

Spiritual Leadership
Psalm 78:70-72

Introduction: Coaching is a great metaphor for leadership. Coaches have to be leaders. A pastor is really like a player-coach. What is leadership? *Leadership is influence.* It is the ability to gather followers. John Maxwell says, “He who thinks he is leading and has no one following is only taking a walk.” Spiritual leadership is influencing people to follow Jesus Christ and His Word. It is imparting a God-given vision and helping people to follow that vision. **Let’s look at some Essential Elements of True Spiritual Leadership:**

(1) Calling (“He also chose David”) [1 Sam. 16: 1-13]

- A. To God personally (relationship and fellowship)**
- B. To the fulfillment of God’s plan (see Jeremiah 1 and Acts 13:36)**
- C. Involves a process of preparation (John Maxwell calls it the Law of Process-**

Leaders are developed daily, not in a day)

Application: Are you doing what you are called to? God empowers us to do what He calls us to and not anything else. Leadership is a process of development. God never wastes an experience. We have to be faithful in small things in order to be made ruler over much.

(2) Care (“shepherd”) [Ezekiel 34:1-4]

- A. Develop relationships with people**
- B. Lovingly put others ahead of ourselves (be sacrificial instead of selfish)**
- C. Meet people’s needs**

Application: Improve people skills, seek to relate to people, love people, help them, listen to them, and add value to their lives. We need a lot of shepherds at True Life.

(3) Character (“integrity of his heart”)

Nothing is more important than character when it comes to leadership. People will not follow someone they do not trust, and we do not trust people without character. John Wooden said, “Be more concerned with your character than with your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.” Charisma without character is a recipe for destruction.

Integrity is being real instead of hypocritical. It is being a principled and godly person. Integrity is the state of being integrated, complete, and whole. It is living from the inside out instead of living to impress others. It is being real instead of fake. We develop character by:

**Walking in the Spirit, Obedience,
Prayer/Study, Confession/Repentance, Discipline, Trials, and Accountability**

Application: The Bible often warns ministers to take heed to themselves and then to those they are leading. Our first priority is to lead ourselves (1 Cor. 9:24-27). We must continually strive for spiritual growth and development of the character of Christ.

(4) Competence (“skillfulness of his hands”)

There’s nothing spiritual about incompetence. We ought to give our best to God (Malachi 1) through His strength and power. Warren Wiersbe has written, “Integrity and skill need each other, for no amount of ability can compensate for a sinful heart, and no amount of devotion to God can overcome lack of ability.” Leroy Eims says, “Good intentions can’t replace good performance. Leaders must be competent in the job God has given them to do.” This is a formula for developing competence:

Competence=Spiritual Giftedness + Natural Talents + Vision + Hard Work + Wisdom + Courage + Experience + Mentoring + Training/Personal Study + Learning From Mistakes
Application: Put this formula into practice in order to develop the gifts and talents that God has given you and grow into the leader that He wants you to be.

“Spending Time With God Through Prayer”

Psalm 63:1-8

Introduction: The challenge for the next two weeks is going to be to step and spend time with God. Spending time with God is foundational to everything else in our Christian lives. Today, I am going to explain the concept of spending time with God and then talk specifically about spending time with Him through prayer. Next week, the plan is to talk about spending time with Him through His Word. When we do this on a consistent basis, it is a life-changing discipline. Remember that we become is a product of our daily habits.

1. The Theology Behind Spending Time With God (Psalm 63:1-8):

A. We have a personal relationship with God (v. 1, 8).

B. We are to be on a personal pursuit to know God (v. 1-8).

2. The Definition of Spending Time With God: Essentially, we are talking about spending time in communion with God. It is spending time relating to the person of God. It is vital to remember that the end is knowing God, and these spiritual practices are simply the means. We follow the example of Christ when we do this. When he was on the earth, Jesus practiced the custom of getting alone and spending time talking to His Father, which is the real essence of prayer (Mark 1:35). Spending time with God is getting alone with God, talking to Him through prayer, listening to His Spirit, reading His Word, worshipping Him, and receiving guidance from Him.

