

## INTRODUCTION

Let's open our Bibles together to Romans, chapter 12. Today I'm going to be talking about “Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gift,” so I have a little gift that I am going to be unwrapping in a moment.

I'm preaching through the book of Romans, verse after verse, and last week we talked about how every Christian is a part of the body of Christ, both the universal body of Christ, and also this local body of Christ. You are a member, a unique, special member of the body. You are very valuable to God and in order to show how valuable you are, God has given you a special gift. He has given every one of us a special gift.

It is Father's Day today and if you have not yet bought your Father's Day gift for your father, you might want to consider something that Neiman-Marcus is offering for Father's Day. At Neiman-Marcus you can buy a NASCAR racecar. If you feel the need for speed, this truly remarkable NASCAR Winston Cup Ford Taurus is the real deal. It is not a show car; it is a racecar Roush Racing built that has been driven by Mark Martin in Winston Cup competition. What do you think this car is worth? It is a used Ford Taurus. It doesn't have power windows. In fact, it doesn't have windows at all; it just has a net. It doesn't have eight-way power seats; all it has is one uncomfortable bucket seat, bolted down. It gets five miles per gallon. It doesn't have air conditioning, but it has plenty of heat. The gas tank takes up most of the trunk. It doesn't have alloy wheels. In fact, its tires do not have any tread.

Somebody looked up what a used Ford Taurus, without those options, would run for in Kelly's Blue Book of car prices and about \$14,000 is the most you could get for that. What do you think Neiman-Marcus is selling that car for? \$14,000? No. \$125,000. That's what you can buy it for. You say, “Well, what makes that car so valuable?” It is because it is not an ordinary Ford Taurus. It was designed and built for a special purpose and that is for NASCAR racing. And really, the same can be said of every one of you. God designed you, built you and equipped you for a special job within the body of Christ and that is what makes you valuable. You are not some ordinary Ford Taurus. You are a special, unique design by God.

Sometimes people do not think they are very valuable or worth very much. I read recently in the *Wall Street Journal* that the average savings account for Americans is only \$83.42. You can see how you measure up. But, before you feel kind of poor, I want you to remember that if you only have \$83.42, you are still \$4.6 trillion richer than the U.S. Government because that is how far in debt they really are. We are valuable; we have worth and meaning before God.

To show how valuable you are, God has gifted you. He has given you some spiritual gifts and that is what we are going to talk about today. Romans 12:6-8 says we have different gifts. Gifts is the word “charisma,” just like our English word charisma. Every Christian ought to be a charismatic Christian in the true sense of the word meaning “gifted.” We have different gifts according to the grace given to us. If a man's gift is *prophesying*, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is *servicing*, let him serve; if it is *teaching*, let him teach; if it is *encouraging*, let him encourage; if it is *contributing to the needs of others*, let him give generously; if it is *leadership*, let him govern or lead diligently; if it is *showing mercy*, let him do it cheerfully.”

Now when it comes to spiritual gifts, there is sort of a wide range of understanding. Many of you in this room right now understand about spiritual gifts. You probably even know what your spiritual gifts are and you are using them, but for some of you, spiritual gifts is going to be a totally new topic to you. So, for that reason, I'm going to be very basic this morning.

## **I. A DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

First of all, let's talk about the definition of spiritual gifts. Then number two, the description of these seven gifts mentioned in Romans 12 and then number three, the discovery of your spiritual gifts. If you were to ask me to define what a spiritual gift is, I would say this, it is:

### **1. A God-given capacity to serve the Lord**

I could use the word “ability,” but I think “capacity” is better because it means you have the potential ability. You have the capacity to do some kind of special service for the Lord. It is a supernatural endowment to do something within the body of Christ.

Remember last week we said that the church is like a human body? Jesus Christ is the head and we are all different members of the body. Some of you may be hands, others may be kneecaps, others may be a feet or elbows. Now you see, every member is different. We have a function in the body of Christ. A hand doesn't fulfill the same function as a kneecap, but before we can determine what part we are, what function we play, we must decide what our spiritual gifts are because our spiritual gifts determine what part of the body we are.

