

A PERSONAL GUIDE TO DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

What Is a Spiritual Gift?

Is there a difference between a spiritual gift and a talent? Is it important to recognise the difference? Will it help me discover my own spiritual gifts if I can distinguish between the two?

The answer to all three questions is yes. And recognising the differences between talents and spiritual gifts can be one of the keys to finding those spiritual gifts God has given to you.

Let's look first at talents, or natural abilities. A natural ability may be something you're born with, like physical co-ordination. Or it may be a talent you've developed through the years, such as playing a musical instrument.

These natural abilities or talents may be useful or entertaining but they deal primarily with the surfaces of life. The root concern of one's relationship to God is left untouched. Abilities and talents affect people on a temporary basis, not an eternal basis. And spiritual growth isn't necessary for their development.

A woman who frequently opens her home for dinner guests and social gatherings may not have the gift of hospitality. Why not? Because spiritual gifts *differ* from natural abilities in two important respects.

First, the *motivation* for the gift is based on love for God and love for humanity. Self-glory or gain can never be the incentive. Paul tells us that one's communication, knowledge, and faith might all *be perfect*, but they are *worthless* unless love is the motive (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Second, the *goal* of spiritual gifts differs from that of natural abilities. Spiritual gifts are granted "for the common good..... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:12).

Keep in mind this motivation and goal as you seek to discover your gifts. Ask yourself, "What is my motivation and goal in this area?" Remind yourself that these gifts form the basis for our individual and collective service for God.

Remember, too, that hardly anyone discovers all his gifts at the beginning of his Christian experience. A period of time, or a special set of circumstances may be required to bring your gifts to light. Be willing to try your hand in new areas. Your spiritual gifts can be confirmed only in the actual setting where they are put to use.

What you find in the next few pages should not be used merely as an assessment.

Rather, use this guide to provide a focus for future service to God and to your fellow man.