3. The Benefits of Spending Time With God: Here are some of the spiritual benefits that come from spending time with God:

A. Personal Knowledge of God: Hosea 4:6a says, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

B. Life Transformation: Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this

world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Andy Stanley says of this verse, “Renewed minds result in changed lives.”

C. God’s Protection: Psalm 91:1 says, “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

D. Peace: Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because He trusts in You.”

E. Proper Perspective on Difficult Times: Psalm 73:16-17 says, “When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me-until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.”

F. Production of Spiritual Fruit: John 15:5 says, “I am the vine, you are the branches, he who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” . Strength to Carry Out Great Exploits For God: Daniel 11:32b says, “But the people who know their God shall be strong; and carry out great exploits.”

4. The Priority of Spending Time With God: If we are going to spend time with God, we must make it a priority. We have busy lives with many things competing for our time. We must set aside the time and make an appointment with God. Ephesians 5:16 tells us to redeem the time. 1 Timothy 4:7 tells us to discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness. Look at the example of Jesus in Mark 1:35, which says, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

5. Practical Outline for Prayer (Matthew 6:5-13): In other words, what are we doing when we pray?

A. We are having a personal conversation with our Heavenly Father (v. 7-9).

More than anything else, prayer is talking to our Father through Jesus under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is a conversation instead of something to get all religious about.

B. We are worshipping God through praise and thanksgiving (v. 9, 13).

Psalm 29:1-2 says, “Give unto the Lord, O you mighty ones, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” Psalm 34:1 says, “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Praise relates to who God is and thanksgiving relates to what He has done for us.

C. We are surrendering our will to God (v. 10). Prayer is more about getting us lined up with God’s will than it is getting God to do what we want Him to do for us. In prayer, God breaks our self will and causes us to listen to His will. Prayer is not just talking, but it is also listening to God. We should ask Him for wisdom, guidance, and the knowledge of His will. However, that knowledge flows out of our surrender to Him.

D. We are repenting of sin (v. 12-13). This involves confessing our sin and asking for forgiveness (1 John 1:9). It also involves being genuinely sorry and turning from our sin (2 Corinthians 7:8-11, Hebrews 12:14-17). We often feel stuck and

miserable in our lives, but we are often only a step of repentance and obedience away from being set free. Repentance also sometimes involves forgiving others, going to others to ask their forgiveness, or trying to resolve some type of conflict.

E. We are asking God to meet needs (v. 11). The good news is that He knows our needs and has promised to meet them. This involves praying for our own needs, which is called supplication, and praying for the needs of others, which is called intercession. Our Father invites us to pray for any and everything. Prayer is an expression of faith.

“Spending Time With God Through His Word”

Psalm 19

Introduction: Last week we talked about spending time with God. We laid a foundation and talked a little bit about spending time with Him in prayer. We are going to follow up on that this week by talking about spending time with God through His Word. I want to do this by asking and answering two simple questions, “Why spend time with God through His Word” and “How do we spend time with God through His Word?” It is important for us to remember what Jesus said to Satan when Satan was tempting Him in the wilderness (Matthew 4). He quoted the Old Testament and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

1. Why should we spend time with God through His Word? The answer is really what God’s Word is and what it does. David states some of those things through the poetry of Psalm 19.

A. Being perfect, God’s Word converts the soul (v. 7a, 2 Timothy 3:14-17).

B. Being sure, God’s Word makes the simple wise (v. 7b). Billy Sunday said, “A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to a person that isn’t.”

C. Being right, God’s Word causes the heart to rejoice (v. 8a).

D. Being pure, God’s Word enlightens the eyes (v. 8b).

E. Being clean, God’s Word endures forever (v. 9a).

F. Being true and altogether righteous, God’s Word warns the servants of God against sin and provides great reward (v. 9b-11). John Bunyan wrote, “This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book.”

2. How do we spend time with God through His Word? The Bible is “the sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17) that is a weapon in our war with the devil. Here are six key ways to take up the sword of the Spirit.

