

Lesson Overview

Biblical Passage

1 Corinthians 12:4–11

Supporting Passages

Romans 12:6–8, 1 Peter 4:10, Ephesians 4:7–11

Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 12:11

Table Talk Question

What spiritual gift do I have?

Biblical Truth

The Holy Spirit gives believers spiritual gifts to work in unity so that God can accomplish His purposes through them.

Context

In addition to other problems that were plaguing the church at Corinth, Paul confronted the disorderly and arrogant way in which the Corinthians were dealing with spiritual gifts. Though it does not seem that Paul intended the list to be exhaustive, he identified nine specific spiritual gifts for the Corinthians. Paul stressed that spiritual gifts were gifts from the Holy Spirit to be used to promote the common good of the Body and not to be used for personal gain.

Learning Goals

- **Explore:** Learners will examine what spiritual gifts are and how they are to be used.
- **Transform:** Learners will evaluate how their spiritual gifts build up the Church and accomplish God's mission.

Prayer Suggestions

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for those in your group.

- Pray that learners will understand that every spiritual gift enables believers to serve God according to His plan for their lives.
- Pray that learners will appreciate God's design for giving His followers a variety of spiritual gifts so that they can work together to accomplish His purposes.
- Pray that God will reveal to each learner the gift(s) that He has given and the ways He wants him or her to use those gifts to serve Him.

Commentary

Investigation

The topic of spiritual gifts can create heated discussion among Christians. It was true in Paul's day as well. Why? While there are many reasons, perhaps the main one is because the gifts come from God. Thus, like many other things related to God, we can't understand everything about them. Nor will we necessarily have the same perspective on them.

The Corinthian church seems to have been in need of an adjustment of perspective. There were rifts in the church. There was quarreling. There was infighting. It was a volatile church in a volatile city. But there also was a real tangible moving of the Spirit. Paul addressed the different spiritual gifts as a way of offering some discernment between what was of God and what was not.

There have been problems regarding the exercise of certain gifts throughout Church history. God's intention was not to cause problems. Ultimately, He gives us gifts to bring glory to Himself. This lesson examines what spiritual gifts are and how God intends them to be used. As we use the gifts that God gave us, we will accomplish His purposes and bring glory to Him.

Importance

This lesson deals with the Essential Truth that [*The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer*](#). The Holy Spirit is supernatural and sovereign, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ. Beginning at the moment of salvation, He lives within every Christian, empowering him or her for effective service. The Holy Spirit convicts individuals of sin, uses God's Word to mature believers into the likeness of Christ, and secures them until Christ returns. The Holy Spirit is also the agent by which we are given and empowered to use our spiritual gifts. As this lesson demonstrates, these gifts are to be used for the unification of

the Church.

This lesson also teaches the Essential Truth that [The Church is God's Plan](#).

Interpretation

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 It appears that some believers in [Corinth] felt that they were more elite because they had received a certain spiritual gift. They looked down on fellow believers whose gifts weren't as spectacular. Thus the Corinthian church was greatly divided over the issue of spiritual gifts. This was not God's intention, so Paul wrote to correct their thinking.

The common theme in these verses is unity in the midst of diversity. [Paul's](#) words in 1 Corinthians 12 (and also in Rom. 12 and Eph. 4) emphasize how God uses differences to develop the Church rather than to destroy it. Three times in these verses, Paul used the words "different . . . but the same." He wanted the Corinthians to understand that differences should not cause division. He noted how variety can bring vitality in the Church. Ultimately, he wanted his readers to see that all gifts are from God; thus they are all important.

The words [gifts](#), [service](#), and [working](#) basically have the same meaning. They are alternate ways of describing what God has given. The word [gifts](#) is a reminder of the price—they are freely given by God to His people. The word [service](#) is a reminder of the purpose—they are given to help others. The word [working](#) is a reminder of the power—God's unlimited energy makes them all effective.

Note that Paul also emphasized the common source of the gifts. He pointed to the Trinity when he mentioned the "Spirit," "Lord," and "God." This is the three-in-one God: Spirit, Son, and Father (2 Cor. 13:14, Eph. 4:4-6). All three persons of the Trinity are responsible for giving gifts to God's people for God's glory.

