

Christian Service

I. Introduction

- A. This lesson focuses on Christian service, particularly those areas that you may be led towards.
- B. Words and Concepts
 - 1. Spiritual - Does not mean "non-physical," but things that pertain to the Spirit. Something can be physical and spiritual at the same time if it pertains to the Spirit.
 - 2. Body of Christ - An analogy that the New Testament writers used to describe the nature of the church.
 - 3. Gift - From the word, "charismata" in Greek. The root meaning is grace, and therefore the word, "charismata" can mean "concrete grace." In the biblical context, it often refers to a concrete expression of God's grace, or how God's grace works among believers.
 - 4. Grace - From the word, "charis" in Greek. The root meaning is favor. It can thus be translated, "favor," "favored," or "to show favor."
- C. A note on concept of gift: Many often think of spiritual gifts as a spirit-given ability. However, when reading all the passages that refer to the gifts, it becomes clear that it is not always a spirit-given ability. Some of the gifts were clearly not miraculous, such as teaching, giving, or serving. In Cor 12:4-6 it seems to use the words "gift, ministry/service, and working/effects" interchangeably. Rom 12:4 speaks in terms of "functions." Therefore, it is better to think of these items in the following lists not so much as abilities, but as ministries.

II. Passages related to spiritual gifts and their use

A. Mt 25:14-30

- 1. Identifying the characters in this parable
 - a. Who is the man who went on the journey? _____
 - b. Who are the slaves? _____
 - c. What might the money represent? _____
- 2. What did the master mean when he said that he reaped where he did not sow and gathered where he scattered no seed?

3. What does this parable indicate about God's expectations of us?
4. What did the one-talent man do wrong? What did he assume about his master that was wrong?
5. What happens when God's servants utilize what God has given them?
6. In a nutshell, what does this parable teach you?

B. 1 Cor 12

1. v.4-11

- a. There are varieties of gifts, but the same _____.
There are varieties of ministries, and the same _____.
There are varieties of effects, but the same _____
who works all things in all persons.
- b. What is the purpose of these gifts? (v.7)
- c. Who "distributes these gifts, ministries and effects?"
- d. What does the reference to gifts as a "manifestation of the Spirit" suggest or imply about the gift?
- e. Make a list of the gifts this passage catalogs on page 126.

2. v.12-27

- a. What does the body analogy suggest about the nature of our individual gifts and ministries?
- b. Why does God desire a diversity of gifts and ministries in the body?
- c. Who decides where you might fit in the body?
- d. What rationale does the text give for our place in the body? [honor, unity, same care, suffer & rejoice as a body]

3. v.28-31

- a. List the specific gifts this passage lists on page 126.
- b. Why are some gifts greater than others?
- c. What determines which is a greater gift? (see also 1 Cor 14:5 & 14:12)
- d. What should be the goal in the use of a "spiritual gift?"



4. Reflection: The emphasis on one Spirit, Lord, and God who works through these gifts suggests that there is/are overarching goals that these gifts are to work together toward. The roles, functions, and gifts in the body of Christ are to serve God's purposes. Here is an analogy: Soma Airlines employs baggage handlers, ticketing agents,

bookkeepers, pilots, attendants, mechanics, technicians, advertisers, leaders and managers. They all have various functions, but they all serve one overarching mission and purpose, which is to provide transportation with excellence. In the same way, each gift, each part of the body of Christ serves an overarching mission.

C. Rom 12:4-8

1. On what basis do members of the body receive a gift or function?
2. How should this affect our attitude toward ourselves?
3. How should this affect our attitude toward others?
4. How should this affect our attitude toward our gifts?
5. List the gifts/functions that this passage catalogs on page 126.

D. Eph 4:7-16

1. What specifically is the nature of the grace that we receive in this passage? Is this saving grace, or some other kind of grace? Explain.
2. Purposes of the gifts
 - a. To *equip* the saints for the work of service
 - 1) In Greek, the word for equipping is *katartismos*
Verb form: *katartizo* - To put in order, put into proper condition, to complete, to prepare, make, create
 - a) Mt 4:21 - Mending their nets
 - b) 1 Cor 1:10 - Be made complete in the same mind
 - c) Gal 6:1 - Restore such a one in a Spirit of gentleness
 - d) 1 Thess 3:10 - Complete what was lacking
 - e) Heb 13:21 - Pray God equip believers
 - f) 1 Pet 5:10 - God...will himself perfect you
 - g) Lk 6:40 - ...when fully trained, will be like his teacher
 - 2) To equip carries the idea of preparing through training. It refers to the instruction and training involved in preparing to carry out a particular ministry.

b. To build up the body of Christ

1) What does this mean?

