

Spiritual Gifts

Spirit-given graces—ordinary and extraordinary—for edifying Christ's body and advancing His mission under the Word

Diversity of Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

[4] Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. [5] And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. [6] And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Romans 12:6

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

1 Corinthians 12:11

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; differences of administrations, but the same Lord; diversities of operations, but it is the same God who works all in all. The Spirit divides to every man severally as He will, so variety is not accident but divine design.

Because Father, Son, and Spirit are united, diversity must not fracture the body; it reveals the many-sided fullness of Christ. No gift makes one superior, for all depend on the same Giver and all are meant to fit together in the one body.

Diversity invites gratitude for what others supply, curiosity to understand their contribution, and cooperation rather than competition.

Gifts for the Common Good

1 Corinthians 12:7

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

1 Peter 4:10

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Corinthians 14:12

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

To every believer is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. Gifts are entrusted as stewardship, not as personal trophies, and their measure of success is the strengthening of faith, the guarding of truth, and the caring of the weak.

Public gifts are not stages for performance; hidden gifts are not lesser because they are unseen by crowds. As good stewards of the manifold grace of God, we employ gifts to edify the church, seeking to excel in what builds up the body rather than what elevates self.

The question is not, What platform do I have? but, Whose burdens am I lifting?

The Motivational Gifts

Romans 12:6-8

[6] Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; [7] Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; [8] Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Peter 4:11

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Paul lists prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, and mercy. Prophecy must accord with the faith once delivered and aim to apply Scripture wisely.

Service rolls up its sleeves to meet practical needs with zeal; teaching unfolds truth

with clarity and patience; exhortation presses truth to the conscience with encouragement and comfort. Giving shares resources freely and quietly, and leadership guides with diligence, not domineering but directing. Mercy moves toward the hurting with tenderness and cheerfulness.

Each grace must stay within the measure of faith God supplies and be exercised so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

The Ministry Gifts

Ephesians 4:11-13

[11] And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: [13] Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

The ascended Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto mature manhood. Apostles and prophets laid the foundation (Ephesians 2:20); evangelists herald the gospel; pastors and teachers feed and guard through Word and sacrament.

These Word-centered offices guard against doctrinal waves, unify the church in confession, and train every believer for service so the whole body grows up into Christ. Healthy ministry assumes plurality and accountability in local churches, where shepherds catechize, administer discipline and comfort, and model the Chief Shepherd's care.

The Manifestation Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

[8] For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; [9] To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; [10] To another the working of miracles; to

another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

The Spirit manifests through gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation. These demonstrations of divine power attest the gospel and build up the church, yet they remain subject to Scripture and congregational discernment.

Claims of extraordinary gifts must be weighed carefully in light of the apostolic foundation, the closed canon, and the Spirit's concern for edification, order, and truth. Where the extraordinary appears claimed, it must submit to the ordinary rule of the Word, the testing of elders, and the aim that the gathered church be instructed rather than dazzled.

Desire the Greater Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:31

But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 14:1

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:12

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

We are commanded to covet earnestly the best gifts and to pursue love. Especially desire intelligible, Word-rich ministry (prophecy/teaching) that edifies, exhorts, and comforts the church, because love builds up through clarity.

The greater gifts are those that clearly build up the body, clarify the gospel, and promote reverent, ordered worship rather than private display. Ambition for gifts must be yoked to humility: we ask not to be impressive but to make Christ plain and strengthen His people.

Gifts Must Operate in Love

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

[1] Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. [2] And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. [3] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:13

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Without love, gifts become noise, knowledge puffs up, and faith that could move mountains profits nothing. Love suffers long, envies not, seeks not her own, rejoices not in iniquity but rejoices in the truth.

Love refuses to weaponize gifts for self-importance; it bends gifts toward patient building up of fragile saints. Faith, hope, love abide—love is the greatest and is the atmosphere in which every gift must operate for God's glory and the church's good.

