

YOU ARE GIFTED

You Are Gifted is first of all an exegetical study of all the New Testament passages that deal with spiritual gifts. It is both biblical and practical.

- The book contains nine chapters plus a brief epilogue on spiritual gifts and spiritual warfare.
- The 13 week study guide, allows sufficient time to deal with the critical 1 Corinthians material.
- There will be two DVD's which will provide approximately 25 minutes of teaching to assist the teacher
- All the administrative materials, teaching guides, and advertising materials will be provided free from several websites including youaregifted.org.

The book begins with a brief study of 1 Thessalonians 5 which focuses on the functions of leaders and the ministry of all members of the church. This section lays the foundation that the church was designed by God based on “every-member-ministry.” This however does not preclude the fact that some are called and gifted for leadership functions.

Four chapters are devoted to the study of 1 Corinthians 12-14 which contains the bulk of Pauline teaching on gifts. The first chapter lays the necessary foundation for understanding the historical situation of 1 Corinthians. Chapter 12 is Paul's attempt to broaden a “too narrow” view of what might be considered a spiritual gift. Paul first establishes that all believers are “spiritual persons” by virtue of their conversion. Then he demonstrates that all are gifted and baptized into the body by the same Spirit. The body imagery establishes the need for unity in diversity in the sovereign design of the body. The second gift list literally pulls the top and bottom off of the accepted understanding of what might be seen as a spiritual gift. Specifically Paul adds leadership and service functions. All the gift lists are intended to be illustrative and never comprehensive. I Corinthians 13 redefines what it means to be a spiritual person in terms of character—specifically the character of Christ. This chapter also clearly indicates that any and all gifts are partial in nature. Some in Corinth saw the gifts, particularly the more dramatic ones, as signs of spirituality and boasted that they proved the possessor “already reigned” in an over-realized eschatological sense. Paul establishes that all gifts will cease when the days of perfection arrive, which will be at the return of Christ. This means that gifts have purpose and meaning only when used appropriately to advance God's kingdom on earth. This establishes the basis for Paul's insistence in chapter 14 that zeal for gifts should be directed at those most suited to edify the church. Thus chapter 14 deals with how gifts must be used in the assembly. Prophecy and tongues are compared and contrasted because they are the most desired and visible gifts. The preference for prophecy is based on its ability to edify believers and convict non-believers.

The chapter on Romans chapter 12 lays the twin foundation for all gifted ministry and that is the presentation of the body to God for service and the renewing of the mind. The body is the realm in which all gifts function and thus the presentation of the body is the key point of beginning if one truly desires to find their gifted place in the body. The renewing of the mind in Romans 12 is similar to Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 2 about the Spirit revealing the things of God to the believer. This section is very affirming as it demonstrates that God has created each of us with value to the kingdom and he has already declared "good, acceptable, and perfect." The five principles are 1) the principle of sound judgment, 2) the principle of universal giftedness, 3) the principle of unity through diversity, 4) the principle of interdependence, and 5) the principle of the common good.

The study of Ephesians demonstrates how gifted members and gifted leaders function together. The gifted leaders assist members in discovery, development, and deployment of their gifts. The church is created by God to demonstrate His fullness in the world today in the same manner that His Son did during His incarnation. The Exalted Lord equips the church to express His fullness by gifting members and then giving them to the church. This is a chapter which challenges each member to invest their gifted potential in the kingdom activity of their local church.

The last two chapters focus on the practical application of the biblical principles learned throughout the study. The first chapter attempts to remove any remaining fear concerning gift discovery and establish why it is essential for each and every believer to discover their unique giftedness. I also deal with the often-ignored question of how spiritual gifts and natural talents are related. First, I believe that the Bible knows nothing of a natural talent. Everything comes from the Father and is filled with Kingdom potential. God created us in our mother's womb for good works which He prepared for us even before we were born. Second, I believe that what we refer to as "natural talents" are transformed along with our total being at the moment of conversion. Thus our bodies and the gifts they contain are now worthy of presentation to the Lord. Most believers will discover that their spiritual gifts are found among their created gifts. I give other information on discovery and development in these final two chapters, including an open-ended gift discovery tool which has proved to be very helpful.