

Wind-Powered Gifts

Lesson 3

1 Corinthians 12:1–11



Big Idea

God is strategic. We can see this in His creation. God created a magnificent planet called Earth that is ideally suited for human habitation, and we are the beneficiaries of His brilliant, strategic mind.

Obviously, God’s brilliance didn’t stop at creation. Another of His strategic plans involved fulfilling His Kingdom purposes on Earth. He decided to bless His followers by giving them the indwelling Holy Spirit and special abilities (spiritual gifts). The earliest followers then used their Wind-powered abilities to work together to establish, sustain and expand His Kingdom on Earth. As a result, the Christian faith was launched and has now spread to 2.3 billion followers worldwide—31% of the world’s population.¹ God’s brilliant, strategic work continues in and through us today.



Background

Spiritual gifts are part of God’s Kingdom-building strategy and can be clearly seen in three of the Apostle Paul’s letters.² This lesson features Paul’s letter to the church in Corinth. While Corinth was a large, cosmopolitan port and trade center, it was also a thriving center of Christ-followers. However, problems soon developed in that young church. Instead of unifying and building each other up, they were allowing their spiritual gifts to divide them. Instead of celebrating all of the God-given abilities, they thought certain gifts were spiritually superior to others.³ Paul addressed these attitudes because, if not dealt with, they would severely compromise God’s strategic plan for His followers. In this lesson, we will focus on the beauty, value and impact of every spiritual gift.

¹ Hackett, Conrad, and David McClendon. “World’s Largest Religion by Population Is Still Christianity.” *Pew Research Center*, 31 May 2020, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/.

² Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4

³ *Life Application Study Bible: New Living Translation*. Tyndale House Publishers, 2004. 1947



Read 1 Corinthians 12:1–11

¹ Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. ² You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. ³ So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹ It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.



Dig In

1. In 1 Corinthians 12 above, re-read **verses 1, 4–6 and 11** and underline who gave spiritual gifts (special abilities) to the Corinthian Christians. Why would Paul emphasize this so strongly?
2. What are the purposes of the gifts, according to **1 Corinthians 12:7** above and **Acts 1:8** below?

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

③ **A spiritual gift is a new ability or divine empowerment of a natural ability, given by Holy Spirit as He determines, to all believers to serve others. This is so that God’s Kingdom on earth can increase in size and maturity and bring Him glory.**

There are many different kinds of spiritual gifts, and they are listed three places in Paul’s New Testament letters: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4.¹ To help you understand them, they are listed and defined in the following chart.

As a Christ-follower, you have been entrusted with spiritual gift(s), and it is both a blessing and a responsibility to identify your gifts. By knowing them you can better understand God’s unique design for your life. Before you read the chart, please pray and ask Holy Spirit to highlight the gift(s) He has chosen for you so you can strategically help build God’s Kingdom on earth. Put a check mark by the gift(s) that seem to describe you. Consider looking up the biblical references noted for those gift(s) to increase your understanding.^{2,3}

↓	Gift	Description	References
	Administration	Able to organize, direct and implement plans to help/lead others to complete goals or tasks.	1 Corinthians 12:28 (ESV) Titus 1:4–5 Acts 6:1–7
	Apostleship	Able to take risks, perform new and difficult tasks and lead leaders; often able to start new ministries or churches.	Ephesians 4:11 1 Corinthians 12:28 Acts 13:2–3
	Discernment	Able to judge or appraise a person, statement, situation or environment; able to discern between good and evil.	1 Corinthians 12:10 Acts 16:16–18 1 John 4:1

¹ **Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; Ephesians 4:11–13**

² “Have some spiritual gifts ceased to exist? No. Because spiritual gifts were given to build up the Church, the body of Christ, as long as the Church is under construction, spiritual gifts are needed. A day will come when spiritual gifts will no longer be needed (**1 Corinthians 13:8**). However, we do not believe that this day has yet come. It will come when perfection comes (**1 Corinthians 13:10**). We believe that this refers to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Church, the bride of Christ is complete and perfect, that is when spiritual gifts will no longer be necessary.” “Spiritual Gifts.” *The Alliance*, www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/perspectives/spiritual-gifts.

