



DIGGING IN

Instructions

Promises and Benefits of Unity

DIGGING DEEPER

Gift: _____

What I learned about this gift:

How I intend to begin practicing it:

Gift: _____

What I learned about this gift:

How I intend to begin practicing it:

Gift: _____

What I learned about this gift:

How I intend to begin practicing it:

Gift: _____

What I learned about this gift:

How I intend to begin practicing it:



DIGGING IN

Ephesians 4:1-16

¹ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;

⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

⁸ This is why it says:

“When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.”

⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?

¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

SESSION 8

SPIRITUAL GIFTS GUIDE

ADMINISTRATIONS

This gift is God-appointed (1 Cor. 12:28). The Greek word for *administrations* means “to guide, to steer, or to pilot.”

Examples: Because the New Testament gives us very little information on administration, you might look at Exodus 18:13–26. Here, Jethro instructs Moses to delegate responsibilities among capable people.

Description: Administrators are organized people. They are able to see a need and identify gifted people who can help with that need. They can plan and execute procedures to accomplish the goals of ministry. Administrators are able to think strategically about ministry goals.

How it relates to our group: The person with this gift might help delegate jobs, serve on a leadership team, help initiate ministry opportunities that will allow others to use their gifts, coordinate special events or service projects, or help with long-range planning.

APOSTLESHIP

This gift is listed first among the gifts appointed by God in 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11.

The Greek word for *apostleship* means “to send, one sent, ambassador.” Some see apostleship as a gift given by Jesus Himself to just a few people (the twelve apostles, and later, Paul) for a select period of time. However, because the Bible names others as apostles (Acts 14:14; Rom. 16:7; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6), many feel that this gift continues today.

Examples: Apostles are sent from God as witnesses to others (Matt. 10:1–7; Acts 2:42–43). Like Paul and the Twelve, today's apostles are missionaries and church planters. They build a foundation upon which other ministry is built (Eph. 2:19–22).

Description: If you have this gift, you're comfortable being “sent out” as an ambassador of the gospel to other people. You get excited about sharing Jesus Christ with people of other cultures or nations.

How it relates to our group: Planning/ participating in missions trips; participating in cross-cultural ministry; helping to start new ministries in places where there has been no Christian presence before; being “sent out” to help strengthen and support other youth groups or ministries.

DISTINGUISHING OF SPIRITS

(also called “Discernment”)

1 Corinthians 12:7–11 tells us that “distinguishing of spirits” is a special gift given by the Spirit.

Examples: In Acts 5:1–11, Peter was able to discern that Satan was behind the lying of Ananias and Sapphira. In Acts 16:16–18, Paul recognized that an evil spirit was causing a slave girl to disrupt his ministry of the gospel. Why is this gift important and needed today? See 2 Corinthians 11:3–4, 13–15 to find out!

Description: The person with this gift is able to discern a bad spirit or tell the difference between God's truth and Satan's lies. This person will want to read and study the Bible often, so that God can use him or her to help distinguish between truth and error.

How it relates to our group: This person might help guide the group regarding popular music, books and movies, by discerning whether the philosophies and ideas contained in them are from a godly or worldly (satanic) perspective. He or she might identify youth who need special counseling because of negative spiritual influences. This person would also be helpful in solving problems, or in leading the prayer ministry of the youth group.

EXHORTATION

(also called “Encouragement”)

A gift given to us according to the grace of Jesus in Romans 12:6–8.

Examples: Barnabas (whose name means “Son of Encouragement”—Acts 4:36) was sent to Antioch to encourage new believers there (Acts 11:22–24). Hebrews 3:13 tells all of us to encourage one another daily, to keep us from being hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Description: Those with the gift of exhortation have a desire to encourage people in order to strengthen their relationship with God. This might be seen in an ability to motivate or help those who are discouraged in their walk with God—or in a desire to offer Christian fellowship to other believers who are struggling with temptation or persecution.

How it relates to our group: The person with this gift might develop accountability groups within the youth group, designed to provide weekly encouragement to others. You might send notes to those who are discouraged or down. God might also use you to encourage or motivate people in their faith through talents such as art, music or drama.

EVANGELISM

Ephesians 4:11–12 tells us that evangelists are appointed in the church to build up the body of Christ. Note that all believers are told to spread the good news about Jesus Christ; it is evident, however, that some will be especially gifted in this area.

