



FOCUS

Called and Gifted

by Joel Berthelsen

“Do not neglect your gift...” — 1 Timothy 4:14

It is God's wisdom and joy to call ordinary, everyday people to transform the world. Our Lord also anoints us with His Holy Spirit, empowering and equipping us with what is needed to walk in conformity with His call (Ephesians 3:20-4:1).

Your Spiritual Gifts Shape Your Call

All faces have two eyes, a nose, a mouth, two ears, skin and a bone structure. However, though everyone has these attributes, no two faces are the same. These attributes and their relationship with one another create a unique facial profile. Your personal attributes—your talents, skills, experiences and much more—shape your “call,” not unlike a facial profile. Furthermore, your bones are what most significantly shape your entire body; similarly, your spiritual gifts most significantly shape your call. Therefore, knowing about your spiritual gifts will help you understand your calling.

Your Spiritual Gifts Continue Jesus' Kingdom Work

Jesus showed evidence of all the spiritual gifts cited in Scripture (except speaking in tongues and interpretation). Because Jesus' call was so immense—a call to change the entire world—He needed *all* the gifts to accomplish it. Our calling is much smaller in scope; nevertheless, we still need *some* of these same gifts to accomplish our calling. Jesus is pleased to give us this help. *“When he ascended on high he gave gifts to humankind”* (Ephesians 4:8 NRSV).

“We are one body in Christ... individually members one of another...” (Romans 12:5 NRSV). When you were baptized and “anointed” with the Holy Spirit, you became a “member” (a part...not just a name on a list) of the “*body of Christ*” (in Biblical Greek, “Christian” literally means “anointed one”). You have a significant function in continuing Jesus' kingdom work, not just at church, but in all of life. Jesus has *given* you powerful spiritual competencies for your unique multifaceted function in His transforming work. Together, as

members of His body, we each have a few of Jesus' gifts, not for our selfish or manipulative agendas, but to accomplish His will. *“God testified by...gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will”* (Hebrews 2:4).

“Spiritual” gift indicates both the source and the effect of the gift. Do you want to have a decidedly spiritual impact on the world?

Through knowing and using your spiritual gifts, you will be more effective, focused and energized.

You will be blessed to watch Jesus work in unseen spiritual ways. When you see this, your trust in Jesus will grow. You will observe, value and encourage others' differing gifts and the Spirit's work in them. You will realize that all spiritual gifts are equally important, noting that the greatest honor should be given to the less visible and seemingly less important, protecting against top-down arrogance and control (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 15ff). Contrary to sinful human thinking, leaders, preachers, speakers and teachers are *not* more important in fulfilling Jesus' purposes for the world.

God Will Reveal YOUR Spiritual Gifts to YOU!

Let's examine these gifts that were active in Jesus' life. Which few gifts are active in you? To which gifts do you feel a strong inner draw?

Functional Gifts (from Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-10). Functional gifts cause a person to function in a certain way with intense motivation and extraordinary effectiveness. *“For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function...we have gifts that differ...”* (Romans 12:4-6 NRSV).

- **Service/Ministry**—Love by doing the behind-the-

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scenes, sometimes menial but essential tasks—Jesus washed the disciples’ feet (John 13).

- **Encouragement/Exhortation** (Greek: “Called-alongside”)—Build up others, give inner courage, strengthen, be genuinely positive, cheerful; after Peter’s denial, Jesus encouraged Peter and told Peter to strengthen the other believers (Luke 22:31-32).
- **Mercy/Compassion**—Show deep concern for the disenfranchised often in sacrificial undeserved action: Jesus told the woman caught in adultery, “Neither do I condemn. Go... sin no more” (John 8:10-11 NIV/NASV).
- **Administration/Assistance/Governing leadership**—Organize and coordinate people, tasks and/or details: Jesus directed the crowd to sit in “groups of fifty,” and to gather up the leftovers when finished (Luke 9:15/John 6:12).
- **Leadership** (Greek: “Standing-in-front”)—Demonstrate natural authority and influence without control, move in front of others with the big picture: “Come follow me’, Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men’” (Matthew 4:19 NIV).
- **Giving**—Show extraordinary generosity with resources and/or time to make kingdom work happen, sometimes through personal sacrifice: Jesus gave up His family’s trade of carpentry.
- **Hospitality** (Greek: “Love of the stranger”)—Help strangers to feel comfortable and connected through practical action (1 Peter 4:9-10): Jesus said, “...teacher, where are you staying” ... “come...” They stayed with him (John 1:38ff NRSV).
- **Intercession** (Greek: “Standing in the gap”)—Have an extraordinary and compelling desire to pray frequently as led by the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:36-38): Jesus prayed for the disciples and others who would believe (John 17).
- **Missionary** (Latin: “Sent-one”)—Have an extraordinary desire to bring Jesus’ rule and reign to other cultures (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8): Jesus

reached “out” to the Samaritans: “Now we know this man really is the Savior of the world” (John 4 NIV).

