

## Transcript 161

Shea Houdmann

Welcome to the Got Questions podcast. Joining me today is Gwen. She's the volunteer coordinator, also the administrator for [compellingtruth.org](http://compellingtruth.org) and Nelson, who's the director of video content. So Nelson, Gwen, welcome. Today, we'll be talking about spiritual gifts. If you search our website, you'll find many many different articles related to spiritual gifts. So we want to kind of start the conversation with what is the spiritual gift? What are the spiritual gifts? And maybe talk a little bit about why it's important to know how God has gifted you spiritually? But also discuss some of the misconceptions that are pretty common around spiritual gifts based on the type of questions we're asked. So, Nelson, why don't you start us off? So according to the Bible, what is a spiritual?

Nelson Domingues

A spiritual gift is a gifting that God gives believers to edify the church and to glorify himself, to bring glory to himself. So these are gifts that he gives and there are many different gifts, and they're listed in several different places in Scripture. And again, they are to empower the believer so that the believer can build up a church and glorify God.

Shea Houdmann

Now the main passages that you point to for the spiritual gift. There's a list in First Corinthians chapter 12. There's another list in Ephesians Chapter 4. There's a list in Romans 12, so there's a list of depending on how much overlap there is, possibly as many as 20 different spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible. There's different ways that God empowers believers to serve, serve the body of Christ. And every passage that talks about spiritual gifts also emphasizes how they're designed to promote unity. That no gift is more important or more valuable than any other. But, I like said earlier that it is important to know both what the Bible teaches about spiritual gifts, but also it's important to know how God is spiritually gifted you. So, Gwen, what's your, based on the type of questions you receive, what are some of the most frequent questions that people have about spiritual gifts in terms of knowing what gifts you have and what that actually means for how you serve God?

Gwen Sellers

What I see come up in churches sometimes is you know, people want to get involved and want to be part of the ministry, but maybe aren't really sure where. I mean, there are so many opportunities and what should they do? And so often that's when people offer a spiritual gift test because it can just help you have some direction. And I think even in going forward, if you kind of have an idea of, oh, here's where God really uses me. Maybe here's how he's wired me naturally, but how he then like, really enables it for the good of the church, both through your own observation as well as the observation of others and seeing you and seeing what you do can help give you some direction in terms of where to serve and what to look for. So for instance, you know teaching, if you seem to be a really good teacher, you know, maybe in your Bible studies every time you share something, people are like oh wow. I really get it now. That can be a flag to, well, maybe this is how God has gifted me. Maybe I need to seek some opportunities to teach, or to learn more. So I think it just really helps give people sort of a framework to be able to know where and how they might plug in. You were talking about how those passages often

emphasize unity and they do they talk about we're all one and they often also use the body metaphor and how we we are all each a part of the body and we all each need one another. And so I think sometimes having an idea of which part of the body you are can just be a helpful way to really fully function in that calling. And yeah and fully serve the Lord and glorify him in it. And I think also just one more thing. So in First, Peter versus 10 and 11, it says as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace. Whoever speaks has one who speaks oracles of God. Whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. So I think knowing your spiritual gift can sort of give you the courage to live it out to God's glory. I mean, it's all meant to be done in humility and for the good of the church.

Shea Houdmann

So here, let me go to this question next. It's for for both you Gwen and Nelson, I'll answer as well. And have you ever taken a spiritual gift test? And if so, what gift or gifts did it the test say you have?

Nelson Domingues

I think most people probably took some spiritual gift tests. I've taken in the past and there's different tests, and oftentimes the different tests have different results in a sense of focus and how they really explain each one or how much detail goes into each one. But I tend to. I've received the gift of teaching and of pastoring, were part of my gifts. Also, there were other things that are mentioned in there. They usually these tests have scales and things like that, but those are typically the ones I've received feedback on most.