A. By **reading** it (1 Timothy 4:13)

B. By **meditating** on it (Psalm 1)

C. By **memorizing** it (Psalm 119:11)

D. By **studying** it (2 Timothy 2:15)

E. By **listening** to it (Romans 10:17)

- F. By **using** it [in resisting temptation, in teaching, in witnessing, in decision-making, in setting the direction for our lives] (James 1:21-25)

Conclusion: Will you make a commitment and make an appointment to spend time with God through His Word?

Supernatural Living”
Galatians 5:16-26

Main Idea: The way to live out the Christian life of trusting Jesus is through walking in the Spirit.

1. What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?

A. To rely on and be under the control of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). Jerry Bridges writes, “To live by the Spirit is to live both in obedience to and dependence on the Holy Spirit. There is a balance then between our wills [expressed by obedience] and our faith [expressed by our dependence].”

B. This is the normal Christian life commanded by God for all believers.

C. It is to be a consistent, ongoing action.

2. What are the results of walking in the Spirit?

A. Supernatural Power (v. 16-17)-He gives us the power to have victory over our sinful nature.

B. Supernatural Freedom (v. 18)-We can be free from legalism (2 Corinthians 3:17).

C. Supernatural Character (v. 22-23)-The Holy Spirit develops the character of Christ (the fruit of the Spirit) within us.

3. How do we actually go about walking in the Spirit?

A. Personally trusting Jesus so that we receive the Holy Spirit. (The book of Galatians is very clear that salvation is by grace through faith.).

B. Crucifying the flesh (Rom. 6).

C. Living under the control of the Spirit. How? It is not a formula because we are relating to a Person, but here are some steps to take in order to be filled:

-Examine our lives, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal all sin, and confess all known sin (1 John 1:9). Repent of sin and make things right with others if needed (2 Corinthians 7:10, Matthew 5:23-24).

-Surrender our wills completely to God (Romans 6:11, Luke 9:23).

-Ask to be controlled by the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

-Depend on the Spirit moment by moment

Works of the Flesh

Categories (Timothy George)

1. Sins of Immorality

A. Adultery-a married person having sex outside of the bonds of marriage

B. Fornication-general word for ungodly sexual intercourse; sexual immorality

C. Uncleaness-Impurity

D. Lewdness-Debauchery; Barclay defines it as “a love of sin so reckless and so audacious that a man has ceased to care what God or man thinks of his actions.”

2. Sins of Idolatry

A. Idolatry-Worshipping a false god in place of God or putting something ahead of God

B. Sorcery-Witchcraft, dabbling in the occult, also has some reference to illicit drug use

3. Sins of Animosity (all refer to the breakdown of interpersonal relationships)

A. Hatred-Enmity; opposite of love

B. Contentions-Strife and discord

C. Jealousies-Wanting what other people have; the root is not being content with what God has given us

D. Outbursts of wrath-A temper tantrum

E. Selfish ambitions-Politicking for yourself

F. Dissensions-The causing of division; cliquishness

G. Heresies-The production of factions, often through false teaching; feuding

I. Envy-Jealousy

J. Murders-Ultimate, outward expression of these inward sins

4. Sins of Intemperance

A. Drunkenness-Excessive alcohol intake

B. Revelries-Wild partying

5. Any other sin

The Fruit of the Spirit

1. Love-God’s sacrificial love manifested to others by action; “the source and fountain from which all of the other graces flow”

2. Joy-Hope in God’s ultimate victory

3. Peace-Wholeness and well-being; confidence in difficult circumstances

4. Longsuffering-Patience; putting up with difficult people and circumstances

5. Kindness-Treating other people the right way
6. Goodness-Benevolence and generosity toward others
7. Faithfulness-Trustworthiness and reliability in our dealings with others
8. Gentleness-Meekness, which is strength under control; it stands for what is right but not necessarily our own way
9. Self-control-“Mastery over one’s desires and passions”

“How To Respond To Our Trials”

