

TAKE *away* →

10.24.15

Gifts of the Spirit

Perceiving = Knowing God's word and being able to see right from wrong

Serving = Helping others and knowing where to pitch in and lend a hand

Teaching = Researching and educating others to see God clearer

Exhortation = Speaking into the life of someone else who is needing guidance

Giving = Supporting and providing resources to further God's work

Administration = Lending leadership and organization for others in service

Compassion = caring for others without need of reciprocation

1. Of all the gifts that you have ever received, which one stands out as being the most useful and/or meaningful, and why?
2. Imagine yourself as a new believer. Which gift from the list above would be most helpful for you at that time?
3. Which of the gifts above would match your personality best? Which would match your abilities? And which one your passion or desire? Why?
4. Which gift do you not resonate with at all, and why?
5. Would you like to know more about your spiritual gifts? Why?

Find out more at www.hospitalchurch.org/spiritualgiftstest

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We've devoted the last few weeks to the study of Spiritual Gifts—gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us to grow His church. And though many times we may never see the direct results in another person's life as we utilize our gifts, we can know that our gifts are vital to God's work.

Prayer

Last week Andy mentioned the 7 gifts that we are highlighting in this series. We're calling them Motivational Gifts. These are the gifts that provide those nudges or, as Kim Johnson put it in our first sermon, those small drops of water that will eventually cause someone to want to seek God.

The Motivational Gifts are different from the two other groups of Gifts – Manifestation Gifts and Ministry Gifts.

So now that we have that identified, let's talk a little bit about the practical side of utilizing these Motivational Gifts.

For those of you who might have taken a Spiritual Gift test in the past, maybe you're not familiar with some of these gift names. If you're like me, you're probably more familiar with gifts like "Hospitality," "Creative Expression," and "Craftsmanship." You're probably wondering, so what happened to those gifts? Well, I would like to call those gifts "Support Gifts." In other words, they are all gifts and talents that God gives us that lend support to our Primary Gifts.

Those of you who have been here a little while remember Pastor Don Castonia. He was actually the pastor of this church before Andy, so it's at least 30 years ago. For those of us who knew him, there is no doubt in any of our minds that Don had the gift of Pastoring (A Ministry Gift). However, we could go further and say Don had the gift of Service and Administration. When Don retired, I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting with him on a number of occasions in his workshop. He showed me around all of his tools and projects that he was working on. Wonderful handiwork. He was given the gift of Craftsman, a notable gift. But while we were talking, I began to notice that everything he was working on was for someone else. If you look around the church, the slat-board in the foyer, the guest card stands, the oak signs, and even this pulpit I'm speaking from—Don had a hand in crafting. His Craftsmanship gift was actually a support to his Motivational Gift of Giving.

We could go on and on and tell story after story of how God has used his people to make a difference in his church just by utilizing their gifts for him.

When the Holy Spirit is allowed to fill us, when we use our God-given gifts for him, things happen. Good things.

Turn with me to Acts, Chapter 2.

Luke tells us that the Holy Spirit moved into the lives of each person there in that upper room. They are so overwhelmed that they bust out into the street, where others are looking on. You can almost sense that even the disciples are a little startled and gathering themselves to find a response that makes sense. Finally Peter comes forward:

Acts 2:16-21

¹⁴⁻²¹ That's when Peter stood up and, backed by the other eleven, spoke out with bold urgency: "Fellow Jews, all of you who are visiting Jerusalem, listen carefully and get this story straight. These people aren't drunk as some of you suspect. They haven't had time to get drunk—it's only nine o'clock in the morning. This is what the prophet Joel announced would happen:

"In the Last Days," God says,
"I will pour out my Spirit
on every kind of people:

It's interesting – no one was quite ready for what had just taken place. But no one could deny that something incredible had happened. What we see here is first and foremost an unprecedented phenomenon. God was no longer to be known as a God of partiality. No race, no color, no gender, no age, no social status, nothing was going to stand in the way of God being able to pour out His Spirit to everyone.

So the first thing we realize when our Gifts are utilized is the Spirit becomes an Equalizing Force:

This was an amazing understanding in this time. To think that a child could be used by God, or a Samaritan or even a woman. But as the Spirit lets loose and we start to realize that we are valued – it also become evident that my gift is no more and no less effective than some else's.

In our church, I have seen how many of you have risen to the call when you didn't think you were qualified, or when you thought someone else could do something better than you. I've seen people who were brand new to our country and the English language become Greeters, knowing that sometimes a smile and warm handshake is worth a thousand words. I know this first hand because not long ago someone came up to me after being greeted one such individual and asked me if I knew who the Greeter was who shook his hand. He wanted to thank her for being so warm and friendly in her facial expressions. He said it was the warmest greeting he had experienced in a long time.

When God equalizes, things start to look different—and sometimes a lot different than what we expected. Have you ever wondered what our church would look like if you were the one that was in charge? Now I know that some of you have the gift of patience and inclusiveness, so you'd be happy to let everyone in. But I dare say that many would have a church that looks pretty much like their own personal "Me Club." Look around, people. We are blessed, because there is an understanding of the value of diversity, and that includes embracing everyone's spiritual gifts. We are all equal in God's eyes.

Let's continue in Acts, Chapter 2.

Peter gives a pretty powerful sermon, saying that what was happening there was what had been missed when Jesus was with them. Peter empowered the people as Christ's witnesses, to share the good news of His return for everyone. It was a bold message, and Christ was lifted up. And at that point it was as if the whole town was ready to accept Christ.

When God's Spirit is poured out and we utilize our gifts, the Spirit becomes an Exponential Force:

Acts 2:36-41

³⁸Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

⁴⁰With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Peter was probably a great speaker, but let's not assume that this was because of Peter's sermon. John the Baptist preached and Jesus preached, but here we see in one sermon the church grows by 2500%. There's nothing that can explain this other than the Holy Spirit being in Peter as well as those 120 disciples, and the Spirit was able to work in the hearts of all who were there. Nothing is impossible for God.

Now let's look at the final 2 verses of the chapter:

Acts 2: 46-47

⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Do you see what is happening here? Growth is happening, but not just numeric growth or popularity growth. When these people lived out their gifts with one another, those who were just bystanders in the city square or shoppers at the market started to notice something different inside them. It was different, it was hopeful, it was a real, and they wanted to be a part of it.

When we utilize our Gifts for God, the Spirit Becomes a Retaining Force:

In case you didn't know – right now - people are looking at you. Yeah, you. Everyday someone is watching, listening, paying attention, and noticing you. It might be a little frightening if it was all about you, but isn't it nice to know that its not! The Holy Spirit is constantly working on God's behalf so that, even in our everyday life, God's character is portrayed in the best light.

Today, right now – there are some of you who have been given any number of these gifts, and you're still not sure if you should jump in and make it a part of your life. But this Church needs you to make that jump; the Holy Spirit who gave you the gifts needs you to respond.

If you have been given the gift of Administration, right now we have room for you. We need organization in our groups, our services, our programs and our processes. We need those who can lead, assist, and plan.

We need those with the gift of Service, those who don't mind pitching in and helping even when it's not all that glamorous. We need those who can work behind the scenes and make our church better and increase our potential for God.

We need those with the gift of Giving, those who do not shy away from sharing their resources and energy for something that is bigger than them. Those who are mindful of the greatest Giver and not content to live life only for themselves.

We need Compassionate people, those who understand that, in this world, they are the hands, arms, eyes, and heart of God. That though there may be a thousand reasons why someone is hurting or impoverished or unwell, they still will not hesitate to act and care for them.

If you have been given the gift of Exhortation, we truly need those people who can speak into the lives of others. Those who are daily seeking God's will in their own lives so that they can share what they've found with others. Because of the nature of this gift, it is especially important to have some support gifts such as, wisdom, discernment and counseling.

If you have been given the gift of Perceiving, we need your keen eye to see things that maybe others don't. We need your precision and your attention to accuracy. Every ship needs that someone who can read the compass and is not afraid to stand

up and say it's off course. Again, however, because of the nature of this gift, it is imperative that support gifts of, wisdom, patience, and knowledge be present.

Lastly, if you have the gift of Teaching, we truly need your gift. It is because of your diligent study, your research, your passion to see others lifted and growing that makes you such a viable part of our church. Just as the Perceiver is the compass, you are the navigators. You study the maps, the courses, and the routes and help us to find our best way.

All of these gifts are part of the Retaining Force of the Holy Spirit. When we work together, utilizing our gifts that the Holy Spirit imparts, then our church becomes an unstoppable force for the Kingdom of God.