

What is the Purpose of Spiritual Gifts?

[1 Peter 4:10-11](#)

1 Peter, Day 22

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.

- 1 Peter 4:10-11, ESV

One of my favorite scenes in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is the arrival of Father Christmas, whose coming signals the decline of the White Witch's power and who gives gifts to the Pevensie children. Peter is given a magnificent sword, Susan is given a bow and a horn, and Lucy is given a vial full of a precious healing cordial.

Imagine if the battle came later in the story and Peter said, "My sword is much too magnificent to soil in battle. Someone lend me another." Or what if Susan had said, "I can't possibly be expected to shoot arrows at monsters. I prefer using my bow for target practice only."? Their precious gifts from Father Christmas would have been useless if they had not used them in faithful service, as they were intended.

Many Christians want to know what spiritual gift they have, and some are convinced they might not have one, at least not an important one. Some Christians tie their spiritual self-esteem to being able to identify and feel good about their spiritual gifting. And, of course, too many Christians exercise their spiritual gifts in a way that draws attention to themselves and wins them praise.

It seems we have forgotten the purpose of our gifts. We have not been gifted so we can feel good about what gift we have, be able to identify our gifts when asked, or be praised by others for our gifts. The purpose of a spiritual gift, is to "*use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.*"

If we were to focus on serving one another in the name of Jesus as stewards of the grace of God, we would focus on the opportunities, on the service, and on the grace of God, and not on our gifts. Peter says we serve one another in two basic ways, by speaking and by serving. We may speak in prayer, or in encouragement, or in teaching, preaching, or even in rebuke and correction. If we do so in loving service to one another, serving the grace of God to each other, we are exercising our spiritual gifting for God's glory. We may serve by serving food, fixing a broken car or home, making a meal, watching a child, visiting someone in the hospital, or helping collect food for a food pantry. All of these ways of serving are the exercise of spiritual gifts, if we are loving one another as stewards of God's grace.

All-in-all, 1 Peter 4:10-11 would seem to have us be less concerned with inventorying our spiritual gifts and more concerned with serving one another - "*in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.*"