

MY JOURNEY TO LIFE

# SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*What are spiritual gifts and how does  
God want us to use ours?*

**STEP 20 OF 28**



## **My Journey to Life, Step 20**

### **Foreword**

*My Journey to Life* will give you the keys for finding peace of mind, harmony of body, and success in relationships. Every step will transform your outlook as you unpack each lesson. We pray they will help you to fall in love with the greatest Teacher this world has ever known. So together, let's walk the pathway step-by-step to a new life in Jesus.

### **Preface**

Just as the human body systems work in harmony to keep us strong and healthy, God desires that His children will work together, serving and supporting one another building up the body of Christ. This can only be accomplished through special gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon His followers.

## **Step Twenty—Spiritual Gifts and Ministries**

**What are spiritual gifts and how does God want us to use ours?** “God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love.”  
—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 243

**Bible Discovery:** Acts 6:1- 7; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 27, 28; Ephesians 4:8, 11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 256.2

### **1. When Christ ascended, He gave gifts to His followers. What are those spiritual gifts?**

Spiritual gifts are an endowment from Christ which are imparted to human beings by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul identifies the various gifts as follows: utterance of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, healing, miracle working, prophecy (see Step No. 21, *The Gift of Prophecy*), ability to distinguish spirits, various kinds of tongues (languages), interpretation of tongues,

service, teaching, teaching, encouraging, giving generously, giving leadership, showing mercy (Rom 12:8 NIV). Paul outlines the appointments that should be made in the church: apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, healers, helpers, administrators, evangelists, and pastors.

**Bible Discovery:** Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-11; 28-30; Ephesians 4:8-11

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 327.1; 328.2

**2. What are the prerequisites to receiving spiritual gifts?** A person must be born again by the Holy Spirit to be endowed with spiritual gifts. This total commitment to God which paves the way for a baptism of the Spirit is not a one-time experience; it is daily dying to self and opening the heart to Jesus.

As we surrender our lives to God's Lordship and abide in Christ, we can pray confidently for wisdom to discover our spiritual gifts. Our study of what the New Testament teaches about spiritual gifts allows the Holy Spirit to impress our minds with the specific ministry He grants us to use in His service. God has spiritual gifts for each person; every Christian should believe they have been given gifts and seek to discover and use them for God's glory.

A person persisting in jealousy, strife, or immorality is still practicing the carnal nature of his old life and therefore not qualified to receive spiritual gifts.

**Bible Discovery:** John 3:1-8; 16:7, 8; Acts 2:38; 5:32; Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 15:31; Ephesians 4:17-24; Colossians 3:5-8; James 1:5

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.2; *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 207.3; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.1

**3. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?** The gifts are to be used both individually and corporately to maintain harmony and strengthen the growth and mission of the church. They promote unity in the church family, and through spiritual ministries help to prepare the world to meet Jesus.

The gifts are also to be used to introduce the gospel into new fields and proclaim Christ with holy boldness, work miracles and wonders for God's glory, and combat error with truth.

As Jesus received a special anointing of the Spirit to fit Him for ministry (Acts 10:38), so will we also receive the baptism of the Spirit to enable our witness through His gifts. Just as the recipients do not receive the gifts for themselves, the church does not receive the gifts merely for itself. God endows the church with gifts to prepare it to fill the mission He has commissioned.

**Bible Discovery:** Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2:43; 4:31-37; 6:10; Ephesians 4:14-16; Revelation 14:6-12

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *This Day with God*, p. 341.3; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 328.1

**4. What are the greater gifts Paul references in 1 Corinthians 12:31?** In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul lists the specific spiritual gifts bestowed on Christ's followers by the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 13, he focuses on the importance of love, even stating that if one gives his body to be burned but does not have love, the act is worthless (1 Corinthians 13:3). The heart that has been transformed by the love of Christ is able to use the gifts to promote God's kingdom, whereas the best orator, teacher, or evangelist who does not have genuine love for others is only a noisy hypocrite (1 Corinthians 13:1).

The talents and gifts are not to be used for selfish gain. God gives each gift, no matter what it may be, to enable its possessor to witness by sharing biblical truth and telling others what He has done in their lives.

**Bible Discovery:** John 14:15; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; 16:14; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:14; 1 John 3:10, 11, 23; 4:8

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 384.3; 6LtMs, *Letter 38*, 1890, par. 16

**5. Are the gifts of the Spirit eternal?** *Charismata* (gifts of the Spirit) will be found in the church until Jesus comes. The gifts have been given to believers in Christ until all "attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). Full unity and knowledge will be realized only when Jesus appears the second time to change this "perishable nature" to "imperishable" and this "mortal nature" to "immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53).