Examples: In Acts 8:26–40, Philip followed God's Spirit to help the Ethiopian come to know and believe in Jesus Christ (a one-on-one witnessing situation). Philip also proclaimed Christ to the multitudes in Acts 8:5–8. Paul preached the gospel to countless people; the basics of the gospel are found in 1 Corinthians 15:1–5. This is what every evangelist must know and speak.

Description: The gift of evangelism is the ability to share about Jesus Christ with confidence and competence, whether one-on-one or in groups. Nonbelievers around you may feel led to ask you questions about God. Your spirit may be characterized by a broken heart for the lost people around you.

How it relates to our group: Planning/ participating in outreach events designed to attract visitors; personally sharing the truth about Jesus with those around you; sharing with other youth group members about how to successfully witness; motivating and encouraging others in the area of evangelism.

FAITH

God's Word tells us that every Christian needs to live by faith and grow in faith. What is faith? Check out Hebrews 11:1 for the Bible's definition. 1 Corinthians 12:9 talks about a special gift of faith—faith that is over and above the normal, everyday kind.

Examples: In Matthew 8:5–13, Jesus is amazed at the faith of a Roman centurion and uses it as an example to those around Him. Hebrews 11 is known as the “Hall of Fame” of faith.

Description: Those with the gift of faith possess an unwavering belief in God. They persistently trust that He will work in lives, situations and circumstances. If someone were compiling a modern-day “Hall of Fame” of faith (similar to Hebrews 11), these people would be included!

How it relates to our group: Leading the prayer ministry of the youth group; being involved in the long-range planning of the ministry; helping to set the vision of what the youth ministry can accomplish in your community.

GIFTS OF HEALINGS

This spiritual gift is said to be given by the spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:9. It's mentioned again in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as being appointed by God.

Examples: Jesus and the apostles healed out of compassion for the sick, but more importantly, so that the power of God might be displayed among unbelievers. Read Acts 3:1–16 and 4:1–13, 21. Be sure to notice the effect this healing had on those who saw and heard what had happened.

Description: If you have been given “gifts of healings,” God may sometimes use you as an agent of His healing, in order to bring glory to His name. People may call upon you to pray for them when they are ill. You will need to discern how God is directing you to pray for them.

How it relates to our group: You are the one to call if someone in the group is ailing. In Scripture, miraculous healings occurred when and where the gospel was being preached to unbelievers, as a powerful confirmation of God's message. If you suspect you have this gift, you may want to take part in evangelistic events, making yourself available to be used as God wills in confirming His message.

GIVING

People with this gift are instructed to give generously (Rom. 12:8). The Greek word for give is also translated “to share.” It is used of monetary giving, but also of sharing whatever you have with someone in need (Luke 3:11; Eph. 4:28).

Examples: In Luke 21:1–4, Jesus talks about sacrificial giving. An example of a giver's heart which did not please God is recorded in Acts 5:1–11.

Description: If you have the gift of giving, you take great joy in sharing your money or resources with those in need. You don't have to be wealthy to be generous (Luke 21:1–4; 2 Cor. 8:1–5); you simply need to have a generous heart that is able to see the plight of others. You are then eager to give in abundance whatever is needed.

How it relates to our group: God might use you to direct a child sponsorship program in conjunction with a ministry like Compassion International, World Vision, or Feed the Hungry. You might serve on a leadership team to monitor the ratio between how much your youth group gives to others and how much it keeps for itself.

HELPS

1 Corinthians 12:28 tells us that God appointed the gift of helps in the church.

Examples: In Acts 9:36–39, Tabitha is commended for being a great help to people. In Romans 16:1–2, Phoebe is also described as someone who helped.

Description: Helps is a “hands-on” gift. Those with the gift of helps are willing to roll up their sleeves and help wherever help is needed. If you have this gift, you likely have a humble desire to help others so that they can use their gifts to the fullest.

How it relates to our group: Every youth ministry needs people who are willing to jump in wherever help is needed—to set up chairs, sound system, etc.; provide donuts/juice for Sunday School; run errands; help the youth leader with details and logistics; coordinate food for events; clean up after meetings; and so on.

INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

Interpretation of tongues is given by the Spirit in order to interpret or explain what is said by one who speaks in tongues (1 Cor. 12:10–11). (See “Tongues” below to learn more about this gift.) Interpretation must be present to validate the gift of tongues.

Examples: In 1 Corinthians 14:26–28, instructions are given regarding this gift.

Description: If someone speaks in an unknown tongue (language), someone is always to interpret the message so that the church may be edified.

How it relates to our group: If someone speaks in an unknown tongue and you understand what was said, you are the one who is to share the message with the rest of the people.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a gift to be used diligently (Rom. 12:8), and those who lead must give an account of their leadership over others to God (Heb. 13:17).

Examples: To find out about biblical leadership, look at Old Testament men like Moses (Ex. 3; Deut. 34:10–12) and Joshua (Deut. 31:1–8). In the New Testament, see Paul, who urged people to follow him as he followed Christ (Phil. 3:17–20; 1 Cor. 11:1).

Description: God's leaders should lead by example; because their lives show others how to follow God and live in obedience to Jesus Christ, they should "pursue righteousness" (1 Tim. 6:11–14). Leaders are often used to help God's people see His plan for them. They also direct God's people to help carry out His mission. Leaders help motivate others to discover and use their spiritual gifts.

How it relates to our group: Serving as an officer or on a leadership team in the group; coordinating service ministries; involvement in long-range planning and vision; helping other students experience God's call on their lives. If you have the spiritual gift of leadership, your life should be an example of Christlikeness that others can follow.

MERCY

The gift of mercy is mentioned in Romans 12:8. The word *mercy* means "to feel sympathy for the misery of others." It also means taking action to alleviate that misery. Jesus taught that all Christians should be merciful toward others. The reward for showing mercy is that you will be shown mercy by God (Matt. 5:7).

Examples: All believers are commanded to love mercy (also translated "kindness" and "faithfulness") and to practice it with others (Prov. 3:3; Mic. 6:8). Jesus illustrated mercy as compassion-in-action in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37).

Description: Though every Christian is supposed to be merciful, some people are especially gifted in this area. These people have the ability to put themselves in others' shoes. They have a compelling desire to help oppressed or sick people—people who can't give anything in return.

How it relates to our group: Spearheading compassionate activities such as working with elderly people (home care or nursing home work) or sick people (such as taking cookies to a children's hospital).

PASTORING

(also called "Shepherding")

Ephesians 4:11–12 tells us that this gift is given for the purpose of building up the body, so that believers are mature and Christlike. The Greek word for *pastor* means "a shepherd; one who tends herds or flocks." Shepherds feed, guide and care for the flock. This gift involves teaching and looking after other people.

Examples: In John 10:1–18, Jesus used the shepherd analogy to illustrate His care for the flock. In Acts 20:28, God's Spirit made certain people overseers to shepherd and care for the church.

Description: Church leaders are instructed to feed the flock, serving as overseers eagerly and willingly (not for money); also, shepherds are to live as examples for others to follow (1 Pet. 5:2–4).

How it relates to our group: This gift enables one to help new Christians grow in their faith. The gifted person might act as a mentor to younger Christians; he/she might also spearhead an accountability group to help others stay on track.

PROPHECY

The gift of prophecy is given by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:10) and is appointed by God (1 Cor. 12:28). It is set apart as a gift that is to be desired in the church (1 Cor. 14:2–5) and is to be used in proportion to one's faith (Rom. 12:6). The Greek word for *prophecy* means "to speak forth"—specifically, to speak forth what God is saying in His Word.

Examples: Acts 13:1 lists several prophets at the church in Antioch. In Acts 13:5 and 13:43–49, we see two of these (Barnabas and Paul) "proclaiming the Word of God." In Acts 21:9, Philip's daughters were prophetesses. 1 Corinthians 14:24–25 tells us of the powerful effect this gift can have on unbelievers.

Description: Prophecy is not fortune-telling. Many Bible prophets did accurately predict future events, but this was simply because they were relaying the Word of God. Instead, the gift of prophecy enables one to openly proclaim the Word of God to others, in a way that strengthens, encourages and comforts them (1 Cor. 14:3). God uses those with the gift of prophecy to build up the church (1 Cor. 14:4) by helping to equip believers for works of service (Eph. 4:11–13).

How it relates to our group: The gifted person might lead youth talks and devotionals. Others will be strengthened, encouraged, comforted and convicted by God's Word through this person.

SERVICE

The gift of service is listed in Romans 12:7. The one who serves is instructed to serve with the strength God provides (1 Pet. 4:11).

Examples: Acts 6:1–7 gives an example of people who took on the responsibility of serving others, in order to free the apostles for prayer and the ministry of the Word. Many people supported Paul's work by serving his needs, so that he was free to minister to others (Phil. 2:25–30; Philem. 10–13).

Description: Those with the gift of service usually serve in a supportive role, performing helpful duties that enable others to fulfill the mission God has given them to do.

How it relates to our group: Someone with the gift of service could come alongside the youth leader in a supportive role, in order to lighten his or her load. You might make yourself available to relieve the leader of various tasks, enabling him or her to minister more effectively. Like the people who supported Paul and helped his ministry succeed, you could offer practical help as the leader's "right-hand man."

TEACHING

Teaching is a gift given according to God's grace (Rom. 12:6–7) and appointed by God (1 Cor. 12:28–29).

Examples: Apollos, Priscilla and Aquilla were teachers (Acts 18:24–26). Peter and John couldn't stop teaching, even when they were ordered not to (Acts 4:18–20; 5:28, 42). Paul taught publicly and from house to house (Acts 20:20).

Description: Teachers must have a thorough knowledge of Scripture, be instructed in the way of the Lord, speak with fervor, and teach accurately the things of Jesus (Acts 18:24–26). Jesus instructs all of us to teach people to obey what He has commanded (Matt. 28:20).

How it relates to our group: Those with this gift need to have a diligent personal Bible study life. You might teach children's Sunday school or younger teens, disciple someone, or lead a Bible study at church or school. This gift enables one to help others accurately apply the Word of God.

TONGUES

The gift of tongues is given by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:10–11) and is God-appointed for some—but not all—believers (1 Cor. 12:28–30). It is a self-edifying gift (1 Cor. 14:1–5) that must be accompanied by interpretation in the church (1 Cor. 14:13–17).

Examples: In Acts 2:1–11, it was a sign that the Holy Spirit had indeed arrived. Acts 10:45–46 and 19:6 recount situations in which tongues gave a miraculous confirmation of what God was doing.

Description: Speaking in a language you don't know, but one that is understood by people of that language (Acts 2:1–11). Speaking in utterances that require interpretation so that the church is built up by what is said (1 Cor. 14:13–17).

How it relates to our group: Tongues are a sign for unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22). This gift is only useful among believers when there is interpretation. If you believe you have this gift, read all of 1 Corinthians 13 and 14—then follow Paul's instructions carefully!

WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8. It is the act of bringing spiritual truth and biblical insight.

Examples: According to Proverbs 2:1–6, knowledge comes from a diligent study of God's Word. In John 14:25–26, Jesus teaches that the Spirit gives knowledge.

Description: The gift of knowledge creates an unquenchable desire to know God's truth and "put it all together" for others. Those with the gift of knowledge do not share knowledge with pride (as a know-it-all), but are able to explain truth with humility.

How it relates to our group: This gift is helpful in the area of apologetics (defending the faith). Someone with this gift might want to start a "skeptics' forum"—a place where nonbelievers could gather and ask questions about the Christian faith. This knowledge, however, must come from God's Word.

WORD OF WISDOM

This gift is listed among those given by the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8.

Examples: To get find out what true wisdom is and how to get it, see Proverbs 2:1–6 and 4:7. In 1 Kings 3:4–14, Solomon was blessed because he asked God for wisdom over everything else.

Description: Because wisdom comes from God, those who have wisdom will be people who spend time with Him, praying and reading the Bible. By seeking God's wisdom, they will be able to help others solve problems or meet needs.

How it relates to our group: Wisdom is needed in long-range planning, decision making and conflict resolution. But remember, if people come to you for advice, you must give them wisdom that comes from God and His Word.

WORKINGS OF MIRACLES

This spiritual gift is said to be given by the spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:10. It's mentioned again in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as being appointed by God.

Examples: Jesus did many miracles that caused people to put their faith in Him (John 2:1–11; 3:1–2; Acts 2:22). Likewise, miracles were used in the days of the apostles to authenticate God's message and show His power. In Galatians 3:5, Paul refers to God's Spirit working miracles among the people.

Description: In the Word of God, miracles only occurred at times and in places where God was revealing something important about Himself, in order to draw people to Himself. If God is going to use someone in this capacity, that person must be completely humble and spiritually clean before the Lord.

How it relates to our group: In this day and age, this gift is mostly seen in foreign countries and cultures, where people are held in bondage by Satan's power. In these dark places, an incredible miracle may be the only thing that causes people to believe the gospel message. If you suspect you have this gift, you may want to volunteer for short-term missions work. Be prepared to tell people about Jesus, remembering that the only reason God gives a miracle is to authenticate His power and authority!