Introduction
My wife and I have been happily married for over 33 years (this is our 34th year). As in any marriage, the start was always tough. You are madly in love (all you want to do is kiss each other), but there’s not much money. Getting established takes time. You have to start from the bottom and work your way up. In the first year of our marriage we shifted/moved house 7 times. We were renting/staying with various people who were helping us out. What a test of your love, commitment and faithfulness to each other. I think that if your marriage can survive moving house 7 times in 12 months, then you know that you’re with the right person. Through all of the moves, nothing seemed to be truly ours.

But one Saturday Yvonne’s uncle encouraged us to go and talk to the banks. We didn’t have much money (nowhere near enough for a deposit). But we took the plunge and met with the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society manager in the main street of Ipswich and secured a loan for our own house. Wow – we could now settle down. Our
very own house! We don’t have to move anymore. No more temporary accommodation. We bought a quarter acre out the back of Raceview, and built a little 3 bedroom house. There we stayed for 17½ years, raising our two children, making a home.

There was such a difference between renting somewhere (not being able to do anything to the house, dead-money, Paying someone else’s mortgage etc.) and owning your very own house (your own piece of Australia, you can paint it, plant trees, dream bigger etc.). After we bought our very own house (all of $30,000), life seemed to have more purpose. It was richer, deeper and of a sudden there was more meaning to establishing a family for Yvonne & I. We had pets, planted trees, had wonderful birthday parties, had so much fun with the neighbours.

When you think about it, our lives are so much like that. It’s not until we discover that our life is not for rent, but that there is a deeper meaning to this life.

In this world, many folk amble along in life not ‘owning’ anything, just paying dead rent money so to speak, content with the temporary, not feeling life there is any purpose.

But there is a deeper and empowering purpose to life. Particularly for the Christian.

Understanding this empowering of God’s Spirit will be the single greatest harmony builders in your life, your marriage, your life and your Church life. A well-tuned life expressed through God’s will so that his people provide blessing through these gifts so that the Church will be filled with His glory, be vibrant and spiritually healthy.

Today, and over the next few weeks, I want to talk about what the Bible says about Spiritual Gifts.

Who wants to know more about Spiritual gifts?

Who wants to discover what their Spiritual gifts are?
As we launch into the dream of a new Church building, God is tapping each of us on the shoulder regarding our spiritual gifts. It is these gifts that you & I will use as we build the kingdom here in the Lockyer Valley going forward.

So I figure as a Church (filled with living stones) that we better know a bit more about Spiritual gifts.  **Let’s pray**

*Father,*  
*We desire to know you more this morning.  We desire to know of your spiritual gift as you choose to give it to us.  Thank you for this gift.  Show me how to express your glory through it and in doing so, understand that my life needs to be owned and occupied and directed by you.*  
*Let me be open to your Spirit today.  Realize in me your purposes.*  
*Amen*

**Imagine** - If you knew that there was a gift going to be given to you, would you be excited?  
Would you be ready to receive it, waiting in anticipation for what it might be?

The Scriptures tell us that God (our Heavenly Father) is the gift-giver, giving gifts to His Church (you & me) and he desires for every one of us to accept them, and use them to bless His house, His people and others, bringing glory to God as we do.

**Read 1 Corinthians 12 (whole chapter)**

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS - What are they?**

A working definition → special abilities that God gives you to accomplish His work

- Given to every man (1 Corinthians 12:7) to profit spiritually
- Never given for selfish pursuit, or public advantage/exploitation
- They are for the building up of the whole body of Christ, and will also build the individual experiencing them.
In 1 Corinthians 12 – the word ‘gift ‘ appears 6 times:

- pneumatikos → from pneuma (spirit) – concerning spirituals (non-carnal/fleshly);
- in other places, charisma is the word translated → special endowment or free gift;
- the term describes specific capacities produced in us by the entrance of the Holy Spirit;
- Given by God, never merited. So there should be no bragging about this gift, or no jealousy about this gift that someone else might have. We have it by grace alone.

We receive them at the moment of salvation (the invasion of God’s Spirit within us – a deliberate and conscious decision to allow God’s Spirit to come in).

Evidence of rudeness, a critical spirit, selfishness, temper tantrums, self-centredness etc. means you are not filled with God’s Spirit.

The Fruit of the God’s Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control – are the evidence that convicts us of having God’s Spirit deep within us.

**1 Corinthians 12 summary:**

**One Lord** – the Spirit always glorifies Christ, not himself. The Spirit gives us gifts so that we can serve Christ and glorify His Church – for the profit of all (v.7) and not for our selfish/proud enjoyment.

**One Body** – as members of the same body, we belong to each other, and we need each other. The ones we think we can do without are probably the ones we need the most! We must minister and care for each other as one body.

**One Danger** – when part of your physical body declares independence from the other parts- what happens? Imagine your stomach saying “I’m outta her!” It starts to die and you have to visit the doctor. Division in the Church brings weakness and pain, because no Christian can go it alone and be successful. Thank God for fellow Christians and seek to care for them.
Three points about Spiritual Gifts:

1. Every believer gets at least one (RECEIVING)

That means you! Yes, God has given you a Spiritual gift. (No, there is no such spiritual gift as being a good shopper or a golfer), that is unless it builds up God’s Church.

