

It's been a while, but **4th Point** is a newsletter that I try to publish from time to time. The name comes from how sermons often have three points... But in preparing messages, I regularly find much more material than can fit into three points, so I offer **4th Point** to provide additional insights to recent messages or series of messages.

Recently I talked about **spiritual gifts**. The same week, Monica and I held a spiritual gifts mini-workshop at our place. It's also a topic that a men's Bible study group at Telkwa CRC has been looking at.

definition:

“Spiritual gifts are abilities graciously given by Christ through the Holy Spirit to empower believers for the ministries of the body of Christ.”

~ Alvin J. vanderGriend



why are we given spiritual gifts?

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts for three reasons:

1. So that Christians may minister to each other in the body of Christ (*1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10*);
2. So that the body of Christ may be built up, that is, grow in unity and maturity in Christ (*Ephesians 4:11-16*); and
3. So that God may be glorified (*1 Peter 4:11*).

~ Alvin J. vanderGriend

Spiritual gifts “are nothing other than the gifts of God’s love. They begin with our redemption. They include the heightening of qualities already present or latent within us, such as the gift of administration, leadership, teaching, marriage, or celibacy. These natural qualities can be *charismata* [spiritual gifts] if, and so long as, they are

dedicated to the service of the Lord. And the building up of His people in the strength that He gives. If they are used selfishly, they can be disastrous.”

~ Michael Green

how do we begin identifying the gifts we have?

Before you can identify your spiritual gifts, you must:

1. Be a Christian — a committed member of the body of Christ;
2. Believe that spiritual gifts exist — accepting the fact that God will use you through the gifts the Spirit gives you;
3. Be willing to work — intending to do the job for which spiritual gifts equip you; and
4. Pray — knowing that God will guide and direct you as you identify your gifts and use them.

Because the Holy Spirit gives *every* Christian gifts, ministry belongs to *all* God’s people, not just to a select few.

what’s the difference?

The **fruit of the Spirit** consists of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (*Galatians 5:22-23*). These are virtues, and all nine are meant to be part of every Christian’s life; spiritual gifts on the other hand are abilities for service that vary from person to person.

Meanwhile, **spiritual disciplines** “are practices by which we pursue the God who has found us, catching the rhythm of the Christian life.” They include things like praying, reading and memorizing Scripture, spending time in silence and solitude, confessing, worshipping, giving, fasting, and feasting.

~ quote by Phil Reinders

In March 1981, American President Ronald Reagan was shot, resulting in him spending several weeks in the hospital. Although President Reagan was the USA's chief executive, his hospitalization had little impact on that nation's activity. Government continued on.

On the other hand, suppose all the garbage collectors in this country went on strike, as they have in the past in Vancouver. That city was not only in a literal mess, the pile of decaying trash quickly became a health hazard. A 3-week nationwide strike could paralyze the country.

Can we really say that the President of the USA is more important than a garbage collector? In the body of Christ, seemingly insignificant gifts are urgently needed. As Paul reminds us, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable..." (1 Corinthians 12:21-22).

~ David Parsons



what are all considered to be spiritual gifts?

The New Testament provides several lists of spiritual gifts (gifts only appear once even if they appear in numerous passages)...

Romans 12:6-8

- ✓ prophesy
- ✓ service
- ✓ teaching
- ✓ encouragement
- ✓ giving
- ✓ leadership
- ✓ showing mercy

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

- ✓ wisdom and knowledge
- ✓ faith (great confidence)
- ✓ healing
- ✓ performing miracles
- ✓ discernment
- ✓ speaking in tongues
- ✓ interpreting tongues

1 Corinthians 12:28-30

- ✓ apostleship
- ✓ helping others
- ✓ administration

Ephesians 4:11

- ✓ evangelism
- ✓ pastoral work

The following are **also** often seen as gifts that the Holy Spirit gives people:

- ✓ craftsmanship
- ✓ music
- ✓ speaking
- ✓ hospitality
- ✓ intentional poverty
- ✓ marriage or celibacy

more resources

Book:

Alvin vanderGriend, *Discover Your Gifts and Learn How to Use Them* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids; Faith Alive, 1996). This manual is available in the Telkwa CRC library.



Websites:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has an interactive spiritual gifts assessment tool as part of its internet ministry. Answer 60 questions and receive instant results: archive.elca.org/evangelizingChurch/assessments/spiritgifts.html.

Another assessment can be found at: www.christianet.com/bible/spiritualgiftstest.htm.

trivia:

Spiritual gifts are also seen in the Old Testament. Where is the first mention of a spiritual gift given to an individual or individuals — a gift that we can still see in people today? Provide both the Scripture reference and the name(s) of the individual(s) who is/are noted for having this gift. The first person to email or phone Pastor Stanley with the correct answer will win a **prize!**

Congratulations Martin & Carolyn Hamming of Smithville ON for finding the prophetic reference to baptism in Ezekiel 36:25-26 in the last edition of **4th Point**. I hope you are still enjoying the CD!

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