WESTVIEW
Baptist Church

Spiritual Gifts Study Guide

To Equip the Saints at Westview

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OVERVIEW

The pastoral team has discussed how Westview can **go deeper in our spiritual** lives. We also believe it is important for Westview to encourage ***gift-based ministry***.

We believe it is good to discern, discuss, and study the same subject at the same time, during the sermon series on Spiritual Gifts entitled, Superpowers.

Here is a basic outline for self-study and participation:

1. October 2 to October 16: Awareness communications.
2. October 16 to October 30: Complete study and Spiritual Gifts questionnaire.
3. October 30 to November 20: Send in Spiritual Gifts summary to the church office.

Note: We hope to gather this information in order to serve together more effectively, and better enable the *Nominating Team*, as they consider people for various ministry positions.

Goals

1. Congregants discover and develop their spiritual gifts.
2. Enable gift-based ministries here at Westview as God has intended.
3. Spiritual growth both personally and as a faith community.
4. High degree of participation amongst the congregation – in the study and especially to complete questionnaire and send information to office..

INTRODUCTION: *What are spiritual gifts?*

Who doesn't love to receive a gift? No matter the occasion or even the lack of an occasion, we all love gifts. A gift is an expression of the giver's love and appreciation for the one who is receiving it. Gifts are meant to reveal the giver's heart and display it to the recipient. The gift itself is not only to be a symbol of love and appreciation, but it is to be received and enjoyed.

The same is true of spiritual gifts, but to a higher degree. Spiritual gifts are from God and are given as a symbol of His divine grace and love for His people. They are meant to be received and used for His glory and in fulfillment of His perfect will. So what is a spiritual gift? How are spiritual gifts to be understood by Christians?

One helpful definition is this: **A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given to believers in Jesus, who have received the Holy Spirit, to do ministry for God in His Kingdom.**

Spiritual gifts are supernatural. This means they are outside the realm of human nature. They cannot be explained by natural law and are not able to be obtained or learned by natural means. They can only be explained as supernaturally coming from God according to His will.

Special talent or aptitude is also a gift from God. Everyone has some sort of ability or aptitude they are given seemingly at birth. This is evidence of God's common grace to all. Both spiritual gifts and talents have their origin in God, however, there are significant differences between the two.

God allows talents to be used for a variety of purposes. We see this everywhere we look: in every business we visit, in every movie we watch and every song we hear. People use their talents for a variety of benefits and rewards.

When it comes to spiritual gifts, God opens up the opportunity for His people to serve Him and bring Him glory with those gifts. Only Christians are given spiritual gifts, so only they can bring God glory in exercising them.

Although talents and spiritual gifts are all given by God, talents lack one other thing: they do not have a supernatural effect in the world. Spiritual gifts have their source in God and their effect is supernatural. This is true even in the outwardly *normal* or *ordinary* types of gifts. Hearts being transformed by spoken words, or mercy that draws the brokenhearted to Jesus are supernatural results. Healing and faith and worship that come as a result of being faithful stewards of our spiritual gifts are expressly supernatural outcomes.

Scripture tells us since the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit has given gifts to the church.[1]

[1] Adapted from: Carver, Jeff, *Gifted by grace. An introduction to the Holy Spirit and Spiritual gifts*. (Jeff Carver, 2015), pp. 27-30.

DIGGING DEEPER: Biblical foundations.

Read the passages of scripture and write down the Spiritual Gifts you see mentioned in each case. Also write down the results or benefits mentioned in each passage.

Biblical Reference	Spiritual Gifts	Results or benefits
1 Corinthians 12		
Romans 12:1 – 8		
Ephesians 4:1 – 16		
1 Peter 4:7 – 11		

Links:

James 1:5	Ephesians 4:1 - 16	Roman 10:9 – 10	Matt. 7:15–24; 25:14-30
Romans 12:1 – 8	1 Peter 4:7 – 11	Acts 18:1 – 17	1 Corinthians 4:1 – 2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the best gift you have ever *received*? Who gave it to you? Why was it so special to you? What is the best gift you have ever *given*? Who did you give it to and why?

2. What do you think of spiritual gifts?

3. What could be some differences between talents, experiences, knowledge, and spiritual gifts?

4. Are you aware of *your* spiritual gifts? Have you ever taken a 'gift assessment' before?

5. If you could have any spiritual gift, what would it be? Why?

6. If you could be involved in any ministry at all, what would it be? Why?

7. What can you do to be a good steward of the spiritual gifts you have been given?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Theology and language.

