

# Operation 180

## Session 7: Our spiritual condition

### Home Group Edition

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## Session 6 review

- ❖ Daily meditations
  - Did any of the readings stand out to you?
- ❖ Amends
  - Any praise reports?

## Introduction

Welcome to session 7!

Your recovery is moving! You are on the road to recovery and making progress! We have a picture of your road to recovery as we will see shortly.

Maybe you made some amends, and hopefully, you continue to work on your sanctification and ask God to remove our shortcomings.

In a 12-Step program, we now come to Steps 10 and 11. In this session, we will take steps 10 and 11 together. They read:

**Step 10 -- We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.**

**Step 11 -- We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.**

Why are we addressing them together? If a picture is worth 1,000 words, here it is:



In this session, we will begin to discern what plans God has for us in this season, that is, looking forward to the future. That is the spiritual principle behind Step 11. We will address Step 11 at the end of this session.

But first, we must look at our day-to-day routines, and how we are doing in the moment. This is Step 10 and the discipline of *spiritual maintenance*.

Like a careful driver, we must periodically check our rear-view mirror while moving forward in our recovery journey. We look back to see if we have harmed anyone or if we owe anyone an amends *while* we are moving forward. Steps 10 and 11 are *lifelong disciplines*.

You just did some real deep self-work in Steps 8 and 9. You just made amends wherever possible, and perhaps you made a covenant of peace with some of those around you. You swept your side of the street. So now you just put the broom away in the closet and call it a day? Right? Nope.

On this part of your journey, the danger is becoming complacent while we move forward. The further down the road of recovery we get, the smaller and more distant our wreckage looks in the rearview mirror. Pretty soon, we can't even see the orange traffic cones that used to surround the wreckage of our lives. Finally, our past seems to move out of sight.

And we forget.

## The danger of relapse

We forget where our recovery came from - *God*.

So we stop working on our sanctification. We fail to *work out our salvation with trembling*. We stop replacing our shortcomings with attributes of Christ. And we put ourselves in danger of relapse.

The Big Book of AA provides tremendous wisdom here:

*The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it. – AA Big Book (pg 83)*

*What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will. – AA Big Book (pg 85)*

We have to live it - we live our way into a new way of thinking.

The second quote sums up the spiritual principle behind our new life - God gives a daily reprieve from our self-destructive behaviors *if* we are diligent in the *maintenance of our spiritual condition*.

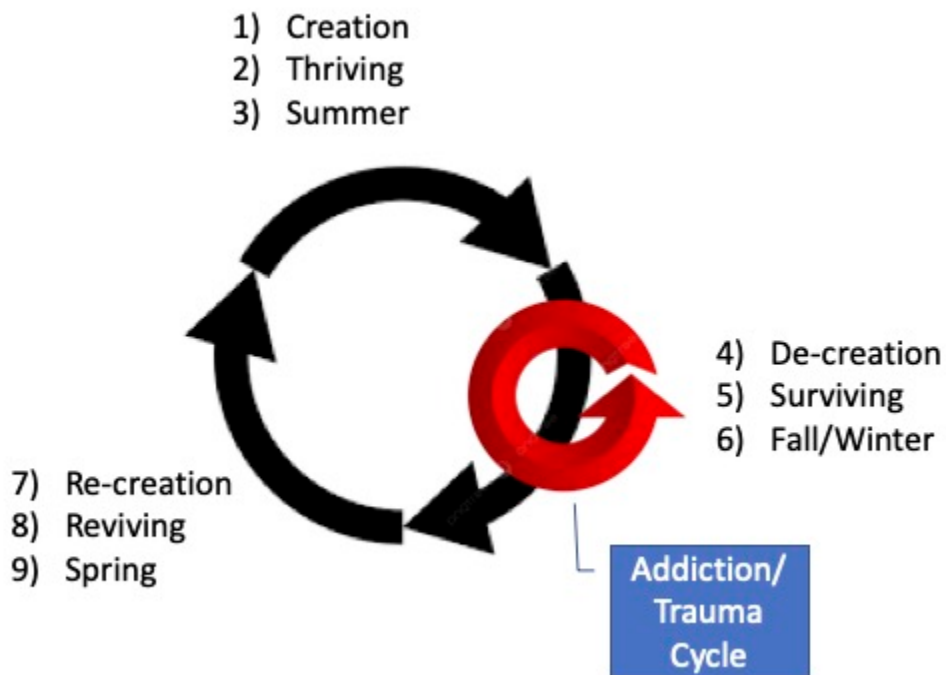
The above quote also states that the maintenance of our spiritual condition is based on *us carrying out God's will for us in our daily lives*. Therefore, the key to preventing relapse is to exercise our will in alignment with God's will. Anything else leads us back into a cycle of fear, shame, and hiding.

