

Spiritual Gift Definitions

For each of the spiritual gifts listed in Scripture that we affirm at Constance, I have created a definition sheet to facilitate your understanding of the gift.

In addition, I encourage you to consider that some gifts are very similar. I have grouped those that are similar as noted on the next page. The gift definitions appear in the order you see them on the next page. For example encouragement and mercy and very similar but they are not the same thing. Similarly, leadership and administration are both somewhat organizational in nature, but they too are not the same thing.

For each gift you will find this structure:

- 1. Where the gift appears in Scripture.**
- 2. A word study of the Greek root words.**
- 3. A listing of gifts that are similar to but not the same as this one.**
- 4. A related discipline that Scripture encourages us to all follow. For example, we are all to witness to our faith, but some are evangelists.**
- 5. A definition of the gift.**
- 6. “Self-talk” or what you might say to yourself if you have this gift.**
- 7. Some characteristics of this gift, what to expect from a person who has this gift.**
- 8. Cautions you should be aware of if you have this gift.**

If you have any questions about these, feel free to email me at jbarber@constancefree.org

**Spiritual Gift
Groupings of Similar Gifts**

	<u>Commonality</u>	<u>Audience Uniqueness / Different Responses</u>
Prophecy	Speaking	Today's Culture; Correction
Evangelism	Speaking	The lost; conversion
Shepherding	Speaking	Needing growth and protection; trust / growth
Teaching	Speaking	Needing knowledge and growth; learn / grow
Leadership	Organization	Needing vision and purpose; follow
Administration	Organization	Needing implementation/effectiveness; comply
Encouragement	Assisting individuals	The discouraged; regain courage and faith
Mercy	Assisting individuals	The suffering; comforted
Wisdom	Knowledge	Needing a godly decision; decide
Knowledge	Knowledge	Needing God's truth; learn knowledge
Giving	NA	Need financial resources
Faith	NA	Need hope and conviction
Discernment	NA	Need truth sorted from error
Helps	Serving others	Anyone, any need; served
Hospitality	Serving others	Specific need for housing, food shelter; served

The Spiritual Gift of Prophecy

Scriptural References:	Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10,28,29 13:2 14:1ff Eph. 4:11
Word Study :	<i>propheteia</i> “to foretell, tell forth” All translations use prophecy, prophesy, or prophets
Similar Gifts :	Evangelism, Shepherding, and Teaching
Related Discipline :	“admonishing one another” (Col. 3:16)
Definition :	The divine enablement to reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance, or edification.
Selftalk :	“If I don’t speak, who will?”
Characteristics :	Forthtelling vs. foretelling Exposes error in popular culture Authoritative and opinionated Confrontational May appear to lack compassion May appear pessimistic or depressed
Cautions :	Still speak with love (1 Cor. 13:2) Must be grounded in the Word

The Spiritual Gift of Evangelism

Scriptural References :	Eph. 4:11
Word Study :	<i>euaggelistes</i> “one who declares good news” All translations use evangelists
Similar Gifts :	Prophecy, Shepherding, and Teaching
Related Discipline :	Witnessing (1 Pet. 3:15)
Definition :	The divine enablement to effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers so that they respond in faith and move on toward discipleship.
Selftalk :	“I must share the gospel with others”
Characteristics :	Bold Persuasive Able to turn conversations to spiritual things Often have many relationships with unbelievers Sowing and reaping Conversion and discipleship
Cautions :	Let the Holy Spirit do the work See it as a gift

The Spiritual Gift of Shepherding

Scriptural References :	Eph. 4:11
Word Study :	<i>poimen</i> “a shepherd” <i>didaskalos</i> “an instructor”
	Pastors and Teachers
Similar Gifts :	Prophecy, Evangelism, and Teaching
Related Discipline :	Love
Definition :	The divine enablement to nurture, care for, and guide people toward ongoing spiritual maturity and becoming like Christ.
Selftalk :	“I want to adopt this person (flock)”
Characteristics :	Sense of responsibility for other’s growth Willing to make time for others relationally Protect others from error and discouragement Nourish and teach Interested in modeling, disciplemaking
Cautions :	Beware of overcommitting Mother, don’t smother Don’t be surprised if they grow beyond you Don’t be overwhelmed if they stray

