

# Notebook



by Herb Miller

## How to Identify Your Spiritual Giftabilities\*

In a survey of several thousand Christians, less than 25 percent felt they were making a contribution to the Christian cause in the world. Less than 10 percent could identify the "spiritual gift" they possessed. Less than 5 percent were actively engaged in a ministry for which they felt a special calling or gift.

Church leaders therefore increasingly want to provide each church member with a means of identifying his or her spiritual gifts. To achieve maximum practicality, such an instrument needs three qualities: (1) easy to understand and use; (2) appropriate for new members, many of whom have no previous church experiences; and (3) short enough to administer during an adult Sunday school class or a new-member orientation. The description below explains how to use one such inventory.

### Introducing the Giftabilities Inventory

The leader begins with a statement something like



the following:

■ Today, each of us will have the opportunity to identify our personal spiritual giftabilities. Before we begin that process, let's be sure we understand the meaning of the term—spiritual gift. What is a spiritual gift?

■ The Bible says that spiritual gifts are the special abilities God gives individual

Christians. According to Ephesians 4:12, spiritual gifts are given "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

■ The Apostle Paul lists many of these spiritual gifts in New Testament letters. For example, we read in Romans 12:6-8, "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness."

■ Paul does not, however, list all of the spiritual gifts. We can produce a list of at least thirty from all parts of the Bible, and I will give you that list a little

\*This is an updated, improved version of an earlier instrument by Herb Miller.

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later. Some researchers come up with a list of thirty-two—some even more than that.

■ We should also take care not to confuse spiritual gifts with offices and roles in the Church—such as pastor, elder, deacon, and bishop. A spiritual gift is not a job, but an indication of the kind of service in which you would probably be effective and feel comfortable doing.

During the next few minutes, we will give each of you the chance to discover your spiritual gifts. As you answer the questions that will identify your gifts, please remember that we are not going to cover all the spiritual gifts.

■ For instance, we will not cover the gift of “speaking in tongues.” If you have that gift, you already know about it.

■ We will not cover the gift of martyrdom. That’s the gift you can only use once. If you have it, you would probably prefer not to know about it yet.

■ We will not cover the gift of exorcism.

■ We will not cover the gift of voluntary poverty, which some researchers feel is listed in the New Testament.

■ We will not cover the gift of celibacy. Nobody seems eager to receive that one these days—and if you have it, you already know that.

■ Answer the identification statements as honestly as possible. There is no way to fail this exercise.

■ Remember that this is not a test—it is an inventory. All of us here will have different scores because we have different giftabilities.

■ Don’t ponder any of the identification statements very long. Your first thought is usually the truest measure.

■ Don’t be too concerned about the answer to any one question. Your results are not determined by the answer to any one statement, but rather by all the statements averaged together.

■ Remember that you will not be sharing these sheets with anyone. Therefore, be as honest as you can, so you can get the greatest possible personal benefit from this experience.

## Taking the Inventory

Following this introductory presentation, the speaker distributes copies of “My Spiritual Giftability Profile” and “One Hundred Questions That Reveal My Spiritual Giftabilities.”

Illustrate the process for answering the questions and

putting the score on the “My Spiritual Giftability Profile” sheet by asking the first question or two. After being sure people understand the process, give them time to complete their profiles.

If you need to speed up the process and ensure that everyone finishes at the same time, read the one hundred statements aloud. To use this approach, read each question twice to make certain people understand it and have time to answer. Read the questions fairly rapidly, which causes participants to answer with their first impressions.

After you complete each set of twenty-five questions, ask people to put a sheet of paper over their answers to that column, so they will not distort the next set of twenty-five answers.

Give participants seven minutes to add up their scores on the “My Spiritual Giftability Profile” sheet.

Next, read the one-word description for each of the first twenty-five gifts from the sheet entitled “Definitions of Thirty Spiritual Gifts Described in the Bible,” and ask participants to write the words in order in the spaces on their “My Spiritual Giftability Profile.”

After you read these words, distribute copies of the sheet titled “Definitions of Thirty Spiritual Gifts Described in the Bible.” This allows people to clarify their understanding of any words they do not fully understand.

Give participants a chance to ask any clarification questions.

## Concluding Remarks

The leader concludes the session by saying something like the following:

This profile is not the only way to find out about your spiritual gifts. You can learn about them in at least two other ways.

1. Personal experience. If you enjoy doing something in the church, you are probably good at it. If you bitterly detest doing something, you may not be gifted for that role. Square pegs can occupy round holes but not with comfort.

