

To the small group leader: This small group guide is meant to augment both the reading of the book "You Have Spiritual Gifts And It's Time You Use Them" as well as a preaching series based on the book's content. If your church is not currently utilizing the preaching material, it might be best for you to use the book, itself, as a book study. (Most of the chapters have discussion questions at the end.) That way, you won't miss or skip any crucial material and will obtain a thorough understanding of the subject.

This small group guide can be used without the book, however. If this is the case, please bear the following in mind:

- This guide will be just a foretaste of a deep subject. If your church is using this as a part of a preaching series, then this should be generally enriching and considered a good overview rather than an in-depth study..
- If all of the members of your group have a copy of the book, then each person should take the spiritual gift assessment in the book PRIOR to session3. That assessment is much more in depth and will provide a richer, more accurate result than the lighter version included in this guide. If, however, you don't have the book, then using the version included in this guide will give a good initial glimpse of the participants' spiritual gifts. It just won't be as extensive.

Each of the small group lessons have some ice breaker questions, a short introduction, some quoted material from the book, a biblical passage, and some follow up questions.

I pray this month is a blessing to all of you, and that the Holy Spirit encourages you in deep and beautiful ways.

Love in Christ,

Pastor Vince Arnone

You Have Spiritual Gifts- Life Group Lesson 1- "Know Your Roots"

Icebreaker:

- What's your family make-up? Do you know where your ancestors are from?
- Growing up, did your family make a certain dish or celebrate a certain tradition that could be associated with your ancestral ethnicity?
- Do you have any famous ancestors, or do you have an interesting story about someone you are related to and their experiences in the place they were from?

Introduction:

We may or may not know the details of our biological ancestry. But, did you know we all share a common *spiritual* ancestry? Think about it- each of us could (theoretically) trace back our ethnic origins by obtaining the names and nationality of our mother, father, uncles, aunts, grandparents, great grandparents and so on. In fact, if all of you in this small group did this with perfect knowledge of it all- you would all at one point or another discover common ancestors. It doesn't matter if right in your group you have representation from all different nations or even different continents. Eventually, one by one, all of you would find a common family line.

The same thing is true in a spiritual sense as well. All of us in the church can trace back our roots. That is to say- we could identify who told us about Jesus and then who told them and so on and so on. The difference is that all of us- in a spiritual

sense- know precisely where all of these "roots" come together already. We all derive our spiritual heritage from the Day of Pentecost, which is when the church of Jesus was born.

From the book:

...Here are some basic facts that will help you to understand what was going on in the lives of our common family on the day the Holy Spirit was released to our faith-ancestors:

- The OT promise of the day of Pentecost is found in Joel 2:28-29, *"I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."* ...
- The day is also referred to with much more immediacy by Jesus in Acts 1:4-5, *"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."* ...
- The scriptural account of Pentecost is found in Acts 2.
- Pentecost literally means "Fiftieth" in Greek.
- Pentecost was also known as the "Feast of Weeks" because it falls seven weeks (or 50 days) after "First Fruits" (or "Passover") which was celebrated with the offering of the first of the barley harvests to God, and the barley harvest took about another seven weeks to fully gather.
- Pentecost, therefore, was seen as a "Harvest Celebration." It was a day of joy and thanksgiving for

the end of the barley harvest. However, it also included another firstfruits offering of the wheat harvest, which had only just begun. Wheat was a more significant and larger crop that people depended on to a much greater degree than barley. This beautiful, perfect timing of Pentecost symbolically reinforces the mission of the Holy Spirit through us as stated by Jesus in Luke 10:2, *“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

Scripture: *“He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.”* Acts 1:7-9

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.” Acts 2: 1-4

Discussion questions:

- 1) Look back at the first scripture from Joel 2:28-29. What do you observe about how likely it is that you will have the Spirit poured out on you, and that God will give you a spiritual gift- in this case, prophecy?
- 2) Read what Jesus said in Acts 1:4-5 as well as verses 7-9 above. This is the last command and promise that Jesus gave them before leaving them physically. He had given them the “Great Commission” before. What do you think this says about the relationship of the Holy Spirit and the sharing of the gospel?
- 3) Let’s think about the celebration of Pentecost, itself. What do you think the symbolism of the full harvest of barley and the “first fruits” of wheat say to us about what pentecost meant spiritually? In light of this, do you think pentecost was one seminal event- or is it continuing? If you think it has continued, in what ways?
- 4) Think back to the ice breaker questions. Are there any ancestors you are particularly proud of? When you think about what generations before you may have sacrificed for you to be here today, how does this make you feel? How do you feel about your spiritual ancestors that lived for Jesus and continued the faith- the people we all have, spiritually, in common at Pentecost?
- 5) Read Acts 2:1-4. The gift of tongues was poured out on everyone who received the Spirit that day. Have you ever received this gift? It is there for any who ask. If you haven’t, take some time with your group to ask God to give this to you. If all of you already have, spend some time praying in tongues with one another. Thank the Holy Spirit for giving you this gift and ask Him to give others as He wants throughout this study.

You Have Spiritual Gifts- Life Group Lesson 2- "Good Lovin'"

Icebreakers:

- If you're married, share a story- a moment, a mishap, or something interesting that happened on your wedding day.
- If you're not married, share if you've ever thought about your wedding day and what you would like it to be like.
- Share with the group the person in your life who has shown you the most Godly love and why you feel that way.

Introduction:

1 Corinthians Chapter 13 might be one of the most misunderstood scripture passages. In our study today, we want to come to both a deeper and a more accurate understanding of its meaning and context.

From the book:

In context, it is written to a church that had been abusing and misusing spiritual gifts. Paul writes the entire letter with a balance of rejoicing that they, at least, were pursuing the gifts, and had a thirst for increasingly deeper and more intimate knowledge of God. In fact, Paul attributes the volume of gifting they have seen to this very fact. In the first paragraph of his first letter he says, "Therefore (*because you've been so enriched by God with all sorts of knowledge*) you do not lack *any* spiritual gift." (1 Corinthians 1:7) He's

admitting they literally have it all - the whole package of gifts among them.

By the time he gets along to 13 chapters later, he has just finished pointedly explaining how selfish and chaotic their worship experiences had become as a result of their inappropriate use of spiritual gifts, and he desires to show them "a better way." Now, obviously, the 13th chapter isn't about order of service. It is certainly more personal. Paul is neither mincing words, nor changing the subject. He commandingly explains to us how our personal understanding and practice of true, Godly love will solely determine the effectiveness and impact of spiritual gifts. The first several verses of chapter 13 make the most sense when looked at with this understanding:

"If I speak in the tongues[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing."

For discussion:

- 1) The word 'love' used in this passage is 'agape' which is perfect love. It is also used at times to describe a fellowship or feast among believers. So, in your opinion, who should be shown this love as described here?
- 2) What do you think the phrase 'resounding gong or clanging cymbal' might mean?

- 3) What do you think this says about how spiritual gifts should be used and what it's like if they are being used improperly?

Read verses 4-6

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

This passage outlines the standard that we are to live by. This is how Jesus lived His life, and we are to represent Him in this way to the world. With that in mind:

- 1) How do you think this standard compares to the old standard (before Jesus) of obedience and sacrifice to atone for sins? In what ways is it similar? In what ways is it different?
- 2) Do you feel this standard is possible to attain? Why or why not?

Do this exercise from the book:

Now, let's do what this passage is really meant to cause us to do - assess. First, pray for your gracious Father to gently speak to you. Then, read these verses again below. But, this time, in each of the blanks, say your own name rather than “love.”...

_____ is patient. _____ is kind. _____ does not envy. _____ does not boast. _____ is not proud. _____ does not dishonor others. _____ is not self-seeking. _____ is not easily angered. _____ keeps no record of wrongs. _____ does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. _____ always protects. _____ always trusts. _____ always hopes. _____ always perseveres.

- 1) Share with the group which statement was hardest to say when you read it to yourself with your name inserted.
- 2) Is there something that comes to mind that you could do to help live this aspect of love better this week?
- 3) How do you think the discipline of loving rightly in this way might affect your ability to receive and use spiritual gifts? What is the relationship between Godly love and spiritual gifts?

You Have Spiritual Gifts- Small Group Lesson 3- " What's Your Gift?"

