

Committed Christian Life

Ministering to Your Fellowman



*But grow in the grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
2 Peter 3:18*

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Ministering to Your Fellowman



In this lesson you will be challenged you to examine how you can serve others. It will open your eyes to why God has given you gifts from His Holy Spirit, and how important it is for you to minister to those around you. Christ set the example. We are His followers. What joy it gives to His heart to see us sharing His goodness with all those around us in many different ways.

This lesson is taken from the course *Committed Christian Life*. Other lessons in this course are:

- 1) “The Goal and Process of the Christian Life”
Do you know what the goal is? Are you struggling to be a “good” Christian? Learn what God wants to do in and through you in this supernatural life we are called to.
- 2) “The Power for the Spiritual Life”
Learn about the ministry of the Holy Spirit to unbelievers and believers and the three commands God’s Word gives us about the Holy Spirit.
- 3) “The War”
We are in a spiritual battle with a determined enemy. Learn about the evil one’s tactics and how to be victorious.
- 4) “Prayer: Worship and Praise”
Prayer is an expression of our relationship to God. Learn a fresh focus as you seek His face before you seek His hand.
- 5) “Prayer: Petition and Intercession”
Now with Almighty God in focus learn the joys of intercession. Included are the basic principles of prayer, hindrances to prayer and the importance of corporate prayer.
- 6) “Alive and Powerful — The Word Of God”
The Bible is our main source of communication from our Heavenly Father and the food of our spiritual lives. Learn how to make the most of this living, powerful resource.
- 7) “Walking By Faith”
The foundational principle of Kingdom living is faith. Learn how to deal with the challenges to faith as well as steps to knowing God’s will for your life.

- 8) “Spiritual Transformation”
What God has promised is that He will transform us by the power of His Holy Spirit so that we become like Him. This lesson will begin to answer the question: As a result of my walk with Christ, what changes in my character should take place?
- 9) “Understanding Suffering”
Learn the five purposes of suffering and how our response to suffering will make or break us. We alone decide whether suffering will drive us to bitterness, or to spiritual maturity.
- 10) “Fellowship in the Family”
Learn how to help build unity in the church, our “family”, how to deal with conflict and how to practice fellowship that honors Christ and brings joy to our hearts.
- 12) “Redeeming The Time”
What does the Bible say about work and how we should use our time? Do you know what your priorities are and do you set goals that reflect that? This lesson will help you redeem the time.
- 13) “Preparing for Revival”
There is much talk about revival, but little evidence of it. Take a look at the history of revivals and the principles we can use to bring revival now, here—in our own lives, in our church, in Ukraine.

Introduction

An almost universal tendency in the body of Christ is to view ministry as something accomplished by those assigned or elected to certain positions of authority in the church. In some cases the pastor is the one whom the congregation pays to do the ministry. It is his job. The word “ministry” itself has in many cases come to denote the activities of an elite group of Christians.

The New Testament, however, portrays a different picture. To illustrate this, take a few moments to do the following exercise:



Exercise 1

Turn in your Bible to Ephesians 4:7-16. Read this passage carefully, and then in your notebook write a one-paragraph summary of what these verses imply about the ministry of the church.

The goal of this lesson is to develop a philosophy of ministry and to survey the ways this philosophy can be worked out in relation to both Christians and non-Christians. You will also be asked to perform some acts of ministry, demonstrating your willingness to be involved in serving your fellow man.

As you do this lesson, for the greatest benefit to your spiritual journey right now, we recommend three things:

- 1) Keep a spiritual journal, at least while you work your way through this lesson. This should include people and needs you are praying for, answers God gives and where you are reading in your Bible and what God is teaching you.
- 2) Make a goal to have a daily quiet time with the Lord. If you are in a leadership position we would challenge you to set aside an hour a day for one month. However if you do not already have a regular quiet time, start with a daily goal that you are willing to practice for one month.
- 3) Memorize 4 Bible verses. We suggest you choose 4 verses from Hebrews 11—the famous chapter on faith.

Throughout this lesson there are various questions, exercises and assignments that will help you interact with the material and apply it to your own life situation. Note that at the end of this lesson there is an answer key so that you may check your understanding of the material covered.

Use a notebook to write out your answers to the exercises. This is your “thinking” notebook so that you can put down your own answers and thoughts on what you are learning. Our learning is reinforced by writing it down so this is an excellent tool as you pursue growth in your personal life.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. A Life of Ministry
 - A. Some Perspectives on Ministry
 - B. Some Benefits of Ministry
- II. The Motivation for Ministry
- III. Equipped for Ministry
 - A. Listing the Spiritual Gifts
 - B. Discovering Your Gifts
- IV. Ministry in Practice

- A. Ministering to Fellow Believers
- B. Ministering to Non-believers

Conclusion

LESSON OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson the student should be able to:

1. Explain why God places believers in this world.
2. Compare and contrast your view of ministry with that of the apostle Paul.
3. List four benefits of ministry, giving a supporting example of each from your own experience.
4. Understand the place of spiritual gifts in the life of the believer and the church body.
5. Evaluate and determine what spiritual gift(s) you have and how you can use and develop them.
6. Describe the ministry responsibilities that believers have to one another as well as performing an act of ministry to a believer.
7. Describe the responsibilities of a believer to a non-believer as well as performing an act of ministry to a non-believer.

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

1. Review the Lesson Outline and study the objectives.
2. Read this lesson and do the questions and exercises referring to the Bible and appendix as requested.
3. Using the appendix evaluate what spiritual gifts you have.
4. Make it a habit in your spiritual life to be faithful in having a Quiet Time and using a spiritual journal. If you have not done this, start now.
5. In each lesson of Committed Christian Life you are challenged to memorize four Bible verse. Decide with your leader what verses would be most beneficial at this time.
6. Perform three acts of ministry: minister to a fellow believer; share the Gospel with an unbeliever; and perform a compassionate act. Write an evaluation of each (Project).

I. A Life of Ministry

As long as we view ministry as something only for a few in authority or as long as we minister out of a sense of duty rather than love, we will never capture the heart of what God intended for us in this area. Nor will we bring glory to God in our service; In Lesson 1 “The Goal and Process of the Christian Life” it was stated that service is one of the aspects by which we can bring God glory and fulfill our purpose on earth. To set ourselves on the right course, let us learn from the life of the apostle Paul what ministry is really supposed to be.

