

# Understanding and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts

## Foreword

This workbook was created as an outgrowth of discussion in the Evangelism Committee at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church on how best to acquaint members of the church with their spiritual gifts. There are a number of gift assessment inventories available to help people discover their spiritual gifts, but it was difficult to find material that would assist in understanding and developing the gift once it was revealed. There was a desire to pull together information from various sources and create a document that would be of value to people who wished to more fully comprehend what is implicit in giftedness and how they might use their gifts. It was also recognized that members of the congregation would benefit from knowledge of all gifts to gain an appreciation for the way God builds up the Body of Christ to equip it for work in the world.

The end product attempts to assist the reader to fully grasp the meaning of the gift, how it might be known, where it may be exercised, and ways in which it can be developed. There is also some “for reflection” narrative provided to aid the gift-bearer in the contemplation process.

Understanding that spiritual giftedness is as much a part of a person’s identity as personality or stature, we offer material that will aid the reader in a personal spiritual growth experience. Simply having the gift is wondrous indeed, but acceptance and use of the gift is a matter of personal choice. However, when the gift is embraced and employed in the fullness of all its spiritual dimensions, some rather wonderful things will happen.

We hope the reader will find this information enlightening and personally satisfying. The church benefits from having members that know and exercise their spiritual gifts to build up the church, and that will surely be a welcome by-product of this effort. However, our real intent is to help the members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church make further progress in their personal spiritual pilgrimages.

Evangelism Committee  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
June, 1998

Developing and Using Your Spiritual Gift

The Gift of Administration

The Gift of Apostle

The Gift of Craftsmanship/Artistry

The Gift of Discernment

The Gift of Evangelism

The Gift of Exhortation

The Gift of Faith

The Gift of Giving

The Gift of Hospitality

The Gift of Intercession  
The Gift of Knowledge  
The Gift of Leadership  
The Gift of Mercy  
The Gift of Music/Vocal  
The Gift of Music/Instrumental  
The Gift of Pastor  
The Gift of Service  
The Gift of Teaching  
The Gift of Wisdom  
The Gift of Writing  
Other Spiritual Gifts

## **Developing and Using Your Spiritual Gift - [ TOP ]**

1.

A spiritual gift is a significant ability given to each believer by the Holy Spirit, who thus equips and moves members of the church to serve in special ways for Christ and his kingdom. This “significant ability” exceeds the normal ability level of others in the church - it has been referred to as a “supernatural ability” vs. the natural talents we and others may have in many different areas. God bestows natural talents to all people, and he also bestows spiritual gifts to believers. Both talents and gifts can be used for the glory of God, but spiritual gifts are somewhat unique by their powerful nature and in their dedication to the service of the Lord. They are used for ministry to others in the church (to help members of the body of Christ) and for building up of the church (to extend the church’s witness and ministry into the world).

2.

Spiritual gifts should be discovered, developed, and used freely and willingly. We were given these gifts by God’s grace, and our use of them should be just as gracious. The object is not to use the gifts to preserve Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, but to further the life of Jesus Christ in this place. Members of the congregation are encouraged to discover, develop, and use their gifts and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to find their ministry and help the church be more intentional in its ministry. Gifts are given to carry out the work of Jesus in the world, they can help us become clearer channels of God’s love, and they can help us find surer steps in our pilgrimage as followers of Christ.

3.

There are many different gifts identified in scripture. Most of the commonly known spiritual gifts that are mentioned in the Bible are included in the Spiritual Gifts Inventory, but there are several that were not included because of the difficulty of inventory assessment for them and/or controversy regarding their employment. Some of the spiritual gifts that were not included are: healing, prophecy, miracles, celibacy, exorcism, martyrdom, and speaking in and interpreting tongues. Anyone desiring to know more about any of those gifts is invited to seek spiritual

direction and guidance from the pastor.

Discovery of a spiritual gift is a wonderful beginning upon which to build. However, inventory assessment results may seem improbable or even inconclusive to you - varying interpretations of questions may lead to different responses. Therefore it is important to test any findings you have been given through further study, prayer, evaluation and confirmation. If you wish, you may want to try other more extensive inventories - one free inventory source on the Internet which provides an immediate analysis is located at: [www.theseeker.org/gifts/chap9.htm](http://www.theseeker.org/gifts/chap9.htm). Follow these eight steps to fully explore each gift that you think you may have:

(1) **Learn about the gift:** Study scriptural passages on gifts in general as well as specific gifts you feel you may have been given. Gain a full understanding about your gift by reviewing the kinds of things that characterize persons who have this gift and the ways the gift can be employed.

(2) **Accept the gift:** Believe that you are gifted (see 1 Pet. 4:10), and give thanks to God for your gift.

(3) **Pray for guidance:** Prayer is essential if you wish to become serious about discovering and using your gift to fulfill God's purposes. This will open passageways for Godly insights and strengthen your faith for use of the gift.

(4) **Offer yourself to God:** Make a commitment to do whatever God asks of you, and trust in him to give you what you need for the task. Be willing to use your gift for God.

(5) **Examine yourself:** Look at how God has already been at work in your life. Review past accomplishments and present interests. What excites you? What needs catch your eye?

(6) **Seek confirmation:** Do other Christians who know you recognize particular giftedness within you? Ask for the counsel of friends and family and especially from people who seem to have the same gift. Do they see this gift in you?

(7) **Try out your gift:** Test the waters as soon as you can using all the above steps as support, and volunteer in a way that you can use your gift. Always keep in mind that you are using your gift to help other Christians, to bring others to Christ, and to glorify God.

(8) **Look for results:** If you have accurately identified the spiritual gift, use of it will produce results. You should be able to discern that your initial efforts have been at least modestly fruitful. Continue working to develop your gift, and the blessings will become apparent to all. If evaluation reveals that your service has been ineffective, then seek anew to find your gift(s).

Even though your gift sets you up in a very real way for empowered use of it in ministry, nothing much will happen unless it is used. Through use you are able to develop the gift to a level of effectiveness. Once you know what your gift is, you should be prepared to take advantage of formal learning and training opportunities that may strengthen you for ministry. Study of biblical persons, saints, or more current witnesses who seemed to have a similar gift can be helpful. Expand your knowledge at every opportunity by reading books and articles related to your gift or listen to audio tapes and videos by scholars in the field. Seek out and speak with other Christians who have the same gift, and find out what they have done with it. If there are conferences or workshops that would help you develop your gift, try to attend.

Continually pray for guidance and strength in the use of your gift and ask God to open your eyes to the needs of others that your gift might address. Prioritize around your gift so that you can focus your

efforts on ministry for which you are gifted and minimize involvement in areas for which you may not be equipped. The support of a small Christian group can be very helpful as an instrument for sharing - look for avenues for this kind of sharing in the family, church committees, or Bible study or fellowship groups. Love is evident in all true spirituality, and it must be present for effective use of spiritual gifts. Expect to sacrifice personally in the service of the Lord, and do not be afraid. Having and using a spiritual gift in no way shields you from adversity, but it does give you assurance of God's favor.

Support other members in the church in the use of their gifts by confirming with them that you see good fruit from their efforts. The feedback you give will help them in their pilgrimage to discover and develop their gifts, and it will contribute to an overall communal spirit of congregational ministry, which is important in the building up of the church.

Resources used in the development of this document and individual spiritual gift information sheets:

*Identifying and Deploying Your Spiritual Gifts*, by Dr. Lindsey Garmon

*Discover Your Gifts*, Church Development Resources

*The Spiritual Gifts*, by Rich Schoenert

*Understanding Spiritual Gifts*, Rev. Dale A. Robbins, M. Div.

*Spiritual Gifts*, by Neal R. Boese

[ **TOP** ]

# The Gift of Administration (1)

**A gifted story:** The church school was in need of a new director, but it seemed as if everyone who knew anything about education had already been enlisted to teach. A whole lot of telephone calls had been made to try and find a good volunteer for the job, but it seemed that no one would come forth and give it a try. Then the pastor suggested that they try to find someone with the gift of administration, rather than looking for someone with the gift of teaching. Someone remembered that Sue was a person who was good at visualizing and implementing plans. Sue was asked, and she accepted immediately and gratefully-- this was something she felt she could do and do well.

## **Biblical references:**

1 Cor. 12:28 - *In the church God has put all in place: in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, and in the third place teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal or to help others or to direct them or to speak in strange tongues.*

Acts 14:23 - *In each church they appointed elders, and with prayers and fasting they commended them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.*

## **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Administration: the special ability that God gives for understanding clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the Body of Christ and the ability to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of these goals. The ability to organize and guide human activities in such a way that Christ's program is carried out.

As a spiritual gift, administration has to do with guiding the affairs of the church and kingdom. The person with this gift has management ability. The administrator accepts the goals set by others and devises and executes plans to accomplish these goals. A sense for organization is evident. Often a person with this gift is characterized as able to direct and motivate people and coordinate their activities. Often, but not always, people with the gift of administration also have the gift of leadership.

A person with this gift will take an organized approach to most undertakings, and this attribute can be valuable in planning, coordinating, directing, supervising, or in committee work. Some would refer to this type of individual as a "how to" person. One might expect a person with this gift to enjoy preparing agendas and reports to help a committee become more productive. Expect that careful attention will be paid to even small details in planning an activity. Someone with the gift of administration is characterized as one who takes satisfaction in a well-run organization.

### **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Are you able to organize ideas, tasks, people, and time for Christian service?
2. Are you able to make effective plans to accomplish goals?
3. Do you have a sense for delegating important tasks to the right people at the right time?
4. If a group you are in lacks organization, do you have a desire to step in to help it to run more effectively?
5. Do you enjoy bearing responsibility for the success of a particular task within the church?
6. Are you able to analyze facts in order to plan for successful completion of a project.

### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1.  
Being an effective administrator requires attention to the basic quality at the core of this gift - that of directing. The Greek word for “administration” is kubernesisis and it means “piloting or steering.” A good pilot is ever vigilant to steer his ship away from harm and catastrophe of Titanic proportions. Developing the means by which to watch over church affairs in areas of involvement is a matter of attention to detail, record-keeping, and keeping sight of chosen goals. Learn how to do these things more effectively.
2.  
It is the Lord who directs his church, and thus we want to follow his plan, not ours. To avoid the danger of drifting in the wrong direction, learn to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and on prayer rather than your own devices. Learn to pray before acting.
3.  
People are more important than projects. They need love and support; they do not want to feel used. Learn how to be sensitive to the needs of all those with whom you are working, and put people first.
4.  
Avoid the danger of “over managing” or “taking over” in such a way to exclude the contributions, ideas, and concerns of others. Remember that the Holy Spirit works through us in community - we need each other to get the whole picture that God has in mind for us. Learn to listen for the “still, small voice of God” by allowing periods of silence so that those with less aggressive natures can make their contributions comfortably.
5.  
Read and meditate on Exodus 18: 13-27 to learn how Jethro understood the use of the gift of administration. Seek out other readings about good administrators to learn how they proceeded, methods they used, and initiatives they took to help build up the enterprise. Look for new approaches that will help make things work better, always striving for improvement.

## **General ways to use the gift of administration:**

- Personally: organize family devotions, help a friend develop a family budget, organize a Bible study at work
- Within the church: superintend the Sunday school, direct a program, or chair a committee (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts).
- Within the wider community: organize fund-raising campaign, serve on board of home for the aged, organize a rally

## **For reflection:**

The gift of administration is really needed in the Christian community. St. Paul spoke many times about the church as a body with many essential parts, each being necessary for the body to function wholly. People with the gift of administration may well hold the key to pulling all the various parts together in harmony. Being able to absorb detail, organize and delegate are traits of this gift, and these qualities, when employed effectively, can be helpful in allowing the Holy Spirit's work in one committee to compliment, rather than conflict with, the work of another. The instincts for what comes first and what follows, who can plug in where, and how to arrange things so that everything fits into the schedule or that everything gets done are sorely needed in a busy church environment. This is a wonderful spiritual gift to have.

With this gift you can help the church get in order and stay in order. That orderliness surely pleases God for he ordered the whole world. The piece of God's image that he placed in you, which we here refer to as the gift of administration, is so like him. Marvel at the awesome detail God has attended to in creation - you like detail too, so you have a special propensity to feel his pleasure when attending to detail in carrying out your ministry. Your work in the church can help bring focus to what we undertake. You can assist us in seeing the way to get where we know we need to go. You have the gift that can help us manage our resources and be better stewards of our time and talent. We praise God for having given you this spiritual gift. May you be blessed as you use it for his glory and the building of his church.

[ [TOP](#) ]

---

## The Gift of Apostle (2)

**A gifted story:** Mary's circle of friends had been a great source of enjoyment until they began experimenting with drugs. She knew that she did not want to become involved with drugs, but her friends told her she had to take one of the substances or no longer be a part of the group. Mary refused, and instead she stood up and proclaimed her faith in front of her friends. She lost many of her friends and went through a very lonely period after that, but in her heart she felt sorry for her friends and knew her intent was to try and help them. Mary possesses the gift of apostle-- she can see what others cannot see and she is able to take a stand in the midst of an adverse situation.

### **Biblical references:**

1 Cor. 12:28 - *In the church God has put all in place: **in the first place apostles**, in the second place prophets, and in the third place teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal or to help others or to direct them or to speak in strange tongues.*

Romans 1:14- 16 - *For I have an obligation to all peoples, to the civilized and to the savage, to the educated and to the ignorant. So then, I am eager to preach the Good News to you who live in Rome.*

See also Acts 20:17-21 - (Paul's description of how he conducted himself in Ephesus and his plans to be obedient to God and go to Jerusalem).

Acts 14: 21-23 - (The activities of Paul and Barnabas in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch, and Pisidia).

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Apostle: the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ which enables them to assume and exercise helpful leadership over a number of churches in spiritual matters which is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches. It is also regarded as a gift that gives the believer the courage and the urgency to express faith in settings where the Gospel is rarely heard. Apostles have a special calling - they are selected by Christ and sent out with a unique commission and divine credentials to act and speak authoritatively on his behalf. These people are called to lead, inspire and develop the Churches of God by the proclamation and the teaching of true doctrine.

Although some believe that this gift was given only to the original 12 men who had been with the Lord from the time of John's baptism until his ascension, there is wide acceptance that Paul too was considered an "apostle." It is interesting to note that Paul

refers to himself as an apostle that was “abnormally born” (1 Cor. 15:7-8). However he may have felt about the receipt of this spiritual gift, he clearly accepted it, and his ministry was characterized as one of church building. In many ways Paul was the first practical theologian, the one who began to lay down rules for church members to follow. The fact that God chose Paul for this task is all the evidence we need that the gift of apostleship did not die with the original 12 apostles.