James 1:1-8

Introduction: Chuck Swindoll writes, “Much of life’s music is played in the minor key. Hurts, headaches, pain, problems, disappointments, sickness, suffering, disease, and death pile upon us and won’t go away. This creates within us questions regarding God’s justice and life’s purpose. Philosophers have tried to interpret this heavy scene but have failed to bring any measure of relief to man’s misery. Education, travel, occupation and even overt acts of kindness provide little help when we are overwhelmed by troubles. On one occasion King David said, ‘Many are the afflictions of the righteous...’ (Ps. 34:19). Job, who suffered deeply, stated, ‘Man is short-lived and full of turmoil’ (Job 14:1). The apostle Paul spoke of being perplexed, persecuted, and struck down. So many of us could testify to lives of affliction and trials.”

Warren Wiersbe writes, “Perhaps you have seen the bumper sticker that reads: ‘When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade!’ It is easier to smile at that statement than to practice it, but the basic philosophy is sound. In fact, it is biblical. Throughout the Bible are people who turned defeat into victory and trial into triumph. Instead of being victims, they became victors. James tells us that we can have this same experience today. Not matter what the trials may be on the outside (James 1:1-12) or the temptations on the inside (James 1:13-27), through faith in Christ we can experience victory. The result of this victory is spiritual maturity.”

Ronald Blue writes, “All too often trials prompt groanings and complaints. This kind of response does not contribute to Christian maturity. It only makes matters worse. Trials are not to be seen as tribulations but testings. A test is given to see if a student can pass, not pass out. James gave sound advice on how to score high on every test. One who brings the right attitude to the trial, who understands the advantage of the trial, and who knows where to obtain assistance in the trial will certainly end up on God’s

honor roll.” We can respond to our trials in helpful ways or harmful ways. Here are some helpful responses:

Response #1-Choose to rejoice in the Lord (v. 2). We may not have control over our trials, but we do have control over our response. The key word in this verse is “count.” It is an accounting term that means to “evaluate, esteem, regard, or hold it up in your mind.” Notice that trials are inevitable because the verse says “when you fall into (it means encounter) various trials.” Also, notice that “trials” is plural, and “various” means that we will have different types of trials. The question is, “Will we react in a way that makes us better or bitter?” God is always unchanging and worthy of worship so we can rejoice in Him and worship Him even as we grieve the trial. On the other hand, we can choose to get bitter. Which is a more helpful response?

Response #2-Know that God has a good purpose for the trial (v. 3). The key word here is “know.” It refers to an understanding mind. God wants us to understand that his purpose for our trials is growth, endurance, patience, and maturity. This cannot happen without difficulty. Warren Wiersbe says, “If there is nothing to endure, you cannot learn endurance.”

Response #3-Surrender our wills to God (v. 4). The key word here is “let.” It refers to a surrendered will. Instead of running from the trial, God wants us to surrender to Him so that we can learn and grow through it. Wiersbe says, “The mature person does not argue with God’s will.”

Response #4-Ask for wisdom (v. 5). The key word here is “ask.” God tells us to ask in faith for Him to give us the wisdom to handle our trials. Wisdom refers to God showing us how to live, and specifically, how to handle our trials.

Response #5-Trust God and pray in faith (v. 5-8). Ultimately, God wants us to trust Him. We are told to “ask in faith” This is how we can stand firm even during trials instead of being up and down like the waves. Faith views circumstances through God instead of viewing God through the circumstances? Are we trusting the Lord during our trials?

Introduction To Ministry

Matthew 20:25-28 says, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Ephesians 4:11-12 says, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Every Christian is called to be a minister and a servant. However, very few seem to realize this fact. According to a Gallup poll only 10% of American church members are active in any kind of personal ministry. 50% of all church members have no interest in serving in any ministry. This means that most churches function like “sleeping giants.” In fact, someone has written that “if the church ever awakens and unleashes the massive talent, resources, creativity, and energy lying dormant in the typical church, Christianity will explode with growth at an unprecedented rate.” Actually, if we want to please God, we do not have any choice as far as ministry goes because God has called and commanded us to do it. Warren Wiersbe has written, “Fortunately, acceptable Christian service isn’t based on feelings; it’s based on obedience. It’s a matter of the will and not the feelings.”