A. Some Perspectives on Ministry

When we look at the life of the apostle Paul, we see a man devoted to ministering to others. He was constantly seeking ways to meet the needs of those around him. What motivated him? Why would he risk his life, give up the opportunity for a home, and endure all kinds of hardship and deprivation in the service of people? The secret lies in his view of the life God had given him.

In order to see this, we are going to examine two passages of Scripture that are indicative of Paul's attitude toward life. First read carefully Philippians 1:12-26, paying particular attention to anything that sheds light on Paul's view of life and ministry. With this in mind, answer the following questions:



Question 1 Describe the circumstances in which we find Paul in verses 12-14. What can we glean from these verses about his attitude toward ministry?



Question 2 A key verse in this passage is verse 21. In your own words describe what he means by saying that "to live is Christ, and to die is gain."



Question 3 Verses 22-26 are a commentary on verse 21. In them Paul describes the inner conflict that he feels. What insights into his philosophy of ministry can you find in this discourse?

For Paul life was a sacred trust filled with purpose, the purpose of God. Even though he reveled in the thought of going to heaven and seeing his Lord face to face, he realized that his usefulness in God's work was not yet at an end. With his heart set resolutely on the glory of heaven awaiting him, he diligently continued in the work that God had given him to do. This truth is further illustrated in another of Paul's letters.

Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17 carefully, looking for any insights into Paul's view of life and ministry. List these insights in your notebook and then answer the following questions:



Question 4 What is the source of Paul's thankfulness? What personal satisfaction in ministry do you detect in Paul's words?



Question 5 What purpose does Paul see for his life? Is there anything in the passage that would indicate what God's purpose is for all believers?



Exercise 2

Pause for a moment to reflect on your own ideas about life and ministry. How would you compare your attitude with that of Paul's? Note any parallels or any differences in your notebook.

Life was ministry for Paul. God had chosen him to be his servant and minister. Because he himself was redeemed by God from a life of rebellion against the gospel of Christ, Paul stood as a living illustration of the desire and power of God to save every man.

B. Some Benefits of Ministry

While it is true that serving others places tremendous demands on the believer, a number of significant benefits come from being involved in the work of the Lord. Even though we do not serve God just for the benefits, this does not diminish the positive effect that ministry has on our lives. We will focus on four of these benefits. You may be able to identify more than those mentioned here, but these are illustrative of the way ministry impacts our lives for good.

Increased faith. One of the first things you feel when you begin to serve the Lord is a sense of inadequacy for the task. Ministry presses us to the limit of our abilities and beyond. Because of this, we learn to trust God for the strength, wisdom, and power necessary to meet the needs of others. When we see God working in and through us in various ministry situations, our ability to believe God will be enhanced.

Self-esteem and purpose. Psychologists tell us that one of the most important needs of any person is a good sense of self-esteem. People need to know that they are contributing something significant to the world in which they live. What could be more rewarding than being part of the very work of God? When Paul said that he was thankful that God had seen him as worthy to be put into the ministry, he understood the awesome privilege of being in the main stream of God's purposes in history. When involved in ministering to others, our satisfaction of a job well done gives a real boost to the way we view ourselves while keeping us humble before God.

Motivation for increased knowledge. In a little book entitled *Principles of Spiritual Leadership*, Douglas Hyde tells of a certain training methodology used by one group. Before his conversion Hyde had been a member of this group. He tells how new members were sent out to the street corners with a stack of newspapers to give away. Inevitably, the young recruit would be challenged and perhaps even ridiculed by passers by. This confrontation usually drove the young recruit to study the party line more fervently than ever before. In order to survive and be effective, he had to work hard to get answers for the tough questions that he would continue to face. This is also true in the spiritual realm. Nothing motivates our learning and growing like being in the front lines of service. Ministry drives us to increase our knowledge and understanding of the gospel and of people so that our impact on our world will be increasingly potent.

Skill development. Not only does ministry motivate us to increase our knowledge, it also serves as the training ground for the development of certain skills. There is a saying around the world that "practice makes perfect". The more we do something, the better we become at it. For instance, an athlete practices the same routines over and over until he can perform them from reflex. Hours and hours of repetition ensure that in the moment of competition his actions come naturally and fluidly. The same is true of many spiritual disciplines, including different ministry skills. Through experience we are able to witness better, recognize needs quicker and more accurately, develop steps of action and perform acts of service as a natural part of our spiritual life.



Exercise 3

For each of the benefits of ministry just mentioned, cite one example from your own experience of how you have grown and developed through ministry opportunities.

The benefits listed above are but a sampling of the ways that we profit from being involved in the Lord's service. But, these benefits, as good as they are, will not suffice as motivation for ministry. When faced with the rigorous demands of ministering to others, most of us will fall by the wayside unless there is something more basic that drives us. Motivation that will sustain us must come from within. Let us look closer at what this motivation should be.

II. Motivation for Ministry

People serve within the church for many different reasons. Often they are frustrated because they do not see the results they expected, or they become overwhelmed with the needs which seem to be unending. And some people do not serve because they do not feel adequate to do so. Let us look at Christ's example and words on this topic.

A. Love and Servanthood

In Mark 10:32 and following we find Jesus explaining to his disciples the fate that awaited Him when he arrived in Jerusalem. This talk of impending death was disturbing to the twelve as this put a damper on their dreams of imperial power in the government of the Messiah. So ingrained in them was this hope of prestige that they even quarreled about who would be the greatest among them. Imagine being in Jesus' place. While trying to enlighten them to the true Messianic ministry, Jesus still could not get his men to think much beyond the benefits that their association with Him would bring them. How childish and self-serving it must have appeared for this group of unlikely leaders to be quarreling about their place in a new administration.

Beginning in Mark 10:42 Jesus gives a short but pointed answer to the problem of their jealous rivalries. Note what He says:

You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

It is not hard to imagine the reaction of the disciples: heads down, eyes staring at the ground or at some distant focal point, anywhere but into the convicting gaze of the Master. Their vain aspirations were exposed by the unveiling of their Master's motivation. At the heart of real greatness lies an unconditional love that has one central goal: meeting the needs of others.

We should not be too harsh in our judgment of the disciples. Their attitudes illustrate a truth that is too typical of us all. Men do not naturally put the needs of others ahead of their own. The cultivation of a servant spirit requires disciplined choices of the will, choices made and acted on in faith that they can be realized through the energizing power of the Holy Spirit.