This is worth restating:

*Exercising our will outside of God's will always leads us back into the deconstruction pattern: Fear, shame, and hiding.*

Step 10 is like God asking Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, “Where are you?” When we are in alignment with God’s will, we can truly answer God’s question of “Where are you” with the answer “Right beside you.”

If we fail in the maintenance of our spiritual condition, we can become caught in a loop of addiction and/or unresolved trauma, cycling forever in a vicious cycle of merely surviving in a de-created state. This is not God’s will for you. An illustration helps show this pattern:



Jesus chose you to bear fruit that remains, to do great works. He did not choose you to be stuck in a cycle of addiction, only surviving.

## Jesus on relapse

Jesus provides a most concise example of the Biblical basis for relapse and the dangers of not working on our sanctification and spiritual condition. Jesus’ illustration is found in Luke’s gospel:

*“When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it roams through waterless places looking for rest, and not finding rest, it then says, ‘I’ll go back to my house that I came from.’ Returning, it finds the house swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that person’s last condition is worse than the first.” (Luke 11:24–26)*

There are several points of wisdom worth unpacking.

First, this is a clear statement that spiritual warfare is part of your recovery. As mentioned in previous sessions, I believe that Luke, the physician, associates the healing that he witnessed as occurring through the process of forgiveness. When we forgive and are forgiven, we are cleansed from unclean spirits, and healing happens. I have seen this process up close and personal in my life and in those I walk with in recovery and grief counseling.

Jesus makes a critical point in this passage - *we are vulnerable to relapse if we are healed and do nothing more*. In other words, we must continue with the maintenance of our spiritual condition for the rest of our lives. As we will see below, *this calls for endurance*.

Jesus also points out who the adversary is and who he is not. Jesus’ illustration points out that the adversary is not *omniscient* (all-knowing) nor *omnipresent* (all-present). Only our sovereign God has the attributes of being omniscient and omnipresent.

In other words, like us humans, the adversary can only do one thing at a time, in one place at a time. Jesus says this much by noting that the adversary, working as unclean spirits, must go out and *look* for places to hide. They do not know in advance where they should be going. Unclean spirits act through trial and error, looking for places of opportunity. Without proper spiritual practices, this could be you.

The Book of Revelation teaches us that the devil is working amongst us with *great fury because his time is short*. (Rev. 12:12) He is working on a tight deadline, indeed, and will lose his patience and eventually go back to where he came from. And that might be you if you are not careful.

Jesus also tells us the consequences of a repeat visit from the unclean spirit. He finds your spiritual house all nice and clean and in order from working the steps. You just made amends and did the hard work of offering forgiveness and accepting Jesus’ forgiveness.

But maybe you have yet to replace the holes left by your shortcomings with attributes of Christ. This is precisely the opening the adversary is looking for. The adversary is a creature of opportunity - he will make himself at home wherever he can find one quickly..

Jesus says the unclean spirit welcomes himself back and takes up residence back in your spiritual house. The unclean spirits *settle down* (Jesus' words). This is what it means for unclean spirits to live in our heads *rent-free*.

But there's more, he is not alone, he invites his friends. Seven of his friends. And not just friends like him, but friends who are even worse off, *more evil than himself*.

So whatever your addiction of choice was to begin with, now your addiction progresses - it is worse than it was before. Relapses always get worse and worse, with more and more consequences.

This is the Biblical truth behind the statement that addiction is a chronic, progressive, and fatal disease if left unchecked. And Jesus just told us why.

We must never let our spiritual guards down. We must protect the spiritual house that Jesus has just cleansed for us. Let's look at how.

## Temptation

How does the adversary work?

Through temptation. Just like the Serpent in the Garden, the adversary puts doubt in our minds. *Did God really say that? Did God really promise that? Will God really do what he said he would?*

And so on.

Being subjected to temptation is tiring. But merely being tempted is not a sin.

Jesus tells us to battle temptation with prayer.

*“Stay awake and pray, so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)*

Likewise, Paul tells us not to make any *provision* for our flesh, meaning not give or supply assistance to the temptation.

