# Gift – Valentine’s day reminder

# [Isaiah 40:31 CSB] 31 but those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint.

# **Foundations of Our Faith (Slide 1)**

## Pastor Lenny: What defines a True Christian? (the Creed)

Pastor Tom: Introduction to the Church Family Fellowship (TCFF)

Brent: Salvation

Pastor Lenny: The significance of Baptism

Pastor Lenny: The authority of Scripture

Today: Discovering and using Your Spiritual Gifts

# **Introduction (Slide 2)**

Our primary text will be 1Corinthians 12 and Romans 12.

The most profound question in life is:

What is our purpose?

Why start a discussion for Spiritual Gifts with that question?

Look around you, this is your church family. The spiritual gift (or gifts) you’ve been given is to benefit your church family. (REPEAT)

You’re not here because you have to be here!!! Think about that for a moment.

The gifts of the Spirit are at work when God’s people gather together!!!

Before we begin, I’d like to share a story I heard about another church…

After the usual Sunday evening service, usual in that it was rather dull and boring, a young lad walked to the rear of the church with his father. Mounted on the wall before them was a large bronze plaque. Somehow it had never caught the boy’s eye before. When he asked his father about it, he was told, “It’s in memory of those who died in the Service.” After a moment of reflection the perceptive youngster asked, “Which one, the morning or evening?”

Seems like the gifts of the Spirit were not at work at that church…

The Title of this sermon is:

## **Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts – Demystifying the Search (SLIDE 3)**

Here are the four points we’ll review today

* The Nature of God in Gift giving
* What is a Spiritual Gift?
* How do I find my Spiritual Gift?
* The purpose of Spiritual Gifts

Setting expectations. The primary focus of this message is finding Spiritual gifts and their purpose. We will not spend much time on the Spiritual gifts themselves.

\*\*\*PRAY\*\*\*

# **The Nature of God in Gift Giving (Advance Slide)**

## **Origin of gift giving**

* + ([The Origins and History of Gift Giving | Curious History](https://www.curioushistory.com/the-origins-and-history-of-gift-giving/))
  + Gift giving has been a long tradition that dates back thousands of years as far back as man can remember.
    - Why do people give gifts? For individuals it demonstrates care and affection for others.
    - For tribes or clans, it would show appreciation and respect.
    - I have a clock made by my dad that others would think is worthless, but to me I see it and remember…It’s a good memory that may cover the not so good ones.
    - My woodworking
    - BTW – why do Christians do communion – Do this in memory of Me.
  + As human beings, we are social creatures who enjoy each other’s company and express our feelings through the giving of gifts.
  + Whether it is an expression of love, appreciation of a job well done or just to show our gratitude for having someone as a friend, the giving of gifts is foundational with humankind.

## **Is gift giving engrained into our DNA?**

* + An article titled “What happens in your brain when you give a gift?” from the American Psychological Association mentions (12/9/2022): ([What happens in your brain when you give a gift? (apa.org)](https://www.apa.org/topics/mental-health/brain-gift-giving#:~:text=Turns%20out%2C%20gift-giving%2C%20particularly%20when%20the%20giftee%20is,studies%20the%20roots%20of%20compassion%2C%20happiness%2C%20and%20altruism.)
    - Gift giving activates regions of the brain associated with pleasure, social connection, and trust, creating a “warm glow” effect.
    - In one [study led by investigators at the University of Zurich in Switzerland](https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms15964), for example, researchers gave 50 people $100, and instructed half of them to spend it on themselves, and the other half to spend it on someone else over the next four weeks. Then, they performed functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to measure activity in the brain associated with generosity and pleasure during a social sharing task. They found that those who spent money on other people had more generous and fair interactions with other people and reported higher levels of happiness after the experiment was over.
    - is the old saying really true, that “giving is better than receiving?”
      * I wonder if the researchers looked into the Bible.
      * *[Acts 20:35b CSB] 35 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*
      * The Bible has guidance for giving:
      * *[Matthew 6:3 CSB] 3 "But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,*
    - So, back to the question: Is gift giving engrained in our DNA?
      * We are created in the image of God for the purpose to glorify Him.
    - *[Genesis 1:27 CSB] 27 So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.*
      * If we are walking in the Spirit *(that is the Spirit influences our thoughts and actions)* we will have the desire of our Father in Heaven.
    - Our gifts are not perfect and fall short of gifts from our Father in Heaven.
    - However, He gives us the privilege of being used by Him to reach the lost and edify the saints. BTW – Spiritual gifts are for edifying the Church – and the church are the people in the seats.

Let’s look at God’s gifts for His Church **(Slide 4)**

## **God’s gifts for His Church**

### **First: God’s gift of salvation. (See Brent’s message on Salvation)**

* + - Salvation is a gift! There is nothing anyone can do to earn salvation. If it could be earned, then Christ did not have to die on the cross for humanity. Ephesians 2:8-9 (it is God’s gift), Romans 6:23 (the gift of God), Romans 5:15 (gift from grace)
      * *[Ephesians 2:8-9 CSB] 8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift ​-- ​ 9 not from works, so that no one can boast.*
      * *[Romans 6:23 CSB] 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
      * *[Romans 5:15 CSB] 15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the one man's trespass the many died, how much more have the grace of God and the gift which comes through the grace of the one man Jesus Christ overflowed to the many.*
  + Salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit, however, God allows us to participate in presenting the gift of salvation through the sharing of the gospel.
  + Christ appearing to the eleven: *[Mark 16:15 CSB] … "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*

### **Second: God’s gift of the Holy Spirit (Advance the Slide)**

* + - Jesus was with His disciples. What an amazing time to be alive! Can you imagine? Peter and John in their epistles *(2Peter 1:16-18; 1John 1:1)* share with us their first-hand experience with Jesus.
  + *[2Peter 1:16-18 CSB] 16 For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased! " 18 We ourselves heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain.*
  + *[1John 1:1 CSB] 1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life --*
    - What does Jesus tell his disciples?
    - *[John 14:26 CSB] 26 "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.*
    - In Acts 2, Peter preaches to all the residents of Jerusalem that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.
    - *[Acts 2:38 CSB] 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
    - Good news for us Gentiles! *[Acts 10:45 CSB] 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.*
    - The Holy Spirit dwells within all believers.

Before we move on to the gifts of the Spirit:

Has gift giving lost its meaning? Does gift giving cost the giver? What did it cost gift givers in the past - prior to the commercialization of gift giving? It cost them their time. As they crafted a gift they would think of the person that would give it to.

God’s gift: The gift of salvation that God has given to man cost him dearly. The only way to redeem mankind was for the Son of Man to be born in the flesh as conceived by the Holy Spirit. He was crucified, died, and was buried. And on the third day he rose again from the dead and ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

The gift of salvation cost God everything.

* + - *[James 1:17 CSB] 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*
    - Who is good? And who is perfect? Jesus Christ

What does gift giving cost you? What does it cost me?

I can’t answer the first question, but can the second, and before we talk about Spiritual gifts I want to share with you the cost of giving for any that are in Christ Jesus.

Share what changed on August 1st, 2004.

I’m not obliged to give gifts, it is in my DNA. God engrained it by a powerful event. Gift giving is a natural outpouring of a believer in Jesus Christ.

### **Third: God imparts Spiritual Gifts. (Advance Slide)**

* + - OK, so we are saved by grace through faith.
    - And, God has given us the Holy Spirit to lead us in truth.
    - What does scripture say about the distribution of Spiritual Gifts?
      * *[Romans 12:3b CSB] God (Theos) has distributed a measure of faith to each one.*
      * *[Ephesians 4:7-8 CSB] 7 Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 For it says: When he ascended on high, he took the captives captive; he gave gifts to people.*
    - When He ascended on high implies that the gifts he gave have been purchased by the precious blood of Christ.
      * *[1Corinthians 12:7 CSB] 7 A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good:*
    - God imparts Spiritual gifts by His grace.

**God’s gifts: Upward (salvation) – Inward (Holy Spirit) – outward (Spiritual Gifts)**

# **What is a Spiritual Gift? (Slide 5)**

It is a **divine endowment** of a **special ability** for **service upon a member of the body of Christ.** (*William McRae - Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts*)

### **What is its source?**

* + (Advance Slide)
  + In Romans 12:3 the Greek word for God is Theos (God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit*. [Romans 12:3b CSB] …as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.*
  + *[1Corinthians 12:4-6 CSB] 4 Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are different activities, but the same God works all of them in each person.*

### **What is its essence?**

* + (Advance Slide) It is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.
  + A worldly analogy would be: can a baseball player’s hand say to the eye I don’t need you? *Each is separate, but both are needed. (1 Corinthians 12:19-21)*

*[1Corinthians 12:19-21 CSB] 19 And if they were all the same part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you! " Or again, the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you! "*

### **What is its purpose?**

* + (Advance Slide) To provide a particular service for the church so that the church remains healthy and effective. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

*[Ephesians 4:11-12 CSB] 11 And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ,*

### **Who are the recipients?**

* + (Advance Slide)
  + *[1Corinthians 12:1 CSB] 1 Now concerning spiritual gifts: brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware.*
  + *[1Corinthians 12:7 CSB] 7 A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good:*

**What is a spiritual gift:**

It is a **divine endowment** of a **special ability** for **service upon a member of the body of Christ.**

## **What are the Spiritual Gifts ? (Slide 6)**

* *1Corinthians 12:28:* (1) Apostle, (2) Prophet, (3) Teacher, (4) Miracles, (5) Kinds of Healing, (6) Helps, (7) Administration, (8)Tongues.
* *1Corinthians 12:8-10:* (2) Prophesy, (4) Miracles, (5) Gifts of Healing, (8) Tongues, (9) Word of Wisdom, (10) Word of Knowledge, (11) Faith, (12) Distinguishing Between Spirits, (13) Interpretation of Tongues.
* *Ephesians 4:11:* (1) Apostle, (2) Prophet, (14) Evangelist, (15) Pastor/Teacher.
* *Romans 12:6-8:* (2) Prophesy, (3) Teaching, (16) Serving, (17) Encouraging, (18) Contributing, (19) Leadership, (20) Mercy.
* We will not examine each of these in detail, that would be multiple sermons.
* Note: The list in Ephesians 4 focuses upon the man with the gift rather than the gift itself.

## **What is not a Spiritual Gift?**

(Slide 7)

### **The Fruit of the Spirit (Advance Slide)**

It might be that some confuse the “fruit of the Spirit” listed in Galatians 5:22-25 from the “gifts of the Spirit”.

**Where the Fruit of the Spirit is demonstrated by man, the gifts of the Spirit is God-given. (repeat)**

*[Galatians 5:22-23 CSB] 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.*

These attributes are in the nature of God (as we’ve looked at in our midweek Bible Study).

Christian – we are called to embrace **ALL of these**. They are not a gift, but the “Fruit of the Spirit”.

One final thought on the Fruit of the Spirit that was mentioned earlier.

**Producing fruit is for all who are in Christ:** *[John 15:4-5 CSB] 4 "Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.*

**Where the Fruit of the Spirit is demonstrated by man, the gifts of the Spirit is God-given.**

### **Natural Talents (Advance Slide)**

#### Both believers and non-believers have natural talents that are present at birth. Spiritual gifts happen after the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

* When are they possessed:
  + Natural talents are possessed from birth through parents.
  + Spiritual gifts are possessed at or after conversion independent of parents.
* What is their purpose:
  + Natural talents benefit mankind on the natural level.
  + Spiritual gifts benefit mankind on the spiritual level.
* What is the process:
  + Natural talents must be recognized, developed, and exercised.
  + Spiritual gifts must be recognized, developed, and exercised.
* Can a natural talent become a spiritual gift? This is a subject of discussion and debate among theologians.

### **Beyond Scripture (Advance Slide)**

A Barna survey is 2009 revealed that 68% of Americans who say they are Christian noted they have heard of spiritual gifts.

The survey also found that many people who say they have heard of spiritual gifts were not necessarily describing the same gifts outlined in the Bible.

These false gifts include: A sense of humor, singing, health, life, happiness, patience, a job, a house, compromise, premonition, creativity, and clairvoyance.

Some of these are just plain scary – like clairvoyance. Others seem silly – a house.

In total, one-fifth of all the gifts cited by respondents (21%) were attributes that do not fit the biblical lists of gifts given by God.