When we were re-born the spirit gave us our gift.

Question – when you decided to give your life over to God – how much of the Holy spirit did you get? Just a little or a lot?

You get as much of God’s Spirit then as you have now (as a maturer believer)

It’s God that grows you, not the other way around. (You don’t grow God’s Spirit)

Isn’t that a relief!

There’s lots of gifts & over the next few weeks we’ll be talking about some of them.

We’ll also be showing you how you can use the gift that God’s Spirit is growing in you for the glory of God and His Church.

2. It’s God-given

We don’t choose what gift we get. God’s Spirit knows what gift would suit us the best. I find that relieving as well.

A spiritual gift is a God-given ability to serve the Church effectively.

God has graciously, undeservedly equipped each of us with the ability to minister to others within the body of Christ.

It’s not a possession, not something we earn or deserve, and it’s a channel through which the Holy Spirit ministers to His Church. This is the means He has chosen to edify (build up) His church.
Imagine if someone in the Church decided what gift you should have – disaster! It has to come from God! He’s the one who knows us best and knows His Church.

If you don’t know what your Spiritual Gift is, start praying for God to show you what gift He has given you and decide today to let Him (by His spirit) grow it so that you can glorify His Church and others in it.

There’s a wonderful variety of gifts – we’ll be talking more about the variety of gifts over the next few weeks.

3. Their purpose is to glorify God and build up the Church

There has to be more than just a Church that becomes satisfied with functioning as a weekly one hour bible study with a few songs thrown in.

What has happened to being salt and light in a world that’s dying throughout the week?

Absolutely nothing can replace the power, influence and impact of a Church that is fulfilling God’s kingdom agenda through the operation of the gifts in the body? Why?

Because that’s how the Spirit manifests himself, and when the Spirit manifests himself, powerful things will happen (remember it’s God’s agenda, not ours)

HOW DO I DISCOVER MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS(S)?

- **Pray and Ask God to Show You** - Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Now about spiritual gifts, I do not want you to be ignorant" (1 Corinthians 12:1). It is God’s intention for us to understand and know how He has gifted us.

- **Study the Biblical Possibilities** - Begin with the Scripture passages listed above and then use a concordance or cross references to find other passages regarding the spiritual gifts.
• **Watch How God Is Using You (Check Results)** – There is a number of good spiritual gift inventories available to help you identify how God is using you. Come & see me for Spiritual Gifts Discovery Tools (there are some online ones).

• **Counsel With Others** - It has been our experience that many times other people who know you and have served with you can easily identify what your spiritual gifts are. Talk to your Pastor, to Christian friends who have served with you, and to your family. "For waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers" Proverbs 24:6.

• **Try New Ministries** - One of the best ways to discover if you have a gift in a certain area is to actually put yourself in a situation that requires that gift. Stretch yourself. Test things out.

• **Expect Confirmation From the Body** - Spiritual gifts will be recognized by the Body of Christ, because spiritual gifts (properly exercised) edify the Body of Christ. They bring blessing to God's people and extend God's kingdom.

### Three Aspects of Spiritual Gifts:

1. **Receiving Spiritual Gifts**

   Only believers are given Spiritual gifts

2. **Using our Spiritual Gifts**

   Common reasons we don’t use our Spiritual Gifts:
   - they have become identified in terms of OFFICE OR POSITION – not true
   - DULL and MUNDANE activities were never considered Spirit-related – not true
   - They could only be used within the OFFICIAL STRUCTURE of the Church – not true

   FACT: ➔ The proper use of Spiritual Gifts will help us collectively grow in Maturity and Unity in Christ

3. **The Effects of Spiritual Gifts**

   - To mobilize & grow the Church *(Are we moving? Are we growing? If not, are you using your spiritual gift and edifying the Church?)*
• Leadership will rise to the top (so to speak) – what I call the natural gift of leadership *(the way God intended it to be – not precocious, haughty, proud or egotistical or pushy)*

• The Church will experience unity. Everyone using their gift together for the glory of God only.

We’ll be talking more about these three things over the coming few weeks.

We’ll also be talking about **natural gifts** and **spiritual gifts** – they’re not the same, but yet they can be – more on this next week.

**Let’s pray …**

*Father God,*

_Show us the gift that your Spirit wants to grow in us._ Forgive us for just ‘paying our rent’ each week and ambling on. By your Holy Spirit, give us eyes to see the potential for your Church to thrive and grow and mature. Give each of us a conviction that you want us to buy into this life you died for. Allow me, through your Spirit to seek to understand the gift that is for me, the gift that is inside me. Help me to understand it and to use it to build your Church. _Let me be radical in its use as it fits into your plan for your Church here._ Amen

**Closing Song ~** For I’m building a people of power
1 Corinthians 12 (New International Version)

The Use of Spiritual Gifts

1 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. 3 Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Unity and Diversity in the Body

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by[c] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.
The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Love Is Indispensable

And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

Other Scripture passages on Spiritual Gifts:

- 1 Peter 4: 10,11
- Ephesians 4: 7-16 (or 11-16)
- Romans 12: 3-8