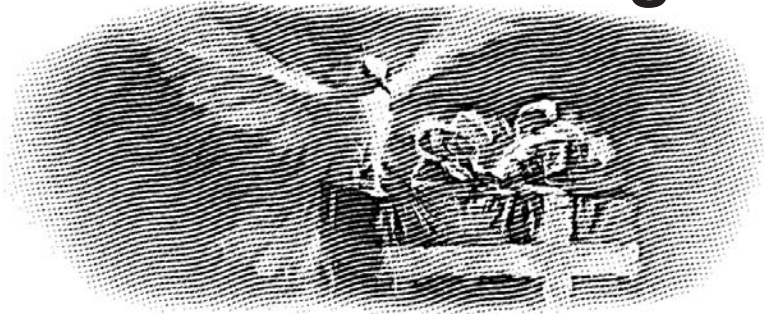


# Spiritual Gifts for Evangelism<sup>1</sup> and Witnessing



## SABBATH—APRIL 14

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** 1 Peter 4:10; John 16:8, 13; 1 Corinthians 12:28–31; Acts 2:40–47; Acts 13:4, 5.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “He is the One who gave some the gift to be apostles. He gave some the gift to be prophets. He gave some the gift of preaching the good news. And he gave some the gift to be pastors and teachers. He did it so that they might prepare God’s people to serve. If they do, the body of Christ will be built up” (Ephesians 4:11, 12, NIV).

**KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT:** Spiritual gifts are God’s personal qualities that He gives to each member to be used for His glory (praise and honor) and for the saving of souls.

**AS A CHURCH WE HAVE RIGHTLY GIVEN SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF PROPHECY.<sup>2</sup>** But we have not always taught that the other spiritual gifts are important for ministry (work done for God) too. But it is important that we do so. It is a clear Bible teaching. So, as a church, we need to take these gifts seriously to help members become comfortable with receiving and using those gifts.

Sadly, many church members do not take advantage of the gifts that God has given them. There are many reasons for this failure. Sometimes it is the members’ fault. Sometimes, perhaps, the church could do more to encourage members to discover their gifts and use them in ministry and outreach with the Holy Spirit’s leading. What a waste it would be for a member to have a gift and never use it.

1. evangelism—the act of spreading the good news about Jesus to the world.

2. gift of prophecy—the ability, given by the Holy Spirit, to receive messages from God and/or foretell future events.

**SUNDAY—APRIL 15****GIFTED BELIEVERS (1 Peter 4:10)**

If you asked the members of your church, many of them would have to think hard before they could say that they had any spiritual gift listed in the Bible. But many of these people probably have already been using a spiritual gift without knowing it. They just have not recognized it. Many people have not tried to find out what their gifts are. But they do expert ministry (work done for God) in areas that God calls them to work in. And their church supports them in that work. Very often, a spiritual-gifts seminar (class) gives proof that the gifts are already being used in a ministry. So, some people can use a spiritual gift under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, knowing that they have that gift. But, also, there are some people who find it difficult to become involved anywhere in the church because they do not think they have any gifts. It is important to encourage them to discover their gifts and try hard to use them.

**Read 1 Peter 4:10. What does this verse say about each faithful church member having some type of gift?**

We already have seen that every believer has a ministry. So, we should not be surprised that God will give us the abilities needed for those ministries. Everyone who believes in the great gospel command will become involved in the work of saving souls with the Holy Spirit's help. And God

knows what is needed in what place and at what time for the church's soul-saving work.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:11. It shows that the giving of spiritual gifts to believers is the Holy Spirit's work. He prepares the saints for every good work (read Ephesians 2:10). The Holy Spirit divides and gives spiritual gifts to believers. But Acts 1:8 shows that the Holy Spirit also gives us the ability to use our gifts.

None of the lists about spiritual gifts in the Bible are the same. This difference shows that the lists of gifts are not complete. In other words, there might be other gifts that could be added to the list.

**Think about the word *gift* or *gifts*. What does the word suggest or mean? What does it tell you about your responsibility to use what God has given you for His work?**

**MONDAY—APRIL 16****THE SPIRIT AND HIS GIFTS  
(Acts 13:1–3)**

In a way, a person's spiritual gifts show his or her place in the local church. To discover spiritual gifts is to discover where the Lord wants you to work within the group. Have you ever been asked to be involved in an area that does not interest you? Do you know people who have accepted church positions but then resigned later in the church year because they felt that they were wrong for the job? Often, people have been asked to accept, and have

tried to become involved in, a church ministry. But they do not have the gift for this kind of work. This does happen. But it does not have to.

