

# LESSON FOUR

## INTERDEPENDENCE: The Spiritual Gifts at Work

*"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet 4:10).*

### DAY 1: READ & SUMMARIZE

---

The following verses encapsulate the lesson to follow. Read them carefully, meditating on their message. Express the key concept of each passage as it applies to the use of spiritual gifts.

A) 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 –

---

---

---

---

B) 1 Peter 4:10,11 –

---

---

---

---

C) Luke 16:10 –

---

---

---

---

## DAY 2: LEARN & RESPOND

---

### INTRODUCTION

Every child in God's family is a gifted child! So says the apostle Paul to the Corinthians: *"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all"* (1 Cor 12:4-7). There is no doubt we are all custom designed; every believer is equipped for the Lord's service in a different way (we will study this later in the lesson) but Paul makes it clear: *"the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all."* What is a gift in this sense? What gifts are available? And how do I discover which gift I have been given? Are all the gifts mentioned in the New Testament still in use today? These and other important questions are in our thoughts now. How important it is to know what ministry the Lord has called us to, for there are no biblical distinctions between

clergy and laity. Peter tells us that we are all *"the servants of God"* (1 Pet 2:16).

### SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISTINGUISHED

The Spirit Himself is a very special gift to every believer, given by the Father at the request of the Son (Jn 14:16). Then through Him, as the already quoted 1 Corinthians 12:7 shows, each child of God has received a gift. Let us begin by seeing what a gift is not:

#### 1. A gift is not a natural talent.

Just as we received certain natural talents by our natural birth, so we receive some supernatural gift by our new birth. We may distinguish between the two by asking which abilities may be shared with unbelievers. On the one hand, natural talents include the ability to draw, sing, speak well, etc. On the other hand, showing mercy in a Christ-like way to those undeserving, preaching the gospel, or teaching the Word—these are obvi-

ously spiritual gifts. Now many natural talents can also be used for the Lord, often in conjunction with a gift. All such resources, natural or spiritual, should be developed for the use of the Master.

**2. A gift is not an "office."** In the governing of the local church, certain men are called by God (elders) or chosen by the congregation (deacons) to a responsible stewardship. Obviously elders and deacons are gifted, but they at some point are called to take up a special burden on behalf of the Lord's people. It is not only gift that qualifies such for this responsibility. They must also be scripturally, morally, domestically, and socially suited for it.

**3. A gift is not a fruit.** The Spirit of God is the active agent in our receiving a gift and in our bearing fruit. However these are different. Warning: you may use your gift and see blessing, all the while being thoroughly unspiritual!

GIFT	FRUIT
outward demonstration	inward development
others benefited	character benefited
His work <i>through me</i>	His work <i>in me</i>
Like the bell of testimony and...	...the pomegranate of fruitfulness

Ex 28:34

**4. A gift is not a ministry.** This we notice from the distinctions made in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 and again chart out:

Different GIFTS	} meaning varied SUPERNATURAL ABILITIES	} By the SPIRIT
Different MINISTRIES	} meaning varied TASKS FOR THOSE TOOLS	} By the LORD (JESUS)
Different OPERATIONS	} meaning varied RESULTS FROM POWER GIVEN	} By GOD the FATHER

### DIFFERENT GROUPINGS OF THE GIFTS

We can see different groups of gifts clearly in Peter's description: *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ..."* (1 Pet 4:10-11). Here Peter distinguishes between speaking gifts and serving gifts.

We noticed in the last lesson the distinction Paul makes in the Ephesian epistle: the gifts of apostles and prophets were **FOUNDATION GIFTS**; the gifts of evangelists, pastors and teachers were **MATURATION GIFTS**, and to that Paul would seem to add a third in his detailed explanations in 1 Cor 11-14: **CONFIRMATION GIFTS**. Because the Jews required a sign, and Joel 2 promised a sign,

and when God was going to act decisively He gave Israel signs (primarily with Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, Christ and His apostles), it is no surprise that these sign gifts were given. But it is interesting to note certain facts about these sign gifts:

- Paul said these gifts would cease—the gift of prophecies, of tongues, and the gift of knowledge (1 Cor 13:8)
- These gifts are only mentioned in the earliest of Paul's letters—1 Corinthians. They are not mentioned in Romans 12, Ephesians 2 or 4, or 1 Peter 4.
- Historically it did happen. Some of the "Early Fathers" in their commentaries on Paul's epistles confessed they were unfamiliar with this gift of tongues. As the evangelists were more and more rejected by the Jewish community, the need for these authenticating signs disappeared.

