

Spiritual Gifts #2 - Discovering Your Spiritual Gift: Serving Gifts

- Welcome to week number two of the 4-week series on spiritual gifts. Let me just tell you, if you didn't get a copy on the way in, there's a free study guide to help you learn all that we're studying or if you're watching online, you can just go to RealFaith.com, you can download it for free. Here's the big idea, the Bible in the New Testament talks about three different categories of unique abilities and capacities that God gives to His children. One category are serving gifts and so that's where you use your hands and you do deeds. For some, it's speaking gifts, you use your words and you minister through communication and then there are supernatural or sign gifts and we'll get into those at the end. Those are the most debatable. What we're dealing with today however, are the serving gifts, we're gonna look at seven of them. And I want to help you figure out your divine design, how did God make you, your personality, your spiritual gifts, your experiences, your education, your job training, all that makes you you and then find your position on Team Jesus and my hope and prayer in this series as well is not only do you get to understand yourself, "Oh, this is how I am," if you are married, understand your spouse, so they're different than me and God made them this way. Also, if you've got kids, if you've got more than one kid, you'll find out that your kids are different. And what happens then is you can start to figure, "Okay, that's how this kid is, this is how this kid is, how do we nourish and encourage their gifts and talents and abilities?" Some of you are students, you're trying to figure out, "What degree should I study in college or once I graduate? what would be a good career path for me?" These are some indicators, your spiritual gifts that have all of this information embedded in it to help you figure out what the good forward plan and path is for you. And I'll start by saying what's interesting is... I still remember when I was a little kid in school, one of the most amazing things I learned when I was really little, a teacher got up one day and they showed us a huge number of colors, all the colors of the rainbow and they said, "You know what makes these colors?" And like, "I have no idea, I'm in kindergarten, I'm still eating paste, I don't know a lot. That's why I'm here in school to learn some stuff." They said it all starts with three primary colors and so this is red, yellow and blue and the teacher said out of these three primary colors, depending upon the combinations, you can make millions of colors. It's kind of like that with your divine design, your gifts and your degrees of gifting and ability and talents, it all comes together to give you a particular color and shape and hue for life and for ministry. So, what we're gonna deal with today are the seven serving gifts and we're gonna start and we'll go right through them fairly quickly and I can't cover everything, but all the details are in the study guide. The first one is mercy. If you were most huggable in high school, this is probably you. You'll find this in Romans 12:8. Mercy is the capacity to feel. If I lost you right there at that word feel, you do not have the gift of mercy. You're like, "I'm feeling so, good night," okay, that's not you. You're probably a prophet, you just rebuke people and don't care about their feelings. Mercy is the capacity to feel and express unusual compassion, empathy, sympathy for those who are in difficult or crisis situations and provide them with the necessary help and support to see them through tough times. People with the gift of mercy and people who are hurting, struggling, broken and overwhelmed, they often find one another so that loneliness can be reduced, a hurt can be healed and a person at the end of their rope gets a knot to hang on to.