Now, a spiritual gift is not a natural talent. Sometimes people say, “Well, I'm not very talented. I can't sing. I can't paint. I cannot speak publicly.” There are natural talents. I think Michael Jordan is probably one of the most naturally talented athletes that the world has ever known, but that is not a spiritual gift. Sometimes people have a natural gift to sing and it is kind of interesting that of the 18 spiritual gifts that are mentioned in the New Testament, music or singing is not even mentioned as a spiritual gift. You may use it through encouragement or mercy or evangelism, but it is not listed as a gift. But sometimes people who have a natural talent, do not touch the body of Christ. They don't move people spiritually whereas those who have the gift for mercy or encouragement through music, minister to the body of Christ.

Many of you have heard of the great world-renown tenor, Luciano Pavarotti. He could have stood up here a few minutes ago and sang the song Jeff Cates sung. Technically, it would have been a lot better than the best that Jeff or anybody else in our church could ever do. I don't know if Pavarotti is a Christian, but if he's not a Christian, his song might entertain you naturally, but it would never move you spiritually. See, when you know Jeff Cates like I know Jeff Cates, and know that he is a trophy of grace, having spent time in the state penitentiary, and having found Jesus Christ, and having been totally transformed by the grace of God, when he singing about the love of Jesus that held him to the cross, folks, that ministers to me. He is using a spiritual gift to minister. That is different than a natural talent.

### **2. No Christian has all the gifts, but every Christian has some spiritual gifts**

That’s why in 1 Corinthians 12 it says that the Holy Spirit gives severally to each person as he will. Now, let me give you an example. Think of the church here as an orchestra. God has given every member of Green Acres Baptist Church and every member of the body of Christ a special instrument we are to play in this symphony of ministry. One mistake we can make is to try to play the wrong instrument. If we try to play the wrong instrument, we are not going to produce beautiful music. For instance, I can play the guitar. I’ve been playing the guitar for 25 years and I could probably join this orchestra and play the guitar or bass. But, if you put me in the trombone section, I could not make pretty music. I cannot make a sound come out of a trombone.

One source of frustration in the church is that people are trying to do the wrong ministry, play the wrong instrument. That is tragic. But do you know what is even worse than that is having your instrument, but refusing to play it. Everybody in this church has been given a special gift that nobody else has, when you mix it with your personality and your own gifts and abilities. If you are just sitting there with your instrument, refusing to play it, there is a part of the symphony that is missing. You need me. I need you. We all need to be playing together. No person is a one-man band.

If one Christian possessed all the spiritual gifts, he wouldn’t need anybody else; he (or she) would be a church all by himself. I could call it “David Dykes Baptist Church” because I wouldn’t need anybody else. I don’t have all the gifts. I have some. You have some, and when we all work together and utilize and exercise our gifts; that’s when beautiful harmony and music occurs.

### **3. The Holy Spirit’s fruit (not gifts) is the best indication of godliness**

Sometimes people think, “Well, that person is so gifted, they must be godly.” You can’t always associate giftedness with godliness. You may wonder, “Shouldn’t that verb “is” be “are?” No, because in Galatians 5:22, which mentions the nine fruits of the Spirit, it is listed singular, the carpus, fruit. One fruit expresses itself in nine different ways. Now, let me just tell you that when you are full of the Holy Spirit which is the spirit of Jesus, your life will be characterized by these nine personality traits: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faith, self-control. People will look at you and say, “Wow! That person has love, joy, all of those.” But unlike the gifts, you can’t say, “I just don’t have the fruit of joy, or patience is not one of my fruits.” You can’t say that. When you are full of Jesus, those personality traits will be exhibited in your life; not so with the gifts. You may have some of the gifts but you may not have other of the gifts. Did you know that sometimes the gifts can be exercised in human strength instead of the Holy Spirit strength? We all know pastors and teachers who were exercising gifts and seem to be very effective, but their lives were not godly.

In the 1970s, there was a pastor in Waco, Texas, who was ministering to many people, and he was a blessing to many people. I heard him teach and I was blessed by his teaching and the whole time he was teaching, he was involved in homosexual behavior which was discovered and led to his resignation. He later died. Amazingly, he was exercising the gift, but there was no godliness in his life, so I need you to know that giftedness doesn’t necessarily equate with godliness. It is the fruit of the Spirit that is more important.

