

# Pursuing God's Presence Through Spiritual Gifts

## Introduction

God manifests his very presence to us *through* spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:4–7, “There are varieties of gifts, but the 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. **To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.**”

## Three Goals

I want to 1) encourage you to pursue spiritual gifts as a means to the end of pursuing God's presence, 2) encourage you to pursue spiritual gifts in order to build others up, and 3) encourage you to pursue spiritual gifts in their wider variety than the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12–14.

## What Other New Testament Passages Teach

God gives us both various spiritual gifts to use for upbuilding others and the faith necessary to use those spiritual gifts.

Romans 12:1–8, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the **mercies** of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the **grace** given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with **sober** judgment, each **according to the measure of faith that God has assigned**. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ **according to the grace given to us, let us use them**: if prophecy, **in proportion to our faith**; if service, in our serving [by faith]; the one who teaches, in his teaching [by faith]; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation [by faith]; the one who contributes, in generosity [by faith]; the one who leads, with zeal [by faith];

the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness [by faith].”

God doesn't just give abilities. He gives people. Both are gifts.

Ephesians 4:4–16, “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.** Therefore it says,

‘When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,  
and he gave gifts to men.’

(In saying, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And **he gave** the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, **for building up the body of Christ**, until we all **attain to the unity** of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up** in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom **the whole body**, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, **makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**”

Let's use our gifts to serve one another and to glorify God.

1 Peter 4:10–11, “As each has received a gift, **use it to serve one another**, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything **God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.** To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”