



## LESSON 1 - DISCOVERY: WHAT'S IN YOUR HAND?

*1 Corinthians 12:1-11*

Have you ever been in a room full of incredibly talented people and thought to yourself, "What am I even doing here?" Like, everyone else seems to have their thing figured out ... Susan's leading worship, Marcus is teaching Sunday school, Jennifer's organizing everything like she's the CEO of ministry ... and you're just standing there thinking, "I can make a decent casserole. Does that count?"

**I get it! I've been there.** Standing in rooms where it felt like everyone got the memo about their purpose except me. But here's what I've learned, and here's what we're going to discover together over the next four weeks: God doesn't do leftovers. He doesn't do duplicates. And He absolutely, positively **never creates anyone without a purpose.**

Let me take you back to the Old Testament. God shows up to Moses ... this guy who's been hiding in the desert for 40 years after totally bombing his first attempt at leadership ... and God has this massive assignment for him. *"Moses, I want you to go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let my people go."*

And Moses does what most of us would do. He freaks out. "Who am I? I can't do this! I'm not qualified! I stutter when I talk!" Then God asks him the most important question: ***"What is that in your hand?"***

Moses looks down. "Uh... it's a stick. Just a regular shepherd's stick." And God basically says, "Perfect. Give it to me."

That ordinary stick became the tool that parted the Red Sea, brought water from a rock, and set an entire nation free from slavery. Not because the stick was special ... but because God got hold of it.

My question is simple ... **what's in your hand?** What has God already placed inside you that you've been dismissing as "just ordinary"? What ability, what passion, what inclination have you been overlooking because it doesn't seem super spiritual?

That thing? That's where we're starting. Because I'm convinced that you're sitting on abilities that God wants to unleash ... not just for your benefit, but for the benefit of everyone around you.

## LESSON TEXT

**1 Corinthians 12:1-11** is like the owner's manual for spiritual gifts. Let's read it together:

*"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills."*

Circle **verse 1** in your Bible. Paul starts with, **"I do not want you to be ignorant."** The Greek word there is *agnoeo*. It literally means "clueless." Paul's basically saying, "Look, I don't want you walking around like you have no idea what God put in you." God is not into keeping secrets about how He wired you. He wants you to know!

## THE EXPENSIVE PROBLEM OF NOT KNOWING

Let me tell you a true story about this guy who bought an old painting at a garage sale for like 50 bucks. He liked the frame. He took it home and hung it on his wall. Years later, someone visited his house and said, "Hey, do you know that's an original Rembrandt?" Turned out the painting was worth millions. This guy had been living like he was broke while sitting on a fortune ... because he didn't know what he had!

That's what happens when you don't know your spiritual gifts. You're living a powerless, purposeless Christian life while sitting on supernatural abilities that could change everything. Not just for you ... but for everyone around you as well.

Paul was so concerned about believers not knowing their gifts that he wrote about it in **Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4**. If God dedicated that much real estate in Scripture to this topic, we should probably pay attention!

Here's what happens when we're clueless about our gifts:

- **We become spectators instead of players.** Church becomes something we watch instead of something we do. We show up, take notes, and go home. **Hit Repeat.** But God didn't save you to sit in a pew ... He saved you to get in the game!
- **We get stuck in comparison mode.** You're watching Sarah teach with such grace, and you're thinking, "I could never do that." Well, yeah ... because you're not supposed to! You're not Sarah. God didn't make you to be Sarah 2.0. He made you to be the original you!

- **We burn out trying to do everything.** Without knowing your gifts, you either try to serve everywhere (and collapse from exhaustion) or you serve nowhere (and feel guilty about it). Both options stink. They're unproductive.
- **The church loses what only you can bring.** When you're not functioning in your gifts, the whole-body limps. You're not just hurting yourself ... you're depriving other people of the blessing God designed you to be.

Rick Warren said, *"The greatest tragedy is not death, but life without purpose."*

When you don't know your gifts, you're alive ... but you're not fully living.

### THREE TRUTHS YOU NEED TO LOCK IN

Let's establish three foundational truths from this passage. I want you to write these down, underline them, highlight them ... whatever you need to do to lock them in.

#### 1. YOU ALREADY HAVE AT LEAST ONE SPIRITUAL GIFT

**Vs. 7** says, *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to EACH ONE for the profit of all."*

Not some people. Not just pastors and missionaries. Not the super spiritual folks who pray in King James English. **"EACH ONE."** That means you and me!