An excellent example of faithful service in spite of the cost can be seen in the life of Paul. In 1 Corinthians 9:22 he states, "I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." Given in the context of adapting himself to the frame of reference of those to whom he would minister, these words reflect a principle that is applicable to any area of service. Serving others has a cost. It may mean a change in life-style or a sacrifice of money, time, or privacy. It could cost us our reputation. Whatever the cost we, like Paul, can and must be servants through God's grace and power.

The motivation for service must be love, an overwhelming love for our Lord and Master which overflows into the lives of others as we seek their success rather than our own. Throughout this course we must come to grips with the great commandment and the one which follows and is directly connected.



Question 6 Write out the command that is second to the great command.



Question 7 What does Jesus say is **His** commandment for us in John 15:12?

B. “Lesser” Motivations

If we serve for lesser reasons there will be little joy in the service because those motivations are not pure before God. What are some of these “lesser” motivations? They can take various forms and are not necessarily based on the desire for power.

Guilt. We may feel that we should do something for God, or someone may lay guilt on us. Those feelings of guilt may serve a good purpose in our lives, but we need to examine them carefully before we accept a task solely on that basis. Otherwise we can be crushed by false guilt.

A sense of duty. Perhaps we should be glad for those individuals who minister out of a sense of duty, but again, it makes for a joyless attitude most of the time. It is a form of legalism. It is so much easier to try to do the right thing than it is to try to **be** the right person.

Looking good to others. Wanting to earn favor with man is another lesser motivation. How often we are disappointed when others do not acknowledge our labors. We want others to think we are “good” Christians. Often our attitude is not too different from the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked because their actions were meant to impress others with their goodness.

Power and position. We have already spoken of the disciples’ jealousy and squabbling because they wanted to move up the ladder. How contradictory to everything that Jesus was teaching and showing them. It was only on the night Jesus washed their feet, just before He died, when they began to truly comprehend the kind of life that Christ desired for them.

How much we miss when we force ourselves and others to service instead of letting it spring from our love of God. We know that if we love God, it WILL evidence itself in love for mankind. If you need reinforcement for this, read 1 John.



Exercise 4

Pause for a moment to consider your own motivation for servanthood and ministry. Give one example from your own experience where you have failed to exhibit a servant’s heart. What was your motivation in the task you were doing—one of those listed above, or something else?

III. Equipped for Ministry

It was mentioned in the lesson on the Holy Spirit (Lesson 2, “The Power for the Spiritual Life”) that one of the tasks of the Holy Spirit is to give us spiritual gifts. These are specific abilities that we are to use in building up the body of Christ and ministering to our fellow believers. All of us are born with natural talents and abilities, but at the time of salvation we also receive divine or spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit who comes to dwell in us.

Read 1 Corinthians 12 and answer the following questions:



Question 8 Who receives a spiritual gift? (See also 1 Peter 4:10)



Question 9 Who decides what gift(s) will be received? (vv. 7-11)



Question 10 According to this passage does any believer receive all of the gifts of the Spirit? Is there any gift that every believer receives?



Question 11 Why does the Spirit give these spiritual gifts?

It is interesting to note that so many spiritual gifts were listed and evidently active in the Corinthian church which was full of so many problems--a further assurance that all receive gifts from the Holy Spirit. They are not necessarily earned in a special way. In I Corinthians 12:31 and 14:1 Paul exhorts us to desire the greater gifts. This would indicate that we not only have received at least one spiritual gift, but that God is willing to give us more. We also know from Paul's writing to his son in faith, Timothy, that spiritual gifts can be received by the laying on of hands by those in spiritual authority (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). So we can always seek to be used in new ways by God.

A. Listing the Spiritual Gifts

The following list of spiritual gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit is taken from the key passages on spiritual gifts: Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12-14; and Ephesians 4. There have been attempts to categorize the gifts in various ways. There are very few who feel that the Holy Spirit limits Himself to the gifts in these three passages. Some people have included such things as hospitality and writing. Others have effectively eliminated some of the gifts by saying they ended with the closing of the New Testament. We will address the gifts as listed in these passages and let you discern what God is doing and what He wants to do.

Romans 12	1 Corinthians 12	Ephesians 4
Prophecy Serving Teaching Exhorting Giving Leading Mercy	Word of wisdom Word of knowledge Faith Healing Miracles <i>Prophecy</i> Discernment Tongues Interpretation Apostle <i>Teaching</i> <i>Helps (Serving)</i> Administration	Apostle <i>Prophecy</i> Evangelism Pastoring <i>Teaching</i>

You will see in the above summary list that some gifts are listed twice or three times as indicated by italics. As you read through the descriptions that follow, see if you can identify individuals in your local church who exhibit one or more of these gifts. (They are simply listed in the order as found in Scripture.)

Prophecy (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 14:3-5,24-25)

- This gift is the ability to proclaim the Word of God clearly and fearlessly to strengthen, encourage and comfort believers (1 Corinthians 14:3).
- People with this gift expose sin in others for the purpose of reconciliation, see truth that others often fail to see and challenge them to respond, and warn of God's immediate or future judgment if there is no repentance.
- If a specific statement about the future is involved it must always be evaluated (judged) by others. A word given with either an overt or implicit "the Lord says" must line up with the Bible. But even if a pronouncement does not contradict Scripture, it still may not be from the Lord.

Note: the New Testament does *not* promote directive, one-on-one "personal prophecies." We each have direct access to our heavenly Father; Jesus alone is an intermediary priest.

- The gift also helps its possessor to anticipate God's plans (Amos 3:7).

Example:

Agabus the prophet predicts severe famine (Acts 11:27-29).

Serving or Helps (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28)

- This gift enables a believer to work gladly in the background so that God's work can go forward. It often involves being in a supporting role and being able to do the practical things with pleasure.
- Serving is to be done by all, but as in the case of a number of the gifts of the Spirit, some people receive an extra measure in ability, as well as joy of serving.
- People with the gift of service are more sensitive to the practical needs of an individual or ministry and are willing to step in and fill those needs.

Teaching (Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28)

- A person with the gift of teaching has the ability to explain and apply truths from God's Word so that those who are taught understand and can apply them.
- He is able to communicate God's truth clearly, systematically, and effectively using illustrations or methods which make them come alive.
- A person with the gift of teaching enjoys both the preparation involved in a good lesson and presenting it to his audience. In turn, those listening to the lesson usually exhibit interest and enjoyment in learning from them.
- The result is a greater Christ-likeness in the lives of the listeners.