Many others were called “apostles” in the New testament: James, the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19); Barnabas (Acts 14:4,14); Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25); Silas and Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1, 2:6); Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7). A number of other references are made to the “other brothers” who are clearly acting as apostles in various passages in both letters to the Corinthians.

A person given the gift of apostle will feel an urgency to be a builder of churches for Christ and will most likely be drawn to the ordained ministry, but the building of churches is not the exclusive domain of ordained clergy. Anyone exercising this gift will be involved in starting and strengthening churches or in reaching out to those who may have little other access to the Gospel.

#### **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Do you have a sense that Christ has called you to build up his church?
2. Is there within you an urgency to take the Gospel to settings where it is rarely heard?
3. Are you compelled to find new ways of communicating God’s love to people that have not been reached by traditional means?
4. Do you feel that God is sending you out on a mission to reach a people in need of hearing the Gospel?

#### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. The roots of the word “apostle” reveal the full meaning of this gift: “stello” means “to send” and “apo” means “off from;” thus an apostle is sent off someplace to speak for Christ. A good place to begin understanding how this gift might be applied in your life might be to contemplate just where God might be urging you to go - in the language of the Shepherd, what sheep to feed. Prayer will be the chief means for this enlightenment.
- 2.

Any call into the ordained ministry will need to be met with consideration for theological training in a seminary or in a special instructional program (such as a lay ministry course or AIM curriculum).

3.

Read and study about the structure of the church and learn about the dynamics within congregations to better understand what is involved in building and growing a healthy body of Christ.

4.

Look for ways to improve your ability to express your faith. You will need to tell both the Gospel story as it is found in scripture and your own Gospel story, witnessing to Christ in your own life. Listen to audio and video accounts by other Gospel storytellers, not in an effort to copy their style, but to sense their passion and build courage watching their joy in delivering the message. Your own story, in your own style, delivered from the heart will become God's vehicle from within to reach those he wants to touch.

5.

Seek out and speak with others with the gift of apostleship, hear their sensitivities as to where the Gospel needs to be taken, and then learn more about the needs that surface so that you will be better prepared to address them.

### **General ways to use the gift of apostleship:**

- Within the church: deliver Temple Talks, testimonials, and sermons (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: take the Gospel message to those who cannot come to church - the sick, the lonely and those in prison

### **For reflection:**

The gift of apostleship is really about being creative in taking the Gospel message where it would not be otherwise be heard. No one did this better than the Apostle Paul, and he is the one to look at to best understand how this gift should be employed. Paul found ways to reach everybody; highly educated, he spoke to people in their own tongue - he knew the best way to reach a person is at their own level. He also trusted greatly in the Lord in all he did, and he recognized his own weakness but was not afraid of it, because the message he was giving out was God's message, and he knew God would work through him effectively because of his willing heart.

Indeed, one of the great ironies is that God chose Paul to build up his church. Paul, who had persecuted so many Christians, seemed an unlikely candidate for such an important

task. But God loves to rise up the weak to his purposes. Christ chose basically illiterate fisherman to spread the good news, even a despised tax collector. These early apostles were not superhuman people, but ordinary people whom God chose to give supernatural gifts to equip them for his purposes. But what an honor to be thus chosen for such a remarkable and world-changing purpose. Today's Christians with the gift of apostleship have a similar honor of working to change the world for Christ. Clearly it is a job that needs to be done.

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Craftsmanship/Artistry (3)

**A gifted story:** Bill was asked to whip up some sort of container to hold nametags for members to wear on Sunday morning. It had to be designed so that everybody could find their tag easily-- perhaps a big box with a lot of compartments would do the trick. Not in Bill's mind! You see, Bill has the gift of craftsmanship. He immediately began to envision a piece of sculpted furniture that would be both beautiful and functional. When he produced the final product a few weeks later, everyone was stunned-- they had never imagined such a magnificent piece. Of course they hadn't, because they didn't have Bill's gift!

### **Biblical references:**

Exodus 31:1-11 - *The Lord said to Moses, "I have chosen Bezalel, ...and I have filled him with my power. I have given him understanding, skill, and ability for every kind of artistic work - for planning skillful designs and working them in gold, silver, and bronze; for cutting jewels to be set; for carving wood; and for every other kind of artistic work...."*

Psalm 149:3a - *Praise his name with dancing...*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Craftsmanship and artistry: the special ability to forward God's kingdom through creative skills such as carpentry, drama, graphic arts, painting and sculpting. This gift provides the believer with the skill of creating artistic expressions that produce a spiritual response of strength and inspiration.

Although not specifically listed as a gift in the New Testament in the long list that Paul provides, clearly God has gifted individuals with remarkable craftsmanship and artistic skills from the earliest of recorded time. Old testament references give vivid accounts of God's distribution of giftedness in these areas - whether for the building of temples or for use to glorify God in praise.

There are really two aspects of this giftedness: inspiration and skill. A person with this gift will probably have a "creative bent" and enjoy innovating, designing, and making new things - this will seem quite natural. But also the gift may manifest itself in fine skilled craftsmanship that one might find in such areas as embroidery, furniture making, or cabinetry. When these abilities and skills are directed toward forwarding God's cause, they fulfill their purpose as a spiritual gift.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

Do you have significant artistic ability that you would like to put into service for the Lord?

2.

Can you see how your artistic or craftsmanship skills could be used to benefit the body of Christ?

3.

Are you aware that people have been blessed through your creative or artistic ability?

4.

Are you characterized as a creative or artistic person?

5.

Can you envision some specific projects that you could undertake to use this gift for the kingdom of God?

6.

What specific artistic or craftsmanship abilities has God given you?

### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1.

Artistic giftedness usually needs to be trained, tamed and channeled. Thus you will want to find appropriate means to do these things to bring the ability to full fruition. Classes of instruction to help bring out the artistry from within should be considered.

2.

Creativity for God requires listening to him who gave you the gift. Inspiration from God is the best inspiration of all, especially when you are engaged in bringing him glory. Deepen your spirituality through prayer, and count on God to set your imagination free.

3.

Meditate on how God might use the gift through you to affect the lives of other people and to build up his church. Be as creative in looking for ways to serve as you will be in carrying out your artistry once you have set upon it. Pray unceasingly for God's loving guidance as you exercise your skill.

4.

Read Exodus 31: 1 – 11 and 35: 30 – 36 to better understand the empowerment that God gives with his gifts in order to fulfill his purposes. Seek out the writings of other Christian artists to learn how they have developed channels of inspiration from their Maker. Keep a journal of all ideas that come to you in prayer.

### **General ways to use the gift of craftsmanship and artistry:**

•

On an informal level: offer assistance where creativity is needed, and show others how natural it is to use a creative perspective in most matters.

- Within the church: design liturgical banners, assist with altar arrangements, aid in the beautification of the church and grounds; help everyone understand the importance of beauty and art in the glorification of God (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts).
- Within the wider community: do artistic work as a volunteer; organize a religious art festival or religious craft fair for the community.

### **For reflection:**

As the Alpha and the Omega, God is the great Creator. This is what he has done and continues to do in awesome ways throughout the ages. God obviously loves to create. We know that God made us in his own image, and thus we too like to create. For some, however, he has given such a large measure of creative ability that we recognize it as supernatural - a spiritual gift of craftsmanship or artistry. How wonderful to have this gift because it is such a clear reflection of God the Creator!

Creativity is an amazing phenomenon - often the creator does not know where he is going in the act of creation. There is a germ of an idea, then a thought to go here or there, and then a certain knowledge for a moment that a particular touch is needed, a little detail attended to, and then perhaps a great flourish in the right place. It could be art, design, dance, most anything - the creative process is the same. Inspiration begins the project, and inspiration moves it along. Sometimes the creator loves the final product so much that it must be kept.

Performing creatively for God must be even more of an adventure. When a supernatural gift is employed, the inspiration may come from God. But in the end the artist dare not keep the final product because there is a certainty that the work really belongs to God. It is for his glory; it is for his purpose to further his kingdom, and so it must be released for the inspiration it will give to others. If this was true for great artists like Michelangelo, Raphael, and El Greco, it must still be true today for God's banner-makers, quilt-makers, and flower-arrangers in the Church as well as for those engaged in the creation of religious works of art.

Unlike some of the other spiritual gifts, this is a gift which produces fruit that can be readily and immediately seen. The results are tangible. It is also a gift that focuses largely on praise for the Lord, and the act of praising is always full of joy. You are blessed to have the gift of artistry or craftsmanship. Rejoice!



## The Gift of Discernment (4)

**A gifted story:** Karen seems always to ask the most probing questions during Bible study. She looks very deeply into a passage and almost always discovers a new insight. There is always a clear desire to get at the truth or to determine what goodness can be discerned from a passage. We have come to expect special insights from her. If we are at a crossroads as to what course of action to take in the church, her input will be sought. Many in the congregation ask for her advice in their attempt to learn of God's will in particular personal circumstances. Karen has a thirst to discern God's will at all times-- she has the gift of discernment.

### **Biblical references:**

Romans 9:1 - *I am speaking the truth; I belong to Christ and I do not lie. My conscience, ruled by the Holy Spirit, also assures me that I am not lying....*

1 Cor. 2:10-13,15 - *...it was to us that God made known his secret by means of his Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the hidden depths of God's purposes. It is only a person's own spirit within him that knows all about him; in the same way, only God's Spirit knows all about God. We have not received this world's spirit; instead, we have received the Spirit sent by God, so that we may know all that God has given us. So then, we do not speak in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, as we explain spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit.... Whoever has the Spirit, however, is able to judge the value of everything, but no one is able to judge him.*

1 Cor. 12:10 - *The Spirit gives one person the power to work miracles; to another, the gift of speaking God's message; and to yet another, the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not. ....*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Discernment: the special ability that God gives which enables a person to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human, or Satanic. This gift can motivate a believer to seek God's will and purpose and apply that understanding to individual and congregational situations. It provides the ability to distinguish between truth and error, to know when a person or act is of God.

Sometimes the gift of discernment is referred to as "discerning of spirits." That phraseology is certainly most descriptive of situations when the behavior or act could be of evil origin but disguised in such a way that many thought it was good. Jesus warned us to beware of false teachers and prophets, and the gift of discernment plays a critical role in helping the church stay the course of true doctrine in the face of error and untruth. Church members with the gift of discernment are responsible for keeping false teachers and teachings from influencing and possibly perverting the church.

The power of discerning good from evil is present in all mature Christians by virtue of guidance from the Holy Spirit. All Christians should seek to discern truth, and the ability to do so is there when conscience guides the mind. The supernatural ability referred to in this spiritual gift is simply a heightened and perhaps more critical sense of the same quality. With it comes a boldness to speak out, a willingness to question apparent authority, and a quality of continual evaluation that puts the believer on guard at all times. It is hard for Satan to sneak up on a person with this gift.

Anyone who has this gift has to walk a fine line. They are compelled to expose heresy, false doctrine, and untruths, but they must do so tactfully or lose credibility as an “overzealous heresy headhunter” or simply a highly judgmental person. Care must be exercised to expose untruths with clarity and kindness.

### **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Have others in the church noted that you are able to see through phoniness or manipulative behavior before it is evident to other people?
2. Has your sense that a person’s teaching was from God, Satan or of human origin later been confirmed as correct?
3. Can you judge between the inadequate and the acceptable, or between evil and good?
4. Do you see a serious danger when false teachings and false practices creep into the church?
5. Are you usually aware of people who pretend or who wear masks?

### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Read works that help identify traits of evil and untruth. A classic is C.S. Lewis’ Screwtape Letters, which exposes many of the cunning methods Satan employs to wend himself into our lives. Study the life of Martin Luther to understand how he came to know he should speak out against the abuses of the church.
2. Become a scholar in what scripture has to say about discerning good from evil. Nelson’s Complete Concordance lists over 600 references to evil - it wouldn’t hurt to read all of them in an effort to hone your sense of awareness and become more alert to evil in the world.
3. Learn about “watchdog” organizations - those that are dedicated to righting supposed wrongs. Become aware of their tactics as examples for potential use when you need to expose error. In doing so you may uncover certain groups that you will want to support and encourage.
4. Read and meditate on Bible passages dealing with discernment and false teachings: Eph. 6:12;

2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1-3; 1 John 4:6; Matthew 16: 21-23; Acts 5:1-11; Acts 8:20-23; Acts 13:6-12; Acts 16:16-18; Rev. 2:2; Rev. 2:14-15,20.

### **General ways to use the gift of discernment:**

- Personally: warn friends and family about false teachings and the dangers of some TV programs. Detect wrong motives of deceitful persons, and help others to be aware of con artists and fraud.
- Within the church: expose error, evaluate study materials, join a committee; arm others through teaching (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts).
- Within the wider community: discern and encounter evil in societal structures; counsel those who are in error or who have failed to recognize the evil of their actions.

### **For reflection:**

Anyone with the gift of discernment will know error and evil when confronted with it. To do something about it takes courage. You will become a “whistle-blower” against Satan, and, well, he’s probably not going to like that! Whistle-blowers are never very popular with the folks that did the wrong to begin with. There will be temptations to step back, perhaps to lay low and just “let sleeping dogs lie.” The trouble with that is that the dog is not sleeping, and unless evil is halted when it starts, it has a way of spreading. God knows that, and so he passed out this particular spiritual gift.

Discernment is a pivotal ability. It is a course-changer. Things are going right along, lickity split, (of course, in the wrong direction), and then comes the guy with the gift of discernment with a word of wisdom - “It doesn’t feel right. Something’s wrong here. It smells bad. It’s wrong because...” And the train stops dead in the track. There is a certain authority that comes with this gift that makes the bearer of the gift better able than most to stop the errant train. Then others can step in and re-evaluate, back up and go a better way. This should all be done in a spirit of love and community. And when it happens this way, everyone present will feel it - the warmth of the Holy Spirit. All of a sudden, everything feels right. It is a moment to pause and offer praise.

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Evangelism (5)

**A gifted story:** Dale doesn't like to give up on anyone. When he learns of a new visitor to the church, he wants to pay them a visit as soon as possible. He likes to just drop in on them and surprise them with a warm loaf of freshly baked bread. Then, with his foot in the door, he offers a warm and welcoming smile and a chance to learn more about the church. Dale's genuine concern for each person he visits comes through in a way that spells "LOVE." Often Dale returns for another visit or checks back by telephone just to keep the invitation open and renew the relationship. Dale's power of persistence is a natural outgrowth of his gift of evangelism.

