

Introduction: Five case studies of “spiritual gift abuse”

1. “God spoke to me about you...you're supposed to...”
2. “Come into the back room/prayer room and I guarantee you will receive...”
3. “Every believer is supposed to receive this spiritual gift; it's the evidence that you're really...”
4. “I don't have a spiritual gift, I'm not worthy of one yet, but someday I hope...”
5. “I don't care what the Bible says, I am God's prophet for this church and He has revealed to me that...”

The 10 most common abuses of spiritual gifts:

1. Beware when spiritual gifts are used as a means of manipulation, power, or control in personal and/or church relationships.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

2. Beware whenever anyone claims to have the ability to give or bestow any particular gift if you follow their formula.

1 Corinthians 12:11

3. Beware when any particular gift is made a universal evidence of spirituality, salvation, or other spiritual blessing.

1 Corinthians 12:29-30

4. Beware when the focus of a church service, ministry, or religious event is on spiritual gifts and their manifestation rather than on the Giver of the gifts and His agenda for His church.

Ephesians 4:11-12

5. Beware of comparing your gifts with anyone else's; it always leads to carnality.

1 Corinthians 12:11-18

6. Beware of any extreme position on spiritual gifts – i.e. “they do not exist” to “a spirit-filled Christian will have all the gifts.”

1 Corinthians 12:1

7. Beware of using your spiritual gift in the energy of the flesh to fulfill personal ego needs or impress other people.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3

8. Beware of confusing spiritual gifts with spiritual fruit as the evidence of spiritual growth and maturity.

Ephesians 4:13, Galatians 5:22-23, John 15:8

9. Beware that apparent “manifestations of the spirit” can be counterfeited by human schemes and demonic forces.

Matthew 7:22-24, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

10. Beware of viewing the discovery, development, and deployment of your spiritual gift either as an “optional exercise” or interesting but not serious responsibility.

Ephesians 4:7, 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Your spiritual gift - action plan:

1. _____ to discover, develop, and deploy your spiritual gift in a local body of believers.
2. _____ seriously seeking divine guidance.
3. _____ the gift passages in God's Word and corresponding handouts.
4. _____ quality counsel.
5. " _____ the waters" for 6 to 8 weeks.
6. _____ the fulfillment (joy) factor.
7. _____ God's evident blessing.

Application / Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the abuses have you observed firsthand?
2. What was the impact of those abuses on you? On others?
3. Which of the 10 abuses might you be most prone to "fall into"?
4. Where are you in your journey to discover, develop, and deploy your spiritual gifts?
5. What specific step of faith/obedience are you going to take?