³ The Scriptures do not indicate that the list of spiritual gifts is exhaustive. The number of spiritual gifts is not important, but rather the understanding of what they are and how they are to be used. “Spiritual Gifts.” *The Alliance*, www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/perspectives/spiritual-gifts.

	Evangelism	Have extra desire, ability and faith to build relationships and share and discuss Christian faith/ the Gospel with unsaved people; undeterred by rejection.	Ephesians 4:11 Acts 11:23–24 Acts 8:26–40
	Exhortation/ Encouragement	Able to strengthen others’ faith through words of comfort, consolation, support or challenge in order to foster spiritual growth.	Romans 12:8 Acts 11:22–24 Acts 15:30–32
	Faith	Have unusual/uncommon trust and confidence in God, expecting God to answer prayer and trusting His sovereignty and goodness.	1 Corinthians 12:9 Hebrews 11:1–40 Romans 4:18–21
	Giving	Have a generous heart for the Church, its ministries, missionaries and people; steward money carefully and adjust lifestyle to be able to give; look for ways to help others financially.	Romans 12:8 2 Corinthians 8:1–5; 9:6–15 Acts 4:32–37 Luke 21:1–4
	Healing	Have a special measure of faith that God can and will heal and are not deterred when He chooses not to; compassionate toward, and regularly pray for, the sick and suffering.	1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30 James 5:13–16 Acts 3:1–16
	Interpretation	Able to understand and explain messages spoken in an unknown language, particularly able to interpret the gift of tongues.	1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:1–28
	Knowledge	Are well-versed in Scripture and able to use it to speak to given situations; receive and speak by divine revelation the specific facts about a situation; able to discern the voice of the Lord; able to discern what is in a person’s heart.	1 Corinthians 12:8 2 Corinthians 2:14 John 1:45–50 Acts 14:8–9

Leadership	Able to lead relationally, with a deep concern for others while accomplishing many different tasks and objectives; able to lead through crisis situations.	Romans 12:8 1 Thessal- onians 5:12 Luke 22:25–26
Mercy	Are patient and compassionate toward those who are suffering, whether emotionally, physically or spiritually; good listener; support others for long periods of time; quickly discern if someone is not doing well.	Romans 12:8 Matthew 5:7 Luke 10:30–37 Jude 22–23
Miracles	Have a heightened awareness of the presence, purpose and power of God for a situation; have a special measure of faith to instigate miracles; don't draw attention to themselves or claim power themselves but give glory to God.	1 Corinthians 12:10; 28–29 Galatians 3:5 Luke 5:1–11 Acts 16:16–18
Shepherd/ Pastor	Care for the spiritual well-being of a church, small group or a person, often by utilizing Scripture; servant-hearted; not attention-seeking.	Ephesians 4:11 Acts 20:28 John 10:11–18
Prophecy	Receive divinely inspired messages from Holy Spirit; eager to check the messages against the Scriptures before delivering them to individuals or groups in the Church and desire recipients to do so as well.	Romans 12:6 1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:1–5 Ephesians 4:11–12 1 Peter 4:10–11 Acts 2:14–41
Service	Love to help and serve others; readily able to identify what is needed; content to serve behind the scenes to bless the church, display the love of Christ and bring glory to God.	Romans 12:7 1 Corinthians 12:4–7, 28 Acts 9:36–41

	Teaching	Love to study Scripture; hate when Scripture is misused; able to make complex truths accessible to all; speak/teach the truths of Scripture with grace—to adults, youth or children.	Ephesians 4:11 1 Corinthians 12:28–29 Romans 12:7 James 3:1 Acts 18:24–28
	Tongues	Able to speak in a language unknown to the speaker; it may be a human language or a language no one understands except God and/or someone with the gift of interpretation.	1 Corinthians 12:10, 28 Acts 2:4 Acts 19:6
	Wisdom	Able to speak into someone’s life or a situation with great understanding and a righteous perspective; able to see through the confusion of a situation; deeply eager for holiness.	1 Corinthians 1:17–31; 2:3–14; 12:8 Colossians 1:9–10 James 3:17–18

To take the spiritual gift assessment, go to <http://bit.ly/sacgifts>

As you look over the gift(s) you checked, what did you learn about yourself?