## **II. A DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

I want us to look at seven spiritual gifts. Remember, everyone who is a child of God or is in the family of God, has one or more of these spiritual gifts. There are 18 of them mentioned in three lists: 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and Romans 12. Many Bible scholars believe that this list in Romans 12, these seven, are foundational and many say that every Christian has at least one of these seven that we are going to be talking about. Let's unwrap the gift and talk about each one of these.

### **1. Prophecy—declaring God's truth for response**

Lest you think the gift of prophecy is predicting the future, that is not what it says in the New Testament. In the New Testament, it is just what we would call inspired preaching. Here is a good description: It is proclaiming God's truth for response. Preaching the word of God for people to respond, either in salvation or for Christians to respond in commitment. It is the gift of taking the word of God and sharing it in a way in which people are motivated to respond to Jesus Christ. It is not telling the future.

Did you know that every church needs someone with the gift of prophecy? That is why it says in 1 Corinthians 12, when Paul is talking about the gifts, he says, "Earnestly desire the better gifts." The gift he is talking about is the gift of prophecy. If a church body doesn't have someone with the gift of prophecy, that church is not going to be a well-balanced, healthy church. Some of you are studying 2 Corinthians in Sunday School and even today, I think you studied 2 Corinthians 3:6 that says, "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life." Now think about that. That really relates to preaching. There's the word or the letter of the word, just the pure Word of God itself, and then there is the Spirit; that's the energizing. If you have one without the other, you're in trouble.

Listen to this. I know some churches that have the word, the letter, but without the Spirit. In other words, they are just cut and dried, dull, dead churches, but they have the Word. If you go to a church like that, you will dry up. Then there are other churches that have plenty of Spirit, plenty of emotionalism, plenty of frantic activity, but they are not basing it on the Word. If you have the spirit without the Word, you won't dry up, you will blow up. But may Green Acres Baptist Church always be a church where we have the Word of God and the energy of the Spirit of God because if you're in a church with the Word of God and the Spirit of God, you will grow up. Do you see the contrast there? Word without the Spirit "dry up." Spirit without the Word "blow up." Word and the Spirit "you grow up in Christ." So that's what the gift is, and a lot of people have the gift of prophecy. If you have it, be preaching.

### **2. Service—seeing a need and meeting it**

It is the word in the New Testament for deacon. It is seeing a need and meeting it. I have something exciting to share with you this morning. Did you know many people in this room have the gift of service? What that means is you may work over at Good Sam in the soup kitchen. You may work in the Clothes Closet. You may be one of our Volunteer Christian Builders, or you may be the kind of person that you don't think you can do much for Christ, but you go change

the oil in the car of a widow who cannot afford to have it done. My friend, you are ministering in the body of Christ and what you are doing is as important as what I’m doing up here.

Sometimes people who have this wonderful gift of seeing a need and meeting it, think, “I can’t do much for God because I can’t speak.” This gift is so vitally important in the church and I thank God for the thousands of people in the body of Christ who have the gift of service and if you have this gift, you ought to be exercising it. You ought to be looking around and finding needs and doing something practical to meet the need.

I need to issue a warning here. The gift of service is not when you see a need and complain about it. In every church you’ve got people who say, “You know, preacher, we have this need over there and nobody’s doing anything about it.” Why don’t you do something about it?

I had somebody tell me one time, “I think my spiritual gifts is the gift of criticism.” I said, “That’s not a spiritual gift. That’s the weed of the devil instead of the fruit of the Spirit.” This gift of service doesn’t complain about needs. It does something to meet those needs. Thank God for the people in our church who have this gift of service.

### **3. Teaching—sharing God’s truth that transforms**

What is the difference between the gift of preaching or prophecy and the gift of teaching? It is not the difference of content, because the content of both is the word of God but preaching is usually intended for a response, for people to do something about it, whereas teaching aims at transforming the thinking and the behavior of the people who hear.

A person may have a talent to teach school or to be a professor in college and when they teach, people are informed. That is not the same as the spiritual gift of teaching, because when someone has the spiritual gift of teaching, people aren’t just informed—they are transformed. That is a wonderful gift and I thank God for the people in our church who have the gift of teaching and they are teaching preschoolers, children, youth and adults in our church. If you have this gift and you are not exercising it, shame on you. You need to be finding an avenue, a place where you can be teaching the word of God.