Gwen Sellers

I have. It's been, it's been so many years though. What's recently in my mind is more just generic strength tests. But when I think about spiritual gifts, I think that for me it's encouragement or sometimes helps, and that fits in, you know, perfectly to what I do. And I do pay attention to that. And so I actively seek opportunity to encourage. Or I recognize that you know, I help clean up my church. We meet in a in a school, and so we have to set up and clean up every week and I that's part of my personality. But you know, maybe is also part of like, yes, I was kind of designed to be a a helper behind the scenes person is where I thrive. And so I seek and enjoy those opportunities.

Shea Houdmann

So for me, every spiritual gifts tests I've taken has indicated some gifting along the lines of teaching. And for me that always confused me because I'd always equated teaching with public speaking. Teaching like in a classroom setting or preaching like church on Sunday, neither of which I do very regularly. But you know you can teach through writing. You can teach through other means other than public speaking. And so most people who've gotten to know me and observe me or serve long time and say no Shea, you you have a gift at taking complicated theological biblical concepts and explaining in a way that's easy to understand, which again is what one of the main goals that Got Questions is help people to understand the Bible better. So I when I'm asked, I typically say that my my primary spiritual gift is to gift the teaching, but that expresses itself primarily through writing, not through public speaking or other oratory type gifts. So now it's always interesting. I've also found that gift, those gift tests, they're just like any other personality test. They can tend to be influenced. You can push them a certain direction, so it's

really important to answer them as objectively as possible. And then also if you're looking for ways to serve God, and you really don't know what your spiritual gift is. To ask the people who know you best. To identify what spiritual gift that they've observed in you. What way they see you serving God and truly having an impact because it's that impact piece that really communicates while God is doing something amazing to you in this area, that might be your spiritual gift.

Gwen Sellers

And I think, you know, sometimes too it's also like just try something. I mean especially I'm thinking you know, for new believers, maybe there isn't really a whole lot of experience with the church. So there hasn't been an opportunity for other people to observe that impact and to point out like hey, I notice that anytime this happens God really works through you. So sometimes it's just try stuff and see what happens.

Gwen Sellers

And I think you know, to Nelson's point of the spiritual gifts test, they really do all list different stuff and different definitions of it. And even within the Bible, there are, you know, various gifts and various words. So I think there's sometimes a sense of maybe the Bible isn't really a comprehensive list. It's like the Holy Spirit has given you know each one a gift like blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But there are, you know, other things there. So you don't necessarily have to be pigeonholed into like this test said this gift is this definition. Like to your point, Shea of, you know, teaching. And so in your mind that means oratory in public but isn't the way that God's gifted you so. But he has gifted you with teaching, so kind of being using those tests as a tool, but being sort of open minded to what it really means in reality for you.

Nelson Domingues

I've always found when people are questioning, you know, what gift do I have or I don't know what gift I have or I've never taken a test. I know as a pastor, people would come up to me all the time and they would be getting started in the church and they looking for where to serve and they they always hear you should serve in your gifting, right? You should serve in your gifting, but some of them say I don't know what my gifting is. And so a lot of the feedback we often get back would be now what, what do people say about you? Do, do they learn from you? Are you a communicator? What are the areas that you seem to thrive in? A lot of times you don't really need a written test and you just talk to your closest friends. For those who are married, you can talk to your spouse. They know you the best. And you can ask them you know what areas do you see that I'm, I'm just naturally good at. Or you think I God has gifted me to be effective in. And a lot of times, that feedback is just golden. It's it's really helpful.

