

# Talents, Fruit and Gifts

## A New Life of Spirit Led Ministry to Others

The Lord gives talents and natural abilities to everyone as a way of getting us started in life. You don't have to be a believer to be a receiver of these—just develop what you notice. As believers, though, it helps to know the limits of these natural abilities in the spiritual life. Wiser still would be to shift our attention towards cultivating those gifts and fruit which are unique to who we now are in Christ as His new creations.

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV**

## A Progression

In general talents are natural abilities given to everyone at birth, fruit are the good things anyone can cultivate, but gifts are the supernatural way God uniquely works in those who are united to Him through faith in Christ. There may be no hard and fast rules here, but there is a general progression that can be noted. Naturally, for those who receive genuine faith in Christ at a very early age, these distinctions will be clouded, since natural abilities, fruit and gifts will begin to appear simultaneously. With adult conversion we see a progression more clearly: natural abilities and most fruit can appear before conversion; some fruit and most gifts can only appear after conversion.

### A. Natural Abilities

We now know that we receive a genetic package at conception which contains fabulous gifts of accumulated generational inheritance. Within it are all of our potential talents waiting (so to speak) for us to discover and cultivate. No one needs to be a believer in God to receive these gifts. Through conception God gives lavishly to everyone natural abilities of body, mind, heart and personality. We all have them to varying degrees. We cultivate them to varying degrees.

Some talents need cultivating from a very early age or they can never develop fully. Other abilities may not be discovered (or even needed) until much later in life. No one is left out, though sadly, many natural talents and abilities may never be recognized or cultivated.

In terms of development a lot depends upon the individual and the environment. However, both of these factors are under the direct influence of the Lord's grace and providential working. Doubtless He helps us discover and cultivate our innate abilities, even if we have no belief in Him at all. That too is His gift to us.

With conversion and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, whole new attitudes arise within us. Even if we previously had been too timid or discouraged to discover our abilities or cultivate our



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known talents, all this is subject to change. A healthy prayer life and growing confidence in God, should be sufficient to help any believer recognize and cultivate their natural abilities above and beyond what they could have done without the Lord's help. Even so, it is important to realize that these are not yet what the Bible calls "gifts." Any good thing a non-believer can do, you can do, too, if you have sufficient desire to cultivate that ability. "Gifts" are what only you can do and a non-believer cannot. Talents come to us through natural birth; "gifts" come to us through spiritual re-birth.

## B. Good Fruit

There are three kinds of fruit that the Bible describes: the fruit of good deeds, the fruit of the Spirit and the fruit of Christian ministry. The first two can be cultivated by anyone on earth; only the third one can be cultivated by Christians.

### 1) The Fruit of Good Deeds

While it is definitely true that our good deeds alone can never be sufficient to save us, it is equally true that the Bible expects us to do good as much as we can, as well as we can and as often as we can. You don't have to be a converted Christian to give to the poor, to work hard and honestly, to love your family or to defend your country. These are good things. We could call them "the fruit of righteousness" if that wouldn't give them too religious a cast. No one needs faith in God to do them, though just as with natural abilities, good deeds should flourish in the lives of genuine believers, since we can call on the Lord for help in cultivating them.

**Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.** Psalms 34:11  
ESV

### 2) The Fruit of the Spirit

These are fruit which can grow in our inner state: peace, love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. All right thinking people everywhere prize these as feelings and praise them as virtues. Christians have a unique access to them through faith and grace, but we do not have exclusive receptivity to them for they are gifts of God to anyone who can receive them. Indeed, little children whose parents may be of any faith or of no faith, universally exhibit these fruit better than many of us who believe. As with natural abilities and good deeds, anyone can recognize, receive and cultivate this to a degree, but as believers we can enter into higher levels of these fruit and learn the way of enhanced cultivation which Jesus desires.

**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.** John 15:4-5 ESV



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### 3) The Fruit of Christian Ministry

In the widest sense Christian ministry includes anything that any believer might do as a service to others. But you don't have to be a believer to spend your life in service to others. The New Testament letters generally narrow this down into those specific things which we do for the sake of making Jesus known or for advancing His kingdom: such as preaching, praying, teaching, serving in His Name and doing healing, deliverance and miracles. This kind of fruit is a form of service unique to Christians. It grows out of the "gifts" that the Lord provides believers so that He can work in us and through us by His Spirit.

**Now 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. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 ESV**

## C. Gifts for Ministry

When we are reborn through the gift of faith and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Lord showers fresh abilities and desires upon us. These are called "gifts and callings" and they go together like peas and carrots. Because of what the Lord plans to call us into doing, He gives us desires that inspire us and gifts that equip us for service in that direction. You can count on it that once you discover any gifts or callings in you, they are there to stay. He doesn't revoke or withdraw them due to neglect, misuse or failed behavior.

**For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Romans 11:29 ESV**

There are three main kinds of spiritual gifts that we can receive, as well as others dropped in for good measure. These are commonly referred to as the [Five Ministry Gifts](#), the [Eight Motivational Gifts](#) and the [Nine Manifestation Gifts](#). They will be discussed in the following three articles. For now let's consider the difference between fruit and gifts, and specific gifts and general callings.

