



STUDY GUIDE

How to Grow in Exercising Spiritual Gifts

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit. ... Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church. ... When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.”
(1 Corinthians 14:1,12,26, NIV)

I. READY, SET, GO!

Want to grow in your spiritual gifts? Want to thrive and be challenged? Want to go to the next level? Ask! Believe! Receive! Step out!

A. Gifts Thrive in the Context of a Believing Fellowship

- 1. Our Heavenly Father has welcomed us!

Yes, our gracious Heavenly Father has welcomed us into His family by giving us gifts, which have been set within a framework of believing fellowship, in an atmosphere of expectant faith, worship, and waiting upon Him.

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ... and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13, NASB)

- 2. We are not orphans!

If Jesus had not fulfilled this promise by adopting us into the heavenly family of His Father God, you and I would be orphans—unable to provide for ourselves. But He did follow through and we are His adopted sons and daughters.

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14:18, NIV)

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are meant to function within the family of God. If you are a Believer in Christ, you have been adopted into the family of God and you are no longer alone. We are not orphans, and none of us is an only child, either. Spiritual gifts are given within a corporate setting, and they shine forth with collective brightness.

B. We Must Continually Flow in the Spirit

There is a river of God, and everywhere it goes it produces life!

1. The New Testament keeps telling us to ask and receive because, as we earnestly seek God, He changes the desires of our hearts to match His; our requests line up with His will, and we end up asking for exactly what He knows we need:

“All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills.” (1 Corinthians 12:11, ESV)

“God added His testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to His will.” (Hebrews 2:4, NRSV)

As former orphans, we can rejoice in the new life He has given us:

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”
(Romans 8:14, NASB)

2. Certain gifts are always within the will of God to ask for in prayer, for example the gifts of prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues (see

1 Corinthians 14:5,13). Move out in faith, stirring up your gift and asking God for more.

C. **Trust God as You Ask and Receive**

1. *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”* (Luke 11:13; see also Matthew 7:11, NASB)
2. *“Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.”* (Mark 11:24, NASB)

D. **Check Your Motives**

Always use your gifts for the sake of the people around you.

“Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.” (1 Corinthians 14:12, NKJV)

Never let anything become a performance, especially if your gift puts you on the platform. You are not building your own little kingdom; you have been adopted into His! God gives His gifts as a demonstration of how much He wants to love others through you!

E. **Practice Makes Perfect**

Correct, mature exercise of the gifts comes by learning through using them.

“For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged.” (1 Corinthians 14:31, ESV)

“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age; that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:14, NKJV)

F. **Gifts Must Be Used Actively**

1. You cannot be passive.

You cannot be passive, hoping that the Spirit will move you in some way. You need to stir yourself up. Jesus told us to go!

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. ... These signs will accompany those who have believed: In My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. ...”

“And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the Word by the signs that followed.” (Mark 16:15,17–18,20, NASB)

2. Who is waiting on who?

God waits for His people to go forth so that He might demonstrate the power of the cross of Christ and impart life to believers and non-believers alike. Signs follow believers who go—not those who sit on their hands.

“For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, now has the eye seen a God besides You, who acts in behalf of one who waits for Him.” (Isaiah 64:4)

“These signs will accompany those who have believed: In My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues.” (Mark 16:17)

II. Welcome the Creativity of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit creates an endless variety of gifts, ministries, and operations within the Body of Christ.

A. There Is a Variety of Expressions

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but that same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.” (1 Corinthians 12:4–6, ESV)

B. No Single “Right Way”

Ministries are made up of a collection of gifts. And the wide variety of gifts, expressed through different personalities, is further varied by the surrounding circumstances and culture.

C. One God, Many Expressions

Despite the great variety of expression, everything stems from the same God. The same Holy Spirit expresses His grace in a distinct manner each time He is allowed to work in and through somebody. He does not limit Himself to “professionals,” or even to polished modes of expression. Our Creator’s life flows through any member of His Body who says “yes” to Him.

D. Called to Bring Light

Through those gifts, God shines His brilliant light. He illuminates our innermost beings (see Proverbs 20:27), and He shows His glory to the world at large.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.” (Matthew 5:14–15, NASB)

III. Scriptures to Build Your Faith

Read through these scriptural truths—they help build your faith for the exercise of your spiritual gifts.