In 1 Corinthians 12, the distinction between different groups of gifts is more subtle. But it helps to know that the Greek uses two words for “another”—another of the same kind and another of a different kind, thus subdividing the list. It would read like this (using **bold** type for **allos** = another of the **same** kind; and underline for *heteros* = another of a different kind): *“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to **another** the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to **another** gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to **another** the working of miracles, to **another** prophecy, to **another** discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to **another** the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor 12:7-11). Thus these markers divide the list as follows: word of wisdom and word of*

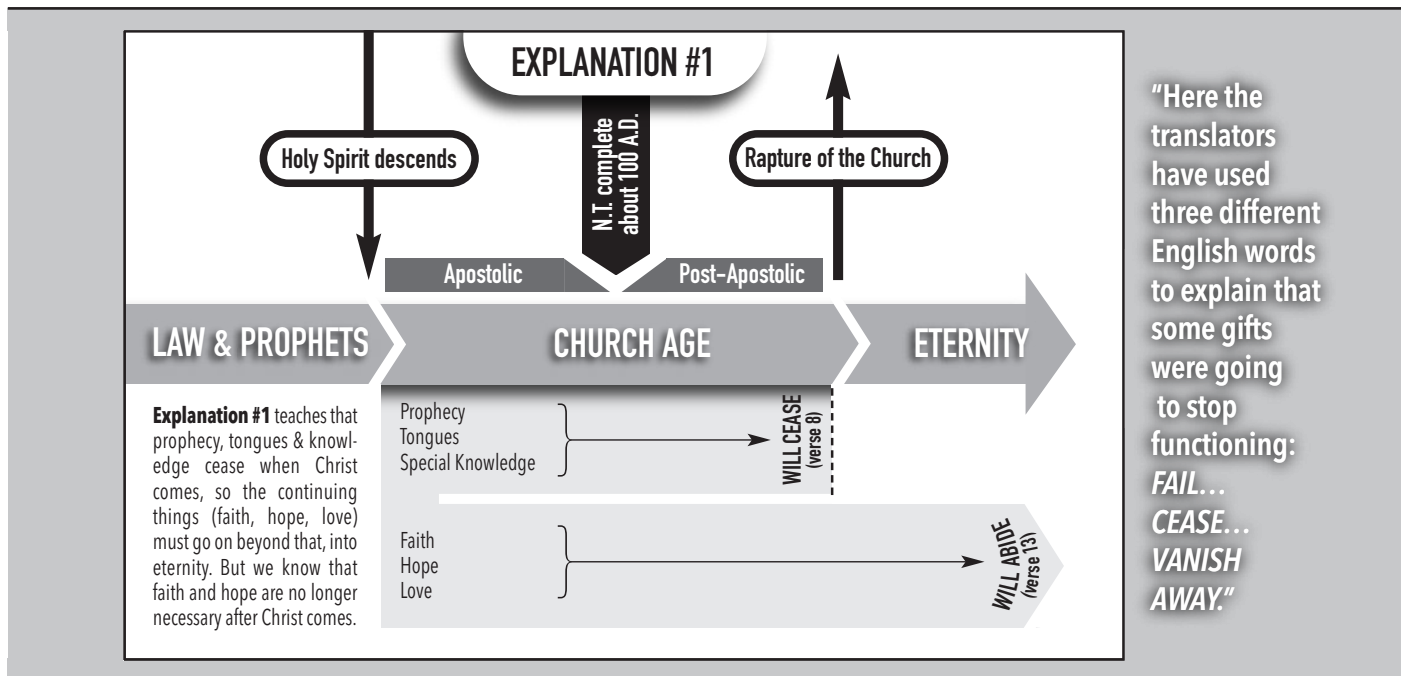
*knowledge are group 1; faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy and discerning of spirits are group 2; different kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues are group 3.*