What is ministry? Gene Mims has defined ministry as “meeting another person’s need in Jesus name.” Wiersbe says that “ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs through loving channels to the glory of God.” Mark 6:30-44 and Acts 3:1-10 are two passages that give beautiful pictures of ministry. Romans 12:1-8 teaches us the following four basic truths about ministry:

Truth #1: Every believer is a minister.

A Christian is a follower and an imitator of Christ, and Jesus came to serve and minister (Mark 10:45). Therefore, to be like Jesus, we must be ministers. Elton Trueblood has stated, “A non-ministering Christian is a contradiction in terms.” In fact, every Christian is:

1. Created for ministry (Ephesians 2:10)
2. Called and saved for ministry (2 Timothy 1:8-9)
3. Gifted for ministry (1 Peter 4:10)
4. Authorized for ministry (Matthew 28:19-20)
5. Commanded to minister (Matthew 20:25-28, 1 Peter 4:10-11)
6. Needed for ministry (1 Corinthians 12)
7. Accountable for ministry (Colossians 3:23-24)

Truth #2: Every ministry is important.

According to 1 Corinthians 12, every person and every ministry is important within the Body of Christ. We need each other to accomplish everything God wants us to accomplish.

Truth #3: We are dependent on each other.

1 Corinthians 12 also teaches us that we must function together in an interdependent manner.

Truth# 4: God gifts us to perform the ministry He calls us to do.

Several places in the New Testament teach us that God gives every believer at least one spiritual gift. 1 Peter 4:10-11 says, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” God does not ask us to do anything He does not enable us to accomplish. Warren Wiersbe has written, “The trouble with too many of us is that we think God called us to be manufacturers when He really called us to be distributors. He alone has the resources to meet human needs; all we can do is receive His riches and share them with others.”

Spiritual Gifts

The Christian life is a life of service (Matthew 20:25-28). While we are not saved by our works, we are saved unto good works (Ephesians 2:10). The leaders of the church are to equip the saints to do the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12). This equipping involves teaching and training, but the abilities that believers have to use in ministry are gifts from God. Spiritual gifts are not natural abilities that anyone can have but supernatural gifts that only believers can have. In the New Testament, these ministry gifts are described as spiritual gifts and grace gifts. Spiritual refers to the fact that they are given by the Holy Spirit. Grace refers to the fact that these gifts are given to the believer based solely on the grace of God. Henry Blackaby has written, “A spiritual gift is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit at work in and through a person’s life for the common good of the body of Christ.” J. E. O’Day has written, “A spiritual gift is God’s grace manifested in specific service to others.” With that introduction, we will proceed by examining the biblical principles governing the use of spiritual gifts, listing and briefly explaining the gifts, and looking at how we can go about discovering what spiritual gifts we have.

1) Principles Governing The Use Of Spiritual Gifts

The primary passage regarding spiritual gifts is 1 Corinthians 12. What principles does it give regarding the use of spiritual gifts?

Principles

- A. The Church is to be Christ-centered and operate under the Lordship of Christ in everything we do (v.1-3).**

- A. **God sovereignly distributes the gifts as He chooses (v.4-6, 11). [We do not decide our own role in the Body.]**
- B. **Every believer has at least one gift (v.7). [1 Peter 4:10]**
- C. **The purpose of the gifts is for the building up of the entire Body (v.7).**
- D. **The body is a single unit made up of many members (v. 12-13).**
- E. **Each member of the body needs every other member (v. 14-24).**
- F. **The Body is to be unified (v. 25).**
- G. **Each member of the body deserves equal care and concern (v.25-26).**
- H. **Everything we do, including the exercise of spiritual gifts is to be done in love (v.31).**
- I. **The exercise of a spiritual gift does not mean that a person is living a holy, spiritual life.**

