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BEYOND THE ASSESSMENT: HOW TO TRULY DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE AND THRIVE IN YOUR GIFTS

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SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

BEYOND THE ASSESSMENT:
HOW TO TRULY DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE AND THRIVE IN YOUR GIFTS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
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IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
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BY

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To Brittany and Kherington Grace,

Thank you for loving me so well and supporting me through the late nights and long hours working on this project. My greatest ministry will always be to serve our family.

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INTRODUCTION

DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?

Do you know who you are? Do you know how God has designed you? Do you know why you are here and what God wants to accomplish with your life? Have you realized your full potential for the kingdom of God?¹ Discerning the answers to these questions can help you live the abundant life that Jesus speaks about in John 10:10. But too many followers of Jesus settle for a normal life, never truly discovering their divine design or stepping into their God-given call. The starting place for determining your divine design is knowing who you are in Christ and understanding that the truest thing about you is what God says about you.

If you have a relationship with God through Christ then Scripture says you are forgiven (Rom. 8:1) and free (Gal. 5:13), you are adopted (Eph. 1:5) and accepted (Rom. 15:7), and you are called (2 Tim. 1:9) and commissioned (Matt. 28:18). In fact, you are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that you should walk in them (Eph. 2:10).² The God of this universe has not only prepared good works for you, but He has equipped you with gifts so that you may walk in them.

When you begin to discover who you are in Christ, you can also begin to discover how he has uniquely wired you and gifted you to make an impact on this world. Brian Houston teaches that one of the signs of being spiritually alive is when you are flourishing in your gifts and using them for the glory of God. He believes that sandwiched in between salvation and grace is our purpose and calling and he urges the people of God not to simply live saved, but to live called.³

¹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Maximizing Your Effectiveness: How to Discover and Develop Your Divine Design* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006): 29

² ESV Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

³ Brian C Houston. "Spiritually Alive." Presentation at Christ Fellowship Church, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, October 16, 2016. http://gochristfellowship.com/sermon_series/brian-houston-spiritually-alive/#1 The author was present for this presentation.

That is what this project is all about: helping followers of Jesus discover their unique, God-given gifts and purpose so that they can experience the full life to which He has called them. Your purpose in the body of Christ will be partly determined by your combination of spiritual gifts, as all members of the body are intended to function in the way God has equipped and designed them to.⁴ The best way for you to experience the joy and satisfaction of authentic ministry is to serve God in the way He has designed you, according to your gifts, passions, temperaments and style.⁵

This project will give a brief introduction to spiritual gifts by defining what they are as well as outlining their primary purpose. It will examine the three key passages of Scripture that teach on the subject of spiritual gifts and offer practical applications from those texts. It will also evaluate the use of current spiritual gift assessments and offer some new approaches to gift discovery. Lastly, this project will move beyond the assessment to help individual believers exercise their gifts in a place of passion and help churches deploy their people according to how God has gifted them.

⁴ Peter C. Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Help Your Church Grow* (Bloomington: Chosen Books, 2012): Kindle Location 338.

⁵ Malphurs, 13.

CHAPTER 1

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENTS

Christians have been recognizing and exercising spiritual gifts since the days of the early apostles, but the systematic form of spiritual gifts assessments that are used in churches today is a relatively new concept. The first known spiritual gifts assessment (or spiritual gift inventory as it was known at the time) was published in 1975 and churches have been using assessment tools like it for the last forty years to help Christians identify which spiritual gifts they possess. Typically, these assessments are in the form of a questionnaire that has the individual rate the degree to which statements are true of them. Based on the final rating scores of these answers, an individual would be able to identify the gifts from Scripture that they scored highest in, thus revealing their spiritual gifts.

The use of these assessments became more wide-spread as books such as C. Peter Wagner's *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* were released, and they have been beneficial over the years in helping believers consider what area of ministry in the church they are best suited and equipped for.⁶ The dilemma with these assessments is that there are several assumptions that lie beneath the construction of the them⁷ and it is extremely difficult – if not impossible – to provide a fully comprehensive list of gifts based on Scripture. The other difficulty is that while assessments can be very helpful, they are not what actually activate our gifts.⁸ While assessments often provide a sense of giftedness, they do not typically match those gifts with a clear assignment or a plan to activate them.⁹

⁶ Sydney Page, "The Assumptions Behind Spiritual Gifts Inventories" *Didaskalia* (Otterburne, Man.) 22, (September 2011): 39-59.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Dave Ferguson, *Hero Maker: Five Essential Practices for Leaders to Multiply Leaders*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018): 141.

⁹ Ibid, 141.

The purpose of this project is to help Christ-followers move beyond the assessment to a place where they can thrive in their gifts. The intent goes beyond simple gift discovery in order help people find the place where their gifts intersect with their passions and are used in the most effective way to build the body of Christ. While there is no singular way to discover spiritual gifts, there is no substitute for a Christian making the effort to discover their unique gift-mix and knowing what the Spirit of God has uniquely designed them to do.¹⁰ It is critical for every follower of Jesus to recognize that they are not only called to make a contribution to the body of Christ but that they are also gifted to do so.¹¹ Scripture is clear that as each believer has received a gift, he or she should use it well to serve one another (1 Pt 4:10) and church leaders must commit – or re-commit - to helping their people discover their unique God given gifts and purpose.

When the church helps individual members body discover their gifts, apply them to meet the needs of their community, and work together with other parts of the body in unity, that church body and those individual believers will be growing and vibrant.¹² Malphurs suggests that few Christians are actually fulfilled or fully realize their potential for the kingdom of God¹³ and that the satisfaction of authentic ministry is experienced only when someone is serving in a way that is consistent with how God designed them, with their spiritual gifts, passions, talents and leadership style all working together.¹⁴ This project is intended to serve as a tool to help churches and believers discover their gifts, align them with their passions, and them make the greatest contribution they can to the Kingdom of God by fully operating in their divine design.

¹⁰ Wagner, 401.

¹¹ Page, 59.

¹² Joshua Brockway, "One Body, Many Parts: Reclaiming the Ecclesial Context of the Spiritual Gifts." *Brethren Life and Thought* 59, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 59.

¹³ Malphurs, 20

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 13

LIMITATIONS TO CURRENT ASSESSMENTS

Before proposing a new approach to spiritual gift discovery, it is important to identify the critical limitations with current assessment tools. This is not an attempt to negate the effectiveness of spiritual gifts assessments but rather to help believers understand how to move beyond the assessment in order to truly discover how God has uniquely gifted them. The truth is that assessments typically give an accurate sense of what a person's gifts are and can create an eagerness to find the right assignment that aligns with that gift mix.¹⁵ The concern is that too many believers place their stock in an assessment rather than exploring scripture for themselves. This could in turn hinder them from discovering more about how God has wired them by actually doing something that may unlock the gifts inside of them that may not necessarily be revealed in a test. This project identifies four key limitations with current spiritual gift assessment tools.

Limitation #1

The first limitation is that spiritual gifts can be discovered without the use of assessments. As noted earlier in this project, the first spiritual gifts assessment was not published until the mid 1970's. And while these assessments were created as tool to help identify gifts, Christians have been discovering and practicing their gifts long before assessments were ever developed. This leads to the limitation that spiritual gifts can be, and have been, discovered without the means of assessments. The most effective starting point for the discovery of spiritual gifts has to be found in the pages of scripture. While the Bible does not give any specific details on how to discover gifts, it is the natural basic source of available information on the subject.¹⁶ Wagner advises that the first step in any human endeavor is to consider all of the options of how to get there and

¹⁵ Ferguson, 140.

¹⁶ Wagner, 1499.

contends that it would be difficult to discover a spiritual gift without knowing the possible avenues of discovery, including knowing the possible gifts available in scripture.¹⁷ Beyond studying scripture, gifts can also be discovered by doing. As a believer begins to serve in various areas of ministry, their true gifts will begin to rise to the surface as they discover where they are most effective.¹⁸ As these gifts begin to emerge, they can be confirmed by other godly people who can give wise counsel and see evidence of that gifts. Lastly, spiritual gifts can be confirmed through spiritual fruit, or effectiveness, in ministry. When someone operates in their gift mix and the Holy Spirit is working through them, there should be evidence of spiritual fruit.

Limitation #2

A second limitation to gifts assessments is that scripture does not specify or provide a comprehensive list of all possible spiritual gifts. While there are several gifts specifically mentioned in key passages of Scripture (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4), it clear that none of these lists were intended to be comprehensive.¹⁹ These three passages are comprised of twenty different gifts (including gifts mentioned more than once) but none of the lists are complete in and of themselves, nor could it be assumed that combining them would be all-inclusive. Paul's most detailed discussion of gifts comes in response to questions from the Corinthian church. And though the exact nature of that question is not clear, his descriptive response seems to address the use of particular gifts in question rather than to provide an all-inclusive list of gifts available.²⁰ The Bible seems to indicate the possibility of other spiritual gifts, but we must be careful when we attempt to speak where Scripture does not.²¹ This project

¹⁷ Wagner, 1499

¹⁸ Malphurs, 77

¹⁹ Page, 48.

²⁰ Bert Dominy, "Paul and Spiritual Gifts: Reflections on 1 Corinthians 12-14." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 26, no. 1 (Fall 1983): 49.

²¹ Malphurs, 47

will further examine the list of gifts that are clearly provided in scripture, as well as address the debate around gifts not mentioned directly, but it there is no reason to suggest that compiling all of the gifts mentioned throughout the New Testament would result in providing a complete or comprehensive list.²²

Limitation #3

A third limitation to spiritual gifts assessments is that not all spiritual gifts are *abilities* that can actually be assessed or possessed. In today's culture, when someone has a natural talent or ability such as playing a musical instrument or throwing a football, that special ability is often referred to as a gift, so it is only natural in Western culture to tie the word gift directly to abilities. It is important to note that there are two distinct differences between spiritual gifts and natural talents. First, talents are God-given abilities, typically given at birth, while spiritual gifts are given at the time of conversion into a relationship with Christ.²³ The second distinction is that spiritual gifts are reserved for believers in Christ, while natural talents are given to all people.

