corinthians 1 Corinthians 12

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-31. As you read the passage, answer the following questions:

- # Why are spiritual gifts given? (Verses 4-7)
  
- # Who receives a spiritual gift? (Verse 7)
  
- # What is the source of all spiritual gifts? (Verse 11)
  
- # What image of the church is used in this passage? (Refer specifically to verses 13-26.) In light of the controversy in the Corinthian church (described in the sidebar), what is the significance of this image with regards to giftedness?
  
- # Which spiritual gifts are identified in this passage?
  
- # How does this teaching about spiritual gifts in Chapter 12 relate to the famous Love Chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, which follows?

### Background Information

The first century city of Corinth was a major Roman sea port. It was a bustling, raucous town, filled with merchants, traders, and sailors. The town was also a noted center of pagan worship. A temple dedicated to a goddess of sex was located in the city. Sacred prostitution and ecstatic forms of worship were conducted in the area around this temple. Local craftsmen also produced and sold idols associated with the worship of this goddess.

Into this chaotic, heathen city came Paul preaching the Gospel. Several Gentiles in the city responded to his message and became Christians. A fledgling church was established. After working to establish a solid faith foundation for these former pagans, Paul moved on to other cities.

From time to time, Paul heard disturbing reports about the church at Corinth. Most biblical scholars believe that the letter we call 1 Corinthians was written in response to one of these reports. Paul penned these words of advice and correction to address a number of important issues that faced the congregation.

One of these issues was *glossolalia*--commonly known as speaking in unknown tongues. It seems that, in their previous pagan services of worship, forms of ecstatic speech were interpreted as a sign of special favor with the gods. The Corinthian, when converted, brought these forms of ecstatic speech into their Christian worship. The undisciplined use of *glossolalia* was causing disruption in the fellowship.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul attempted to address this inappropriate display and the disruptions that it caused. But rather than focusing exclusively on the misuse of *glossolalia*, Paul provides the longest, most complete teaching on the topic of spiritual gifts in the entire New Testament.

### **Background Information**

In his teachings about spiritual gifts in the book of Romans, Paul gave individual Christians advice about how to discover the will of God. In that book, he encouraged the reader to present his or her entire life as a living sacrifice. He urged the reader to avoid a life based on the principles of this world; rather, he counseled the individual to come to a new understanding of God's principles and how they can be played out in this world. His advice to the individual Christian: to discover the will of God for your life, discover and use your spiritual gifts!

In his letter to the Christians at Ephesus, Paul shifts his attention from the commitment of the individual Christian to the life of the church, a unique community established by God through the work of Jesus Christ. While Romans 12 focuses on the individual and giftedness, Ephesians 4 focuses on the church and giftedness.

## **Welcome to God's Gym--Body Building 101 Ephesians 4:1-15**

Read Ephesians 4:1-15. As you read, consider the following questions:

- # According to verses 1 and 2, describe the "calling to which we have been called."
  
- # In verses 3-6, how is the theme of unity described?
  
- # Who receives a spiritual gift? (Verse 7)
  
- # Which spiritual gifts are listed in this passage? (Verse 11)
  
- # Why are spiritual gifts given? (Verse 12)
  
- # What image of the church is used in this passage?
  
- # What does this image of the church have to do with the idea of "Christian body building"?



## Integrate The Results of Your Inductive Study

What **common themes, images, and words** did you find in these four passages? List them in the space below:

In the space below, **list all of the spiritual gifts** that you discovered in the four New Testament passages. Depending on the version(s) of the Bible that you used, you should find around 22 gifts.

Incorporating everything that you have learned about spiritual gifts, write **your definition of a spiritual gift**.

## Integration Work, Continued

Based on your current understanding of giftedness, respond to the following statements:

- # Assuming that talents are abilities received at birth, or skill developed after birth--capacities which are possessed by all people--what is the difference between talents and spiritual gifts? Are the two related? If so, how?
  
- # Is it possible for a Christian to deny the fact that he or she has at least one spiritual gift? Why or why not?
  
- # Is this statement consistent with your understanding of spiritual giftedness:  
  
Spiritual gifts are congregational, not personal. Through these gifts, the Church and the local congregation are equipped to function as worshiping, discipling, community-building, witnessing, serving, and ministering family of faith.