Also it’s true folks, we have some places in our church where people are teaching and they don’t have the gift of teaching. The reason is somebody who does have the gift is holding back and not offering to come forward. Have you ever sat in a class or in a setting when somebody is trying to teach and they don’t have the gift of teaching? One sound predominates—snoring. We’re talking Snore City here. It’s very obvious. Teaching is a general command and there are times when we all ought to teach even if we don’t have the gift. But, as far as on-going, regular teaching the Word of God, wouldn’t it be wonderful if every Sunday School class in our church was manned by somebody who had the gift of teaching? Praise God for the men and women who teach the Word of God in our church.

### **4. Encouragement—motivating others by words or acts**

The King James Version says “exhortation.” You are motivating people to do something. To do what? To have courage. Sometimes it is motivating somebody to give up a sinful habit, a bad habit they have. Maybe it is giving somebody the courage to accomplish something for God that otherwise they wouldn’t accomplish without your encouragement. You can do it by sending cards or letters. You can do it by telephone. These days you can do it by e-mail. There are many different ways you can encourage. Some of you in this church, you have this gift, and there are times when you said, “I really ought to send a card to that person and tell them how much I appreciate them.” And then you get busy and just forget about it. My friend you are quenching the Holy Spirit when you don’t follow through if God has given you the gift to do that.

In the early church, in the book of Acts, they had a member of the church who was so accomplished in this gift that they quit calling him by his real name? His name was Joseph, but they didn’t call him Joseph. They called him Barney or Barnabas, which means “encourager.” When Barnabas attended a group of believers, they said, “Here comes the encourager.” Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we were so in tune with our gifts and using our gifts that people called us by our gift? “There’s preacher. There’s teacher. There’s mercy-giver. There’s encourager.” I love this gift. I think our church and any church would be so much better if people who had this gift would exercise it all the time.

You know what else I call this gift? I call this gift the gift of spiritual cheerleading. When I was playing football in high school, and I was out on the field, I am sure the cheerleaders were cheering, but I couldn’t hear them very much unless they did “Two bits, four bits” and everybody would stand up and holler. But when I was playing basketball inside the gym, it was a different story altogether. I can remember at my high school, our cheerleaders had a certain cheer when someone on our team would go to the free throw line and shoot a free throw. You would walk up there and the cheerleaders would be over there going, “Sink it, sink it, come on David, sink it.” I kind of liked that, you know. I’m there with the ball and they are telling me to sink it. They are encouraging me and I want you know, by what they cheered, I wanted to do a better job. They encouraged me to try to sink that free throw. Every time I sunk one, I wanted to look over there and say, “Thanks a lot girls, that was great.”

Wouldn’t it be great in Green Acres Baptist Church if those who have the gift of spiritual cheerleading would start doing it? I can just hear it now, can’t you? “Preach it, come on pastor, preach it!” Or you could say, “Pray more, pray more. Come on believers pray more!” Or some of you guys need to say to other guys, “Love her, love her, come on husband love her!” Whatever it is, you encourage people to do what God has commanded them to do. What a great gift that is!

## **5. Giving—generous, cheerful timely giving**

In the New International Version, it is called the gift of contributing. Some of you will look at this gift and you will say, “What is that?” Some of you are looking at this gift right now and are saying, “Wait a minute pastor, didn’t you just say while ago that not everybody has all the spiritual gifts?” That’s true. “Well, pastor, if I don’t have the gift of giving, does that mean I don’t have to give anymore?” No. You can’t get off that easy.

Did you know that many of the gifts are also general commands of God? For instance, we're going to look at the gift of mercy in a moment. Everyone is to show mercy but some have a special gift for it. One of the spiritual gifts, according to 1 Corinthians 12 is the gift of faith. All of us had better exercise faith, but some just have a special gift for it. The same is true of giving. All of us are to give.

