

What is the purpose of Spiritual Gifts

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The purpose of spiritual gifts is to promote “the common good” of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7), to build up the church (1 Corinthians 14:12), and to prepare us each for “works of service . . . until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12–13). Each person upon accepting the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ receives the Holy Spirit inside as a seal of salvation (Ephesians 1:12–14). The Spirit then gives to each believer certain gifts from God to do the work of God (1 Corinthians 12:4–6).

Scripture contains several passages about spiritual gifts: 1 Corinthians 12:1–31, 1 Corinthians 14:1–33, Romans 12:1–8, Ephesians 4:1–13, Hebrews 2:3–4, and 1 Peter 4:10–11. No matter what the gift, its purpose is to edify and mature the church and to glorify God in serving others.

In no way are the spiritual gifts to be used to draw attention to oneself or put on a showy display. This was part of the problem in the church in Corinth. Members there were exercising their spiritual gifts to edify themselves without regard to what anyone else was doing (1 Corinthians 14:4), and their methods resulted in chaos in the church service (1 Corinthians 14:23, 27–28). They needed reminding that the greatest gift of all is love (1 Corinthians 13:13). Without love, none of the other gifts are profitable at all (1 Corinthians 13:1–3).

All gifts are given by grace from God through the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4; Hebrews 2:4). Different people are given different gifts. Not everyone receives the same gift (1 Corinthians 12:4). Those gifted with various spiritual gifts are meant to work together as the parts of a body work together (1 Corinthians 12:12–27). The gifts God gives to His people are divinely placed for the good of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27).

The gifts God gives us through His Spirit are to be used for His glory (Colossians 3:17). The “most excellent way” to do that is with love (1 Corinthians 12:31b; 13:1–13). Any gift used for personal gain or without love is like a harsh noise to God and the church. Even the most powerful spiritual gifts memorably displayed, if done without love, cannot glorify God.

We should also take care of and develop the gifts God has given us. We are to fan into flames every spiritual gift God gives (1 Timothy 1:6) and put them to good use.

Various spiritual gifts assessments or tests are available, which may or may not be helpful in one’s Christian life. What’s most important is to be prayerfully serving the Lord. The gifts of the Spirit will be confirmed by time, teaching, and mentoring.