*“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.” (Romans 13:14)*

How do we stand against temptation? Paul tells us to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*. This phrase calls to mind *sinking into a garment*, we are to immerse and cover our whole selves in the glory of Jesus.

But note that nowhere does Scripture command us to *defeat* the adversary. Jesus has already done that through His finished work on the Cross.

Nope, we are simply to not fall for, or aid, the adversary.

How?

By resisting temptation.

The entire weight of the New Testament is directed at instructing us to just stand and resist.

## Resist

Here is a series of examples of figures from the Bible saying ONLY to stand and resist:

Peter shows us how the devil is indeed prowling around, looking for opportunity. The adversary wants to devour you and all you have worked for. Peter instructs us *to resist him, firm in our faith*. Resistance is hard and we may suffer, but that is to be expected.

*“Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.” (1 Peter 5:8–9)*

Peter also says that sometimes suffering can come from our old “friends”. When we come into recovery, some of our old acquaintances may actually mock us for our new life:

*“They are surprised that you don’t join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you.” (1 Peter 4:4)*

Again, all we are to do resist these taunts, and stand firm in our faith.

A key passage on spiritual warfare is Paul discussing the armor of God. Paul tells us that the purpose of the armor of God is primarily defense, enabling us to stand firm against the *schemes of the devil*:



*“Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.” (Ephesians 6:10–13)*

Jesus’ brother James calls on us to *resist the devil*, but at the same time to *draw near to God*.

*“Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4:7–8)*

James also notes to *cleanse our hands and purify our hearts*, the very task that Step 10 asks us to do daily.

When we live like Christ, we will experience persecution. Jesus knows this, and only asks us to *endure to the end*.

*“You will be hated by everyone because of my name, but the one who endures to the end will be saved.” (Mark 13:13)*

The book of Revelation also calls for our *endurance and faithfulness*.

*“If anyone is to be taken captive, into captivity he goes. If anyone is to be killed with a sword, with a sword he will be killed. This calls for endurance and faithfulness from the saints.” (Revelation 13:10)*

Finally, Paul pulls this all together by saying that we *all experience temptation* - it is common to *humanity*. But he also says that there is a way out. God, in His faithfulness, provides a way out. Why? So that we can bear it, and endure it to the end.



*“No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)*

## Forever forgiveness

Step 10 calls us to a life of *forever forgiveness*. The words of Step 10 command us to *constantly examine ourselves, and when we were wrong, to promptly make amends when needed.*

Not when *they were wrong*. We continue to take inventory of *ourselves*. We resist the temptation to slide back into fear and anger, letting resentment rule our lives again.

We will not let the grouch and brainstorm regain control of our lives.

This is a new way of life for many of us. And it needs to be a permanent way of life.

Forgiveness is the broom we use to keep our house clean. Forgiveness keeps the unclean spirits from settling back into your life. It is the practice of *forever forgiveness* that sweeps the unclean spirits out of our house *before* they can settle in and do any damage. This is worth repeating:

*Forgiveness is the spiritual broom we use to keep our house clean.*

## Put on your new self

But if a key part of recovery is to live ourselves into a new way of thinking, we must do so by putting on our new self. We must immerse ourselves in this new way of life.

Paul equates this directly with sanctification, being renewed in the image of God.

*“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator.” (Colossians 3:9–10)*

This is the beginning of the *renewal cycle* from the circle chart above. We move into our new season of life by *putting on our new selves*. As we saw a few sessions ago, sanctification is the *supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in our lives*.

In temptation, we will face a choice - our old self, or our new self. Paul tells this plainly to the church in Ephesus:

*“And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.” (Ephesians 5:18–21)*

We cannot backslide into our old reckless way of living. Instead, we must be *filled with the Spirit*.

Notice the reference to the heart. Think back to the definition of spiritual death we looked at early in this series - death as the *misery of the soul*. God’s will for us is to have a heart and soul filled with song and music, not a heart stuck in despair.

And this is where the principle of Step 11 comes into our daily lives.

But first, let’s look at an important tool in our spiritual arsenal - gratitude.

Notice that Paul exhorts us to be in a state where we are *giving thanks always for everything*. Elsewhere, Paul tells us to *give thanks and have gratitude in your hearts*:

*“Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:12–17)*

Notice the theme of this passage: *forgiveness, peace, unity, and gratitude*. This is how we are to live when we *let the word of Christ dwell richly in us*.

Paul also connects the power of prayer with the power of gratitude.

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. Do what you have learned and received and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:4–9)*

Pail connects two important spiritual practices together, prayer and gratitude. And he gives us specific guidance on how to practice gratitude.