In 1 Corinthians 16, the Bible says, “On the first day of the week every one of you should lay by in store according to your income.” That is for all of us, but some people have a special gift for this. Romans 12 says if you have the gift, just give generously, give cheerfully. What it means is sometimes people are just endowed by God to be able to do it in a supernatural way. You say, “Pastor, does that mean that some people that have this gift have been gifted financially so they can give great amounts of money?” Sometimes but not always. Sometimes people who live by modest means have this gift.

I recall an older couple in one of my churches in Alabama. All their kids were grown and they lived on his income and I know that they gave away every penny of her income. They didn't have a very large income, but they had reduced their living expenses to a point where they could give amazingly to the work of God.

Just a few weeks ago when we were needing \$10,000 to finish a Habitat for Humanity house, a couple wrote me that check. With tears streaming down their faces, they said, “God told me to give it you this.” You would never in a million years think they were wealthy and compared to others in this room, they are not wealthy. But they had this gift and God led them to do it and they did it and it gave them such joy.

The Bible says if you have this gift, be doing it. I thank God for the people who not only give while they are alive but they make preparations so when they die, through endowed giving through their will, they continue to support the Lord's work. I really think this gift is better exercised when you are alive, so you can receive the joy of the blessing of doing it.

I came across a little poem the other day. It had two lines:

If you're giving while you're living,  
You'll be knowing where it's going.

People who have this gift never want any attention. They don't want to blow a horn. They give because they love God, and the work of God prospers because of it. That's a great gift.

## **6. Leadership—organizing and inspiring to accomplish God's work**

It is also called the gift of administration in 1 Corinthians 12. Thank God for the people in the church throughout the ages who had the gift to be able to organize and inspire God's people to accomplish God's goals and tasks. In fact, the period of time we call the Judges was probably the darkest in Israel's history because they didn't have any good spiritual leadership. It said everybody did what was right in his or her own eyes. I have known some churches like that;

everyone does their own thing. They do what is right in their own eyes. There is no spiritual leadership and that creates spiritual anarchy.

Thank God that in every church, there are people who are gifted to organize and to lead people to accomplish God’s goals. Did you know a good characteristic of spiritual leadership is that person never has to say, “I’m a leader. Follow me.” They just put their eyes on Jesus and follow Jesus and everyone else who is following Jesus, follows on along behind. Every church needs people who exercise this gift.

## **7. Mercy—seeing and helping hurting people**

It says in Romans 12, if you have the gift of showing mercy, do it cheerfully. Everybody ought to show mercy, but there is a special gift. There are some people in the body of Christ who aren’t sensitive enough to see when somebody is hurting, but there are certain people in the body of Christ who can look at someone and say, “That person is lonely” or “That person is grieving.” They notice it whereas other members of the body just miss it. Not only do they see that that person is hurting, they do something about it. They go there and they talk to them and listen to them and put their arms around them and hug them and reach out and they are there for them.

You see folks, one of the worst things in the Christian life is the belief that you have to do everything in the Christian life. You will kill yourself if you try to do everything that the body of Christ is supposed to do. You don’t have all the gifts. But one of the most liberating things in the Christian life is to realize you may not have to teach. You may not have to preach. But, it could be that God has given you the gift of service or the gift of mercy. And if you’ve got it, please exercise it because there are a lot of others who don’t have it.

In one of my churches I served in Alabama, there was a man who was a fairly wealthy businessman, but he did not have the ability to speak publicly. He could never teach a Sunday School class, but he had the gift of mercy. We ran about 400 in Sunday School and every time that there was a death in our church family, that man would immediately go over to the home. He couldn’t say much because he didn’t know what to say, but he would go into the closet of every family member and he would shine all their shoes because he knew they needed their shoes to be shined for the funeral. Then he would wash their cars knowing that those cars were going to probably have to ride in a funeral procession. That was his gift. What a wonderful gift it was. People would say, “That guy is such a great guy.” He was gifted to do that. Thank God he knew what his gift was and he was exercising it. If you’ve got this gift, exercise it.

Now look at the seven gifts listed. I believe it is a good chance that every true child of God in this room has one or more of those gifts. Do you know what it is, and are you using it for Christ? You say, “Well, pastor, I hear what you’re saying, but maybe I don’t know what my gifts are. Help me here.”