We've all had moments, seasons, days where you just don't feel like you can go anymore. You're just kind of overwhelmed, exhausted, frustrated. And what happens is most of the time people walk away. Like, how are you doing? You're like, "I'm doing terrible." They're like, "Oh, okay, best of luck with that." That's not the gift of mercy. The person with the gift of mercy is like, "Oh, you're having a bad day? How can I help? I'm here to serve." And they approach you when people are walking away from you because they wanna give to you things that you don't have for yourself. Looking at Jesus' ministry, Jesus taught a lot on mercy. One of the greatest, most famous stories in the history of the world is the parable of the good Samaritan. This is a guy who's hurting and everybody walks by him and then one guy stops and says, "I'm here to help," gift of mercy. Thousands of years later, even non-Christians all over the globe will refer to mercy as being a good Samaritan. Jesus, he had a lot of mercy on people. In fact, the only way you can become a Christian is if he has mercy on you. The shortest verse in the New Testament says that Jesus wept, he had emotional compassion and empathy at the death of his friend. The bible talks a lot about Jesus' emotional life, but the emotion that's mentioned more than any other is compassion. And if you know Jesus, there's gonna be a lot of days when we really need his compassion. We've blown it, we've made a mistake, we've created problems and pains and perils and we come to him and he's like, "I have mercy, I have compassion, I forgive you, I'm not gonna rub your nose in it, I'm gonna help you get through it." This is why we love Jesus so much. He also was very compassionate toward women and children and in his day, religious leaders tended to avoid women and children. But Jesus has a lot of compassion on women and children. One of the most famous stories of Jesus with a woman was a Samaritan woman. She's in a cult, they're a rejected people group, she's been married and divorced a bunch of times, she's living with some guy she's not even married to, all the women get up early in the day, they go to the well to draw the water and get their girl time, she has to come in the heat of the midday sun in the afternoon because nobody wants to see her, she's the rejected outcast. And Jesus comes from heaven to earth and then he walks all the way through into Samaria to sit down and give her mercy. He converses with her, he is kind to her, he forgives her, he saves her and changes her life. Jesus is also very compassionate with children and that the religious leaders especially single men tended to avoid children. Not Jesus, children loved Jesus and Jesus loved children. Our youngest daughter, her favorite story in the Bible was the raising of Jairus' daughter. So, the story is there's this good dad who's got this little girl who's on her deathbed. And so Jesus comes to the little girl's side to heal her. It's the healing of Jairus' daughter and literally about every night for a year, I would read a story to my daughter, I'd be like, "Okay, bed time," she's like, "Oh, we got to read the raising of Jairus' daughter," I was like, "You know how this ends, I mean, we've read this 360 nights in a row, we know exactly..." But for her, she loved to hear the story. And she used to say all the time, she said, "Daddy, could he have healed her from a distance?" I said, "Yeah," and she said, "That means he came to her bedside just because he wanted her to see how much he loved her." Here's what it shows you, when you're reading the Bible to your kids, sometimes our favorite Bible stories or their favorite Bible stories are connected to their spiritual gifts or our spiritual gifts. My daughter has gift of mercy so she loves the mercy stories and every night I got to read her favorite mercy story. Sometimes you can find your gifts by figuring out what are the stories in the Bible that mean the most to you and same is true for your spouse and or your kids if you're married or a parent. And

Jesus would practice ministry of presence. So the gift of mercy sometimes comes with just the ministry of presence. There're times when you can't fix it. As men, we're not good at this. How many of you are husbands? Your wife tells you a problem, you're like, "I'll fix it." And your wife's like, "No, I just need you to listen." You're like, "I don't have that spiritual gift, I don't." But there're times when you can't fix it, you can't do anything, there're other times you can't explain it. You're like, why did that happen? I don't know. But you can just be present. And so Jesus is often present, he sits with people, he meets with people, he's available oftentimes to people, that's part of mercy as the ministry of presence. Now, when it comes to the spiritual gifts, I want you to know that every gift has a potential shadow side. So, how many of you this sounds like you or someone you know, someone you know? Here's the shadow side. You need to make sure that your compassion and your mercy and your empathy also does its homework so you're not just taking bad information and rushing to erroneous conclusions. Proverbs