This course of study is based on the following definition of a "spiritual gift":

A **spiritual gift** is an ability, skill, or talent given through the activity of the Holy Spirit working in the life of each individual Christian. Collectively, the spiritual gifts possessed by the members of a local congregation enable that congregation as the body of Christ to perform the mission and ministry to which it has been called by God.

How does your definition compare with this definition? What points of clarification would you raise? Record your responses in the space below:

## Congratulations!

You have completed an inductive Bible study of the four New Testament passages which describe spiritual giftedness. The next section of this booklet contains A Spiritual Gifts Inventory designed to help you discover your individual gifts.

## Discovering Our Spiritual Gifts An Inventory

**Discovering Our Spiritual Gifts--An Inventory** is a personal assessment tool developed to assist you in the process of identifying which spiritual gifts you may possess. The inventory consists of 100 statements. Some of these statements communicate concrete action, some are descriptive terms, and others are statements of personal values and beliefs.

### Directions

As you read each statement, decide to what degree that statement is characteristic or descriptive of you. Use the following scale to make your assessment:

5	.....	<b>Highly</b> Characteristic of Me
4	.....	<b>Very</b> Characteristic of Me
3	.....	<b>Frequently</b> Characteristic of Me
2	.....	<b>Somewhat</b> Characteristic of Me
1	.....	<b>Not at all</b> Characteristic of Me

Select the appropriate numerical response for each item. Record the response in the blank space provided. Reflect on each statement, but do not spend too much time on any one item. In general, your immediate response is the best one. Please give a response for each item.

1.		I love to praise God through singing or playing a musical instrument.
2.		I always tell the truth, even when it is difficult to do.
3.		Looking back on my faith pilgrimage, I can identify specific situations in which my personal experience and God's Truth have interacted in powerful ways.
4.		I am a biblical scholar.
5.		In a classroom context, I am able to explain God's Truth in such a way that others are able to understand it and apply it to daily Christian living.
6.		I take the initiative to help others grow in their faith.
7.		I actively seek opportunities to share the Gospel message with persons who have not yet professed faith in Jesus Christ.
8.		I have a strong desire to take the Gospel to places where it has never been heard.

9.		When I see a person struggling with a problem, I am compelled to offer words of encouragement and support.
10.		Shortly after I meet a person for the first time, I have a good sense of that person's character and abilities.
11.		When visitors come to my place of business or my church, I make sure that I meet them and talk to them.
12.		It is important for me to know the names of as many members of my church as possible.
13.		I empathize with people who suffer physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual distress.
14.		I have an acute awareness of such emotions as loneliness, pain, fear, and anger in others.
15.		When I see a person in need, I immediately take action to provide assistance.
16.		The first and most important goal for the church is to serve humanity in the name of Christ.
17.		God owns all of my "possessions;" I serve as God's steward of those resources.
18.		I sense when others need prayer support.
19.		I seem to be "out front" in faith ventures, and others often follow my lead.
20.		I have the ability to organize ideas, resources, time, and people effectively.
21.		In congregational worship, music is a spiritual aide to worship, not a performance.
22.		When I discover a new insight in the Bible, I am eager to tell other people what I have learned.
23.		It is quite natural for me to embody biblical truths in my daily life.
24.		I find it easy to identify complex spiritual insights--in the Bible, in literature, in art--wherever these insights might be found.
25.		I believe that the Sunday School classroom should be a "laboratory for Christian living," not a lecture hall.
26.		I am often asked to give spiritual guidance to others.
27.		I believe that the first and most important goal of the church is to win persons to Jesus Christ.
28.		Other cultures, races, and languages pose no obstacle to my desire to share the Gospel.
29.		People who need comfort, reassurance, and encouragement often seek my help.
30.		Often, I am able to affirm skills and gifts in other persons that they may not see in themselves.
31.		I make strangers and newcomers feel comfortable when I meet them.
32.		I enjoy introducing members of my church family who have not yet come to know one another.