Gratitude is not just positive thinking. Paul lays out a definite and repeatable practice for us. Let’s take a look.

## An attitude of gratitude

Paul isn’t just asking us to look around and notice some nice things. He uses the word *dwell*. The meaning of the word *dwell* implies *inventory*. Where have we heard that word before?

In the midst of standing in our faith, we are to stop and take an inventory of certain things around us, namely:

- whatever is true;
- whatever is honorable;
- whatever is just;
- whatever is pure;
- whatever is lovely;
- whatever is commendable;
- if there is any moral excellence; and
- if there is anything praiseworthy.

We are to *dwell on these things*. There is substantial evidence that what is commonly called “an attitude of gratitude” has substantial positive effects on our mental health.

One study suggests the mental process associated with gratitude. In 2018, Wong et al. conducted the first positive psychological adjunctive intervention for psychotherapy clients. About 293 adults who were receiving university-based psychotherapy participated in a study and were randomly assigned to three groups:

- A control group that received only psychotherapy.
- A psychotherapy group that also did plus expressive writing focusing on expressing their deepest thoughts and feelings about stressful experiences - a journaling group.
- A psychotherapy group that also did gratitude by writing letters expressing gratitude to others - a gratitude group.

At week 4 and week 12 after doing their first writing work, the gratitude writing group reported better mental health than those who were assigned to the journaling group and to the psychotherapy-only group.

But the reasons behind the results were surprising. The authors concluded that it was not so much the expression of gratitude in and of itself that made an impact on the participants' mental health. Rather, it was refraining from the expression and use of negative thoughts and emotions that explained the difference in mental health between the gratitude writing group and the expressive writing group (Wong et al., 2018).

In other words, during the process of journaling, one would normally express the positive and negative thoughts of the day.

But in writing only about thoughts of gratitude, it was the absence of negative thoughts and the focusing (dwelling) on positive thoughts had an overall positive effect.

And the study found that an attitude of gratitude was *more effective than psychotherapy*.

Gratitude is an important spiritual practice not to be dismissed.

Paul also notes that we are not to be thankful *for everything*, in other words, we need not be thankful for a terrible situation. But we can be thankful *in the situation*:

“*Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

To fully implement the spiritual practices of Step 10 we need to combine *forever forgiveness with an attitude of gratitude*. And we must do this *daily*.

And there is no time like the present, I would encourage you to take a moment and take an inventory by dwelling on the gratitude list shown above.

Having mastered the rear-view mirror and Step 10, we now move our eyes to the journey ahead and visit Step 11.

## The power to carry it out

Let's look at the words of Step 11 in reverse order, beginning with "the power to carry it (God's will for only us) out."

Paul puts it succinctly here:

*"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power." (1 Corinthians 4:20)*

Again, we see it not talk that gets it done, but *walking in power*. This is the power of the Holy Spirit.

Recall our theme passage for this series:

*44 He told them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.*

*46 He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, 47 and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

*48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high." (Luke 24:44–49)*

Now we are moving to the final verse which contains the promise of the Holy Spirit.

In the next and last session, we will focus on *proclaiming forgiveness and repentance*, as Jesus commissions us to do. For the balance of this session, we will focus on *how the Holy Spirit empowers us to do so*.

## You are equipped

It is of the utmost importance that you understand and appreciate that you have been equipped with spiritual gifts that enable you to be an ambassador for Christ. Many of us come from backgrounds where we have been told lies about ourselves. Maybe you were told that you would never amount to anything, and that you will always fail. But those are lies told to you by flawed and psiritually sick people, those lies are not God's truth about you.

Paul promises us that *God equips those that He calls*:

*“Such is the confidence we have through Christ before God. It is not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God. He has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:4–6)*

You have been made *competent* and *qualified* to be a minister of the new covenant, the Good News of Jesus Christ. In other words, *you are equipped to proclaim forgiveness and healing for all*.

You need not be perfect, you only need to be *adequate* or *sufficient*. That is all Jesus asks of you.

You are *empowered with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit gives life*. Yes, you.

Jesus chose you to bear fruit, and *He will ensure your success by making you an adequate and competent minister of the Gospel*.