Wagner actually defines spiritual gifts as *attributes* - not just abilities - given by the Spirit for use within the body of Christ.²⁴ While there are several gifts that could be considered abilities, there are other spiritual gifts, such as the gift of faith, that is more of an attribute or quality. There is plenty of debate over how much spiritual gifts actually coincide with abilities and some scholars even place gifts into different categories²⁵ stemming from the miraculous to the seemingly mundane.²⁶ Some scholars even contend that the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians are more expressions of the working of the Spirit more than they are special abilities given by the

²² Page, 48.

²³ Malphurs, 69.

²⁴ Wagner, Kindle Location 429.

²⁵ Mark F. Ledbetter and James D. Foster. "Measuring Spiritual Giftedness: A Factor Analytic Study of a Spiritual Gifts Inventory." *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 17, no. 3 (Fall 1989): 275.

²⁶ Dominy, 53.

Spirit to people.²⁷ Berding argues that the lists the Apostle Paul mentions should be recognized as ministry assignments more than they are recognized as gifts.²⁸ But no matter your theology on the issue, there are clear limitations to spiritual gift assessments that are designed to simply help people discover the abilities they possess when, throughout the pages of scripture, the Spirit of God so often works through people's weaknesses and/or lack of ability.

Limitation #4

A fourth limitation to spiritual gifts assessments is that gifts are not static. Current gift assessments can give the impression that gift results that will never change and that there are gifts that you may never possess. Most scholars agree that all believers have at least one spiritual gift and concur that no individual believers have all of the gifts. However, these truths do not imply that spiritual gifts cannot change over time. To the contrary, it could be argued that God is creative enough to bestow any gift to any person at any given time for any specific circumstance or purpose.²⁹ Wagner, however, would argue that spiritual gifts do not come and go but rather they remain consistent. Using Paul's illustration of each gift relating to a part of Christ's body, he argues that he never goes to bed worrying that his foot will one day be a kidney, and contends that the functionality of the body of Christ relies on that same type of consistency.³⁰ Even if the latter argument is true, there are still significant limitations with current assessments because they often lead the participant to identify a certain gift mix (typically their top three scores) and dismiss or ignore the rest of the gifts which could be potentially developed or imparted in them at any time.

²⁷ Page, 45.

²⁸ Kenneth Berding, "Gifts and Ministries in the Apostolic Fathers." *Westminster Theological Journal* 78, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 135

²⁹ Dominy, 68.

³⁰ Wagner, 1401.

BEYOND THE ASSESSMENT

Despite the noted limitations, the purpose of this project is not to dismiss the use of spiritual gift assessments but rather to help believers move beyond them into a place of true discovery and deployment of their spiritual gifts. For too many years, Christians men and women have relied on the results of a spiritual questionnaire to determine the role they are supposed to play in the body of Christ without discovering Scripture for themselves or every truly understanding why their gifts are so significant in the first place. This project is designed to help Christians better understand and clearly define what spiritual gifts are and to offer new approaches to discovering those gifts and how they are meant to work together. It is also designed to help church leaders place a greater emphasis on teaching their people about spiritual gifts and helping them find the best place to exercise those gifts in the context of the body.

When individual believers and church leaders are able to move beyond the assessment to a place of true discovery, development, and deployment of spiritual gifts, the body of Christ will come alive and function in the way God designed it to. When this happens, the church gets to serve as a facilitator, connecting gifted people to the needs of the world while individuals get to use their gifts to meet the needs around them.³¹ But moving beyond the assessment will require both the individual believer and church leader to experiment with new approaches to both gift discovery and gift use. It will require elements of self-discovery as well as discovery through a community of believers. And it will require stewardship of the gifts that the Spirit of God has given you. Are you ready? It is time to move beyond the assessment, so you can discover your purpose and unlock your gifts.

³¹ Brockway, 59.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

In order to truly understand spiritual gifts, it is imperative to provide a basic definition. The issue is that spiritual gifts have been defined many different ways by many different authors and scholars. As previously mentioned, Wagner defines a spiritual gift as “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the body of Christ, according to God’s grace, for use within the context of the body.”³² Others have defined spiritual gifts as divinely given capacities to perform functions for spiritual service³³ or simply as unique God-given abilities for service.³⁴ But any adequate definition must address the source, the nature and the purpose of the gifts.³⁵ This project defines spiritual gifts as *spiritual gifts of grace, given by the Holy Spirit to each believer in Christ to be used well to serve others*. An explanation of this definition can be provided by examining the key phrases that comprise it.

The starting place for any definition can be found in the root words used in the key New Testament passages about spiritual gifts. The Greek word *charisma* is the term most associated with gifts in the NT and literally refers to a divine gift of grace or favor which one receives without merit of his own.³⁶ This word is used exclusively in Paul’s writings with the exception of Peter’s use of the term in 1 Peter 4:10.³⁷ The Greek word used for spiritual in these texts is the word *pneumatika*, which literally refers to spiritual things and could refer to either spiritual

³² Wagner, Kindle Location 429.

³³ John F. Walvoord, “The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143, no. 570 (April 1986): 109.

³⁴ Malphurs, 44.

³⁵ Jan-Woo Lee, “A Biblical Basis of Spiritual Gift in Contemporary Church Growth.” *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 39, (May 2005): 245.

³⁶ New Testament Greek Lexicon – New American Standard. Biblestudytools.com. Available from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/charisma.html>.

³⁷ James F. Stitzinger, "Spiritual Gifts: Definitions and Kinds." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 14, no. 2 (September 2003): 150

people or spiritual gifts. The use of this word *pneumatika* in 1 Corinthians 14:1 is clearly designated to spiritual gifts, suggesting that the use of the word in chapter 12 refers to the same thing.³⁸ These original words provide a basic frame work to help work towards a more complete definition of these divinely given spiritual gifts of grace.

The next phrase in the definition reveals the source (or giver) of the gifts of grace, which 1 Corinthians 12 states is the Holy Spirit. Verses 4-6 explain that while there are many gifts, the same Spirit (and same Lord) is behind every gift and empowers them all. Verse 11 shows that all gifts are empowered by the same Spirit, who apportions them according to His will. Some scholars suggest a Trinitarian view of The Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus and God the Father as the source of these gifts, noting that the unity and diversity of the Trinity are reflected in the diversity of gifts given to believers in Christ.³⁹

Next, an adequate definition must consider who the recipients of these gifts of grace are. Scripture makes it clear that spiritual gifts are for all believers in Christ. It is evident that spiritual gifts are given to every believer by the use of the phrase *each* in many of the key texts written about the gifts.⁴⁰ Paul writes that *to each* (believer) is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1 Cor. 12:7) and that these gifts are apportioned by the Holy Spirit to *each* (believer) as he wills (1 Cor. 12:11). Peter also notes that *each* (believer) has received a gift to serve one another (1 Pt. 4:10).

This leads to one of the primary reasons for spiritual gifts, which is that they are to be used well to serve one another as good stewards of God's grace (1 Peter 4:10). Wagner's definition includes the phrase "for use within the context of the body" but clarifies that the gifts

³⁸ ESV Study Bible.

³⁹ ESV Study Bible.

⁴⁰ Malphurs, 44.

are not reserved for internal use within the church since many of the gifts, such as the gift of evangelism, are designed to benefit those who are not yet part of the body.⁴¹ Either way, it is clear that spiritual gifts are not given for the benefit of the individual but rather for the benefit of others and to build the Kingdom of God.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

The basic purpose of spiritual gifts based on the definition provided above is for them to be used well to serve others. It is clear that gifts are not given solely for the benefit of the believer, as they are intended to be used to serve others and build the church. However, their greater purpose goes beyond even that. Gifts give each part of the body a unique part to play and gifts reveal how much the church needs every part to in order to function properly. This project proposes a three-fold purpose for spiritual gifts: (1) Spiritual gifts exalt Jesus, (2) Spiritual gifts build the body, and (3) Spiritual gifts promote unity.

Spiritual Gifts Exalt Jesus

First, spiritual gifts are intended to exalt Jesus and point people to him. It is already clear from 1 Peter 4:10 that spiritual gifts are to be used to serve one another but verse 11 goes on to say that the reason is so that in everything God can be glorified through Christ Jesus. It could be said that spiritual gifts are expressions of God's grace that point to an even greater gift, the gift of life in Christ Jesus.⁴² It is evident that the gifts are given by the Holy Spirit and it is the Spirit that bears witness to Christ, suggesting that the gifts of the Spirit are intended to do the same.⁴³ It is important for Christians to remember that spiritual gifts are always intended to bring them

⁴¹ Wagner, Kindle Location 464.

⁴² Dominy, 68.

⁴³ Ibid, 67.

back to the Giver⁴⁴ and to exalt him. When a spiritual gift ceases to exalt Jesus, it ceases to be divinely inspired.⁴⁵

Spiritual Gifts Build the Body

Secondly, spiritual gifts are given to build up the body of Christ. One of the benefits is that they help each individual believer grow as they use their gifts do what the Spirit specifically designed them to do. But in addition to helping individuals develop, they also help their entire body of Christ grow and mature. The illustration of the body is used in all three major spiritual gift passages (Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 12:4-6 and Eph. 4:4-6), strongly suggesting that gifts are primarily meant for use within and for the body.⁴⁶ In 1 Cor. 12:7 Paul states that the gifts were given by the spirit for the *common* good, not to build up the individual but rather to build the community or body as a whole.⁴⁷ Whenever gifts are mentioned in Scripture, they are univocally used to reference the purpose of building up the entire body of Christ.⁴⁸ Therefore, gifts are never intended to be used selfishly for personal gain but rather selflessly for the benefit of others.⁴⁹

Spiritual Gifts Promote Unity

The third purpose of spiritual gifts is to promote unity within the body of Christ. One of the primary issues Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians is division within the church, including in the area of spiritual gifts with some church leaders attempting to elevate certain gifts over others. One of Paul's prayers for the church in Corinth is that there would be no division among them

⁴⁴ Steven G. Trefz, "Picturing Lay Ministry: Photovoice and Participatory Group Spiritual Gift Assessment." ProQuest LLC, 2013, 46.