Group 1 would be two gifts which I believe were necessary before the completion of the canon of Scripture. Elders couldn’t say to a troubled young believer, “Let’s turn to 1 Timothy” since it had not been written. So some were given a supernatural ability to explain doctrinal issues (word of knowledge) and others could explain practical issues (word of wisdom), which gifts were no longer necessary after the Scriptures were completed. No doubt these gifts would be replaced by the gifts of teaching and exhorting. Again note that “word of wisdom” is only in the early epistle of Corinthians; “exhortation” is in the Romans 12 passage. Likewise “word of knowledge” is only in 1 Corinthians 12 (and 13:8); the Romans 12 list gives “teaching.”

Why are tongues and interpretation of tongues in a separate category? The citing in 1 Corinthians 13:8 may help. It reads: *“Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.”* Here the translators have used three different English words to explain that some gifts were going to stop functioning: *“fail...cease...vanish away.”* The first word, *fail*, is not the same Greek word as *“Love never fails.”* It is a word that carries with it a ceasing because of something else—a causal relationship. Likewise the words *“vanish away”* are used to translate the same Gk.

word, something stopping because of something else. But the middle word, *“cease”* is a different Greek word, actually meaning *“to pause.”* It is not causal.

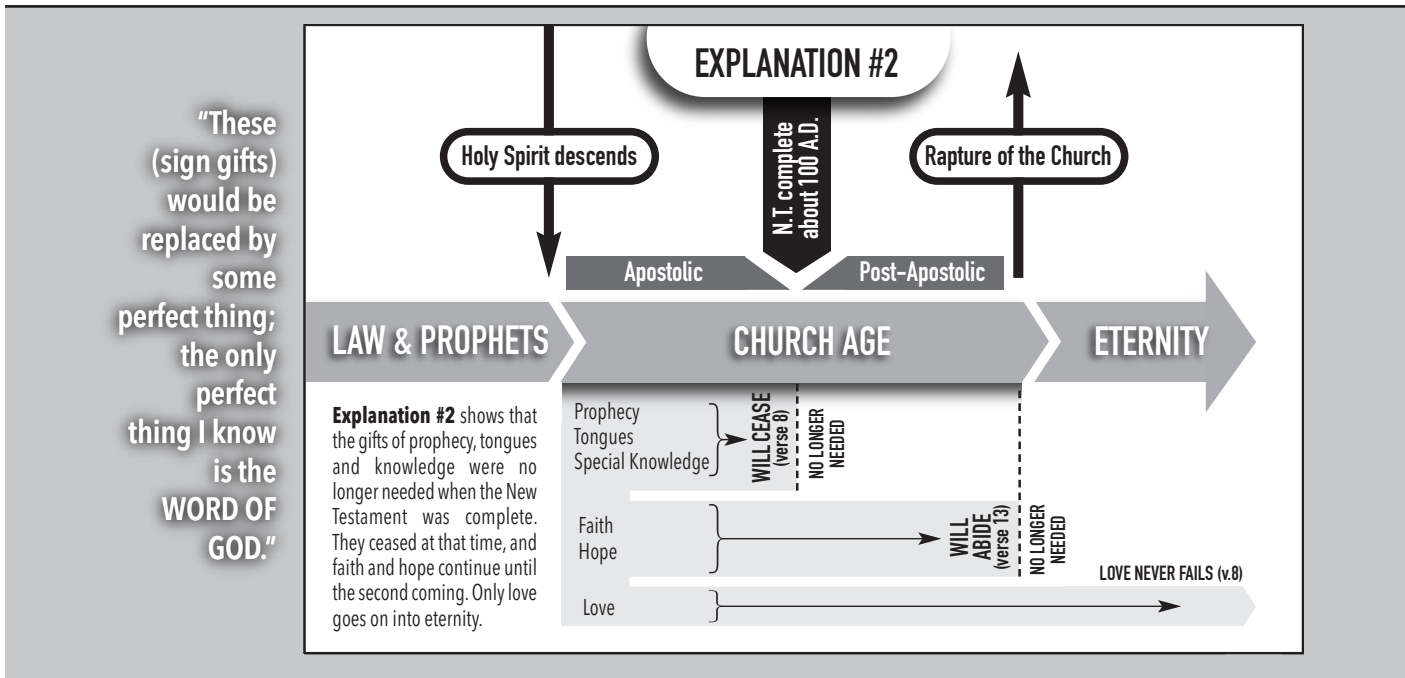
Let’s think about the effect of the completion of the Scriptures. They now carried their own proof of this being a work of God. It was the power of God unto salvation. Signs of divine power were no longer necessary. Even the apostle Paul in his later ministry did not heal Timothy with his *“oft infirmities”* or Epaphroditus who was *“nigh unto death”* or find relief from his own *“thorn.”* Yet in the early days he was used to bring life to Eutyclus! Something



