

LifeKey 3



There are no second fiddles in God's orchestra.

While life gifts are given to all and cover most of the purposes of life—how we relate to other people, find our work, and fill our leisure hours—spiritual gifts allow us to be a part of purposes bigger than what we can do alone. They help us carry out work that God wants to have done.

The *LifeKeys* book contains full descriptions for each of the spiritual gifts as well as suggestions for developing the gifts you discover. As you work to identify your spiritual gifts, please keep the following principles in mind:

- ***Spiritual gifts are given to us so we can use them for others.*** Each of us receives different gifts so that the body of Christ has what it needs to spread God's message of love. The gifts are given for the common good, not for the benefit of the individual who receives them. We are simply stewards of the gifts we are given.
- ***Spiritual gifts are given, not earned.*** The gifts we have are in no way a mark of maturity or of how much God loves us. The gifts we have are the ones God wants us to have. Christian maturity is shown not by spiritual gifts, but by the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, etc. Thus, incredibly gifted Christians can do amazingly stupid things. Instead of putting any gift or person who has a certain gift on a pedestal, look for people who use their gifts wisely and fruitfully, whatever they are.

- ***God gave us our gifts for one reason: to put them to use.*** If for some reason we choose not to use the gifts God gave us, some part of God's work may be left undone. Therefore, every individual and their unique contributions count.

The inventory below is only part of the process of discovering your gifts. In addition:

- **Instead of completing the following inventory in order, start with the descriptions of spiritual gifts that seem most appealing, likely, or similar to your life gifts.**
- **Read the stories about each gift in *LifeKeys*, chapter 3, or listen to how others have used these gifts. Do these examples sound like things you could do?**
- **Read the statements below for each of the gifts. Check the statements that apply to you.**

The gifts are grouped into *four categories* that we developed based on the different purposes the gifts seem to serve: *Gifts of the Heart*, *Gifts of Proclamation*, *Gifts of Action*, and *Gifts of Inspiration*. While these categories aren't found in the Bible, we find that they help people compare similar spiritual gifts and more easily discover which ones they have. You can go through the inventory page by page, or start with the category that sounds most like you. At the end, you'll give a rating to each gift, as explained on page 18.

GIFTS OF THE HEART

These gifts involve direct opportunity for service to individuals, for being God's hands on earth.

HELPS: The ability to work alongside others, attaching spiritual value to the accomplishment of practical, often behind-the-scenes tasks.

- I tend to notice and assist with practical tasks that need to be done.
- As I do routine tasks, I feel a spiritual link to the ministries or people I serve.
- I would rather take on set responsibilities than be involved in leadership.
- I prefer to work behind the scenes and often avoid public recognition for what I do.
- I receive satisfaction through quietly serving others.
- I enjoy working on odd jobs, often seeing a need and tending to it without being asked.

HOSPITALITY: The ability to provide a warm welcome for people that demonstrates God's love by providing food, shelter, or fellowship.

- I am comfortable around strangers and care deeply about how they are welcomed.
- I enjoy providing a safe environment for those who are in need.
- I feel fulfilled when I can open my home to others for food and fellowship.
- I can easily concentrate on whether guests feel welcome rather than on whether my house is in order or the food is extraordinary.
- I like to create appealing, appropriate environments for people.
- I view new relationships as opportunities to pass on God's love.

MERCY: The ability to perceive the suffering of others and comfort and minister effectively with empathy.

- I notice when people are hurt, displaced, or rejected and want to reach out to them in their suffering.
- I enjoy finding ways to show others how much God loves them.
- I can frequently see how to help people who are in need of comforting.
- I can easily gain the confidence of those in need.
- I tend to see each person as a life that matters to

God and reach out to people who are avoided by others.

- I enjoy conveying the grace of God to those who feel guilt or shame.

FAITH: The ability to recognize what God wants accomplished as well as to sustain a stalwart belief that God will see it done despite what others perceive as barriers.

- I firmly believe God is active in our lives.
- Sometimes I sense that God is orchestrating a project or idea. I find it easy to support this when others have doubts.
- I believe deeply in the power of prayer and am aware of God's presence in my life.
- I am able to believe that God is faithful, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties.
- People often tell me I am an "incurable optimist."
- My personal experiences help me believe in the power of faith.

GIVING: The ability to give of material wealth freely and with joy, to further the work of God.

- I often give generously and joyfully.
- I am resourceful in finding ways to free up my resources to benefit others.
- I feel a special connection to the ministries and projects I support financially.
- I'd rather give anonymously, for the most part, unless my example might inspire others to be generous.
- I tend to manage my own money well, often basing financial decisions on what will be made available for giving.
- I feel comfortable and have success with approaching others to give of their resources.

