

Spiritual Gifts #4:

Ministering Spiritual Gifts

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

1. Because many of the spiritual gifts involve hearing and discerning God's voice, it is important that we develop our ability to do so.
 - When we learn to hear God's voice, we can become more effective in advancing God's kingdom.
 - The Bible informs us that there are various ways God communicates with us.
2. God speaks to us through the Scriptures (2 Tm 3:16-17). The Scriptures are the very words of God in written form. They are the final authority for faith and practice, and are the standard by which we judge all spiritual impressions, experiences, etc.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV) *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
3. God speaks to us through the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26; 16:13-14).
 - John 14:26; 16:13–14 (ESV) *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things... When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...and he will declare to you the things that are to come...*
4. God may speak to us through other believers by the manifestation of various spiritual gifts, such as prophecy.
5. God may speak to us through other people's godly advice, input, and counsel, including reproof and correction as well as wisdom and guidance.

MINISTERING IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

The following imperatives are important in order to effectively minister spiritual gifts in the power of the Spirit which are in a manner that pleases God and bears good fruit.

1. Cultivate the ability to listen to and be led by the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26; 16:13-14; Ro 8:14; Gal 5:18).
2. Observe and learn from others who are experienced in spiritual gifts.
3. Avoid all forms of spiritual manipulation.
4. Walk in humility.
 - 1 Peter 5:5 (ESV) *Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*
5. Minister in the love of Christ (1 Co 14:1).
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1–2 (ESV) *If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*
6. Understand that spiritual gifts are a stewardship, not a permanent, unconditional endowment.
7. Ground your identity in Christ, not in the exercise of spiritual gifts (1 Co 1:26-31).
 - 1 Corinthians 1:30–31 (ESV) *And because of (God) you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*
8. Exercise spiritual gifts in proportion to your faith.
 - Romans 12:6 (ESV) *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith...*

EVANGELISM AND THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The gifts of the Spirit enable us to minister more effectively to the body of Christ *and* to the lost.
2. The Book of Acts records numerous occasions when the manifestation of various spiritual gifts of God's power contributed to people coming to Christ. Some examples are listed below.

Acts	Power Gifts	Result
2:42-47	Signs & wonders	People saved daily
3:1-4:4	Miraculous healing	Many believed; church grew to 5000 "men"
5:12-16	Signs & wonders; extraordinary healings	Multitudes of men & women were added
8:4-13	Signs (spiritual deliverance), healings	Much joy in the city; men & women believed & were baptized
14:1-7	Signs & wonders	Confirmed the Gospel among a great number of new believers
19:11-20	Extraordinary miracles	God's word increased & prevailed mightily

3. Spiritual gifts that are often thought of as being most applicable to a church setting can also be used for winning the lost.
 - People with the gift of administration can organize evangelistic activities.
 - People with the gift of hospitality can open their homes to unsaved neighbors, co-workers, or students.
 - People with the gift of mercy can serve in outreaches that minister to those who are underprivileged or hurting in some way.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. Do you in general have difficulty discerning God's voice or leading? How do you go about seeking to "hear" God? What could you do to increase your ability to discern God's voice or leading?

2. Among the eight things listed to do in order to become effective in ministering in the power of the Spirit, which do you most need to concentrate on?
3. Have you ever used a spiritual gift for evangelism? Describe the circumstances.

HOMEWORK

1. Pray with someone and ask God to increase your ability to discern God's voice and leading, and also to manifest some specific spiritual gifts through you.
2. Read and reflect on the passages listed in the table above regarding evangelism and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.