Recall the promise of how God will use your life experiences to help comfort others:

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. He comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” (2 Corinthians 1:3–4)*

You have now reached the point of your recovery and restoration where God will begin to use your experience to help others. You will find new hope and purpose in your life as you come alongside others. And He does this through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

# Spiritual gifts

Spiritual gifts are defined as *Ministries or abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to Christians for the edification of the Church.*

Spiritual gifts are abilities given to individual believers by the Holy Spirit in order to equip God's people for ministry. This is how the *equipping* happens discussed above. These gifts flow *in and through us*, uplifting and edifying those around us, especially those in a need of comfort.

We will deal separately with ministry gifts and abilities. First, here is a table of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are abilities that the Holy Spirit gives each of us uniquely:

Gift	Description
<b>Message of wisdom</b>	An utterance from the Holy Spirit applying God's word or wisdom to a specific situation
<b>Message of knowledge</b>	An utterance from the Holy Spirit revealing knowledge about people, circumstances, or biblical truth.
<b>Faith</b>	Supernatural faith imparted by the Holy Spirit, enabling a Christian to believe God for the miraculous
<b>Healing</b>	Restoring someone to physical health by divinely supernatural means
<b>Miraculous powers</b>	Divine supernatural power to alter the course of nature, including driving out demons
<b>Prophecy</b>	A special temporary ability to bring a word, warning, exhortation or revelation from God under the impulse of the Holy Spirit
<b>Distinguishing between spirits</b>	Special ability to judge whether prophecies and utterances are from the Holy Spirit
<b>Speaking in tongues</b>	Expressing oneself at the level of one's spirit under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit in a language he or she has not learned and does not know
<b>Interpretation of tongues</b>	Special ability to interpret what is spoken in tongues

Much of the Scripture that discusses the spiritual gifts is from Paul, and he has several points and cautionary warning for us.



- First, the Spirit gives gifts in order to empower the church for God’s mission. The gifts serve the mission and *should therefore be received in humility and for service*.
- Second, the gifts are not given to affirm any person’s power, prestige, or personal superiority. Rather, they highlight the beauty of diversity in the body of Christ and the necessity of a corporate ministry. No hero can be singled out in God’s kingdom since the gifts are spread among God’s many people.
- Third, the very nature of any gift is that it is unearned and is to be received with a posture of gratitude (1 Cor 4:7). The Spirit is the giver of the gift, while the human recipient is only a steward (1 Tim 4:14). *Always desire the Giver, not the Gift*.
- Finally, the giving of gifts by the Spirit reassures believers that God will empower them for his calling. It is God himself who bears the weight of the world’s needs, and it is God who will address everyone. Although he calls his children to accomplish his mission, *the power and the ability to do so come from him alone*.

## Ministry gifts

There are ministry gifts that are alive and well today. When Jesus ascended to heaven, He left the ministry gifts behind: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers:

*“The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, to fill all things. And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness.” (Ephesians 4:10–13)*

These are gifts to equip us for the work of ministry. They are to help us build up the *church*. As such, many see these gifts as *gifts to the church*. That makes you a gift to the church.

The ministry gifts also help *build unity* in the church. Each of us is empowered with different gifts, but the gifts should all be used in service to the church.

## Your spiritual gifts assessment

Step 11 also recites “praying only for knowledge of His will for us”. Note that we pray for God’s will for *us*, not our spouse, boss, or the guy that just cut us off in traffic.

To help you discern your unique gifting, I have included a Spiritual Gifts Survey. Please complete this and be ready to report out your results at the next session.

## Sought to improve...

Finally, let's unpack the first clause of Step 11 - *"We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God."*

***We sought*** - we are to actively seek a relationship with God. We do not wish, we do not sit and wait. *We seek.*

***To improve*** - we are always seeking to improve. We do not seek to maintain. We do not allow ourselves to coast on idle. We never leave our spiritual house open and unlocked. *We constantly improve.*

***Our conscious contact with God*** - we are seeking a deep and personal relationship with Jesus, a *conscious experience of actual contact through the presence of the Holy Spirit.*

Step 11 is where we step out in power.

As mentioned above:

*"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power." (1 Corinthians 4:20)*

A truism of recovery is that *we can't give away something that we don't have.*

This leads to the paradox of recovery:

*We get power by rendering ourselves powerless, and we keep it by giving it away.*

Step 11 is where we get the power that we will give away next session.

I pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as you work through Steps 10 and 11!

# Daily Meditations

**Theme: Maintenance and improvement of our spiritual condition**

## Day 1

“When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it roams through waterless places looking for rest, and not finding rest, it then says, ‘I’ll go back to my house that I came from.’ Returning, it finds the house swept and put in order. Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that person’s last condition is worse than the first.” (Luke 11:24–26)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Day 2

“Stay awake and pray, so that you won’t enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Day 3

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.” (Romans 13:14)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Day 4

“Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.” (1 Peter 5:8–9)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Day 5

“They are surprised that you don’t join them in the same flood of wild living—and they slander you.” (1 Peter 4:4)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Day 6

“Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

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## Day 7

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.” (1 Corinthians 4:20)

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## **Discover Your Spiritual Gifts!**

Gene Wilkes

Ken Hemphill defines a spiritual gift as “an individual manifestation of grace from the Father that enables you to serve Him and thus play a vital role in His plan for the redemption of the world.”<sup>i</sup> Peter Wagner defines a spiritual gift as “a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ according to God’s grace for use within the context of the Body.”<sup>ii</sup> I like to use this definition:

A spiritual gift is an expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers which empowers them to serve the body of Christ, the church.

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:9-11 contain representative lists of gifts and roles God has given to the church. A definition of these gifts follows.<sup>iii</sup>

**Leadership** - Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).

**Administration** - Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Teaching** - Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God’s Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

**Knowledge** - The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God’s Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Wisdom** - Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).

**Prophecy** - The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).

**Discernment** - Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).

**Exhortation** - Possessors of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).

**Shepherding** - The gift of shepherding is manifested in persons who look out for the spiritual welfare of others. Although pastors, like shepherds, do care for members of the church, this gift is not limited to a pastor or staff member (Eph. 4:11).

**Faith** - Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).

**Evangelism** - God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship (Eph. 4:11).

**Apostleship** - The church sends apostles from the body to plant churches or be missionaries. Apostles motivate the body to look beyond its walls in order to carry out the Great Commission (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

**Service/Helps** - Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).

**Mercy** - Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).

**Giving** - Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).

**Hospitality** - Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

God has gifted you with an expression of His Holy Spirit to support His vision and mission of the church. It is a worldwide vision to reach all people with the gospel of Christ. As a servant leader, God desires that you know how He has gifted you. This will lead you to where He would have you serve as part of His vision and mission for the church.

[Download the Spiritual Gifts Survey from LifeWay.com.](#)

*Gene Wilkes is pastor of Legacy Church, Plano, Texas. This article was adapted from [Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders](#), by Gene Wilkes (LifeWay Christian Resources 1998).*

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<sup>i</sup> Ken Hemphill, *Serving God: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts Workbook* (Dallas: The Sampson Company, 1995), 22.

<sup>ii</sup> *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* by C. Peter Wagner, Copyright © 1979, Regal Books, Ventura, CA 93003. Used by permission, 42.

<sup>iii</sup> These definitions exclude the “sign gifts” because of some confusion that accompanies these gifts and because they are difficult to fit into ministries within a typical church’s ministry base.

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS SURVEY

### DIRECTIONS

This is not a test, so there are no wrong answers. The *Spiritual Gifts Survey* consists of 80 statements. Some items reflect concrete actions; other items are descriptive traits; and still others are statements of belief.

- Select the one response you feel best characterizes yourself and place that number in the blank provided. Record your answer in the blank beside each item.
- Do not spend too much time on any one item. Remember, it is not a test. Usually your immediate response is best.
- Please give an answer for each item. Do not skip any items.
- Do not ask others how they are answering or how they think you should answer.
- Work at your own pace.

Your response choices are:

- 5—Highly characteristic of me/definitely true for me
  - 4—Most of the time this would describe me/be true for me
  - 3—Frequently characteristic of me/true for me—about 50 percent of the time
  - 2—Occasionally characteristic of me/true for me—about 25 percent of the time
  - 1—Not at all characteristic of me/definitely untrue for me
- 