The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit

We draw our understanding from the entirety of Scripture and when it comes to Spiritual Gifts, particularly from the epistles, which were written as instruction for the churches.

1. God gives the Holy Spirit to each believer at the time of conversion as a seal of ownership and promise of His empowerment (Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:13; II Cor. 1:21, 22; Titus 3:1–7).

2. 'Baptism of the Spirit' and the receiving of the Holy Spirit are one and the same thing. 'Baptism of the Spirit' could also be a description for a spiritual renewal or an additional 'blessing of the Spirit' which can take place in the life of a follower of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 11:15–18; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:4, 5).

3. The fullness of the Holy Spirit should be a continuous, dynamic, growing process throughout the life of the believer (Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:18–21; Col. 1:27–29).

4. As Christians turn from sin and yield themselves more fully to the influence of the Holy Spirit, they will experience renewal and vibrancy in their spiritual lives (Rom. 8; II Cor. 4:16–18; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 6:10–18).

5. The fullness of the Holy Spirit will result in a deeper desire for holiness and obedience, and the fruit of the Spirit, albeit not limited to this alone in one's life (I Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22–25).

6. The Holy Spirit has gifted all believers to make a unique contribution to God's work on earth. There is no one gift that everyone must have (Rom. 12:3–21; I Cor. 12–14; Eph. 4:7–16).

8. Speaking in unique 'tongues' is a gift the Holy Spirit gives to whom He wills and should be exercised within the Scriptural guidelines given. It is not a sign the person has now received the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12–14).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS Phrase regularly used to translate two Greek words, *charismata* and *pneumatika* (the plural forms of *charisma* and *pneumatikon*). Both words are almost exclusively Pauline within the biblical writings; elsewhere in the NT, they appear only in 1 Peter 2:5 and 4:10. Other writers, of course, mention phenomena that fall within Paul's definition of "spiritual gifts," but for specific teaching on the subject, one must depend on Paul first and foremost.

Both words are derived from more familiar words, *charis* (grace) and *pneuma* (spirit). Both have similar senses—*charisma* meaning "expression of grace," *pneumatikon* meaning "expression of Spirit." Their range of application, however, is somewhat different.

Charisma denotes God's saving action in Christ (Rom 5:15–16) and the gift of eternal life (6:23). More generally, in Romans 11:29 it probably refers to the series of gracious acts on behalf of Israel whereby God made Israel's calling and election sure. In 2 Corinthians 1:11 it probably refers to a particular action of God that brought Paul deliverance from deadly peril. Otherwise, the reference seems to be to divine grace as mediated through individuals, with Paul presumably thinking of the sort of utterances and deeds that he illustrates in Romans 12:6–8 and 1 Corinthians 12:8–10.

Pneumatikon has a wider range of usage. It is more properly an adjective and so describes various things (and people) as "spiritual," as manifesting the Spirit, or as serving as the instrument of the Spirit. These include some particular word or act (Rom 1:11), the law (7:14), the manna, water from the rock, and the rock itself in the wilderness wanderings of Israel (1 Cor 10:3–4), the resurrection body (15:44–46), unspecified blessings "in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:3), particular insights into the divine will (Col 1:9), and songs in worship (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). As a plural noun, it can be used of individuals ("the spiritual ones," 1 Cor 2:13, 15; 14:37; Gal 6:1) or of things ("the spirituals," "spiritual gifts," Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 2:13; 9:11; 12:1; 14:1), even "spiritual powers in heaven" (Eph 6:12).

From this brief survey, a more precise definition of "spiritual gifts" can be made. Whatever thing or individual serves as an instrument of the Spirit or manifests the Spirit or embodies the Spirit is a spiritual gift (*pneumatikon*). Whatever event, word, or action is a concrete expression of grace or serves as a means of grace is a spiritual gift (*charisma*). *Pneumatikon* is the more general word; *charisma* is more specific. Moreover, *charisma* is probably Paul's own word (Rom 1:11; 12:6; 1 Cor 7:7; 12:4) in preference to the more ambiguous *pneumatikon*, which seems to have been popular with those causing difficulty for Paul in Corinth (1 Cor 2:13–3:4; 14:37; 15:44–46). Consequently, attention will focus in what follows on *charisma*. Not forgetting those passages where Paul uses this word in broader terms for the direct act of God (Rom 5:15, 16; 6:23; 11:29; 1 Cor 1:11), concentration will be on the passages where Paul speaks in more precise terms of particular manifestations of grace mediated through one individual to others—"spiritual gifts" in this the narrower sense of *charisma*.