- a) Until we attain to the _____ of the faith
 - 1] Body of Christ analogy is instructive here
 - 2] Members of the body all claim Christ as head and are obedient to him as Lord
 - 3] Members of the body work together
 - 4] Members of the body support each other

- b) And of the _____ of the Son of God
 - 1] Each member grows in knowing Christ
 - 2] The life of Christ and his will is the standard

- c) To a _____ man, of full stature in Christ
 - 1] We are no longer to be children
 - 2] We are no longer to be naïve
 - a] We do not uncritically accept anything
 - b] We learn to recognize heresy
 - 3] We speak the truth in love
 - Jesus did the same, we imitate him
 - 4] We grow up in all aspects into Him
 - "All aspects" includes emotional, social, and intellectual growth, which are all part of spiritual growth.

2) The whole body is fitted and held together by what?

3) What does this suggest about the importance of your service?

3. List the gifts/functions from this passage on page 126.

III. The gifts listed: At various times when you read through the biblical passages related to spiritual gifts and do the lessons, you will be instructed to list the gifts on the chart below.

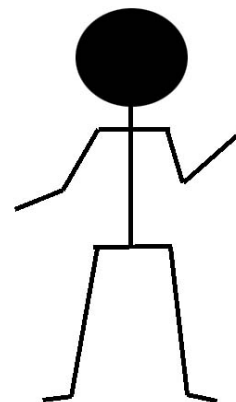
1 Cor 12:4-11	1 Cor 12:28-31	Rom 12:4-8	Eph 4:7-16	Other

IV. Christian service and the mission of Christ

A. A poem:

Christ Has No Body

*Christ has no body but yours,
 No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
 Yours are the eyes with which he looks
 Compassion on this world,
 Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
 Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
 Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
 Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
 Christ has no body now but yours,
 No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
 Yours are the eyes with which he looks
 compassion on this world.
 Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*



- Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

B. Questions:

1. Is there such thing as an "ungifted Christian?" Explain.
2. List all of the purposes of these gifts/functions you have discovered so far
3. What implications does the body analogy have for the following:
 - a. Service?
 - b. Fellowship?
 - c. Mission?
 - d. Other?
4. (Jn 1:14-18; Heb 1:1-4) - What implications do these passages have for the body of Christ today? How would we, as the body of Christ, fulfill being His body?

V. A closer look at the ministries/gifts lists

- A. Possible classifications (keep in mind that the often overlap): (1 Pet 4:10-11)
 1. Speaking gifts/ministries
 2. Serving gifts/ministries
 3. Other

B. Speaking gifts/ministries

1. Apostleship



- a. Greek: *apostolos*. Definition: "One sent"
Typically used of an official envoy
sent out with authority with a message or task
- b. Ways it is used in the New Testament:
 - 1) Heb 3:1 - Jesus is the apostle of God
 - 2) Lk 6:13 - The twelve apostles of Christ
 - 3) Rom 11:13 - Paul was an apostle
 - 4) Rom 16:7 - Andronicus and Junias were apostles
 - 5) Acts 14:14 - Barnabas was an apostle
 - 6) Gal 1:19 - James, brother of Jesus was an apostle
- b. Is the simple designation *apostle* limited only to the twelve?
- c. One who can be an apostle, but an apostle of whom?
 - 1) The twelve were apostles of Christ, commissioned directly by him for a specific mission
 - 2) There were also apostles of the church
 - a) Phil 2:25 - Epaphroditus was an apostle of the Philippian church (note: many translations translate *apostolon* as "messenger" here)
 - b) 2 Cor 8:23 - There were apostles of various churches (note: many translations *apostoloi* as "messengers" or even "representatives" here.)
- d. More information
 - 1) Acts 13:1-2 - Paul and Barnabas appeared to have been either prophets or teachers before being commissioned as Apostles. Apostleship is a teaching role
 - 2) 1 Tim 2:7 - Preacher and apostle seem to be used almost interchangeably. Apostleship is a preaching role.
 - 3) 1 Cor 9:19-23 - Paul's purpose as an apostle was to identify with and share the Gospel to all people. Apostleship involves bringing the Gospel to people
- e. Conclusion: It appears the idea of "apostleship" was not limited to the twelve. Jesus had official envoys whom he commissioned directly, calling them "apostles," a fitting term. However, the church also had official envoys whom they sent as well, calling them "apostles" as well. Apostle, then, is a person with an official commission to preach and teach the Gospel.