Exhorting/Encouraging (Romans 12:8)

- This gift is the ability to help others reach their full potential by encouraging, challenging and guiding them.
- A Christian with this gift regularly has insightful words of encouragement for others. He may not understand himself why he must give these words, but in obedience and faith he is willing to risk and share an encouragement with another individual which often "happens" to be exactly what they needed at that moment in time.
- This is the divine ability to give the discouraged hope, emphasizing God's promises and our confidence in Him.

Example:

Barnabus actually means “Son of Encouragement” and we see that encouragement exemplified many times in his life.

Giving (Romans 12:8)

- Giving is part of the Christian life, but some receive this as a special gift that enables them to generously, sacrificially and cheerfully give of their resources without thought of return.
- It is to be ministered with liberality.
- There is some teaching that only those who are wealthy can have the gift of giving, but this is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. Givers often give sacrificially and as an act of worship; the size of their gift is immaterial.

Example:

The widow who gave all that she had to God (Mark 12:41-44).

Leadership (Romans 12:8)

- This gift is a visionary and forward looking gift that enables people to stay focused on where God might be leading.
- Those with this gift look more to the future and where the church is going rather than where we have been or are now.
- They can motivate people to work together harmoniously in pursuit of goals related to a vision.
- It is important to note that not all who are gifted with leadership are charismatic in personality. And just because an individual has charisma does not mean he has the spiritual gift of leadership.

Mercy (Romans 12:8)

- This divine gift enables a believer to feel deep compassion for those who are suffering physically, mentally, or emotionally. They are able to not just speak words of compassion but actually reach out in their distress with acts of love.
- We are all to show mercy, but it is also a special gift to be always merciful and compassionate.
- It is to be ministered with cheerfulness.

Examples:

- Tabitha abounded in deeds of kindness and charity--continually (Acts 9:36).
- Probably the most well-known present-day example of this gift is Mother Theresa who worked in India for years ministering to the destitute and dying.

Word of Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)

- An extra measure of insight, not acquired through experience that comes from the Holy Spirit to solve a problem or possibly silence an opponent.
- The ability to apply spiritual truths so that they are relevant and practical in decision making and daily life.
- Because it is stated as a “word” of wisdom, it indicates a verbal sharing of that wisdom as opposed to the wisdom we seek for our own lives.

- This gift often shows up when there is a difficult situation and the Holy Spirit gives the right “word” that opens spiritual understanding.

Example

Demonstrated by Jesus when the Pharisees attempted to trap him with their question about paying tribute to Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22).

Word of Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)

- Through this gift, the Holy Spirit reveals information otherwise impossible for the user to know.
- The ability to bring truth to the body of Christ through a revelation or Biblical insight.
- This gift may be especially helpful in intercessory prayer, Christian counseling, and praying for the sick and demonized.
- Like Word of Wisdom (above) this gift is often given at a time of need to an individual, rather than being continually in evidence.

Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9)

- This gift is a firm conviction of God’s power and promises to accomplish His will; it is not moved by obstacles or delays.
- The gift of faith is to be distinguished from ordinary faith without which it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Rather this gift is exhibited when someone **regularly** shows faith in what are humanly impossible circumstances.
- Those with the gift of faith move forward for the cause of Christ when others hold back.

Examples:

- We see this gift at work in the life of George Müller (1805-1898) of Bristol England, famous for his ministry to orphans there.
- Also seen in the lives of Andrew Murray of South Africa, and J. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) of the China Inland Mission.

Healing (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28)

- God uses this gift through human instruments to cure illness and restore health physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually apart from the use of natural means.
- Though these special gifts of healing are given only to certain individuals, this does not preclude other believers from laying hands on the sick (Mark 16:18), or elders in the Church from anointing the sick with oil (James 5:14). Such activities are not dependent on possessing these gifts.

Example

Paul and Peter both regularly exhibited this gift.

Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10,28)

- The Holy Spirit gives this gift to some so that He can confirm the message they bring through acts of supernatural power that alter the ordinary course of nature.
- This gift is seldom seen today except occasionally in what are considered more primitive cultures.

Distinguishing of Spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10)

- This gift helps the possessor to determine the spiritual source of a particular utterance, action, or teaching; whether it is of 1) divine origin, 2) satanic origin, or 3) human origin.
- The gift distinguishes truth from error and pure motives from impure. It discerns whether a word attributed to God is authentic and recognizes inconsistencies in teachings.

Examples:

- Jesus' rebuke of Peter, Matthew 16:23, Mark 8:33.
- Paul's recognition of the source of the slave girl's inspiration, Acts 16:16-18.

Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10,28)

- We see this gift first used in the book of Acts to speak in a language not previously learned so unbelievers could hear God's message in their own language (Acts 2:4-6).
- It is also seen as speaking out in tongues, with interpretation, to share a message from God, not usually in a known language but what some refer to as a "heavenly" language.
- Paul clarifies that it is not appropriate to draw attention to yourself by loudly praying to God in tongues; it would bring confusion during a Christian meeting.
- Paul explicitly states not to forbid people to speak in tongues (I Corinthians 14:39).

Interpretation of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:27)

- This gift is always required after the utterance of a message from God via the gift of tongues, in order to make the message understandable to the assembly.
- It is a gift that can only be in evidence if there is speaking in tongues in a group situation.
- The final message in the vernacular is not a word for word translation of the utterance in tongues; rather, it is a supernatural interpretation.

Apostleship (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 1:5; Ephesians 4:11)

- A person with this gift serves as a pioneer to establish new churches.
- It is usually considered to include the task of missionary and therefore he has a divine capacity to adapt to different cultures.
- A missionary/apostle is not self-selected. He is to be recognized from within a local body of believers, commissioned by them, and supported by them. The Bible says nothing of "short-term" missionaries, or missionary organizations.
- This is listed as a position in the body as well as a gift, with a responsibility to equip God's people for His work thereby building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

Administration (1 Corinthians 12:28)

- People with this gift are able to help the body of Christ accomplish God-given goals by planning and organizing. These people often have the ability to plan towards a given goal, but are not visionary themselves. They are best paired with a visionary leader who can give them goals and whom they can keep accountable for the details.
- They assist various church ministries to become more effective and efficient. Those gifted with administration often also provide accountability in many areas including finances.
- Secretaries and bookkeepers in spiritual ministries often will be gifted in this area as well as others. (However, not all secretaries or bookkeepers have this gift).

Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11)

- This gift enables a believer to share the Gospel of salvation freely and effectively so that people respond in repentance and new life.
- All of us carry the responsibility of witnessing and sharing what Christ has done for us, but not necessarily with the ease or results of those with the gift of evangelism.
- A person who is gifted with evangelism can use almost any situation to share the gospel. Often these people cannot “keep quiet” about what God has done for them.

