

BIG IDEA: Spiritual gifts are for everyone – all we have to do is ask!

INTRO:

- Have you ever bought a piece of furniture or an item that needed to be assembled, and you look at the instructions and you realize one of two things: 1) The person writing these instructions has never actually put one of these things together, or 2) The person writing these instructions does not speak English as the primary language.
 - I bring this up because when I read some of the articles or YouTube videos about spiritual gifts, it feels like the confusion of these instructions.

1 Cor 12:1

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

- There's so much confusion in the American church on the subject of spiritual gifts.
- But when you read what the Bible has to say, it's actually not that complicated.
- So today, I'm going to answer 3 big questions that many people have about spiritual gifts. Maybe these are questions that you have. The first question is this:
 - 1) Why is there so much confusion about spiritual gifts?**
 - a. **Because Satan is sowing confusion.**
- Spiritual gifts are like power tools, energized by the Holy Spirit to build the Kingdom of God.
 - Is it any surprise that Satan would want to cause confusion about this subject?
 - Satan wants a weak, ineffective church that is spiritually dead. He wants a church that can't break people free from addictions, heal the sick, or cast out demons. He wants a church that doesn't minister to the poor, is not racially diverse, and is not effective in reaching lost people and discipling them.

1 Cor 2:4-5

my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- b. **Because people are trying to analyze them without experiencing them.**
- There is so much about the Christian life that you can never understand until you experience it.
 - Christianity is like a giant cathedral with stained glass windows. When you're outside, the windows look grey and indistinguishable. But when you step inside, the windows come to life with brilliant colors of biblical stories and saints of old.
 - Just the same, you will never understand Christianity from the outside looking in.
 - Many of the books that are out there today on spiritual gifts are written by people who have never experienced spiritual gifts for themselves.

- In the Vineyard, we believe in all of the spiritual gifts that are in the Bible and that every follower of Jesus is to operate in spiritual gifts!

2) What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

a. To glorify God.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

- When you study spiritual gifts in the Bible, there are 4 main passages that talk about spiritual gifts:
 - 1 Corinthians 12
 - Romans 12
 - Ephesians 4
 - 1 Peter 4:11

1 Peter 4:11

whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Depending on who you are talking to there are 7, 9 or 12 gifts. While those are the ones specifically listed in the Bible, you need to know that in no way are the gifts of the Bible limited to those gifts. Those lists are given as examples of the gifts, not as exhaustive lists.

- When spiritual gifts are in operation: people are drawn upward towards God, and they end up giving glory to God!
- Spiritual gifts are gifts!

Now there are varieties of [gifts](#), but the same Spirit. | 1 Corinthians 12:4 (NASB)

- Spiritual gifts are not given to us based on merit! You don't get them for a job well done. You can't earn them.
- You don't give your kids Christmas gifts because they "earned" them – we give them gifts because we love them! This is what the Bible teaches us about God: God gives us good gifts to his children!
- There is no relationship whatsoever between a spiritual gift that is given to someone by God, and the level of that person's spiritual maturity!
- The only condition for receiving spiritual gifts is to want them and to ask for them. God is sovereign. And he gives spiritual gifts to whomever he pleases. But I have found that the more I've asked for them, the more I've gotten them.

b. To build up the body of Christ (the Church)

1 Corinthians 12:7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

- Each gift is purposed for the common good of God's family, the Church!