The gifts of the Spirit will pass away at Christ's return, but the fruit of the Spirit—our character—is eternal. While prophecy, tongues, and evangelism will disappear, faith, hope and love will remain.

**Bible Discovery:** 1 Corinthians 1:6, 7; 13:8-10, 13; Galatians 5:22, 23; Ephesians 4:13

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *Maranatha*, p. 223.2; *The Great Controversy*, p. viii, par. 1

**6. How does Satan seek to tarnish the spiritual gifts?** The use of gifts devoid of love causes confusion and divisiveness in the church. Similarly, jealousy can also wreak havoc to the unity of the believers and fracture the sweet fellowship of the church.

Satan's original sin was embracing feelings of jealousy against Christ and coveting His position in the Godhead. Dissatisfied with the position and spiritual gifts God had granted him, Lucifer stirred up disunity in heaven and persuaded one third of the angels to follow him in rebellion.

Today Satan continues to tempt believers to covet others' spiritual gifts and be envious of their success. Those who succumb to Satan's diabolical efforts to create dissatisfaction often bury their own talents and live in a state of unhappiness.

Every Christian is given gifts by the Spirit. As we identify those gifts and use them gratefully in God's service, our gifts will grow and multiply. A church whose members affirm the gifts found in others can be much more effective as it organizes for service and spreading the Gospel.

**Bible Discovery:** Isaiah 14:13, 14; Ezekiel 28: 6, 7; 17; Matthew 25:14-30; Ephesians 4:1-3; Revelation 12:4

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 495.1, 2; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 328.3

**7. How does Paul's analogy of the different parts of the body and their valuable functions illustrate the need for unity in diversity?** Just as each part of the body contributes uniquely toward an individual's health and well-being, so the church body is enriched and strengthened by its members' talents. The church is to remain united despite the diversity of spiritual gifts. The progress of God's church depends upon the willingness of every believer to use his or her gifts to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God intends that all gifts, ministries, and operations within the church blend together in the work of building on the foundation of Christ, the Chief Cornerstone.

**Bible Discovery:** Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 4:6; 12:12-25; Ephesians 2:21; 4:15, 16; Philippians 2:3

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *Maranatha*, p. 228.4, 6; *Manuscript Release*, vol. 1, p. 276.3; 16LtMs, *Letter 19*, 1901, par. 50; *Pacific Union Recorder*, Dec. 29, 1904, par. 2

**8. How do I know what my spiritual gifts are?** Most importantly, pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you to recognize the gifts He has given you, and for opportunities to use those gifts. You could also check out the list of gifts in Question #1 of this study. As you read through the list, do you find yourself drawn to some of them? Resonating with one or more gifts in the list could be a way the Spirit is directing you to find your gifts. You can also ask Christian friends to identify which gifts they can see the Spirit has given you. Not only must we be willing to listen to what others tell us about our gifts, but it is important that we look for ways to recognize and affirm God's gifts in others.

There are many spiritual gift inventory tests available to help determine what gifts are yours. You could ask your local Adventist pastor for a sample, or you might find one online. Though these inventories can be used by the Spirit to help discover your gifts, they might also fail to identify a gift that is not so easily determined by a test.

Sometimes believers are aware how God has gifted them from the time of their conversion and baptism. Others discover gifts later in life that they were not aware God had given them! As our fellowship with Jesus grows stronger and we become involved in service and outreach to others, the Spirit is better able to show us our talents and understand the special work for which God has anointed us.

**Bible Discovery:** Mark 16:17, 18; Luke 4:18; Acts 2:17; 4:13; James 1:5; 1 John 2:27

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 327.2, 328.2; *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 291.1

**9. What happens if I don't use my spiritual gifts?** Believers who refuse to use their spiritual gifts will find that not only do their gifts weaken, but they are jeopardizing their eternal life. Jesus is straightforward when He expresses with loving concern that the servant who did not use his talent was nothing less than a “wicked and lazy servant” who forfeited the eternal reward (Matthew 25:26-30).

Sometimes intimidation, lethargy, timidity, or feelings of inadequacy tempt us to “hide our gift under a bushel” (see Matthew 5:15, 16). Jesus longs to give us holy boldness in response to our prayer of faith so we can help fulfill the mission of the church to a dark world.