33.	I take the initiative to help people who are hurting.
34.	I have immediate compassion for persons who have spiritual, emotional, or physical pain.
35.	While my own needs and the needs of my family are important to me, I still feel a driving desire to address the needs of strangers and the underprivileged.
36.	I think of cleaning, typing, caring for buildings, ushering, baby-sitting, mowing, setting up chairs and other acts of service as significant ways to worship God.
37.	I carefully manage my own income in order to share my financial resources with those in need.
38.	When I hear a request for prayer, I immediately begin to offer prayers of intercession.
39.	I have clear dreams and visions about new ministries that our congregation might offer.
40.	I am energized by organizing a project, working out the details, getting the right people in the right places, and accomplishing the objectives.
41.	After I have sung or played music in worship, members of the congregation have told me that they felt a special sense of God's presence.
42.	I am sensitive to issues of right and wrong, of justice and injustice. I am compelled to express my opinions on these types of issues.
43.	When faced with difficult choices, I find it best to make decisions based on biblical principles, not on immediate consequences, no matter how appealing those consequences.
44.	I enjoy the challenge of exploring passages of scripture that are controversial or difficult to interpret.
45.	I am aware of the ways in which the gathered life of the congregation educates the preschoolers, children, youth, and adults of the church family.
46.	When I see others grappling with issues of faith, I am willing to listen to their stories and to support them in their struggles.
47.	I have led many people to make an initial commitment to Jesus Christ.
48.	When I travel, I seek out persons with different cultural backgrounds and actively engage them in conversations about their faith lives.
49.	By living out my faith daily, I encourage and motivate others to do the same.
50.	I have a good sense of "the right person for the right job."
51.	New people are not strangers--they are just friends in the making!
52.	At church, I intentionally try to create a warm and caring environment for fellowship and spiritual growth.

53.		I often feel compelled to pray for the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual well-being of others.
54.		Care giving (in nursing homes, hospitals, hospice situations, etc.) is a part of my personal ministry.
55.		I enjoy helping other people as a direct expression of my Christian faith.
56.		Because of a special closeness to God I feel when I do any kind of ministry, I am quick to volunteer.
57.		I experience a deep sense of joy when I share my resources with others.
58.		Of all spiritual disciplines, prayer is my favorite.
59.		At a time when there was tension and discord in my church family, I provided a stabilizing presence and a clear head.
60.		All ministries should be amply planned, sufficiently staffed, and carried out to the fullest detail.
61.		When I sing or play music, I feel a special sense of God's presence flowing through me.
62.		I see clear connections between biblical truths and modern life. I am compelled to express these connections publicly.
63.		The biblical themes of love, righteousness, grace, and peace, though very complex and rich in meaning, are easy for me to translate into practical acts in my daily life and in the life of the congregation.
64.		While the names, dates, and places identified in the Bible are important, the meanings and overtones of biblical themes and principles are more important.
65.		I find it stimulating to explore how biblical truth impacts my own life and I am moved to share my discoveries with others.
66.		I have led other Christians to explore and develop their own personal ministries and their role in the overall ministry of the church.
67.		I actively cultivate friendships with persons who do not profess faith in Jesus Christ.
68.		My understanding of the Christian faith transcends racial, economic, and language barriers.
69.		When I see a great amount of potential in another person, I do everything I can to name and to encourage that potential.
70.		I can tell when a person is genuine and honest.
71.		I am happy to open my home to and to share my possessions with persons who are new to the neighborhood, community, or church.

72.		I like to participate in activities in which all members of the church family are invited to be together and to work together toward a common purpose.
73.		God uses my concerns and my efforts as a means to heal the distress of others.
74.		I am drawn to people with troubles and special needs, and I get special joy by helping them.
75.		I do not need to get recognition for my service to others.
76.		I serve others as a way to glorify God.
77.		Giving my time, talents, energy, and money is an everyday expression of my Christian commitment.
78.		Through my prayers, I believe that I serve as a channel for God's energy and concern.
79.		I am able to effectively communicate my own Christian principles to other Christians in such a way that they are also able to articulate their own principles, even if they are different from mine.
80.		I enjoy showing others how they can work for God in the church and in the community.
81.		I know which musical pieces seem right for specific events in the life of the congregation.
82.		As a result of my relationship with God, I have felt compelled to share words of advice, caution, instruction, and encouragement with others.
83.		In my faith pilgrimage, I have learned how to discern God's will, both in my personal life and in the life of the congregation.
84.		It is obvious to me how biblical stories and teachings relate to universal and timeless needs of human existence.
85.		Teaching is more than transmitting biblical truth; teaching is embodying biblical truth in such a way that students are motivated to do the same.
86.		I encourage other Christians to think theologically about their life experience.
87.		I have a strong desire to tell others about the impact that Jesus Christ has in my life.
88.		I feel compelled to share the Gospel message with the unchurched, the underprivileged, and others that the established church is not touching.
89.		I am able to help others who are troubled, depressed, or confused.
90.		I often affirm the skills and gifts of persons who are trying new avenues of ministry and service.
91.		My home tends to be a gathering place for friends, neighbors, and other guests.
92.		The first and most important goal of the church is to create a sense of Christian community.