### **Biblical references:**

Eph. 4:7,11 - *Each one of us has received a special gift in proportion to what Christ has given....It was he who "gave gifts to mankind"; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers.*

2 Tim. 4:5...you must keep control of yourself in all circumstances; endure suffering, do the work of a preacher of the Good News, and perform your whole duty as a servant of God.

Matt. 28:18-20 - *Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age."*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Evangelism: the special ability that God gives to believers to present the Gospel to unbelievers in a clear and meaningful way, which calls for a response. This gift enables one to present the story of Christ's death and saving resurrection with simplicity, clarity, and effectiveness. The individual possessing this gift not only understands the Gospel, but feels a deep burden for those entrapped in the darkness of sin.

There are several dimensions to this gift that become evident from reading scripture. Sometimes the gift is embodied in an individual referred to as an "evangelist" - Philip is called that, and he is clearly a man on a mission to baptize. John, the Evangelist, is another example - he is known as the Baptist. In other references, however, people are called to "do the work of an evangelist." Timothy falls into that category. In all cases the admonition is clear - effective evangelism brings people to Christ.

To evangelize is to bring the Good News of Christ's salvation to unbelievers. To the degree that many Christians claim to believe is more in the category of "lip service" rather than discipleship, the gift of evangelism is needed greatly in the church to enable members of the body to develop ministries for true discipleship.

## **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Do you like to talk about Jesus to those who do not know him?
2. Do you are able to share the Gospel in a way that makes it clear and meaningful?
3. Do you wish to relate to non-Christians so you can share your faith?
4. Are you are at ease in sharing how Christ has changed your life?
5. Do you get frustrated when others do not seem to share their faith with unbelievers as much as you do?
6. Have you been instrumental in leading others to believe in Christ as their Savior or in helping believers find their ministry?

## **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Because of the poor reputation of so-called “televangelists,” many people today equate evangelism with quackery, and that is very unfortunate. Seek out the writings of reputable evangelists of today (such as Billy Graham), and strive to learn how they respond to God’s call in the use of this gift.
2. Scripture gives some wonderful examples of evangelism, both on an individual level (see Acts 8:26-40, where Philip performs his ministry), and in larger groups (see Acts 2:14-42, where Peter exercised his gift with a crowd of thousands). Study these passages to fully understand how these disciples used their gift of evangelism.
3. To evangelize effectively one must be able to communicate the Gospel story in the vernacular - that is, in today’s language. Read and internalize the story of Christ’s life, rising from the dead, and saving grace, and discover ways to speak about it from the heart.
4. Attend some workshops on evangelism to learn techniques and discover tools that may help you in this ministry. Seek to learn methods of reaching out to the unchurched as well as programs that will help church members connect with personal ministries. Plan to be a catalyst for change where it is needed.
5. Since approaching people effectively is critical if you hope to convey your evangelizing message, look for ways that will improve your appeal. Appearance, humor, tolerance, kindness, patience - learn what attributes and virtues need strengthening within yourself to enhance your acceptance by others. Remember how Paul sought to fit in with all people to gain

acceptance.

### **General ways to use the gift of evangelism:**

- Personally: be involved in one-to-one evangelism wherever the need is present; lead your own children to Christ
- Within the church: participate in a church visitation program, lead an evangelistic Bible study group, serve on the evangelism committee (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts).
- Within the wider community: become involved in marketplace ministry; give an evangelistic message at a rescue mission; offer counseling at an evangelistic crusade.

### **For reflection:**

The charge to evangelize is clear, the need is present, and yet many fear even the word “evangelism” because of the negative connotations involved. There are too many images of “Brother, have you been saved” on the street corner or high-pitched TV evangelists seemingly ranting and raving as they “pitch” the word of God as they see it. It makes one want to shrink from the duty of using this gift - “Please, God, give me a different one - I can’t be one of those people.”

But you have something really special. You have a unique spiritual gift of evangelism. The words you use, the style you employ, the approach you make - these will be born of keen insight, reason and intelligence, and inner peace. Trust that God will empower you in appropriate ways to do his work. The way you operate will not be a “canned” approach; it will be all you, and it will be effective because you are gifted.

To some degree the exercise of all spiritual gifts should have evangelistic implications and bring people to the saving knowledge of Christ. Indeed, all Christians are subject to Christ’s great commission to spread the Gospel. But those who are spiritually gifted in evangelism have an even greater level of responsibility because evangelizing is what God has especially equipped them to do. Perhaps it is even more critical that you accept and use this gift because of the reluctance of so many others to do so. It is truly a life-changing gift that is also life-saving. Fulfilling Christ’s great commission is the result when this gift is effectively employed. Is there really anything that would be more important to do?

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Exhortation (6)

**A gifted story:** Val has a special sensitivity for people in trouble or facing a crisis in their lives. She recognizes that when bad things happen, our belief system can be violated and our faith shaken. These are the times that she is drawn to the side of the suffering person. Her compassionate nature and grasp of the human condition equip her to listen to those experiencing a crisis of faith, and she is able to relate God's presence in the midst of it all. Val's friendship, counsel and guidance renews and strengthens the faith of the afflicted people as they begin to see that the loving hand of God still at work in their lives. Val's gift of exhortation is a precious gift to the congregation.

### **Biblical references:**

Romans 12:8 - *...if it (our gift) is to encourage others, we should do so.*

Acts 4:36 - *And so it was that Joseph, a Levite born in Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "One who encourages"), sold a field he owned, brought the money, and turned it over to the apostles.*

1 Thess. 2:11-12 - *You know that we treated each one of you just as a father treats his own children. We encouraged you, we comforted you, and we kept urging you to live the kind of life that pleases God...*

1 Peter 5:1 - *(I appeal to you) to be shepherds of the flock that God gave you and to take care of it willingly, as God wants you to, and not unwillingly.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Exhortation: the special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to stand beside fellow believers in need and bring comfort, counsel and encouragement so they feel helped. It is an ability to minister strengthening words of consolation to other members of the Body in such a way that they feel helped and healed. The gifted believer is able to reach out with Christian love and presence to people in personal conflict or facing a spiritual void. By virtue of this gift these people are motivated through encouraging words to live fruitful lives.

The word "exhortation" today often carries a connotation of harshness, and that is actually incorrect. The Greek word "parakalon" in Romans 12:8 is literally translated "encouragement" - it refers to the often gentle actions of one who "comes alongside" to offer comfort, counsel and encouragement. The insights delivered with this gift enable the believer to find ways to bring out the best in others. It suggests reassurance, buttressing, consolation and support. Although it does not exclude the possibility of rebuke, the emphasis is on the positive. Many think of it as the "counseling gift."

A number of apostles exercised this gift. Paul "exhorted them (the disciples) to continue in the faith" (Acts 14:21-22). Peter was commissioned by Jesus to "strengthen" his brothers (Luke 22:32) and he did so, encouraging the elders of the churches in their work. (1 Peter 5:1-2) This gift is

especially helpful for those wishing to help others who are weak, drifting, or undergoing trials and difficulties in their lives.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1.  
Are you sensitive to suffering, troubled and discouraged people and desire to help them?
2.  
Are you accepting of people deeply troubled or in crisis?
3.  
Have you been (or do you think you could be) used to encourage people to live more Christian lives?
4.  
Have you urged others to seek a biblical solution to their problems or afflictions?
5.  
Can you see yourself in a counseling or mentoring ministry?

**Areas for study and personal growth:**

1.  
In the Bible Paul often urges the disciples to “stir up” or “encourage” one another to love and good works. Meditate on ways to discover where this is needed and what might be done to fulfill this mission as Paul describes it.
2.  
Examine your personal demeanor when trying to offer encouragement. Patience, kindness, good listening skills, ability to build rapport - these are all essential to effective counseling. Where are your strengths and weaknesses with respect to these qualities? Work to build up areas where weaknesses are evident.
3.  
Good counselors know how to work closely with a person while fostering that person’s sense of independence. Interdependence (ability to work well with others) comes later. Learn more about what goes into healthy relationships from a human psychological point of view. Strive to understand stress reactions as well as coping mechanisms in order to enhance your sensitivities to people in need and your usefulness as a counselor.
4.  
Consider attending a workshop on good listening practices. Verbalization is only the starting point. Learn how to interpret body language, how to respond to draw out the deeper message and where to probe to get to the core of a person’s pain.
5.  
Learn what programs are available for people who are troubled in various ways (addiction intervention, substance abuse, marital conflict resolution, and the disenfranchised).

## **General ways to use the gift of exhortation:**

- Personally: counsel a friend with a problem, console a bereaved person, encourage a new Christian.
- Within the church: visit inactive or lapsed members, lead a marriage enrichment group, be a youth sponsor (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts)..
- Within the wider community: be a telephone hotline counselor, become involved in an addiction intervention program.

## **For reflection:**

The Apostle Paul tells all Christians to be encouraging to one another and build one another up (1 Thess 5:11), so this is clearly a role for all of us to play - it is expected of all of us. We are asked to draw upon our natural abilities and do the best we can to encourage others. But then there are those who are especially empowered with a supernatural gift to do this at a highly effective level. That we must all do this illustrates the importance of the activity. Those with the gift of exhortation have to recognize, therefore, that their unique responsibility is to exhort or encourage especially well, with the greatest of effectiveness and the greatest of sensitivities. Training to develop expertise should be a real consideration.

Dag Hammarskjold, past Secretary-General of the United Nations, observed, “It is more noble to give yourself completely to one individual than to labor diligently for the salvation of the masses.” Those with the gift of exhortation know exactly what this means. They work with the individual on an extensive basis. It often takes a great investment of time to counsel well - it is not something done on a “quick fix” basis, but slowly, carefully, patiently, lovingly, hand-in-hand, for as long as it takes. After all, it takes time for healing.

Many would call people who exercise this gift to be “angels” on earth because the help they give is so precious to the receiver. There are many angelic parallels. God’s love is very real, whether sent in the form of an angel or in the form of encouragement at the hand of a gifted believer.

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Faith (7)

**A gifted story:** All Christians have to learn how to ride out the various tests to their faiths that occur in adversity. During difficult times it is helpful to know of others who have maintained their faith through the worst of times. Betty's life was slipping away very quickly at too early an age-- the cancer could not be reversed. As her many friends and family visited her in the hospital, they were struck with the peace she displayed. Betty was not afraid to die, as she knew she would soon be with Jesus. She just wanted to comfort all of her visitors and say good-bye. The testimony of her courage in the last days was an inspiration to all that knew her that faith gives us victory over death.

### **Biblical references:**

1 Cor. 12:9 - *One and the same Spirit gives faith to one person, while to another person he gives the power to heal.*

1 Cor. 13:2 -- *...I may have all the faith needed to move mountains, but if I have no love, I am nothing.*

Heb. 11:1-3 - *To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see. It was by their faith that people of ancient times won God's approval. It is by faith that we understand that the universe was created by God's word, so that what can be seen was made out of what cannot be seen.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Faith: the special gift whereby the Spirit provides Christians with extraordinary confidence in God's promises, power, and presence so that they can take heroic stands for the future of God's work in the church. The person with this gift is able to envision what God wants to happen and to be certain he is going to do it in response to prayer, even when there is no concrete evidence. There is discernment of the will and purpose of God for the future of his work. The believer with this gift is able to see the Spirit at work and trust the Spirit's leading without knowledge of the path ahead.

Jesus made some extraordinary statements regarding faith. He tied faith to believing expectantly that prayers would be answered: *"...if you have faith as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this hill, 'Go from here to there!' and it will go. You could do anything!"* (Matt. 17:20) He also declared that *"... when you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it, and you will be given whatever you ask for."* (Mark 11:24) Often missed in discussions about the power of prayer is Jesus' admonishment in the very next verse to *"forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive the wrongs you have done."* He said to do this when praying.

Most Christians have heard that prayer brings results if faith is present, but they feel a bit amateurish in the prayer and faith department. A quick word of encouragement should be added here - sincerity is the key, not eloquence. Faith is essential for all Christians. We know that it must be exercised with love, and we don't need much of it. It is so powerful, that even just a little will do. However, some

Christians are given an abundance of faith by God's grace in the awarding of the spiritual gift of faith. Those so gifted have the capability, when exercising their gift, to address expectantly the greatest of concerns, plead for intervention in the largest of needs, and undertake prayer requests that seem mountainous.

### **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Have you had the experience of knowing God's will with certainty in a specific situation?
2. Have you felt assurance that God would do what seemed unlikely?
3. Do you have a sense for moments when prayer with deep faith is needed?
4. Are you able to go on believing God will act in a situation in spite of evidence to the contrary?
5. Do you depend upon God's resources and guidance to an unusual degree?

### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. As a receiver of the spiritual gift of faith, you need to become expert in what faith is. There is no better way to do this than to review the full text of Hebrews 11 where Paul recounts the history of faith in scriptural stories. Internalizing these stories will give you a sense of comradeship with people who had faith of great proportions.
2. The peculiar strength of your gift needs to be explored. Document what you can remember of prayers answered, and begin a log of prayer requests for the future. Few people trouble to do this, but you have every reason to do so. Evidence of prayers answered is powerful encouragement for Christians in need to trust the power of prayer and God's loving response.
3. Seek out and read works that describe how prayers have been answered for others. Learn all you can about the power of prayer and how to use prayer in an intercessory fashion. Understand that it is harder for some, who do not have your gift, to maintain faith, and look for ways to build up the faith of fellow believers through the sharing of your faith stories.
4. Cut out for yourself an informal role of "prayer expert," and offer help to others regarding various approaches to prayer (meditative, contemplative, intercessory, petition, praise, ...).

### **General ways to use the gift of faith:**

•

Personally: be available to anyone desiring your prayers.

- Within the church: offer hope in the face of any discouraging situation, listen to the still small voice of God for a word of guidance for his church (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts)..
- Within the wider community: seek God's will for new community ministries

### **For reflection:**

Some believe that the supernatural gift of faith was bestowed on believers in the early church to help get it started. They are less certain that it is given today in larger measure to certain believers because of the need for all Christians to have at least some faith to validate their membership in the Body. The counter perspective is that God isn't finished with us yet. He has continual and creative plans for us. He needs people of extraordinary faith to counter evil and to spread his influence dominantly throughout the world. Extraordinary faith inspires healing vision in individuals and courage for action. God uses the gift of faith to bring glory to himself, to encourage the church to believe in a prayer-answering God, and to meet crises faced by individuals and by the church.

Love is the fuel that empowers faith. Thus empowered faith inspires hope. And there is no place, however cold and dark, that cannot be penetrated by the warmth and light that radiates from a hopeful soul. It is God's plan that coldness and darkness be thus eradicated in this fashion. Exercise your gift of faith with a loving heart. That will bring a larger measure of hope into our community of faith. When hope is abundantly present, God's plan for our church will be more fully revealed and our ability to know his purpose for us will be assured.