Perhaps the best motivation for putting all our gifts and talents to work for Jesus is to consider what He gave for us—His own life so that we could live forever with Him.

**Bible Discovery:** Psalm 90:17; Ecclesiastes 9:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:15; 8:12; Galatians 3:20; Philippians 4:13; Colossians. 3:23, 24

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Revelation ed., vol. 5, p. 511.9; *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 329.2

**10. How important is it for church leadership to identify spiritual gifts before asking members to volunteer in a specific capacity?** Each person who has accepted Christ as Savior and Lord has been given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit! Pastors and church leaders should make every effort to identify the gifts God has given to the members of their congregations and, as far as possible, match the invitation to work for God with the specific gift that has been given to the individual.

No one's gifts are perfectly developed at the time they commit themselves to Christ and seek to work for Him. It is important that church leadership gives opportunities to all—regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity—to develop their talents through actual experience.

**Bible Discovery:** Matthew 10:8; Luke 9:1; Acts: 2:39; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 12:11; Ephesians 4:8, 11; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50.2; *Review and Herald*, July 9, 1895, par. 10; *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 156.3

**11. Does Satan counterfeit God's spiritual gifts?** Yes, Satan tempts individuals to pervert their spiritual gifts for selfish purposes. One example is Simon Magnus' desire to buy power from Peter so he could give the Holy Spirit to whoever he wished. The prophet Balaam tried to hire himself out to Balak, the king of Moab. He hoped that if he was to curse Israel, he would receive great monetary rewards. In addition to the genuine gift of prophecy given to build and strengthen God's church, there are counterfeit prophets whose work leads to confusion and misinterpretation of Scripture.

The gift of tongues also has a counterfeit. The original gift on the Day of Pentecost was actual languages which enabled those gathered in Jerusalem from many foreign localities to understand the preaching of the gospel in their own language. Speaking in an ecstatic utterance that does not comprise a human language is a counterfeit.

Some teach that tongues are the evidence of Pentecostal power and are a prerequisite to genuine conversion. However, Paul asks, “Do all speak with tongues?” (1 Corinthians 12:30) with the inference that the answer is no. Paul also stated, “All these (gifts) are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11). It is a perversion of Paul’s teaching about the dispersal of the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 to insist that all who have been baptized by the Spirit must speak in tongues.

**Bible Discovery:** Numbers 22:1-24:25; Matthew 24:24; Acts 8:19; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Revelation 16:14

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 412.1; *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, pp. 408.4-409.1

**12. What is the correlation between spiritual gifts and the end of all things?** Peter presented the topic of spiritual gifts against the backdrop of the end of all things being “at hand” (1 Peter 4:7). Today, with events associated with the soon coming of Jesus escalating on every side, there is urgency to use our spiritual gifts to announce that the Kingdom of God is at hand—that everyone should choose Jesus as Lord before there is no more opportunity.

The Old Testament prophet Joel speaks of an abundant outpouring of God’s Spirit immediately preceding “the great and terrible day of the Lord” (Joel 2:30, 31). This wonderful gift of a special outpouring of God’s Spirit just before His Second Coming will be counterfeited by those who dwell exclusively on the love of God, without making a clear distinction between right and wrong. Those who authentically use their spiritual gifts for God will deny self and self-promotion, take up their cross and follow the meek and humble example of Jesus.

**Bible Discovery:** Psalm 1:1-3; Joel 2:28, 29; Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 Peter 4:10

**Further Reading:** Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 83.2 (\*See Step #11, Questions 7, 8, 9); *The Great Controversy*, p. 464.1-2

### **Reflection...**

The Holy Spirit will give special gifts to everyone who accepts Jesus as the Lord of their lives. These gifts, talents, and capabilities are to be used to advance God's church and His kingdom.

### **Next Step...**

In our next step, we will consider a very special spiritual gift that carries unique significance for people living in the last days before Jesus returns.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. How are you currently using your spiritual gifts?
2. What does the concept "daily conversion" mean to you?
3. What connection is there between spiritual gifts and Jesus' Second Coming?

### ***Further Reading***

Official Adventist Website: <https://adventist.org/spiritual-gifts-and-ministries>

### ***Contact Information***

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Request a personal Bible study: <https://www.bibleschools.com/en/personal-studies>

Visit your local Seventh-day Adventist Church: <https://www.adventistlocator.org>

Online prayer room: <https://www.wepray.mobi>