93.		Through my advice, touch, or prayer, people experience physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual healing.
94.		I empathize with the feelings of those in distress.
95.		I am drawn to people with troubles and special needs.
96.		I enjoy working behind the scenes to meet the physical needs of others.
97.		My stewardship of resources is motivated by joy and gratitude, not a sense of duty.
98.		I am often moved to pray for others, even though I do not know them.
99.		Through my initiative, my congregation has developed a new and exciting ministry.
100.		When I take on projects, my planning, detail work, and supervision result in a good end results and a cooperative spirit among participants.

For scoring directions, please turn to the next page.

## Scoring the Inventory

### Directions

Transfer your numerical response to each statement to the appropriate place in the table below. Write a number in each space. When all responses have been transferred to the table, total the numbers in each row. Record the totals in the last column of the table.

Spiritual Gifts	#	Resp.	#	Resp.	#	Resp.	#	Resp.	#	Resp.	Totals
Music	1		21		41		61		81		
Prophecy	2		22		42		62		82		
Wisdom	3		23		43		63		83		
Knowledge	4		24		44		64		84		
Teaching	5		25		45		65		85		
Mentoring	6		26		46		66		86		
Evangelism	7		27		47		67		87		
Missionary	8		28		48		68		88		
Exhortation	9		29		49		69		89		
Discernment	10		30		50		70		90		
Hospitality	11		31		51		71		91		
Community Builder	12		32		52		72		92		
Healing	13		33		53		73		93		
Mercy	14		34		54		74		94		
Helps	15		35		55		75		95		
Service	16		36		56		76		96		
Giving	17		37		57		77		97		
Prayer	18		38		58		78		98		
Leadership	19		39		59		79		99		
Administration	20		40		60		80		100		

Each row in the table represents a spiritual gift described in the scriptures. Based on the information that you provided about yourself in the inventory, the total scores recorded in the last column of each row are an indicator of which spiritual gift(s) that you might possess. A high score (between 20 and 25) in one or more of the twenty categories means that you have described yourself as having characteristics highly consistent with that gift. These scores, however, are only an initial indicator of your giftedness. As you continue to explore your giftedness using these materials, please feel free to challenge, to disagree with, or to affirm the results of the inventory as appropriate.

## An Initial Listing of My Spiritual Gifts

In the space provided below, please record the three (3) gifts on which you received the highest scores:

# \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

### Tips

# If you scored highly on a number of gifts, with no one or two gifts above the others, take the inventory again and be more discriminating about your responses (i.e. fewer 5's and 4's).

# If you had low scores on a number of gifts, with no one or two scores above the others, take the inventory again and be less discriminating about your responses (i.e. more 4's and 5's).

### Questions

# Do you agree with the results of the inventory?

# Were you surprised by any of the results?

# Have other persons affirmed these same gifts in you?

For more information about the nature of the individual gifts listed in the inventory, turn to the next section of these materials--a listing of the gifts with their definitions.

## **Definitions of the 20 Spiritual Gifts Identified in The Spiritual Gifts Inventory**

This section of the study material lists definitions for each of **the twenty (20) spiritual gifts** described in the inventory. Carefully read all of these definitions in order to develop a better understanding of the meaning of each gift. Focus attention on those gifts on which you recorded the highest scores in the inventory.

The twenty gifts identified in the inventory and defined below are listed in the four biblical passages which describe giftedness. This is not meant to be an inclusive list of all spiritual gifts. Many biblical scholars, theologians, pastors and Christian educators (myself included) believe that there are many gifts which are not listed in scripture. An example of such a person is Charles V. Bryant, a pastor and author of the book, **Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts**. In his book, which was used in the development of this material, Reverend Bryant also lists craftsmanship, exorcism, faith, humor, voluntary poverty, martyrdom, and singleness as spiritual gifts. Other authors have other suggestions.

As you explore the twenty gifts defined below, you are encouraged to explore other gifts listed in other resources. A few of these other resources are listed in the bibliography of this material.

### **Music**

The capacity to create or perform lyrics and melodies that lead others to experience, to worship, and to serve God.

### **Prophecy**

The capacity to receive, to reveal, or to interpret God's Truth, publicly, no matter what the consequences or risks.

### **Wisdom**

The capacity to convincingly illustrate the mystery of God's Truth in very concrete, practical, and specific ways.

### **Knowledge**

The capacity to cognitively comprehend the complexities of God's Truth and to explain these complexities to others.

### **Teaching**

The capacity to create an environment in which obedience to God's Truth can be practiced.

## **Mentoring**

The ability to affirm, to equip, and to support other Christians in spiritual formation and Christian ministry.

### **Evangelism**

The capacity to discern when and how the Gospel message should be communicated to persons outside the Christian community.

## **Missionary**

The ability to move beyond race, culture, faith tradition, nationality, or lifestyle to meet the physical and spiritual needs of neglected peoples.

### **Exhortation**

The capacity to inspire, to motivate, and to encourage others in their spiritual formation and personal ministry.

## **Discernment**

The ability to recognize and to affirm the skills, talents, and spiritual gifts of other people, especially other Christians.

### **Hospitality**

The ability to meet the basic social needs of and to extend care to persons (strangers) beyond one's immediate circle of friends.

## **Community Builder**

The ability to help create *koinonia*, that unique type of inclusive fellowship which characterized the early Christian church.

### **Healing**

A sensitivity to the pains and hurts of other persons and the capacity to participate in addressing these pains and hurts.

## **Mercy**

The ability to identify with and to feel the pains and hurts of another person and the capacity to help that person move beyond those pains and hurts.

### **Helps**

The ability and overwhelming desire to aid persons in need.

## **Service**

The ability to perform the most basic acts of kindness as a means to glorify God and to embody the Gospel.

### **Giving**

The capacity to manage one's own resources (income, time, energy, skills, and gifts) in such a way that there is more than enough to share with other people.

## **Prayer**

The ability to sense when, and for whom or what, to pray.

### **Leadership**

The ability to understand one's own principles and vision, to communicate those principles and vision to others, and to challenge others to move into the future, all in a non-reactive way.

## **Administration**

The ability to organize resources and persons for effective ministry.

## **Spiritual Gifts Used Through the Local Congregation**

As we discovered in the inductive study of the biblical texts associated with spiritual giftedness, each Christian possesses at least one spiritual gift. A spiritual gift, however, is not given for the personal benefit of the possessor. Gifts are given “for the common good,” “for the building up of the body of Christ.” Each Christian is uniquely endowed with individual gifts to be shared in the context of the Church Universal and through a local congregation. Grounded in the image of the church as “the body of Christ,” each Christian is given at least one gift to be used as the church strives to achieve its mission. Each congregation contains a unique blend of spiritual gifts. When all the members of a congregation recognize, claim, and utilize their collective giftedness, the church is truly “on mission.”

Printed below is the Vision State for First Baptist Church, Huntsville, a statement developed in 1992 as a part of the *Dreams of Faith* Emphasis:

The Vision of Faith for First Baptist Church, Huntsville, is to share God’s love through Jesus Christ through participative worship, open inquiry, loving fellowship, valued diversity, genuine inclusiveness, and servant leadership—encouraging all members to exercise God’s gifts and calling as we share the Gospel with the whole world and minister to the whole person.

- # Provide opportunities to commune with God through creative, well-planned and participative worship services, responding to God through the offering of our lives and resources to God.
- # Equip our people to be more responsible Christians through deliberate lifelong teaching and learning, using resources that are theologically sound, well written, relevant, and age appropriate.
- # Build a sense of family and fellowship in the church by enhancing a feeling of belonging, communion, and sharing both within and across generational lines.
- # Proclaim the Word of God and good news of salvation through Jesus Christ to all people through our speech and daily lives.

Take a few moments to reflect on the following questions:

- # What does this vision statement say about the nature and mission of First Baptist Church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- # Which aspects (words, phrases, or concepts) of this vision statement pose the greatest challenge for our church corporately?

Our church vision statement was used in the development of the most recent version of the **Spiritual Gifts Inventory** that you have just completed.

As indicated in the table below, sixteen (16) of the spiritual gifts listed in the inventory are matched to one of the five functions described in the vision statement. Four (4) of the spiritual gifts are classified as “Foundational Gifts,” those gifts which underlie and support the total life and ministry of the church. Take a few moments to study the table.

<b>Functions</b>	<b>Associated Spiritual Gifts</b>
WORSHIP	Music, Wisdom, Knowledge
TEACHING AND LEARNING	Teaching and Mentoring
BELONGING AND FELLOWSHIP	Exhortation, Discernment, Hospitality, Community Builder
PROCLAIMING	Prophecy, Evangelism, Missions
SERVICE AND MINISTRY	Healing, Mercy, Helps, Service
FOUNDATIONAL GIFTS	Giving, Prayer, Leadership, Administration

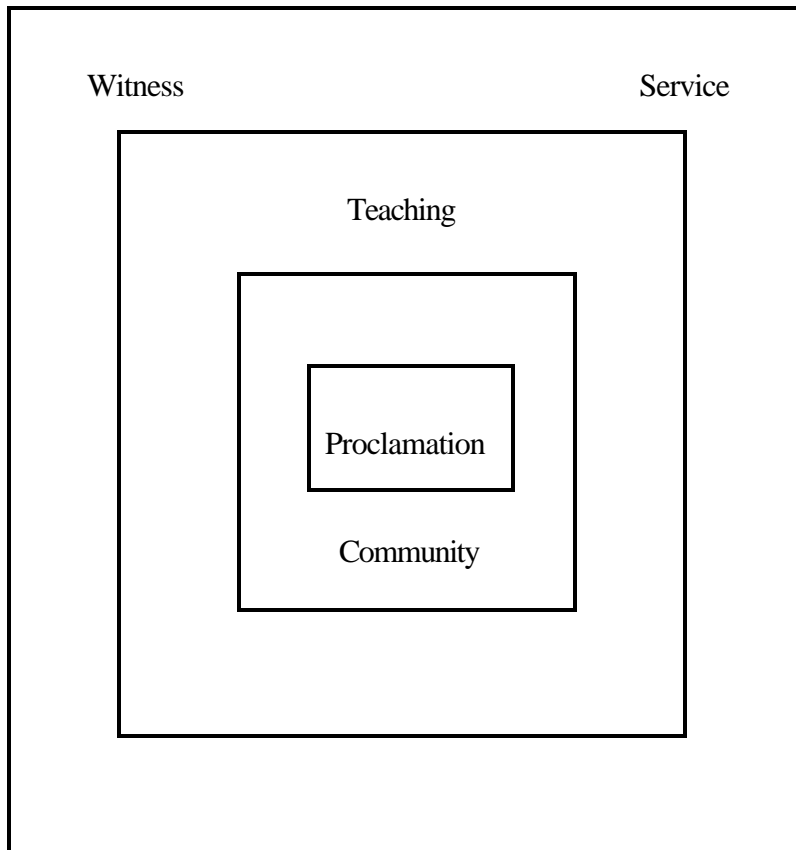
Based on your understanding of the church vision statement, of spiritual giftedness in general, and of your personal giftedness, brainstorm several specific ways in which you can help First Baptist Church to be on mission. Write your ideas in the space below. Once you have listed several ideas, classify your answers according to the following criteria:

# Which of your activities focus specifically on the life of the family of faith?

# Which of your activities focus on ministry, service, and witness to persons outside our family of faith?

The following diagram is offered to visually demonstrate one's understanding of how these various tasks work together to position the local congregation in relationship to the world.

### THE WORLD



### THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

If this diagram is descriptive of the mission of our church, it appears that certain functional tasks are designed to minister **to** the local congregation and other tasks are designed to minister **through** the congregation.

First, certain tasks (and their associated gifts) are accomplished in the context of the family of faith. For example, according to this diagram, the task of proclamation (or worship) is the core activity of the local congregation. Proclamation takes place best, however, in the context of Christian community. The teaching task is then designed, primarily, to bring people into community, so that they may fully participate in worship.

Second, other tasks (and their associated gifts) are designed **to interface with** the World, to provide an avenue through which people come into a growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ. If we are not actively about the business of interfacing with the World (i.e. about the tasks of witnessing, serving, and ministering to the World), then the congregation becomes a closed community.

Obviously, a healthy, growing congregation must find a balance among all of these functional tasks. Further, a healthy, growing congregation must acknowledge that a variety of spiritual gifts are needed to address these functions. Because a congregation is made up of many individuals, each uniquely gifted, each local family of faith contains a unique blending of spiritual gifts. As all members of a congregation recognize, claim, and utilize their collective giftedness, the church is truly “on mission.”

### **Connections between Personal Ministry and Corporate Ministry**

One goal of this study material is to activate the **personal** ministry of each member of the congregation so that, collectively, the church may accomplish its **corporate** ministry. Some people see their personal ministry focused within the life of the congregation--working inside the four walls of the church building. They teach a class, sing in the choir, or perform services for other church members. Others see their mission field as the World--in the schools, in the office, at home, or in the neighborhood. Again, obviously both types of personal ministry are needed for the church to be on mission.

For those persons who are actively about the process of discovering or rediscovering a personal ministry, a study of spiritual gifts is an excellent tool. If you have no idea where to begin a personal ministry, begin by identifying your gifts. Next, brainstorm ways that your particular blending of gifts can be used in ministry.

As you reflect on this self-discovery process, please remember that many gifts have dual functions--facilitating ministry **to** the church and **through** the church to the World. A few examples will suffice. Teaching, as defined in this material, can be expressed in the Sunday School classroom; it can also find expression in the public school classroom. Service, helps, mercy, and healing can be offered to members of the congregation; but these gifts expressed in the world can be a powerful way to communicate the Gospel message in very tangible ways. Hospitality can help to integrate new members into the congregation; but further it can be an outreach to persons who might never come to the church building.

As you continue to explore your own giftedness, reflect on the following questions:

- # What is your current understanding of your personal ministry?
  
- # Are the gifts you identified in the inventory related to this personal ministry? If so, in what way(s)?
  
- # Does your personal ministry focus on congregational life? Or does it focus on being an interface to the world?
  
- # How does your personal ministry relate to the corporate ministry of your church?

In the next section of the study materials, you will read about three specific strategies designed to “call forth” the gifts of others.

## How Can I Call Forth the Gifts of Others?

One crucial aspect of *koinonia*, or Christian fellowship, as defined in the New Testament, is the discovering, developing, celebrating, and sharing of our spiritual gifts. In the list of gifts associated with this study, at least four spiritual gifts are specifically associated with this type of *koinonia*--exhortation, discernment, hospitality, and community builder. Hopefully, your congregation is blessed with many members who possess and use these gifts to call forth the gifts of others.

### Three Strategies

1. Use Your Own Gift
2. Become a "Parent"
3. Become a "Patron"

There are, however, several strategies that each member of your church can use to assist in the development of a *koinonia* fellowship. Read and respond to the following strategies to learn how you can call forth the gifts of other Christians.

### Strategy # 1: Use Your Own Gift

Read the following quote from Gordon Cosby, pastor of The Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C., from his book, **The Calling Forth of Charisma**:

"No matter how much we love a person, accept him, give him support, have warmth and affection for him, no matter how much we help him in so many ways, unless we can actually call him forth so that he is himself exercising the uniqueness God gave him, then the love is incomplete; he is not free, he is less than fully human.

We have said that the most effective thing we can do to call forth the gift of another is to employ our own gift in freedom. This may seem selfish at first. Aren't we supposed to help the other person? What does our gift have to do with it? We start here.

The charismatic person is one who, by her very being, will be God's instrument in calling forth gifts. The person who is having the time of her life doing what she is doing has a way of calling forth the deeps of another. Such a person is herself Good News. She is the embodiment of the freedom of the new humanity. Verbal proclamation becomes believable. The person who exercises her own gift in freedom can allow the Holy Spirit to do in others what He wants to do."

- # Reflect on the following question: If you accept the premise of Dr. Cosby's statement, how does the truth communicated here affect your understanding of your own personal ministry?
  
- # Based on this statement, what is your response to a person who says: "Whether or not I claim my personal ministry and use my spiritual gift is my business. I'm not hurting anyone by not using my gift!"