## **III. THE DISCOVERY OF YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

How can you unwrap your spiritual gifts? Let me give you a couple of words of advice. You must believe that you are gifted. It says in 1 Corinthians 12:11, “All these (gifts) are the work of



one and the same Spirit and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.” That’s very important. It’s not your job to ask God for a gift. I mean, that contradicts the nature of a gift. If somebody gives you a gift and you say, “That’s really not what I want,” that is so rude. You don’t go to God and say, “God, I want this gift.” He has already given you the gifts when you were born into the kingdom of God, now it is your job to discover what gifts you have. You don’t go back to God and say, “God, I need some gifts now.” Even in a newborn baby there is the capacity to drive an automobile and to fly an airplane, but those gifts and abilities have to be cultivated and discovered. The same is true of Christians.

There are a couple of ways you can determine your gifts:

## **1. Personal inclination**

What kind of ministry or spiritual service are you inclined toward? What do you enjoy doing? God is not going to gift you to do something that contradicts your personality, your passions or even your natural talents. Why do you think that the gift God has given you is just going to make you miserable? For instance, some people have the gift of mercy and they love going in nursing homes and hospitals, serving the Lord. Others just can’t stand going into those places. Listen, friend if you can’t stand to go in those places, it’s a good bet that God didn’t give you the gift of mercy.

### **Just do what comes supernaturally!**

Have you ever heard the expression, “Do what comes naturally?” When it comes to spiritual gifts, just do what comes supernaturally. It is not a natural talent; it is a supernatural capacity. Sometimes it boils down to trial and error. Trust me on this. If you are clueless, try some of these. The biggest mistake you can make is to get so bound up in analyzing and diagnosing what your spiritual gifts are, taking all these surveys until you’re guilty of what’s called the paralysis of analysis. Just start doing some of it and you will see.

My dad was a cook in the Navy during World War II. He used to make big pots of spaghetti and this is how he used to tell when the spaghetti was ready to serve. He would pick up a little strand of spaghetti and flip it up on the bulkhead, the wall. If it stuck, it was ready; if it didn’t, it wasn’t. That is probably good advice for spiritual gifts. Sometimes you ought to flick one up on the wall and try doing it and if it slides down, that’s not it. If it sticks, and you’ll know if it sticks, that’s it. You will just know, “Wow! This is what God has gifted me to do.”

## **2. Public affirmation**

The body of Christ will recognize your gift sometimes more quickly than you will. That’s why I say listen to the body’s feedback. What is the body of Christ saying to you? When God called me to full-time ministry when I was 17 years old, I really thought I was going to go into music because that’s what I loved most. I loved music and I still do. But as I began to have opportunities to preach and to share the word of God, God would bless and I would have so many people come and say, “You really ministered to me by what you had to say tonight.” That was one way I knew that God had gifted me in that area.

If you are teaching or trying to teach and you're not constantly receiving affirmation from the body about what a blessing you are, could be, you don't have that gift. But if you, on the other hand, have the gift of encouragement, you are constantly encouraging people and people say, "Listen, you don't know how much what card meant to me. It came at just the right time." Listen to the church body, you probably have that gift.

Around the turn of the century, First Baptist Church of Whitewright, Texas, was without a pastor. You know how Baptist churches get a pastor. They elect a committee and steal somebody else's preacher, right? First Baptist Church, Whitewright didn't do that. They had a single young man who was a member of their church and was principal of a local grammar school. He was Sunday School Superintendent, which was a volunteer job. This church did an unusual thing. They went to this man and said, "George, we just sense that God wants you to be our next pastor." This man, who was a principal and Sunday School Superintendent, could have said, "I'm not called to preach." But he listened to the body and said, "Okay, if you want me to be your pastor, I'll be your pastor." And so he became pastor of First Baptist Church of Whitewright, Texas. He realized later he needed to prepare more for the ministry. He went to Baylor University and later went to Southwestern Seminary. And George W. Truitt pastored First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, for 47 years. Do you know how he saw for the first time that he was gifted to be a pastor? The body said, "You're the man. We see in you that ability." So see, folks, sometimes the body will affirm you.

