

LifeSpot ... Spirit gifting

Received, then given

Jesus “filled earth with his gifts. He handed out gifts ... to train Christians in skilled servant work.” Ephesians 4:8–12 (MSG). This is *gifting*—the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to equip us for specific ministry in everyday life. Do you see a variety of ministries in people around you? “They all originate in God’s Spirit. . . . All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people!” 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7 (MSG). This is one of Scripture’s most significant teachings. Have you studied it? Have you considered it for yourself? Have you prayed over it? Wherever Heaven’s gifts are handed out, I want to be in on it, don’t you? Remember, gifting is two-way. Jesus said, *Freely you’ve received gifts of service—now freely give them away.* Matthew 10:8.



Given, and given again

The word for “grace” in the New Testament is *charis*, also translated “gift”. Here’s the seed of our word *charity*. Very close to *charis* is the Greek word *charisma*. This is the word Paul uses for gifts of the Spirit. You can recognise our English word *charisma*, which means charm or giftedness. But did you know that *charisma* is also used in texts like Romans 6:23 (NIV)—“The wages of sin is death, but the gift [*charisma*] of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus”? The rescue mission is one huge process of gifting! Christ is our amazing “charisma” from Heaven, and now he gives us his own “charisma” to continue his incredible work on Earth. Amazing grace, amazing gifts for ministry—all ours in Christ.



Gift, always gift



Giving is the love language of Heaven. This makes the Kingdom of God a gift-giving operation. God is gift. Christ is gift. Eternal life is gift. The Holy Spirit is gift. Gift is not just a piece of the picture, it is the picture! “We all live off his generous bounty, gift after gift after gift.” John 1:16 (MSG). This is our context for gifts of ministry. If I imagine my goodness or talents originate with me, I ruin the picture. A gift is a gift. When I try to pay for it by my hard work or sacrifice, it’s not a gift any more. If I take pride in it as my personal creation, I sabotage it. If I focus on my gift rather than on the Giver, I spoil it. Every ability I have for ministry stays *gift*—God’s gift, every day and in every way.

Christ, only Christ

Sometimes, on TV or in other venues, we see people who claim to be Spirit-filled who come across as full of themselves rather than filled with God. It’s a turn-off. It disgusts reasonable minds. It’s a caricature of truth. The Bible’s picture is different. See Stephen—Spirit-filled, persecuted and suffering, on his knees in submission, humbly facing death, having eyes only for God, pointing to Jesus in his glory. Acts 7:55. This is what it means to be Spirit-filled and gifted for ministry. Jesus himself relied humbly on the Father for his words and acts, rejecting the “lust for miracles” in those around him. John 14:10 and Luke 11:29 (MSG). Will you commit to the same obedience, humility and sacrifice?