Pastoring (Ephesians 4:11)

- This is a gift of mentoring and providing spiritual guidance to others to help them develop in their faith.
- They take an active and individual interest in the personal spiritual growth of others. They often make good counselors.
- This gift enables the believer to spiritually nurture by sharing from his own spiritual experience and insight in such a way as to build up others.
- “Pastor” can be an official capacity in the church body, but is not limited to the office of pastor. It is often in evidence in small group settings where the leader actively “pastors” the members.

It is important to note that there is a distinct difference between natural talents that we are born with and the spiritual gifts received through the Holy Spirit. Some spiritual gifts may involve natural talents, but these talents are distinguished from the spiritual gifts. A simple example that has been observed is the case of one young church member who had never had any interest in teaching in any form. He was presented with the need and opportunity to teach a Bible class, and discovered that he both enjoyed it greatly and was able to do it well, even though he was inexperienced; whereas many of us have had opportunity to see school teachers try to teach a Bible class with little success, simply because it was not a “spiritual” gift. However, it can also be true that a person can be naturally gifted in teaching, and God can choose to also endow that person with a spiritual gift of teaching.

We are never exempt from using talents, or whatever God has given us, for His glory. We have the responsibility of stewardship in all areas of our lives. You will also note that some of those listed as spiritual gifts are evident or should be evident in some measure in all believers, even though they have not received it as a specific gift. And some gifts seem to be given for a short period of time, for a specific need, but are not active in a regular way in the believer’s life. Yet, some of those gifts can also be given to a believer permanently. Our focus needs to be to use what God has given for His glory.



Exercise 5

Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. How could this parable be applied to your spiritual gifts and your responsibility for them?

B. Discovering Your Gifts

Knowing about spiritual gifts is interesting but often believers are frustrated in trying to decide what gift they might have. There is a test for spiritual gifts in Appendix. This is merely a tool to begin to help you explore what spiritual gifts you might have. There are many of these tests available in different forms covering talents as well as the gifts we have covered in this lesson.



Exercise 6

Take the Spiritual Gifts Inventory now. Just follow the instructions. Be prepared to discuss what you discovered about your own gifting from this exercise.

Even more important than taking a test as you just did, it is wise to talk to friends and a spiritual leader who knows you fairly well to get their evaluation. You may need to try doing different things in the church to see where you are most capable. Do not be afraid to go out of your comfort zone as you explore God's gifts to you. You may never know you have a gift until you are put in a situation where you need to use it. You also need to be aware that gifts need to be used or they will decrease, and they need to be developed. Paul had some encouragement for Timothy in this area. Paul exhorted, "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you" (1 Timothy 4:14). In his second epistle he said, "I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you" (2 Timothy 1:6). So if we desire to serve Christ more we must seek and do more.

It is not important whether a certain ability is a spiritual gift, a blessing from God, a God-given talent, an inherited trait, a natural human ability, or something learned. What is important is that we discover what gifts and abilities are more pronounced in us and learn how to use them to serve God. God is just as pleased when we use a learned ability to serve Him as He is when we use a spiritual gift to serve Him. The key is to discover our abilities and learn to use them to the glory of God.

IV. Ministry in Practice

The life of the believer is to be one of serving others in the name of Christ. In doing so we reap many benefits. We have seen that we must cultivate a servant's heart as a motivating force in our serving and that God has especially equipped us to minister. Yet, if we stop here, we would commit one of the most common errors that Christians tend to make. This error is to simply talk about ministry without actually doing anything. In the remainder of this lesson we will outline some of the types of ministries which you should be involved in. Then you will be given some specific ministry assignments to accomplish.

A. Ministering to Fellow Believers

Our understanding of ministry within the family of God is grounded in our view of the church. By this we mean that it is the responsibility of the church to see that all believers grow up to maturity in Christ. In achieving this goal, we are to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of each other. The activities involved in this process can be categorized under two headings: discipleship (helping other believers mature in the faith) and fellowship (participating in and helping to strengthen the family, the body, of Christ). We will look briefly at these categories, defining them and surveying ways we can be involved in their fulfillment.

Discipleship. Discipleship is the process of nurturing believers toward spiritual maturity. In Matthew 28:19-20 we see that the Great Commission was not simply to evangelize but to make disciples. It is the mandate of all believers to be involved in the building of disciples. This same idea is also present in the teaching of the apostle Paul. In 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul instructs his young protégé to take the things that Paul had taught him and pass them on to other faithful men.

Perhaps you are thinking that you are not qualified to do this. We all feel this way to some extent. The key to discipleship, though, is not how well we are trained but how close we walk with the Lord and how willing we are to share our lives with others in the family of Christ. Discipleship is not a program that you must know how to use but rather a life-style to be taught, shared, and modeled. Discipleship programs can be helpful, and it is to your advantage to get all the training you can but only as a supplement to the reality of your own personal walk with Christ.

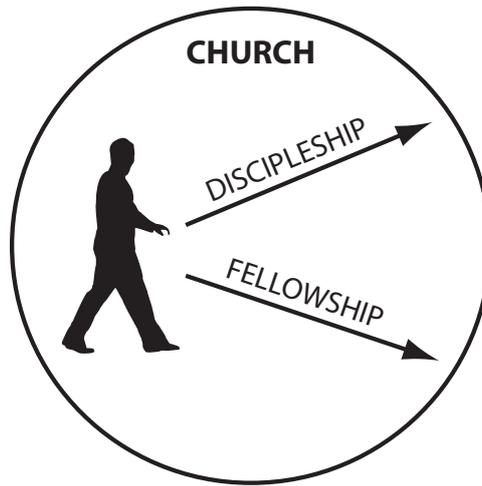


Diagram 11-1



Exercise 7

Make a list of all the believers that your life touches regularly who could be classified as “younger” in the faith than you are. Pick a name from this list and begin to pray for God to show you how you might help this person grow in his walk with the Lord.

Fellowship. The second way that we minister to other Christians is the broader category called fellowship. By this we are referring to all of the different “one another” commands given in the New Testament. It is imperative that each member of the body of Christ function the best he can for the good of the whole body. (This is covered thoroughly in Lesson 10, “Fellowship in the Family”.) You have had opportunity to also explore where you may be specially gifted. But as you probably have noticed there are many ways we are to be involved in the lives of other believers whether we have a special gift in that area or not. So do not spurn one area or another because you are not “gifted”. The overall principle is always love and showing the love of Christ in whatever way we can.