Reveal your faith in the ways that you can so that members of the congregation may witness it in action. Revealed faith strengthens the whole Body by example. Your faithful actions make tangible what is not so easily seen. Your lessons in faith will offer encouragement and hope. And in hope, one's face always turns Godward.

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Giving (8)

**A gifted story:** Billy usually fidgeted during the sermon, but this morning he was captivated by the story being told from the pulpit. The pastor had just told about the poor widow who gave all she had to the church, and how that was more meaningful than all the riches conveniently given by wealthy persons. Billy had his little coin purse with him-- it was filled with coins he had saved over many weeks. The plate was being passed down the pew. He knew what he had to do. When the plate arrived in front of him he squeezed open his coin pouch and all the coins tumbled out into the plate, and then it moved on. For a moment he was stunned by what he had done, but then joy overcame him and he was most glad at heart.

### **Biblical references:**

Romans 12:6-8 - *So we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do so generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do so cheerfully.*

2 Cor. 8:2-4 - *They (the churches in Macedonia) have been severely tested by the troubles they went through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their giving, even though they are very poor. I can assure you that they gave as much as they could, and even more than they could. Of their own free will they begged us and pleaded for the privilege of having a part in helping God's people in Judea.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Giving: the special gift that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord liberally and cheerfully. This kind of giving from material blessings is characterized by exceptional willingness. The believer is able to recognize God's blessings and to respond by generously and even sacrificially giving of one's material resources to support the Lord's work.

The Greek word for "giving" is *metadidomi* - it means "to share," "to impart," or "to bestow." None of these root meanings convey any sense of self-benefit. What is involved is simply unconditional giving. The Holy Spirit directs the giver to exercise the gift for the common good, and the giver obeys this message in the heart in such a manner as to draw no personal attention.

There is a temptation to connect this gift with the wealthy, but that would be in error because even the poor can exercise this gift with the greatest of effectiveness. Jesus took special note of the poor woman who gave "all she had to live on" to the Temple Treasury (see Luke

21: 1-4). Even though it was only two small coins, it became a gift that taught a lesson of great

importance about sanctity of sacrificial giving.

Attitude, perceptiveness, and the spirit of self-sacrifice are the keys to understanding this gift. When giving is characterized by these attributes, the supernatural dimension is evident, and the spiritual gift of giving is undoubtedly at work.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1.  
Do you feel moved to give when confronted with financial needs in God's kingdom?
2.  
Are you willing to have a lower standard of living in order to benefit God's work with your finances?
3.  
Do you have a conviction that all you have belongs to God and you want to be a good steward for the sake of his kingdom?
4.  
Do you freely and joyfully give of your resources because you love God?
5.  
Do your giving records show that you give more than 10% of your income to the Lord's work?

**Areas for study and personal growth:**

1.  
Explore giving as it is described in scripture. Read Romans 12:8; Acts 4:32-37; Luke 8:1-3; 2 Cor. 8:1-7; 2 Cor. 9:6-15; Mat. 6:2-4; 1 Cor. 13:3; 2 Cor. 9:7; Phil. 4:14-19.
2.  
Learn as much as you can about being a good steward of the resources God has given you. Through good practices of budgeting, cost control, and abatement of compulsory behaviors, you will be able to maximize your giving potential.
3.  
Become aware of the needs of all that your giving may be able to help, whether in the church or elsewhere. No matter how willing you are to give, there are limitations to what you can do. It will be important to know where God wants you to direct your giving. Prayer is essential to hear God's voice in this.
4.  
Find out how others who have this gift choose to exercise it. Biographies about philanthropists may be helpful in understanding the ways and means by which they exercised this gift. Examples of the generosity of people with more meager means may be even more enriching as you assess the best way to exercise your gift of giving.
5.  
Become an expert on stewardship in the church. Create a card file of examples of giving that touch you in a special way. Share faith stories of the giving of others that clearly demonstrate

how God can use the giving of individuals for great and effectual purposes.

### **General ways to use the gift of giving:**

- Personally: help a person out financially; help a Christian friend discover the joy of giving; make a no interest loan where it will do some good.
- Within the church: contribute generously to a fund drive; give above what is expected; give a presentation on stewardship (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts).
- Within the wider community: provide financial support for a Christian organization; invest “seed money” in a new and needed cause; give an anonymous gift to help a child attend camp.

### **For reflection:**

Every Christian is called to give support to build up the Body of Christ. The tithe (10%) is the standard mentioned in the bible, and many people have yet to reach that level. Since giving is the responsibility of all Christians, it is hard to grasp that giving is also a spiritual gift given only to some individuals. But Paul clearly mentions giving as a spiritual gift, so we know that some people are endowed with this supernatural gift in the same manner that all Christians are called to have faith, but some are given the supernatural gift of faith.

If you have the gift of giving and you exercise it through study of needs, prayer and sacrifice, your giving will be especially God-directed, and there is assurance that important things will be done. Just as God will call upon you in a special way to provide from your blessings, he will return back to you even more blessings. To him you will be the faithful servant worthy of his trust. There has to be excitement in the prospect of opening the lines of communication with God, to use his blessings to do work that he has given you to do. Clearly, the process of deepening your spirituality in order to know where to exercise your giving will be faith enriching.

And so each of us is to “*bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord (our) God has blessed (us).*” (Deut. 16:17). Our gift is acceptable to God when the willingness to give is present. It is not the amount that matters so much as the willingness, and that may be hard for many Christians to bear. But for the person with the spiritual gift of giving, the willingness to give comes with the gift - it is just there and there in ample portion. Therefore the giving will not only alleviate human need, extend the gospel, and honor God, but it will also enrich the giver in the assurance that God will always find it acceptable. How wonderful a circumstance for your action to always be acceptable to God!

[ **TOP** ]

## The Gift of Hospitality (9)

**A gifted story:** "Mom, there's an old guy at the back door," young Pete's voice sounded anxious. Meribel went straight to the door and welcomed the stranger in. "Set yourself down here in the kitchen," she said warmly. "I've got something here I think you'll like." Then she carved him a big slice of ham and heaped freshly-cooked beans on the plate with a thick piece of homemade bread on the side. It was a ritual Meribel went through often when "tramps" came by, as they often did because the word was out that she was a kindly lady. Years before, when her father disappeared one day, she vowed never to let a stranger go hungry. God gave her the gift of hospitality.

### **Biblical references:**

1 Peter 4:9-10 - *Open your homes to each other without complaining. Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God.*

Hebrews 13:2 - *Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There were some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it.*

Romans 16:23 - *My host Gaius, in whose house the church meets, sends you his greetings...*

Genesis 18:1-15 - *The Lord appeared to Abraham at the sacred trees of Mamre. As Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the hottest part of the day, he looked up and saw three men standing there. As soon as he saw them, he ran out to meet them. Bowing down with his face touching the ground, he said, "Sirs, please do not pass by my home without stopping; I am here to serve you. Let me bring some water for you to wash your feet; you can rest here beneath this tree. I will also bring a bit of food; it will give you strength to continue your journey. You have honored me by coming to my home, so let me serve you."*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Hospitality: the special gift whereby the Holy Spirit enables certain Christians to open their homes willingly and offer lodging, food, and fellowship cheerfully to other people. This gift causes the believer to joyfully open his or her home for meetings and overnight visitors, making people feel welcome and comfortable. Guests and strangers are graciously served.

The Greek word for "hospitality" is *philoxenia*, meaning, "love of strangers." The hospitable person is comfortable entertaining others - family, relatives, friends to be sure, but most especially when welcoming strangers. People with this gift have a special sensitivity with others, and they know how to make people feel at ease and wanted. Making strangers feel comfortable and at home takes the form of a ministry that helps dispel loneliness and builds a sense of community.

Hospitality was not mentioned specifically as a gift in scripture, but there is wide acceptance of hospitality as a gift because it was used effectively to build up the body and also for community

ministry. All Christians should be hospitable to one another - it is a Christian duty to be kind to strangers. Some Christians, however, feel drawn to reach out to strangers and to invite them into their home - evidence of a supernatural gift.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Do you enjoy providing a haven for guests and not feel imposed upon by unexpected visitors?
2. Do you have a knack for making strangers feel at ease in your home and at church?
3. Are you sensitive to the acts of kindness which make people feel comfortable?
4. Is your home usually open to people passing through who need a place to stay?
5. Do you enjoy participating in church suppers or other events that welcome people to the church?

**Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Study scriptural references to hospitality to gain a full appreciation of all that is implied in “loving strangers” as well as who should and should not be extended this courtesy: Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9; Heb. 13:2; 1 Tim. 3:2, 5:10; Titus 1:8; Genesis 18:1-115; 2 John 10-11; 3 John 5-8, 10. Pay particular attention to the story of Aquila and Priscilla in Acts 18:24-26.
2. Learn about what it takes to be truly hospitable. Contemplate ways in which you can insure that those invited into your home will be given the best of care and service and will enjoy themselves. Understanding that this is a gift you have been given, do all you can to exercise it at the highest level.
3. Expand your abilities for entertaining by developing a file of recipes for different tastes, having on hand a variety of games and activities for a wide range of interests, and create a space utilization plan for how you will shuffle family or furniture quickly to accommodate unexpected guests. Train the family so that they know how to assist in creating a warm welcome when the need arises.
4. Become aware of the hospitality needs of the church, and make known your willingness to house people in need of overnight lodging. Offer your home for specific church-related gatherings (bible study, meetings, and fellowship), and make suggestions that would create opportunities for you to use your special gift.
5. Develop a special ministry of your own that will capitalize on your gift of hospitality - for

instance, bring together new church members for a social evening to help them get to know one another.

### **General ways to use the gift of hospitality:**

- Personally: display gracious openness to strangers; entertain in your home; welcome into your home.
- Within the church: be a greeter; make welcome calls to prospective members; help new members become oriented to and incorporated into the church (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts).
- Within the wider community: befriend foreign students; become involved in refugee resettlement; volunteer at a nursing home to offer companionship to the elderly.

### **For reflection:**

Hospitality could be called the “making friends gift” because it is the great bridge-builder between people. Perhaps it was the quality tapped in olden times when a “match-maker” was employed to bring a boy and girl together. Most people have a natural reluctance or shyness when it comes to meeting people or approaching others about possibly getting together. There is a fear of rejection. But on neutral territory it is natural to converse, the first step in making friendships. People with the gift of hospitality can offer that neutral territory by bringing lonely folks into their homes and helping them mingle with others. It is a great service.

Graciousness is a wonderful quality that is born out of a genuine love for others. People with the gift of hospitality just simply like people, and it shows. They are involved in uplifting spirits, and they are good at it because God gave them a special pizzazz or charisma (which means gifted) that enables them to help people feel included and enjoyed as persons.

And so the stranger comes along, doesn't know anyone in the area, no one to talk with, and destined for a lonely night - probably he doesn't even feel like going out to eat alone. But maybe God will lead the stranger to his disciple with the gift of hospitality. It is easy to see how the evening would be gloriously changed as a result. To be touched in this fashion in the name of Christ is time-honored as a means of introducing people to him. Christianity spread throughout the world, not by crowds talking to crowds, but by individual Christians making friends, being friends, and bringing their new friends to Christ. Bringing someone into your home is an unmistakable act of friendship. No wonder God bestows it as a special gift!

**[ TOP ]**

## The Gift of Music/Instrumental (15)

A gifted story: He is an accomplished flutist. In fact, he teaches flute at the university. It would be fair to call Paul a professional. In his concerts he is appreciated for his fine performances. Some would call it a miracle that Paul, a sickly boy who took up the flute because the doctor thought it might help him build up his lung capacity, can play so beautifully. Maybe that is why he loves to fill a church with his free-flowing and personal rendition of Amazing Grace. People have been known to weep as the notes escalate up and descend down the scale, "I once was lost and now am saved..." The words come to mind as the sound penetrates the air. "He has a gift," people say. Indeed he does, a spiritual gift of instrumental music.

### **Biblical references:**

1 Sam. 16:23 - *From then on, whenever the evil spirit sent by God came on Saul, David would get his harp and play it. The evil spirit would leave, and Saul would feel better and be all right again.*

Psalms 33:1-3 (Exultate, just) - *Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous; it is good for the just to sing praises. Praise the Lord with the harp; play to him upon the psaltery and lyre. Sing for him a new song; sound a fanfare with all your skill upon the trumpet.*

Psalms 150 - (Laudate Dominum) *Hallelujah! Praise God in his holy temple; praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts; praise him for his excellent greatness. Praise him with the blast of the ram's-horn; praise him with the lyre and harp. Praise him with timbrel and dance; praise him with strings and pipe. Praise him with resounding cymbals; praise him with loud-clanging cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Hallelujah!*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of instrumental music: the special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to praise God through instrumental music in such a way as to enhance the worship experience of other believers. It gives the believer the desire and capability to express personal faith and provide inspiration and comfort through the playing of a musical instrument. Like the gift of vocal music, the key to understanding this gift is not so much the beautiful sounds or the skill with which the notes are delivered, but the inspiration behind the delivery. The spiritual aspect of the gift is revealed as the gift bearer gives witness to love and praise for the Lord, and thus glorifies God. Listeners become inspired to feel the presence and majesty of God when music uplifts their soul in a manner that brings them closer to their Lord.

It takes years of learning and practice to develop a talent for playing a musical instrument into a level of skill at a performance level. Sheer determination and hard work on the part of the person are requisites for accomplishment. Once achieved, the instrumentalist is able to perform to great effect and enjoyment of audiences. Spiritual giftedness comes into play only in those cases where there is a deep desire to use the accomplishment thus attained in a manner that glorifies God. There is

recognition that God provided the initial ability and a drive to use it to witness faith - to bring others to understand the love and presence of God.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. When you play your instrument, do you feel the presence of God?
2. Do you see your ability to play an instrument as your means of sharing God with others?
3. Do you feel that your music helps people get in touch with their emotions in a helpful way?
4. Do you sense a gifted power and ease in playing your instrument that at times seems to transcend your own capabilities?
5. Were your talents in music evident even at an early age?

**Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Proficiency with your instrument is obviously very important. Are you giving yourself adequate time to practice? Are you able to consider further lessons to enhance your skills? Is your instrument in good condition, or are you in need of a better quality instrument?
2. Knowing where you can make a contribution with your instrument is something you will have to determine yourself as most members of the congregation (pastor included) will not know of your proficiency or willingness to play. Make your willingness to perform known to the music director, and look for ways that your gift might be utilized within the church to glorify God and inspire others to know of God's love and presence.
3. Strengthen the tie between your playing and your prayer life so that your playing will become an act of prayer for God's glory. Meditate on why you have been given this gift, and seek to use it in ways you believe fulfill its purpose in you.
4. There are many references to music in scripture, especially in the Psalms. Spend time internalizing the Psalms so that they become familiar examples to you of how music is used to praise God.
5. Begin gathering a music library of spiritual songs that you know and can play from memory. Use this repertoire when providing accompaniment for songfests or evening home sings. Work with people gifted in singing to develop musical programs and special performances. Record your music on tapes for the shut in.

## **General ways to use the gift of music/instrumental:**

- Personally: help family and friends learn how to appreciate music as an important component in a balanced life; teach others how music uplifts the soul.
- Within the church: assist the choir on special occasions; be a music leader (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: play in an ensemble for performances of religious works.

## **For reflection:**

Music played instrumentally brings out emotions within us that are an important part of our essence as human beings. We thus renew the discovery that our souls can be stirred by beauty in a cleansing way. When you exercise your gift you bring balm to harried souls in need of a touch of God's peace. As a musician you have learned how to entertain with your music. The added dimension your spiritual gift offers is a quality of love from God, an outreaching from him through your music. In your playing you become his instrument of peace.

Music is part of God's nature. He has inspired great composers throughout the ages to blend the sounds of musical instruments in moving ways. He has inspired craftsmen to build many fine instruments. And he has given musicians talent to use the fruits of the composer and craftsman to fill the air with heart-gladdening sounds. And to some he adds a special quality of sweetness and power, a richness and sensitivity, a depth and exquisiteness. They combine in a glorious manner to lift the listener above the worldly plain for a time, suspended by God's grace in your hands. Made in the image of God, though man may not realize it, he has in his heart the capacity, indeed the need, to be lifted in music. Through you God will fill that need and draw both the listener and instrumentalist ever closer to him.

Make a joyful sound unto the Lord!

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Intercession (10)

**A gifted story:** David had decided he needed to spend more time in prayer, and he began to devote daily quiet time for that activity, not being sure what might happen. As he prayed his eyes drifted to a newspaper picture of a gang youth in New York City in trouble for drugs and he began to cry. Taking this as a sign from God, he decided to travel to the city and try and find the boy and do what he could to help him. It was a correct interpretation, and his faith and willingness to intercede on behalf of the boy in trouble led David on a lifelong adventure in drug rehabilitation. Oh yes, and he did find the boy. You can read about it in *The Cross and the Switchblade* by David Wilkerson.

### **Biblical references:**

Col. 1:9,10 - *For this reason we have always prayed for you, ever since we heard about you. We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, with all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives..*

John 17:20-22 - *“I pray not only for them, but also for those who believe in me because of their message. I pray that they may be one. Father! May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they be one, so that the world will believe that you sent me...”*

Matt. 6:6 - *“But when you pray, go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you.”*

1 Tim. 2:1-2 - *First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests, and thanksgivings be offered to God for all people; for kings and all others who are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceful life with all reverence toward God and with proper conduct..*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Intercession the special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to pray for extended periods of time with great positive effect for the building of the Kingdom. Prayer is given on a regular basis, and frequent and specific answers to the prayers are seen to a much greater degree than with most Christians. There is a certainty that the prayers are heard and that answers will come. The special ability empowers the Christian to pray faithfully for others and to identify specific responses to those prayers.

Intercession is one of those gifts that are not expressly identified as a spiritual gift in the New Testament. However, it is widely recognized as an activity that was used to great effect by the disciples of the early church. Paul interceded regularly in prayer on behalf of the churches he established, and Timothy taught the importance of intercessory prayer.

Prayer for others is considered a Christian vocation - we are all to do it. But some people are gifted in such a way that their “prayer channel” seems to be uniquely static free. These people have a kind of prayer ministry whereby they spend a great deal of time in prayer in the full knowledge that God is

listening and he answers heartfelt prayer.

### **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Are you sensitive to the prayer needs of others and desire to give them needed prayer support?
2. Are you conscious of ministering to others as you pray for them?
3. Can you pray for extended periods, in regular intervals, unceasingly?
4. Are you confident that when you pray for others, you will have tangible results?
5. Do you have some prayer stories to tell about answered prayers?

### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Understand all that you can about prayer from scripture. Review especially what Jesus has to say about praying in John 17:1-26. See also Eph. 1:15-19; Phil. 1:3-5; Col 1:9-12; James 5:13-16; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Eph. 6:18-20; James 5:16-18; Rom. 8:26-27.
2. Learn about prayer from people who have chronicled their experiences. It is helpful to read personal accounts of prayers being answered to build a sense of awe in the marvelous ways in which God answers prayer. Examples: *Prayers that are Answered* by Betty Malz; *How to Live Like a King's Kid* by Harold Hill.
3. Intercessory prayer requires faith to be effective. Indeed, after the prayer is made, belief carries the prayer in an unceasing manner until God's answer is known. Thus maintaining an attitude of faith finishes the job. Work in any way that you can to deepen your faith so that your belief will not falter after the prayer is sent up. Prayer is only the beginning in the intercessory process - it is the sustaining belief that the prayer will be answered that is essential.
4. Keep a log of prayers offered and prayers answered. This will help you to maintain your confidence that your prayers will be answered - to develop the sense of expectancy that is required. Too often prayers are simply offered and then forgotten. The log will help you be more accountable - you will be looking for results, and God will not disappoint you.
5. Think about where intercessory prayer is needed, and seek out those in need of your prayers. Your special ability is sorely needed by many that do not have your gift. You will find many people in need in newspaper articles and from word of mouth accounts. After a while, when your ministry is more evident, people will come to know that you should be told of the need.

## **General ways to use the gift of intercession:**

- Personally: faithfully intercede for friends, family and others; pray for persons with special needs.
- Within the church: develop a prayer chain; lead in public prayer; be a prayer partner and pray with others in prayer (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet Channels for Using the Gifts)..
- Within the wider community: pray for those in authority; pray for missions, missionaries and public groups that are struggling with problems or conflict.

## **For reflection:**

As you exercise the gift of Intercession, you will find yourself filled with awe. You are embarking on a great adventure that will be filled with much joy. At times you will feel that you have uncovered a treasure of riches, that you are privileged to be a conduit to heaven. There is a song of praise that asks, “Lord, make me an instrument, an instrument of glory.” You will be that instrument as you help others receive grace from God through your prayers.

Intercessory prayer was used by Moses to intercede on behalf of his people for their sinning (remember the golden calf). Moses called upon God’s merciful and compassionate nature over a period of forty days, and God turned away his wrath in the end. In World War I, General Allenby, in charge of the British Forces in Egypt, was ordered to take Jerusalem. He did not want to bomb the Holy City, but he had his orders. So he asked his officers to join him in prayer to ask the Lord to intervene. They dropped to their knees and asked God to show his hand so that the city could be spared. As morning dawned a man came forward waving a white flag, and the city was taken without a shot being fired.

The ministry of intercession gives us the ability to cast off the powers of darkness if it is exercised boldly and in a sustained manner. It is a case of the goodness of prayer simply starving out all traces of evil. Victory is assured in these battles. Through your prayers you will witness God’s outpouring of love, healing, cleansing, and rebirth. It is a remarkable gift that you have. Rejoice in the power of the Lord!

[ [TOP](#) ]

# The Gift of Knowledge (11)

**A Gifted Story:** He was not particularly interested in religion, but the campus Christian group gave him a chance to make some friends. They were all talking about the Bible, and he really couldn't offer anything on the subject because he had never even touched a copy. Curtis figured he'd better take a look at it before the next meeting. He began reading the Bible one evening, and he literally couldn't put it down. All through the night he poured over the pages and on through the next day. Day after day he lived and breathed scripture. His thirst for the Word of God was insatiable from that day on. Curtis has the gift of knowledge, and today he is a publisher of Christian books.

## **Biblical references:**

Romans 12:2 - *Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God - what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect. .*

Col. 1:10 - *Then you will be able to live as the Lord wants and will always do what pleases him. Your lives will produce all kinds of good deeds, and you will grow in your knowledge of God.*

1 Cor. 12:8 - *The Spirit gives one person a message full of wisdom, while to another person the same Spirit gives a message full of knowledge.*

1 Cor. 14:6 - *So when I come to you, my brothers, what use will I be to you if I speak in strange tongues? Not a bit, unless I bring some revelation from God or some knowledge or some inspired message or some teaching.*

## **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Knowledge: the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to discover, accumulate, analyze, and clarify information and ideas which are pertinent to the growth and well-being of the Body. This gift builds understanding in an exceptional way of the great truths of God's word and gives insight into their relevance to specific situations in the church. A person with this gift will be driven to learn, analyze and uncover new insights with regard to the Bible and faith.

The spiritual gift of knowledge may well be revealed through certain characteristics - a bent for scholarship, a love of reading, contentment with study, at home wrestling with ideas and engaged in problem-solving. Undoubtedly people involved in Bible translation have this gift, as do those who often find revelation in the words of scripture. The particular kind of knowledge inherent in this gift is tied to God's revealed word and it's applicability to the moment at hand.

Since the major source of knowledge being employed by this gift is the Bible, there will most certainly be a high level of comprehension and internalization of scripture. It is said that immersion in God's word readies a person for most any circumstance as the Spirit will then call forth a message of truth as needed from the storehouse of passages held in the heart. The person with the gift of knowledge will

understand the living nature of God's word.

### **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Have you been able to help others distinguish key and important facts of scripture?
2. Do you enjoy studying and reading material that expands your understanding of the Bible?
3. In your personal study do you frequently discover new insights in scripture?
4. Do you feel compelled to share with others the biblical insights you discover?
5. Do biblical passages come to mind when you seek to know God's will in a particular situation?

### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Full familiarity with the Bible is critical for effective exercise of the gift of knowledge. More than likely you will be at home with scripture for the rest of your life. A regular disciplined excursion through the pages will become an on-going visit with a friend. A rule of life of daily scriptural reading will help to develop your gift of knowledge.
2. Seek to build a library of biblical reference materials (such as Barclay's daily study Bible series; guides to help with interpretation of idioms, parables and allegories, symbolism and figures of speech; and a concordance to assist in the finding of passages).
3. Develop a regular prayer discipline that you might be led by the Spirit to the knowledge that is needed for situations that arise. Trust not in your own intellect for God's knowledge; instead, trust him to give you knowledge through prayer.
4. If your ministry calls you to work with others as you impart knowledge, strengthen your skills for presentation, whether teaching, mentoring or reading - all of these areas require skills of message delivery that can be learned. Consider attending appropriate workshops. For example, a workshop on techniques for being a lector could help you maximize your effectiveness in oral reading; a workshop on storytelling could help you relate the Gospel stories more dynamically.
5. Discover ways to share your knowledge with others, and be sensitive to where a message of knowledge may be helpful in the building up of the church. For instance, you may become better equipped than most to lead a bible study or to help develop a good curriculum.

### **General ways to use the gift of knowledge:**

- Personally: share biblical truths with family and friends; tell stories from scripture whenever they seem applicable.
- Within the church: find ways to offer the knowledge you have gained in decision-making, instruction, and through writing (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: seek ecumenical involvement and help reveal Christ's hope "that we all may be one."

### **For reflection:**

We Christians grow in our faith by many avenues, and the best spiritual growth occurs when we build up our faith in multiple ways. Tradition, the sacraments, heartfelt belief, and reason all combine to enrich our experience as children of God. All of these together complete our armor against the dark forces of this world and set us in forward movement on our pilgrimage as we seek to know our Maker.

Sometimes, through ill preparation or lack of opportunity, we fall short in our reasoning powers when it comes to our faith. Many feel that faith can only truly be known by sheer belief. The thought is that reason should not be employed because one cannot absolutely prove the existence of God. That, however, leaves the believer vulnerable to a loss of faith in a time of trial or attack of disbelief in depression. Actually, reason is as important as any other component in faith building, and the gift of knowledge is the chief gift that can be employed to help Christians see their faith in reasonable terms.

Your gift of knowledge is crucial in helping others to see and understand God's truths in intellectual ways that will stand the test of dispute. Knowledge of our faith holds us together when weakness cools our hearts. We stay the course because our minds tell us with surety that the path we are on is correct, despite any feelings of despair that may grip us. Our grounding in knowledge and our consequential reasoning give us mental as well as heartfelt conviction. It is a case where our minds carry our hearts through the turbulent periods of our lives until our hearts can be rekindled again. Use your gift to help strengthen our minds for Christ in the certain and reasonable knowledge of the enduring quality of his love.

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Leadership (12)

**A gifted story:** The church was locked to keep out the riffraff, lest the building be ruined. It was already so run down. The congregation had dwindled to such small numbers-- most people had moved to the suburbs. Then George said, let's open the doors and welcome the street people in-- we'll make it their church. Horrors! But George was persistent. "Whenever you do this unto the least of me..." he proclaimed to the congregation. Eventually the doors were opened, the needs of the people were addressed, a soup kitchen was set up, the pews began to fill again, and a whole new congregation was born. And the priest? He went on to become the Archbishop of Canterbury.

### **Biblical references:**

Romans 12:8 - *...if it (our gift) is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do so generously; whoever has authority should work hard...*

1 Thess. 5:12 - *We beg you, our brothers, to pay proper respect to those who work among you, who guide and instruct you in the Christian life.*

John 21:18 - *...Jesus said to him (Peter). "Take care of my sheep."*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Leadership: the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and communicate these goals to others so that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish them for the glory of God. Through this gift the Spirit enables the believer to motivate, direct and inspire God's people in such a way that they desire to work together to do the Church's work effectively. The gift of leadership gives the believer the confidence to step forward, give direction and provide incentive to get a task completed or a dream fulfilled. Members of a group will be led with caring concern and foresight.

Sometimes this gift is paired with the gift of administration, but that may not always be the case. The original word for "leadership" in Greek is "prohistemi" and it conveys the picture of someone "presiding over others." In 1 Timothy, chapter 3, a full account is given of the characteristics of a church leader. A high standard is set: without fault, sober, self-controlled, orderly, welcoming of strangers, able to teach, gentle and peaceful, be not enamored with money, able to manage his family and children, mature in the faith and respected by the people.