- Sometimes, certain spiritual gifts get suppressed and shut down. When that happens, some people feel like they don't fit in or belong. On the other hand, when these gifts are released in a church, people feel like they are needed, and belong.
 - Early church meetings happened in homes, with 20-30 people. In that smaller context, Paul says that everybody has something to contribute when it comes to spiritual gifts.
 - Here at the Vineyard, we do the same thing! We encourage all of our small groups to let all of the spiritual gifts be expressed.
- Spiritual gifts are like bodybuilding equipment at the gym, where people use certain pieces of equipment all the time. A lot of men want to build up their chest, so they spend lots of time at the bench press. Some people stay on the treadmill or elliptical to focus on their cardio health and their heart.
 - This happens in many of today's churches where only certain gifts are permitted to be used.
 - This is like telling a human body to only use some of its parts. Only use your hands, but don't use your feet, eyes, or ears.
 - When this happens, the "body" can begin to appear deformed.
 - Many churches are deformed because they're not working out all of the parts of the body. "We only allow evangelism, teaching, service, and the gift of helps. But we don't believe in tongues, prophecy, healing, or words of knowledge." And when this happens, the church is not as strong as it could be!
- It is a dispensational viewpoint that the supernatural gifts of the spirit ended when the Bible was canonized, or agreed upon by multiple counsels as the Word of God.
 - There is nothing in the Bible that suggests that supernatural gifts and signs stopped when the Bible was canonized.
- We've talked about some of the reasons why there is so much confusion, and the purposes of the spiritual gifts. But there's also a personal dimension.
 - Like standing on the outside of a cathedral looking in, and the windows appear grey and devoid of imagery, for whatever reason, some of us continue to stay on the outside. Why is that?

3. Why don't we seek spiritual gifts from God?

a. We've had some kind of disappointment with God.

- Maybe you've lost a loved one after believing and praying for them. Maybe you've asked to receive the gift of tongues, and it seems like you never received them. Maybe you tried to prophesy, and it flopped. Maybe you've been praying to get pregnant, and nothing is happening.
 - Everybody becomes disappointed with God at some point.
 - When you try to move in the power of God, you will have to deal with failure all the time. You'll never be successful in moving forward in the power of God unless you learn how to deal with failure.
- The Kingdom of God is like a picket fence.
 - Is it all wood? No. Is it all space? No. It is both wood and space at the same time. It's fence and not fence.
 - The Kingdom of God is already here, and it's not yet here. And we have to live with this tension at all times!
- When you seek to move in spiritual gifts, it's not about you! It's all about God.
 - Sometimes God breaks in, and sometimes He doesn't. And we will always have to live in this tension.

- So whenever you are trying to move in a spiritual gift, and it seems like you've failed, you haven't failed, you're just living in the tension!
- So keep trying!
- b. **Personal discomfort.**
- For some of you, it's not that you don't see spiritual gifts as unbiblical, or not from God – it's just that you feel uncomfortable with some of the supernatural signs and wonders that we experience sometimes.
 - Because of former trauma, this might be because you feel like you've lost control.
 - But God can and wants to use spiritual gifts to help build trust so that you can release control to Him.
 - God wants us to trust Him in everything! Even right now, the Holy Spirit is inviting you to take a risk, and trust him.
- e. **We've had distorted teaching about spiritual gifts in our past.**
- Maybe you grew up in a pentecostal church that taught that if you don't receive the gift of tongues, you are not filled with the Spirit. Or you experienced prophecy that was flaky or false. Or maybe you've been in circles where the environment is hyper-emotional and demonstrative, and you were so turned off that you said, "I want nothing to do with all that."
- Or maybe you came from the other side of the spectrum that told you that if you opened yourself up to speaking in tongues, or the gift of prophecy, you were opening yourself up to demons! So because of that, you've drawn back from certain spiritual gifts.
- The proper response to the misuse of spiritual gifts is the proper use of spiritual gifts!
 - Study what the Bible actually teaches about spiritual gifts, and ask God to show you what the truth really is!
 - Sometimes, we have to renounce faulty teaching and ask God to break its power of you so that God can reveal the truth. Some of you need to do that right now.

PRAY: Holy Spirit, Come! Bring healing to my heart when it comes to disappointment, a need for control, and faulty teaching on spiritual gifts. Break the power of those things, so they no longer affect my thinking moving forward. Open my spiritual eyes to see and know the truth! EMPOWER ME as I receive the gifts you want to give me.