B. Ministering to Non-Believers

[The unchristian environment] is the place where we find out whether the Christian’s meditation has led him into the unreal, from which he awakens in terror when he returns to the workaday world, or whether it has led him into a real contact with God, from which he emerges strengthened and purified. Has it transported him for a moment into a spiritual ecstasy that vanishes when everyday life returns, or has it lodged the Word of God so securely and deeply in his heart that it holds and fortifies him, impelling him to active love, to obedience, to good works? Only the day can decide.¹

We live and work and walk in Satan’s territory, this world where we will spend our physical days. Reread the above quotation from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian, and a 20th century martyr.



Question 12 According to Bonhoeffer what should happen in the Christian’s everyday world if he has a deep and real relationship with God?

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (Harper & Row Publishers, NY, 1954) 88.

Of equal importance to serving within the body of Christ is ministering to those outside the church. It is not just a matter of surviving out in the world. It is the mission of the church to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is the mission of each believer to find ways to accomplish this goal in his own part of the world. Again, we will examine two categories of application: compassion and witness.

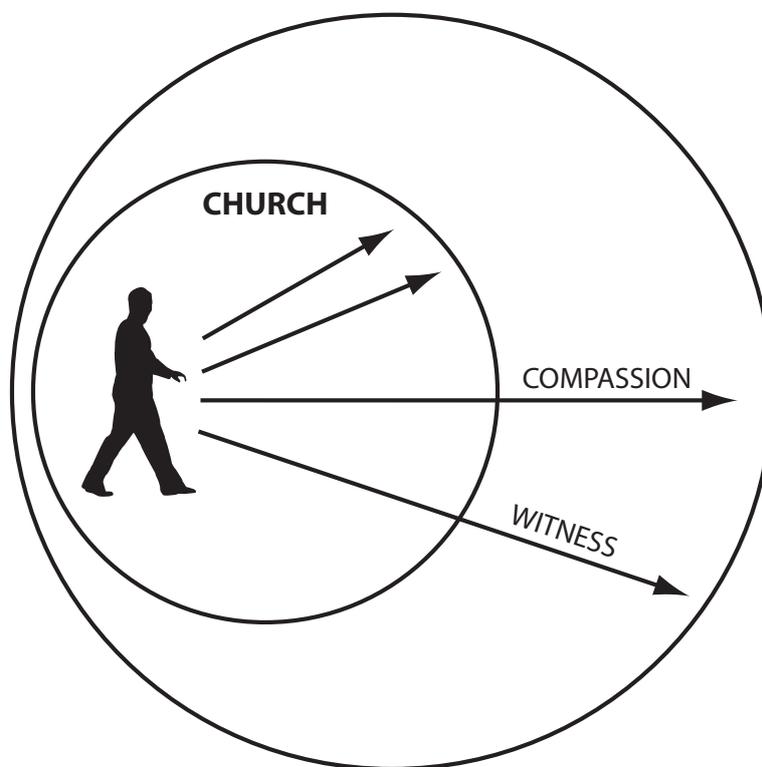


Diagram 11-2

Compassion. Sometimes we wonder why the unbelieving world seems uninterested in listening to our message. Perhaps it is because they see little in our lives that attracts them to the gospel. Perhaps it is because they are too caught up in their own selfish pursuits to hear us. It is also possible, however, that we project an appearance of unconcern. Our actions and inaction often give the impression that our unsaved friends and acquaintances are the object of our preaching but not our love. When the church has been ready to step in and minister to the needs of men, it has found marvelous opportunities to demonstrate the love of Christ and to share the gospel. When it has failed to see and respond to needs, it has often run into closed doors.

To see that compassion is an essential part of the Christian's relationship to the world, we need look no further than the life of our Lord. To illustrate this, work through the following exercise:



Exercise 8

Look up the following references, and note Jesus' actions:

- a. Matthew 8:5-17
- b. Matthew 9:18-26
- c. Matthew 12:22
- d. Luke 9:10-17

Perhaps no passage emphasizes the need for meeting the needs of men like Matthew 25:31-46. In this scene of judgment, Jesus describes an interesting criterion for pleasing God. Make a list of the different kinds of ministry outlined in these verses.

Witness. There is a CBLT course *Practical Evangelism* which covers this topic thoroughly. (If you have not, make it a high priority.) But it is important to understand that whatever “method” of evangelism you use, it must start with a heart of compassion and love. Without that the results will be minimal. We often are caught up in the pressure to perform, and we know part of that is being a good “witness”.



Exercise 9

Examine your heart. How often do you give a verbal witness to the unsaved? Why do you do it? Why do you not do it? Do you feel guilty about your lack of witness? Why?

We are ambassadors for Christ. Our task as ambassadors is to help people be reconciled to God. We often have to find ways to convince them of why they might want to be part of God’s Kingdom. The Psalms speak so often of praising God for who He is and what He has done. This is part of our task as ambassadors—letting people know who we belong to and how wonderful it is. However, you will only be convincing if you have a dynamic relationship with God yourself. Telling others how He saved you twenty years ago is beneficial, but it is critical that people around you see an on-going relationship with God. People are so caught up in sin and problems, they need to see hope. When Jesus appeared to Saul he was appointed as a minister and a witness “to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me [Jesus]” (Acts 26:18). Peter also tells us to be prepared always to give a reason for the hope that we have (1 Peter 3:15).

To end this section we are going to seek to put into practice ministering.



PROJECT: Application

This is a three-part project, encompassing the three subjects discussed in this lesson. First, ministering to a fellow believer, then witnessing to a non-believer, and then finally, a ministry of compassion.

Part 1: Ministering to a Fellow Believer

The goal of this assignment in particular is to get you involved in ministry. Pick any area of ministry that you feel you are best able to do. It can be in the area of helping a less mature believer in his walk with Christ. It could be performing some act related to the “one another” passages. The choice is yours. After you have completed this particular ministry, write a one-page evaluation of your performance answering the following questions:

1. Describe the ministry activity. Explain why you chose this particular ministry over other possibilities.
2. Are you satisfied with the way that you handled the ministry situation? Why or why not?
3. In what areas do you feel you need help?
4. List resources you know about where you may find help in improving your ability in this area.
5. In what way did being involved in this ministry opportunity benefit you?