Caring more than rank or authority marks Christian leadership. The gift may be employed in a small and unofficial way, such as in a committee or task force, or it may be used in an official way, such as by a pastor or elected officer of the church. Christian leadership is always exercised under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Do you enjoy inspiring and leading others for the sake of Christ's work?
2. Are you usually quick to sense when a group you are in is getting nowhere and you want to do something about it?
3. When you join a group, do others often expect you to take leadership?
4. Have you accepted leadership responsibilities and succeeded in helping a group work toward a goal?
5. Do you find it easy to motivate others to follow through on a ministry project?
6. Do you tend to think futuristically about ministries within the church and community?

### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. There are many stories in the Bible that illustrate how leadership is exercised in the name of God. Temples were built, people were led to new lands, and armies were led to victory. Read passages throughout the Bible that exemplify leadership by people under God's direction to understand what God expects of his leaders, the faith that is required, and the ways in which the leadership is carried out
2. Read biographies of great leaders to gain insight into effective methods used. Learn how to develop rapport, how earn the trust of others, and how to delegate. Study leadership techniques to understand how administration and leadership tie together for effective management practices.
3. Consider attending a seminar on leadership dynamics, management skills, or time management in order to gain more insight into effective goal-setting, prioritizing, and planning.
4. Build a library of leadership materials and resources, such as: *Strategy for Leadership* by Edward Dayton and Ted Engstrom, the *Christian Leadership Newsletter* (monthly), and *Leadership 100* (bi-monthly magazine).
5. Meditate on the ways your gift of leadership could most effectively be employed to help build up the church. Where is leadership needed, and what skills can you bring to the table to help move things along in the right direction? Prayer is essential to support any initiative you may feel moved to take.
6. It will be important for you to develop discipline in the caring exercise of your leadership gift to avoid drifting into a condition where the sense of center-stage power moves your

consciousness rather than the sense of how God wants ministry done. Understand fully how attractive you will be to the Evil One once you are leading others, and arm yourself to stay on God's course.

### **General ways to use the gift of leadership:**

- Personally: help others to set healthy goals and objectives; lead family projects.
- Within the church: chair a committee; assist in the setting of long-range church plans; head up a project (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: serve as a school board member; become involved in community service groups (Hospice, Bootstrap, youth activities).

### **For reflection:**

A leader has to believe in himself or herself, and that carries the danger of being perceived as arrogant. But a good leader is not so. The good leader appreciates that there are a great variety of paradigms and principles out there about how the world works-- different ways of looking at things. Other viewpoints are respected - they are different, not necessarily wrong. Confidence in the leader stems from a sense that he or she is centered in basic principles that are true and good; the Christian ethic gives us these principles. Steven Covey (*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*) believes that personal effectiveness builds when a person is proactive, begins with the end in mind, puts first things first, thinks "Win/Win", seeks first to understand and then to be understood, synergizes (finding a creative result from cooperation), and works at self-renewal. These are good points for a leader to master for maximum effectiveness.

However it is arrived at, leadership requires conviction, the courage to pursue what you believe in, and the ability to convince others that you are on the right tract. Churchill said, "An accepted leader has only to be sure of what it is best to do, or at least to have made up his mind about it." It is the curse of leadership that you have to stick your neck out every so often and see if you can get others to follow. One might say it is not a task for sissies!

But true Christian leadership is on a higher plain. God provides special empowerment when it is his plan that is being worked on. The leader is acting as God's instrument, and when that is evident, a wonderful harmony can be achieved, the activity is blessed, and good things begin to happen. You share the spiritual gift of leadership with the likes of Moses, Peter, and Paul. Won't it be interesting to uncover the special mission God has in mind for you?

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Mercy (13)

**A gifted story:** They were traveling in Italy on a wonderful holiday from America. The children were in the back seat asleep as they sped down the road at night. Suddenly shots were fired into the car from highway bandits. They eluded the bandits, but their son, Nicholas, was dead. It was story that shocked and outraged the world. But Christ had a story to tell through this family as they employed their gift of mercy. They donated their son's organs to save the lives of a number of Italian children, a hitherto rare practice in that country. They call it the Nicholas effect-- all across Italy the reluctance to donate organs has been lifted as Italian people now see this as a good thing. Mercy has worked a miracle.

### **Biblical references:**

Romans 12:8 - *If it (our gift) is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully.*

Matt. 5:7 - (Jesus began to teach the crowds)... *“Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will be merciful to them!”*

Acts 9:36 - *In Joppa there was a woman named Tabitha, who was a believer. (Her name in Greek is Dorcas, meaning “a deer.”) She spent all of her time doing good and helping the poor.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Mercy: the special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to feel exceptional empathy and compassion for those who are suffering so that they can devote large amounts of time and energy to alleviate it. This ability to empathize with hurting people manifests itself into cheerful acts of service. The believer feels deeply for those with physical, spiritual or emotional needs and is motivated to take action to meet the needs. The actions taken reflect Christ's love.

The Greek word for “mercy” (eleos) means “to show compassion,” or “to feel sympathy of heart.” This gift is characterized by the ability to suffer alongside the person in pain, in a sense to feel the pain with them and to want to help them bear it. This extraordinary gift enables the believer to feel a deep compassion that transcends natural Christian caring and to minister to hurting people in a cheerful and sustained manner.

The person with the gift of mercy will be drawn to exercise it among the needy, ill, the mentally impaired, the handicapped, shut-ins, imprisoned, bereaved, lonely, and others in troubled situations. It is revealed in the person's being able to serve in the presence of human misery such as is so often seen among the poor, the sad, the afflicted and the abandoned.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Do you enjoy visiting in hospitals and/or nursing homes and feel comfortable in these environments?
2. Are you able to turn compassion into cheerful deeds of kindness?
3. Would you enjoy spending time with a lonely, shut-in person or someone in prison?
4. Are you inclined to reach out to people who are ignored by the majority of those around them?
5. Do you sense when people are hurting in some way and feel moved to ease their pain somehow?
6. Is it fulfilling to you to work with people who suffer physical, mental, or emotional problems?
7. Does the sight of misery stir your heart to want to express God's love to the hurting person?

#### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Study scriptural examples of mercy to see how the gift is exercised: James 2:15-16; Luke 10:30-37; Luke chapters 4 – 8 (examples of Jesus showing mercy); Luke 7: 12-15; Matt. 25:34-36.
2. Look into various caring ministries that are available to assist the sick or the imprisoned (Stephen Series, People Helper Clinics, Prison visitations, Amity Workshops).
3. Seek out materials that will expand your knowledge about suffering and caring, and build a library of these resources. Also become familiar with films (videos) that are available in the general subject area of caring (such as Peege, about relating to older people).
4. Learn what you can about death and dying and ministering at the various stages of grief.
5. Identify areas within the church where the gift of mercy should be employed to a greater degree, and outline how these needs could be met with a program of regular visitation by a core of people with the gift of mercy.
6. Spend time with experienced caregivers who seem to you to have strong giftedness in mercy, and consult with them to gain effectiveness in your ministry. Learn also by this means how to shoulder all the pain you take on in the caring process and how to recover from these experiences and “recharge your batteries” when needed. Gain an understanding of healthy ways to work interpersonally with others while holding them harmless from forming a

dependency upon you.

7.

Prayer will be essential as you exercise the gift of mercy as you will need God's empowerment for full effectiveness when working with individuals in need. Insure that your prayer life is disciplined and that you depend upon it for inspiration and strength in your ministry.

### **General ways to use the gift of mercy:**

- Personally: help a sick neighbor; send cheering cards and letters to people with special needs; offer transportation to elderly who cannot drive.
- Within the church: visit church members who are in the hospital or who are shut-in; help with clothing or food pantry drives (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: work with various social ministries; become a foster parent to an impaired adult.

### **For reflection:**

Jesus spent much of his time among the apostles displaying the quality of mercy - it was something he seemed to put above most other matters. His compassion for the unfortunate appears in scripture over and over. No matter what he was doing or where he was going, when he saw someone in need he would stop and help them. His way was to show mercy and to instruct us that we are to "*be merciful, even as your Father is merciful*" (Luke 6:36).

People who have this gift understand the value of facing pain with other persons, holding their hand and hearing what they have to say. Empathy requires no more response than a continual willingness to keep on listening. The expectation isn't that you will find a way to change the unchangeable, but that you will simply be there through it all giving support. You will be the answer to the prayer, "If I am to suffer, Lord, please do not let me be alone." You will provide the accompanying tears and the reassuring smile. You will find a way to bring cheer into fields of despair. It is a very blessed gift that lifts lonely souls and brings to them the love of Christ.

In the Prayer attributed to St. Francis, the author asks, "*Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy...*" Your spiritual gift of mercy is the gift that brings peace from God where it is needed - you are the instrument, the channel through which God will bring comfort to his beloved in need

[ **TOP** ]

## Other Spiritual Gifts

Listed below are nine additional gifts of the Spirit that are not included in the basic inventory due to the difficulty of assessment or their controversial nature. Anyone desiring to know more about any of these gifts is invited to seek spiritual direction and guidance from the pastor. A little information is presented to describe each of the gifts. Many of these gifts appear to be extremely rare today.

**The Gift of Prophecy:** This gift is mentioned in all of the major scriptural passages. Paul believed it to be an especially valuable gift. This gift provides the ability to proclaim and apply God's truth so that believers may be edified, encouraged, and consoled, and so that non-believers may be convinced. Implicit is a "forthtelling" of God's truth so that others may be touched by it. Today, the primary source of prophecy comes from Scripture itself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is understood that every prophet and prophecy is subject to Christ and to the Scriptures. The focus of prophecy today is upon Christ, who is the Living Word of God, but it is recognized that the Spirit is free to give direct guidance, and any such guidance will be tested by biblical teaching and the wisdom of the believing community. Martin Luther King is often cited as a person who had this gift.

**The Gift of Healing:** This gift is given to certain Christians to restore health to the sick. It is understood that the gift-bearer serves as a human intermediary through whom God pleases to cure illnesses and restore health apart from the use of natural means. Much criticism has been justly levied on the falsehood that there is a direct connection between healing and amount of faith. The truth is that all that is necessary is a "mustard seed of faith" (Matt. 17:20) for the accomplishment of God's purposes. The person with the gift of healing knows that healing may or may not take place according to the loving purpose of God.

**The Gift of Miracles:** This gift is given by God to certain members of the Body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature. A miracle is understood to be an event of supernatural power, perceived by the senses, accompanying a servant of the Lord, in order to draw attention to the Lord and his message. Miracles remind us of the power and wonder of God and often give us signs of his love for us.

**The Gift of Missionary:** This is the special ability that God gives to some members of the Body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture or second community. Certainly Paul is the primary example of someone who exercised the gift of missionary regularly. Persons with this gift have a strong desire to win people of other countries to Christ.

**The Gift of Celibacy:** This gift is given to some members of the Body of Christ to remain single in order to use one's time and other spiritual gifts to serve God more effectively. There are a number of references in New Testament scripture to persons who "have renounced marriage for the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:12) with the recognition that being single frees the person from worldly affairs thus allowing full attention to the Lord's affairs.

**The Gift of Martyrdom:** God gives this gift to some members of the Body of Christ to enable them to undergo suffering for the faith, even to death, while consistently displaying a joyous and victorious attitude that brings glory to God. This gift is marked by a forgiving spirit and a need to rejoice and to praise God. It is said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.

**The Gift of Tongues:** This gift is a special ability for certain members of the Body of Christ to speak to God in a language they have never learned and/or to receive and communicate a message from God to his people through a divinely anointed utterance in a language they never learned. The practice of “tongue speaking” is highly controversial in some circles, but those with this gift enjoy exercising it as a spiritual communication with God for worship, prayer and praise. This gift is not given as a “necessary sign of the baptism of the Spirit,” nor is it evidence of the filling of the Spirit, although some people have that misconception. The speaker in tongues may or may not know what the utterances mean.

**The Gift of Interpretation:** This is a special ability that God gives to some members of the Body of Christ to make known in the vernacular the message of one who speaks in tongues. This knowledge of what has been spoken is regarded as an interpretation and not a translation. The early church did not permit speaking in tongues unless someone with the gift of interpretation was present so that the message could be used for the edification of the church. Tongue interpretation results in comfort, guidance, warning, encouragement, admonition, or edification. Like tongue speaking, interpretation of tongues is also highly controversial in some circles today.

**The Gift of Exorcism:** This is the special gift that God gives certain members of the Body of Christ to cast out demons and evil spirits. Jesus gave his disciples the power to expel demons, and the gift was exercised in the earliest days of the church (Acts 15:16; 16:16-18). It is also practiced today when there is clear evidence of possession by evil spirits. Extreme care must be taken not to confuse possession by evil spirits with mental illness, which will be unaffected by exorcism.

**The Gift of Voluntary Poverty:** This gift provides a special ability for certain members of the Body of Christ to renounce material comfort and luxury and adopt a personal lifestyle equivalent to those living at the poverty level in a given society in order to serve God more effectively. The gift may be given to provide for the poor, to resist material temptation, or to prove the faithfulness of God.

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Pastor (16)

A gifted story: Bob has built up a library of devotional materials and spiritual works that have helped him in his faith pilgrimage. Over the years Bob has paid attention to his spiritual life, and he has a real sense of God's presence in all he does. You might say he is strong in the faith. Bob's special gift is that he is able to help other believers move along in their faith journeys by offering spiritual direction here and there. He often puts a favorite book into the hands of someone who might be helped by it. Sometimes he passes on a devotional audiotope. Bob is always on the lookout for a way to assist fellow pilgrims as they make their faith journey. He has the gift of pastor.

### **Biblical references:**

Eph. 4:11 - *It was he (Christ) who "gave gifts to mankind"; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ.*

1Peter 5:1c-3 - *I appeal to you to be shepherds of the flock that God gave you and to take care of it willingly, as God wants you to, and not unwillingly. Do your work, not for mere pay, but from a real desire to serve. Do not try to rule over those who have been put in your care, but be examples to the flock.*

1 Tim. 4:12-15 - *Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith, and purity. Until I come, give your time and effort to the public reading of the Scriptures and to preaching and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift that is in you, which was given to you when the prophets spoke and the elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things and devote yourself to them, in order that your progress may be seen by all.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Pastor: the special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to assume a long-term responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers. It involves overseeing the spiritual lives of others and care for their spiritual needs by teaching and guiding them toward maturity. The believer with this gift will have the confidence, capability and compassion to provide spiritual leadership and direction for individuals or groups of individuals.