was happening in the life of the Church. These incomplete parts of divine revelation (see 1 Cor 13:9), these immature forms of communicating truth (v 11), these imperceptive sights of divine reality (v 12) would be replaced by some perfect thing (v 10). The only perfect thing I know is the Word of God.

If you assume with me that is true (thank you for your graciousness!), then these word distinctions make perfect sense. Both the gifts of knowledge (explained earlier) and the gift of prophecy would not be needed once the Scripture was finished. And while the power of the Word would

now be the convincing proof rather than sign gifts, tongues would not immediately become useless as a result of the Bible's completion. It would pass away of itself. More exactly, it would pause. For Joel prophesies a day when what was partially fulfilled in the Jews at Pentecost will be completely fulfilled at the conclusion of the Time of Jacob's Trouble. Then the believing Jews who embrace their Messiah will have a message to preach to all the nations when "the kingdom is restored" to Israel. Once again, as at the inception of the Church, it will be used in the rapid spread of the gospel.



"These (sign gifts) would be replaced by some perfect thing; the only perfect thing I know is the WORD OF GOD."

**LISTING THE GIFTS**

Rom 12:6-8	1 Cor 12:8-10	1 Cor 12:28-29	Eph 4:11	1 Pet 4:10-11
		<b>apostles</b>	<b>apostles</b>	
	<b>word of wisdom</b>			
<b>prophecy</b>	<b>prophecy</b>	<b>prophets</b>	<b>prophets</b>	
encouraging				
teaching		teachers	teachers	
	<b>word of knowl.</b>			
				speaking
			shepherds	
			evangelists	
	miracles	miracles		
	faith			
	healing gifts	healing gifts		
serving		helps		serving
giving				
mercy				
leading		leading		
	tongues	tongues		
	interp. tongues	interp. tongues		
	<b>identify evil spirits</b>			

These gifts had different purposes during the beginning, middle and current stages of Church growth:

<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Transitioning</b>	<b>Continuing</b>
<p><b>Purpose of Gifts: REVELATION</b></p> <p>These gifts were meant to reveal the mind of God to His people before the New Testament was complete. These helped lay the foundation for the Church. Having served their purpose, these gifts have ceased. (Eph 2:20)</p>	<p><b>Purpose of Gifts: SIGN (PROOFS)</b></p> <p>These gifts were meant to validate or prove that the Apostles were really speaking on behalf of God. Once the canon of Scripture was complete, both foundational and sign gifts were no longer needed. (1 Cor 13:8-10)</p>	<p><b>Purpose of Gifts: EDIFY</b></p> <p>These gifts are on-going and will remain so until the Church has reached completion, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph 4:13). We must seek to use these gifts to the glory of the Lord Jesus.</p>