Nelson Domingues

And sometimes other people don't have feedback, they don't have someone to ask or they don't feel like they can really trust anyone around them or they don't know enough people. Maybe they're new in the area. And for those types of situations, it's always good just to try different things. Now especially in the church contexts when we come together and meet together, there are many different things to do and in ways to bless one another and and glorify God and so try some different things. Maybe start on childcare, maybe start out in reading. Maybe ask if you can do announcements and perhaps teach a Sunday school class. And then as you go through these different things, you'll find that some of

them will completely drain you and you you won't like it. It'll be difficult. You won't feel like you're naturally clicking in it. But there be some other areas perhaps, where you are really thriving in. I mean, you walk away from that experience, maybe you're tired, but you still walk away from the experience thinking like, wow, I really enjoyed that. I feel like I did something important. I feel like I was doing something effective and so a lot of question like should I work with the youth? I have no ability to work with the youth in our church and like you'd be really surprised if you have a gifting for teaching or for for compassion for just being a good listener to some of these students, you'd be amazed at the effectiveness you could have on that team.

Nelson Domingues

You're gifting may not look like you think it should look like or or what it might typically look like and and we do that way too often. We look at the people around us and we think I I want that gifting or it would be good I don't have that, so I can't do that ministry. I'm not like so and so so I can't do that. And I think that's a dangerous place to be. I think God will use you in the place that he's gifted you. And even if you don't look like the people around because maybe your church needs someone who looks different to be doing the things that he wants you to do within that context. And so again, if you don't know what gift you have, just ask the people around or be able to try some different areas and see where you gravitate towards, where you see things happening. Where the Lord is working through you in that context.

Gwen Sellers

I think that's such an important point of that sometimes when we look around and compare and I think having a concept of spiritual gifts can help us with that rather than, you know, look around and wish we were like somebody else or think we have to be exactly like someone else to look around and recognize these are different parts of the body. And so to celebrate that. It's like wow, look like that guys an ear over there. Isn't that great? And you know, not be being like Oh well, too bad I'm a hand. Like that's kind of a lousy deal, I mean. So when we have that concept of God has designed people and equipped people differently for a purpose so that we can all together complement one another and move forward. And I think is, yeah, is a helpful way for us to to stay humble and also to celebrate one another. And you know, we keep talking about asking other people what your spiritual gift is. I think we can also be people who maybe it's as an encourager I'm saying this, but, you know, we can be people who specifically call that out and encourage other people when we notice someone functioning in a spiritual gift to say, hey, I noticed God really gifted you that this way and it's really blessed me today.

Shea Houdmann

Absolutely. I love the the body analogy that Paul gives in for Corinthians 12, where the context of this is in the Corinthian church. And I'm sure many other churches back then and today, certain spiritual just for getting all the attention. And the Corinthian churches seems to have been the gift of tongues and prophecy, and the the miraculous gifts. So again, this is not the focus of this episode. But everyone in the Church of the Corinth wanted those gifts. They wanted the flashy, showy ones, they wanted the ones that are most clearly demonstrate in God's miraculous power. Paul's counter to that is look, everyone was a mouth where would the sense of sight be? If everyone was a foot. Everyone was a hand or eye, etc, etc. It's like no. Just like a body, all the parts need one another to function optimally. So do we in the body of Christ need different people who are gifted in different ways. And none of the gifts are more important or more valuable than the other. Today it almost seems in some churches that the

spiritual gift of teaching gets all the emphasis. That those who are teaching or those are the most important people in the church. And that's understandable with the the sermon being such a big emphasis in churches, as it should be, but the gift of teaching is not the most important gift in the church either. We need people with gifts of compassion, gifts of service, gift, gift of help, the gift of faith, the gift of giving et cetera, et cetera.

Shea Houdmann

And I've read many bible commentators, as I've studied for this this week. Want to think the spiritual gifts listed in the Bible are all of them, that there may be other spiritual gifts that the Bible doesn't specifically mention, so don't even restrict yourself to serving necessarily in the ways that the Bible explicitly mentions. There could be other ways, other gifts, and there's no way we can know that Paul was intending this is a comprehensive list. So rather than focusing so much on a gift that you want or a gift even that you necessarily your church needs and focus on what is a need in this church. How can I meet that need? How can I serve God in such a way? There's a saying that God's calling is God's enabling. And what that means is that if God is calling you to do something, he will enable you to do it.