Part 2: Sharing the Gospel

As in most areas of ministry, it is much easier to talk about evangelism than to do it. In order for you to get practice in this area, you are to share the gospel with a person

with whom you have regular contact. This may be the time to speak to someone you have been praying for salvation. Share your personal testimony, and the plan of salvation. After you have done this, take time to write out an evaluation of this encounter, including:

1. The things that went well
2. The things that could be improved
3. Questions that you did not know how to handle
4. Anything else that you think to be important

Part 3: A Ministry of Compassion

In Exercise 8 you were requested to list the different kinds of ministry outlined in Matthew 25:31-46. From this list select one that you can perform, identify how you might perform it, and actually perform it. After completing this ministry, write a brief evaluation of your performance, being as specific as possible.

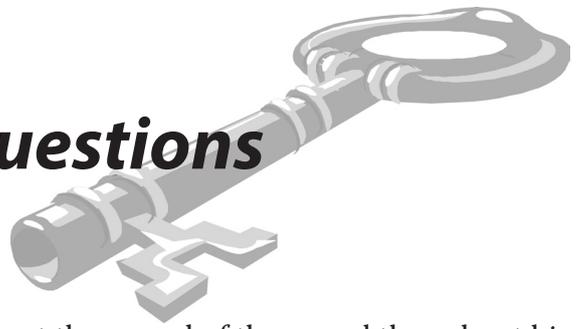
Be prepared to discuss all three evaluations at your group meeting.

Conclusion

In this lesson we have examined how we are to minister in the name of Christ. Much more could have been said, but we have purposely limited our discussion for one reason. It is better to do ministry than to talk about it. Because of this, it is of utmost importance that you do the three ministry assignments and the evaluations.

Ministry is a privilege. In a world that exalts power, money, and success, there is no higher calling than serving the living God. May we come to see the value of living for others so we can say as Paul did, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service" (1 Tim. 1:12). Be encouraged. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. " (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Answers to questions



Question 1

Paul is under house arrest. He was more concerned about the spread of the gospel than about his personal circumstances.

Question 2

Your answer might include that for Paul his life was totally given to serving his Lord. His death would be even greater because it would usher him into the presence of the One he loved and served.

Question 3

While he longed to be with Christ, he was willing to delay this for the sake of those he was called to serve.

Question 4

Paul is thankful that, even though he was once a persecutor, he was chosen by God to serve. It was a great satisfaction to see God use him in reaching others.

Question 5

Paul sees his life as being an example of how God can save any one. This is the privilege that all believers have.

Question 6

“YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” Matthew 22:39

Question 7

Jesus said, “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”

Question 8

Every believer receives a spiritual gift.

Question 9

The Holy Spirit gives gifts as He wills.

Question 10

According to verses 28-30, no, no one receives all of the spiritual gifts. Nor does there seem to be a gift that all believers receive.

Question 11

According to verse 7, they are given for the common good of the body of Christ. The whole illustration of the body follows with the indication that each member is important and has a function and needs to use his gift(s) for the healthy normal functioning of the church.

Question 12

The Christian will emerge from his time with God strengthened and purified, and the Word of God which is deep in his heart will hold and fortify him, moving him to be active in love, obedience and good works.

Answers to exercises



Exercise 1

Your answer. Your answer should include the ideas of leaders training the people in the church to do the work of the ministry and the responsibility of all Christians to be involved in ministry.

Exercise 2

Your answer

Exercise 3

Your answer.

Exercise 4

Your answer.

Exercise 5

Your answer. Notice that like the gifts from the Holy Spirit these “talents” were given by God to His servants and He did hold them accountable regardless of how much or how little they had received.

Exercise 6

Your answer. Be sure to record your final results in your notebook.

Exercise 7

Your answer.

Exercise 8

Jesus took the following actions:

- a. Matthew 8:5-17 — He healed the sick and the demon possessed
- b. Matthew 9:18-26 — He raised a child from the dead
- c. Matthew 12:22 — He cast the demons out of a man
- d. Luke 9:10-17 — He fed the five thousand people

Matthew 25:31-46 — Your list should include:

1. Feeding the hungry
2. Giving drink to the thirsty
3. Taking strangers into your home
4. Clothing the naked
5. Visiting the sick
6. Visiting the prisoner

Exercise 9

Your answer.

Spiritual Gifts Inventory

Instructions

This Spiritual Gifts Inventory consists of 75 statements that you are to respond to by entering in a number for each on a separate sheet of paper. Depending on how you feel about each statement, enter a number between 0 and 4 where 0 means that the statement does not describe you at all and 4 means that the statement describes you closely.

This test is designed for Christians. If you have been a Christian for at least a few years, you should use your personal experiences as the basis for your responses. If you consider yourself to be a new Christian, then your responses should be based on how well each statement describes the desire of your heart (even if you have not yet done what the statement talks about).

Please keep in mind that this test was written by people, not by God, and as such it is certainly imperfect. It should be used as a starting place to begin to discover how God has gifted you, but not as an absolute indicator. The test may not always indicate your true spiritual gift(s). It is just one tool in what should be a life-long search for how God has blessed you so you can bless others.

Read Carefully!

1. As you start the test, take a blank sheet of paper to record your answers.
2. As you take the test, select the value from 0-4 indicating how true the statement is in your life. Record the number of the statement and then your evaluation as follows:

- 0 -- Not at all
- 1 -- Little
- 2 -- Moderately
- 3 -- Considerably
- 4 -- Strongly

3. Continue this process for all the statements. The test will take up to a half hour to complete.
4. Respond to each statement quickly with your first feeling. Don't be too modest, however. You probably will have many more low number responses than high number responses.
5. ONLY after you are done, read the Analysis Instructions at the end.