⁴⁵ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*. (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2008): 72.

⁴⁶ Anthony D. Palma, "Spiritual Gifts – Basic Considerations." *Pneuma* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1979): 9.

⁴⁷ Siegfried S. Schatzmann, "Purpose and Function of Gifts in 1 Corinthians." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 45, no.1 (Fall 2002): 55.

⁴⁸ Trefz, 44.

⁴⁹ Warrington, 72.

but that they would be of the same mind and purpose (1:10). This theme of unity comes out in chapter 12 when he uses the illustration of the body as a metaphor of gifts working together to do their part. Like the human body, the church requires the coordinated effort of different parts to work together as one and the health of that body must always be protected.⁵⁰ This passage is centered on unity, sharing the same calling and being members of one another.⁵¹ Paul asserts that spiritual gifts should operate harmoniously in their diversity, resulting in unity and in mutually beneficial relationships with one another.⁵²

GOD’S VARIETY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

There is an ample amount of debate on what gifts are included in God’s variety of spiritual gifts. Paul informs us that there are not only a variety of gifts but also a variety of ways the Holy Spirit can empower people to use them (1 Cor 12:4-6). The word used in the original language to describe the “different” kinds of spiritual gifts is the Greek word *diarseis*, which can be translated as either distributions or differences. The term most likely carries a dual meaning with Paul signifying that there is distribution of a diversity of gifts.⁵³ Even though Paul does provide a variety of spiritual gifts in his writings, he provides only a small sample, not a definitive list. But despite the lack of a comprehensive list, it is essential to establish a basic catalog of gifts. This catalog can be determined by looking at the key New Testament Scriptures about spiritual gifts found in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4.

Paul identifies seven gifts of grace in Romans 12 including the gift of prophecy, the gift of service, the gift of teaching, the gift of exhortation, the gift of giving, the gift of leadership and

⁵⁰ Robert A. Bryant, “Romans 12:1-8.” *Interpretation* 58, no. 3 (July 2004): 289.

⁵¹ Berding, 135

⁵² Warrington, 71.

⁵³ Stitzinger, 154.

the gift of mercy. 1 Corinthians 12 repeats a few of those gifts but also adds the gift of wisdom, the gift of knowledge, the gift of faith, the gift of healing, the gift of performing miracles, the gift of discernment, the gift of speaking in tongues, the gift of interpreting tongues, the gift of apostleship, the gift of helps and the gift of administration. Many spiritual gifts assessments have added the gifts of evangelism and pastoring (or shepherding) based on Ephesians 4 but this text varies slightly from the other mentioned above as this text focuses on the *offices* given as gifts to the church.⁵⁴ Another common gift included in spiritual gift assessments is hospitality, which is not directly mentioned in any of Paul's lists, but is mentioned when Peter urges believers to be hospitable to others in 1 Peter 4:9 right before speaking about spiritual gifts in verse 10.⁵⁵

Most of the debate around which spiritual gifts should be included is based around the distinction between gifts of grace and natural talents or abilities that are used to build church today, such as music (worship leading) or craftsmanship. Wagner proposes what he calls an "open approach" to spiritual gifts, where he includes gifts such as intercession and worship leading on his list, not because of biblical references, but because of how integral they are in church life and ministry.⁵⁶ Other scholars would claim while talents and abilities can and should be consecrated to the Lord, there is and should be a clear distinction between spiritual gifts and natural talents.⁵⁷ It is natural to err on the side of only including spiritual gifts clearly mentioned in Scripture; however that is difficult to do when it has already been concluded that Scripture does not provide a comprehensive list.

It is also possible that different gifts are required for new and changing situations, and given God's creativity, a rigorous uniformity on what gifts are to be included is probably not

⁵⁴ Wagner, 697.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 848.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 917

⁵⁷ Stitzinger, 157.

necessary.⁵⁸ Not to mention, at some point a person's spiritual gifts are going to work together with their natural talents as they serve the body of Christ. Dr. Bill Bright suggests, "The difference between a spiritual gift and a natural ability is not important because spiritual gifts and natural abilities come from God. What matters is that you develop that gift or ability to its fullest potential through the control and empowering of the Holy Spirit and through much hard work, and that you use it according to God's will and for his glory."⁵⁹

Where the conversation can be even more confusing is contrasting spiritual gifts such as teaching or leadership with the general abilities of teaching or leadership, which can be possessed by non-Christians as well.⁶⁰ This is an important distinction that is too often overlooked by churches when teaching on the subject of gifts and should be something that is considered. Either way, church leaders should be committed to teaching their people that every gift and talent they have comes from the Lord and is given for a specific purpose and those gifts should be faithfully administered in their various forms to benefit the body of Christ and to point the world to him.⁶¹

CATEGORIES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

An additional area of consideration regarding spiritual gifts is the differing categories or groupings of gifts. This is not an essential theological dispute but is more of a theological preference. Just as the gifts mentioned in Scripture were not meant to be comprehensive, there is no clear evidence that they are meant to be divided into groupings. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the various types of gifts that could be grouped together. Some contend that Paul

⁵⁸ Dominy, 55.

⁵⁹ Bill Bright, *The Holy Spirit: The Key to Supernatural Living* (San Bernadino: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1980): 181.

⁶⁰ Stitzinger, 157.

⁶¹ Craig Groeschel, *Chazown: Discover and Pursue God's Purpose for Your Life*. (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2006): 55.

divides the gifts into three different categories of human nature: intellect (knowledge and wisdom), will (faith and healing) and emotions (speaking in tongues).⁶² Others have divided the gifts into the categories of speaking gifts and serving gifts.⁶³ This project proposes that gifts could be divided into four potential categories: (1) Equipping Gifts such teaching, pastoring or apostleship, (2) Informing Gifts such as knowledge, wisdom or discernment, (3) Uplifting Gifts such as exhortation, giving, mercy or service, or (4) Influencing Gifts such as leadership or administration. This breakdown is based on the interrelatedness of certain gifts, but it is important to acknowledge that any attempt to divide all of the gifts into separate categories like this is suggestive at best.⁶⁴ Despite the lack of definitive groupings, it is evident that there are different types of gifts and it is worth considering potential categories in which they could fall.

The research in this chapter is not intended to suggest a comprehensive theology of spiritual gifts but rather to inform you in such a way that you can begin to develop your own theology on the subject. Ultimately, each church and individual believer must decide on their own philosophy of spiritual gifts. There will always be debate over how many gifts should be included and on what gifts will be exercised in a local church context, but there should never be debate to the importance of Christ followers discovering and using their gifts for the glory of God. These *charismas* are gracious gifts from the Spirit of God that have a well-defined purpose and it is critical that all Christians are good stewards of these gifts regardless of philosophical differences.

⁶² Lee, 252.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Palma, 15.

CHAPTER 3

DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GPS

If you are attempting to arrive at a specific destination, then it is important to know what tools or methods are available to help you get there. People today are incredibly dependent on GPS systems to get to the places they desire to go. As you probably know, GPS stands for Global Positioning System and its purpose is to help people to know their precise location, and to provide directions to where they are going. Gone are the days of using printed maps or road atlases when traveling to a new place. Now, one can open up their favorite map application on their phone and Siri will guide them to the desired destination using GPS.

Just as a GPS system can guide a driver from where they are to where they want to be, a Spiritual GPS can help Christians identify where they are best equipped to do ministry and provide guidance as to where their impact for the Kingdom can be maximized through the work of the Holy Spirit. In this case, GPS stands for gifts, passions and sweet spot. When a believer, guided by the Holy Spirit, is able to identify their unique gift mix and connect it to a God-given passion they have the ability to find their sweet spot, or the place where they are able to be most effective in ministry.

Discovering your gifts, identifying your passions and pinpointing your sweet spot is vital to your health and growth as a believer. Paul himself warns that people should not be uninformed when it comes to their gifts (1 Cor. 12:1) and should understand how the Holy Spirit has empowered them. Wagner is convinced that the ignorance of spiritual gifts is a chief retardant of growth in the church today because it is preventing Christians from maximizing their effectiveness for God.⁶⁵ The same could also be said about the importance of connecting gift

⁶⁵ Wagner, 262

mixes to personal passions. Too many Christians settle for gift results without ever considering how they intersect with God-given passions or burdens. When people serve for long periods of time outside of their gifting or outside of their place of passion, that act of service can begin to feel like a duty and will begin to drain a them. But when you are able to find your sweet spot in ministry, you can begin to thrive in your gifts and serving suddenly becomes life giving, empowering and enjoyable.⁶⁶

FINDING YOUR GIFT MIX: HOW DO GIFTS WORK TOGETHER?

The starting place for discovering your Spiritual GPS is finding your unique gift mix. Most spiritual gift assessments typically help people identify their top three gifts but rarely consider how those gifts are intended work together. Every believer has at least one spiritual gift, but it is more than likely that each believer has multiple gifts. But how are those gifts intended to work together? How is a person supposed to know what part of the body they are? How do they know if they are a leg or a hand or a foot? Wagner suggests that the answer to these questions is found in a person's combination of gifts,⁶⁷ also known as a gift mix. A gift mix is a term used to describe all of a person's spiritual gifts,⁶⁸ which are meant to work together rather than work in isolation from each other. One of the greatest values of spiritual gifts is that they are not only unique, but they are also meant to be complementary of each other.⁶⁹

Suppose that a person has the spiritual gift mix of leadership, teaching and administration. While one of these gifts may be more dominant than the other two, all three gifts are intended to work together through the power of the Holy Spirit to enable the believer to be

⁶⁶ Darren Kizer, Christine Kreisher and Steph Whitacre. *The Volunteer Project: Stop Recruiting, Start Retaining*. (Atlanta, GA: 181 Publishing, 2017): 23.