“Pastoring” comes from the Greek word “poimen.” It refers to service in a caring, protecting, feeding and leading function. In the New Testament, the gift appears in connection with the work of elders, shepherds, overseers, and presbyters. Sometimes this gift is referred to as “shepherding.” Which is a near translation from the Greek. One who has this gift may be an ordained pastor; however, a person may have this gift and not be theologically trained or ordained. The person who has the gift of pastor must feed (Acts 20:28b), guide (John 21:16), and protect (Acts 20:28a) others, be a teacher (1 Tim. 3:2), give doctrinal instruction (Tit. 1:9), and enable others to mature in their faith. This gift can

function in informal as well as official ways - in the role of counseling and spiritual direction to help others build a spiritual foundation for their lives.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Are you concerned to see the spiritual needs of believers met and are willing to be personally involved in nurturing and discipling ministries?
2. Do you sense in yourself a shepherd's instinct when you know of Christians who need spiritual counsel?
3. Do you assume responsibility when you see a Christian being led astray?
4. Have you helped individual believers by guiding them to relevant portions of the Bible and praying with them?
5. Do you desire to care for the spiritual welfare of a group of young Christians, shut-ins, or people in pain?

**Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Study scriptural examples of pastoring to see how the gift is exercised: John 10:1-18; Ezekiel 34:1-6,15; 1 Peter 5:1-11; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
2. Understand the context within which you will be able to exercise your gift of pastoring, and determine how best to utilize the gift - in an entire congregation or in a cell (a care group). Make a list of possible ways to minister using your gift of pastoring: visitations, counseling, Bible teaching, some new initiative to help others with spiritual direction.
3. Learn about the various discipling and spiritual direction programs that are available for churches, and develop expertise in helping people to deepen their spirituality and enhance their Christian lifestyle.
4. Seek ways to increase the opportunity for personal spiritual development of church members, and spearhead the implementation of programs that will promote spiritual growth and wellness (small group home meetings, prayer chains, retreats, renewal weekends, revival meetings, personal devotions and spiritual rule of life, pilgrimages, etc.)
5. Work on increasing your sensitivity to the spiritual needs of individuals. Participate in a listening workshop. Make known your availability for spiritual conversation, and then be available to meet pastoring needs that arise.

6. Build a library of spiritual literature that can be lent out to persons you are shepherding to help in their spiritual development. Take the time to discuss these materials with the person you are helping afterwards as the basis for spiritual conversation.
7. Read about shepherding to understand better what is asked for in a shepherd. One excellent book is *A Shepherd Looks at The Good Shepherd and His Sheep*, by Phillip Keller.

### **General ways to use the gift of pastor:**

- Personally: strike up spiritual conversation with family or friends
- Within the church: become a youth counselor or spiritual director for a person who has that need (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: conduct a jail ministry; volunteer for a child guidance clinic; lead a campus Bible studies group

### **For reflection:**

Jesus called himself the “Good Shepherd” and he referred to us as his sheep. There is great comfort in knowing that he watches over us in that fashion. We know we can trust him to care for us and tend to our needs. If we follow him, we will not go astray, nor will we fall into danger. We recognize his voice and thus know whom to follow. But what if we did not recognize his voice? Perhaps we heard no voice at all or heard another voice, thinking that was the one to follow. What direction should we take?

We all need a solid spiritual foundation of knowledge and faith as well as the discipline to stay on the right path, lest we become lost in our lifelong spiritual journey. People with the gift of pastor, or shepherding, help us find our spiritual direction. This is a gift of gigantic importance that empowers people to assist others to make right choices, to find Christ, and to re-center their lives in a fulfilling Christian lifestyle. Obstacles to knowing God’s love are thus removed so that God’s peace can work its daily miracle.

You have a special calling to tend to the spiritual needs of your brothers and sisters in Christ. You will be a person whose inner love for Christ is reflected in your own devotional life, and that foundation will embolden you to give other believers the courage and motivation to continue on their own faith journeys. You will show us the way, and if we drift off course, you will be the one who will see it and urge us back on the correct pathway and help us recognize the true voice of the Good Shepherd.



## The Gift of Service (17)

**A gifted story:** Scott knows how to plug in where needed. He just has an affinity for that-- if there is a need, he's more than happy to help fill it. And happy is the word for it, because he always has a happy look on his face as he does this or that. Roof leaking? "Hey, I'll go up there." Grass need mowing? "How about next weekend?" Chairs in the wrong place? "Let me take care of that." Kids need a chaperone? "I've got a car." It's always a quick response to a need, and that's because Scott sees service as his ministry. He is a believer that he can support the efforts of others and help pull things off. Some people start things or talk about things-- he finishes things. It's the gift of service.

### **Biblical references:**

Gal. 6:2 - *Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ.*

Romans 12:7 - *...if it (our gift) is to serve, we should serve, if it is to teach, we should teach...*

1 Cor. 12:28 - *In the church God has put all in place: in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, and in the third place teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal or to help others or to direct them or to speak in strange tongues.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Service: the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work, and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired goals. With this gift the Spirit brings empowerment to willingly bear the burdens of other Christians so that they can do their tasks more effectively. The person who has this gift is able to work gladly behind the scenes in order that God's work is fulfilled. There is a desire to help others in their ministries by aiding them in practical ways.

The gift of service is also described as the gift of helps in different scriptural passages. Both service and helps are being combined for the purposes of this study. The Greek word "Diakonia" refers to "serving" and "Antilempsis" is translated as "helping." The verb form of the word means "to take a burden upon oneself." The gift manifests itself in persons who place themselves at the disposal of others in order to give assistance in a Christian undertaking. There are always many things that need tending to in the church, and many of these things require no particular ability other than a willingness to see and do the task at hand. People with the gift of service or helps are ones who "get things done" and "see the job through."

It is important to recognize the great value of this gift. Because it is largely employed "behind the scenes," it may seem less prestigious. However, in Christianity humility outranks prestige, and people with the gift of service are blessed with that attribute and are exceedingly valuable to the church as a result.

## **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Do you enjoy doing tasks that help others minister effectively?
2. Do you sense when others need a helping hand and are ready to give it?
3. Are you content to take orders rather than to give them?
4. Would you prefer to let someone else have the “limelight” while offering a supportive role?
5. Do you find it satisfying to find practical ways to help others do their work?
6. Have others mentioned that you seem to enjoy doing routine tasks and that you do them well?

## **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Study the lessons in scripture that pertain to this gift, especially as it is demonstrated in the lives of several New Testament accounts: Acts 6:1-7; 9:36-39; 20:34-35; Romans 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 16:15; 2 Timothy 1:16; Philemon 8-13.
2. Because you have the gift of service, you have the power to relieve a great deal of stress in the lives of others. However, you will have to become skilled at “plugging in.” Learn where assistance from you can relieve burdens and make an offer to help out. As a helper, you must be somewhat expert at working well with a variety of personalities - practice the art of understanding before seeking to be understood, and use that as your guide when giving assistance.
3. Look for literature on giving support to others, and build a personal library of resources that will assist you in this ministry (such as: How to be a People Helper, by Gary Collins). Consider attending a workshop on building positive relationships or on caring ministries.
4. Insight into where and how you might volunteer to assist can be gained through prayer. Place your gift in God’s hands and ask for his guidance as to where to exercise your serving gift to help a fellow Christian, to build up the church, or to glorify God. Seek to be the hands of Christ in all you do.

## **General ways to use the gift of service:**

- Personally: be a good Samaritan; help a busy single parent children or widow with home maintenance tasks
- Within the church: attend the nursery; help with furniture re-arrangement or in keeping up the grounds; help with meal setup or cleanup (see more specific church service opportunities in the

Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).

- Within the wider community: help with Operation Bootstrap or the church food pantry; assist with a Bible ministry.

### **For reflection:**

There is probably no person better equipped to exemplify humbleness than one who possesses the spiritual gift of service or helps. All Christians are called to serve and not to be served, to help the weak, and to support one another, but the person with the gift of serving is able to do these things at a supernatural level with great gladness of heart. This is especially marked by the joyful attitude, which is displayed when the service is rendered no matter how lowly the task. It is an example of the rewards of humility - joy!

When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, it was an action that was hard for them to understand. Peter at first wasn't going to let Jesus do it. But Jesus had found a way to show the disciples the kind of servanthood he expected of them - they were to help one another with humility and love. Even today, many of us have a hard time grasping this important lesson. Being a "humble servant" seems to go against the American grain, yet when we see someone perform a humble act of assistance, we instinctively know how truly wonderful it is and desire to share in it. Your acts of humble assistance to others will serve as a reminder to all the rest of us that this is really the Christian way. It is an important witness indeed.

In all that you do using your gift, remember that your service to others is really service to God. The joy you feel comes from him. As you perform your many unseen tasks that enable ministry to thrive at Good Shepherd, your spirit of love and cheerfulness will perhaps be the more visible part. As your heart is gladdened in the rendering of the service, Christ's radiance will shine through in the works that are performed and in the lives that are touched.

Our Christian experience is deeply enriched in so many ways by the people who exercise the gift of service. It is a wonderful gift.

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Teaching (18)

**A gifted story:** He has a way of finding a story to explain every situation. Jesus did that too, so in a way he is like Jesus. The stories come from his life's experiences or from his reading, but they always do the trick. They help him get the point across every time. Al knows instinctively how to teach, and his teaching comes from the heart. He will bear his soul if you will learn from it. Some of his drive to teach comes from understanding the importance of it for the spiritual development of the members of the church, but the instincts and desire for helping others to truly learn are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Al has the gift of teaching, and it is a joy to see how he creatively exercises it each Sunday.

### **Biblical references:**

Eph. 4:11 - *It was he who “gave gifts to mankind”; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers.*

Heb. 5:12-14 - *There has been enough time for you to be teachers - yet you still need someone to teach you the first lessons of God’s message. Instead of eating solid food, you still have to drink milk. Anyone who has to drink milk is still a child, without any experience in the matter of right or wrong. Solid food, on the other hand, is for adults, who through practice are able to distinguish between good and evil. Let us go forward, then to mature teaching and leave behind the first lessons of the Christian message.*

1 Cor. 12:28 - *In the church God has put all in place: in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, and in the third place teachers; then those who perform miracles, followed by those who are given the power to heal or to help others or to direct them or to speak in strange tongues.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Teaching: the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to communicate information, relevant to the health and ministry of the Body and its members so that others will learn and be edified. Through the employment of this gift the truths of God’s Word are conveyed to others for the purpose of building up the church. This gift enables a believer to communicate a personal understanding of the Bible and faith to instruct, guide, and nurture Christians in the Word of God in such a way that it is comprehended and can be applied to life.

There is a strong warning in James 3:1, “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” This statement seems to indicate that there is a special responsibility attached to the role of teaching. Having the gift of teaching is an important asset in the carrying out of a teaching ministry. Teachers in the church today, unlike the teachers in the early church, have the completed canon of Scripture and almost 20 centuries of church history to shed light on the interpretation of the Bible. The role of the Christian teacher has changed from verbal communicator of the Word to facilitator of the Word as found in written materials. Teachers today must exercise care to pass on both head and heart knowledge and to be more

concerned with the person being taught than with the teaching content itself. Teaching effectiveness is strengthened by a basic grasp of the content and doctrine of the Bible as well as by adequate preparation before teaching sessions.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. When you communicate biblical truth to others, do you see changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or conduct?
2. Do others understand as you explain the Bible or the Christian life to them?
3. Are you able to communicate truth clearly and concisely and hold the interest of those you instruct?
4. Are you concerned to help others learn what the Bible teaches about life?
5. Have people responded that you have helped them learn biblical truth in a meaningful way?

**Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Study the lessons in scripture that pertain to this gift: James 3:1; Acts 18:24-28; 20:18-21,27; 28:30-31; Eph. 4:13-14; Col. 3:16.
2. There are certain skills in teaching that can be developed. Review opportunities for Christian education workshops that may be available for you to attend, or consider attending a Sunday school convention.
3. Good lesson plans are often constructed by utilizing ideas from a variety of sources. Although a particular curriculum will probably provide a teacher's manual, you need not be limited to the suggestions in that one source. Build a library of good materials that will help you "spice up" the lesson plan as needed to hold attention or broaden the perspective being presented. Keep a card file of your own creative ideas that can be used to improve a teaching presentation, and make note of how well you perceive the idea was received by the class.
4. Increase your personal knowledge of Christianity by reading some of the spiritual writings of well-known modern authors (C.S., Lewis, Billy Graham, Katherine Marshall, Keith Miller, Thomas a Kempis, and others). Read also some inspirational life accounts of answered prayers (Merlin Crouthers, Harold Hill, Betty Malz, David Wilkerson).
5. Look for a mentor among other teachers - someone whom you feel clearly has a well-developed spiritual gift of teaching, and share teaching stories in order to improve your

teaching methodology and sensitivities

### **General ways to use the gift of teaching:**

- Personally: lead a friend through a Bible study; clarify religious issues for an acquaintance.
- Within the church: serve as a Sunday school teacher; lead an adult Bible study or spiritual conversation class (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: instruct in a life-enrichment class

### **For reflection:**

There is a difference between brilliant knowledge and brilliant teaching. Sometimes it is absolutely dazzling to behold a great oratorical display of knowledge, but little or even none of what was presented may be retained past the moment. Brilliant teaching, however, will be retained because the knowledge and ideas conveyed are somehow vividly made applicable to your own life. We need scholars to sift through pools of knowledge and figure things out for us, but we need teachers to put the knowledge thus attained into terms that we can understand and relate to.

It is important to recognize that faith is a matter of both the heart and the mind. Heartfelt faith will be vulnerable to any onslaught of adversity unless it is sustained by a sound foundation of knowledge attained through the reasoning process. This is where teaching comes in - we can learn a tremendous amount about our faith by simply reading about it, but until it is tested in the crucible of reasonable debate with a good teacher, it may shatter under duress.

All Christians are to share their faith stories as a means of evangelizing and bringing others to Christ. But it is the teacher that builds upon those initial stories with lessons of doctrine, church history, scripture, and personal experience that really converts the learner to a full acceptance of the Christian life. People bearing the gift of teaching will also have an on-going thirst for knowledge and a passion for learning themselves. The incentive will always be to discover new ways to convey God's love through their teaching. When the Holy Spirit is invited to join in the teaching, the result is truly inspirational!

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Music/Vocal (14)

**A gifted story:** There is sweetness to the sound of her voice that can only come from her love of God. You can see it on her face as she sings-- she is praising God with every breath she takes and every note she sings. Alice has been singing in the choir for decades, and she no longer has the power she had when she was younger and there is a slight wavering in her voice. But the richness of her delivery nearly stops the heart because you know an angel is singing, and the beauty of this outpouring of love stirs your soul. Alice's faith shines through her singing, and it is a privilege to witness the presence of the Spirit as she sings. Her gift of vocal music is wonderful to behold.