Functional & “Equipping” Gifts (from Ephesians 4:11-12).

Equipping gifts are for increasing effectiveness and training others for Jesus’ transformative work. “The gifts that he gave were that some would be apostles...prophets...evangelists...shepherds...teachers, to **equip** the saints for the work of ministry”(Ephesians 4:11-12 NRSV).

- **Shepherding/Pastor** (not implied or limited to those with the title)—Extraordinary care exercised through nurturing relationships of depth: “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11 NIV).
- **Teacher**—Bringing Scriptural insight and transformative spiritual depth: “The crowds were amazed because he (Jesus) taught as one who had authority...” (Matthew 7:29 NIV).
- **Evangelist**—Communicating Jesus’ Good News and causing extraordinary transformation of lives and trust in God: Jesus caused the woman at the well to turn from her past and desire life with God (John 4).
- **Apostle**—Extraordinary authority and influence that transforms leaders, people and culture, sometimes through signs and wonders: “Consider Jesus, the apostle” (Hebrews 3:1 NASV).
- **Prophet**—Desiring and speaking God’s direct, compelling and forthright words of truth: “A great

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prophet has risen...” (Luke 7:16); Jesus said, “*Woe to you... Pharisees...*” (Matthew 23:13 NIV).

Manifestation Gifts (from 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). *Manifestation* gifts cause God’s supernatural power to be unmistakably visible (*manifest*), creating undeniable recognition of God’s action and glory. **Supernatural** means unexplainable by the natural God-created course of events. “*To each is given the **manifestation** of the Spirit for the common good*” (1 Corinthians 12:7 NRSV).

- **Wisdom**—Supernatural insight to know what, when, where and how to do something: Jesus said, “*Go down to the lake... take the first fish you catch, open its mouth and you will find a coin...give it... for my tax...*” (Matthew 17:24-27 NIV).
- **Knowledge**—Supernatural ability to know and understand something you have not learned: “*Jesus knew their thoughts...*” (Luke 11:17 NRSV).
- **Faith**—Extraordinary belief that the impossible can happen without tangible evidence: Jesus walked on water and told Peter he could also (Matthew 14:25-32).
- **Healing**—Supernaturally bringing wholeness: “*Jesus stretched out his hand...immediately the leprosy left*” (Luke 5:13 NASV).
- **Discernment**—Supernatural insight to separate, whether a situation has its source in God or Satan’s operation: Jesus discerned the source of evil (Mark 9:29).
- **Miracles**—Supernatural cause and effect: Jesus turned water into wine (John 2).
- **Prophecy**—Supernatural, direct revelation from God: Jesus said, “*Jerusalem, Jerusalem...who kills the prophets and stones...*” (Matthew 23:37-39 NASV).
- **Tongues**—Supernatural prayer form in another language that was never learned (1 Corinthians 14).
- **Interpretation of Tongues**—Supernatural translation and revelation of “speaking in tongues” (1 Corinthians 14).

For deeper insight and increased effectiveness, carefully study the Scriptures noted in this article—ignorance regarding spiritual gifts is common (1 Corinthians 12:1). To assist in identifying your gifts, try a spiritual gift inventory. Ask others which gifts they see in you. Ask God to reveal the relationship between your gifts and other strengths. Ask Him to call you, showing you opportunities to use your gifts

in order to transform the world in Jesus’ name. If YOU have an idea, maybe YOU are CALLED to make it happen—rather than complaining, suggesting or thinking “someone else”!

Continually Invite the Holy Spirit

It is impossible for you to live the life that our Lord planned for you without the Holy Spirit’s power. Welcome the Spirit’s fire to empower all your gifts and attributes (Exodus 35:30-35). You can be a “*faint embers*” believer or a “*burning*” worker for God’s kingdom (2 Timothy 1:6-7). What would your life look like if you were totally receptive to the Spirit’s full activity?

What could our Lord accomplish through you? The apostle Paul encouraged ordinary everyday believers, “*Do not get **overly-filled** (drunk) with wine, ...instead be **continually filled with the Spirit***” (Ephesians 5:18 paraphrased). So, given that God has called and even equipped you, don’t waste your life on meaningless things. Get to it... walk, act and live in conformity with Christ and His call, and remember our Lord’s words spoken many times to people like you and me: “*Do not be afraid.*”

May you be willing to pray this prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, **fan into flames** the gift of your Holy Spirit in me. Amen.



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