**Read Acts 13:1–3. What happened here? What does it tell us about why being called to a ministry is important?**

It is important to know that the Holy Spirit is the one who calls us to minister (work) for God. Barnabas and Saul were called by the Spirit and given the ability by the same Spirit to do God's work. Verse 2 gives us some important information. It shows that Barnabas and Saul were already involved in ministering for the Lord before they were called to do His special work. We know that it was a special ministry because Simeon and Manaen were not called at this time.

Just before Jesus left the earth, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come to be our Helper. Part of the Spirit's work is to give us the ability to spread the gospel. He gives us gifts to do evangelistic work. So, spiritual gifts are surely important, and we need to use these gifts.

**What do John 16:8, 13; Acts 13:4; Romans 8:11; and Acts 1:8 teach us about the Spirit's work among us?**

When we understand why the Spirit gives spiritual gifts, we learn how important they are to the salvation of

those souls for Christ. Through the Holy Spirit's work of calling and giving gifts, each believer is involved in the great work of spreading the gospel in different ways.

Sometimes we may decide that certain gifts are important or special. But really all gifts are important for the life and mission of the church. We may sometimes make a gifted evangelist,<sup>3</sup> preacher, or teacher very important. But those members whose gifts support and encourage believers are just as important too.

## TUESDAY—APRIL 17

### DISCOVERING (FINDING) OUR GIFTS (1 Corinthians 12:28–31)

Discovering your gifts is not hard. You will be able to recognize quickly the gifts of your pastor and other key leaders in your church. All you have to do is study what they are doing and notice how people accept their ministry. But considering what one's own spiritual gifts might be is not always so easy.

The method of discovering a person's spiritual gifts has sometimes been seen as simple. For example, fill out a personal survey, and it will help you to discover your gift. Many church members have tried to discover their spiritual gifts through this method. But they have been disappointed when their local church does not put them in positions where they can use their gifts within the church.

3. evangelist—a preacher who travels from place to place preaching the gospel to many people.

A spiritual-gifts seminar is perhaps the easiest way to begin to discover your spiritual gifts. But it is wise to think of the seminar as only the beginning of the search. Most prepared seminars teach that this is so.

### What is Paul telling us in 1 Corinthians 12:28–31 about spiritual gifts?

These verses are not telling us all to desire one or two gifts that are commonly thought to be the best. In these verses, Paul shows that spiritual gifts are divided and given according to the special needs of any church, in any place, at any time. So, the best gifts would be those that would help members solve problems of the local church.

When seriously studying what your possible gifts are, do not fail to take seriously what other church members say. For example, members who sit on the nominating committee<sup>4</sup> choose different leaders and support teams for the coming church year. They choose people who already have shown an interest and ability in certain ministries. The committee may not understand or think about what someone's spiritual gifts are when choosing him or her to work in a certain area of ministry. But the nominating committee members are looking for people who have talents or gifts for certain areas of ministry.

Suppose someone believes that you would work well in a certain min-

istry position. That person may show support for your gifts in that area. So, it would be wise to listen and pray about it.

(1) The results of a spiritual-gifts seminar, (2) the support of fellow believers, and (3) the results of a trial period (time for trying something) in a certain ministry field would be clear signs that the Lord has called you to use the gifts given to you in that area.

### What do you think your own gifts are, and why?



It is important to pray that God will show you what your gifts are.

## WEDNESDAY—APRIL 18

### OTHER GIFTS (Acts 6:1–4)

When we think of spiritual gifts and witnessing and evangelism, we probably focus the most on the gifts of evangelism, preaching, and teaching. Not all gifts are evangelistic.<sup>5</sup> But if they are used within the church, these gifts will have different kinds of

4. nominating committee—a committee responsible for suggesting names of people to fill empty church positions.

5. evangelistic—having to do with spreading the good news about Jesus to the world.

influence upon the church's evangelistic mission.

**Read Acts 6:1–4 again. People during Bible times were given the same duties as deacons (church officers) would be given today. What reasons did the disciples give for not wanting to do this work? How are we to understand the principle (important rule) being shown here?**

The newly elected deacons were helping with the evangelistic program of the early church by freeing up the disciples for full-time work in evangelism and preaching. We may not think the actions of the deacons were important for the evangelistic front line (work that is the hardest). But the deacons did have influence on the evangelistic work. Of course, it is quite possible that the deacons' ministry of giving aid to needy widows helped people to be more open to listening to the gospel. God alone knows how much good these people did in their work.

