

# Spiritual Gifts Descriptions

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The work of the Holy Spirit is an awesome mystery for us. Because of the way these spiritual gifts are given to us and manifested in individuals, it is better to provide a description rather than a narrow, one-size-fits-all definition. These descriptions will give you a picture in words that will lead you to an image of your spiritual gifts.

Each entry contains a description, general characteristics, cautions and biblical references. Like the spiritual gifts assessment, these descriptions are not definitive but paint a beautiful tapestry of the Holy Spirit at work in God's people.

The gifts are listed in alphabetical order for easy reference.

**Administration:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to formulate, direct and carry out plans necessary to fulfill a purpose.

**People with this gift are usually:** organized, goal oriented, thorough, objective, efficient, responsible, and conscientious.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** being open to adjusting their plans so that they don't stifle a leader's vision; not using people simply to accomplish goals without concern for their growth in the process.

**Biblical references:** 1 Corinthians 12:28, Acts 14:23

**Artistry:** The spiritual gift that gives the receiver the skill to create artistic expressions which produce a spiritual response of strength and inspiration.

**People with this gift are usually:** expressive, imaginative, artistic, creative, unconventional, sensitive, and idea-oriented.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** remembering that art is not for art's sake, but to glorify God and edify others; finding constructive criticism difficult to accept; being uncooperative and needing to work at being a team player.

**Biblical references:** Exodus 31:1–11, Psalm 149:3a

**Discernment:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to seek God's will and purpose and to apply that understanding to individual and collective situations affecting the faith community.

**People with this gift are usually:** perceptive, insightful, sensitive, intuitive, decisive, challenging, and truthful.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** being harsh when confronting others instead of speaking truth in love; confirming perceptions before speaking.

**Biblical references:** John 16:6–15, Romans 9:1, 1 Corinthians 2:9–16

**Evangelism:** The spiritual gift that moves the receiver to reach nonbelievers in such a way that they are baptized and become active disciples in the Christian community.

**People with this gift are usually:** sincere, candid, respected, influential, spiritual, confident, and commitment-oriented.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** remembering that the Holy Spirit, not guilt, is the motivator in a person's decision for Christ; needing to listen carefully, because the same approach is not appropriate for everyone.

**Biblical references:** Matthew 28:16–20, Ephesians 4:11–16, 2 Timothy 4:1–5

**Exhortation:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to encourage others so as to strengthen, comfort or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith.

**People with this gift are usually:** positive, motivating, challenging, affirming, reassuring, supportive, and trustworthy.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** being overly optimistic, too simplistic or flattering; being aware where others are in their faith journey and what they really need.

**Biblical references:** 2 Timothy 1:16–18, John 14:1, 3 John 1:5–8

**Faith:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to see the Spirit at work and to trust the Spirit’s leading without indication of where it might lead.

**People with this gift are usually:** prayerful, optimistic, trusting, assured, positive, inspiring, and hopeful.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** remembering that those who speak with reason and desire to plan do not necessarily lack faith; jumping to action.

**Biblical references:** Mark 5:25–34, Genesis 12:1–4a, 1 Thessalonians 1:8–10

**Giving:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to recognize God’s blessings and to respond to those blessings by generously and sacrificially giving of his or her resources (time, talent, and treasure).

**People with this gift are usually:** responsible, resourceful, trusting in God, charitable, disciplined, sensitive, and stewardship-oriented.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** remembering that the church’s mission is guided by its leaders and not determined by the giver’s gift; greed.

**Biblical references:** Luke 21:1–4, 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

**Hospitality:** The spiritual gift that causes the receiver to joyfully welcome and receive guests and those in need of fellowship, food, lodging or care.

**People with this gift are usually:** friendly, gracious, inviting, trusting, caring, responsive, and warm.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** viewing their gift of hospitality as just “entertaining”; remembering to ask God whom to befriend and serve.

**Biblical references:** Romans 12:13, Romans 16:23a, Luke 10:38

**Intercession:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to pray consistently on behalf of others with the certainty that prayer is heard and that, when requests are made, answers will come.

**People with this gift are usually:** caring, sincere, trustworthy, advocating, burden-bearing, and spiritually sensitive.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** feeling that their gift is not valued; diminishing the spiritual contribution to the body of Christ that comes from this ministry; using prayer as an escape from fulfilling responsibilities.

**Biblical references:** Matthew 6:6–15, Luke 11:1–10, Ephesians 6:18

**Knowledge:** The spiritual gift that drives the receiver to learn, analyze and uncover new insights with regard to the Bible and faith.

**People with this gift are usually:** inquisitive, responsive, observant, insightful, reflective, studious, and truthful.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** being cautious of this gift leading to pride, remembering that it is God’s message, not theirs, when they speak.

**Biblical references:** 1 Corinthians 12:8; 1 Corinthians 14:6, Romans 12:2

**Leadership:** The spiritual gift that gives the receiver the confidence to step forward, give direction and provide motivation to fulfill a vision or complete a task in advancing ministry.

**People with this gift are usually:** influential, visionary, diligent, trustworthy, persuasive, sensitive, and goal-setting.

**Cautions for people with this gift:**

remembering that servant leadership is the biblical model – the greatest leader being the servant of all; waiting for a “leadership position” to use this gift.

**Biblical references:** Romans 12:4–8, John 13:12–17, Luke 22:24–26

**Mercy:** The spiritual gift that moves the receiver to feel deeply for those in physical, spiritual or emotional need and then to act to meet that need.

**People with this gift are usually:** empathetic, caring, responsive, kind, compassionate, sensitive, and burden-bearing.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** feeling “unappreciated” when the people they have helped don’t show appreciation in expected ways; becoming defensive and angry about the sources of others’ pain.

**Biblical references:** Luke 7:12–15, Luke 10:30–37, Matthew 25:34–36

**Music (Vocal):** The spiritual gift that gives the receiver the capability and opportunity to present personal witness and inspiration to others through singing.

**People with this gift are usually:** expressive, imaginative, insightful, inspiring, reflective, sensitive, and creative.

**Cautions for people with this gift:**

remembering that music is not for music’s sake but to glorify God and edify others; finding evaluation and constructive criticism difficult to accept.

**Biblical references:** Psalm 96:1–9, Psalm 100:1–2, Psalm 149:1–2

**Music (Instrumental):** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to express personal faith and to provide inspiration and comfort through the playing of a musical instrument.

**People with this gift are usually:** expressive, imaginative, insightful, inspiring, reflective, sensitive, and creative.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** failing to see that their gift is significant and one that makes a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ; remembering that music is not for music’s sake but to glorify God and edify others.

**Biblical references:** Psalm 33:1–5, Psalm 150, 1 Samuel 16:14–23

**Pastoring (Shepherding):** The spiritual gift that gives the receiver the confidence, capability and compassion to provide spiritual leadership and direction for individuals or groups of believers.

**People with this gift are usually:** discipling, supportive, protective, relational, influencing, guiding, and nurturing.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** passing judgment when they feel others are neglecting or abusing their responsibilities; finding it difficult to say “no” because of the desire to support others.

**Biblical references:** 1 Timothy 3:1–13, 2 Timothy 4:1–2, 1 Timothy 4:12–16

**Service (Helps):** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to work gladly behind the scenes in order that God’s work is fulfilled.

**People with this gift are usually:** available, willing, helpful, loyal, reliable, dependable, and having a whatever-it-takes attitude.

**Cautions for people with this gift:**

remembering that doing practical deeds is a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ; finding it difficult to say “no” because of the desire to support others.

**Biblical references:** Luke 23:50–54, Romans 16:1–16, Philippians 2:19–23

**Skilled Craft:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to create, build, maintain or repair items used within the church.

**People with this gift are usually:** creative, resourceful, helpful, design-oriented, practical, handy, and used to functioning behind the scenes.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** failing to see that their gift is significant and one that makes a spiritual contribution to the body of Christ; using people to get things done instead of helping them grow in the process.

**Biblical references:** Exodus 30:1–6, Exodus 31:3–5, Ezekiel 27:4–11

**Teaching:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to communicate a personal understanding of the Bible and faith in such a way that it becomes clear and understood by others.

**People with this gift are usually:** analytical, disciplined, perceptive, teachable, authoritative, practical, and articulate.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** becoming too detailed when teaching and losing sight of the reason for teaching; remembering that their spirituality is not measured by how much they know.

**Biblical references:** 1 Corinthians 12:28, Matthew 5:1–12, Acts 18:24–28

**Wisdom:** The spiritual gift that allows the receiver to sort through opinions, facts and thoughts in order to determine what solution would be best for the individual believer or the community of believers.

**People with this gift are usually:** sensible, insightful, practical, wise, fair, experienced, and possess common sense.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** failing to share the wisdom that God has given them; being patient with others who do not have this gift.

**Biblical references:** 1 Corinthians 2:6–13, James 3:13–18, 2 Chronicles 1:7–11

**Writing:** The spiritual gift that enables the receiver to express truth in a written form, a form that can edify, instruct and strengthen the community of believers.

**People with this gift are usually:** expressive, studious, insightful, inspiring, reflective, truthful, and observant.

**Cautions for people with this gift:** remembering that it is God's message, not theirs; being proud.

**Biblical references:** 1 John 2:1–6, 12–14, 1 Timothy 3:14–15, Jude 3