2) New Testament Lists Of Spiritual Gifts

What are the actual spiritual gifts? The New Testament lists several, but Bible scholars disagree on exactly what they are. Bible scholars also disagree on whether or not the New Testament lists are exhaustive or representative. They also disagree on the question of the validity of some of the gifts for today. Various scholars also classify them according to various systems. My list of spiritual gifts contains twenty of them. I am only attempting to list and briefly define them without categorizing them in a certain way other than by scripture passages. Also, a particular spiritual gift can manifest itself in different ways in different people. For example, one person with the gift of teaching may use it to be a seminary professor, another may be a pastor, and another may be a children's teacher. There is also a distinction sometimes between the use of a gift for ministry and the occupation of an office within a congregation. For example, a lady can have the gift of pastoring and use it effectively in ministering in particular situations, but it does not mean she is called to the office of pastor in a local congregation. It is also important to realize that there are both fleshly and satanic counterfeits of the various spiritual gifts.

The New Testament spiritual gifts are:

- A. **Missionary** (Ephesians 4:11)-In my understanding, this is the modern-day equivalent of the gift of apostle. The office of apostle ceased with the original apostles (because apostles were given special miracle-working power and had to have seen the risen Christ), but the gift of apostleship is the ability and calling to go forth and proclaim the Gospel of Christ cross-culturally.
- B. **Prophecy** (Ephesians 4:11, Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:10)-This is the ability to proclaim a message from the Lord. It is preaching or forth-telling. The message must always be based on and be in agreement with the written Word of God.

- C. **Evangelist** (Ephesians 4:11)-While all Christians are commanded to proclaim the Gospel, some have special ability to share the Gospel with unbelievers and to equip believers in the area of evangelism.
- D. **Pastor** (Ephesians 4:11)-It should actually be translated pastor-teacher in this passage. That is the function of the pastor. He is to shepherd the flock of God (literal meaning of the word). This gift is the special ability to oversee, lead, teach and be an example for a particular local congregation.
- E. **Ministry** (Romans 12:7)-This could also be called the gift of service or helps. It manifests itself in a willingness to serve others and to handle practical jobs.
- F. **Teaching** (Ephesians 4:11, Romans 12:7)-This is the ability to study, understand, and proclaim the Word of God to the Body of Christ in an understandable, relevant, edifying, and practical way.
- G. **Exhortation** (Romans 12:8)-This is the ability of one Christian to minister words of comfort, encouragement, challenge, and wise counsel to others.
- H. **Giving** (Romans 12:8)-While all Christians are commanded to give, some Christians have a special gift of giving that causes them to cheerfully give a large percentage of their income to the Lord, His work, and those who are in need.
- I. **Leadership** (Romans 12:8)-This is a person with the ability to discern God's will and influence others to follow him in doing God's will.
- J. **Mercy** (Romans 12:8)-This is the ability to feel compassion and empathy for people who are suffering and then to translate those feelings into helpful actions.
- K. **Administration** (1 Corinthians 12:28)-This is the ability to organize in such a way as to carry out the God-given goals of a church. It is the ability to manage the affairs of the church.
- L. **Celibacy** (1 Corinthians 7:7)-This is the ability to remain single and abstain from sexual relations in order to more fully serve the Lord.
- M. **Wisdom** (1 Corinthians 12:8)-This is the special ability to be led by the Holy Spirit in applying the Word of God to various, specific situations within the Body of Christ in order to give practical answers.
- N. **Knowledge** (1 Corinthians 12:8)-This is the ability to be led by the Holy Spirit in ascertaining, understanding, and communicating the facts of a situation.
- O. **Faith** (1 Corinthians 12:9)-All Christians have faith, but this is faith in a large measure that is a mountain-moving faith.
- P. **Healing** (1 Corinthians 12:9)-This is God working through a human agent to cure physical maladies.
- Q. **Miracles** (1 Corinthians 12:10)-This is God doing supernatural works through a particular human agent.
- R. **Discerning of Spirits** (1 Corinthians 12:10)-This is the ability to determine if behavior or a message is divine, human, or satanic.