2. Prophecy

a. Greek: *Prophetes*, used in New Testament in these ways -

- 1) Old Testament Prophets - Those called by God to give an authoritative message of repentance. Repentance would result in forgiveness and blessing, and refusal to repent would result in judgment. Foretelling, if done, was usually in the form of, "if you do - - - - , then - - - - would happen." Often times the message was communicated verbatim from God, or in the form of a vision from God. They were bold, often unpopular, and fearless. They unflinchingly identified sin, injustice, oppression, and other evils, and upheld the standard of righteousness, justice, and holiness. The purpose was always to motivate people to repentance and faithfulness
- 2) False prophets - Those who pretended to speak the word of the Lord but did not.
- 3) Christian Prophets. - The early church had prophets who possessed the gift of prophecy.
 - a) Acts 21:10-11 - Agabus
 - b) Acts 15:32 - Judas and Silas

b. Function of a prophet

- 1) From Old Testament background it was to faithfully convey a word of repentance and bold warning from the Lord to the people.
- 2) 2 Pet 1:21 - Communicated a message conveyed to them from God through the Spirit
- 3) Rom 12:6 - Prophecy seemed to be connected to a strong faith
- 4) 1 Cor 14:1-4 - Purpose was to edify the church
Acts 15:32 - An example of prophets who edified the church

c. Conclusion: A Prophet, in the official sense, seems to have been one who communicated a message directly from God for the purpose of building up the church by calling it to repentance

and faithfulness.

d. Notes and warnings on modern day "prophets"

- 1) Prophecy in the sense of receiving direct revelations from God seems to have gone the way of miraculous gifts.



- a) Gal 1:8 - Scripture teaches us the Gospel has already been delivered and there will be no other
 - b) Jude 1:3 - The faith has been handed down once for all, which indicates we have all we need through God's word.
 - c) 1 Cor 14:29 - Even when there was prophecy, the prophet's words needed to be weighed
 - 1] Jer 28:9
 - 2] Dt 13:1-5
 - 3] Dt 18:20-22
 - 4] 1 Jn 4:1
 - d) Heb 1:1-2 - God's final message was in His Son
 - 1] Before it was through prophets & fathers
 - 2] Heb 2:1-4 - Jesus passed his message on
 - a] It was spoken by the Lord Jesus
 - b] God confirmed and testified to the authenticity of the message through signs and wonders
 - 3] Since Jesus was the final message, there will be no more
- 2) Prophets and prophecy seems to have passed from use in the New Testament period
 - a) The written word was completed, eliminating the need for prophecy
 - b) People who have claimed to be prophets, such as Joseph Smith, Ellen White, and many faith healers today have proven to be false.
 - c) 2 Pet 1:3 - We need not worry about more revelation, because scripture declared that God had already given us everything we need for life and godliness.

- 3) Further thoughts: Even though one may not have the miraculous gift of prophecy, he may in the spirit of the prophets, feel compelled to call God's people back to God, providing correction and upholding right and wrong. An example would be calling the church out because of its neglect of the poor (Amos 5:11-13; James 2:1-13).