Above all, Paul wanted his hearers to know that the variety of gifts came from God and were empowered by Him. Thus there should be no division among His people who had received these special gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:7 Paul emphasized that every believer ("each one") has been given a spiritual gift. No Christian is excluded from God's generosity. Thus, every gift is a "[manifestation](#) of the Spirit," or an indication of His indwelling and work in every believer. This means that the Spirit of God expresses Himself through each gift.

Paul also noted that God's gifts are given "for the common good." Though God gives individual believers a gift, He planned for the variety of gifts to benefit everyone in the Church. Later in this chapter, Paul would note how different parts work together in the human body. The parts can't exist apart from each other, and the body won't function properly if the parts don't work for the good of the whole. This is the same way in which God designed the Church. He planned it so that different believers with different gifts can work together for the good of the whole. There is no room for us to think that a certain spiritual gift indicates a higher status in God's family. God didn't give the gifts to recognize or honor certain believers but to build up His Church (Eph. 4:12).

1 Corinthians 12:8-10 These verses introduce several of the gifts from the Spirit. Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list because other specific gifts are mentioned elsewhere (Rom. 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:28-30, Eph. 4:11, 1 Pet. 4:10). The gifts that Paul mentioned were probably noted because of the situation in Corinth.

Paul first mentioned two gifts related to intelligent speech. This speech relates to "wisdom" and "knowledge" that comes from God's Spirit. Many scholars believe that these could refer to the same thing. Others, however, see wisdom as referring to intelligence and its practical application, while knowledge refers to insight and understanding. In either case, the focus of these gifts is the ability to communicate what comes from God, not merely wisdom and knowledge.

Another gift mentioned is faith. This does not refer to saving faith, in which people place their trust in Christ to receive eternal life. Every believer has this type of faith. But the person with the spiritual gift of faith is able to do powerful things. The gift of faith is an incredible trust in God to work in a particular situation and is the willingness to step out in faith even in what seems like an impossible situation. This is the type of faith that Jesus said could move mountains (Matt. 17:20).

Further, the Spirit also gives some believers "gifts of healing." This was evident in some of the apostles in the book of Acts. It goes beyond ordinary medical attention and impacts people with a variety of illnesses. This is a way that God works through certain people to bring both physical and mental health.

While gifts of healing are miraculous, the gift of "[miraculous powers]" goes beyond just healing. It covers a variety of actions that are unexplainable and can only be the work of God. Jesus exhibited miraculous powers when He fed the 5,000 (Mark 6:34-44), calmed the storm (Mark 4:35-41), and drove out demons (Mark 5:1-20). Paul also exhibited miraculous powers when he caused a sorcerer to go blind (Acts 13:8-11) and when he brought a young man back to life (Acts 20:7-12). Jesus promised that those who have faith in Him will do "even greater things" than the miracles that He had been doing (John 14:12).

Another of the Spirit's gifts is prophecy. The focus of prophecy is on sharing God's message (rather than telling the future). Thus, it is "inspired speech" (Morris, 1985). Before the New Testament was written and compiled, prophets in the Church (Eph. 4:11) announced and explained God's message in different situations. Even today, those with the gift of prophecy have a special ability to help others discover God's will in a particular situation. Paul noted that the gift of prophecy is helpful for evangelizing nonbelievers (1 Cor. 14:24–25) and encouraging believers (1 Cor. 14:3).

Related to prophecy is the gift of "distinguishing between spirits." There have always been many false prophets seeking to lead astray immature believers (Matt. 7:15, 1 John 4:1). Thus in Paul's day there was a need for those persons with special discernment who could determine if a message had come from God or from somewhere else (such as Satan). There is still a great need for those who can discern whether certain persons who claim to speak for God actually have a message from Him. In addition, believers with this gift help guard believers against religious fakes who claim to be acting for God or in His power.

The last two gifts that Paul mentioned in this section relate to speaking in and interpreting "different kinds of tongues." Perhaps no other gift has caused such controversy, either in the ancient Church or in our own time. Paul devoted much of 1 Corinthians 14 to the gift of tongues and gave it a lower priority than the gift of prophecy. It appears that this does not refer to speaking in other known languages (as in Acts 2:4). Instead, it refers to an "ecstatic utterance" in which neither the speaker nor the hearers understand what is spoken (Vincent, 1985). The words are "mysteries" directed "to God" (1 Cor. 14:2). The person with this gift must "keep quiet" (1 Cor. 14:28) if there is no one present in the church meeting who can interpret what is being expressed. It is not an uncontrollable gift.

