

HOLY SPIRIT



SHEPHERDCHURCH

LESSON 4:

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT II

LIFE GROUP LEADERS: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING...

You and your Life Group have made it to the halfway point of our Holy Spirit series! We know leading a Life Group takes time, prayer, preparation, and heart, so we want you to know that your faithfulness is making a real difference as people grow in their relationship with Jesus and with one another.

As always, we're here to support you. If you have any questions, need advice about a situation in your group, or there's anything we can do to help, please don't hesitate to reach out to a member of the Life Groups staff team. We look forward to opportunities to encourage you and partner with you however we can.

Thank you again for all you do. We're grateful for you and excited to see what God continues to do through your Life Group during the second half of this series!

—The Life Groups Team

WELCOME

What would your friends say that you're naturally good at?

Guide the Conversation

This is a fun time, designed to bring lightheartedness to your Life Group (as each WELCOME section is).

WORSHIP

Read **Psalm 100** together, then spend a few minutes thanking God for the unique ways He has gifted each person in the group and asking Him to help everyone use those gifts for His glory.

Guide the Conversation

Budget about 5-7 minutes for the group for this section of the lesson. Try asking 1 person to read the verses aloud. Then you can also try the "popcorn prayer" method, where you give people time to pray as they feel led. As the leader, it would be good for you to close out this time in prayer.

WORD

Read **Romans 12:3–8**.

1. According to **Romans 12:3–8**, why do you think God gives different gifts to different people instead of giving everyone the same gifts?

Guide the Conversation

When studying spiritual gifts, it's easy to be unintentionally focused on self (and focusing on your own spiritual gifts is NOT a bad thing!). However, this question/prompt is meant to encourage your Life Group to think beyond themselves and consider God's greater purpose for spiritual gifts as they pertain to the church as a whole. Just as God's Kingdom is made up of every tongue, tribe, and nation (Revelation 7:9), God's family needs people with different gifts, personalities, and callings. To get the conversation going, you can ask further questions like, "What would happen if everyone had the gift of teaching but no one had the gift of serving?" or "How have you been blessed by someone whose gifts are different from yours?" Hopefully your group knows this, but different gifts don't equate to a hierarchy of gifts. Different gifts reflect God's wisdom and grace in equipping His people to work together. If time allows, this could be a good chance for your group members to briefly celebrate the gifts they see in one another.

Deeper Dive

In Romans 12:3–8, Paul explains that God gives different spiritual gifts because His people are meant to function as one body with many different parts. After spending 11 chapters describing God's mercy, Paul begins Romans 12 by calling Christians to offer their lives as living sacrifices.

He then immediately discusses humility, warning to "not to think of yourself more highly than you ought" (v. 3). The Greek word *phroneō* (φρονέω), translated "to think," refers to "one's mindset or attitude." Paul urges believers to have a sober and realistic view of themselves, because every gift comes from God's grace rather than their own ability. Different gifts cultivate humility because they remind us that we need one another. No one can say, "I have everything the church needs," and no one should believe, "I have nothing to contribute."

Paul goes on to describe the church as one body with many members, each with a unique function. In the first-century Roman church, Christians came from diverse ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds, creating opportunities for comparison and division. Paul reminds them that diversity is not a problem to overcome but a crucial element of God's design for His people.

If every Christian possessed the same abilities, many needs within the body of Christ would go unmet, and the church would not reflect the fullness of Christ's ministry. Paul lists gifts such as prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, and showing mercy to demonstrate that every role is valuable, whether it is highly visible or quietly done behind the scenes.

The diversity of gifts among Christians illustrates how every believer is equally valuable because each is equally loved and equally empowered by God's grace, even though our assignments differ. God gives different gifts to different people because His goal is interdependence, not independence. Spirit-driven interdependence glorifies Jesus, while independence merely places the spotlight on the individual. When every Christian serves according to God's grace rather than seeking personal recognition, the entire body is strengthened, Christ is honored, and the gospel is displayed through a community that reflects His character.

2. How does **Romans 12:3–8** challenge the way our culture views talent and ability?

Guide the Conversation

In a sense, this question/prompt is literally a continuation of the previous question/prompt. So, as you continue the conversation, help your Life Group compare the values of our culture with the values of God's Kingdom. They'll probably note that, as we've discussed earlier in this series, our culture often measures people by their achievements, influence, popularity, or natural talent, encouraging us to promote ourselves and compete with others. Romans 12:3–8 offers a completely different perspective by reminding us that every ability we have is a gift of God's grace and is meant to be used to serve others, not elevate ourselves. Do not offer the following until later in the conversation (if at all), but it would be good for your group to discuss how humility, teamwork, and serving others stand out in a world that often values individual success above all else. At some point, it might be good for you to say something such as, "God isn't looking for the most talented. He's looking for people who are faithful and willing to use their gifts for God's glory and the good of others."

3. Where and how does Paul use the words "grace" and "faith" in **Romans 12:3–6**? What does this teach us about how we should view spiritual gifts?

Guide the Conversation

As your Life Group studies Paul's repeated use of the words "grace" and "faith" in Romans 12:3–6, try asking your fellow group members why God intentionally connects those two words to spiritual gifts. Help them see that Paul is reminding us Christians that both our salvation and our ability to serve begin with God, not with us. To go even further, our ability to serve with spiritual gifts and its impact begin and end with God. You probably won't need to do this, but if needed, remind the group that spiritual gifts aren't badges of honor or signs of greater spirituality. They are gifts entrusted to us for the benefit of others.

Deeper Dive

In Romans 12:3–6, Paul connects the ideas of "grace" and "faith" to the use of spiritual gifts.

- In verse 3, he says, “by the grace given me,” referring to the calling of Apostleship that God had graciously entrusted to him. The Greek word *charis* (χάρις), translated “grace,” means God’s “unmerited favor.”
- Paul continues in verse 3 by telling Christians not to think too highly of themselves but to think with sober judgment “in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.” The word “faith” is actually better translated “measure of faith.” The phrase “measure of faith” probably refers to the measure of faith God has given each Christian to fulfill the plan and role that He assigned them.
- Paul continues in the beginning of verse 6 by saying, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.” Once again, he emphasizes that spiritual gifts are expressions of God’s grace, not human achievement. Writing to a diverse church in Rome made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers, Paul wanted to guard against pride, comparison, and division.
- In the second part of verse 6, Paul writes, “If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith.” More than likely, the words “prophesy” and “prophesying” refer to preaching. Paul is telling Christians with the gift of prophesying or preaching that their words must be driven by the strongest faith.

The repeated references to “grace” and “faith” completely reshape how we should view spiritual gifts. As stated in the previous couple of questions/prompts of this lesson, since our gifts are given by grace, we have no reason to boast, because we did not earn them or deserve them. Similar to how we’re saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9), we also serve by grace through faith. Everything begins with God and returns glory to God. This means we should approach our gifts with humility, gratitude, and confidence at the same time:

- Humility because spiritual gifts are products of God’s grace
- Gratitude because He chose to use us.
- Confidence because He equips us to do the work He’s given us.

When believers understand that both the gift and the ability to use it come from God, comparison gives way to cooperation, pride gives way to worship, and the church becomes a community where every member serves joyfully for the good of others and the glory of Jesus.

4. What’s the point of the human body illustration in **Romans 12:4–5**?

Guide the Conversation

Help your Life Group picture Paul’s illustration in practical terms. Ask them what would happen if every part of the human body tried to do the same job or if one part decided the others weren’t important. Then connect that idea to the church by saying something like, “God has designed Christians to depend on one another, with each person contributing something unique to the health of the whole body.” Encourage the group to share examples of how someone else’s gifts have strengthened or encouraged them. Doing so further drives home Paul’s point: though different, we’re connected. Every Christian is needed, every gift has value, and we function best when we humbly use our gifts alongside others.

Deeper Dive

In Romans 12:4–5, Paul uses the human body as an illustration to show that unity does not require uniformity. Just as the human body has many parts with different functions, the church is made up of many believers with different gifts and responsibilities. Paul says, “we have many members in one body, and these members do not all have the same function.” The Greek word for “members” is *melē* (μέλη), meaning “individual body parts or limbs,” while “function” comes from *praxis* (πρᾶξις), referring to “the work or activity each part performs.”

Every part (aka, person) has a distinct role, yet every part belongs to the same body. Paul then writes that Christians are “one body in Christ,” emphasizing that our unity is found in our relationship with Jesus rather than in having the same personalities, backgrounds, or abilities. Such imagery would have been familiar in the Roman world, where writers often used the body to describe society. However, Paul uses the body as an illustration with a distinctly Christian meaning: unlike social hierarchy, every Christian has equal value because each belongs to Jesus and is connected to one another.

Verse 5 says we are “members of one another,” which points not only to our relationship with Jesus but also our responsibility to one another. God’s design for the church is to be a living, interconnected community where every believer contributes to the health and growth of the whole body. This is why every believer is equally important. The believer who serves quietly behind the scenes is just as important as the one who teaches or leads in front of others. Those with more visible gifts cannot think they are more important, and those with less visible gifts should never believe they have little to offer.

5. Re-read **Romans 12:6–8**. What’s one practical way you can use one of your spiritual gifts to serve someone this week?

Guide the Conversation

As you prepare to finish the WORD section, this final question/prompt is designed to move your group from learning to action. Ask everyone to think of one specific person they could serve this week using a gift God has given them. Some examples include:

- Someone with the gift of encouragement could send an encouraging text or make a phone call.
- Someone with the gift of serving could help a neighbor or volunteer at church.
- Someone with the gift of mercy could spend time with someone who is hurting.
- Someone with the gift of giving could quietly meet a practical need.

These are just a few examples, and there are numerous other examples that your group members can share. Along these lines, please don’t share examples unless necessary. You don’t want to stifle any creative example a group member might offer. Hopefully, these examples will motivate everyone to share one concrete step they plan to take this week and, if they’re comfortable, invite the group to check in

with one another over the next 7 days and at the next meeting.

WITNESS

If you haven't already, go to shepherdchurch.com/go and sign your Life Group up for an outreach project. If you have already done so, spend some time working out the details of your local outreach project.

Also, if you didn't do so last week, go to shepherdchurch.com/myassessments to discover your spiritual gifts. You will need to set up a profile if you don't have one already (it's free to set up a profile).

Guide the Conversation

Budget about 5–10 minutes for this final part of the lesson.