

HOLY SPIRIT



SHEPHERDCHURCH

LESSON 3: GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT I

WELCOME

Have you ever been given a gift that you weren't sure how to use? If so, what was it and what happened?

Guide the Conversation

The WELCOME section of each lesson is designed to be fun and bring lightheartedness to your Life Group, so please do not skip past this section of the lesson. It also helps your brand-new and returning Life Group members get to know each other, catch up on the week, share random thoughts, etc.

WORSHIP

Read **Psalm 139:23–24** together, then spend a few minutes in silent prayer asking the Holy Spirit to reveal how He wants to use each person this week.

Guide the Conversation

Budget around 7 minutes for this section of your Life Group time.

WORD

Read **1 Corinthians 12:4–11**.

1. According to **1 Corinthians 12:4–7** and **Ephesians 4:11–13**, what are spiritual gifts and what is their purpose?

Guide the Conversation

Spiritual gifts are not special talents people develop on their own but supernatural abilities the Holy Spirit gives to every Christian for God's purposes. After reading 1 Corinthians 12:4–7, point out that while the gifts are different, they all come from the same Spirit and are given "for the common good," not for personal gain. In Ephesians 4:11–13, notice that God also gives gifted leaders to equip His people so that everyone can serve and help the whole body of Christ grow in maturity and unity. The goal of this discussion isn't to compare gifts or figure out who has the most impressive gift. To help get this point across, try asking questions that will your fellow Life Group members think about how God uniquely wired them to encourage, serve, teach, lead, show mercy, build up others., or _____ (you fill-in-the-blank).

Deeper Dive

Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 12:4–7 that spiritual gifts are supernatural abilities that the Holy Spirit gives Christians for God’s purposes. The word translated “gifts” is the Greek word *charismata* (χαρίσματα), which comes from *charis* (χάρις), meaning “grace.” Spiritual gifts are gifts of grace given by the Spirit. They aren’t rewards for spiritual maturity or achievements.

Paul also emphasizes diversity by repeating that there are different gifts, different kinds of service, and different kinds of workings, yet the same Spirit, the same Lord (Jesus), and the same God (the Father) is at work in all of them. This highlights both the unity and diversity of the Trinity in empowering believers. In verse 7, Paul says that the manifestation of the Spirit is given “for the common good.” The idea is that one of the ways the Holy Spirit makes His presence visible is through the way Christians serve one another. In the first-century church, believers came from different backgrounds, social classes, various ages, and across cultures. Corinth was especially known for division and competition. Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that spiritual gifts were never intended to elevate certain Christians above others but to strengthen the entire church.

In Ephesians 4:11–13, Paul shifts the focus from individual gifts to Christ giving gifted people—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—to equip the church. The word “equip” comes from the Greek word “*katartismos*” (καταρτισμός), which carries the idea of “preparing, restoring, or making someone fully ready for a task.” The goal of church leadership is not to do all the ministry themselves but to prepare every Christian to serve. As each believer uses the gifts God has given, the church is built up, grows in unity, and becomes more like Jesus.

Every believer has a meaningful role in God’s mission. When every believer faithfully uses the grace God has entrusted to them, the body of Christ functions the way God designed it, with each member contributing to the health, growth, and witness of the whole church.

2. Look at the gifts listed in **1 Corinthians 12:4–11** and list examples of how God can use each gift for Jesus.

Guide the Conversation

For this question/prompt, focus on how each gift helps people know Jesus and strengthens His church. Go through the list one gift at a time and ask your Life Group to brainstorm real-life examples of how God might use it today. For example, how could wisdom help someone make a godly decision? How could healing demonstrate God’s compassion? How could discernment protect someone from false teaching? It will be helpful if they think about situations they’ve seen in their own lives or church where God has worked through these kinds of gifts. Hopefully you won’t need to do this, but if there’s disagreement on what everyone can agree on: every spiritual gift comes from the Holy Spirit, every gift is valuable, and every gift is designed to glorify Jesus, serve others, and build up the body of Christ.

Deeper Dive

In 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, Paul gives examples of several spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit distributes “just as He determines” (v. 11). The Greek word *charismata* (χαρίσματα), meaning “gifts of grace,” reminds us that these abilities are graciously given by God, not earned through spiritual maturity or natural talent. The reason Paul wrote these words to the church in Corinth is that the Corinthian believers had begun to treat certain gifts—especially the more visible or dramatic ones—as signs of greater spirituality. Instead, Paul teaches that every gift comes from the same Holy Spirit and has equal value because each one points people to Jesus and builds up the church. The list includes:

- The message of wisdom (helping people apply God’s truth to difficult situations)
- The message of knowledge (understanding and communicating truth that benefits others)
- Faith (extraordinary confidence in God during impossible circumstances)
- Gifts of healing (God bringing physical, emotional, or spiritual healing through believers)
- Miraculous powers (God working in extraordinary ways that display His power)
- Prophecy (speaking God’s truth to encourage, strengthen, or warn—this can also describe preaching)
- Distinguishing between spirits (discernment and recognizing what comes from God and what does not)
- Different kinds of tongues (speaking in unlearned languages as the Spirit enables)
- The interpretation of tongues (explaining the meaning so the church can be strengthened).

While Christians differ on how some of these gifts function today, all believers can agree that every genuine spiritual gift comes from the Holy Spirit and is meant to glorify Christ.