\* From R. E. Harlow's *The New Testament Church*



**SOME SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE NATURE OF 18 GIFTS**

<b>apostles:</b>	given authority to settle foundation issues (eg, Gentiles' relation to law), give definitive answers
<b>prophets:</b>	unveiling of hidden truth; explanation of typical truth, clarifying of seeming contradictions, selection
<b>evangelists:</b>	blazing new trails for the gospel, articulating the message, training a generation of witnesses
<b>pastors:</b>	<i>pro tem</i> elders, seeing new souls confirmed, churches established, elders trained and recognized
<b>teachers:</b>	clearly explain the Word with practical applications, teach others how to study and teach locally
<b>word of wisdom:</b>	ability to clearly explain practical application of truth before the completion of the canon
<b>encouraging (exhortation):</b>	encourage practical biblical change in others; showing wrong in a way that they want to make it right
<b>word of knowledge:</b>	ability to clearly explain and settle doctrinal disputes/concerns before completion of canon
<b>faith:</b>	trusting God for a great deal in such a way that it inspires others to at least trust Him a little more
<b>healing:</b>	the ability to reverse some visible effects of the curse as a living parable of deeper spiritual truth
<b>miracles:</b>	a more general term (also wonders, signs); ability to give a taste of the coming millennial reign of Christ
<b>discernment:</b>	the ability to see things, not as they appear, but as they really are, and convince others of danger
<b>tongues:</b>	the ability to communicate the gospel to a needy soul in a known (but personally unlearned) language
<b>interpretation of tongues:</b>	the ability to hear and understand an unlearned language, then translate convincingly
<b>serving (helps):</b>	easing of the burden of others engaged in His work to encourage and enlarge their effectiveness
<b>leading (governing):</b>	understand, coordinate related ministries; help others see the significance of parts to the whole
<b>giving:</b>	a sensitivity to see material need, and a strategic (not always large) placement of resources to do the most good
<b>mercy:</b>	a manifestation of the character of God in others' lives by showing a Christ-like grace in the face of need

### **HOW TO DISCOVER AND BEGIN USING YOUR GIFT**

Having been convinced that you have been engifted by the Spirit and that your gift is to be used for the glory of God and the blessing of others (one of the problems with the modern tongues phenomenon), what do you do? One thing we should not do is “lean [to our] own understanding,” taking some kind of aptitude test. Instead, simple obedience will do! There are two general principles that are helpful: “*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with you might*” (Eccl 9:10). Paul’s personal confessions of zeal in God’s work and his charges to Timothy are similar. The second is this: “*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much*” (Lk 16:10). And the interesting thing is this: If we take only those gifts still for today, we discover we have already been commanded to do every one of them! To give? Surely not just the one with the gift of giving is to give. And showing mercy? Helping? Sharing the gospel? What about teaching?

Yes, everyone is to be able to clearly explain why they believe what they believe (1 Pet 3:15). To lead or govern? Yes, we are all leading someone and we need to “make straight paths” for our feet to lead well.

Thus as we do all these things in faith and obedience as we have opportunity, the Spirit will nudge us into those areas where we have been especially gifted. Others will see it too, as we stir up the gift in us. Then we must make “full proof” of our ministry so that the rest of the body is able to “grow up into Him” along with us.

### **A WORD ON DEACONS**

The Lord has called every believer into full-time spiritual ministry: “*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ*” (Col 3:23-24). One of the most common words for a servant is the word from which we get “deacon.” Now it seems

## INTERDEPENDENCE

---

that there are special deacons within a general “deaconship.” While everyone was to be a servant, some especially trustworthy people who had the confidence of the Lord’s people were entrusted with special tasks on behalf of the church. Often it had to do with material things like looking after the poor or widows.

DEACONS	ELDERS
selected by the Christians	appointed by God (Acts 20:28)
assisted in the more material matters	freed to attend more spiritual matters
“deaconed tables”	“deaconed the Word”
only when required to relieve elders	necessary for proper function of assembly

The first occasion when deacons were appointed was for that very reason. In Acts chapter 6, it shows the differences between elders and deacons as shown in the chart above.