Everybody in this room is gifted for some special ministry and the way you function as a part of the body is to discover your job and then start doing it. Start doing it wholeheartedly. Do it more than you've ever done before. Do it and do it and do it. And when every member of the body of Christ called Green Acres Baptist Church is doing their job, that's when this body rises up as the body of Christ in a healthy way and makes an impact on the world for Jesus Christ. But imagine how frustrating it must be for the Lord Jesus who is the cerebral cortex, the nerve center, trying to say, "Move. Move hand. Move arm." And individual Christians say, "I can't do anything." Friend, you are gifted and when the head speaks, you move.

I was driving to Dallas the other day on I-20. I passed an 18-wheeler and on the back of the truck was an advertisement that said, "Any load, anywhere, any time. 1-800 . . ." Now that's a good approach to business. When I read that I said, "Thank you Lord." Because that's the greatest definition of spiritual service and availability I've ever read. "Lord, any load, any job, anywhere, any time, 1-800-CALL ME. I am available, Lord." Can you say that today? "Any load, anywhere, any time? Here I am."

Let's pray. Lord, I just pray that somebody in this room, number one, would be so curious about spiritual gifts that they would not really be settled until they discover and start exercising their spiritual gifts. Number two, Lord, I pray that are some people in this room who knew that they could do this, but didn't really understand the full implications of it being a spiritual gifts and now Lord I pray that you would free them up to do it more heartily than they've ever done it before. Number three Lord, for those who know they have a spiritual gift, but they're just sitting on it, not using it in the body, Lord, I pray that you would draw them to a place where they start serving you once again.

Lord, if there is somebody here today that is not in your family, I pray that you would just draw them to Yourself today so that the greatest desire of their heart in the next few minutes would be to take You as Lord and Savior. We lift this prayer up in Jesus' name. Amen.

## OUTLINE

### I. A DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. “A God-given capacity to serve the Lord”
2. Not every Christian has all the gifts—but every Christian has some
3. The Holy Spirit’s fruit (not gifts) is the best indication of godliness

### II. A DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

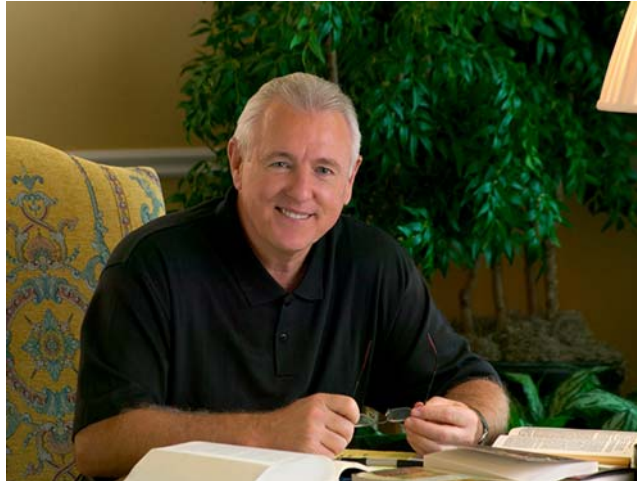
1. Prophecy—Declaring God’s truth for response
2. Service—Seeing a need and meeting it
3. Teaching—Sharing God’s truth that transforms
4. Encouraging—Motivating others by words or acts
5. Giving—Generous, cheerful, timely giving
6. Leading—Organizing & inspiring to accomplish God’s work
7. Mercy—Seeing and helping hurting people

### III. A DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

\*Believe that you are gifted \*

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.” *1 Corinthians 12:11*

1. Personal inclination: Just do what comes super-naturally!
2. Public affirmation: Listen to the Body’s feedback!



**DISCLAIMER:** These messages are offered for your personal edification and enrichment. There is no legal copyright on this material. I have used many sources, and I have always attempted to cite any exact quotations. Any failure to cite a quote is simply an oversight on my part.

If you are a preacher or teacher, I encourage you to use this material to stimulate your own Spirit-driven imagination. Additional study beyond this material will benefit both you and your listeners. You have my full permission to use any of this material as long as you cite the source for any substantial amount used in your message.

If you borrow the majority of a message or outline, I encourage you to simply preface your remarks by saying something like: ***“Some (or “much” as the case may be) of the ideas I’m sharing in this message came from a message by Pastor David Dykes in Texas.”*** This simple citation may prevent any criticism that may be directed toward you.

To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes