

Gifts – What kind of ‘giftings’ does God give to people?

- Talents
 - A person, regardless of their belief in God, is given natural talents as a result of...
 - Genetics
 - Surroundings (how they were raised)
 - Training (school, the people around them)
 - God's desire
 - Some examples:
 - Writing, drawing, speaking, mathematics, the ability to understand difficult concepts, typing, programming, graphic design, playing instruments, etc.
 - They can be used for spiritual or non-spiritual purposes
 - **Exodus 31:1-6**
 - **1 Kings 7:14**
 - **James 1:17**
 - **Psalms 144:1**
- Spiritual gifts
 - Given by the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 12:11**)
 - Given only to those who believe in Jesus Christ
 - **Ephesians 1:13-14**
 - Non-believers do not have the Holy Spirit
 - Note: In the Old Testament, there were “believers” but they didn’t have the Holy Spirit unless God decided to give it to someone for a specific work
 - They were looking forward to God’s Messiah (Jesus)
 - Today – believers are those who look back at Jesus’ death and resurrection and believe
 - The Holy Spirit came after Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension
 - **John 16:7**
 - Used only for spiritual purposes for the benefit of others, not ourselves (**1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:11**)
 - They are given at the point of salvation, but they also can be given later in your walk as a Christian
 - Paul exhorts us to “earnestly desire the best gifts”
 - **1 Corinthians 12:31**
 - We should be desiring to have the best gifts that the Lord wants us to have
 - Paul says that one of the best gifts is prophecy
 - **1 Corinthians 14**
 - Bible verses to look over:
 - **Romans 12:3-8**
 - **1 Corinthians 12**
 - **1 Corinthians 14:1**
 - **Ephesians 4:7-16**
- Using your Gifts
 - If you are a Christian, you have both natural talents and spiritual gifts that God has given to you
 - How do I know what my spiritual gifts are?
 - Pray and ask God to reveal them to you
 - Read the Word
 - Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:7-16
 - God will show you the ones that you use consistently on a regularly basis in your life
 - You will receive confirmation about it from other believers
 - You could also take a “spiritual gifts test” online to give you an idea
 - But these shouldn’t be fully relied upon
 - What does it mean to “use” or “develop” your spiritual gifts? Can you lose them if you stop using them?
 - The bible doesn’t seem to teach that you can lose your spiritual gifts
 - But it does teach that they can lie dormant and unused
 - We may not even realize we have them!
 - You can also allow a spiritual gift to “die down” by not using it
 - **2 Timothy 1:6**
 - The best way to grow in a spiritual gift is to practice it!

- Paul says we should not neglect our gifts
 - **1 Timothy 4:14**

Prophets – What were they about in the Old Testament? What makes them different from us?

- What is a prophet?
 - A prophet is a man who speaks to men on behalf of God the message he has received from God. Prophecy is the declaration and illustration of the principles of the divine government, whether in the past, present, or the future. Prophets were God's specially called and inspired messengers. They were "holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (**2 Peter 1:21**).
- In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon all believers
 - When God gave someone of His Spirit, it was selective and temporary
 - It wasn't always given just for prophecy...
 - Some kings and leaders received the Holy Spirit as well
 - I.e. Joshua, King David, even King Saul!
 - **Joel 2:28**
 - This verse from the Old Testament speaks of the Holy Spirit coming in the future
 - The New Testament clarifies this in **Acts 2:14-21**
 - But God's Holy Spirit was obviously still around back then
 - It has been around since the beginning! (**Genesis 1:2** – "...the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters")
 - God would only put His Spirit upon certain people, for a certain task
 - And when the task was done, the Spirit presumably would depart
 - For example – Prophets! (**1 Peter 1:10-11**; **2 Peter 1:21**)
 - Ezekiel (**Ezekiel 2:1-5**)
 - While the Spirit was upon the prophets, God would give them a specific message to say to the people
 - It always involved:
 - Bringing people back to God and the truth
 - Revealing God's will to man
 - Warning them of the consequences of their actions
 - Calling the people to repentance
 - God would "put His words in their mouth" (**Jeremiah 1:9**)
 - He would give them clear visions and dreams to preach to the people in some way (**Jeremiah 1:11-12**)
- Today...
 - All believers in Jesus have the Holy Spirit living within them
 - But not everyone is given the gift of prophecy
 - Prophets do exist today – just not in the same sense as they did in the Old Testament
 - The purpose of Old Testament prophets was:
 - To reveal truth from God
 - We now have God's complete revelation – the Bible!
 - Back then they didn't have it
 - Now that we have it, the "office of prophet" is no longer needed
 - In the New Testament, the Apostles (office of Apostle) laid the foundation for the church
 - The church has already been built!
 - We already have the foundation!
 - In order to be a prophet in the "Old Testament" sense, you couldn't be wrong – even once!
 - Can God still speak a message through someone today?
 - Yes!
 - If there was a prophet today, He would be in 100% complete agreement with what God has already said in His Word – the Bible
 - God will not contradict Himself! (**Malachi 3:6**; **1 Corinthians 14:33**)
 - The Bible tells us to "test everything!" (**1 Thessalonians 5:20-21**; **1 John 4:1**)
 - Whenever someone tells you, "thus saith the Lord..."
 - Test it through the Word of God!