The lists of *charismata* (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4; 1 Pt 4) are the obvious starting point because they provide the clearest indications of what Paul would include within the range

of spiritual gifts. For Paul (the one who gave Christianity the concept of *charisma*), a spiritual gift is essentially an act of God's Spirit, a concrete manifestation in word or deed of God's grace through an individual for the benefit of others.

In its basic sense, a spiritual gift is a specific act of God, and this remains true even when it is mediated through any individual. This means that no one can hope to manifest such a gift except in conscious openness to and dependence on God. By extension Paul can speak of individuals "having" or "possessing" certain spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 7:7; 12:3), but this is presumably just shorthand for their being so open to God's grace that that grace regularly or constantly manifests itself through them in particular ways. Such language no more means that the *charisma* is an ability at the individual's command than does the similar talk of "having the Spirit" (Rom 8:9, 23). It is true, however, that in 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6 this basic sense is beginning to be left behind.

A spiritual gift is any event, word, or action that embodies and expresses God's grace. In this sense sacraments can be "means of grace" (though they are never called this in the NT), as are many other utterances and actions as well. In recognizing this, one can recognize too that the lists of gifts (e.g., Rom 12:6–8; 1 Cor 12:8–10) are neither definitive nor exhaustive, simply typical manifestations of the Spirit (or those with which they needed some advice). The degree of overlap between these various lists shows that Paul was not concerned to specify a precisely defined catalog; he simply selected a number of activities and utterances through which he saw the grace of God manifesting itself in his churches.

It is important to grasp that Paul saw all Christians as charismatics. Whoever "has" the Spirit—that is, is open to and being led by the Spirit (Rom 8:9–14)—will inevitably manifest the grace of God in some way and should also be open to the Spirit's power coming to expression in particular words and deeds within the community of the Spirit. For Paul, the church is the body of Christ. The functions of that body's members are exemplified by the spiritual gifts (Rom 12:4–6; 1 Cor 12:14–30). Unless the individual is functioning charismatically, he is not functioning as a member of the body. The Spirit's gifts are the living movements of Christ's body. As the body is many different members functioning as one body, so the unity of the church grows out of the diverse functions (gifts) of its members. It follows that a spiritual gift is given primarily with the community in view. It is given "for the common good" (1 Cor 12:7). That is why a selfish, loveless clutching after *charismata* is wrong and futile (13:1–3). A spiritual gift is never one's to use as one wants for one's own benefit (except perhaps glossolalia, but that is why Paul gives it lower value). It is given to one only in the sense that God chooses to act through one for others. More precisely, it is given only through one to the community, and one benefits only as the community benefits. The spiritual health and edification of the individual is inextricably bound up with the health and well-being of the whole body (12:14–26; Eph 4:16). [2]

[2] Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (pp. 1222–1223). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

SPIRITUAL GIFT DEFINITIONS:

The following contains **suggested** definitions of spiritual gifts. While not meant to be dogmatic or final, these definitions and supporting scriptures do correspond to characteristics of the gifts as expressed in the *Wagner-Modified Houts Questionnaire*.

A. **Prophecy**. The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely-anointed utterance.	I Cor. 12:10, 28 Eph. 4:11 – 14 Romans 12:6 Luke 7:26 Acts 15:32 Acts 21:9 – 11
B. **Shepherd.** The gift of shepherd is the special ability that Godgives to certain members of the body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.	Eph. 4:11 – 14 I Timothy 3:1 – 7 John 10:1 – 18 I Peter 5:1 – 3
C. **Teaching.** The gift of teaching is 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 in such a way that others will learn.	I Cor. 12:28 Eph. 4:11 – 14 Romans 12:7 Acts 18:24 – 28 Acts 12: 20 – 21
D. **Wisdom.** The gift of wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may best be applied to specific needs arising in the body of Christ.	I Cor. 2:1 – 13 I Cor. 12:8 Acts 6:3, 10 James 1:5 – 6 II Peter 3:15,16
E. **Knowledge.** The gift of knowledge is 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 well being of the body.	I Cor. 2:14 I Cor. 12:8 Acts 5:1 – 1 1 Coloss. 2:2 – 3 II Cor. 11:6
F. **Exhortation.** The gift of exhortation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel to other members of the body in such a way that they feel helped and healed.	Romans 12:8 I Timothy 4:13 Hebrews 10:25 Acts 14:22
G. **Discerning of Spirits**. The gift of discerning of spirits is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know with assurance whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human, or satanic.	I Cor. 12:10 Acts 5:1 – 11 Acts 16:16 – 18 I John 4:1 – 6 Matt. 16:21 – 23
H. **Giving**. The gift of giving is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to contribute their material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.	Romans 12:8 II Cor. 8:1 – 7 II Cor. 9:2 – 8 Mark 12:41 – 44