- S. **Tongues** (1 Corinthians 12:10)-It is the supernatural ability to speak an unlearned, foreign language. There is a great deal of controversy surrounding this gift, but its usage is very strictly governed in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.
- T. **Interpretation of Tongues** (1 Corinthians 12:10)-It is the ability to translate the tongues message into the vernacular of the body.

3) Discovering Our Spiritual Gifts

As we learned earlier, God gives every believer at least one particular spiritual gift. As a Christian matures and gains experience in the Lord's work, he or she may exhibit characteristics of several of the spiritual gifts, but there will be either one or a few that a Christian will particularly manifest. You can use your spiritual gift(s) without even knowing what it is, but it is helpful to know its identity so you can look for ministry opportunities in your area of giftedness.

How can we discover what our spiritual giftedness is? Ultimately, it is something the Holy Spirit must reveal to us. However, there are some steps we can take to help us discern how the Spirit is speaking to us in this matter. The following are suggestions for steps to take:

1. **Walking in the Spirit**-As we are filled with the Holy Spirit on an ongoing basis, He will direct us in the ways He wants us to serve and will show us the gifts He has given us.
2. **Prayer**-The Bible teaches us that if we pray persistently, in faith, and according to God's will that God will answer. We know it is God's will for us to know what our spiritual gifts are so we can be assured that He will show us if we ask Him.
3. **Scripture Study**-We should study what the New Testament teaches about spiritual gifts for ourselves and allow God to speak to us through His Word.
4. **Determine Our Passion**-We should think about what motivates and excites us because this can be an insightful clue into what our spiritual gifts are. For example, if studying and sharing spiritual truth excites you, that could mean that you have the gift of teaching. If sharing the gospel with people pumps you up, that could mean that you have the gift of evangelism. If helping people is a thrill to you, that could mean that you have the gift of service.
5. **Seek Godly Counsel**-Proverbs 11:14, "In the multitude of counselors there is safety." Therefore, it would be wise to discuss this subject and how it applies to your life with a couple of trusted, godly, Spirit-filled friends.
6. **Experiment**-As the Lord leads and as you suspect you have a certain gift, serve in different areas of ministry. It is practically impossible to discover your spiritual gift without doing this. As you do this, observe

to see if you are effective in using this gift, if people are blessed, if the church confirms you, if you enjoy it, and if you feel comfortable in serving in this way.

7. **Do a Spiritual Gifts Inventory**-This will not definitely show you what spiritual gift that you have, but it can definitely give a lot of insight.
8. **Analyze Your Natural Abilities**-God can use any ability we have to His glory and for people's benefit.
9. **Remember That God Never Wastes An Experience**-2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." If you have been through something, you have the empathy and understanding to be especially effective in ministering to others who are going through the same difficulty.

Shaped For Service
(Adapted from Rick Warren)

Spiritual Gifts

-What do you believe are your spiritual gifts?

-Do you enjoy serving in these ways and do others affirm you in this service?

-Write down possible spiritual gifts according to the spiritual gifts inventory.

Heart

-What is your passion? In other words, what fires you up?

-What are some issues that are really important to you?

-If time and money were no issue, how would you spend your life?

A bilities

-Brainstorm and write down as many of your talents and abilities that you can think of.

P ersonality

-Describe your personality.

-Are you introverted or extroverted?

-Passive or aggressive?

-Emotional or logical?

E xperiences

-God never wastes an experience (Romans 8:28). Ask the following questions:

-Educational experiences: What were your favorite subjects in school?

-Vocational experiences: What jobs have you enjoyed and seen results in doing?

-Training experiences: What types of training have you had that would be useful in ministry?

-Spiritual experiences: What have been the meaningful or decisive times with God in your life?

-Ministry experiences: How have you served God in the past?

-Painful experiences (2 Corinthians 1:3-4): What are the problems, trials, and hurts that you have learned from?

