

A SURVEY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I. EQUIPPING GIFTS

These are gifts that are specifically identified as persons who provide for the equipping of the others, so that the saints may do the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:11-12):

A. FOUNDATIONAL EQUIPPERS

These first two are the “foundations” that the church has been built on (Ephesians 2:20). In that sense, they were given just once to the church and are no longer being given:

- **APOSTLES:** those men sent by the Lord, having seen Him in His resurrection, to testify of Him and provide the foundational witness of the church (1 Corinthians 12:28; Eph. 4:11).
- **PROPHETS:** those individuals used by the Lord to serve as the instruments of special divine inspiration prior to the completion of the New Testament. An example of this is Agabus in Acts 11:28; 21:10-11 (1 Corinthians 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

B. MAINTENANCE EQUIPPERS

These second two are given to provide for the ongoing support of that which was built upon the foundational gifts. They are continually being given to the church:

- **EVANGELISTS:** those who were sent out authoritatively as travelling missionaries who introduced the gospel to unreached people and helped establish a church in an unreached area. An example would be Philip in Acts 8:26-40 and 21:8 (Eph. 4:11).
- **PASTORS AND TEACHERS:** two words that describe one person (“pastor” emphasizing his shepherding work, and “teacher” emphasizing his instructional and exhortational work); those men who serve as the ministers of a local congregation (Eph. 4:11; see also Acts 20:28-30 and 1 Peter 5:1-5).

II. SPEAKING GIFTS

Based on the division given us in 1 Peter 4:11, these are gifts that are uniquely “up-front” kinds of gifts. They primarily meet the “instructional” and “exhortational” needs of the body of Christ:

- **PROPHECY (as distinct from “prophets”):** the ability to proclaim a specific message from God to the people of God with authority and power, and in such a way as to result in the people being admonished, or exhorted, or encouraged. This has often been associated in the history of the church with the idea of “preaching” (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 14:1-3, 6).
- **TEACHING:** the ability to study, explain and apply truths from God’s word in such a way that the people of God clearly learn—in a logical and applicational way— what they are to believe and do (Rom. 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:6).
- **EXHORTATION:** the ability to challenge and motivate believers to respond to God’s call on their lives, and to put into practical action the specific things He desires them to do (Romans 12:8; see also Acts 15:32).
- **WISDOM:** the ability to know how to recommend and apply spiritual truth to a particular situation in the best way, so that the result that God desires is achieved (1 Corinthians 12:8).
- **KNOWLEDGE:** the ability to discover, understand, and systematize pertinent spiritual truth or information that the body of Christ needs in a particular situation (1 Corinthians 12:8; 14:6).
- **DISCERNMENT:** the ability to distinguish and clearly identify the spirit of truth from the spirit of error; and thus protect the church family from harm (1 Corinthians 12:10; see also 1 John 4:6).
- **TONGUES:** the ability to receive and express a spiritual message in a language that the speaker has never learned (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 14:1-5; see also Acts 2:4-11). The proper use of this gift is always associated with the gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:5, 13, 27-28); always in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:27, 32-33), and ultimately with the goal of being understood by the body of Christ (vv. 5, 7-19).
- **INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES:** the ability to translate a message that was publically uttered through the gift of tongues, so that the body of Christ can understand and discern the message, and become edified by it (1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:5, 13, 26-28).

III. MINISTERING GIFTS

Again based on the division given us in 1 Peter 4:11, these are gifts that are uniquely “behind-the-scenes” kinds of gifts. They primarily meet the “practical” needs of the body of Christ:

- **SERVICE:** the ability to identify, provide for and complete the physical tasks that the body of Christ needs to have met (Romans 12:7, where it is called “ministry”; see also 1 Peter 4:11).
- **HELPS:** the ability to enhance and enable the ministry of others in the body of Christ (who themselves may have the gift of service) by being a practical support to them in their work (1 Corinthians 12:28).
- **GIVING:** the cheerful willingness, ability and resources from God to contribute materially to the work of Body, thus enabling others to fulfill their ministry and meet pressing needs (Romans 12:8).
- **LEADERSHIP:** the ability to, with diligence, discern God’s purpose for a group, set its goals, communicate its vision, and motivate its participants all the way to the completion of a task that God calls them to (Romans 12:8).
- **ADMINISTRATION:** the ability to manage the resources, personnel and organization of the church family toward a certain task in such a way as to most effectively accomplish its goals (1 Corinthians 12:28).
- **MERCY:** the ability to compassionately listen to and understand the suffering, distress, guilt or needs of others, and to minister comfort and encouragement to them in such a way as to help meet their physical, emotional and spiritual needs through Christ in a non-condemning way (Romans 12:8).
- **FAITH:** the ability to capture the vision of what God can do and wants done in a particular situation, to believe confidently that He will overcome the obstacles, and to encourage others in the body to likewise trust Him (1 Corinthians 12:9).
- **HEALING:** the ability to serve as an instrument of faith through whom, in special and remarkable situations, God cures illnesses and restores others to health and soundness (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28; see also James 5:14-16).
- **MIRACLES:** the ability to serve as an instrument of faith through whom God manifest His power or authenticates His message by remarkable acts (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28).