says, one person seems right till you hear the other side of the story. If you're a parent, you know what this is like. Usually the first kid that come and tell you what happened is the criminal. And then once the victim shows up, you get the full police report on your child. And so what can happen is if you have the gift of mercy, you immediately empathize and sympathize, but you need to make sure that you get the entirety of the story. In addition, sometimes you can be so hurting with the person that you're not helpful for the person, meaning, sometimes the pains we have are because of the decisions we make, reap and sow. And you can't just say, "I'm so sorry, let me just cry with you, let me just stay with you," we need to also lovingly say, "What are some of the decisions you've made that contributed to this so that in the future, you can make wiser decisions and not repeat the pattern?" And so sometimes people who have the gift of mercy, if they don't have also wisdom, they turn into the complaint department, they turn into the enablers, they turn into the codependent people. God will give you a gift, but you need to use it wisely. Now historically, and what I wanna do throughout our time together in this series is I'm gonna look at some of these gifts historically and if some of these people strike you as curious, these might be good biographies to read and people to learn from. So, there was a woman named Amy Carmichael, she was a missionary to India. She had great compassion for particularly children and in that culture, it was a caste system and so if you were the lower caste, you really were an outcast, you were rejected, there was no mercy for you or compassion for you, there was no grace for you or help for you, you were just sort of discarded and you were not treated as a full human being. And the thought was that you did something bad in your past life that created karmic debt and so we need you to suffer to pay back your karmic debt and if we have mercy or compassion toward you, we're interrupting your karmic cycle. So, people are hurting and we're doing nothing in the name of our religion which is demonic. She comes along and she sees these little girls called child widows. They were literally temple prostitutes, abused. And what she decided was, "This needs to end. God need them, God loves them, they're not outcasts. They're welcomed by our heavenly Father." And she started a ministry of rescuing these girls from this kind of trafficking and abuse. She told them that God was their father, that they were adopted, that they had full rights as the children of God, she gave them their dignity and freedom back, she taught them about the love and the cleansing of Jesus and she had a massive ministry that elevated the status particularly of young girls in India. And she said that God was the God who had mercy for all. And then some years later, there was a woman named Mother Teresa who came

along and sort of continued that same legacy, but it started with Amy Carmichael, that's where that ideology began. The next gift is hospitality. In Romans 12:13, hospitality is the ability to welcome strangers, entertain guests, find chicken wings, make nachos, all that's in the great text, trust me, I'm an expert, often in your home with great joy and kindness so that they become friends. Hospitality is to include one's family, friends, Christians and strangers who may not be Christians. So, for those of you that have the gift of hospitality, oftentimes, this comes with cooking, event planning, interior design, you're the HGTV network folk, you're head, you're the cooking channel for people, you're like, "Oh, rewind that baking show again." You're the people who love to plan the parties, you love to throw the events, you are the, "Hey, everybody get together for the group photo people," you're those people. You like bringing people together, you like throwing events, you like making memories, you love seeing people meet, "Okay, let's invite them and then they'll meet and then they'll get married and then we'll take credit." That's you. You love introducing people. And now with this as well, this includes your home, so when you think of your home, you think of it differently than most people. Most people when they think of their home, all they think of is, "This is my house, what do I need?" People with a gift of hospitality they're thinking, "How could we throw parties and events here? Is there enough parking? Is it an open concept? Do we have a large kitchen? How big is our dining area? How can we entertain? Do we have good outdoor space? When the kids come over, do we have a fence around the pool so that they're safe?" You're thinking through all the details for guests. How many of you, you don't have the gift of hospitality you're like, "Yeah, whatever, this is my house." You don't have the gift of hospitality. But what oftentimes happens is two people get married and maybe one has the gift of hospitality and the other doesn't, now you gotta decide what kind of home you're gonna buy. And you need to consider your spouse's gifts. And so there're three kinds of homes, there're closed homes, there're random homes and there're open homes. Closed homes, how many of you grew up in a closed home and this is dinner's at 6, bedtime is at 9:25, not 9:26, family movie night is on Friday and if you want somebody to spend the night, you need to fill out a form a year in advance. It's all buttoned up, put together. Your dad was an engineer, your mom was an accountant and you're miserable, that's your home. That's your home. And if somebody comes over, it's a big deal. If your friends are coming over, big deal. If somebody is gonna stay the night, big deal. We're having people over for the holidays, big deal because that was unusual. Random home, complete opposite. Doors on lock, people are coming, going, there's no bedtime, there's no set schedule, kids don't even check in. "Hey, where's Tony?" "I don't know, he's out tonight." "But he's seven," "Yeah, whatever. He'll figure it out." And so in a random home, there's no set dinner time. Everybody just kinda warms up the hard pocket and sits by the TV whenever they feel like it. The most random home I saw nobody even had their own bed. You just grabbed a bed and then the last person had to sleep on the couch because they're one bed short. That family did not have the gift of administration, I'm just telling that right now. An open home is somewhere in the middle, people can come over, but they need to let you know. We do have guests, but that's kind of gonna get run by mom and dad. There is a dinner time, but it's fairly flexible. When Grace and I first got married, we did college ministry to a bunch college kids who were totally 100% random. They're knocking on our door, literally one night knock on the door dude. I was like, what are you guys doing? He was like, "Plotting your murder." It's like 11:30, I'm married, you're single, you got nothing to do. I

have things I'd rather be doing than talking to you on my doorstep. College kids have no boundary and no clue and so we had people coming and going in our house, we had a few thousand people in our home a year for Bible studies and meetings and prayer and we're feeding them and dealing with them. So, finally I'm like, "I want to be closed home." I overreacted, "We're gonna lock the door, we're gonna move, we're going to the witness protection program, we're getting a dog, I'm gonna get a taser and anybody who knocks, I'm tasing them, that's just what we're doing." So, Grace and I... But she had gift of hospitality. I have gift of non-hospitality. Like, if I was on a desert island, but Grace came, I'd be fine. Like, I'm good, that's all I need, all my people are here and the kids can visit, I do love you kids. But she likes a lot of people around so we had to figure out as America, "Okay, what kinda house do we buy? How do we entertain? How do we schedule this? How do we do hospitality together?" You gotta respect your spouse. Well, Jesus had meals with his disciples, holidays with his disciples, he went to parties, they said he was a drunkard, a glutton and a friend of sinners. He wasn't, he just enjoyed hanging out with people. He also had Mary, Martha and Lazarus who were his near and dear friends and they really ministered to him through hospitality, he often stays at their home and they feed him and minister to him and so they're like extended family. And the whole picture of heaven is that it's hospitality, it's a party that God throws at His house forever. And it's free and it's awesome. And so the reason that we throw big parties at church is because we wanna practice for heaven. Our next big one will be for our fifth birthday, September 12 and 13th. Well, how about you? Do you have this gift? And if your spouse has it, you need to consider it. It's like, if one of you is cheap and one of you has the gift of hospitality, you're gonna have to negotiate over the food budget. If one of you is like, "We don't need a big dining room," the other goes, "We do or that we need a divorce attorney." You gotta discuss this stuff and you gotta figure out how to accommodate one another. Do you have this gift? Do you like having people in your home? Some of you don't, you're like, "Nope," that's okay, then you need to open up your home. Do you enjoy watching people meet at parties and events and fun things that you plan and host? Is your home setup for guests? It's like, "Well, we need more seating, we need... Grace and I got married, I don't even know how many, it was... She's like, "Well, we need like 127 play settings." I was like, "Are we not doing dishes or like we're gonna eat and throw them away?" Like, I don't know what we're doing. She's like, "No, no, for parties." I was like, "We don't know that many people." She's like, "We will," I was like, "Oh, gosh, okay." But if you're a hospitality person, you think through this stuff. If you're a single guy, you're like, "I got a spork and a plate. Done, I mean, what else do you need?" And do you plan and go all in for parties, events and holidays or you're like, "Oh, vacation let me do this. Christmas, I got this. I'm gonna dress up like an elf. I'm gonna show up on a sleigh, I'm gonna find a reindeer, it's gonna be awesome." You're those people that love to plan the crazy, fun events. Now, the shadow side can be be careful that you have discernment. So, in addition to hospitality, you need discernment because you don't want everybody in your home, what if they're dangerous? What if they're gonna hurt you or your kids? So, you gotta be discerning, gotta be discerning. But illustrated historically, this is one of my favorite couples, there's a couple named Edith and Francis Schaffer, during the tumultuous 1960s and 70s, the counterculture, the false trinity of sex, drugs and rock and roll, whole generation of hippies are just sort of high and wandering around and just trying to find themselves and find God and they were gonna go to church and