3. Evangelist

- a. Greek: *euangelistes* means one who announces good news
 - 1) Related word is *euangelion* "gospel, good news"
 - 2) A good translation would be a "gospel preacher"
- b. Examples:
 - 1) Phillip was called an evangelist, Acts 21:8
Acts 8:5, 26-40 - Phillip preached the Gospel
 - 2) Timothy was to do the work of an evangelist 2 Tim 4:5
Context implies hardships and opposition
- c. An evangelist is simply one whose ministry is to preach the good news publicly

4. Pastor

- a. Greek: *Poimen* - "shepherd or pastor"
 - 1) Eph 4:11 - Only time the noun "shepherd/pastor" is used of church leaders
 - 2) Verb form, *poimaino*, used of elders and overseers
 - a) Acts 20:28 - Elders to shepherd the church
 - b) 1 Pet 5:2 - Elders were to shepherd the flock of God
 - c) Tit 1:4f - Gives a list for qualities and qualifications for elders.
 - v.7 - Also calls them "overseers/bishops"
 - Similar passage in 1 Tim 3:1f
 - 3) Therefore, it is understood that elders, shepherds/pastors, and overseers/bishops and elders are interchangeable terms/or descriptions (not technical terms) for those who lead and care for the church
- b. Functions:
 - 1) Eph 4:11-13
 - a) Equip the saints for works of service
 - b) Build up the body of Christ



- c) Help the flock to grow into maturity in Christ
- 2) 1 Pet 5:1-3
 - a) Shepherd the flock of God among you
 - b) Be examples to the flock
 - 1 Tim 3:1f - Outlines honorable character as a prerequisite for this ministry
- 3) 1 Tim 3:4-5 - Leadership in the household of God
- 4) 1 Tim 3:2; 5:17-18; Tit 1:9 - Teach God's word faithfully with fidelity
- 5) Titus 1:10-11 - Protect the flock from trouble makers
- 6) John 10:1-15 - Follow Jesus as the example (he is the Chief Shepherd, 1 Pet 5:4)
 - a) Know the sheep, be known by the sheep
 - b) Regularly inspect the sheep
 - c) Lead the sheep to good food and water
 - d) Be self sacrificial for the sheep
 - e) Love the sheep

- c. A "pastor" is one who cares for the church among them, leading them to maturity and growth by knowing them, teaching them, leading them, and loving them.

5. Teachers

- a. Greek: *Didaskalos* - "teacher"
 - 1) Jews favored the term, "Rabbi" for teacher
 - 2) Students were called "disciples"
- b. More information
 - 1) Acts 20:20-21 - Teaching can be done in a classroom and at home
 - 2) Heb 5:11-13 - Maturity is a requirement for teaching
 - 3) James 3:1 - Teaching is a very critical ministry in the church which requires skill, knowledge, and maturity
- c. Greatest example teacher is Jesus
 - 1) Used stories, Lk 10:30f; Mt 18:27f
 - 2) Used analogies, Mt 13:31f
 - 3) Used comparison and contrast, Mt 7:24f; 25:32f
 - 4) Used hyperbole, Mt 18:9; Lk 14:26
 - 5) Moved from familiar to the unfamiliar, Jn 3:8; Mt 16:2f
 - 6) Used questions, Lk 11:11f; Lk 10:36
 - 7) Used humor, Mt 7:3; 15:14
 - 8) Used explanation, Mt 13:36f; Jn 16:29

- d. A teacher is one that is able teach, explain, and model God's word in such a way that students can integrate God's teaching into their lives and be transformed by it.

6. Leadership

- a. Greek: *Prohistemi* - "To be a leader, have authority over, manage, care for, rule"
- b. Used of
 - 1) Overseers: 1 Tim 3:4 - "...one who manages his own household..."
 - 2) Deacons: 1 Tim 3:12 - "...good managers of their children and..."
 - 3) Leaders in general: 1 Thess 5:12 - "...and have charge over you in the Lord..."
- c. A leader's function is to lead, inspire, guide, model for, and direct others in the right way.



7. Exhortation

- a. Greek: *Parakaleo* - To encourage, urge, appeal to, request, console, comfort
- b. Noun form (*parakletos*) used in John of the Holy Spirit, the "helper," Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7
- c. Noun form also used of Jesus, the "advocate," 1 Jn 2:1
- d. The function of one who exhorts is to encourage and motivate

8. Wisdom (word of)

- a. Greek: *Sophia* - Wisdom, insight, intelligence, knowledge
- b. This is not wisdom in the worldly sense, but godly wisdom
 - 1) Prov 9:10 - Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord
 - 2) James 3:13-18 - Contrast between two types of wisdom