4. The Scriptures do not indicate that the above list of spiritual gifts is exhaustive; other gifts include hospitality, craftsmanship, prayer, music, etc. For example, when Moses was leading the Israelites, special gifts were given to various individuals so they could build the Tabernacle (a portable sanctuary to use for worship). God inhabited the Tabernacle so that He could dwell among them. Read the story below.

¹ Then the Lord said to Moses, ² “Look, I have specifically chosen Bezalel son of Uri, grandson of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³ I have filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, ability, and

expertise in all kinds of crafts. ⁴ He is a master craftsman, expert in working with gold, silver, and bronze. ⁵ He is skilled in engraving and mounting gemstones and in carving wood. He is a master at every craft!

⁶ “And I have personally appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to be his assistant. Moreover, I have given special skill to all the gifted craftsmen so they can make all the things I have commanded you to make.

Exodus 31:1–6¹

a. How did God gift Bezalel, Oholiab and those who served with them?

b. From the list of gifts and this story, we see that spiritual gifts are unique and they are expressed in different ways. What are some ways you have seen Wind-powered spiritual gifts encouraging and building up the Church?

5. It is helpful and inspiring to see gifts in action. As you read the Scriptures below, note how the gifts were used. Then comment on the spiritual impact of these gifts.

a. Peter (**Acts 2:37–38, 41**)

TEACHING, EVANGELISM

³⁷ Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” ³⁸ Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” ⁴¹ Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

¹ To read the whole story go to **Exodus 31:1–11** and **40:33–38**.

How the gifts of teaching and evangelism were used:

Impact:

b. Tabitha and Peter (**Acts 9:36–42**)

CRAFTSMANSHIP, MERCY, SERVICE, HEALING

³⁶ There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor. ³⁷ About this time she became ill and died. Her body was washed for burial and laid in an upstairs room. ³⁸ But the believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg him, “Please come as soon as possible!”

³⁹ So Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. The room was filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them. ⁴⁰ But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, “Get up, Tabitha.” And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up! ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then he called in the widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive.

⁴² The news spread through the whole town, and many believed in the Lord.

How the gifts of craftsmanship, mercy, service and healing were used:

Impact:

6. It is important and helpful to realize the disciples and other Christ-followers were filled with Holy Spirit multiple times over the years as they used their spiritual gifts. The same is true for us today.¹ While Holy Spirit is given to each believer at salvation and never leaves them, the reality is every believer can always ask for more Holy Spirit empowerment.²

a. How does the statement above help you understand your need for continual Holy Spirit filling and empowerment?

b. One of Paul's disciples was Timothy. In his letters to Timothy, Paul challenged him not to neglect his spiritual gift (**1 Timothy 4:14**) and to fan it into flame (**2 Timothy 1:5–6**). How could you fan your spiritual gift(s) into flame? Share your ideas with your group.

Wind-Powered Gifts

Have you ever attended an orchestra concert? If so, you saw a marvelous assortment of musicians and instruments on stage. Those orchestra members were gifted and highly trained to play specific instruments. As soon as they began to play, glorious music filled the auditorium. The music was sometimes soft and gentle; at other times it was grand and dramatic. Every instrument contributed to the beauty of the whole. When the orchestra played the final note, the musicians were exhilarated and so was the audience. They stood to their feet and clapped wildly.

So it is with spiritual gifts. When individuals serve together using uniquely given spiritual gifts, the result is often exhilarating and amazing.

¹ **John 20:22; Acts 2:1–4; Acts 4:8; Acts 4:31**

² Torrey, Reuben A. *Baptism of the Holy Spirit: How to Receive This Promised Gift*. ANEKO Press, 2019. 68

Every person's gift is God-given and contributes significantly to the impact and success of God's Kingdom work. It is like a splendid symphony.

1. In your small group or with a friend, celebrate each other's gifts
 - by affirming each other.
 - by cheering each other on to run with those gifts.
 - by encouraging each other to find places to use God-given gifts.
 - by rejoicing in the potential impact.

2. Pray this prayer together:

Holy Spirit, thank You for blessing us with spiritual gifts. Thank You for loving us, believing in us and empowering us to make a Kingdom difference. Show us where You want us to serve at this time in our lives, and give us the courage and commitment we need to pursue those opportunities. Amen.