### Review:

1. Which observation in the list of “What a gift is not” got your attention? Why?

---

---

2. What surprised you in the facts about the sign gifts?

---

---

3. What are the three words used to explain that some gifts were going to stop functioning?

---

4. Complete this sentence: “These immature forms of communicating truth (verse 11) ... would be replaced by some perfect thing (verse 10). The only perfect thing I know is

---

5. What practical insight did you gain from the description of the gifts that will help you bless others and bring glory to God? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

## DAY 3: WATCH & ANSWER

---

Fill in the blanks as you watch the video. TIP: It's helpful to pre-read the questions before watching. You can check the answers in the Answer Key (Appendix 10).

**Introduction:** Unity is not ( ), but a blending of personalities into a whole so it is more beautiful than individually. The Church is given gifts in order to be a ( ) of ( ) to others.

### Spiritual Gifts Distinguished and Grouped

1. One reason our prayers are ( ) is because we want to spend the blessing on ourselves. Gifts are to be a channel of blessing to others.
2. It is possible to exercise our gifts in such a way that it is ( ), showing off.
3. ( ) is compared to the dew of Mount Hermon (Psalm 133). As the water from Hermon flowed through the whole land creating ( ) and ( ), so the unity of the church is both fragrant and fruitful.
4. Romans 12:1 refers to our "reasonable service" - it is the ( ) to do to give our bodies to Him so the body of Christ will grow, constantly enlarging.
5. 1 Corinthians 12:1 should read, "now concerning spirituality..." -true spirituality. If this is right, your spiritual gift will be exercised in the ( ).
6. We want and need ( ) part of the body working ( ).
7. The Spirit gives gifts as He will. The Corinthians wanted the ( ) gifts, the ( ) gifts, but Paul wanted to show them the ( ) way.

8. Every child in the family of God is a  child.

9. Spiritual gift is God's work  me; spiritual fruit is God's work  me.

10. Spiritual gifts refer to the "" , ministry is a particular work that requires your gift , your tool box.

11. There is not one occasion in the New Testament where Paul thanks the believers for their spiritual gifts. He thanks  , and God is glorified.

**Some suggestions as to the nature of 18 gifts**

1. The gift of knowledge was a supernatural ability to understand the principles of Scripture  they were written down.

2. Once Scripture was complete, the gift of  was/is needed.

3. The word of wisdom has passed, the gift of  continues.

4. A sword makes its own point. The Word of God is its own  proof.

5. The early church got into every kind of possible  they could, and we have the  recorded for us in Scripture.

6. The primary burden of an evangelist is to  do the work.

Paul trained elders in less than  . He worked himself out of a job and then moved on.

7. Every child of God should be a  of the word of God.

8. The gift of exhortation: we are too easily  , too  .

9. The gift of miracles was to give the Jews a  of what it would have been like if they had accepted Him.

10. You can get  for God to use but you can never get .

11. The gift of helps - their joy is to see other people's ministry .

12. Gift of ruling: It is the ability to see how people's gifts can work  and  one another.

13. Giving: It is not so much the  of money one gives but the  to respond to a need at the time.

### How to discover your gift:

There is a sense in which  of us are called to do  these things (gifts) but the Spirit nudges us in the areas in which we have been especially gifted.

### QUESTIONS

#### FOR DISCUSSION...

1. Are there gifts that seem to be neglected among the Christians with which you fellowship? Why do you think that is so, and how can this situation be rectified?

2. Discuss the purpose of the Church. How does the gifting of every believer relate to that purpose?

**General Notes for the Video Lesson**

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of 25 horizontal lines.

## DAY 4: WRITE & REMEMBER

---

1. Record three significant statements from this chapter. Why are they significant to you?

A) **Statement One:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B) **Statement Two:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C) **Statement Three:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Memorize **Colossians 3:23,24**.

## DAY 5: REFLECT & PRAY

---

Respond in prayer: Having looked carefully at the importance and use of spiritual gifts, reflect on your own life in the following ways:

**Praise:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Repent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ask:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Yield:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAISE:** What specific blessing have you discovered in this lesson? Thank the Lord for it! **REPENT:** Is there something in your life that is hindering you from experiencing what you have just learned? **ASK:** What specific way would you like the Lord to help you live out these truths? **YIELD:** Is there a particular area in your life that needs to come under the Lord's rule?