- a) Earthly wisdom:
 - 1] v.15 - It is earthly, natural, and demonic
 - a] Its source is not from God
 - b] It comes ultimately from human ingenuity, intelligence, and reason
 - 2] v.16 - It has selfish ambition
 - a] Ambition is hailed as a good thing
 - b] Selfish ambition can get one far, according to earthly wisdom
 - 3] In other words, worldly wisdom has a tendency to be pragmatic

- b) Wisdom from above:
 - 1] v.17 - It is
 - a] pure,
 - b] peaceable,
 - c] gentle,
 - d] reasonable,
 - e] full of mercy and good fruits
 - f] unwavering
 - g] without hypocrisy
 - 2] v.18 - The seed whose result is righteousness

3) 1 Cor 2:6-16

- a) v. 6 - This wisdom is spoken among those who are mature
 - b) v.8 - The "rulers" of this age cannot understand this wisdom
 - c) v.10 - This wisdom is revealed through the Spirit
 - d) v.11 - This wisdom enables us to think like God
 - e) v.13 - We are able to articulate this wisdom
 - f) v.14 - The natural person cannot accept this wisdom, it seems foolish to him
 - g) v.15 - This wisdom enables one to appraise all things
- c. One who is gifted with the word of wisdom would be akin to the sages of the Old Testament. The wise one would be able to discern situations, personalities, and other such things from a godly and wise perspective and draw out or apply a fitting word for teaching and guide others into choosing a course of action or thought that is not only right, but fitting.

9. Knowledge (word of)

- a. Greek: *Gnosis* - Knowledge, Esoteric knowledge
- b. Not in the worldly sense, but in the godly sense
- c. Prov 1:7 - Knowledge begins with the fear of the Lord
Note: In Prov 1:1-7, wisdom and knowledge almost seem interchangeable.
- d. Since this is a "word" of knowledge, this appears to be not just having knowledge, but being able to articulate it as well.

C. Serving gifts

1. Service

- a. Greek: *Diakonia* - Ministry, service, support
- b. The word "Deacon" comes from this word

2. Giving

- a. Greek: *Metadidomi* - To share, give, impart
- b. Same word used in the following passages:
 - 1) Lk 3:11 - The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.
 - 2) Eph 4:28 - He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.
- c. One with the gift of giving appears to be one who has an abundance or the ability to work and create an abundance and share it with others

3. Mercy

- a. Greek: *Eleao* - To be merciful, to show kindness ,to show compassion



- b. Mercy is not limited to the idea of forgiving someone who has wronged you. Mercy also includes the ideas of compassion, sympathy, benevolence, charity, and kindness. Here are some examples:
 - 1) Many who asked Jesus for healing phrased it, "please have mercy."
 - a) Mt 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30-33
 - b) They were not asking for forgiveness but for Jesus to have compassion and do something about their afflictions and heal them.
 - 2) Lk 10:25-37 - Parable of the Good Samaritan
 - a) Prompted by two things
 - 1] The command, "Love your neighbor as yourself"
 - 2] The question, "Who is my neighbor?"
 - b) Jesus' question: Who was a neighbor?
 - c) Answer: The one who showed mercy
 - 1] The one who showed mercy helped
 - 2] The one who showed mercy personally expended himself
 - 3] The one who showed mercy took a personal risk
 - d) Mercy means - Love your neighbor as yourself
- c. Mercy givers are compassionate, kind, sympathetic people who are willing to touch people in ministries of mercy and compassion, whether it is encouraging the downhearted, serving those in hospice care, ministering to the elderly, etc. etc. etc.

4. Helps

- a. Greek: *Antilempsis* - Ability to help, helper
Note: Used only here in the New Testament
- b. One who helps is one who assists or renders aid.

5. Administrations

- a. Greek: *Kubernesis* - Administration
Note: Used only here in the New Testament
- b. One with the gift of administration is able to organize or manage a ministry or task.