GIFTS OF PROCLAMATION

These gifts involve conveying God's truths or revelations to others.

EVANGELISM: The ability to spread the good news of Jesus Christ in ways that inspire others to learn more about our faith.

- I get excited about sharing the Gospel with others.
- I enjoy studying questions that challenge Christianity.
- I frequently think about people who do not have a faith commitment, wishing they could understand how my faith helps me.
- I look for ways that might help others understand the difference Christianity can make in their lives.
- I can see how people's needs can be met through faith in Christ.
- I can comfortably talk about my Christian faith with others in a way that makes them comfortable as well.

TEACHING: The ability to understand and communicate God's truths to others effectively—in ways that lead to applications in their lives.

- I want to make God's truths relevant to life in ways that help people grow and develop.
- I like gathering information, especially with the goal of effectively communicating it to others.
- I often easily envision how to present spiritual concepts in ways that people find useful.
- I love to study the Bible. I receive new insights fairly easily.
- When I listen to other teachers, I often think of alternative ways to present the materials.
- When I communicate what I have learned, others are motivated to learn more about the Bible and their faith in God.

DISCERNMENT: The ability to recognize what is of God and what is not of God.

- I can generally rely on my first impressions of people and whether their motives or character are authentic. I tend to "know" where a person is coming from.
- I sometimes sense when something like a book or presentation will bring people closer to God—or cause them to be hurt or pushed away.
- In many situations, I find my gut reacting to the

circumstance or atmosphere I am experiencing, whether good or bad.

- My mind tends to pick up on whether books or speakers are in line with God's truths. Contradictions stand out for me.
- I can distinguish sources of energy and motivations in people, whether from the Holy Spirit or others.
- I can tell if someone is operating from Jesus' commandment to love one another or if they are putting themselves before God.

KNOWLEDGE: The ability to understand, organize, and effectively use information, from natural sources or the Holy Spirit, for the advancement of God's purposes.

- I tend to notice and assist with practical tasks that need to be done.
- It is easy for me to gather and analyze information for projects, ministries, or other causes that serve God's purposes.
- I enjoy studying the Bible and other books to gain insights and background for God's Word.
- I can organize information well to pass on to others.
- I seem to understand how God acts in our lives.
- At times I find myself knowing information about a situation that has not been told to me by anyone else.
- I have insights about how things come together for God's purposes.

PROPHECY: The ability to proclaim God's truths in a way relevant to current situations and to envision how God would will things to change.

- I often spot the differences between cultural trends and what we are called to do as people of faith.
- I tend to see or think of images that convey God's truth.
- To me, repentance, change, and challenge are a healthy part of our spiritual life. I am very aware of the future consequences of choosing one path or another.
- When necessary, I am able to confront people with the truth of a situation.

- It saddens me when others ignore or take lightly life's problems.
- Often I can interpret God's truths in situations where that truth is encouraging—or even where that truth is unpopular or difficult for listeners to accept.

WISDOM: The ability to understand and apply biblical and spiritual knowledge to complex, paradoxical, or other difficult situations.

- It is easy for me to make practical applications of the truths found in the Bible, thinking through different courses of action and deter-

mining the best one.

- People often come to me for advice about personal and spiritual matters.
- I am known for my depth of understanding and insights into complex problems.
- I am often able to find a profoundly simple solution in the midst of a difficult situation.
- I have resolved paradoxes by cutting through to the essence of an issue.
- I help others see God's way in the midst of conflicting viewpoints.

GIFTS OF ACTION

These gifts involve moving individuals or the church toward accomplishing what God wants done.

LEADERSHIP: The ability to motivate, coordinate, and direct the efforts of others in doing God's work.

- I can motivate others and get people to work together toward a common goal.
- I have enough confidence in my vision of what could be done to give direction to others.
- I frequently accept responsibility in group settings where leadership is required.
- People under my leadership sense that they are headed in a good direction.
- When necessary, I can make unpopular decisions and work through any conflicts that follow.
- I can see in advance what people can achieve and know what needs to be done to make it happen.

ADMINISTRATION: The ability to organize information, events, or materials to work efficiently for the body of Christ.

- I like to organize facts, people, or events.
- When I am working on a project or effort, it is easy for me to see the necessary steps in the process to solve potential problems.
- I tend to be frustrated when I see disorganization.
- I enjoy learning about management issues and how organizations function effectively.
- I can easily manage schedules, finances, or supplies.
- I am generally careful and thorough in handling details.

PASTORING/SHEPHERDING: The ability to guide and care for others as they experience spiritual growth.