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I have the ability to organize ideas, resources, time, and people effectively.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I am willing to study and prepare for the task of teaching.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I am able to relate the truths of God to specific situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I have a God-given ability to help others grow in their faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I possess a special ability to communicate the truth of salvation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I have the ability to make critical decisions when necessary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I am sensitive to the hurts of people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I experience joy in meeting needs through sharing possessions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I enjoy studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I have delivered God's message of warning and judgment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I am able to sense the true motivation of persons and movements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I have a special ability to trust God in difficult situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I have a strong desire to contribute to the establishment of new churches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I take action to meet physical and practical needs rather than merely talking about or planning to help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I enjoy entertaining guests in my home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I can adapt my guidance to fit the maturity of those working with me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I can delegate and assign meaningful work.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I have an ability and desire to teach.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I am usually able to analyze a situation correctly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I have a natural tendency to encourage others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I am willing to take the initiative in helping other Christians grow in their faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I have an acute awareness of the emotions of other people, such as loneliness, pain, fear, and anger.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I am a cheerful giver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I spend time digging into facts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I feel that I have a message from God to deliver to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I can recognize when a person is genuine/honest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I am a person of vision (a clear mental portrait of a preferable future given by God). I am able to communicate vision in such a way that others commit to making the vision a reality.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I am willing to yield to God's will rather than question and waver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I would like to be more active in getting the gospel to people in other lands.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. It makes me happy to do things for people in need.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I am successful in getting a group to do its work joyfully.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I am able to make strangers feel at ease.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. I have the ability to plan learning approaches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. I can identify those who need encouragement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. I have trained Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. I am willing to do whatever it takes to see others come to Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I am attracted to people who are hurting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. I am a generous giver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. I am able to discover new truths.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. I have spiritual insights from Scripture concerning issues and people that compel me to speak out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. I can sense when a person is acting in accord with God's will.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. I can trust in God even when things look dark.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. I can determine where God wants a group to go and help it get there.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. I have a strong desire to take the gospel to places where it has never been heard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. I enjoy reaching out to new people in my church and community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. I am sensitive to the needs of people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. I often am consulted when fellow Christians are struggling to make difficult decisions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. I think about how I can comfort and encourage others in my congregation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 50. I am able to give spiritual direction to others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 51. I am able to present the gospel to lost persons in such a way that they accept the Lord and His salvation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 52. I possess an unusual capacity to understand the feelings of those in distress.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 53. I have a strong sense of stewardship based on the recognition that God owns all things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 54. I have delivered to other persons messages that have come directly from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 55. I can sense when a person is acting under God's leadership.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 56. I try to be in God's will continually and be available for His use.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 57. I feel that I should take the gospel to people who have different beliefs from me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 58. I have an acute awareness of the physical needs of others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 59. I am skilled in setting forth positive and precise steps of action.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 60. I like to meet visitors at church and make them feel welcome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 61. I explain Scripture in such a way that others understand it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 62. I can usually see spiritual solutions to problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 63. I welcome opportunities to help people who need comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counseling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 64. I feel at ease in sharing Christ with nonbelievers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 65. I can influence others to perform to their highest God-given potential.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 66. I recognize the signs of stress and distress in others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 67. I desire to give generously and unpretentiously to worthwhile projects and ministries.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 68. I can organize facts into meaningful relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 69. God gives me messages to deliver to His people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 70. I am able to sense whether people are being honest when they tell of their religious experiences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 71. I enjoy presenting the gospel to persons of other cultures and backgrounds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 72. I enjoy doing little things that help people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 73. I can give a clear, uncomplicated presentation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 74. I have been able to apply biblical truth to the specific needs of my church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 75. God has used me to encourage others to live Christlike lives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 76. I have sensed the need to help other people become more effective in their ministries.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 77. I like to talk about Jesus to those who do not know Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 78. I have the ability to make strangers feel comfortable in my home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 79. I have a wide range of study resources and know how to secure information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 80. I feel assured that a situation will change for the glory of God even when the situation seem impossible.