In this lesson, we're going to begin to discern our spiritual gifts. There are two ways to approach this as stated in the introduction to this guide. You can use the spiritual gift assessment in this guide which will give a basic assessment of those spiritual gifts that are easiest to identify on a short quiz. Or, you can use the one from the book which is significantly more extensive and will give a more accurate assessment. (The book assessment takes more time to complete, so it is recommended you take it before your group session.) There are more gifts included in the book assessment vs. the one in this guide.

If everyone in your group has already done the book assessment version, you can skip to the scripture and discussion questions.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ASSESSMENT

Read each of the statements below carefully. Decide how much you agree with the statement personally according to the following scale:

1. Almost Never 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes

4. Frequently 5. Almost Always

Then, flip to the results page and write your response (1-5) in the blank that corresponds to the statement.

1. Encouraging others is a high priority in my life.
2. Influencing others for the kingdom of God through finances is extremely important to me.
3. While I can do a lot on my own, I prefer to organize a team to get the job done.
4. My heart hurts when I see others hurting.
5. It deeply saddens me when people don't know who God has called them to be.
6. I enjoy serving behind the scenes.
7. I truly love to study the bible in depth.
8. It comes naturally to me to see God's handiwork even in the most challenging circumstances.
9. There have been times when I just know that God is speaking through someone even when they are unaware of it.
10. I love to help others believe in themselves and take on new challenges.
11. I find ways to give offerings above my tithe.
12. I prefer to take the lead whenever necessary.
13. I'm very sensitive to sad stories.
14. During prayer, I often hear and sense the thoughts of God about myself and others.
15. If I see a helpful task that needs to be done, I feel I must try to do it.
16. I enjoy sharing what God has taught me with others.
17. My first response to any large challenge is to pray and declare a Godly outcome.
18. There have been times when I feel the need to pray for God's protection even when my immediate environment doesn't appear dangerous.
19. I have a real knack for getting people to sign up or get involved.
20. Making more money means that I can give more.
21. I delegate responsibilities to accomplish tasks.

22. I am motivated to help others who are less fortunate in any way I can.
23. God often gives me a dream or pictures in my mind when I pray.
24. I really just want to do anything the church asks me to do, no matter how small.
25. If I feel I can teach you something that will help you, I will try to do so.
26. If I'm being totally honest, I sometimes struggle to relate to those who have doubts about God's power.
27. I can recall discussing things with my family or at work where I knew I needed to support an idea not because it sounded the best but because I sensed it was what God wanted.

7. _____ 16. _____ 25. _____ _____ G
8. _____ 17. _____ 26. _____ _____ H
9. _____ 18. _____ 27. _____ _____ I

Once you've put all of your answers in numbers 1-27, add across each row and put the total in the final column. Circle your top three numbers. Then look on the next pages to find the spiritual gift that corresponds to the letter next to the totals you circled.

<u>GIFTS</u>			<u>TOTAL</u>	
1. _____	10. _____	19. _____	_____	A
2. _____	11. _____	20. _____	_____	B
3. _____	12. _____	21. _____	_____	C
4. _____	13. _____	22. _____	_____	D
5. _____	14. _____	23. _____	_____	E
6. _____	15. _____	24. _____	_____	F

A. EXHORTATION - Acts 14:22; Rom 12:8; 1 Tim 4:13

The ability to encourage others through the written or spoken word and Biblical Truth.

B. GIVING - 2 Cor. 8:1-7; Mark 12:41-44; Rom 12:8

The ability to produce wealth and to give by tithes and offerings for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God on earth.

C. LEADERSHIP – Rom 12:8; 1 Tim 3:1-13; Heb 13:17

The ability to influence people at their level while directing and focusing them on the big picture, vision, or idea.

D. MERCY – Matt 9:35-36; Mark 9:41; 1 Thess 5:14

The ability to feel empathy and to care for those who are hurting in any way.

E. **PROPHECY** - 1 Cor. 14:3; Acts 2:37-40

The ability to clearly hear God's voice and boldly speak His words for the strengthening, encouragement and comfort of others.

F. **SERVICE** - Acts 6:1-7; Rom 12:7; Gal 6:10

The ability to do small or great tasks in working for the overall good of the body of Christ.

G. **TEACHING** - Eph. 4:12-13; 1 Cor 12:28; Acts 18:24-28

The ability to study and learn from the Scriptures primarily to bring understanding and depth to other Believers.