⁶⁷ Wagner, 337

⁶⁸ Malphurs, 49.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 44.

most effective in his or her service. Someone with the spiritual gift of leadership naturally gravitates towards the point position and has the influence to get people to move towards a common goal or vision.⁷⁰ If that same person also has the gift of administration, they are able to manage the affairs of a church (or organization) and have the potential to be effective with plans, strategy, budget, etc.⁷¹ That same person also has the gift of teaching, which is the God-given ability to communicate biblical truth.⁷² Now consider how this gift mix could work together for effective spiritual service.

This person has the unique ability to develop strategies and plans (administration) while having the influence to be able to move people to action (leadership), as well as the capability to communicate biblical truths (teaching), which are ultimately what is driving the mission they are leading and advancing. The combination of their leadership and administrative gifts allow them to problem solve as challenges arise and the gift of teaching gives them the ability to communicate God's Word in a relevant way. This person can operate their unique gift mix through the power of the Holy Spirit to be more effective because they are aware of how their gifts work together. The better acquainted someone is with their menu of spiritual gifts, the more likely they are to connect those gifts to their unique calling.⁷³ In addition to identifying your gift mix, it is also important to be aware of gifts that you do not have. While most believers are multi-gifted, no believer has all of the gifts.⁷⁴ When people know their limitations, they are able to rely on the gift-mixes of other parts of the body who are created to function in ways that they

⁷⁰ Ibid, 51.

⁷¹ Ibid, 48.

⁷² Ibid, 52.

⁷³ Samuel D. Rima, *Leading From The Inside Out: The Art of Self-Leadership*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000): Kindle Location 926.

⁷⁴ Malphurs, 46.

are not. Just as an individual's gifts are intended to function together, the collective gifts of the body are intended to work together to help the body as a whole.

FINDING YOUR PERSONAL PASSION: WHAT FUELS YOU?

In addition to a believer discovering their spiritual gift mix, it is also essential to recognize the passions that live inside of them that will ultimately fuel how they use their gifts. Passion can be defined as “a God-given capacity to attach ourselves emotionally to something or someone (people, a cause, an idea, or an area of ministry) over an extended period of time to meet a need.”⁷⁵ While gifts reveal what ministry abilities a believer has been equipped with by the Spirit of God, it is a person's passions that focus and motivate those gifts. It is completely possible for gifts to be used in an area where passion is in lack, but that is not God's intention when it comes to spiritual gift distribution. It is critical for every follower of Jesus to search for the place where their gifts intersect with passions.

Passions attach the heart of people to specific age groups, people groups, causes, needs and injustices that will motivate them to determine the best ways to exercise their spiritual gifts. Passions have the ability to focus your gift mixes and provide direction as to where your gifts could be best used.⁷⁶ Ultimately passions are what drive people back to the same activities over and over again.⁷⁷ But just as it is possible to use spiritual gifts in an area where there is no passion, it is also possible to serve in an area of passion without giftedness. It is in the place where these two areas collide that a believer finds where they truly can be most effective for the Kingdom of God.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 52.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 54.

⁷⁷ Marcus Buckingham, *StandOut 2.0: Assess Your Strengths. Find Your Edge. Win at Work.* (Boston, MA: One Things Production Inc, 2015):

Paul serves as a biblical example of someone whose gifts were fueled by his passion. He clearly had a passion to preach the gospel (Acts 20:24) but he developed a specific burden for making sure the Gentiles knew that salvation was for them as much as it was for the Jews (Acts 26:17). It was Paul's passion to reach Gentiles with the gospel that fueled his gifts of apostleship and evangelism. It was his passion for the lost that compelled him to give his life to testifying to God's grace despite being shipwrecked, beaten, stoned and often going without sleep, food or water (2 Cor. 11:25-27). Paul was one of the greatest missionaries the world has ever seen and one of the reasons he was so effective is because he discovered where his God-given gifts intersected with his passions, leading him to a cause to which he would give his life.

So how do you discover your God-given passions? A great place to start this process is by asking yourself the right questions. Do you have any burning convictions inside of you? Are there any areas of ministry that you seem to care more deeply about than others? Are there specific areas of ministry that your unique gift mix suits you to make a difference in?⁷⁸ Answering these questions will allow potential passions to arise to the surface of your heart. And once you unlock your passions, they have the ability to serve as a constant source of energy as you use your gifts for the glory of God.⁷⁹

FINDING YOUR SWEET SPOT: WHERE GIFTS & PASSIONS INTERSECT

When spiritual giftedness intersects with a place of passion, it allows a person to find their sweet spot. In the sport of baseball, the sweet spot of a bat is critically important to the success of the batter. When a player hits the ball on the sweet spot of the bat, it can cause the ball to go further without the player having to swing any harder. To the contrary, when a player hits

⁷⁸ Malphurs, 78.

⁷⁹ Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead: 25 Principles for Leadership That Matters*. (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2012): 53

the ball off the end of the bat or makes contact closer to their hands, the ball will not travel as far no matter how hard they swing. The same thing is true when it comes to spiritual gifts. When a believer is operating in his or her gifts and using them in an area of passion, they will naturally be more effective. But when they begin operating outside of their giftedness and/or area of passion, they will not be as effective no matter how hard they work at it. When a person serves in their sweet spot, their effectiveness and their experience is much different than if they serve in any old spot.⁸⁰

Suppose there is a Christian with the spiritual gift of teaching. The Holy Spirit has equipped him or her to teach biblical truth in a powerful way. In addition to the gift of teaching, this particular believer has a passion for teenagers and teaching them God's word in a practical way because it was during their teenage years that they found life in Christ. But suppose that a church leader asks this person to use their gift to fill a need by teaching lessons to preschoolers every Sunday. While there is certainly the potential to be effective while exercising their gift of teaching, the lack of passion in this specific area will not drive them back each week with the same desire. This person will have to work harder to be effective because their ministry is not fueled by passion. This is not an excuse for someone to only be willing to serve in an area of passion, but it is a caution that attempting to use spiritual gifts in the wrong place for too long can and will lead to a lack of fulfillment and possible ineffectiveness. On the contrary, God-given spiritual gifts mixed with God-given passions can fuel a believer and give long-term direction to ministry efforts.⁸¹

Groeschel suggests that every person should answer the following questions to gain a clearer understanding of their gifts, passions and sweet spot: (1) What do you absolutely love to

⁸⁰ Kizer, 23.

⁸¹ Malphurs, 55.

do? (2) What do you do that has significant impact on others? (3) What do others tell you that you are good at? (4) What do you secretly believe you could do but have never tried?⁸² This project has already addressed the first three questions to a reasonable extent, but it is the fourth question that may be the most important. It is the question that is both the most dangerous and the one with the most potential to unlocking your divine design. Rima poses the same question in a different way when he inquires, “If there were no obstacles (money, geography, etc.), what kind of position or career would you create for yourself?”⁸³ But too many Christians settle for knowing their gifts and identifying their passions without stepping into what could be their sweet spot, because it lies beyond their comfort zone, bringing hesitation and fear. God has given each of you a vision along with the gifts and opportunities to make it happen, but it is up to you to identify them and to use them as the Spirit leads.⁸⁴

⁸² Craig Groeschel, *Chazown: Discover and Pursue God’s Purpose for Your Life*. (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2006): 56-57.

⁸³ Rima, 1059.

⁸⁴ Groeschel, 61.

CHAPTER 4

A NEW APPROACH

It is well accepted that spiritual gift assessments were created to be a helpful tool for believers to begin to discover their primary spiritual gifts; however it could be implied that the results of these assessments lack definitive accuracy. This project has already identified four key limitations to current assessments but there are additional difficulties with the construct of them that must also be addressed. One concern with the way gift assessments have been constructed involves the way that questionnaires are developed intuitively (at face value) while suggesting that they carry biblical authority. The difficulty is that they tend to lack adequate validity and reliability that other personality assessments have from well formulated research.⁸⁵ Another concern is that assessments tend to give the impression that gift results are definitive, despite the obvious possibility that a person can answer questions or rate statements based on desired results. Wagner actually advises those completing his questionnaire to not regard any gifts as final but rather to consider them as a starting point for prayer and experimentation.⁸⁶

An additional shortcoming is the found in the way spiritual gift assessments are often administered. Too often churches administer an assessment with the goal of helping people identify their gifts without moving them beyond the assessment to understand where and how they can use those gifts most effectively. Some local churches have even attempted to suggest specific ministry teams or assignments based on gift results. While these suggestions are made with good intentions, churches must be careful not to compartmentalize or classify specific gifts

⁸⁵ Ledbetter, 277.

⁸⁶ Wagner, 3225

with specific teams, thus limiting areas of opportunities for people. The reality is that there should be a place for every gift on every possible ministry team.

And while anyone could add to the growing list of limitations, the focus of this project is to move beyond the limitations of current assessments and the ways they are being administered. The concerns stated in this work merely serve as evidence that a new approach must be developed in order to become more effective. This project does not suggest that churches or believers no longer use spiritual gift assessments, but rather advises that it is time to develop additional strategies around such assessments so that the people of God can truly discover their gifts and thrive in them. The author proposes that a new approach to helping believers unlock their gifts could happen in three phases: discovery, development and deployment.

DISCOVERY

The first phase to unlocking spiritual gifts is the discovery phase. Wagner compares this phase to the idea of unwrapping Christmas gifts. He describes the feeling as that of a child's anticipation on Christmas morning: the tree is decorated, the presents are wrapped, and they are anxiously waiting to find out what is inside. He advocates that God has provided spiritual gifts for every single believer but that too few of them know what their gifts are, and it is time to unwrap them.⁸⁷ Too many followers of Jesus have no idea that God has gifted them or know how God has uniquely gifted them to advance His Kingdom. This lack of discovery is preventing believers all over the planet from stepping into their God-given potential and living the abundant life to which Jesus has called them. In an article written about the lack of awareness of their spiritual gifts among Christian people, George Barna envisions what could be.