The moment you gave your life to Jesus, the Holy Spirit moved into your life. And when He moved in, He didn't show up empty-handed. He brought gifts with Him! You might not know what they are yet ... but I guarantee you, if you're born again, you are gifted.

Peter backs this up in **1 Peter 4:10**: *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another."* Notice ... **"HAS received."** Past tense. Already done. The gift is already in you. We're just going to figure out what it is.

Think about Christmas morning. When someone hands you a wrapped present, you don't just stare at it going, "Hmm, I wonder what's inside." You rip into that thing! You want to know what you got! That's what we're doing here ... we're unwrapping the gifts God already gave you.

Say this with me: **I AM GIFTED BY GOD!** One more time, with feeling: **I AM GIFTED BY GOD!**

Now let me add something important here. Say this with me: **I AM EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT!** Get it in your spirit. Don't ever forget. It's Biblical truth. As a Christian believer you are gifted by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

#### 2. SPIRITUAL GIFTS COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

**Verse 4** says: *"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."*

The word **"diversities"** in Greek is *diairesis*—it means varieties, distributions, differences. Translation? God doesn't mass-produce people. He custom designs each one.

Look around creation. God didn't make one kind of tree ... He made oaks, maples, pines, and palms. He didn't make one kind of animal ... He made lions, dolphins, eagles, and penguins. And He didn't give everyone the same spiritual gift. He distributed different gifts to different people for different reasons. This means you don't have to be like anyone else. You don't have to fake it in someone else's gifting. God made you unique on purpose! You are different by design.

Check out **verses 4-6**. There are three levels of diversity:

- **"Diversities of gifts"** - Different abilities
- **"Differences of ministries"** - Different places to serve
- **"Diversities of activities"** - Different ways to do it

Same Spirit. Different expressions. It's like a symphony ... every instrument is different, but when they play together? Beautiful.

### 3. YOUR GIFTS AREN'T ABOUT YOU

This one's huge. Look at **verse 7** again: ***"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the PROFIT OF ALL."***

Your spiritual gifts are not about you ... they're about everybody else. They're not for building your ego or your social media following. They're for serving people and building God's kingdom.

- If you've got the **gift of encouragement**, it's not so you can feel good about yourself ... it's so you can lift up that person who's one bad day away from quitting.
- If you've got the **gift of giving**, it's not so you can stack money ... it's so you can be the answer to someone's prayer for provision.
- If you've got the **gift of leadership**, it's not so you can boss people around ... it's so you can guide people toward God's best.

Myles Munroe said, *"The greatest tragedy in life is not death, but a life without a purpose."* Your gifts are how you live out your purpose ... and that purpose is always about blessing others.

### WHAT EXACTLY ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

Great question. Let's get super clear on this. The Greek word for "spiritual gifts" is *charisma*. It comes from *charis*, which means "grace." So spiritual gifts are literally **"grace gifts."** They are supernatural abilities given by God's grace to do supernatural things.

Here's a working definition:

**A spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given by the Holy Spirit to every believer for the purpose of building up the church and advancing God's kingdom.**

Let's unpack that:

- **"Supernatural ability"** - This isn't something you learned in school or picked up from your parents. This is God-given, Holy Spirit-powered ability. We're talking about the same power that raised Jesus from the dead working in you!
- **"Given by the Holy Spirit"** - You can't earn it, buy it, or work for it. It's a gift. Free. Given according to God's sovereign choice.
- **"To every believer"** - Not optional. Not just for spiritual superstars. Standard equipment for all Christians.
- **"Build up the church and advance God's kingdom"** - Gifts are tools, not trophies. They're meant to be used, not displayed.

## **A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE: TWO DISTINCT EXPERIENCES**

Now let me share something that's foundational to who we are as Pentecostal believers. We believe in two distinct experiences with the Holy Spirit:

### **Experience #1: Salvation (Being Born Again)**

When you accept Jesus as your Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside you. You become a child of God. You're saved. You're sealed. You belong to Him. This is when your spiritual journey begins, and some gifts may start to manifest ... gifts like serving, mercy, giving, or hospitality.

### **Experience #2: Baptism In the Holy Spirit (Being Empowered)**

Jesus told His disciples in **Acts 1:8**: ***"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me."***

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a **subsequent experience** that empowers believers for supernatural ministry and witness. When you're baptized in the Spirit, something shifts. The power kicks in. The fire falls. And according to **Acts 2:4**, the initial physical evidence of this baptism is speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.

This is when many of the more supernatural gifts ... like tongues, prophecy, healing, miracles, and words of knowledge ... are often activated.

Let me be clear: You're saved when you accept Jesus. But you're empowered when you're baptized in the Spirit. Think of it like this: Salvation is getting the car. Spirit baptism is getting the keys and the fuel. Both are essential for the full Christian experience!

**Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit?** If not, just ask. This powerful experience is available for every believer who asks! And it's that simple. You ask! If your earthly Father offers you a gift, you don't have to beg him for it. You simply receive it, and you thank him.

**Matthew 7:11** reads like this ... ***"If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"***

## **GIFTS VS. TALENTS VS. FRUIT**

Check out the chart in your student book. It shows the differences between gifts, talents and fruit:

<b>NATURAL TALENTS</b>	<b>SPIRITUAL GIFTS</b>	<b>FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT</b>
You're born with them	Given at salvation and Spirit baptism	Developed over time
Can use them for yourself	Must use them for others	Shows your character
Everyone has some	Every believer has them	Every believer should have all
Singing, sports, art, cooking	Teaching, prophecy, mercy, giving, tongues	Love, joy, peace, patience

**Natural talents** are abilities you were born with. Maybe you can sing, play sports, fix things, or cook like Gordon Ramsay. Those are great! They're gifts from God. But they're not the same as spiritual gifts. However, God often uses your natural talents as a platform for your spiritual gifts. Like, if you're naturally good with people and you get the spiritual gift of evangelism? Game over. You're going to lead so many people to Jesus.

**Spiritual gifts** are supernatural abilities given by the Holy Spirit. Some gifts may manifest at salvation (like serving, mercy, or giving), while others (especially the more supernatural ones like tongues, prophecy, healing, and miracles) are often activated when you're baptized in the Holy Spirit. These gifts let you do things for God's kingdom that you couldn't do in your own strength.

**Fruit of the Spirit** (Galatians 5:22-23) is character ... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Every Christian should be growing all of these. They're not distributed differently. They're who you should be becoming. Think of it like this: Spiritual gifts are what you DO. Fruit of the Spirit is who you ARE.

You can have the gift of teaching but lack patience. You can have the gift of leadership but lack gentleness. God wants you to have both ... supernatural ability AND godly character.

## **THE GIFT LIST**

Alright, let's talk about the different kinds of gifts. Depending on who you ask, there are between 18 and 22 spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture. They show up in four main passages: **Romans 12**, **1 Corinthians 12** (twice), and **Ephesians 4**.

Don't freak out at this list. We're going to explore these more in the coming weeks. For now, just let your eyes scan through them and see which ones make your heart beat faster:

### **Serving Gifts (helping others):**

- Serving/Helps
- Mercy
- Giving
- Hospitality

### **Speaking Gifts (communicating truth):**

- Teaching
- Prophecy
- Encouragement (Exhortation)
- Evangelism
- Apostleship

### **Leading Gifts (guiding the body):**

- Leadership
- Administration
- Pastoring

### **Revelation Gifts (supernatural insight):**

- Word of Wisdom
- Word of Knowledge
- Discernment of Spirits

### **Power Gifts (supernatural intervention):**

- Faith
- Gifts of Healing
- Working of Miracles
- Tongues
- Interpretation of Tongues

As you read that list, did anything jump out at you? Did something make you think, "Ooh, that sounds like me"? Pay attention to that! The Holy Spirit might be dropping you a hint.

## ARE ALL THESE GIFTS STILL FOR TODAY?

The short answer is YES! And here's why we believe ALL the gifts listed in Scripture are available and active in the church today:

### 1. The Bible never says these gifts would cease

**1 Corinthians 13:8-10** says gifts will cease "***when that which is perfect has come.***" That's referring to when Jesus returns or when we see Him face to face in eternity ... not when the Bible was completed or when the apostles died, as some people teach.

### 2. Jesus said signs would follow believers—period

**Mark 16:17-18** says: "***And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.***"

Jesus didn't put an expiration date on that promise. He said "***those who believe***" ... and that includes us!

### 3. We see these gifts in action today

All around the world, people are being healed, prophesying, speaking in tongues, and seeing miracles. The same Holy Spirit who moved in **Acts 2** is moving today. He hasn't retired. He hasn't changed. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever!

### 4. We desperately need the supernatural today

The world is dark. The enemy is real. People are hurting. We need more than good teaching and nice music ... we need the power of God! We need healing, deliverance, prophetic direction, and supernatural wisdom.

We're Pentecostal, which means we believe in the ongoing, active, powerful presence of the Holy Spirit working through ALL these gifts right now, in this room, in your life, today! Don't let anyone tell you that God doesn't move like that anymore. He does! And He wants to move through you.

## WHY GIFTS MATTERS MORE THAN YOU THINK

Here's why discovering your gifts matters:

### 1. It gives you clarity

When you know your gifts, you stop wandering and start walking with purpose. You understand what lane God put you in. No more wondering, "What am I supposed to be doing with my life?"



## **2. It multiplies your effectiveness**

You'll do way more ministry in your gifting than outside of it. A fish swims. A bird flies. Put the fish in a tree and the bird in water, and you've got two miserable creatures. When you serve in your gift zone, ministry feels natural, not forced.

## **3. It protects you from burnout**

Ministry outside your gifting drains you. Ministry inside your gifting energizes you. If you've got the gift of mercy, working with hurting people fills your tank. If you've got administration, organizing systems lights you up. When you know your gifts, you can say yes to the right things and no to the wrong things ... guilt-free.

## **4. It helps everyone around you**

When you function in your gifts, the whole body wins. Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 12** that the church is like a body ... every part matters. When your part does what it's designed to do, everyone benefits.

## **5. It brings you joy**

There's nothing like operating in your sweet spot ... doing what God made you to do. You'll think, "THIS is what I was born for!" That's not pride ... that's purpose.

## **YOUR JOURNEY STARTS NOW**

Over the next three weeks, we're going deeper. We're going to help you nail down your specific gifts, figure out how to develop them, and discover where to use them. But today, we're starting with this simple truth: **God put something in you that the world needs.**

Moses had a stick. David had a sling. The widow had a jar of oil. The boy had a lunch. They all had something in their hands ... and when they gave it to God, He did something extraordinary with it.

What's in your hand today? What has God put in you? It's time to find out! Let me leave you with this from Sam Chand:

*"Your gifts are not for you. They are for the benefit of others. The greatest use of your life is to invest it in something that will outlast it."*

You matter. What's in you matters. And the church needs what only you can bring.

## **DISCOVERY EXERCISE #1: PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Okay, grab your pen. For the next 10 minutes, I want you to work through these questions. Be honest. No one's grading this but you:

1. Have you ever felt like you had nothing special to offer? What was that like?

2. Looking at that gift list we just went through, which 2-3 jumped out at you? (First impressions ... don't overthink it!)
3. When have you felt most "in the zone" while helping others? What were you doing?
4. What kind of serving energizes you instead of draining you?
5. If someone gave you a million dollars and said you had to spend it on ministry, what would you do? (This reveals what you're passionate about)
6. Finish this sentence: "If I could do anything for God without worrying about failing, I would..."

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS QUOTES

In your manual, you'll find eight quotes about spiritual gifts. Circle the one that hits you the hardest and write a short paragraph explaining why it matters to you.

*"Your gift is not about you; it's about others. Serve with humility and love."* - Unknown

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*"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another."* - 1 Peter 4:10 (NLT)

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*"When you discover your spiritual gift, you unlock the door to your divine destiny."* - Myles Munroe

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*"Spiritual gifts are tools for building others up. If they're not being used, they're just taking up space."* - Bill Hybels

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*"You can't hire someone to do your exercise for you, and you can't hire someone to live out your spiritual gifts for you."* - Christine Caine

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*"Your spiritual gift is God's way of making you an answer to someone else's prayer."* - Unknown

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*"The purpose of spiritual gifts is not to make us feel special, but to make us useful."* - Andy Stanley

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*"Everybody is gifted. But some people never open their package."* - Unknown

## ASSIGNMENT

Here's your homework ... and it's actually fun. This week, I want you to do three "gift discovery interviews." Find three people who know you well (could be your spouse, a close friend, a family member, a co-worker) and ask them this question:

**"When you think about me, what do you see as my strengths? What do I do that seems to come naturally and helps others?"**

Write down exactly what they say. Don't argue with them. Don't deflect. Don't say, "Oh, that's nothing." Just write it down. Often, other people can see gifts in us that we totally miss because they feel so natural to us.

Bring your findings back next week. We're going to use them as clues in your gift discovery process. This is going to be good. See you next week!

## Resource Credits

1. Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Life*. Zondervan, 2002.
2. Stanley, Andy. *Visioneering*. Multnomah Books, 1999.
3. Munroe, Myles. *Understanding Your Potential*. Destiny Image, 1991.
4. Giglio, Louie. *Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table*. Passion Publishing, 2021.
5. Bugbee, Bruce. *What You Do Best in the Body of Christ*. Zondervan, 2005.

*Next Week: LESSON 2 - PURPOSE (Understanding Your Purpose)*

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