### 1) Fruit and Gifts

The good side of God's promise in Romans is that any effort we put into discovering our gifts and callings will always grow us towards our intended destiny: we can build on this as on a foundation that will never be removed. However, we need to build with wisdom. Character and integrity are entirely separate issues—they don't come with any of the gifts. They are fruit of the Spirit (for instance, faithfulness and self-control) that we must cultivate alongside of the gifts, otherwise we risk tarnishing the gifts, spreading confusion in the Body of Christ and giving the work a black eye to outsiders. Maybe someone's been given gifts of healing and evangelism, but if they steal from the offering and cheat on their spouse, that lack of character will bring their work to ruin. Don't let it happen to you!

Another difference between fruit and gifts is that fruit takes time to cultivate. Gifts can drop on you in an instant. The rule for fruit is that of natural cultivation: *sow and grow*. It takes a considerable amount of time to raise fruit trees to the point of harvesting a bumper crop. That should tell us something. We sow and grow by cultivating the 3 P's:



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prayer, patience and perseverance. As we die to the old ways of self, the Holy Spirit raises us up into the ways of the Lord. That just doesn't happen overnight.

The three great loves—for the people we serve, the people we serve with, and for Jesus Himself—don't grow all by themselves. Or rather, they do grow by an effortless grace when conditions are right, but if we don't cultivate around them, our harvest will be mostly weeds and rotten fruit! God starts us with a lot of grace, but we have to learn how to work with His love and mercy in order for things to keep growing in the right direction. So, be prepared to refresh your compassion, acceptance and obedience when the manure of unwanted events and difficult people gets added into the mix.

The rule with gifts is different: *believe and receive*. This calls for the 3 F's: faith, fact and feeling. By faith we trust ourselves to the "facts" in God's Word; then feelings follow as we receive what we ask or seek. Ask in faith for the gifts that your heart points you towards, believe in the fact of God's promise to gift and equip you, then step out into service and the feeling of being called and equipped will begin to show up. There's more to it than this, but that's enough to get anyone started.

## 2) Gifts and "General" Callings

Let's take in on faith for the moment that you have been given specific gifts and have a specific calling upon your life. Eventually, you will discover what these might be as you see what you like to do and what you do easily and well. Your friends may point some of this out to you, leaders may confirm it, and the Lord may reveal more through your hopes, dreams or encounters with Him. You have a unique purpose to fulfill and you have been exquisitely gifted to go at it. None of this, however, has anything to do with your "general" callings.

Every Christian knows Jesus by faith and has the Holy Spirit living inside of them. Therefore, every Christian has the potential of serving in any way that the Lord may ask of them from time to time. This has nothing to do with the way we may be best gifted and equipped to operate. It certainly has nothing to do with our comfort zones or personal desires. Just because I may not be "called and gifted" to be an evangelist, doesn't exclude me from the call of God to share my faith in Christ. I may not have any discernible gifts of healing, but I am still called to pray for the sick. You may not be a pastor, but you still will need to know how to comfort, encourage and guide your friends and others the Lord may put in your path.

These general callings of God are in the scriptures and they are directed to all of us. Sure, some have champion level gifts, but all of us are soldiers and may be required to step in to any role at a moment's notice. This can easily seem intimidating at first (and at times along the way), because it means that God may ask us to step out of our comfort zone and rely on Him to help us fill in when no one better equipped is standing by. The beautiful side of this is that nothing is excluded from us: we can grow in every direction to some degree and we can, therefore, reap the blessing of experiencing that part of the Rescue.



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## More to Explore

**5 Ministry Gifts** Everyone benefits directly from these five gifts for they are given by the Father for the express purpose of building up the whole Body of Christ so that we can be fully equipped to play our part in the Rescue. Considering how important they are in God's plan, it should not be too surprising that the enemy has tried to eliminate or decimate them. Several of these ministry gifts have nearly passed out of everyday experience for many in the church. The good news is that they are all staging a comeback!

**7 Motivational Gifts** These should be of particular interest to everyone, since each of us has been given at least one. Oddly enough, it's not always obvious to us what our unique gift is. Perhaps the Lord enjoys playing Hide and Seek more than we might imagine! Here's a clue: usually you will find them "hidden in plain sight," since people often live out of their gift before they catch on to what it is. Intrigued? See if you can spot your own.

**9 Manifestation Gifts** Jesus never intended for His church to be powerless or penniless. Just as the tithe is the Lord's provision for material supply, so the baptism in the Spirit is His provision for supernatural supply. Neither is forced on anyone, but when believers come into obedience, watch out! The "windows of heaven" open wide! Through the baptism in the Spirit, Jesus pours out gifts that will manifest as signs and wonders for the sake of ministry to someone He wants to bless.

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## Scriptures on Talents, Fruit and Gifts

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11 ESV

Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth. Colossians 1:5-6 ESV

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:9-10 ESV



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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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