Imagine what might happen if nearly half of all believers had a clear and firm conviction that God has given them supernatural ability to serve him in a specific manner. If more

⁸⁷ Ibid, 3156.

believers understood the nature and potential of that special empowerment, the global impact of the Christian body would be multiplied substantially. One of the functions of the local church is to help believers understand who they are in Christ, and how to live the Christian life more fully. Focusing on spiritual gifts – what they are, who has them, how to discover one’s giftedness, and how to use gifts most appropriately – could ignite a movement of service and influence unlike anything we have experienced in our lifetime.⁸⁸

But how can churches practically help their people in the discovery phase? What are the practical implications? As stated earlier in this project, the Bible does not specifically address how to discover gifts, but the lack of instructions should not be a deterrent from setting forth modern, practical approaches to helping discover those gifts using the Word of God.⁸⁹ This project offers four practical ways to discover spiritual gifts.

Step One: Study in Scripture

The starting place for discovery of spiritual gifts begins with the key passages that address the gifts, which are found in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. These texts have been well referenced throughout this project and serve as the best source for knowledge for what spiritual gifts are, what gifts are included and what their purpose is. Believers must commit to studying these Scriptures for themselves and pastors must commit to teaching their people on the subject. Different churches take different approaches to teaching on spiritual gifts from Scripture. Some pastors will teach on spiritual gifts a few times per year but two of the most common environments that gifts are taught on today is in membership classes or in volunteer orientations.⁹⁰ No matter the approach, churches and individuals must allow the Word of God to be their starting point for discovery and listen for the Holy Spirit to speak through Word.

⁸⁸ Barna Research. “Awareness of Spiritual Gifts is Changing.” Research Release: September 5, 2001. <https://www.barna.com/research/awareness-of-spiritual-gifts-is-changing/>

⁸⁹ Wagner, 1488.

⁹⁰ This information was collected in a survey from a variety of Senior Pastors and is available in Appendix D.

Step Two: Discover by Doing

One of the most effective ways to determine what gifts you have is by doing something. Groeschel suggests doing is believing and that if you are attracted to a particular ministry or feel like you can make a difference in an area, then maybe God is trying to tell you to do something.⁹¹ Stepping out and experimenting with gifts can be an effective way to discover what gifts you have as well as discovering what gifts you do not have because gifts can be evaluated through effectiveness. Spiritual gifts are meant to work and if God has given you a gift it is because He wants you to effectively build the body of Christ. At the end of the day, gifted people see results⁹² so one of the best ways of discovery is through experimentation and action.

Step Three: Confirm in Community

A third way to discover your unique spiritual gifts is to find confirmation of those gifts in the context of godly community. Too often spiritual gift assessments are completed in isolation, leaving people to explore results of their individual assessments by themselves. This project, along with others, proposes that the study of what Scripture says about gifts as well as gift assessment results are best studied and explored in community.⁹³ When spiritual gifts and assessment results are studied on their own they are limited to a singular point of view, but when they are explored in community within the body of Christ it creates the opportunity for believers to affirm gifts in each other.⁹⁴ If you are seeking confirmation for certain gifts, one of the best things you can do is to find other gifted people that you trust and ask them if they see evidence of those gifts inside of you. Sometimes, God will even use people in your life to call out gifts you never knew were inside of you in the first place!

⁹¹ Groeschel, 58.

⁹² Wagner, 1657.

⁹³ Brockway, 66.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

DEVELOPMENT

The second phase of unlocking spiritual gifts is the development stage. It is important right off the bat to keep in mind that the development of gifts is not the mastering of a skill set because the gifts function by the power of the Holy Spirit, not by human power.⁹⁵ Randy Clark suggests that the first step in developing your gift is to be filled with the Holy Spirit because your gifts are more than tools you pull out whenever you need them; they are gifts through which the Holy Spirit acts and works through you.⁹⁶ Development in this context is more about the development of the gifted people, not development of the gifts themselves. If pastors and church leaders are going to develop their people and unlock their gifts, then it will most likely require a new approach to ministry. Development requires a shift from professional pastors doing the works of ministry, which ultimately hampers the growth of the body, to a focus on preparing the body for the work of the ministry. It demands that pastors transfer from a place of performance to a place of preparing others.⁹⁷

All believers are called to be ministers and those who have been selected by God to be pastors are called to be equippers, inviting all of God's people to personally engage in ministry⁹⁸ by using their gifts. Paul urges that the primary role of pastors and teachers is to equip the saints for works of ministry (Eph. 4:12) so that the body may be built up. The original word used for equip, *katartismos*, notes an act of complete furnishing and derives from a verb that literally means to create, to restore and to repair⁹⁹ so that each saint may find his or her proper place and

⁹⁵ Randy Clark and Mary Healy. *The Spiritual Gifts Handbook: Using Your Gifts to Build the Kingdom*. (Bloomington, MN: Chosen Books, 2018): 198.

⁹⁶ Clark, 198.

⁹⁷ Eric Geiger and Kevn Peck. *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development*. (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016): 39.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ New Testament Greek Lexicon. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/katartismos.html>

function in the church.¹⁰⁰ This text suggests that the primary responsibility of a pastor is to equip God's people for works of ministry with the goal of building the body, achieving unity, and increasing in knowledge until they have reached maturity and fullness in Christ. In order to properly equip and develop people for works of ministry, people must know the gifts with which they have been equipped. Each member of the church is like an unopened present waiting to be unwrapped by providing opportunities for them to use their gifts in meaningful ways.¹⁰¹

What would happen if churches shifted from an emphasis on ministry programs to an emphasis on people development? What if the primary focus of the church was helping people discover and activate their unique, God-given gifts?¹⁰² This author suggests the people of God would begin to discover their purpose and thrive in their gifts, resulting in the church becoming healthier and stronger. As each part of the body works together and gets stronger, the body as a whole will grow and mature. If churches want to grow towards unity and maturity, as suggested in Ephesians 4, then their primary cause must be equipping and preparing their people for ministry.¹⁰³ If churches do not make the effort to develop and equip their people for ministry then the opposite will be true. The reality is that churches don't become unhealthy or ineffective because they lack gifts but rather because their people are not using their gifts as they should.¹⁰⁴ For the body to grow as it is intended to, the local church must commit to equipping and enabling its members to both discover and deploy their gifts for ministry under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Markus Barth. *The Anchor Bible: Ephesians 4-6*. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1974): 439.

¹⁰¹ Darren Kizer, Christine Kreisher and Steph Whitacre. *The Volunteer Project: Stop Recruiting, Start Retaining*. Atlanta, GA: 181 Publishing, 2017.

¹⁰² Ferguson, 141.

¹⁰³ Geiger, 52.

¹⁰⁴ Lee, 253.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

DEPLOYMENT

The third phase of unlocking spiritual gifts is deployment, a phase where churches often get stuck. Even in churches where there is place for discovery and an emphasis on development, deployment is often limited to certain opportunities. One obstacle to the deployment phase is that churches face pressure to fill volunteer roster spots each week causing churches to place members in position based on availability rather than giftedness. This needs to change.¹⁰⁶ One way to move beyond this limitation is for churches to place a greater emphasis on helping people discover and activate their gifts in a ministry they are passionate about than they do on filling empty roster spots or needs within the church.¹⁰⁷ Gift activation is not about filling roster spots, but it is about developing people's gifts and commissioning them to be sent out in ministry.¹⁰⁸

When volunteer spots are filled based on needs rather than gift or passions, then volunteers serve out of obligation rather than meaning.¹⁰⁹ This often happens because churches are full of faithful men and women of God who have a willingness to serve wherever is needed. But it is the responsibility of pastors and churches to not take advantage of the willingness of an individual who is committed to the cause or mission of the church.¹¹⁰ When pastors and church leader fall into this trap of placing volunteers by needs rather than by gifts, it shifts the focus from equipping and deploying people for their works of ministry to finding people that can execute the church's ministry. However, the list of spiritual gifts Paul mentions in Scripture are not meant to monopolize the Church's ministry but rather to equip and empower the people of the church for the betterment of the whole.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Malphurs 727.

¹⁰⁷ Ferguson, 141.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 137.

¹⁰⁹ Kizer, 25.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Trefz, 42.

Another area where deployment can stall is when churches limit the placement of a person to ministry roles within the church walls. Deployment should always include the sending out of people, especially when certain gift mixes actually equip believers to be most effective outside of the church. Jesus himself sent out the disciples to carry on his ministry and churches must be willing to send people out to fulfill the purpose God has for their lives. One practical way to send people out is through commissioning. Commissioning is the simple process of blessing a person and affirming the use of the gifts God has given them that includes the laying on of hands as a sign of affirmation as well as prayer for God to bless people as they are sent out.¹¹²

If you are a church leader, then you should desire to help activate the gifts and callings that God has imparted in his people through the laying on of hands and prayers of blessing.¹¹³ One expression of this could be through hosting an annual commissioning service where you can lay hands on your people and ask the following question: Where and to whom are we commissioning you to go and bless the world?¹¹⁴ This commissioning service could include prayer for anything: from little league coaches who want to have a lasting impact on kids they coach to prayer for families who will be adopting children to prayer for people going out on international missions trips that year. The big idea is that the church needs to be willing to commission and deploy the people of God to use their gifts in the community and in the world as much as they do to deploy people to serve in various ministries of the church. As churches send their people out, their ministry and influence is exponentially expanded because ministry is best multiplied when leaders are developed and deployed.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ferguson, 147.

¹¹³ Ibid, 148.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Geiger, 188.