The Spiritual Gift of Teaching

Scriptural References :	Rom. 12:7	1 Cor. 12:28-29
Word Study :	teaches (V) <i>didasko</i>	teachers (N) <i>didakalos</i>
	Instruction of doctrine	an instructor
Similar Gifts :	Prophecy, Evangelism, and Shepherding (possibly knowledge and wisdom)	
Related Discipline :	“teaching ... one another” Col. 3:16	
Definition :	The divine enablement to understand, clearly explain, and apply the word of God, causing greater Christlikeness in the lives of listeners.	
Selftalk :	“This is how I would say that ...”	
Characteristics :	Love for studying the Word Analytical and objective Articulate Attention to detail and accurate interpretation Emphasis on the whole counsel of the Word Challenges listeners to apply the Word	
Cautions :	Beware the pride of knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1) Practice KISS Do not sacrifice application for knowledge	

The Spiritual Gift of Leadership

Scriptural References :	Rom. 12:8
Word Study :	<i>proistemi</i> “to put before, be above, ahead, rule” Leadership (NIV)(NLT) Lead (NASB,NRSV,NKJV) Gives aid with zeal (RSV), ruling (KJV)
Similar Gifts :	Administration (possibly Shepherding also)
Related Discipline :	None
Definition :	The divine enablement to cast vision, motivate, and direct people to harmoniously accomplish the purposes of God.
Selftalk :	“We can get from here to there”
Characteristics :	They have a plan or vision Take responsibility for future results Communicate the big picture for others Motivate others to want to follow Persuasive To be done with diligence “to hasten, urge on”
Cautions :	Servant leadership is the one biblical model Mk. 10:45 Development takes time

The Spiritual Gift of Administration

Scriptural References :	1 Cor. 12:28
Word Study :	<i>kubernesis</i> “to steer, guide, govern” Administrators (RSV) Administration (NIV)(NKJV) Governments (KJV) Get others to work together (NLT) Forms of Leadership (NRSV)
Similar Gifts :	Leadership (possibly helps)
Related Discipline :	None
Definition :	The divine enablement to understand how an organization functions, and to plan and execute procedures that accomplish the goals of the ministry.
Selftalk :	“There’s a better way to do this”
Characteristics :	Systems or process outlook Create order out of chaos Organize people, task, events Detail oriented Concerned about efficiency and effectiveness May appear negative (See Ex. 18 “What you are doing is not good”)
Cautions :	Be open to change Don’t overlook relationships Don’t ignore what’s working well Beware a lack of faith

The Spiritual Gift of Encouraging

Scriptural References :	Rom. 12:8
Word Study :	<i>paraklesis</i> “calling upon, incitement, persuasion” Incite : to stir up and urge on Encouraging (NIV)(NLT) Exhortation (RSV, NRSV, KJV, NKJV, NASB)
Similar Gifts :	Mercy, Shepherding
Related Discipline :	Love
Definition :	The divine enablement to present truth so as to strengthen, comfort, or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith.
Selftalk :	“This discouraged person needs my help”
Characteristics :	Not unlike the <i>Paracletos</i> , Comforter, Helper Jn. 14:26 Coming alongside to help Gravitate toward the discouraged Often employ tough love Positive and motivating See Barnabas (Aramaic) Son of Encouragement Acts 4:36
Cautions :	Take time to understand root issues Do not be overly optimistic

The Spiritual Gift of Mercy

Scriptural References :	Rom. 12:8
Word Study :	<i>eleeo</i> “shows mercy; have compassion; pity” Does acts of mercy (RSV) Showing mercy (NASB)(KJV)(NKJV)(NIV) Compassionate (NRSV) Showing kindness (NLT)
Similar Gifts :	Encouragement
Related Discipline :	Love and serving
Definition :	The divine enablement to cheerfully and practically help those who are suffering or are in need; compassion moved to action.
Selftalk :	“I must help this suffering person”
Characteristics :	Go to the emotional, psychological, physical sufferers Kindness and service Action versus good intentions Removing the sources of suffering if possible To be done <u>cheerfully</u> “a strong, spontaneous flow of good spirits”
Cautions :	May need to learn to see God’s hand in suffering May need to learn to appreciate prophets

The Spiritual Gift of Wisdom

Scriptural References : 1 Cor. 12:8

Word Study : *logos* a statement or speech
sophia skill, cleverness, learning

Word of Wisdom (NASB)(KJV)(NKJV)
Message of Wisdom (NIV)
Utterance of Wisdom (RSV)(NRSV)
Ability to Give Wise Advice (NLT)

Similar Gifts : Knowledge, Teaching

Related Discipline : living as wise not unwise Eph. 5:15
If any lacks wisdom ... ask Jas. 1:5

Definition : The divine enablement to apply spiritual truth effectively to meet a need in a specific situation.