A. The Exercise of Spiritual Gifts Brings Glory to God

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.”
(1 Peter 4:10–11, NRSV)

B. The Exercise of Spiritual Gifts Edifies and Builds up Others

“Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves, but those who prophesy build up the church. Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets so that the church may be built up. ... So with yourselves; since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for the building up of the church.” (1 Corinthians 14:4–5, 12, NRSV)

C. God Wants Every Believer to Exercise Spiritual Gifts

Whenever He wants to bring His Kingdom to bear on something, God’s first choice is to use a spiritual-gift-equipped follower. That man or woman or child does not have to be a professional “religious person”; God typically uses the nearest available believer to accomplish His purposes throughout the world.

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ... All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. ... What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.”
(1 Corinthians 12:7,11; 14:26, NRSV)

D. Spiritual Gifts Are Tools of Love

They are channels for God’s love. Believers need to practice using them, and nobody will be an expert on his or her first try. It feels risky to step out in public to use them, and a person has to be willing to appear stupid or to fail.

Nothing is guaranteed, except that the Holy Spirit will help.

“But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. ... Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” (1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1, ESV)

E. God Will Faithfully Give His Gifts to Us

If we love Him, we will desire to receive and exercise them.

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11, Luke 11:13, NRSV)

“Do not be deceived, my beloved. Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” (James 1:16–17, NRSV)

F. Spiritual Gifts Will Continue to Operate until Christ Comes Again

“I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:4–8, ESV)

“‘And it shall come to pass in the last days,’ says God, ‘That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.’” (Acts 2:17–20, NKJV)

G. God Ordained that the Gospel Should Be Preached with Signs Following

With more heathen in the world today who have not heard the gospel than there were in the days of the apostles, we should expect an unprecedented display of God's grace and supernatural power to testify to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and give glory to God the Father. The Church (which is made up of individuals like you and me) needs to stir up and exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit more than ever before. This is not the time to settle into comfortable resting mode, it is the time to shed every encumbrance and obey the words of Jesus.

1. From Mark 16:15–20, ESV:

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them. They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.’

“So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.”

2. From Acts 8:5–7, ESV:

“Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.”

3. From Acts 28:3–10, ESV:

“When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, ‘No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.’ He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

“Now, in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.”

4. From Romans 15:18–19, NRSV:

“For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ.”

5. From Hebrews 2:1–4, NRSV:

“Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard so that we do not drift away from it. For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard Him, while God added His testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles,

and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to His will.”

6. From Matthew 28:18–20, NKJV:

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

IV. Learn from the Examples of Others

A. In Like Manner as the Early Apostles

Just as the early Church apostles and prophets relied upon needed supernatural power in their ministry in the first century, so should we today!

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8, NKJV)

“But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, ‘Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?’ (Acts 3:12, NASB)

“And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.” (Acts 4:33, NKJV)

“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19, KJV)

B. Influencers and Imparters in My Life

1. Fire of God, through Jill Austin.
2. Anointing of sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, from Mahesh Chavda.

3. Divine knowings, from Bob Jones.
4. Authority over demons, from Derek Prince.
5. Strong intercession, through Dick Simmons.
6. Prayer shield, from Beth Alves.
7. Ready at all times, from Cindy Jacobs.
8. Integrity matters, from Che Ahn.
9. Forgiveness as a lifestyle, from my Mother.
10. Compassion, from Michal Ann Goll.
11. Prayer of travail, from Pat Gastineau.
12. God's heart for Israel, from Derek Prince.

C. **We Need Each Other's Gifts**

No one can exercise their spiritual gifts in isolation, apart from other people. We need each other's ministry. We need each other's encouragement in the faith. And we flourish within a culture of honor, where believers are—

"... devoted to one another in brotherly love, giving preference to one another in honor." (Romans 12:10, NASB)

V. **Prayer to Stir Up the Gift**

Dear God, we believe that You are a good, good Father, and You only give good gifts to Your children. So we ask for an increase of the gifts of Your Holy Spirit to be released into our lives right now. We receive more of Your empowerment for Your Kingdom's sake. Come upon us now, Holy Spirit!

Like Paul the apostle speaking to Timothy, we stir up the gifts of God already within us. We speak to the river of God within us, and we say, "Spring up, oh well, and burst forth. Rivers of living waters, come forth now, in Jesus' great name!" I declare that there is an increase of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ flowing upon me, into me, and out of me to others for the glory of God.

I am stepping into the river of God's amazing purposes fresh and anew. I am going further and further into His glorious Presence, step-by-step. The anointing of the

Holy Spirit is increasing upon me, upon my life right now, and I will never be the same again. Praise the Lord! Amen and Amen.