I. **Helps.** The gift of helps is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the body, with thus enabling those others to increase the effectiveness of their own spiritual gifts.	I Cor. 12:28 Romans 16:1 – 2 Acts 9:36 Luke 8:2 – 3 Mark 15: 40 – 41
J. **Mercy.** The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals (both Christian & non – Christian) who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems, and to translate that compassion into cheerfully done deeds which reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.	Romans 12:8 Mark 9:41 Acts 16:33 – 34 Luke 10:33 – 35 Matt. 20:29 – 34 Matt. 25:34 – 40 Acts 11:28 – 30
K. **Missionary.** The gift of missionary is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture.	I Cor.9:19 – 23 Acts 8:4 Acts 13:2 – 3 Acts 22:21 Romans 10:15
L. **Evangelist.** The gift of evangelist is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the body of Christ.	Eph. 4:11 – 14 II Timothy 4:5 Acts 8:5 – 6 Acts 8:26 – 40 Acts 14:21 Acts 21:8
M. **Hospitality**. The gift of hospitality is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to provide an open house and a warm welcome to those in need of food and lodging.	I Peter 4:9 Romans 12:9 – 13 Romans 16:23 Acts 16:14 – 15 Hebrews 13:1 - 2
N. **Faith.** The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for His work.	I Cor. 12:9 Acts 11:22 – 24 Acts 27:21 – 25 Hebrews 11 Romans 4:18 – 21
O. **Leadership.** The gift of leadership is 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 to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish these goals for the glory of God.	I Timothy 5:17 Acts 7:10 Acts 15:7 – 11 Romans 12:8 Hebrews 13:17 Luke 9:51
P. **Administration.** The gift of administration is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long range goals of a particular unit of the body of Christ and to devise and execute effective plans for the accomplishment of those goals.	I Cor. 12:28 Acts 6:1 – 7 Acts 27:11 Luke 14:28 – 30 Titus 1:5

Q. **Miracles.** The gift of miracles is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to perform such powerful acts that are perceived by observers to have altered the ordinary course of nature.	I Cor. 12:10, 28 Acts 9:36 – 42 Acts 19:11 – 20 Acts 20:7 – 12 Romans 15:18 – 19 II Cor. 12:12
R. **Healing.** The gift of healing is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to serve as human intermediaries through whom it pleases God to cure illness and restore health apart from the use of natural means.	I Cor. 12:9, 28 Acts 3:1 – 10 Acts 5:12 – 16 Acts 9:32 – 35 Acts 28:7 - 10
S. **Tongues.** The gift of tongues is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ (a) to speak to God in a language they have never learned and/or (b) to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people through a divinely – anointed utterance in a language they have never learned.	I Cor.12:10, 28 I Cor. 14:13 – 19 Acts 2:1 – 13 Acts 10:44 – 46 Acts 19:1 – 7 Mark 16:17
T. **Interpretation**. The gift of interpretation is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to make known in a vernacular the message of one who speaks in tongues.	I Cor. 12:10, 30 I Cor. 14:13 I Cor. 14:26 - 28
U. **Voluntary Poverty.** The gift of voluntary poverty is the special ability that God gives to 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.	I Cor. 13:1 – 3 Acts 2:44 – 45 Acts 4:34 – 37 II Cor. 6:10 II Cor. 8:9
V. **Celibacy.** The gift of celibacy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to remain single and enjoy it; to be unmarried and not suffer undue sexual temptations.	I Cor. 7:7 – 8 Matt. 19:10 – 12
W. **Intercession**. The gift of Intercession is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specific answers to their prayers, to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian.	James 5:14 – 16 I Timothy 2:1 – 2 Coloss.1:9 – 12 Coloss.4:12 – 13 Acts 12:12 Luke 22:41 – 44
X. **Deliverance.** The gift of deliverance is the special ability God gives to members of the body of Christ to cast out demons and evil spirits.	Matt.12:22 – 32 Luke 10:12 – 20 Acts 8:5 – 8 Acts 16:16 – 18
Y. **Service**. The gift of service is 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 to help accomplish the desired results.	II Tim. 1:16 – 18 Romans 12:7 Acts 6:1 – 7 Titus 3:14 Gal. 6:2, 10