2. Experiment. Try it. You may not like a particular role. But then again, you might. Let your light shine. See if it lights up any hidden dark corners.

## Why Use this Inventory?

Churches that use this inventory report several benefits, among which the following are especially obvious.

1. Involves new members in faster and better ways.

2. Increases self-esteem and involvement of members with low self-confidence. For example, Fred never feels worthy or adequate to do anything in the church. He is always apologizing and feeling that he couldn't possibly do a task well enough because he isn't smart enough or spiritual enough.

3. Reduces burnout and guilt feelings among high-involvement members who seem to operate as if they feel they have all the spiritual gifts. Most churches have a Maxine, whose zeal causes her to volunteer for every task that comes up.

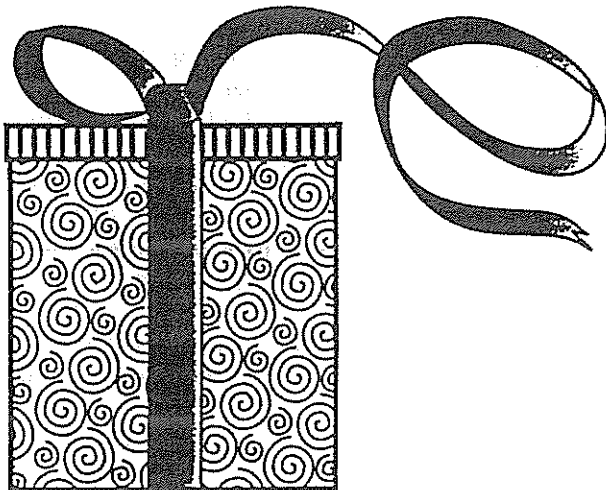
Using such an instrument does not totally eliminate the confusion surrounding the topic of spiritual gifts. (But people who have the opportunity to use it are confused on a much higher plane than before.)

## One Hundred Questions That Reveal My Spiritual Giftabilities

Instructions: To obtain your spiritual giftability scores, answer these one hundred questions and write the answers in the appropriate column (A, B, C, D) on the sheet entitled "My Spiritual Giftability Profile." Score yourself 0 if you do not experience the statement in your own life. Score yourself as high as 5 if the statement represents a high degree of intensity or frequency in your personal experience. If it is a lower degree of intensity or frequency, score yourself with a 1, 2, 3, or 4, accordingly.

### Column A

1. God frequently gives me a clear picture of what will happen in the future.
2. I try to keep rooms tidy and comfortable by properly arranging tables, chairs, etc.
3. I often carry out special assignments for other people.
4. When I teach, people seem to enjoy learning.
5. I can persuade others toward self-improvement even if they are at first reluctant.
6. I give significant amounts of money to special causes.
7. People seek my advice and follow my suggestions.
8. I often think of ways to help people in physical distress or bereavement.
9. People under my influence grow spiritually.
10. I have been elected or appointed to serve the church on district or general levels.
11. I can readily adjust to the "differentness" in other cultures without making negative judgments.
12. I can explain clearly to non-Christians the biblical meaning of salvation.
13. I can usually select a course of action that benefits the other people in my group.
14. I can easily remember ideas and facts.
15. The people I vote for in organizations usually make good officers.
16. I have prayed for the physical healing of another person, and healing has resulted.
17. In the name of the Lord, I have done the otherwise impossible.
18. Because of my faith in God's power, I can overcome challenging problems in ways that seem to defy the laws of reason.
19. I can easily see when and how to delegate important responsibilities and to whom I should delegate them.
20. I can provide food and/or lodging in a manner that guests appreciate.
21. I have played one or more musical instruments in



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public performances.

22. I have utilized my vocal-music ability in public performances.

23. I have used my writing ability in businesses, churches, or other organizations.

24. I have employed my artistic ability in businesses, churches, or other organizations.

25. I have the ability to design, construct, or repair buildings, equipment, or property.

### Column B

1. I find satisfaction in telling a group what I feel is God's will.

2. I enjoy helping others feel comfortable at meetings and events.

3. I like to run errands for other people.

4. I enjoy learning and teaching new ideas and facts.

5. I enjoy encouraging other people to put forth their best efforts.

6. I like to give significant financial gifts that help worthy organizations accomplish what they could not otherwise do.