## Strategy #2: Become a “Parent”

Read the following quote from Elizabeth O’Connor, a leader in The Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C., as written in her book, The Eighth Day of Creation:

“A primary purpose of the Church is to help us discover and develop our gifts and, in the face of our fears, to hold us accountable for them so that we can enter into the joy of creating. The major obligation of the Church to children is to enjoy them and to listen to them so that each can grow according to the design which is written into the being of each and emerges only under the care and warmth of another life. One of the reasons we experience so much difficulty with our gifts is that parents have thought their chief function in life is to feed, clothe, and educate the young. However, their really important ministry is to listen to their children and enable them to uncover the special blueprint that is theirs. There is one line in Scripture that will instruct us in these matters: ‘But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered over them.’ (Luke 2:10 NEB)

Every child’s life gives forth hints and signs of the ways that it is to go. The parent that knows how to meditate stores away these hints and signs and ponders over them. We are to treasure the intimations of the future that the child gives to us so that, instead of unconsciously putting blocks in the way, we help that life to fulfill its destiny. This is not an easy way to follow. Instead of telling our children what they should do and become, we must be humble before their wisdom, believing that in them, and not in us, is the secret that they need to discover.”

Reflect on these questions:

- # If you accept the premise of O’Connor’s statement, how does the truth communicated here affect your understanding of your personal ministry as parent of your children (if you have children)?
- # If you accept this premise, how does the truth communicated here affect your understanding of your personal ministry as “parent” of the children who are a part of your church family?

## Strategy #3: Become a Patron

Read the following definition of a “patron,” again from O’Connor’s book, The Eighth Day of Creation:

“A patron is ‘one chosen, named, or honored as a special guardian, protector, supporter, or the like.’ A patron is much more fundamental than we have thought to the discovery and emergence of gifts. Very few people creatively and happily engaged in their work can look back without seeing behind the evolving of their gifts the face of their patron saints.”

O’Connor goes on to list several activities of a patron. A patron helps you to uncover and affirms your gifts. A patron helps you to identify the gifts you have by naming them or helping us name them, perhaps in a way that is particularly fitting or evocative. A patron encourages you, believes in you, and calls you forth.

- # Who are the patrons in your church family?
- # Who have been your personal patrons?
- # For whom have you been (or should you be) a patron?

## A Bibliography of Resources about Spiritual Gifts

If you are interested in exploring spiritual gifts in more depth, the resources listed on this page are highly recommended.

### **EMPOWERED! Reclaiming the Meaning of Missions Through the Power of the Holy Spirit** by Esther Burroughs

Each year, the Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention commissions a book to support the overall WMU theme for that year. In 1990, the theme and resulting book focused on spiritual gifts. This resource provides both a solid biblical background for giftedness and a wide variety of practical applications of giftedness in the area of missions. Copies are available through the WMU or through LifeWay Christian Resources stores.

### **The Eighth Day of Creation: Gifts and Creativity** by Elizabeth O'Connor

Active in the leadership of The Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C., O'Connor has written a provocative book about, not only discovering our spiritual gifts, but also nurturing and supporting other Christians who are also in the process of claiming their giftedness. The book was published in 1971 by Word Books of Waco, Texas. You will probably have to ask your bookstore to order a copy for you.

### **Spiritual Gifts from the LifeSearch Series for Small Groups** by Kent Millard

This excellent workbook for small groups is available from Abingdon Press. To order call 1-800-251-3320 or contact the web site--[www.abingdon.org](http://www.abingdon.org).

### **Uniquely You in Christ Resources**

This publisher approaches the topic of spiritual gifts from a conservative biblical perspective, but interestingly, integrates the concept with elements of psychology, namely personality theory. They offer several study guides and spiritual gift inventories. Some of these inventories are integrated with the DISC Personality Types Inventory. For more information about these resources, call 1-800-501-0490.

### **The "Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts" Series from Upper Room Ministries**

In mid-career, Methodist minister Charles Bryant "rediscovered" the concept of spiritual gifts—and it revolutionized his ministry and the ministry of his church. In his book, **Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts**, Bryant tells the story of this rediscovery process. Further, he provides one of the best resources that you can find to help you go through the process of finding a fresh understanding of giftedness.

In addition to Bryant's excellent book, two other support resources are also available. A **workbook** by the same title, written by John I. Penn, is designed for members of a class who wish to learn more about giftedness. An **inventory**, also by the same title, is also available.

To order these materials, contact **The Upper Room** at (615)-340-7110 or through [www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org).

According to the last edition of the Upper Room catalogue, the book sells for \$10.95, the workbook for \$7.95, and the inventory for \$19.95 for a package of 10.

# Discovering Our Spiritual Gifts

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A Seminar in Spiritual Formation

developed for  
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