Shea Houdmann

And we could talk some about whether God gives each person only one spiritual gift and one spiritual gift for their entire life, or if we have multiple spiritual gifts, all can function at the same time or depending on what stage of life we're in or what God's calling us to. Does God give us different spiritual gifts at different times? But the Bible doesn't answer any of those questions explicitly. But God is calling you to do something. He will give you what you need to be able to accomplish that purpose in a way that glorifies him and that encourages others.

Shea Houdmann

So probably the primary faulty question that we see a lot at Got Questions is people trying to limit to themselves by what spiritual gift they have, or what spiritual gift they think they have. That well God is giving me the gift of this, therefore, that's the only way I can serve God. And that is completely foreign to the passage of the Bible on spiritual gifts where the focus is on on unity, on serving alongside, on encouraging, rather doing things for the health and growth of the body. And nowhere does it say that you're limited to one spiritual gift at any one time, or for your entire life. So it's a mindset change. So just look for opportunities to serve and if we have a spiritual gift that's been clearly identified and it's been demonstrated by its effectiveness, lives being changed, people being encouraged, let's find ways to serve God in that. But not use that as an excuse to limit ourselves to that one area.

Gwen Sellers

I I was talking with one of our other staff members about this prior and she mentioned one helpful thing for people sometimes is to frame whatever it is they need to do through their spiritual gifts. So sometimes you might legitimately feel like this is not my gifting, and yet this is the need of the moment. But looking at that through the lens of OK, well, what is my gifting and how might God be equipping me for this need of the moment? Just through himself, but even also, how can I bring that gift to bear in it? So the example she provided was someone who was asked to do administrative work, who's like, I don't really like doing administration. But she felt like she had the spiritual gift of serving. So in her mind, she said it as well I'm serving my church through providing this.

Nelson Domingues

Yeah, it's a great way to look at it. I think sometimes we might want to, you know, say no to different things just because, like, oh, I'm definitely not gifted in that. Well, that God did he give you time? He he puts you in this place. He give you the ability to do it. Maybe he is calling you to do that right now because in the end of the day you're serving the others here at the church and you're glorifying God. And so it's not that you have to feel like I only do the thing that I feel specifically gifted at. There could be many different areas and you may find as you work in an area where you previously thought you were not gifted that God uses you in tremendous ways, and perhaps all of a sudden you might see like, wow, I truly am gifted in a certain area. Just like in the accounting. Like maybe I can't stand numbers. I don't like doing it. But the fact that I can help my church keep its books straight. That the pastors are content and that everything is right and legal. That they don't have to worry about that. That other people can focus on other things in the ministry, that's amazing. And and you enable that by the work that you're doing. And so we should definitely not put aside work or say no to different things just because we think we might not be gifted in it. The Lord is calling you to it or if someone else is saying, hey, won't you get this shot? Sometimes we should just try to give it a shot and see what we can do.

Nelson Domingues

That reminds me of a of a Psalm. Psalm 70. Sorry. In Psalm 37, verses four and five, it says. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your ways to the Lord. Trust in him, and he will act. And I think that is applicable in our scenario here where you just serve God lovingly and serve the people around you lovingly and you will find joy as you see him working in the lives of the people around you. And just because you may not like accounting, for example, you could even find great delight and great joy in that because you were serving the Lord your God in in a meaningful and impactful way.

Gwen Sellers

And I will say I I mean to that, yeah, I think it is like when your heart is really is set on that and it's set on God and serving him and serving others. And paying attention to yeah, to him and to where he's calling, cause, like Shea said, you know, God equips the people that he calls. But then I think there's also the other saying the need is not the call. So it is true that sometimes there might be a need in your church, and you might not be the one who's called to to fit it. And like just because there's a need, doesn't necessarily mean God is calling you to it. He might be calling someone else and you might need to be patient and let them wait, but yeah, but if God definitely is calling you to something or like Nelson said, someone else has asked you to give it a try. Often the excuse of well, I'm not spiritually gifted in that isn't really a great one.