Selftalk : “There is a solution to this confusion”

Characteristics : Applied knowledge and truth
Great “common sense” (supernatural)
Decisive
May be skilled in debate; apologetics
A sense of justice
See Solomon : 1 baby and 2 moms
See Jesus : render unto Caesar and God

Cautions : Be patient with others who don't “get it”

The Spiritual Gift of Knowledge

Scriptural References :	1 Cor. 12:8
Other Names :	<i>logos</i> “a statement, speech” <i>gnosis</i> “enlightenment, knowledge” Word of Knowledge (NASB)(KJV)(NKJV) Message of Knowledge (NIV) Utterance of Knowledge (RSV)(NRSV) Special Knowledge (NLT)
Similar Gifts :	Wisdom, Teaching, Prophecy
Related Discipline :	let the Word ... dwell in you richly Col. 3:16
Definition :	The divine ability to bring truth to the body through biblical insight.
Selftalk :	“My studies show that ...”
Characteristics :	Analytical study of the Word and theology Reflective, studious, observant Disciplined Research vs. application General truth vs. truth applied to a situation
Cautions :	Knowledge puffs up but love builds up 1 Cor. 8:1 Knowledge must be applied

The Spiritual Gift of Giving

Scriptural References : Rom. 12:8

Other Names : *metadidomi* “give a share of”

haplotes “simplicity, singleness”

He who gives, with liberality (NKJV)(NASB) The Giver, in Generosity (NRSV)
Have money, share it generously (NLT) He who Contributes, in liberality (RSV)
Contributing to the needs of others, give generously (NIV)
He that giveth, with simplicity (KJV)

Similar Gifts : Hospitality

Related Discipline : Tithing, giving offerings

Definition : The divine enablement to contribute money and resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality.

Selftalk : “All I have is the Lord’s for His use”

Characteristics : Give generously of \$/assets to the work of the Lord
Over and above a tithe
May be the widow’s mite (Lk. 21:1-4)
May prosper so they can give more (Lk. 16:10)
No motive of self-gain, e.g. health and wealth gospel
Private about their giving
Concern for stewardship and excellence, but not controlling
Example : LaTourneau 90/10 versus 10/90

To be done with liberality

Cautions : See it as a gift
Resist desire to drive church agenda

The Spiritual Gift of Faith

Scriptural References :	1 Cor. 12:9
Word Study :	<i>pistis</i> “faith, to have confidence, be persuaded” Special Faith (NLT) All other translations : faith
Similar Gifts :	Leadership
Related Discipline :	(live) walk by faith not sight (2 Cor. 5:7)
Definition :	The divine enablement to act on God’s promises with confidence and unwavering belief in God’s ability to fulfill His purposes.
Selftalk :	“Lord you can do anything...”
Characteristics :	Not the gift of saving faith Eph. 2:8-9 Believing God’s promises and inspiring others to believe Go forward when others cannot or will not Prayer bringing hope to reality Thinking, communicating, and praying “big” in His will Example : George Mueller – 1800’s / England / Orphanage Prayer list :3000 pgs. 50,000 answers The story of the fog
Cautions :	Planning and reason in not necessarily a lack of faith See PV 16:1,3,9 for balance

The Spiritual Gift of Discernment

Scriptural References : 1 Cor. 12:10

Other Names : *diakrisis* “judgement”

pneuma “spirits”

Discerning of Spirits (KJV)(NKJV)

Discernment of Spirits (NRSV)

Distinguishing of Spirits (NASB)

Distinguishing between spirits (NIV)(RSV)

Ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking (NLT)

Similar Gifts : Prophecy, Wisdom

Related Discipline : testing the spirits 1 John 4:1

Definition : The divine enablement to distinguish between truth and error, good and evil, right and wrong.

Selftalk : “I can’t let this deception continue”

Characteristics :
Upholds truth of the Word and Christ’s Lordship
Able to sense the presence of evil or false teaching
Perceptive and opinionated
Confrontational
Possible oriented toward exposing the cults, occult, Satanism
Examples : Deprogramming
The Peters Brothers

Cautions : May need to learn to speak the truth in love
Beware of seeing demons in everything

The Spiritual Gift of Hospitality

Scriptural References :	1 Pet. 4:9
Other Names :	<i>philokenos</i> “loving strangers” Hospitable (NASB)(NKJV)(NRSV) Hospitality (KJV)(NIV)(RSV) Share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay (NLT)
Similar Gifts :	Helps, Giving, Mercy
Related Discipline :	hospitality Rom. 12:13, Heb. 13:2
Definition :	The divine enablement to care for people by providing fellowship, food, clothing, and shelter.
Selftalk :	“Mi casa es Su casa”
Characteristics :	Welcome and serve strangers or those in transition Warmth, Care, financial assistance Setting others at ease – laidback Like a hospital ! Make others part of your family Not primarily entertainment Not necessarily a rearranged lifestyle – open doors
Cautions :	May need to elevate entertaining to ministry May need to know when to say no