H. **FAITH**- 1 Cor 12:9; Acts 3:6; 9:36-43; 28:3

The supernatural ability to maintain absolute confidence in God's goodness and ability to act, regardless of what is being said or the odds of success.

I. **DISCERNMENT**- 1 Cor 12:10; Acts 16:18

The ability to discern the presence and blessing of God, the presence of evil, and that which is not spiritual at all but of human origin.

Discussion:

- 1) Do you agree with your result? Why or why not?
- 2) Share your gifts with the group.

- 3) Talk with each other on how you think this gift could be useful to your church, community- in your small group, etc.
- 4) How would you like to be using this gift in 10 years?

Study:

1 Cor 12:7-14

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. **8** To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, **10** to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. **11** All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. **14** Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Discussion:

- 1) Verses 12-14 emphasizes that no person and their gifts is more important than another. What do you think these verses also emphasize about how we work with one another?
- 2) Based on your conclusions, how do you think the gifts represented in your group could work together in ministry? Do you see certain gifts having a relationship to each other, like one gift might actually work in conjunction with another well? In what ways?
- 3) How can your group commit to practicing and using these gifts on a regular basis? What other steps do you think you can take to further develop these gifts?

You Have Spiritual Gifts- Small Group Lesson 4- "Starter Fluid" (The gift of prophecy)

Introduction: (From the book) *We all want the fire of the Holy Spirit in our worship services and prayer gatherings; but I think, often, the very best tool God has given us to start that fire goes largely unused during these times.*

I'm speaking of the spiritual gift of prophecy.

Sure-

It's been misused.

It's been very misunderstood.

Mostly, I would say it has been simply ignored. It's like we have a bag of BBQ charcoal we just bought and the package (like they always do) says, "Just one match lights it up! No starter fluid needed!" Which, of course, anyone who has spent any time in pursuit of the title of

local neighborhood 'grill master' knows is a bitter, bold-faced lie. Instead of all the gyrations and struggles and frustrations many go through to try to live up to the declaration on the package, sometimes it's just better to break down and use a little starter fluid to get cookin'.

Scripture: *Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. (1 Cor 14:1-5)*

- 1) Just as a reminder, what does Paul encourage us to do in the first verse above (the reason/ motivation to desire spiritual gifts?)
- 2) The scripture above makes the point that prophecy always strengthens, encourages, and comforts. With this in mind, why do you think Paul would want everyone to seek to prophesy?
- 3) If a small group or church consistently prophesied over each other, what do you think some possible results might be? How would it change the culture and expectations of everyone who participated?

Exercise:

The reality is that anyone can prophesy. While it may be referred to as a “greater” gift, this does not elevate the gift (or the person blessed with it) to any sort of elite level. Like so much in the kingdom of God, it is considered “greater” simply because it serves the most. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit was poured out on *all* flesh. Therefore, it is possible for everyone to hear from God and share a strengthening, encouraging or comforting word.

- Take some time in your group to ask God to speak to each of you. Pair up and speak something encouraging to one another. It could be as simple as one word. You might not necessarily hear anything. That's okay- you can still encourage them! Just be sure to say that it's more about what you think or feel.
- If someone in your group is hearing a bit more and sharing with some clarity, let them pray over a few of you.

I encourage you to practice doing this as often as you can when you are together. Prophecy can lead to great steps of faith and an encouraged, strengthened spirit among you.

If this becomes a regular practice and you keep seeing fruit coming from these words, then be sure to record them and pray over them/ stand on them when

challenging times come- and pray over them to verify they are from God.

One final note- scripture is the highest form of God's voice. We don't need to pray about whether scripture is true. Someone who seeks to prophesy will study God's word daily, and make it a priority in their life.

If you were blessed by this small group series and you have not yet, consider obtaining a copy of "You Have Spiritual Gifts- And It's Time You Use Them."

There are many more lessons within it and a more detailed and comprehensive spiritual gift assessment.

One of the more poignant aspects of the book is another assessment of your core "calling." This can be incredibly useful not just in how to serve God better, but it can have an incredibly positive effect on family, career decisions, and even key relationships that can last a lifetime.

Thank you for participating in this, and I pray all of God's abundant blessings and love flow through your life!