Shea Houdmann

Just I've been doing a study in the qualifications for deacons and elders recently and what's interesting about that passage in First Timothy 3 and Titus one is that in other places in the New Testament, all of us are called to exhibit each of those qualities, and very similarly with the spiritual gifts. You look at the spiritual gifts list in Romans chapter 12. Some of them are serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership and mercy. To varying degrees all of us are called to do all of those things. On the spiritual gifts lists in Corinthians, giving words of wisdom, words of knowledge, having faith, the gift of helps, the

gift of administration. All of those things are things that we serve Christ in and Minister to others in. So the fact that we're only maybe spiritually gifted in one or two areas again doesn't limit us to those things. Because we are called to give, we are called to serve. We are called to lead at times. So don't again, just look at these spiritual gifts in the list and the tests and the wisdom you receive from others as empowerments. It's like this is an amazing way God has designed me and he equipped me and empowered me to serve him. Not as like an exemption from serving him in all the other ways. Some gifts that seem to be we can they do a future episode on whether all of the spiritual gifts are fully active or are they functioning exactly the same? So not every person has every gift. That's clear. But, well, no where it says, as I said earlier, that you're restricted to one or two gifts at any given time or for our entire lives. Use the spiritual gifts as encouragement to find ways to serve God and ways he has gifted you not as a give us a restriction on how you might be able to serve God or how you might be used effectively of God.

Nelson Domingues

Absolutely. I think at the end of the day, we all have the same goal where to glorify God and to build up the church. And we have the Great Commission that tells us to go and make disciples. So whichever way you can do that, go and do that. A lot of times we're we sit on the bench and we're waiting for some sort of miraculous thing to happen, waiting for God to call down from heaven or an angel to to speak to us, you know, miraculously and instead he's already spoken to us in His word with power and with truth. And he's calling us to go. Do something. Go get up and and and make disciples. And who knows what that's going to like look like you know. Who knows what role you're going to play at your church doing that or in other places, maybe as an evangelist or whatever it might be. But the point is to get up and get working, and God will guide you through that. He will speak to you as you move and as long as you are dependent on him in that process, you'll quickly find areas where you're affective and that he is using you. And you can just keep moving along that journey. But to sit on the bench and to wait for some test results or some wait for someone to tap you on the shoulder to volunteer or to wait for a particular spot in the church that looks perfect and just made for you, a lot of times you just need to go and make disciples.

Shea Houdmann

Love the story of not the story, the saying of you can't move a parked car. Start heading in a direction. And God is far more likely to divert you once you're already moving into the area he wants you to serve rather than just, you're just sitting there not doing anything, as Nelson just said.

Gwen Sellers

And I think of like, I mean, isn't that so exciting that God invites us into his kingdom work? I mean, it's when we're saved, we become a child of God. We become part of the body of Christ. And we're invited to really live it out in meaningful, impactful ways. Going and making disciples, building up the body. So I think it's kind of the encouragement for believers is, God has invited you into his work and he has equipped you for it so be a part of the body.

Shea Houdmann

Gwen, Nelson, thank you for joining me today. Great and very important discussion. I encourage our listeners if you go to Got Questions or do a search for spiritual gifts, you'll find a plethora of articles on

the individual spiritual gifts, spiritual gifts in general, what they mean, what they are, spiritual gift tests, gifts list, et cetera, et cetera, is it questions about spiritual gifts are very, very common. So look for ways to serve God. If you find that God has gifted you in a spiritual way. Seek to serve him in that way. But don't limit yourself. Remember that God can use you in multiple ways. Can empower you in ways that you would never imagine. So our encouragement to you today is yes, absolutely try to discern the areas where God has gifted you. But also don't limit yourselves to a spiritual gift or gifts. Be willing. Be ready. Be able to serve God in whatever way he provides you with the opportunity. This has been the Got Questions podcast on what are spiritual gifts. Got questions? The bible has answers. We'll help you find them.