For a church to do its work, leaders are necessary in the areas of organization and finances. Those who serve their Lord in these different positions must understand that they are part of a team. And they need to know that their contribution is important to the church's complete evangelistic program.

**Read Acts 2:40–47. What spiritual gifts are being shown here? What was the result, not only in witnessing but in discipleship?<sup>6</sup>**

**What important lessons can we learn from this?**



**The deacons helped the widows so that the disciples could be free to preach.**

The word *added* in Acts 2:47 is used in the sense of something being made, or brought, into a society. While the new believers were certainly added to the church, they were also brought into fellowship and taken care of. So, we can conclude that spiritual gifts in the areas of administration (management), leadership, hospitality, preaching, and service would be found among the believers in the church. This is a good example of individual spiritual gifts being used to help the whole church through supporting the evangelistic ministry of others.

**Think of your own part or your own ministry in the church. Where does it fit in with the mission of the church as a group?**

6. discipleship—the practice of accepting Jesus and following Him.

**THURSDAY—APRIL 19****GIFTS AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY (Romans 12:4)**

Spiritual gifts are not discovered just to satisfy our curiosity. Instead, they show what the Lord would have us to do and where we fit into the church group. This knowledge brings great responsibility as we try to do the work that God has given us.

**Read Romans 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:12; and Ephesians 4:16. What do these verses say about spiritual gifts and the church body (group)?**

It is important to know that the three main chapters that list spiritual gifts all deal with the church body. One person may be involved in a witnessing or evangelistic event, such as Philip, who witnessed to the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8). But we each have the responsibility to use our gifts through the church too.

Whatever the church does, it must do under the authority and leading of the Holy Spirit. It is our responsibility to learn what God's will is. We must work with His Spirit and do what He shows us to do. We must not fall into the trap of making plans and then ask God's approval. Often we ask, "What can our church do for God?" We would do better to discover what God is already doing among His people and get involved with that.

**What do Matthew 10:19, 20; Acts 13:4, 5; and Acts 16:6, 7 tell us**

**about how the disciples were led by the Holy Spirit?**



**Philip witnessed to the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8).**

The disciples let the all-knowing Holy Spirit lead their ministry. Sometimes they tried to enter a field of labor and were prevented (stopped) by the Holy Spirit. Probably Paul received a vision in which the Holy Spirit gave him special instructions as to where the disciples were to work (read Acts 16:9, 10).

Spiritual gifts must be used responsibly. The best way to make sure of this is for the receiver of a gift to keep an open line of communication with the Spirit. We have a responsibility to help keep unity (being united; oneness) in the church. If we are Spirit-led, there will be the desired unity. The Spirit leads individuals (persons), and He leads the church. The direction (command) He gives to one member, He gives to the whole church. The Spirit does not lead individuals away from the body (church group).

When we have committed (promised) ourselves to the service of Christ, we can expect great things to happen as the Holy Spirit is poured out upon us. We must, as individuals

and as a church, be ready to receive that which the Spirit gives.



We must be ready to receive what the Spirit gives.

### FRIDAY—APRIL 20

#### ADDITIONAL STUDY:

Discover (or organize) local training opportunities. If you have decided upon an area of witnessing and evangelism and have discussed it with your pastor and evangelistic leaders, it is time to think about how ready you are for the task. You will want the best possible chance of influencing people for Jesus. So, training is important. Remember, working as a team, rather than working alone, will help there to be encouragement, support, and success. The following are this week's key (important) areas of focus.

❶ While talking with your pastor and evangelistic leader, discuss what (if any) training events and processes you can begin. Not all training has to be done at the local church. Attend, if you can, training seminars in your region.

❷ Another possibility is to ask your pastor or other trainers to give local witnessing and evangelistic training. If the costs are too high and there are

only a few people wishing to be trained at your church, why not advertise and make it a training event at your home?

❸ While you are going through training for your chosen area of witnessing and evangelism, think about what training materials are available. Becoming familiar with the materials and how to use them will help you to prepare for your ministry.

❹ An important part of your outreach and evangelistic ministry is your own spiritual growth. You will become more aware of your personal spiritual needs as you begin to serve God. As you then ask for, and receive, the Holy Spirit's power, God will prepare you for greater service. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead and use you.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ "God has set in the church different gifts. These are important in their proper places. All these gifts may act a part in the work of preparing a people for Christ's soon coming."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, page 481. Think about what spiritual gifts are important in your local church. What can you do to make them even more important?

❷ "Not all men receive the same gifts. But God promises some gift to every servant of Jesus."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 327. How can we help to encourage all church members to discover, develop, and use their spiritual gifts? Why is it important that we do so?