

more to be

A LOOK AT SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND PERSONALITY TYPES

uncovering who God made us to be

We are uniquely designed by God with a perfect combination of personality traits and spiritual gifts. This is our core wiring that inclines us toward relationships, hobbies, careers, and personal pursuits. Through uncovering our basic spiritual gifts and personality traits, we can make wise choices suited to our combination of talents, gifts, strengths, weaknesses, and passions. In doing so, we are able to live a satisfying life for God's glory.

The study of spiritual gifts and personality traits begins with these foundational, Biblical truths.

- God is the one who distributes the gifts.
- We cannot earn spiritual gifts.
- When we belong to the body of Christ, we are to use our gifts for the good of the body.
- Although there are some gifts we may not have in large quantity, like hospitality, we are still required to practice being hospitable.
- The greatest gift is love, and without it, none of our gifts can be used appropriately.
- Every personality has a combination of strengths and weakness, and we should seek to use our strengths for God's work and seek the Lord to minimize our weaknesses.
- Understanding different personalities increases our level of compassion for others and ability to have better relationships, all around.

what do the Scriptures say

In terms of personalities, we can study different character profiles to gain understanding. In terms of spiritual gifts, four passages encompass the major teaching points: Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12:4-31 thru 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Ephesians 4:11-13.

what are spiritual gifts

According to the Ministry Tools Resource Center (<http://mintools.com>), "You will find twenty different Greek words used for the gifts listed in the key passages on spiritual gifts [and] five possible gifts not found in the key spiritual gifts passages." The way to determine your spiritual gifts is by doing an assessment test, such as <http://www.churchgrowth.org/cgi-cg/gifts.cgi?intro=1>. Keep in mind that your results may be skewed, depending on how you answer the questions. Often times, we're influenced by our

environments and upbringing. Below are the gifts used in most assessment tests:

ADMINISTRATION: 1 Cor. 12:28 - to steer the body toward the accomplishment of God-given goals and directives by planning, organizing, and supervising others (Greek Word: kubernesis - to steer, guide, helmsmen)

APOSTLE: Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28 - to be sent forth to new frontiers with the gospel, providing leadership over church bodies and maintaining authority over spiritual matters pertaining to the church (Greek Word: apostolos - 'apo'=from 'stello'=send; one sent forth)

DISCERNMENT: 1 Cor. 12:10 - to clearly distinguish truth from error by judging whether the behavior or teaching is from God, Satan, human error, or human power

EVANGELISM: Eph. 4:11 - to be a messenger of the good news of the Gospel (Greek Word: euaggelistes - preacher of gospel; eu=well, angelos=message - messenger of good)

EXHORTATION: Rom. 12:8 - to come along side of someone with words of encouragement, comfort, consolation, and counsel to help them be all God wants them to be (Greek Word: paraklesis - calling to one's side)

FAITH: 1 Cor. 12:8-10 - to be firmly persuaded of God's power and promises to accomplish His will and purpose and to display such a confidence in Him and His Word that circumstances and obstacles do not shake that conviction

GIVING: Rom. 12:8 - to share what material resources you have with liberality and cheerfulness without thought of return

HEALING: 1 Cor. 12:9,28,30 - to be used as a means through which God makes people whole either physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually

HELPS: 1 Cor. 12:28 - to render support or assistance to others in the body so as to free them up for ministry

HOSPITALITY: 1 Pet. 4:9,10 - to warmly welcome people, even strangers, into one's home or church as a means of serving those in need of food or lodging (Greek Word: philoxenos - love of strangers; 'philos'=love; 'xenos'=stranger)

KNOWLEDGE: 1 Cor. 12:8 - to seek to learn as much about the Bible as possible through the gathering of much information and the analyzing of that data

LEADERSHIP: Rom. 12:8 - to stand before the people in such a way as to attend to the direction of the body with such care and diligence so as to motivate others to get involved in the accomplishment of these goals

MERCY: Rom. 12:8 - to be sensitive toward those who are suffering, whether physically, mentally, or emotionally, so as to feel genuine sympathy with their misery, speaking words of compassion but moreso caring for them with deeds of love to help alleviate their distress

PASTOR: Eph. 4:11 - to be responsible for spiritually caring for, protecting, guiding, and feeding a group of believers entrusted to one's care

PROPHECY: Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; Eph. 4:11 - to speak forth the message of God to His people (Greek Word: prophetes - the forth-telling of the will of God; 'pro'=forth; 'phemi'=to speak)

SERVICE: Rom. 12:7 - to identify undone tasks in God's work, however menial, and use available resources to get the job done (Greek Word: diakonia - deacon, attendant 'diako'=to run errands)

TEACHING: Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11 - to instruct others in the Bible in a logical, systematic way so as to communicate pertinent information for true understanding and growth

what are the different personalities

There are many different personality profiles available, but they all draw similar conclusions using different labels. Florence and Marita Littauer breakdown personalities into four unique profiles: Popular Sanguine, Powerful Choleric, Perfect Melancholy, Peaceful Phlegmatic. These personality descriptions point out both strengths and weaknesses, allowing you to pursue opportunities and relationships that play toward your strengths and also putting into place helpful techniques for balancing out your weaknesses.

Almost every person will end up with a dominant and secondary personality, however, the Littauers insist that those two must fall side-by-side. If you come up with opposites, it means that either you didn't answer the questions honestly or have been so influenced by a parent or guardian, that your assessment is skewed. It is also quite possible that your God-given personality has been suppressed if you have experienced trauma, difficulty parent-child relationships, or be under the authority of a very dominant personality. Often times, asking a loved one to answer the questions with you, will help uncover the true answers to each question.

The study of personalities is extremely helpful in building relationships, because you will have a new framework for understanding how others process life and be able to meet them in their place of strength and demonstrate compassion (and even accountability) in their weaker moments.

To learn more about personalities, read "Wired That Way," by the Littauers and complete their personality assessment.

how can I apply this to my life

There are many benefits in determining our spiritual gifts and God-given personality:

- We can learn how to best be involved in serving others, especially in church, ministry work, and families;

- We can select a field of study or employment that allows our gifts and personality to flourish.
- We can better understand the conflict and struggles we have in our relationships as well as resolve them more easily.
- We will be able to say no to those things we know do not fall within our strengths or gifts set.
- We will navigate through a weaker area more humbly.
- We will better understand others and work with them more effectively.
- We will see areas in which God is perfectly using our personality and give Him praise.

Ultimately, coming to an understanding of our gifts and personality provides us with understanding of what God has wired us for and direction for our lives. When we recognize our gifts, strengths, and weakness, we will not only be able to confidently say "yes" to the opportunities before us that we have a passion for, but we can quickly humble ourselves before the Lord when we find ourselves in a situation in which our weaknesses present a tremendous challenge. God doesn't provide us with a life built around our gifts and personality. He provides a life in which He plans to use our gifts and personalities, both the strengths and weaknesses, for His work.

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Philippians 4:13

I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

We can do anything in this free country -- any relationship, any job, and lifestyle. However, we when belong to God, as a holy people set apart to declare His praises, our lives become a canvas filled with His work for His pleasure and the benefit of others.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

In that regard, our relationships, job, and lifestyle need to come under His authority according to Scripture and be used to serve the body with God's grace.

1 Peter 4:10

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various form.

As we recognize the gifts and personality the Lord has given us, will we be further equipped by the Lord to make decisions and respond to opportunities based on our role as the Lord's ambassador. Our lives are not about us. It is about Him and His body.