1 Corinthians 12:11 This verse is a summary of Paul's teaching about the gifts. He emphasized again that "all" the gifts come from God's Spirit. While we should "eagerly desire the greater gifts" (1 Cor. 12:31), the Spirit alone "determines" what gift to give to "each" believer. This is a reminder that all believers receive a gift from the Spirit. And each gift is an expression of His "work" in the believer's life.

Implications

Every believer has a spiritual gift. This means that everyone in God's family has been given a special ability. The Christian who says, "I can't do anything for God," has not recognized the gift(s) that God has given to him or her. But it's also important to remember that spiritual gifts are given to benefit the Church, not individual believers. God designed His Church so that every person has something to do. No one has all the gifts; we are dependent on other believers to accomplish God's mission. Because [*The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer*](#), He distributes the spiritual gifts to believers as He sees fit. When the individuals in a church or fellowship utilize their gifts in tandem with others, the gospel is proclaimed, new believers are added to the Church, and the body is strengthened.

Have you ever given someone a gift and discovered later that he or she gave it away or packed it away in an attic? Even if the gift is the wrong size or isn't needed, it's discouraging when the recipient doesn't use it. How do you think God feels when His people don't use His gifts? Because God knows us inside and out, the gifts that He gives us are never the wrong size or style. His gifts are perfect for us. Therefore, God expects believers to use their gifts to serve Him. Seekers may want to serve God but struggle to find their place of service. When they understand how the spiritual gifts they have received work with other gifts, they will find that "sweet spot" in ministry. As Owners and Servants gain confidence in using their gifts, they may begin to value their gifts more than others or use the gifts to gain attention for themselves instead of bringing glory to God. Shepherds can help members of both groups understand and properly use their gifts to strengthen the Kingdom of God.

Teaching Plan

Fun: Building a Body

(5–8 minutes, moderate set-up)

Provide two or more Mr. Potato Head games.

Distribute bags to learners. Set the Mr. Potato Heads on tables in the room. Instruct learners to work together to complete them. Afterward, invite volunteers to name them and describe them and what they have been created to do. Share that today's lesson focuses on the way that God has designed His followers to work together to serve Him and strengthen the Church.

Discussion: Three Kinds of Giving

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Provide a dry erase board and dry erase marker. On the dry erase board, write the following quote from Robert Rodenmayer: "There are three kinds of giving: grudge giving, duty giving, and thanksgiving."

Divide learners into three groups. Assign each group one of the types of giving listed in the Rodenmayer quote. Then instruct groups to determine what is meant by the type of giving assigned to them and to provide examples of how that type of giving is demonstrated through the lives of Christians. After three minutes, call on groups to share their findings. (Note: Make sure that each group includes these descriptions of giving: grudge giving—giving even though I hate to do it; duty giving—giving because I ought to; and Thanksgiving—giving because I want to.) Afterward, point out that today’s lesson challenges believers to give of themselves by using their spiritual gifts to serve God and strengthen the Church.

Life and Times: A Faith that Gives Back

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Share the following story: **The commentary writer for this week’s lesson defined the spiritual gift of faith as “an incredible trust in God to work in a particular situation. It is also the willingness to step out in faith even in what seems like an impossible situation. This is the type of faith that Jesus said could move mountains.” By following God’s plan for their lives, Andy and Serenity Coulombe exemplify this type of faith.**

After reading several books, the Coulombes realized that they needed to show God’s love to the poor and marginalized in a radical way. Andy resigned his job as a coach and teacher, the couple sold their home and possessions, bought an RV, and planned a mission trip lasting eight to ten months. Along with their three children, they traveled across the United States, ministering to people in need. Along the way, they relied upon the hospitality of local churches for providing a place to park their RV. They spent ten to 14 days in many different cities, connecting with local ministry organizations and churches to provide meals, clothing, sleeping bags, and even short-term hotel stays for homeless people in each city. Their plans for life after the mission trip are still resting in God’s hands. “Serenity and I both believe that God is going to show us the next step while we’re out there,” Andy said. “I have chosen to resign instead of taking a sabbatical year for that reason, because I want to have complete 100 percent abandon faith in God.”

Afterward, state that today’s lesson emphasizes that God gives believers spiritual gifts to enable them to fulfill His plans for their lives as they build and strengthen the Church.

Visual: Giving Back the Gift

(5–8 minutes, moderate set-up)

Provide a monitor, DVD player, and a DVD of the motion picture August Rush (PG). Prepare to show a clip from chapter 23, titled “Waxing Rhapsodic,” which runs from time index 1:18:51 to 1:21:35.

Set up the movie clip by sharing that “orphan” Evan Taylor grew up in a boys’ home while always dreaming that his gift for music would lead him back to his parents. Explain that a highly unusual series of events led to his placement at the Julliard School of Music, where his professors struggled to understand his amazing musical gift. Play the movie clip at this time. Afterward, ask: **How does August explain how the music comes to him? How does August “give back” to the ones who give him the music?** State that today’s lesson challenges us to use the gifts that God has given to us to “give back” to Him by using those gifts to serve Him with joy.

Relational: To Give or To Receive

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Provide a dry erase marker board and dry erase marker.

Ask: **Would you prefer to give a gift or receive a gift?** Divide learners into two groups based on their responses. Instruct learners to discuss the following questions that you’ve written on the dry erase. (Note: If needed, divide learners into several smaller groups for discussion.)

- If you prefer to receive a gift:
 1. Of all the gifts you have received, which was your favorite? Why?
 2. What did that gift reveal about your relationship with the giver?

- If you prefer to give a gift:
 1. Why do you enjoy giving gifts to others?
 2. What do you consider when choosing a gift for someone?

After several minutes of discussion, encourage a couple of volunteers from each group to share their responses. Then state

that today's lesson reveals that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers that will allow them to fulfill God's plan for their lives.

Interactive Core Study: Gifted to Serve

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the *Learner Worksheet*. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens. Display the ***The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer*** Essential Truth poster.

Pass out pens and copies of the Learner Worksheet. Then ask: **Have you ever received a gift that inspired you to give to others? What made that gift so special? How did others benefit from sharing your gift?** State that the spiritual gifts that God gives us are given to benefit the Church and bring glory to Him.

1. Our spiritual gifts enable us to serve Christ and strengthen the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 12:4–6).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4–6. On the dry erase board, list the different roles filled by God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Ask: **How does this demonstrate unity within the Trinity? How does this emphasize our need to depend on God for the gifts and for the outcome when we exercise our gifts?** Prompt learners to write *spiritual gifts* on the first line of the worksheet.

2. Every spiritual gift is valuable for building and strengthening the Church (1 Cor. 12:7–10).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7–10. Lead learners to identify the gifts and list them on the board. Use the commentary to answer questions that learners might have about each gift. Ask: **Why are these gifts given to believers? How can believers know that they are using their gifts in ways that would please God?** Encourage learners to write *valuable* on the second line of the worksheet.

3. Believers are called to work together to accomplish God's purposes (1 Cor. 12:11–12).

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11–12. Then ask: **How does the Spirit distribute gifts? Which ones are most important?** Emphasize that all gifts are equally important and are given by the Spirit for maximum effectiveness. Ask: **How can proper use of spiritual gifts increase unity within a church or among a group of believers? What happens to unity among believers when gifts are misused, abused, or judged less worthy?** Prompt learners to write *work together* on the third line of the worksheet. Emphasize that because ***The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer***, believers can trust the Spirit to equip them with the spiritual gifts that they will need to fulfill God's plan for their lives as they work in unity with other believers.

Master Teacher Core Study: Gifted to Serve

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Download *Master Teacher Outline*. Print one copy for your own use. Download the *Learner Worksheet*. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens. Display the ***The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer*** Essential Truth poster.

Pass out pens and copies of the Learner Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Outline to teach 1 Corinthians 12:4–11. Afterward, lead learners to form groups of five or six to discuss the following worksheet questions:

- **How does this passage connect spiritual gifts to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit?**
- **Which spiritual gift(s) has the Spirit given to you?**
- **Who should receive the benefits of your spiritual gift(s)?**
- **How can your gift(s) be used in the ministries of your church?**

How can your gift(s) be used to demonstrate Christ's love to others?

Context Study: Worship at Delphi

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Point out that the Corinthian believers seemed to value the outwardly expressive spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues and prophesying as evidence of God's presence in their lives. Suggest that Greek worship practices such as those conducted for the Oracle at Delphi might have influenced these beliefs. Share this information about worship at Delphi:

- In the 14th century B.C., a goat herder discovered a chasm on Mount Parnassus from which mind-altering vapors, considered a gift from the divine, wafted upward.
- To worship the divine at Delphi, the people appointed a priestess. After one young virgin priestess escaped, all future priestesses were required to be at least 50 years old.
- As the cult grew, temples were built and sacrifices were offered. Priests were trained and rituals were established.
- Petitioners brought gifts to the Oracle, hoping for a favorable prophecy for their situations.

- When answering a petitioner, the Oracle spoke in incoherent babblings, which the priests then interpreted.

Ask: **Why would Paul emphasize the importance of seeing all spiritual gifts as equally important to God and the mission of the Church?**

Closer Look: The Gift of Tongues

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Remind learners that on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–8), the Holy Spirit enabled believers to share the Gospel in languages that they had never learned to speak so that people from all nations in Jerusalem for the Feast could understand the gospel. Explain that the Greek word for “tongues” is *glossa*, the same word used in today’s passage. Share this information:

- The term denotes a language or dialect.
- The gift of tongues gives a person the supernatural ability to speak a language that he or she has never learned or spoken before.
- The Spirit gives the believer this ability instantly, but usually temporarily, to convey God’s message to others.
- Without someone to interpret or translate, the believer might be seen as babbling.

Ask: **What does the Bible reveal about the proper use of tongues? How did the early Church benefit from this gift? How could the Church benefit from this gift today?**

Comparative Study: More Gifts

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Provide a dry erase board and dry erase marker.

Briefly review the spiritual gifts from 1 Corinthians 12:11–12 and list them on the dry erase board. Then explain that this listing is complemented by another listing of spiritual gifts in Romans 12:6–8. Instruct learners to add to the list any new gifts mentioned as this passage is read aloud. (*Answers: serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy*) Ask:

How does this combined listing of spiritual gifts help us to understand how God equips us to serve Him? (*Possible answers: Wisdom and knowledge of Scripture equips one to teach. Faith gives one the courage to prophesy or apply Scripture to life.*) **Why is each of these gifts necessary for the Church to fulfill its purpose of leading people to Christ?**

Discoverers: My Gift Guide

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the “My Gift Guide” PDF. Print a copy for each learner.

Remind learners that every believer has been given one or more spiritual gifts. Ask: **What are some ways that we can discover the gifts given to us?** Emphasize the importance of prayer in helping us to ask God to reveal our gifts, to serve in various ministries to discover our gifts, and to seek evidence of specific gifts in our lives. Explain that one way to explore our gifts is by examining how God works through us. Distribute copies of the “My Gift Guide” PDF to learners at this time. Point out that each gift mentioned in today’s passage is briefly explained. Instruct learners to determine how frequently God demonstrates each gift in their lives. Then ask: **Which gifts have been given to members of our class? How can each of us use our gifts in the ministries of our church?**

Servants: Good, Better, Best

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the “Good, Better, Best” PDF. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.

Ask: **As believers discover and use their spiritual gifts, how can their gifts be misused?** (*Answers: used for own glory, disparage other gifts, fail to work together, say yes to every ministry opportunity, work repeatedly outside area of giftedness, burnout*) Emphasize that we may sometimes be asked to serve God outside our area of spiritual gifts, but suggest that our continuing ministry should be in areas where our gifts can be used most effectively.

Distribute pens and copies of the “Good, Better, Best” PDF to learners at this time. Instruct learners to list all the ways that they have used their gifts to serve in various ministries of their church. Suggest that areas of ministry be considered based on the “good, better, best” scale of evaluation. Ask: **As you consider current and future ministry opportunities:**

- **Which ones are good opportunities?**
- **Which ones offer a better match for your gifts?**
- **Which ones represent God’s best place of service for you right now?**



Prompt learners to consider their spiritual gifts in conjunction with their other training, talents, life experiences, and passion for service as they attempt to find God's best place for them to concentrate their service to Him.

Ask: **What happens to our effectiveness in ministry when we say "yes" to every good opportunity instead of focusing the majority of our efforts on God's best place for us? What is the connection between God's "best" place and what Wilkes calls our "sweet spot" of ministry?** Encourage learners to prayerfully discover God's "best" calling for them during this season of their lives.

Shepherds: Unwrapping Their Gifts

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Provide a dry erase board and dry erase marker.

Call on volunteers to share how they discovered and learned to use their spiritual gifts. Then ask: **How did other believers help you through this discovery process? What have you learned that can help you guide others to discover and use their gifts?** Allow learners to respond. Then list the following two groups as column headings on the dry erase board:

- people not serving in church ministries
- people who seem unhappy or mismatched in their present place of service

Invite learners to suggest ways to help people in these two groups discover their gifts and place of service. List responses on the board under the appropriate heading. Encourage learners to use the back of their worksheets to list people they know who fall into these categories. Suggest that they consider which options from the discussion they could use to help those persons find their "sweet spot" of ministry within your church and within God's Kingdom.

Prayer Option: Praying for Gifts

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Provide strips of paper, pens, a basket, and an Ekklesia journal.

Share the Gene Wilkes' advice for discovering and using spiritual gifts from page 227 of the *Ekklesia* journal: "Spend time in prayer . . . study the biblical teaching on gifts . . . seek help to identify your gifts . . . and, finally, serve. As you serve in the Body of Christ you will discover how you best function as a member of that Body. There you will find your joy and "sweet spot" of ministry with God's people."

Invite learners to pray for God to reveal their "sweet spot" of ministry. Distribute strips of paper and pens to learners. Encourage learners to write on their strip of paper a sentence-long prayer voicing their desire to understand and/or use their spiritual gifts for God's purposes. Collect prayer strips in the basket. Read each sentence-long prayer aloud—do not identify the writer—and allow learners to echo silently those prayers that apply to their lives at this time. Close by asking God to bless learners as they use their gifts to serve Him.

Biblical Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:4–11

Biblical Truth: The Holy Spirit gives believers spiritual gifts to work in unity so that God can accomplish His purposes through them.

Prayer Suggestions

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for those in your group.

- Pray that learners will understand that every spiritual gift enables believers to serve God according to His plan for their lives.
- Pray that learners will appreciate God’s design for giving His followers a variety of spiritual gifts so that they can work together to accomplish His purposes.
- Pray that God will reveal to each learner the gift(s) that He has given and the ways He wants him or her to use those gifts to serve Him.

COMPLETE SUPPLY LIST

Connect . . .

- Fun: Building a Body**—two or more Mr. Potato Head games
- Discussion: Three Kinds of Giving**—dry erase board, dry erase marker
- Life and Times: A Faith That Gives Back**—No supplies needed
- Visual: Giving Back the Gift**—monitor, DVD player, *August Rush* (PG) DVD
- Relational: To Give or To Receive**—dry erase board, dry erase marker

Explore . . .

- Interactive Core Study: Gifted to Serve**—copy of the Learner Worksheet, pens, dry erase board, dry erase marker, The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer Essential Truth poster
- Master Teacher Core Study: Gifted to Serve**—copy of the Master Teacher Outline, copies of the Learner Worksheet, pens, The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer Essential Truth poster
- Context Study: Worship at Delphi**—No supplies needed
- Closer Look: The Gift of Tongues**—No supplies needed
- Comparative Study: More Gifts**—dry erase board, dry erase marker

Transform . . .

- Discoverers: My Gift Guide**—copies of the “My Gift Guide” PDF, pens
- Owners: Gift Match**—dry erase board, dry erase markers
- Servants: Good, Better, Best**—copies of the “Good, Better, Best” PDF, pens
- Shepherds: Unwrapping Their Gifts**—dry erase board, dry erase marker
- Prayer Option: Prayers for Gifts**—strips of paper, pens, basket, *Ekklesia* journal

EKKLESIA lesson 36

BUILDING UP THE BODY: The Role of Spiritual Gifts

::BIBLICAL PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 12:4–11

::MEMORY VERSE: 1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

::TABLE TALK QUESTION: What spiritual gift do I have?

GIFTED TO SERVE

1. Our _____ enable us to serve Christ and strengthen the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 12:4–6).

2. Every spiritual gift is _____ for building and strengthening the Church (1 Cor. 12:7–10).

3. Believers are called to _____ to accomplish God’s purposes (1 Cor. 12:11–12).

Small Group Discussion Questions

- How does this passage connect spiritual gifts to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit?
- Which spiritual gift(s) has the Spirit given to you?
- Who should receive the benefits of your spiritual gift(s)?
- How can your gift(s) be used in the ministries of your church?
- How can your gift(s) be used to demonstrate Christ’s love to others?

Free Thought

“When we exercise the gifts which Christ has given us, we are really saying to our fellow Christians and others: ‘See how much the Lord Jesus Christ loves you and cares for you; He has sent me to serve you in this way; He is using my hands and feet, my lips and ears, to show His love.’ It is a tragic mistake if we think that the message is: ‘See what a superb Christian I am; see the wonderful gifts I have.’ . . . Gifts are for service, not self-advancement.”—Sinclair B. Ferguson

Master Teacher Outline

GIFTED TO SERVE

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and the Biblical Commentary to prepare to share the truths of this passage with learners. Encourage learners to take notes on their copies of the Learner Worksheet as you teach. The underlined words in the Master Teacher Outline correspond to the blanks on the worksheet.

Introduction: Athletic teams illustrate that every player is important to the team. While the offensive linemen on a football team protect the quarterback, the receiver is equally important because if he drops the ball, the whole team suffers. Likewise, the kicker, who plays only a few times in each game, can botch a kickoff or kick the winning field goal. Every believer is an important player on God’s team. God gives each person the gifts that he or she needs to fulfill a vital role on the winning team.

1. Our spiritual gifts enable us to serve Christ and strengthen the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 12:4–6).

- Paul emphasized that all believers receive gifts from the Spirit to equip them for ministry (v. 4).
- By using their gifts, all believers serve Christ (v. 5).
- Believers can trust God to produce results for His Kingdom as they use their gifts in ministry (v. 6).

Illustration: Through careful study, parents discover that each child has specific talents and interests. As parents raise their children, they will provide resources for each child to help that child reach his or her full potential. Because God has designed each believer to fill a vital role in His Kingdom, He provides the spiritual gifts that he or she will need to complete those tasks.

2. Every spiritual gift is valuable for building and strengthening the Church (1 Cor. 12:7–10).

- The Spirit distributes gifts so that all believers can work together for the common good (v. 7).
- Paul provided a partial listing of gifts to show some of the ways that believers can minister to both believers and unbelievers (vv. 8–10).

Illustration: John McArthur emphasized how believers should use their spiritual gifts: “Our purpose should be to discover the gifts He has given us and to use those gifts faithfully and joyfully in His service, without either envying or disparaging the gifts we do not have.”

3. Believers are called to work together to accomplish God’s purposes (1 Cor. 12:11–12).

- The Spirit gives each believer the gifts that he or she needs to become a vital part of the Body of Christ (vv. 11–12)
- Because The Holy Spirit is God and Empowerer, all believers are equipped with the necessary spiritual gifts to fulfill God’s purposes for their lives as they serve alongside other believers.

Illustration: On page 224 of the *Ekklesia* journal, Gene Wilkes explains: “Spiritual gifts are not for the spiritually elite or the most spiritually mature group in the church. The Bible teaches that God has given each Christ-follower an expression of the Holy Spirit. . . . They are for the common good of the church, not to build up our spiritual pride.”

Conclusion: God has given every believer specific gifts to equip him or her for ministry. As members of God’s winning team, believers should work together to use their gifts to accomplish God’s mission.

GOOD, BETTER, BEST lesson 36.....

How could these spiritual gifts be used in your church?

WISDOM

KNOWLEDGE

FAITH

HEALING

MIRACULOUS POWERS

PROPHECY

DISTINGUISHING SPIRITS

SPEAKING INTONGUES

INTERPRETING TONGUES