1. At this point, what do you believe are your spiritual gifts?

2. **How are you presently serving God?**
3. **Are there ways you are serving that are a possible mismatch?**
4. **Are there areas that you should experiment with as far as ministry?**
5. **How should you be serving God now?**

The Theology Of The Gospel

What is the gospel? This is a fundamental question that we must be able to answer if we are going to be Christ's witnesses. 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4 is probably the primary passage in regard to defining the gospel. Let's look at what the gospel actually is.

I) The Definition of Gospel

The word gospel simply means good news. It is wonderful news that God loves us so much that even though we have sinned against Him that He gave Jesus Christ to be the sacrifice for our sins on the cross and that Christ rose from the dead. That is the best news the world has ever heard!

II) The Content of the Gospel

What do we need to know and understand in order to understand the gospel? There are five areas that I want us to look at: the nature of God, the nature of man, man's problem, God's solution for that problem, and how man can receive God's solution.

1. The Nature of God

- a. God is _____ (Revelation 15:4).
- b. God is _____ (1 John 4:8).
- c. God is _____ (Genesis 1:1).

2. The Nature of Man

- a. Man is made in the _____ of God (Genesis 1:26-27).
- b. This means that man is the _____ creation of God and that we have a capacity to have a _____ with God.

3. Man's Problem

- a. Man has a problem due to _____ (Romans 3:23).
- b. _____ are guilty of sin (Romans 3:23).
- c. The result of sin is _____ (Romans 6:23).
- d. We are sinners by _____ (Psalm 51:5) and by _____ (Isaiah 53:6, James 1:14).
- e. Our sins _____ us from God (Isaiah 59:2).
- f. Our righteousness are like _____ (Isaiah 64:6).

4. God's Solution For Our Problem

- a. Jesus is _____ who became _____ (John 1:1, 14).
- b. Jesus died on the cross _____ and _____ from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

5. The Way We Receive Salvation

- a. Salvation is a free _____ (Romans 6:23).
- b. Salvation is through _____ and received by _____ (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- c. We must _____ of sin (Acts 3:19).
- d. We must _____ Jesus as Lord and _____ on Him (Romans 10:9, 13).

Sharing Our Personal Testimony

- (I) **Definition of a Testimony:** Our testimony is the telling of how God has personally worked in our lives. The Greek word that testimony is translated from in the New Testament literally means evidence. Therefore, if we are Christians, our lives and words are evidence for the truth of the gospel.
- For a person to be a witness and testify in court, they must have first-hand knowledge of the subject they are testifying about. It works the same way spiritually. It is not enough for us to just know the facts of the gospel or to know about Christ, but we must be able to share first-hand knowledge of how Christ is real in our lives. Otherwise, our testimony would be totally empty! An excellent biblical expression of this is found in Mark 5:19, where Jesus said to the Gadarene demoniac that he had saved, delivered, and healed, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." Therefore, our testimony tells how the gospel story became our personal story.

Scriptures: 1 John 1:1-3, Acts 22:1-21, Acts 26:9-23, and Revelation 12:11

(II) Outline of a Testimony:

1. My life before receiving Christ
2. How I realized my need for Christ
3. How I became a Christian
4. How Jesus Christ has changed my life

(III) Suggestions For Giving a Testimony:

1. Be led by the Holy Spirit
2. Unless God leads otherwise, it generally should be short.
3. We should not tell more about what we were like before we became a Christian than what Christ has done in our lives since.
4. Stick to the point of sharing what Christ has done in your life.
5. Use words that the people you are speaking to will understand.
6. Focus on what God has done for you and not what you have done for God. In other words, brag about Jesus – not yourself.
7. We need to make sure we don't contradict our verbal testimonies by living ungodly lives.
8. We should weave the presentation of the gospel and the sharing of Bible verses into the sharing of our testimony.

Note Some of the material in this section was adapted from the Continuing Witness Training manual produced by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Outline Of A Testimony

1) My Life Before Receiving Christ

2) How I Realized My Need For Christ

3) How I Became A Christian

4) How Jesus Christ Has Changed My Life