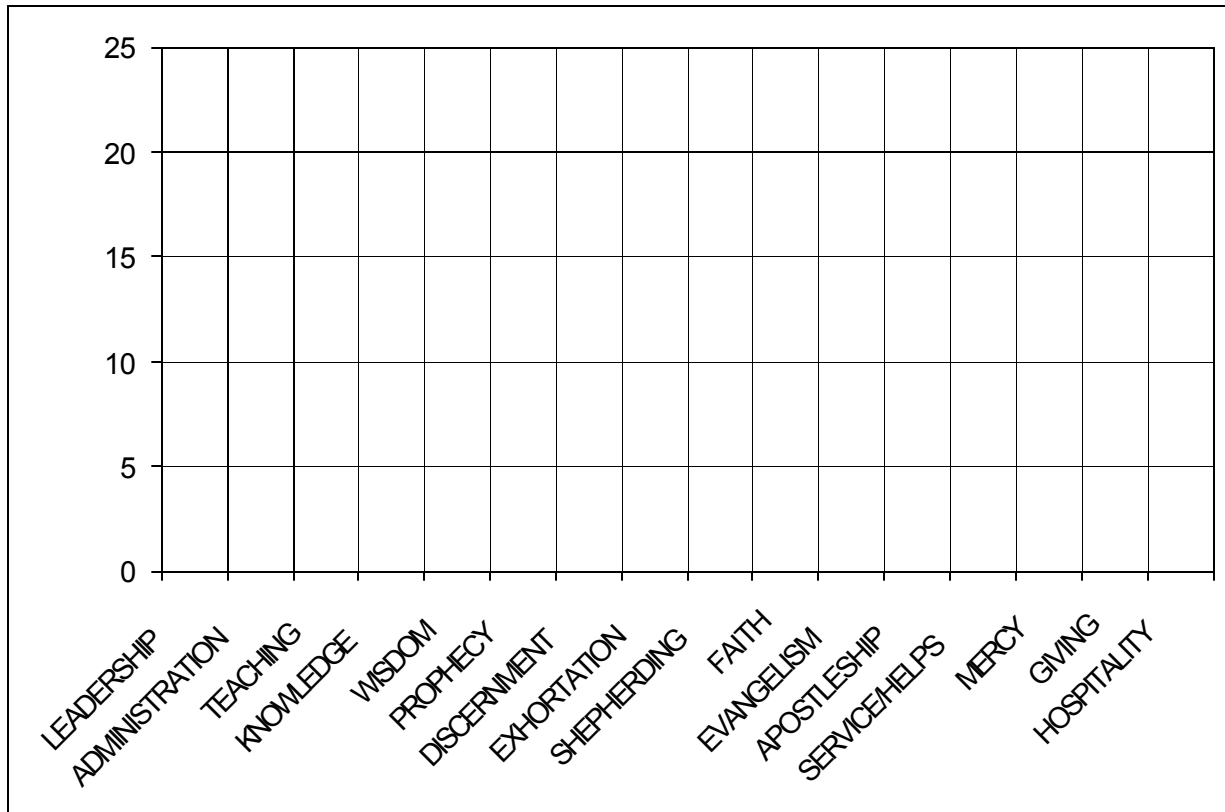
## SCORING YOUR SURVEY

Follow these directions to figure your score for each spiritual gift.

- Place in each box your numerical response (1-5) to the item number which is indicated below the box.
- For each gift, add the numbers in the boxes and put the total in the TOTAL box.

<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 6		Item 16		Item 27		Item 43		Item 65		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 1		Item 17		Item 31		Item 47		Item 59		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>TEACHING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 2		Item 18		Item 33		Item 61		Item 73		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 9		Item 24		Item 39		Item 68		Item 79		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>WISDOM</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 3		Item 19		Item 48		Item 62		Item 74		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>PROPHECY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 10		Item 25		Item 40		Item 54		Item 69		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>DISCERNMENT</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 11		Item 26		Item 41		Item 55		Item 70		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>EXHORTATION</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 20		Item 34		Item 49		Item 63		Item 75		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>SHEPHERDING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 4		Item 21		Item 35		Item 50		Item 76		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>FAITH</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 12		Item 28		Item 42		Item 56		Item 80		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>EVANGELISM</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 5		Item 36		Item 51		Item 64		Item 77		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>APOSTLESHIP</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 13		Item 29		Item 44		Item 57		Item 71		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>SERVICE/HELPS</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 14		Item 30		Item 46		Item 58		Item 72		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>MERCY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 7		Item 22		Item 37		Item 52		Item 66		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>GIVING</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 8		Item 23		Item 38		Item 53		Item 67		<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	+	_____	=	_____
	Item 15		Item 32		Item 45		Item 60		Item 78		<b>TOTAL</b>

**GRAPHING YOUR PROFILE**



1. For each gift place a mark across the bar at the point that corresponds to your TOTAL for that gift.
2. For each gift shade the bar below the mark that you have drawn.
3. The resultant graph gives a picture of your gifts. Gifts for which the bars are tall are the ones in which you appear to be strongest. Gifts for which the bars are very short are the ones in which you appear not to be strong.

***Now that you have completed the survey, thoughtfully answer the following questions.***

The gifts I have begun to discover in my life are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

- After prayer and worship, I am beginning to sense that God wants me to use my spiritual gifts to serve Christ's body by \_\_\_\_\_.
- I am not sure yet how God wants me to use my gifts to serve others. But I am committed to prayer and worship, seeking wisdom and opportunities to use the gifts I have received from God.

Ask God to help you know how He has gifted you for service and how you can begin to use this gift in ministry to others.