CHAPTER 5

CONTEXTUAL APPLICATION

While researching the history of gift assessments and studying key Scripture passages on spiritual gifts is beneficial, it is the releasing of gifts for effective operation within local body that ultimately matters most.¹¹⁶ The purpose of this final chapter is to move towards a contextual application within the local church setting that activates the gifts of the God's people. There are too many Christians not exercising their gifts because they either do not know what they are, or they don't know how to use them and that is a great loss to the body of Christ.¹¹⁷ And of those who are active in ministry, too many are placed in areas outside of their design. The time is now for church leaders to move from a place of performing works of ministry to a place of preparing their people for works of ministry as they are intended to do. A critical step in moving to the application phase is developing a philosophy of ministry that will ultimately determine how gifts are discovered, developed and deployed within a local church context.

DEVELOPING A MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Local churches must develop and agree upon their philosophy of ministry concerning spiritual gifts. This philosophy would include determining when and how they will teach their people about spiritual gifts as well as deciding what specific gifts will be exercised in their local body. It has already been established that Scripture does not provide a comprehensive list of spiritual gifts so local church leadership must decide on what *charismas* they will activate in their congregation. What spiritual gifts does your church expect God to give your people? How many gifts does your church identify in Scripture? Is your church open to the more miraculous

¹¹⁶ Wagner, 3047.

¹¹⁷ Clark, 26.

gifts of tongues, miracles and healing?¹¹⁸ Church leaders must consider the answers to these questions as they develop their philosophy of ministry. But that ministry philosophy must move beyond a theology of gifts to a strategy of how the church will help their people discover, develop and deploy their gifts.

This strategy should begin with considering the primary method by which churches will teach their people about spiritual gifts. Will they dedicate a message series every year to preaching on spiritual gifts or serving? Will this content be primarily taught as a part of a membership class? Will it be included as part of the scope and sequence of small group curriculum? Will it be taught as part of volunteer orientation or training? There is not a singular delivery system when it comes to helping people discover their gifts, but churches must decide on their most effective delivery system to do so.

Lastly, churches must decide how gifts and people will be deployed for works of ministry. This not only includes defining all potential ministry roles in the church but also doing the hard work to determine how each spiritual gift can fit on each ministry team. Effective churches develop a consistent strategy for how volunteers will be onboarded and placed onto ministry teams. This strategy must include how church leaders will care for and develop ministry leaders once they begin serving on the team. This project suggests that the best way to recruit, retain and release volunteers in your church is to S.E.R.V.E them.¹¹⁹

Select: Identifying potential volunteers and inviting them to step into ministry.

Equip: Helping volunteers start strong through training, orientation and resourcing.

Relate: Establishing a healthy relational connection with volunteers.

Validate: Showing value to volunteers through evaluation and appreciation.

Empower: Transferring responsibility and authority to release volunteers for ministry.

¹¹⁸ Wagner, 3087.

¹¹⁹ The S.E.R.V.E model is the volunteer development strategy at Christ Fellowship Church, where the author of this project currently serves as the Director of Dream Team and Connections.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE GIFT DEPLOYMENT

One of the goals of this project is to help people find their place in the body of Christ where they can thrive in their gifts in way that intersects with areas of passion. This requires church leaders to place people in roles based more on gift mix and passions rather than by needs or empty roster spots. While this is the heart of the majority of church leaders, there are several barriers and competing factors that can prevent them from deploying their people in this way.¹²⁰ Some of these barriers have been loosely addressed at various points in this project but will be included here for the sake of clarity and potential action steps to overcome them.

Barrier #1: The Barrier of Time. The reality is that it takes a great amount of work and a great amount of time to shepherd a person and guide them to a place of gift discovery and activation. Even though Ephesians 4 shows us that the number one item on a pastor's job description is to equip their people for works of ministry, the reality is that there are other responsibilities that demand their time as well. There will always be messages to write, events to plan and needs to care for. But when you are willing to work hard to overcome the barrier of time and create systems that develop and deploy the gifted people in your church, it actually releases people to do the works of ministry, ultimately creating more margin for you to invest in more gifted people.

Barrier #2: The Barrier of The Empty Roster Spots. The second reality is that Sunday is always coming and there will always be roster spots to fill. Every door needs greeters, every kids' room needs workers and every ministry has openings. But could it be that what is ultimately leading to empty roster spots and volunteer turnover is that church leaders have placed

¹²⁰ The barriers identified in this section were partially developed from the collective responses of a variety of Senior Pastors in a survey, which is available in Appendix D.

people in roles for which they were never designed for or gifted? If filling roster spots became secondary to helping people discover and activate their gifts,¹²¹ could it ultimately result in roster spots being filled more effectively, thus ultimately minimizing this potential barrier? Even if this barrier remains, the primary role of a minister is still to equip the people for the works of ministry God has prepared for them, not to use the people to fill spots in order to accomplish their own works of ministry.

Barrier #3: The Barrier of Disruption. This final barrier comes as a result of churches helping people discover their gifts only to realize they are currently serving in an area outside of their gift mix or place of passion. When this happens, it can be overwhelming to figure out how to develop a strategy of how to re-position people into the right roles and overcome the disruptions that follow in their current areas of ministry. In moments like this it is so easy to trade what you ultimately know and believe about equipping volunteers for a quick solution or easy fix, but you must fight to overcome this barrier. A brief disruption to current ministry initiatives that ultimately leads to healthier volunteers thriving in their gifts in the long run is actually no disruption at all.

If church leaders are going to be committed to helping people discover their gifts and committed to deploying them according to how God has designed them then they must find ways to overcome the barriers of time, empty roster spots and disruptions. The short-term pain is *always* worth it for the long-term benefit that come when you equip and release healthy ministers to operate in their gifts in order to build the body of Christ. When your people are dialed into their sweet spot and serving from a place of fulfillment, they help create a great culture and invite others to join them on the mission.¹²²

¹²¹ Ferguson, 141.

¹²² Kizer, 24.

BUILDING THE PROPER FRAMEWORK

This project has repeatedly suggested that churches must consider new approaches to spiritual gifts when it comes to discovery, development and deployment. One approach to consider is the *Discover Your Purpose Experience* being developed at DYP Church.¹²³ The main idea behind the DYP Experience is to help people discover their gift mix, identify where those gifts intersect with areas of passion, and connect them to the ministry that most closely aligns with those gifts and passions. Prior to launching this experience, DYP primarily taught on spiritual gifts as part of a brief segment in their membership class and offered a spiritual gifts assessment that helped people identify their top three gifts. This assessment recommended ministry teams based on gift results, but communicating these suggested teams tended to seem like an assignment rather than a suggestion because it was not consistently matched with conversation about all teams that were available.

Like many churches, DYP Church places a heavy emphasis on volunteerism and equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry but has a strong desire to move to a new level of effectiveness when it comes to the idea of helping people discover their purpose. The concept of serving and servanthood is engrained the DNA of this church and they believe that if Jesus came to serve and give (Mark 10:45) that those two words should mark the lives of his followers as well. But there is also a strong desire to help people understand that discovering your purpose is about more than serving on a ministry team every weekend. It must move people to a place where they are on mission every day of the week as they go to work, attend school and live their everyday lives. When someone truly discovers their purpose, it should affect every sphere of

¹²³ This is a narrative from a fictitious church, however the author intends to implement this strategy in the context of his local church and will track progress for the future development of this project.

their life because they realize the Jesus has called and equipped them to impact their world in a unique way. Even though many people at DYP Church live their life on mission, they acknowledge that there are far too many people on the sidelines that don't know their gifts and have never understood that God wants them to contribute to the work of building his Kingdom.

Before launching the *Discover Your Purpose Experience*, the church leaders at DYP had to do some ground work to do in order to build a healthy foundation for this experience. The church already had clearly defined volunteer roles but needed to move to a place of identifying key attributes of an effective team member that would step into that role. They also created one sentence role descriptions for every volunteer role that provided clarity of what was to be expected in that area of ministry. This church grasped the concept that when you understand what types of personalities and gift mixes best fill a unique volunteer role and you are able to communicate those roles with a clear and understandable job description, then volunteers are more likely to find the right team and thrive in their roles.¹²⁴

Secondly, they identified and created clear on-ramps for people to jump onto ministry teams. DYP revamped their website to help people navigate through ministry opportunities more efficiently and developed a new on-boarding workflow that made applying for and connecting to a ministry team more user friendly. If anyone wants to serve in any area of ministry at DYP Church, their first step is always the same. There is one clear on-ramp that teams are equipped with that helps people discover the best lane in which to serve. Once a potential volunteer at DYP fills out the serving interest form they are connected to the appropriate ministry leader who is able to clearly communicate expectations and next steps. Ministry leaders clearly articulate that anyone who serves at DYP Church will fill out an application, which includes a background

¹²⁴ Kizer, 19.

check, and are asked to participate in their membership class while being on-boarded so that they understand the heart, vision and values of the church as they jump into serving. When someone serves at DYP Church they should have clear understanding of the role they are pursuing and as well as the church's expectations that they complete a ministry application, a background check and the four-week membership experience.

Thirdly, DYP worked with key ministry leaders to ensure that each specific ministry area had a rhythmic and effective volunteer orientation process in place to help volunteers start strong through initial ministry training, resourcing and a process for shadowing existing volunteers. This process was refined not only to make the on-boarding process more effective but to ensure that ministry teams had rhythmic experiences in place in order to deploy the high number of new people who were about to discover their gifts. By identifying clear roles, creating clear on-ramps and setting clear expectations, DYP built the proper framework to begin implementing the *Discover Your Purpose Experience*.

DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE EXPERIENCE

The *Discover Your Purpose Experience*¹²⁵ is the primary environment in which DYP Church teaches extensively on the subject of spiritual gifts. This experience serves as the keynote event of the church's "discovery" phase and is designed to help participants work towards identifying their Spiritual GPS. It begins by introducing the three key passages of Scripture that reference spiritual gifts (Romans 12:1-4, 1 Corinthians 12:1-12 and 1 Peter 4:10) and defining spiritual gifts using the definition provided in chapter two of this project. This initial content introduces the topic of spiritual gifts to participants and teaches key points such as every Christ follower has at least one spiritual gift, the Holy Spirit is the giver of these gifts and that spiritual

¹²⁵ An outline of the *Discover Your Purpose Experience* is available as a resource in Appendix C.

gifts are to be used to serve others and build the church. This content will also include the already defined three-fold purpose of the gifts, helping participants understand that spiritual gifts are meant to exalt Jesus, build the body and promote unity.

After the introductory teaching section, participants will complete a Discover Assessment¹²⁶ that helps identify their potential spiritual gifts based on their responses to statements in the assessment. Participants will then engage in conversation around their tables where they are able to review their results, read and discuss the descriptions of different spiritual gifts¹²⁷ and begin to identify their potential gift mix, not in isolation, but rather in community. Often times people are surprised by the results of assessments like this because they had assumptions about what the outcomes would be or believed that certain gifts would actually score higher or lower than they did. When churches can create healthy dialogue in this area, it helps participants identify potential gifts and share how they can see themselves using those gifts to serve other people.

Section two of the experience is designed to help participants unlock their passions. Participants will select areas of passion from a checklist to identify areas of ministry that resonate with their heart. This list includes but is not limited to areas of passion such as kids, students, special needs, small groups, marriage, local outreach, international missions, event planning, hospitality, foster parenting, generosity, at risk children as well as various social issues such as hunger, homelessness or human trafficking. Participants will also be able to discuss the four questions Groeschel asks in his book *Chazown*: (1) What do you absolutely love to do? (2)

¹²⁶ The complete Discover Assessment is available in Appendix A.

¹²⁷ A complete list of spiritual gifts, descriptions and scripture references is available in Appendix B. Many other spiritual gifts lists include additional gifts, such as speaking in tongues and interpreting tongues, which are not included due to the practical application of this project. The author views these as valid spiritual gifts, however did not include them in this project due to practical application of this assessment being used at his current local church.

What do you do that has significant impact on others? (3) What do others tell you that you are good at? (4) What do you secretly believe you could do but have never tried?¹²⁸ This once again allows participants to have conversation in community under the guidance of a ministry leader who is able to help them begin to see where their gifts and passions could collide. DYP facilitators are then able to walk participants through the defined ministry roles and descriptions in order to help them find the place there they may fit best based on gift mix and passions.

The third section of this experience moves to a general ministry orientation that walks participants through what it means to serve and be part of the ministry team at DYP Church. This is where church leaders can teach on core values and leadership values that are essential for people to know as they serve and lead. This is an opportunity to connect people to the mission of the church and to help them understand that what they called to be a part of is bigger than the part that they play. While spiritual gifts can reveal *what* each believer is uniquely gifted to do in ministry, this section instructs on *how* those gifts can be exercised within the context of this local church. This is an essential element in DYP Church because church leaders here believe that how people do what they do is just as important as what they do.

While the *Discover Your Purpose Experience* is the central element of the discovery phase at DYP Church, it not intended to be a comprehensive solution to the needs and limitations identified in this project. The intent of this kickoff experience is to introduce spiritual gifts and to begin the discovery process for people trying to find their place in ministry. But by the end of this experience, churches should be able to place participants in a ministry role that seems to align with their divine design. As noted earlier, part of discovery happens through doing and

¹²⁸ Groeschel, 56-57.

through experience, so checkpoints should be put into place a few weeks into serving to see if people are connecting and feeling useful in their new ministry area.

CONCLUSION

This central focus of this project has been to help Christ followers move beyond the assessment to a place where they can truly discover their purpose and thrive in their gifts. It has also intended to challenge church leaders to more effectively help their people discover, develop and deploy their gifts. The Holy Spirit has gifted all believers with at least one spiritual gift and called them to be part of a community of believers known as the body of Christ. Christ has also provided the church with gifted leaders (pastors, evangelists, teachers) to prepare his people for works of service so that the entire body may be built up.¹²⁹ When each part of the body functions as God intended, the body will grow and mature. In order for each part to properly function, each part must know how God has uniquely gifted and designed them. This project has suggested throughout that spiritual gifts are best discovered in community, best developed by under the leadership of equipping pastors and teachers, and best deployed in areas of passion.

While there are several noted limitations to current gift assessments and there will certainly be limitations to proposed new approaches, those limitations should never hinder the people of God from finding new ways to discover how God has uniquely designed and gifted them. These limitations and barriers should also not prevent church leaders from implementing new strategies to better educate and equip their people in the area of spiritual gifts. The people of God must be committed to discovering their purpose and churches must be committed to equipping God's people to fulfill that purpose. Equipping churches are usually able to effectively move people from consumption to contributing. The longer people are active in a church that

¹²⁹ Malphurs 102-103.

values equipping and releasing, the more they will grow uncomfortable with simply attending because they will see that the church expects them to grow and contribute.¹³⁰

The primary motivation for the development this project is the fact that spiritual gifts are often overlooked or misunderstood and there are too many Christians that either don't know their unique gift mix or they are not operating within the strength of that gift mix. Far too many Christ followers are not involved in ministry while many others are not properly involved because they are placed in ministry roles outside of their divine design.¹³¹ While it is clear that followers of Jesus are called to serve and give their life just as He did, it is also clear that each part of the body is designed to function in a specific way. Paul exhorts that if you are gifted in the Spirit then you should use the gifts you have as effectively as you can. He states, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, then in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, in zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:6).¹³²

It is time for the church and the people of God to rediscover the power and importance of spiritual gifts. The recent picture of spiritual gifts in the church has been ambiguous at best and the subject has recently been bordering on irrelevancy. But these gifts were given so that each part of the Body of Christ can function as it was designed to and contribute the body as a whole. Spiritual gifts are given to empower believers to be instruments of God's love to others. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, these gifts of grace enable what is humanly impossible (prophecy, healings, miracles) and elevate natural gifts (such as teaching or administration) to a supernatural

¹³⁰ Geiger, 51.

¹³¹ Malphurs 103.

¹³² ESV Study Bible. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.

level.¹³³ But these gifts will never be fully activated until Christians commit to the process of discovering, developing and deploying.

This project began with a series of reflective questions: Do you know who you are? Do you know how God has designed you? Do you know why you are here and what God wants to accomplish with your life? Have you realized your full potential for the kingdom of God?¹³⁴ It is the prayer of the author that you have moved a few steps closer to answering these questions as a result of searching for your divine design. Discovering your spiritual gifts could be likened to receiving your spiritual job description. They reveal not only what you are equipped to do but can also help direct you to the right ministry assignments and help you discover your purpose.

Now imagine how effective churches could be when they are full of people who are discovering their spiritual job description under the direction of pastors and leaders who are releasing and empowering the saints for the works of ministry God created them to step into. Imagine what the Lord could do with a church full of people committed to discovering their purpose. When you know who you are in Christ, when you understand how the Spirit of God has uniquely gifted you to serve others, and when you intersect those gifts with an area of passion, you can begin to realize your full potential for the Kingdom of God. And when you begin to thrive in your gifts through the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, you can become more spiritually alive than you ever have before.

¹³³ Clark, 24.

¹³⁴ Malphurs, 29

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APPENDIX A

DISCOVER ASSESSMENT

God has designed you in unique and special way. Upon your decision to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit equipped you with special abilities known as spiritual gifts. 1 Peter 4:10 says that the purpose of these gifts is to “use them well to serve one another.” By completing this assessment, you will have a better understanding how God has wired you and gifted you to serve the body of Christ. Please circle the number that best describes your response to each statement. This assessment is available online at www.cfspiritualgifts.com.

	Never		Sometimes		Always
1. I like organizing events and activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I enjoy working with my hands.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can tell when someone is not being truthful.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I frequently pray for people who don't know Jesus.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Encouraging others is a high priority in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I trust that God will supply my daily needs.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I use my finances to further God's purposes.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I look for opportunities to pray for the sick.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Having people over to my house is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Spending extended time in prayer is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I enjoy learning new things.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am able to motivate others.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am deeply distressed when I see others hurting.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I believe God wants to use me to perform miracles.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I've devoted considerable time to learning music.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Helping people grow closer to Jesus fulfills me.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am compelled to speak truth in a loving way.	1	2	3	4	5

18. I enjoy doing the little things that others do not.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I can explain Scripture in a way that others understand.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I enjoy sharing the gospel to other cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I use God's Word as my basis for making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I am passionate about managing details.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I consider myself a craftsman or craftswoman.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I sense when situations are spiritually unhealthy.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I am greatly concerned about people knowing Jesus.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Others would describe me as loving and caring.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Praying bold prayers is exciting to me.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I regularly give offerings above my tithe.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I believe miraculous healing is relevant today.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Creating welcoming environments is important.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I am burdened to pray for situations around the world.	1	2	3	4	5
32. People seek me out to learn more about God.	1	2	3	4	5
33. In groups, people tend to follow my lead.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I am very sensitive to sad stories.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Miracles tend to happen when I pray for them.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I desire to use my musical abilities for the church.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I enjoy connecting, caring for, and coaching others.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I enjoy helping people discern God's will.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I enjoy serving behind the scenes.	1	2	3	4	5
40. I enjoy sharing biblical truths with others.	1	2	3	4	5