- I enjoy encouraging others to develop in their faith.
- As I work to help others I tend to think in terms of groups, teams, and task forces rather than individual personalities.
- I can often assess where a person is spiritually; I try to create or look for places where they can connect to enable them to take the next step.
- I have compassion for those who seem to be getting off track. I long to see them come back to the fold.
- I would enjoy nurturing and caring for a group of people over a period of time.
- I like to see people form long-term, in-depth spiritual relationships.

ENCOURAGEMENT/COUNSELING: The ability to effectively listen to people, comforting and assisting them in moving toward psychological and relational wholeness.

- People tell me that I am a good listener and approach me with dreams and concerns.
- I often see attributes or gifts in others that they are slow to recognize for themselves.
- I am usually aware of the emotional state of people around me, whether they are content or whether something is bothering them.
- In stressful situations, I often find myself able to give perspective on what is positive in a way that others find helpful.

- I tend to have more faith in people than they have in themselves.
- I sympathize easily with others and am tolerant of their shortcomings, yet I enjoy helping people mature in their faith.

APOSTLESHIP: The ability to minister transculturally, starting new churches or ministries that touch multiple churches.

- I am excited about working in multiple church settings and diverse religious communities.
- I am interested in how the Gospel can be

brought to those who have never heard it.

- I am attracted to new ministries, churches, or settings at home or abroad where a whole new approach to evangelism or service is needed.
- Presenting the Gospel to a different culture or in a different language sounds fulfilling.
- The idea of living in or visiting different places excites me.
- I have often envisioned myself as a missionary.

GIFTS OF INSPIRATION

These gifts make us aware of God's power in our lives or provide new energy for the work of God's kingdom.

HEALING: The ability to call on God for the curing of illness and the restoration of health in a supernatural way.

- I am naturally drawn to those who are sick either in spirit or in body.
- Sometimes God seems to work through me to bring physical, spiritual, relational, or emotional healing to others.
- I am aware of God's presence and listen for God's guidance on how to pray in each situation where healing is desired.
- Often I can sense whether a person's problems are physical or emotional in origin.
- When petitions for healing are spoken, I find myself wanting to pray.

MIRACLES: The ability to call on God to do supernatural acts that glorify God.

- I find myself praying for things that are obviously beyond the natural capacity of people.
- I seek for God to be glorified however my prayers are answered.
- I have witnessed God perform supernatural acts when I have prayed for intervention.
- I have seen others accept the Christian faith through these displays of the impossible being accomplished.
- I have faith that miracles happen even today.
- Often I see God at work when others only see coincidences.

SPEAKING IN TONGUES: The ability to speak in a language, known or unknown to others, supernaturally.

- Occasionally I have prayed in words or language(s) I have never before heard.
- Sometimes in prayer, my love for God feels so strong that I have difficulty expressing myself in words.
- I have been inspired or have inspired others to step out in faith through the use of personal prayer languages.
- I find during worship that my tongue wants to express itself in syllables I do not understand.

INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES: The ability to interpret spiritual languages.

- I can interpret the words of others who have spoken in languages ("tongues"), even though I have never before heard the languages.
- I understand how messages given through the use of tongues serve to glorify God, Jesus, or our faith.
- When somebody speaks in tongues, I feel the Holy Spirit giving me the ability to interpret or speak.

Spiritual Gifts Summary

Consider each gift again. Is it something that you've often done? Something that you can envision yourself doing with more training? Something that intrigues you but you haven't had opportunities to explore? Or something that is of no interest to you? Regardless of the number of statements you checked, rate your endowment of each of these spiritual gifts as follows, writing the numbers in the blank in front of each gift:

5. *This is definitely one of my spiritual gifts.*
4. *This is probably one of my spiritual gifts.*
3. *I am unsure—I need to learn more about this gift or experiment with ways to use this gift to find out if I have it.*
2. *This is probably not one of my spiritual gifts.*
1. *This is definitely not one of my spiritual gifts.*

Gifts of the Heart

- ___ Helps
- ___ Hospitality
- ___ Mercy
- ___ Faith
- ___ Giving

Gifts of Proclamation

- ___ Evangelism
- ___ Teaching
- ___ Discernment
- ___ Knowledge
- ___ Prophecy
- ___ Wisdom

Gifts of Action

- ___ Leadership
- ___ Administration
- ___ Pastoring/
Shepherding
- ___ Encouragement/
Counseling
- ___ Apostleship

Gifts of Inspiration

- ___ Healing
- ___ Miracles
- ___ Speaking in Tongues
- ___ Interpretation of
Tongues

Choose your top five spiritual gifts and record them on the "Putting It All Together" chart on pages 20-21.