Inventory

1. I am often chosen as the leader in a group of people.

2. I have the ability to recognize a need, and get the job done, no matter how trivial the task.
3. I have the ability to organize ideas, people and projects to reach a specific goal.
4. People often say I have good spiritual judgment.
5. I am very confident of achieving great things for the glory of God.
6. I enjoy giving money to those in serious financial need.
7. I enjoy ministering to people in hospitals, prisons, or old folks' homes to comfort them.
8. I often have Insights that offer practical solutions to difficult problems.
9. I have understood issues or problems in the church and seen answers when others didn't.
10. I enjoy encouraging and giving counsel to those who are discouraged.
11. I have an ability to thoroughly study a passage of scripture, and then share it clearly with others.
12. I presently have the responsibility for the spiritual growth of one or more young Christians.
13. Other people respect me as an authority in spiritual matters.
14. I have an ability in the area of communication and public speaking, and people enjoy listening to me.
15. I enjoy spending time with non-Christians, especially with hopes of telling them about Jesus.
16. It is a thrill to inspire others to greater involvement in church ministry.
17. I would like to assist the spiritual leaders so they will have more time to accomplish their essential and priority ministries.
18. I am a very organized person who sets goals and makes plans to reach them.
19. I am a good judge of character, and can spot a spiritual phony.
20. I believe God could cause any church to double in size.
21. I joyfully give money to the church well above my tithe.
22. I feel compassion for people who are hurting and lonely, and like to spend considerable time with them to cheer them up.
23. God has enabled me to choose correctly between several complex options in an important decision, when no one else knew what to do.
24. I enjoy studying difficult questions about God's Word, and I am able to find answers easier and quicker than others.
25. People often tell me their problems, and I encourage them.
26. When a question arises from a difficult Biblical passage, I am motivated to research the answer.
27. I take an active role in protecting Christians from worldly influences that would hinder their spiritual growth and weaken their faith.
28. I feel empowered to stand-alone for Christ in a hostile, unbelieving environment.
29. Sometimes I have a burning desire to speak God's word even if I know it will not be well received.
30. I find it easy to invite a person to accept Jesus as their Savior.
31. I don't mind asking others to accomplish an important task for the church.
32. I am very dependable for getting things done on time, and I don't need much praise and thanks.

33. I easily delegate significant responsibilities to other people.
34. I am able to distinguish between right and wrong in complex spiritual matters, that other people can't seem to figure out.
35. I often step out and start projects that other people won't attempt, and the projects are usually successful.
36. God has blessed me with the ability to make more money than I need, so I cheerfully give much to the church.
37. I want to do whatever I can for the needy people around me, even if I have to give up something.
38. People often seek my advice when they don't know what to do.
39. I have an ability to gather information from several sources to discover the answer to a question, or learn more about a subject.
40. I feel a need to challenge others to better themselves, especially in their spiritual growth.
41. Others listen and enjoy my teaching of scriptures.
42. I like to give of my own free time to meet other's needs.
43. I have little fear in leading people where God wants them to go.
44. I feel a need to speak God's messages from the Bible so people will know what God expects of them.
45. Every chance I get I try to win my friends to Jesus.
46. I can guide and manage a group of people toward achieving a specific goal.
47. I would like to do things like typing, filing, gardening, painting, etc. for the church, or helping in any way I can.
48. I am able to recognize gifts and abilities in others and help them find a ministry where they are effective.
49. People come to me for help in distinguishing between spiritual truth and error.
50. I trust In God's faithfulness for a bright future, even when everything looks bad.
51. I wouldn't mind lowering my standard of living to give more to the church, and others in need.
52. I feel great compassion for the problems of others.
53. God enables me to make appropriate application of Biblical truth to practical situations.
54. I can recognize difficult Biblical truths and principles on my own, and I enjoy this.
55. People will take correction from me because they know I am on their side.
56. I am able to present Bible lessons in a vivid way to a group of people with appropriate illustrations that make it come alive.
57. I enjoy working with people, and desire to help them be the best person they can for the Lord.
58. I really want the Gospel to spread in my country and around the world.
59. I sometimes have a strong sense of what God wants to say to people in response to particular situations.
60. I would like to tell others how to become a Christian, and give them the invitation to receive Jesus in their life.
61. People respect my opinion and follow my direction.

62. I enjoy helping people in any type of need, and feel a sense of satisfaction in meeting that need.
63. I am comfortable making important decisions, even under pressure.
64. I can sense when a speaker is empowered by the Holy Spirit or just bringing glory to himself.
65. I often exercise my faith through prayer, and God answers my prayers in exciting ways.
66. When I give money to someone I don't expect anything in return, and often give anonymously.
67. I enjoy working with the "unfortunate" and the "have-nots" who are usually ignored by most people.
68. People usually do what I recommend, and remember advice I have shared with them.
69. People have come under conviction from my insights of scripture.
70. It is enjoyable to motivate people to a higher spiritual commitment.
71. I get excited thinking about the opportunity to share broad concepts and details about scripture which are relevant to daily life with others.
72. I help Christians who have wandered away from the Lord find their way back to a growing relationship with Him.
73. I would be excited to share the gospel and form new groups of Christians in areas where there aren't many churches.
74. I feel God's blessing, power and anointing when publicly speaking His message.
75. I seem able to determine when the Spirit has prepared a person to received Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ANALYSIS

Response 1-15	Response 16-30	Response 31-45	Response 46-60	Response 61-75	TOTAL	Rank in order highest to lowest	Name of GIFT
1	16	31	46	61			Leadership
2	17	32	47	62			Service
3	18	33	48	63			Administration
4	19	34	49	64			Discernment
5	20	35	50	65			Faith
6	21	36	51	66			Giving
7	22	37	52	67			Mercy
8	23	38	53	68			Wisdom
9	24	39	54	69			Knowledge
10	25	40	55	70			Exhortation
11	26	41	56	71			Teaching
12	27	42	57	72			Pastoring
13	28	43	58	73			Apostleship
14	29	44	59	74			Prophecy
15	30	45	60	75			Evangelism

Analysis Instructions

- Using the paper on which you recorded your responses, now transfer those numbers to the appropriate boxes on the Analysis Sheet. Be sure that you have made a response in every box.
- Now calculate the total of the 5 responses in each horizontal row and enter it in the Total column. You need to do this for each of the 15 rows of responses.
- Next, look over the 15 numbers you have just entered in the vertical Total column. Look for the highest number you can find (for example 16). Now, place an “A” in the Rank column for the row with the highest Total. If there is more than one row with this same high number, place an “A” in the Rank column for each.
- If you placed an “A” in 3 or more Rank boxes, then skip this step — Look for the second highest number (for example 12). Place a “B” in the Rank column for each row with this number.
- If you placed an “A” or “B” in 3 or more Rank boxes, then skip this step — Look for the third highest number and place a “C” in the Rank column for each row with this number.
- Now look at the names of the Spiritual Gifts beside the rank boxes where you entered “A”, “B”, or “C”. These are the Spiritual Gifts that it seems most likely God has given to you.

You will notice that several of the spiritual gifts listed in the workbook are not used here. These are tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles and healing. The reason is that these gifts, when given, are obvious and without question. They also are the ones that are the cause of dissension between denominations. We are not indicating that these gifts are not present today, but rather when they are present they are obvious to the individual and to the local body of Christ.