7. I enjoy seeing others follow my guidance.

8. I enjoy doing little things for people who are unable to take care of themselves.

9. I enjoy helping people grow spiritually.

10. I feel comfortable taking responsibility for the spiritual growth of large numbers of people in various communities.

11. I feel at ease when relating to people from other cultures.

12. I enjoy seeking out unbelievers in order to witness to them regarding my faith in Christ.

13. I enjoy seeking and applying ideas that help solve specific problems.

14. I enjoy collecting, analyzing, and utilizing complex information to improve the effectiveness of organizations.

15. I can easily see the hidden reasons behind the statements and actions of other people.

16. I enjoy praying for the healing of sick persons.

17. I feel that spiritual forces can alter the laws of nature.

18. I find it easy to trust in God in difficult circumstances, and that faith is usually rewarded.

19. I have a knack for organizing ideas, people, and resources to effectively achieve goals.

20. I enjoy making strangers and/or persons in need feel at home.

21. I enjoy playing one or more musical instruments in

public performances.

22. I like to use my vocal-music ability in public performances.

23. I find projects that require writing skill enjoyable.

24. I derive satisfaction from projects that require skill in art.

25. I enjoy projects that require designing, constructing, or repairing buildings, equipment, or property.

### Column C

1. When I tell people what I feel is God's will, they seem willing to follow.

2. People thank me for my careful attention to details.

3. People appreciate the skill I use in helping them achieve their goals.

4. People seem to like my style of giving them information, ideas, and insights.

5. People tell me that I have been a big help when they were depressed, lonely, or trying to make a big decision.

6. Christian colleges, churches, or charities appreciate the large sums I am able to contribute.

7. People in organizations and groups appreciate my opinions and often follow my suggestions.

8. Persons with special needs, such as the elderly or handicapped, appreciate my visits.

9. People express appreciation for the spiritual help they receive through friendship with me.

10. Local church leaders respond well to my guidance in matters such as theological beliefs and establishing new congregations.

11. People of other cultures trust and react pleasantly to me.

12. People respond to my witnessing conversations with them by deciding to become Christians or join the church.

13. People seem inclined to accept my advice and act upon it.

14. People appreciate my ability to analyze complex information and to apply it in simple, practical ways.

15. My friends often seem surprised at how easily I can analyze the motives behind the behaviors of others.

16. Friends seem amazed at my sense of confidence that my prayers will help sick or injured people recover.

17. People have told me that I have more faith in the possibility of miracles than they do.

18. People notice how much I seem to trust in God.

19. People comment about the effective and efficient ways I help an organization accomplish its goals.

20. People often want to stay in my home.

21. People compliment me on my ability to play a musi-

cal instrument.

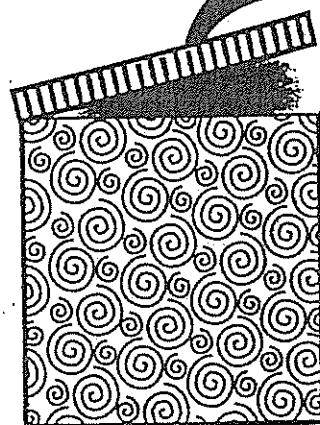
- 22. People seem to like my singing.
- 23. Friends and other people seem impressed with my writing.
- 24. People seem to appreciate my ability in art.
- 25. People comment on my ability to design, construct, or repair things.

### Column D

- 1. In group situations, people ask me to give my opinion regarding God's will.
- 2. People ask me to take responsibility for matters that require careful attention to details.
- 3. People in authority often ask me to help them prepare for special meetings or projects.
- 4. People invite me to fill roles that require teaching skills.
- 5. People seek my advice when they are depressed or facing a tough decision.
- 6. Leaders of various charitable organizations often bring special financial needs to my attention, knowing that I can draw upon reserve funds to meet those needs.
- 7. Groups elect or appoint me to leadership positions involving decision making.
- 8. Because they sense that I will know what kind of help we should extend, people often tell me of another's mis-

fortune.

- 9. People often seek my counsel in personal spiritual matters.
- 10. People seek my opinions regarding biblical, denominational, and local church traditions.
- 11. People ask me to help with projects involving persons of other nationalities.
- 12. Church leaders invite me to help with evangelistic reachout activities.
- 13. People ask for my help in deciding moral, ethical, and other life issues.
- 14. Because I often bring fresh insights to complex issues, people ask me to help them find solutions.
- 15. People in authority ask my opinion about giving certain jobs to certain people.
- 16. Because God often answers my prayers for healing in a way visible to others, sick people ask me to pray for them.
- 17. People often ask me to assume difficult tasks because they know that the miracles I believe will happen often do.
- 18. When people work with me on challenging projects, they seem to gain confidence from my faith in God's providence.
- 19. People seem to appreciate my organizational abilities.
- 20. Because I enjoy entertaining guests, organizations in



which I participate invite me to provide hospitality skills.