41. Sharing Jesus in other countries excites me.	1	2	3	4	5
42. When I study the Bible God, gives me unique insights.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Creating a task list in enjoyable to me.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Building something with my hands is fulfilling.	1	2	3	4	5
45. I typically identify problems before others do.	1	2	3	4	5
46. I enjoy sharing the gospel with people.	1	2	3	4	5
47. I look for ways to encourage others.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I trust that God has my back in every situation.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Making more money means I can give more.	1	2	3	4	5
50. God has used me to bring healing to the sick.	1	2	3	4	5
51. It is important to me that guest feel like family.	1	2	3	4	5
52. People would describe me as a prayerful person.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I enjoy helping people understand the Bible.	1	2	3	4	5
54. I delegate responsibilities to accomplish a task.	1	2	3	4	5
55. I am motivated to help others who are less fortunate.	1	2	3	4	5
56. I desire to see God's miraculous power.	1	2	3	4	5
57. I enjoy leading others in worship musically.	1	2	3	4	5
58. I enjoy walking with people through difficult times.	1	2	3	4	5
59. I enjoy passionate and clear teaching from the Bible.	1	2	3	4	5
60. I enjoy being part of making things happen.	1	2	3	4	5
61. I enjoy teaching the Bible to others.	1	2	3	4	5
62. Being on a team that serves others excites me.	1	2	3	4	5
63. I make wise decisions during difficult situations.	1	2	3	4	5

$1 \underline{\quad} + 22 \underline{\quad} + 43 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

$2 \underline{\quad} + 23 \underline{\quad} + 44 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

$3 \underline{\quad} + 24 \underline{\quad} + 45 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

$4 \underline{\quad} + 25 \underline{\quad} + 46 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

$5 \underline{\quad} + 26 \underline{\quad} + 47 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

$6 \underline{\quad} + 27 \underline{\quad} + 48 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

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$19 \underline{\quad} + 40 \underline{\quad} + 61 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

$20 \underline{\quad} + 41 \underline{\quad} + 62 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

$21 \underline{\quad} + 42 \underline{\quad} + 63 \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

Administration

Craftsmanship

Discernment

Evangelism

Encouragement

Faith

Generosity (Giving)

Healing

Hospitality

Prayer

Knowledge

Leadership

Compassion

Miracles

Worship (Music)

Pastoring

Proclaiming Truth

Serving

Teaching

Missions

Wisdom

APPENDIX B

SPIRITUAL GIFT LIST & DESCRIPTIONS

This list of spiritual gifts and descriptions below are used as to describe the gifts included in the Discover Assessment provided in Appendix A. As mentioned in this project, there are additional gifts such as the gift of tongues and the gift of interpreting tongues that are often included in other gift assessments. These are both valid gifts that are clearly mentioned in Scripture. The gifts included in this appendix are a replication of the gifts included in the Discover Assessment, which is currently used in the author's local church.

Administration

The gift of administration is the divine strength or ability to organize multiple tasks and groups of people to accomplish projects. Luke 14:28-30; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians 12:28.

Craftsmanship

The gift of craftsmanship is the divine strength or ability to plan, build, and work with your hands in construction environments. Exodus 30:22, 31:3-11; 2 Chronicles 34:9-13; Acts 18:2-3.

Discernment

The gift of discernment is the divine strength or ability to distinguish between right and wrong motives and situations. Matthew 16:21-23; Acts 5:1-11, 16:16-18; 1 Corinthians 12:10; 1 John 4:1-6.

Evangelism

The gift of evangelism is the divine strength or ability to effectively share the good news of Jesus Christ with non-believers. Acts 8:5-6, 8:26-40, 14:21, 21:8; Ephesians 4:11-14.

Encouragement

The gift of encouragement (exhortation) is the divine strength or ability to encourage others through the written or spoken word empowered by Biblical truth. Acts 14:22; Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews 10:24-25.

Faith

The gift of great faith is the divine strength or ability to believe God for unseen supernatural results in every area of life. Acts 11:22-24; Romans 4:18-21; 1 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 11.

Generosity (Giving)

The gift of generous giving is the divine strength or ability to invest generously by returning the tithes and giving offerings for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. Mark 12:41-44; Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9:2-7.

Healing

The gift of healing is the divine strength or ability to act as an intermediary in faith, prayer, and by the laying-on of hands for the healing of physical and mental illnesses. Acts 3:1-10, 9:32-35, 28:7-10; 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28.

Hospitality

The gift of hospitality is the divine strength or ability to create warm, welcoming environments for others in places such as your home, office, or church. Acts 16:14-15; Romans 12:13, 16:23; Hebrews 13:1-2; 1 Peter 4:9.

Praying for Others

The gift of praying for others (intercession) is the divine strength or ability to pray for someone, something, or someplace, believing for profound results. Hebrews 7:25; Colossians 1:9-12, 4:12-13; James 5:14-16.

Knowledge

The gift of knowledge is the divine strength or ability to understand and to bring clarity to situations and circumstances often accompanied by a word from God. Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:8; Colossians 2:2-3.

Leadership

The gift of leadership is the divine strength or ability to influence people effectively while directing and focusing them on a shared mission. Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 5:17; Hebrews 13:17.

Compassion

The gift of compassion (mercy) is the divine strength or ability to feel empathy and to care for those who are hurting in any way. Matthew 9:35-36; Mark 9:41; Romans 12:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

Miracles

The gift of miracles is the divine strength or ability to alter the natural outcomes of life in a supernatural way through prayer, faith, and divine direction. Acts 9:36-42, 19:11-12, 20:7-12; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28.

Missions

The gift of missions is the divine strength or ability to reach others in your region or outside of your culture. Acts 8:4, 13:2-3, 22:21; Romans 10:15.

Worship (Music)

The gift of music/worship is the divine strength or ability to sing, dance, or play an instrument primarily for the purpose of helping others worship God. Deuteronomy 31:22; 1 Samuel 16:16; 1 Chronicles 16:41-42; 2 Chronicles 5:12-13, 34:12; Psalm 150.

Pastoring

The gift of pastoring (shepherding) is the divine strength or ability to lead people and care for their personal and spiritual needs. John 10:1-18; Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3.

Proclaiming Truth

The gift of proclaiming truth (prophecy) is the divine strength or ability to strengthen others by speaking boldly and bring clarity to scriptural truth. Acts 2:37-40, 7:51-53, 26:24-29; 1 Corinthians 14:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

Serving

The gift of serving is the divine strength or ability to do small or great tasks with with humility in working for the overall good of the body of Christ. Acts 6:1-7; Romans 12:7; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 1:16-18; Titus 3:14.

Teaching

The gift of teaching is the divine strength or ability to study and learn from the Scriptures primarily to bring understanding and clarity to others. Acts 18:24-28, 20:20-21; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-14.

Wisdom

The gift of wisdom is the divine strength or ability to apply the truths of Scripture in a practical way. Acts 6:3,10; 1 Corinthians 2:6-13, 12:8.

APPENDIX C

DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE EXPERIENCE OUTLINE

The *Discover Your Purpose Experience* is a round table event where church leaders can help their people begin to discover their gifts, unlock their passions and find their sweet spot in ministry. This is intended to be the central experience of the discovery phase and help place people into ministry roles according to gifts and passions.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

What are Spiritual Gifts?

Spiritual gifts are gifts of grace, given by the Holy Spirit to each believer in Christ to be used well to serve others.

What does Scripture say about Spiritual Gifts?

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. – 1 Corinthians 12:4-12

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.- Romans 12:4-8

What do I need to know about Spiritual Gifts?

- 1) Every Christ follower has at least one spiritual gift.
- 2) The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts and decides which gifts to give.
- 3) Spiritual gifts are different than natural talents or abilities.
- 4) No gifts are more important than other gifts. They are meant to work together.
- 5) Spiritual gifts are to be used to serve others.

What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.
– 1 Peter 4:10*

- 1) Spiritual gifts exalt Jesus.
- 2) Spiritual gifts build the body.
- 3) Spiritual gifts promote unity.

Discover Assessment and Table Discussion: Instruct participants to complete the Discover Assessment and then engage in table discussion using the following questions.

- 1) What were your top three spiritual gifts?
- 2) Were there any surprises about your results?
- 3) How can you see yourself using your gifts to serve others and build church?

Unlock Your Passion: Instruct participants to check the top 3-4 areas of passion that resonates with their heart and then engage in table discussion using the following questions.

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kids | <input type="checkbox"/> Students | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Parenting | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Parents | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Int. Missions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry | <input type="checkbox"/> Art / Painting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness / Nutrition | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Finances | <input type="checkbox"/> Generosity | <input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunger | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty | <input type="checkbox"/> Recovery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sanctity of Life | <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Trafficking Awareness | |

- 1) What do you absolutely love to do?
- 2) What do you do that has significant impact on others?
- 3) What do others tell you that you are good at?
- 4) What do you secretly believe you could do but have never tried?

APPENDIX D

SPIRITUAL GIFTS SURVEY TO PASTORS AND MINISTRY PRACTICIONERS

This survey was sent out to a variety of Senior Pastors who serve different denominations in different regions of the United States. The purpose of this survey was not to gain comprehensive statistical data but to discover potential practical implications for this project.

1. How many times have you preached / taught a weekend message on spiritual gifts or spiritual giftedness in the last two years?
 - A. 0-1 – This is not a subject I teach on regularly
 - B. 2-3 – This is a subject I teach on once or twice per year.
 - C. 4-5 – I try to teach on this subject regularly.
 - D. 6 or more – This is a subject I am constantly teaching on.
2. What is the primary venue that your church uses to teach on spiritual gifts?
 - A. Weekend Message
 - B. Membership Class
 - C. Volunteer Training or Orientation
 - D. Class or Small Group
3. What are some limitations with current spiritual gift assessments that you have personally identified from your experience with them?
4. One of the goals of this project is to help church leaders equip their people to find their place in the church and to place them in serving roles based on gift mix and passions rather than needs or open roster spots. In your opinion, what are some of the competing factors that the church must overcome to move in this direction?

5. This project will also offer practical applications moving forward for how to help their church discover their gifts (and passions) and equip them to build the body of Christ. Has your church attempted any new approaches to this (beyond a traditional spiritual gift assessment) that you feel could be valuable to this project or other churches? Is there any data or results from this initiative worth sharing?