### **Biblical references:**

1 Cor. 14:26 - *This is what I mean, my brothers. When you meet for worship, one person has a hymn, another a teaching, another a revelation from God, another a message in strange tongues, and still another the explanation of what is said. Everything must be of help to the church.*

Acts 16:25 - *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them...All at once all the doors opened, and the chains fell off the prisoners.*

Eph. 5:19 - *Speak to one another with the words of the psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts.*

Psalms 26:7 - *I sing a hymn of thanksgiving and tell of all your wonderful deeds.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of vocal music: the special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to praise God through song in such a way as to enhance the worship experience of other believers. It is an ability that gives the believer the opportunity to present personal witness and inspiration to others through singing. The key to understanding this gift is not so much the beautiful sounds or the skill with which the notes are delivered, but the inspiration behind the delivery. The spiritual aspect of the gift is revealed in the fullness of song as the gift bearer gives witness to love and praise for the Lord, and thus glorifies God. Listeners become inspired to feel the presence and majesty of God when song is lifted in this spiritual manner.

Singing ability alone is something to admire, but when that ability is raised up as an act of prayer in music from the heart, it can open up others to the presence of the Spirit and lead them toward faith. Not everyone with singing ability has the supernatural gift of vocal singing, but those who have been given this spiritual gift have a special motivation to make sounds that please God and bring joy to others.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. When you sing, do you truly feel the presence of God?
2. Do you see your ability to sing as your means of sharing God with others?
3. Do others see the significance of God in your life through your singing?
4. Have others been led to a new understanding of their own faith through your singing?
5. Do you sense a gifted power and ease in singing that at times seems to transcend your own capabilities?
6. Were your talents in singing evident even at an early age?

### **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Singing ability can be enhanced with vocal training to improve such things as breath control, pitch and timing. Consider voice lessons to help you develop your talent fully.
2. Opportunities to sing within the church are varied, and your gift may be needed for both choral and solo pieces. Train for appropriate vocal deliveries for the type of singing required - learn how best to blend your voice with singing partners in choral situations and how to project your voice fully when singing solo.
3. Come to understand the nature of your gift and how it appears to be utilized for best effect. Strengthen the tie between your singing and your prayer life so that it becomes always an act of prayer for the glory of God. Meditate on why you have been given this gift, and seek to use it in ways you believe fulfill its purpose in you.
4. Listen to the recorded voices of well-known spiritual singers, not to emulate them, but to witness what they bring forth from their hearts. Read autobiographies of these people.
5. There are many references to song and singing in scripture, especially in the Psalms. Spend time internalizing the Psalms so that they become etched in your heart and a ready source for inspiration to sing always to the Lord in praise.
6. Begin gathering a music library of spiritual songs that you know and can sing from memory. Use this repertoire as a source to inspire others to sing in praise to God. Organize evening "sings" at church or at home where fellow members of the congregation can gather to sing favorite songs of praise.

## General ways to use the gift of music/vocal:

- Personally: help family and friends lift their voices in song
- Within the church: join the choir; be a music leader (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: sing in area vocal group for performances of religious works.

## For reflection:

Clearly music pleases God for he gave the ability to sing to many of his creatures, each in unique ways. He gave us many soothing sounds - surf, crackling fire, gentle breezes whistling through treetops, and raindrops in all manner of delivery. Evenings filled with chords of crickets or frogs across the lake offer a serenade of perfect harmony to suggest a peaceful order in nature. To the many birds he gave the joy of song from their perches high above. Higher still angel choirs sing unending praise to God. God's creation is one filled with music - he designed it that way.

It is said that "he who sings, prays twice." It is true that a prayer lifted in song seems to fly off heavenward in a way that touches the heart more deeply than mere utterance. When we sing, we cannot harbor anger, malice, or hatred - the act of singing so fills the heart that it is sanctified, with no room left for anything made out of darkness. When we sing together, a sense of community begins immediately to be felt. It is easy to see why God gave us song in our lives.

Your spiritual gift of singing is surely related to the gift given to members of God's angel choirs. Their singing is pure and sacred and full of joy. Your singing, too, when delivered in praise from the heart will approach that quality. When you sing, you are in the company of angels. God gave you the beauty in your voice, but lovelier still for those of us that listen, is the presence of God we feel when you sing.

*Be joyful in God, all you lands;  
Sing the glory of his Name;  
Sing the glory of his praise.  
From Jubilate Deo (Psalm 66)*

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Wisdom (19)

**A gifted story:** "It's going to fall down any day now!" Everyone looked up at the top of the steeple at the sagging cross. "Someone's going to get killed when it comes down." "We've got to take it down now." The feeling of panic was spreading through the Council. "I wonder how bad it really is- maybe we should just have someone check it over first." Bob spoke softly, and everyone listened. Everyone always listened when Bob finally spoke because it seemed he was usually right. He liked to wait until everyone had shared their thoughts, and then he would ask an insightful question or two, and render his opinion. In the end, Bob's wisdom prevailed and the cross was simply repaired.

### **Biblical references:**

1 Cor. 12:1-8 - *The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all. The Spirit gives one person a full of wisdom, while to another person the same Spirit gives a message full of knowledge.*

James 3:17-18 - *...the wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy. And goodness is the harvest that is produced from the seeds the peacemakers plant in peace.*

2 Peter 3:15 - *Look on our Lord's patience as the opportunity he is giving you to be saved, just as our dear brother Paul wrote to you, using the wisdom that God gave him.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of Wisdom: the special ability that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit and to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the Body of Christ. With this gift the Spirit endows particular Christians with an understanding of God's will and work as it relates to the living of life. In the early church a "message of wisdom" served a revelatory purpose by enabling a few specially chosen individuals to receive the hidden and secret wisdom of God. There was a close kinship between this gift and the gift of prophecy. The Apostles and Prophets exercised this gift regularly, and the wisdom the Paul received resulted in a considerable amount of Scripture. Many feel that the "message of wisdom" was fulfilled upon the completion of the New Testament.

However, it is still commonly accepted that "wisdom"(vs. a "message of wisdom") is needed by every Christian in order to find the right course to take after considering various sources of information. Some people are endowed with a special ability to sift through all the facts and see the bottom line, to understand the direction that needs to be taken after hearing all the possibilities and considering all the details. These are the people today that we believe have the gift of wisdom. Although special inspiration from God is not ruled out, the gift is more likely to be exercised to choose the best logical course of action.

## **Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. Have you applied spiritual truth effectively to situations in your own life?
2. When a person has a problem, are you usually able to guide them to the best biblical solution?
3. Do others ask you for workable ideas or alternatives?
4. Do your recommendations for church positions or solutions to problems often turn out well?
5. Can you intuitively arrive at solutions to fairly complicated problems?
6. Are you comfortable grappling with a variety of possibilities and determining which appears best?

## **Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. It is especially important that you understand the nature of your gift of wisdom as it applies to you. Study all appropriate Bible passages to clarify the difference between a “message of wisdom” and the “use of wisdom.” Read especially: 1 Cor. 2:4-13; 4:1;12:7-10; 13:8-12; James 1:5; 3:13-18; Peter 3:15-16. Also read about the wisdom of Solomon: 2 Chronicles 1: 1-12; 1 Kings 3:1-28.
2. There is considerable responsibility attached to being known as a good decision-maker. It will be important for you to develop the discipline to hear all sides fully, to gather and absorb all relevant facts and consider all perspectives before making a determination as to the best course of action to take. Learn how to do this methodically and to document the details that support your conclusion.
3. Having the wisdom to make right choices carries the burden of delivering the advice thus generated, and this may not always be popular. Learn how to present your determination in a convincing manner, helping all sides realize how their views were carefully considered and weighed. Work on laying out your finding compassionately and always under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
4. Insure that you give attention to the urgings of the Holy Spirit in your deliberations and decision-making through prayer. Learn to subjugate your own beliefs, preferences and particular dogmas as well as those views of people in a position to influence you in favor of making truly wise determinations base on the evidence and guidance of the Spirit.
5. Develop the ability to ask probing and pertinent questions that bring out what everyone needs

to hear. Study basic logical concepts (as well as fallacies) that will help you analyze arguments and see truth more readily. Appropriately targeted questions can often help a person see things in a different light.

6.

Study group dynamics to learn how people interact in a group setting. This will give you insight into why people may be reacting and contributing in certain ways to the group discussion and better enable you to get to the heart of the matter at hand.

### **General ways to use the gift of wisdom:**

- Personally: assist family or friends in making good decisions
- Within the church: be a council member or officer; plug in to task forces or committees (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: serve on any of various community service boards

### **For reflection:**

Having wisdom and being able to convey it are two very different things. Your gift of wisdom will enable you to readily see a truth that you may find incredible others fail to see. You will need to be patient enough to give others time to “see the light” as is evident to you. Steven Covey, in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, presents a good discussion on paradigms that shape our thinking. Helping people to shift their paradigms is an important step in broadening their range of acceptance of new ideas. You will need to have a good grasp of where people are coming from as you seek to exercise your gift of wisdom and communicate your conclusions.

Wisdom is not the only gift needed for good decision-making. The logical answer may not be the right answer. As such, you will have to factor in the contributions of people with the gift of discernment - these people have a sense of what is right and wrong, what is good and what is evil, what is appropriately motivated and what is not. When it is determined, however, that the course under consideration is a good one, wisdom should be employed to help determine the best direction to take for the task to be appropriately completed to everyone’s satisfaction.

In some ways using wisdom is like playing chess - you have to look ahead at all the possibilities and see which avenues are clear and which are fraught with peril. It takes a lot of hard thought to be a grand master chess-player. Similarly, exercising wisdom is no easy task, but when thoughtfully done, perilous situations are avoided and the church is

[ [TOP](#) ]

## The Gift of Writing (20)

**A gifted story:** Catherine just wanted to tell the story about her husband's life after he died. His sermons were so inspiring that he was known the world over for his splendid oratory from the pulpit. Somehow, she thought, she should try to put to writing some of his homilies. Would God give her the gift of writing to thus carry on his ministry? And so Catherine compiled many of Peter's sermons, put them in a book and wrote an introduction - she entitled it, *Mr. Jones, Meet the Master*. That was followed by *A Man Called Peter*. Both were best sellers. Over the years Catherine Marshall has reached countless thousands of people with her spiritual prose in numerous books. Her spiritual gift of writing is now well known.

### **Biblical references:**

1 Tim. 3:14-15 - *As I write this letter to you, I hope to come and see you soon. But if I delay, this letter will let you know how we should conduct ourselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.*

John 20:30-31 - *In his disciples' presence Jesus performed many other miracles which are not written down in this book. But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life.*

1 John 2:12-14 - *I write to you, my children, because your sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who has existed from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have defeated the Evil One. I write to you, my children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who has existed from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are string; the word of God lives in you, and you have defeated the Evil One.*

### **Definition and comment:**

The gift of writing: the special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to translate Bible truths into a written form that can edify, instruct and strengthen the community of believers. This is a gift of creative ability that is called into use in the service of the Lord to forward his kingdom. Although this gift is not specifically named in New Testament gift lists, there is little dispute that God still gives special creative abilities for use in his work today as he did in Old Testament times. David's great poetic ability was a skill God used to enhance temple worship, and his writings became timeless through the Psalms, moving literally hundreds of generations of believers.

Man was made in the image of God, the Great Creator, and creativity is part of that image. As men and women find outlets for their creativity, they are fulfilled knowing what they have done is good. Music, drama, painting, sculpting and writing all are born out of the creative instinct God placed in humans. When these abilities are dedicated to the building up of the church or to glorify God, there is an openness to Holy Spirit empowerment. It is in that context that writing is being considered a

spiritual gift.

**Affirm that you have this gift; questions to ask yourself:**

1. In your writing have you felt inspired by God to write a certain way?
2. Do you see your ability to write as your means of sharing God with others?
3. Do others see the significance of God in your life through your writing?
4. Have others been led to a new understanding of their own faith through your writing?
5. Do you sense a gifted power and ease in writing that at times seems to transcend your own capabilities?
6. Were your talents in writing evident even at an early age?

**Areas for study and personal growth:**

1. Come to understand the nature of your gift and how it appears to be utilized for best effect. Strengthen the tie between your writing and your prayer life so that it becomes always an act of prayer for the glory of God. Meditate on why you have been given this gift, and seek to use it in ways you believe fulfill its purpose in you.
2. Skill as a writer comes from mastery of basic rules of grammar and punctuation as well as learning the elements of style. Insure that you have mastered these essentials.
3. Establish a comfortable setting where you can write effectively without being disturbed. Equip yourself well for the task, and develop an appropriate discipline for regular exercise of your gift. Style and good phraseology are developed and enhanced through practice.
4. Make it a habit to read the spiritual writings of others to gain an appreciation for the range of content being offered, and consider the variety of ways you may be able to use your gift in God's service. Learn also to listen to verbal accounts of Christian experiences that they might offer inspiration for future writings.
5. Seek the heavenly guidance of the Holy Spirit when writing. Insure that you are open to inspiration through prayer as you gather your thoughts and seek the best methods of expression. Develop a prayer rule of life to support your craft.
6. Consider attending a creative or spiritual writer's workshop, such as the Christian Writers Conference and Workshop or the Billy Graham School of Writing.

## **General ways to use the gift of writing:**

- Personally: write a family history
- Within the church: create worship liturgies; write newsletter articles; compose workbooks and teaching materials (see more specific church service opportunities in the Booklet *Channels for Using the Gifts*).
- Within the wider community: do free lance religious writing.

## **For reflection:**

When creating we must search for a new expressiveness we have not known before. This activity can only be performed with a high degree of openness to new possibilities. The need for this kind of openness is doubly important if we wish to be the hands of Christ in our writing. The Holy Spirit must be able to penetrate through the thick exterior of our limited experiences. Writing in the service of the Lord requires sufficient discipline to hold open the channel to God so that the Holy Spirit can move us in appropriate directions.

The spiritual gift of writing is both a personal and public blessing. Because the act of creation is so fulfilling, you will experience all the excitement that arises from any creative adventure. But when you place your writing in the service of the Lord, it takes on a public dimension of great importance to the church. The church needs spiritual writers and new ways for the gospel story to be told among the people. Each age brings with it different vernaculars, different perceptions, and different ways of comprehending truth. Spiritual writings expand the influence of the church beyond its limited boundaries, while often bringing new insights even to members within the church.

You will find writing in the service of the Lord to be a spiritual experience as you feel a responsibility and urgency to put forth a message that will enhance the spiritual understanding of others and move them into a closer relationship with their Maker. As your writing is led by the Spirit, so you will be too. What better way to straighten any crooked path that might lie ahead!

[ [TOP](#) ]