[Survey Describes the Spiritual Gifts That Christians Say They Have - Barna Group](https://www.barna.com/research/survey-describes-the-spiritual-gifts-that-christians-say-they-have/#:~:text=The%20survey%20asked%20people%20who%20said%20they%20were,%284%25%29%2C%20healing%20%284%25%29%2C%20knowledge%20%284%25%29%2C%20and%20tongues%20%283%25%29.)

# **How do I find my Spiritual Gift(s)? (Slide 8)**

Most here are probably familiar with Spiritual surveys. I think these are a good tool if used properly. What do I mean by that.

* Should a spiritual survey be the only thing used to determine spiritual gifts?

## **Prayer (Advance Slide)**

* Not only should prayer be to discover a spiritual gift, but for the opportunity to use it!
  + Sometimes we feel like we’ve done everything else right.
    - We’ve accepted the gift of Salvation.
    - The Holy Spirit guides our thoughts and actions.
    - What about my spiritual gift – scripture tells me I have one!

*[Romans 8:26-27 CSB] 26 In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

* + - Keep praying persistently! And look for answers, which brings us to the next point.

## **Study (Advance Slide)**

* Read and study God’s word.
  + Specifically read and dive deep into the four chapters of the New Testament which describe spiritual gifts: 1Corinthians 12; Romans 12; Ephesians 4; and 1Peter 4.
  + One example:

*[1Corinthians 12:28 CSB] 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, next miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, leading, various kinds of tongues.*

* + A word search for ‘teacher’ has 58 references in the New Testament. For example, see Hebrews 5:12 and James 3:1
    - *[Hebrews 5:12 CSB] 12 Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God's revelation again. You need milk, not solid food.*
    - Spiritual maturity is needed for teaching. I might not be ready for this yet.
    - *[James 3:1 CSB] 1 Not many should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a stricter judgment.*
    - Am I ready for this?

## **Desire (Advance Slide)**

* It may be indicated by desire. Be careful!
  + As we see spiritual gifts about us, as we are exposed to them, we may be drawn to them and begin to desire them.

*[Proverbs 3:5-6 CSB] 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight.*

* + God directs our path in many ways. Be open to His leading.
  + Be aware that the heart may deceive you. Look for others (more than one) to affirm your gift.
  + Our desire may be self-induced. A desire does not necessarily mean a gift. **This is sometimes obvious to everyone except the person themself.**

*[Jeremiah 17:9-10 CSB] 9 The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable ​-- ​who can understand it? 10 I, the LORD, examine the mind, I test the heart to give to each according to his way, according to what his actions deserve.*

## **Ability (Advance Slide)**

* There just fishermen…

*[Acts 4:13 CSB] 13 When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus.*

* + Look for God to open a door of opportunity to exercise your gift.
  + Try it, get involved, do it!
  + Ability improves with practice.
  + One of the responsibilities of elders in a church is to help people discover their spiritual gifts.

## **Blessing (Advance Slide)**

* Using spiritual gifts will be accompanied by blessing.
  + The blessings and encouragement will be mutual.
    - *[Romans 1:11-12 CSB] 11 For I want very much to see you, so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, 12 that is, to be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.*

# **The Importance of Spiritual Gifts**

The purpose of spiritual gifts is to equip the church to carry out its ministry until Christ returns.

*[1Corinthians 1:7 CSB] 7 so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The gifts of the Spirit are essential in the church! The church is intended to be intentional community.

A healthy church is one where spiritual gifts are in use.

## **Spiritual Gifts bring unity to face the challenges of the world.**

What challenges does the church face today?

*[Ephesians 6:12 CSB] 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.*

That’s not a discussion we have time for today…

Persecution and Infiltration.

What will unite the church?

Spiritual gifts bring unity to the church.

*The uniqueness and unity of spiritual gifts:*

*[1Corinthians 12:4-7 NLT] 4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. 7 A spiritual gift is given* ***to each of us*** *so we can help each other.*

# **Closing (Advance Slide)**

## **God’s gifts: Upward (salvation) – Inward (Holy Spirit) – outward (Spiritual Gifts)**

1. What is a Spiritual Gift?
   * A Spiritual gift is a **divine endowment** of a **special ability** for **service upon a member of the body of Christ.**
2. Who has a Spiritual gift?
   * All believers have a Spiritual gift.
3. What is the purpose of Spiritual Gifts?
   * To Equip the Church to Carry out its Ministry until Christ Returns