Stewardship of Gifts

1 Peter 4:10-11

[10] As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. [11] If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 25:14-30

[14] For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. [15] And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. [16] Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other

five talents. [17] And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. [18] But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. [19] After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. [20] And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. [21] His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. [22] He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. [23] His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. [24] Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: [25] And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. [26] His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: [27] Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. [28] Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. [29] For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. [30] And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1 Timothy 4:14

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

We must not neglect the gift within us but stir it up. Like faithful stewards in the Master's parable, we will give account for how we invested what He entrusted, whether large or small.

Stirring involves prayer, practice, training, and community affirmation. Gifts are to be exercised dependently ('If any man speak, as the oracles of God') and doxologically ('that God in all things may be glorified').

Even seemingly modest gifts, offered in faith, matter eternally when invested for Christ.

The Spirit's Sovereign Distribution

1 Corinthians 12:11

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

1 Corinthians 12:18

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Hebrews 2:4

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

The Spirit gives to each as He wills, and God sets members in the body as it has pleased Him. Gifts are not earned by zeal or maturity but bestowed sovereignly.

We therefore receive them with gratitude, avoid envy toward those differently gifted, and reject pride when our gift is celebrated. God's wise ordering of the body means no one has everything, no one lacks everything, and all must lean on one another.

Edification and Maturity

Ephesians 4:12-16

[12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: [13] Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: [14] That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; [15] But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: [16] From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

1 Corinthians 14:12

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

Colossians 1:28

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Gifts aim at perfecting the saints, strengthening faith, and bringing the church to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. They protect from doctrinal instability and enable every part to make increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Maturity means Christlikeness, stability instead of being carried about by every wind, and speaking the truth in love. The Spirit ordinarily grows His church through Word, prayer, and sacrament, using gifts as instruments toward that sober, steady end rather than toward temporary spectacle.

Orderly Worship

1 Corinthians 14:26-33

[26] How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. [27] If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. [28] But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. [29] Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. [30] If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. [31] For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. [32] And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. [33] For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

1 Corinthians 14:40

Let all things be done decently and in order.

In the assembly, let all things be done unto edifying. Paul requires intelligibility, interpretation of tongues, regulated prophecy, and mutual submission so that confusion and disorder are avoided.

Two or three at most may speak in a tongue and only with interpretation; prophets speak by course while others judge. God is not the author of confusion but of peace; worship governed by Scripture, shepherded by elders, and ordered around the means of grace honors the Giver of the gifts and protects His flock.

Discernment and Testing

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

[19] Quench not the Spirit. [20] Despise not prophesyings. [21] Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1 John 4:1

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Acts 17:11

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

We must not quench the Spirit nor despise prophesyings, yet we must prove all things and hold fast that which is good. Every claim of spiritual utterance must be tested against the sufficiency of Scripture, the church's confession, and the fruit it produces.

The Bereans were noble because they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so; we imitate them by examining teaching, evaluating character, and refusing anything that contradicts the closed canon. True gifts withstand time, testing, and submission to elders; counterfeit zeal demands immediate acceptance and resists accountability.

Gifts and the Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23

[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, [23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

1 Corinthians 13:2

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Matthew 7:20

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Gifts display power; fruit displays Christlikeness. A man may prophesy or understand mysteries and yet be nothing without love.

The Spirit's fruit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—authenticates true spirituality and reveals abiding in Christ. Gifts must be yoked to fruit for healthy ministry, for the tree is known by its fruit and not merely by its activity.

Word-Regulated Ministry

2 Timothy 3:16-17

[16] All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: [17] That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

1 Peter 4:11

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 14:26

How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

All exercise of gifts sits under the sufficiency of Scripture. We speak as those delivering the oracles of God, aiming that everything done in the gathering be intelligible and edifying.

The Word furnishes the man of God for every good work, so gifts never bypass or contradict Scripture but serve its ministry. Even spontaneous encouragement or prayer is shaped by Scripture's vocabulary and theology, keeping ministry tethered to the revealed will of God.

Christ the Giver

Ephesians 4:7-10

[7] But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. [8] Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. [9] (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? [10] He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Psalm 68:18

(See Psalm 68:18)

John 16:14

He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

When Christ ascended He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. The Spirit takes what is Christ's and distributes it to His body, so that every gift ultimately magnifies the triumphant, ascended Lord who fills all things.