D. Other

1. Notes on miraculous gifts:

- a. Some classify these as "sign" gifts because their purpose was to act as signs and wonders, confirming the message when it was first preached, Heb 2:3-4
- b. The miraculous gifts were intended to be a temporary thing (1 Cor 13:8-11)
 - 1) The "partial" and the things done "in part" were things such as tongues
 - 2) The "partial" would be done away with when the "perfect" comes
 - a) "Perfect" (*teleios*) in Greek means perfect, complete, mature, full, or full-grown.
 - b) Something complete or full would come and the miraculous gifts would be done away with
 - 3) What was the "perfect/full/complete?"
 - a) Context seems to suggest maturity
 - b) Context could also suggest the complete written word (completed at the end of the 1st century)
 - 1] v. 12 speaks of partial knowledge
 - 2] Time will come when knowledge will no longer be incomplete
 - 3] This would fit with the idea of maturity, because spiritual maturity is tied to being in the word
- c. These sign gifts appear to have only been intended for the early period of the church before the word of God was written

2. Faith

- a. Most likely not the faith that all Christians are to have
- b. Faith occurs in a list of miraculous gifts, indicating that it is faith in a highly qualified sense
- c. Probably the faith that can "move mountains" (1 Cor 13:2)
- d. In the Gospels, this kind of faith has the power to perform

signs, especially to cast out demons (Mt 17:20; 21:21; Mk 9:23; 11:22; Lk 17:6; Acts 3:16; Gal 3:5)

- e. This obviously would have been a prerequisite for any of the sign gifts

2. Healing

- a. One of the common signs Jesus performed was healing, which was immediate and instantaneous
- b. This reflects not only his power, but his compassion
- c. Even though the gift of healing may have passed, we can still reflect the compassion of God through healing/medical/counseling ministry through natural means

3. Miracles

- a. Literally reads, " workings of powers"
- b. Ability to performs signs beyond the laws of nature
- c. Example - Acts 13:9-11; 19:11

4. Discernment of Spirits

- a. Refers to the gift of properly judging what a prophet says
- b. Examples 1 Cor 14:9; 1 Jn 4:1f; 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 2:2

5. Tongues

- a. The ability to speak another language without ever having studied it
- b. The first example of this is in Acts 2:4-11; 19:11
- c. This gift was the most troubling to the Corinthian church due to pride and abuse (1 Cor 12-14)

- 6. Interpretation of Tongues - This obviously goes together with the former gift

E. Additional gifts

- 1. Keep in mind that these lists of gifts were probably not intended to be exhaustive.
- 2. Also keep in mind that the purpose of these gifts were to build up the body of Christ
- 3. What other gifts might there be that are not included in these lists? (Go ahead and add them to the lists on page 126)

VI. Putting the gifts to work: Scenarios

The purpose of this exercise is to envision the possibilities of how various spiritual gifts might work together in the body. Discuss each scenario using the discussion questions at the bottom of the page

- A. Scenario One: During a meeting at the church building, a grungy person comes in and says that he saw that there were people at the building and so he came in to ask for some help. He has been out of work, has been evicted from his apartment. He has a wife and baby who are now staying with some friends, but there is no room for himself. He doesn't know what to do.
- B. Scenario Two: The Church building is in bad need of repair. Due to the age of the building, many are suggesting that the church might need to get a new building. Either way, the building cannot continue to be used effectively or safely.
- C. Scenario Three: Two members of the congregation are running for the school board against each other. Each of their campaigns turned nasty. They each began to focus on each other's faults and eventually degenerated into promoting innuendo, gossip, underhanded tricks, and perhaps outright dishonesty.
- D. Scenario Four: Person in the congregation feels called by God to be missionary. This person started to raise financial support. However, in spite of his best efforts, he could only raise half of what he needs.
- E. Scenario Five: A boyfriend and girlfriend in the church has gotten pregnant out of wedlock. The boy wants to get married and be a family, but the girl is not so sure because she feels overwhelmed by the prospect of being a mother and wife. Both sets of parents are conflicted as to what they think should be done.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Using the above scenarios, discuss the following questions

1. Using the various spiritual gifts of the body, what might you do?
2. Which gifts would be used?
3. In what way(s) would each gift be used?
4. Would there be times when the various gifts might fit together to create or do something that neither gift could do by itself?
5. How are the gifts used to the glory of God?

VII. Wrapping it Up

A. Reflection questions

1. What kind of Spiritual Gifts do you think you might have?
2. In what ways do you envision God using them in your life?
3. What are you excited about from this study? What are you anxious about?

B. Spiritual Gifts Inventory: The appendix in this study contains an inventory tool to help you identify what your spiritual gifts might potentially be.