- 21. I am employed or have been employed in using my instrumental-music talent professionally.
- 22. I am employed or have been employed in using my vocal-music talent professionally.
- 23. I am employed or have been employed in using my writing skills professionally.
- 24. I am employed or have been employed in using my art ability professionally.
- 25. I am employed or have been employed in using my design, building, or repair craftsmanship professionally.

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## My Spiritual Giftability Profile

Instructions: Write answers here from the sheets titled "One Hundred Questions That Reveal My Spiritual Giftabilities." Score yourself 0 if you do not experience the statement in your own life. Score yourself as high as 5 if the statement represents a high degree of intensity or frequency in your personal experience. If it is a lower degree of intensity or frequency, score yourself with a 1, 2, 3, or 4, accordingly.

After completing the first twenty-five answers (column A), cover those and subsequent answers with a sheet of paper to avoid distorting your other answers.

A	B	C	D	Total Score	Rank	Spiritual Gifts
						1.
						2.
						3.
						4.
						5.
						6.
						7.
						8.
						9.
						10.
						11.
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						22.
						23.
						24.
						25.

◆◆◆ Warning! ◆◆◆

Do not review this list until you have answered the "One Hundred Questions That Reveal My Spiritual Giftabilities" and written the numerical scores on "My Spiritual Giftability Profile."

After you have answered the one hundred questions, take the first twenty-five words from the "Definitions of Thirty Spiritual Gifts Described in the Bible" below and write them in order in the twenty-five blanks on the sheet entitled "My Spiritual Giftability Profile."

Take the seven highest total scores and rank them one through seven in the column titled "Rank." This gives you a list of your seven highest-ranking spiritual gifts. (Some of your top seven may be ties.)

### Definitions of Thirty Spiritual Gifts Described in the Bible

The basic New Testament texts regarding spiritual gifts are found in Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-27; 1 Corinthians 14:1-5; Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16; and 1 Peter 4:8-11. These and other gifts are illustrated in numerous other texts throughout the Bible.

1. **Prophecy:** The giftability to receive and communicate a message from God to a particular audience with clarity and persuasive power. (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; Ephesians 4:11-14; Luke 7:26; Acts 15:32; Acts 21:9-11)
2. **Serving:** The giftability to identify and perform various details of work essential to the efficient functioning of the Church. (Romans 12:7; 2 Timothy 1:16-18; Titus 3:14; Galatians 6:10; 1 Peter 4:10-11)
3. **Helping:** The giftability to help other Christians

increase the effectiveness of their particular spiritual gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 16:1-2; Acts 9:36; Luke 8:2-3; Mark 15:40-41)

4. **Teaching:** The giftability to communicate Christian information or concepts in ways that allow people to learn quickly and easily. (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-14; Romans 12:7; Acts 18:24-28; Acts 20:20-21)

5. **Encouraging:** The giftability to exhort, counsel, comfort, console, and encourage others in ways that strengthen their Christian faith commitment. (Romans 12:8; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 14:22)

6. **Giving:** The giftability to earn and give material resources to God's work liberally and cheerfully. (Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 9:2-8)

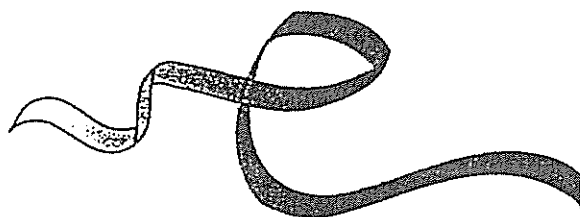
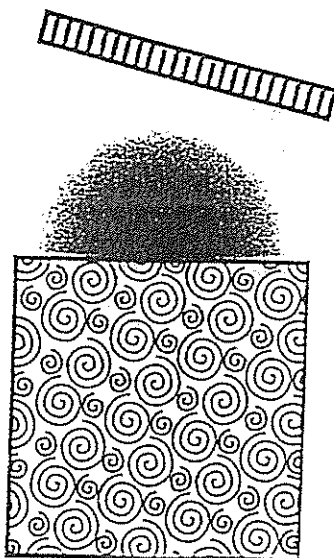
7. **Leadership:** The giftability to help Christians set goals congruent with God's will and to communicate these goals in ways that cause others to work voluntarily and harmoniously toward their achievement. (1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17)