Gifts are not self-originated; they descend from Christ's victory and serve His preeminence. Remembering the Giver keeps us doxological, turning every exercise of gifting into gratitude and every fruit of ministry into praise.

To use gifts rightly is to abide in the risen Christ, drawing strength from Him and returning glory to Him.

Ordinary and Extraordinary Gifts

Hebrews 2:3-4

[3] How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; [4] God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Acts 2:43

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

1 Corinthians 12:28

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

God bore witness to the apostolic gospel with signs, wonders, and various miracles, especially in the church's foundation. Alongside those extraordinary works, the Spirit gives ordinary, ongoing gifts of word and service for the church's regular life.

We thank God for all He has done while anchoring our expectations in the ordinary means He promises to bless. The church is healthiest when it prizes faithful preaching, prayer, sacraments, hospitality, mercy, and evangelism, while receiving any unusual providences with gratitude and careful discernment.

Guardrails for Tongues and Prophecy

1 Corinthians 14:22-29

[22] Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. [23] If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? [24] But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: [25] And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a

truth. [26] How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. [27] If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. [28] But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. [29] Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

Deuteronomy 18:20

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Tongues are a sign and must be interpreted; prophecy must be judged by others. No claimed revelation may contradict Scripture, add to the canon, or escape testing.

False prophecy is serious; therefore the church applies careful, humble scrutiny so that peace and edification, not confusion, mark the assembly. The goal of regulation is not to stifle the Spirit but to ensure the Spirit's own priorities of order, truth, and love guide the gathered church.

Seeking with Humility

1 Corinthians 14:1

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

Romans 12:3

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

James 1:5

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

We pursue gifts while thinking soberly about ourselves according to the measure of faith God has assigned. Desire must be yoked to humility, prayer for wisdom, and willingness to serve in unseen ways.

We ask for gifts not to elevate self but to bless Christ's flock and adorn the gospel. Humble seeking includes submitting desires to the church's counsel, being content with the portion God assigns, and rejoicing when others are used more visibly than we are.

Gifts Serving the Mission

1 Peter 2:9

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Matthew 5:16

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Acts 13:2-3

[2] As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. [3] And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Gifts exist so the church may proclaim God's excellencies, shine before the world with good works, and send laborers to the harvest. Evangelists herald Christ; teachers ground converts; mercy-givers commend the gospel through tangible care; administrators keep the mission coordinated.

The Spirit's leading in the church at Antioch shows gifts coordinating with fasting, prayer, and the church's commissioning to advance the gospel. Every gift, public or private, finds its aim in the Great Commission.

Harmony of Gift Lists

Romans 12:6-8

[6] Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; [7] Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; [8] Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

[8] For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; [9] To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; [10] To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

Ephesians 4:11-12

[11] And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

1 Peter 4:10-11

[10] As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. [11] If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

No single list exhausts spiritual gifts. The New Testament presents overlapping catalogs of graces, offices, and manifestations.

Taken together they show a multi-faceted ministry of Word and deed under one Lord. This guards us from rigid systems, discourages chasing novelty, and invites gratitude for whatever service the Spirit supplies.

Rather than obsess over labels, we lean into the needs around us and trust the Spirit to supply what the moment requires.

Interdependence of the Body

1 Corinthians 12:14-26

[14] For the body is not one member, but many. [15] If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? [16] And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? [17] If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? [18] But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. [19] And if they were all one member, where were the body? [20] But now are they many members, yet but one body. [21] And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. [22] Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: [23] And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. [24] For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: [25] That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. [26] And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Romans 12:4-5

[4] For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: [5] So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Ephesians 4:16

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The body is not one member but many. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee.

God composes the body so that the weaker and less presentable parts receive special honor, that there be no schism. Every joint supplies; all need one another; suffering and honor are shared.

Interdependence means we slow down to notice missing members, lift those who are weary, and celebrate quiet faithfulness as essential to the church's life.

