



CrossPointe has a “two-handed” theology, which holds essential doctrines in a closed fist and non-essential doctrines in an open hand. By this, we mean that some doctrinal stances are essential according to biblically orthodox Christianity (i.e., the Trinity; Jesus’ deity, virgin birth, sinless life, death for sin, and resurrection; the authority of the Bible; salvation by grace through faith in Jesus alone; etc.). Others are non-essential, because they stem from secondary issues that CrossPointe holds in an “open hand.” A person’s salvation does not depend on a particular stance concerning these issues.

The various gifts that the Holy Spirit imparts to Christians and their continuation through history are “open-handed” issues at CrossPointe.

What is the purpose of “spiritual gifts”?

After Jesus’ resurrection, he spent 40 days with his disciples, teaching and preparing them for the work of advancing his kingdom. They anticipated, however, that Jesus would usher in his kingdom soon.

They asked, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” to which Jesus replied, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:6-8). In other words, the kingdom’s timeline is unknown to all but the Father himself, yet those who anticipate Jesus’ worldwide dominion are called to go out as his witnesses. Jesus said this witness could only be accomplished once the disciples had received power.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, empowers individual *believers* with gifts—abilities, talents, attitudes, capacities—that serve Jesus’ mission to advance his kingdom.

However, **these gifts also serve the body of Christ**, according to 1 Corinthians 12:7, which reads, “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” Those who love Christ also love the body of Christ, his Church. The Holy Spirit enables the body’s members to work for its own good, lovingly serving each other according to their gifts. Consequently, Ephesians 4:16 refers to Christ as the one “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.” It is through Jesus and the gifts his Spirit imparts that Jesus’ people follow him and encourage each other to become more like him.

On this point, it is important to mention that possessing certain gifts does not necessarily indicate the degree of a person’s spiritual maturity. For example, the Corinthian church to which Paul wrote was very gifted, speaking prophecies and tongues, but it was also very carnal, giving in to lusts and fleshly passions not unlike their sinful, unregenerate neighbors and coworkers in Corinth. Thus, gifts must be used wisely and for the local and global church body’s benefit, keeping the church pure from sin and effective in ministry for Jesus’ fame.

In addition to Jesus’ kingdom and his church’s benefit, **there is a certain joy for believers who receive and use their spiritual gifts.** The people whom Jesus purchased with his blood love their Savior, the one who conquered death for them and gave them his righteousness as their very own. They long to serve him, not to repay him or put him in their debt, but to glorify him, working with the strength God provides as 1 Peter 4:11 suggests. God gives to believers what he asks of them in service to Jesus’ kingdom.

Consequently, men like Peter and Paul encouraged believers to seek God-given abilities so that he might be glorified and they might delight in his provision and sufficiency.

What specific gifts does the Bible mention?

According to 1 Corinthians 12:4, “there are varieties of gifts” of which the Scriptures provide a few exemplary, albeit not exhaustive, lists. So keep in mind that the gifts mentioned in Scripture are not all the gifts that the Holy Spirit designates to different believers throughout history and regions. Go to http://theresurgence.com/series/spiritual_gifts for Mark Driscoll’s articles for The Resurgence missional theology cooperative.

First Corinthians 12:8-10 mentions:

- **Utterance of wisdom**—the possession of specific wisdom in accordance with God’s Word for a particular situation or person
- **Utterance of knowledge**—the possession and ability to gather specific knowledge and information for a particular situation or person
- **Faith**—not for salvation, but a special impartation of faith as a means to bring about some common good or specific purpose
- **Gifts of healing**—the ability to cure a disease or sickness; not just for the physical body, but the mind and emotions, too
- **Working of miracles**—any kind of activity where God’s mighty power is evident to further his purposes in a situation, such as answering prayers of deliverance from danger, meeting special needs, judging opponents to the gospel message, vanquishing demonic forces that wage war against the church, etc.
- **Prophecy**—the act of telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind to build up, encourage, console, or confront other Christians, or to convict an unbeliever; a sign for believers that God is at work in their midst
- **Ability to distinguish between spirits**—ability to recognize the influence, whether that of the Holy Spirit or demonic forces, in a person; may involve distinguishing between various types of evil spirits
- **Various kinds of tongues**—prayer or praise spoken in syllables not understood by the speaker; mysteries in the Spirit for personal edification or, when spoken out publicly and accompanied by an interpretation, for the edification of gathered believers
- **Interpretation of tongues**—ability to interpret the unknown publicly-spoken tongue in the known language of the gathered believers for the purpose of building up God’s people