God can use each of these gifts in ways to help people know and follow Jesus.

- He may use wisdom to guide someone through a difficult decision with biblical truth.
- Knowledge can help explain Scripture clearly or provide insight that strengthens another believer’s faith.
- Faith can inspire others to trust God when circumstances seem hopeless.
- Healing can reveal God’s compassion and remind people that He is still at work.
- Miracles can point unbelievers to God’s power and strengthen the faith of His people.
- Prophecy can encourage a discouraged believer, call someone to repentance, or remind the church to stay faithful to God’s Word.
- Discernment helps protect the church from false teaching and spiritual deception.
- Tongues can serve as a sign of God’s work and, when interpreted, strengthen the church through understandable encouragement.
- Interpretation allows the whole congregation to benefit from what is spoken.

Again, the Spirit never draws attention to Himself or to the person exercising the gift. The Spirit always points people to Christ, strengthens the body of believers, and advances God’s mission in the world.

3. What does **1 Corinthians 12:4–11** teach us about the Holy Spirit's character and work through Christians? And why does it matter that every gift comes from the same Spirit?

Guide the Conversation

To begin navigating this prompt/question, try asking everyone to observe repeated phrases like “the same Spirit” and point out that, although the gifts are diverse, they all have the same divine source. Then, you could ask the group to identify what this tells us about the Holy Spirit's character: He is generous, wise, intentional, and unifying. The Spirit doesn't give every believer the same gifts because He has designed the body of Christ to depend on one another. You can ask why it matters that every gift comes from the same Spirit. If you do ask, help your Life Group see that this leaves no room for pride, jealousy, or competition. No gift makes someone more valuable or more spiritual than another because every gift is an expression of God's grace. The Holy Spirit works through ordinary believers in extraordinary ways, and His goal is always to glorify Jesus, strengthen His people, and help the church accomplish the Great Commission together.

Deeper Dive

In 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, Paul paints a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit's character and work through His people. He continually emphasizes “different kinds” of gifts, service, and activities, but they all come from “the same Spirit,” “the same Lord,” and “the same God” (v. 4–6). This repeated pattern reflects the unity of the Trinity while highlighting the Spirit's personal role in empowering believers. The Greek word *diabaseis* (διαρέσεις), translated “different kinds” or “varieties,” emphasizes diversity rather than uniformity. God intentionally distributes different gifts because His people are meant to complement one another. Verse 7 talks about “the manifestation” of the Spirit. A manifestation is something made visible, so Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit makes His presence evident through the lives and ministries of believers.

In first-century Corinth, a city marked by status, competition, and pride, believers were tempted to rank certain gifts above others. Paul challenges that mindset by teaching that the Spirit's work is never about making one Christian look more important than another but about serving the entire body of Christ. When believers remember that the same Holy Spirit empowers every gift, it produces humility instead of pride, gratitude instead of envy, and cooperation instead of competition.

It matters that every gift comes from the same Spirit because it reminds us that every believer has equal value, even though we have different roles. No one can boast because they earned their gift, and no one should feel inferior because their gift seems less visible. Verse 11 says the Spirit “distributes” these gifts “to each one, just as He determines.” The Greek verb *diareō* (διαρέω) means “to divide or intentionally distribute.” This points to the Holy Spirit sovereignly and wisely giving each Christian the gifts He knows are best for God's purposes.

4. As you read **1 Corinthians 12:7–11**, where are you tempted to seek recognition for yourself instead of looking for ways to use your gifts to serve others and point them to Jesus?

Guide the Conversation

This question/prompt is an opportunity for your Life Group members to be honest about their motives, so set the tone by reminding the group that this isn't about feeling guilty but about growing to be more like Jesus. It might be helpful to give everyone a moment to reflect before anyone answers. As the leader, consider sharing a personal example of a time when you were tempted or gave in to the inner desire to seek appreciation, recognition, or affirmation while serving. If people struggle to answer, ask gentle follow-up questions like, "When do you feel most disappointed if no one notices what you've done?" or "What would it look like to serve with the same faithfulness even if no one thanked you?" Close by reminding your Life Group that the greatest joy is bringing Jesus all the glory.

5. Which spiritual gifts do you believe that you've been given? How do you use those gifts, or how can you begin to use those gifts? If you aren't sure which spiritual gifts you've been given, go to shepherdchurch.com/myassessments to find out! 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 question/prompt. If people in your group haven't taken a spiritual gift survey, ask them to share what they believe one or more of their spiritual gifts might be. Then, encourage them to take the spiritual gift survey and to create a profile if they haven't already.

WITNESS

As a Life Group, go to shepherdchurch.com/go and choose an outreach project to participate in sometime in the next few weeks. Make sure everyone in your Life Group has the details.

This prompt is designed to move your Life Group from study to action by doing an outreach project. The website link connects your group to opportunities that Shepherd Church has already organized (local service projects, community partnerships, and ways to meet tangible needs). By choosing one together, your Life Group can live out what you're studying in Scripture about serving others and showing God's love.

As a Life Group, you'll want to set aside time to:

- Look through the options on the website together
- Narrow down a project that fits your Life Group's availability and strengths
- Clarify details, such as the date, time, location, and responsibilities
- Make sure everyone gets the information, either by sharing it verbally, texting/emailing the Life Group, or creating a group chat reminder