8. **Mercy:** The giftability to feel empathy and compassion for those who suffer from mental, emotional, or physical hurts and to help them in ways that alleviate their suffering. (Romans 12:8; Mark 9:41; Luke 10:33-35; Acts 11:28-30)

9. **Pastor:** The giftability to assume long-term responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a Christian group. (Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3)

10. **Apostle:** The giftability to give leadership to a group of churches with a kind of spiritual authority that is spontaneously recognized by other people. (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-14; Galatians 2:7-10)

11. **Missionary:** The giftability to minister effectively to persons in another culture. (Acts 13:2-3; Acts 22:20-21; Romans 15:18-19)



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12. **Evangelist:** The giftability to share the gospel of Christ with unbelievers in ways that encourage them to become active disciples and responsible members of his Church. (Ephesians 4:11-14; 2 Timothy 4:5; Acts 8:5-6,26-40; Acts 21:8)
13. **Wisdom:** The giftability to see how a given item of knowledge applies to specific problem situations in the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:6-13; 1 Corinthians 12:8; 2 Peter 3:15)
14. **Knowledge:** The giftability to find, collect, analyze, and clarify knowledge and then appropriately apply that information to problem situations in ways that promote the growth and well-being of the Church. (1 Corinthians 12:8; 2 Corinthians 11:6)
15. **Discernment of Spirits:** The giftability to accurately judge character, recognize whether a person's behavior arises from godly or from evil motives, and see the difference between false teaching and divine truth in a confusing situation. (1 Corinthians 12:10; 1 John 4:1-6)
16. **Healing:** The giftability to serve as the human instrument through whom God's healing power cures another person's physical or emotional need in ways different from those considered medically natural. (1 Corinthians 12:9,28; Acts 3:1-10; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 9:32-35; Acts 28:7-10)
17. **Miracles:** The giftability to exercise faith in ways that observers perceive as altering the normal course of nature. (1 Corinthians 12:10,28; Acts 9:36-42; Acts 19:11-20; Acts 20:7-12; 2 Corinthians 12:12)
18. **Faith:** The giftability to clearly see the will and purpose of God and confidently act accordingly. (1 Corinthians 12:9; Acts 11:22-24; Acts 27:21-25)
19. **Administration:** The giftability to clearly understand the goals of a particular part of Christ's Body and to effectively execute designed plans for the accomplishment of these goals. (1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 6:1-7)
20. **Hospitality:** The giftability to enjoy providing a warm welcome to those who need food and lodging. (1 Peter 4:9; Romans 12:13; Romans 16:23; Acts 16:14-15; Hebrews 13:1-2)
21. **Instrumental Music:** The giftability to play a musical instrument in ways that spiritually encourage and strengthen others. (1 Samuel 16:14-23)
22. **Vocal Music:** The giftability to spiritually strengthen people through singing. (Psalm 96:1-4)
23. **Writing:** The giftability to spiritually edify, instruct,

**F**ocus is the most powerful leadership resource. Focus determines what you pay attention to and how you use your time. Focused attention and effort beat brilliance every time in the marketplace of human affairs.

—Mark Sanborn

- and strengthen people with written words. (1 John 2:1-28)
24. **Artistry:** The giftability to create, design, and build things that inspire others to greater faith and spiritual growth. (Exodus 31:1-11)
25. **Craftsmanship:** The giftability to construct or repair buildings and/or other items used to achieve God's purposes. (Exodus 31:3-5)
26. **Tongues:** The giftability to speak to God in an unknown language and/or to receive a message from God for his people through this medium. (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; 1 Corinthians 14:13-19; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 19:1-6; Mark 16:17)
27. **Interpretation:** The giftability to translate the message of someone who speaks in unknown tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 1 Corinthians 14:13; 1 Corinthians 14:26-28)
28. **Intercession:** The giftability to regularly pray for extended time periods and frequently see these prayers answered to a degree much greater than that found among most Christians. (James 5:14-16; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Colossians 1:9-12)
29. **Celibacy:** The giftability to enjoy remaining unmarried without suffering undue sexual temptation. (1 Corinthians 7:7-8; Matthew 19:10-12)
30. **Martyrdom:** The giftability to undergo suffering for the faith to the point of death with a joyous and positive attitude. (Acts 7:54-60; Acts 12:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:22-28)