First Corinthians 12:28 also lists some gifts, particularly regarding church leadership:

- **Apostles**—not to be confused with the office of apostle limited to those personally taught and commissioned as apostles by Jesus; this gift typically involves multiple other gifts which enable a person to lead, teach, prophecy, administrate, etc., as necessary
- **Prophets**—see “Prophecy” above
- **Teachers**—the ability to understand and explain biblical truth
- **Miracles**—see “Working of miracles” above
- **Healing**—see “Gifts of healing” above
- **Helping**—the ability to serve others or alongside others in whatever God-given task is at hand; typically sees others’ needs well
- **Administrating**—the ability to direct, organize, and accomplish goals
- **Various kinds of tongues**

Romans 12:6-8 notes:

- **Prophecy**—to be used in proportion to one’s faith; see “Prophecy” above
- **Service**—see “Helping” above
- **The one who teaches**—see “Teachers” above
- **The one who exhorts**—the ability to encourage and comfort others in relation to Jesus
- **The one who contributes**—in generosity; the ability to give money and other forms of wealth to serve God and his people

- **The one who leads**—with zeal
- **The one who does acts of mercy**—with cheerfulness

Ephesians 4:11 also mentions those who “equip the saints for the work of ministry”:

- **Apostles**—see “Apostles” above
- **Prophets**—see “Prophecy” above
- **Evangelists**—those who communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ often with the fruit of salvation in its hearers
- **Pastors**—not just the church leader, but one with the ability to shepherd or biblically counsel people in the church
- **Teachers**—see “Teachers” above

What are the different positions on spiritual gifts?

Generally speaking, there are two views concerning spiritual gifts. One claims that all the gifts present in the early church are present today, including “miraculous gifts” such as prophecy, tongues, and miracles. The other position argues that some gifts, particularly the “miraculous,” have ceased to exist in the present church age.

CrossPointe believes that all the gifts mentioned in Scripture are still imparted by the Holy Spirit and should be earnestly pursued for Jesus’ kingdom, his church, and our joy. From our perspective, the Scriptures do not suggest the end of any gifts that the Spirit distributed in the early church according to 1 Corinthians, Romans, and Ephesians. In any case, believers should seek gifts from the Holy Spirit to more effectively serve Jesus and his mission.

How does CrossPointe encourage the “practice” of spiritual gifts?

Our desire at CrossPointe is to cultivate an atmosphere where the pursuit and practice of spiritual gifts is encouraged, but not at the expense of the admonishment found in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, which tells us that “all things should be done decently and in order.”

At times in church cultures where the continuation of the gifts is believed and practiced, there can be an unhealthy focus on particular gifts. This earnestness often unwittingly creates a sense of pride for those who “have” a particular gift and discouragement for those who do not “have” it. Often what results is a self-absorbed, super-spirituality that causes division and separation rather than edification. When this environment exists, the heart and purpose of spiritual gifts is completely missed and the church tends to become far less effective in living on mission for Jesus. On the other hand, churches that believe in the full operation of the gifts, but are wary of falling into this culture of super-spirituality, tend to err on the side of nominally believing in the gifts but never actually pursuing or practicing them. This over-cautiousness also misses the heart of why God gives us spiritual gifts. At CrossPointe, we desire to avoid both of these extremes.

As a young church, we are still very much in process in regards to how we should live out these things biblically. Our desire is to exalt Jesus and boldly proclaim the Gospel as we are empowered by the Spirit of God. To that end, we encourage all members of CrossPointe to “earnestly desire spiritual gifts” (1 Corinthians 14:1). And, as we strive to develop a culture of earnest pursuit, we likewise strive to create a culture of deep humility, where we count others more significant than ourselves.