deal with traditional sort of Christian church and ministry so Edith and Francis Schaffer in the Swiss Alps, they open something called LAbri which means shelter and they work together and this is a good example of bringing spiritual gifts together in a family and in a ministry together as a couple. So, she had gift of hospitality, she actually wrote a book called "The Hidden Art of Homemaking." So, she would set up bedding and centerpieces for the table and cookies and food and artwork and decor and vegetable-growing gardens and she architected this beautiful environment of hospitality. He had gift of evangelism and teaching. So, these hippie kids would find their way to their house, upwards of 100 hippie kids at a time would live with them. She would care for them, he would teach them, many of them got saved and met Jesus. And the secret they say was not just his ability to teach and evangelize, but her ability to create an environment where people were loved and they wanted to be there long enough to have conversations about Jesus. And so they found a way to do life and ministry together. How about this one, discernment? If you're sitting there right now judging me, this may be your gift. It's in 1 Corinthians 12:10. I think he's dangerous. Discernment is the ability to quickly perceive whether such things as people, events or beliefs are from God or Satan. You're like, that's God, that's Satan. That's true, that's false. That's right, that's wrong. That honors God, that doesn't honor God, that's gonna work out, that's gonna be a problem. How many of you the Holy Spirit lives in your gut and you just tend to be very discerning? You can discern very, very quickly. Now, the way we see this in Jesus' ministry, it says in John 2, Jesus didn't trust people because he knew all about people, no one needed to tell him about human nature for he knew what was in each person's heart. So, people would come up to Jesus and he could read their motives. "Oh, you're a flatterer, you're just trying to butter me up, but you're not really sincere. You have an agenda here, you're picking a fight with me." Jesus trusted some people, but not all people because he knew what was in all people. So, discernment is the counter to being naive which means you're in danger. Gullible people, naive people, they live in harm's way. Discerning people say, "Okay, trust them, not them, listen to them, not them, hang out with them, not them, date them, not them, marry them, not them." And this is why you gotta bring discerning people into your life because we're all blind to our own blind spots. Now, the warning is, some of you have the gift of discernment, but if you're unhealed, you're broken, you're jaded, you can become critical, you can become a critic, you can become one who's always telling everyone what's wrong, but never helping them figure out how to make it right, you can be the one who just sort of sits back and points out the errors in everyone else without doing anything yourself. That sometimes the most independent, insubordinate, difficult people think they have the gift of discernment, there's a brokenness about them so they're not exercising getting into the most healthy way. And the way that people that are broken and have the gift of discernment justified is they've two categories, perfect and disqualified. So, they just wait for you to say or do something wrong and then they shoot you and they're like, "Yeah, that's why I don't listen to you and I don't trust you because you're not perfect." It's like, well, none of us are. But what's interesting is, once you're healthy, you use the gift of discernment not just for others, but for yourself. Now, okay, where are you wrong, where am I wrong? Because I'm not always right. So, there's a healthy and an unhealthy application of the gift of discernment. How many of you this sounds like you? Probably you're like the jaded part, "I don't know if I raise my hand." All right, okay, fine. Do you have this gift or do someone you know? My wife Grace does, our kids do and sometimes the

longer you're in ministry or the more life experiences you have, like anything, you just sort of grow in that gift. But do you have a solid understanding of the Scripture and a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit? Because if you have the gift of discernment, you don't need a reason, you just need a caution from the Spirit and it doesn't mean that you rush to a conclusion about someone, but you wait to see what the facts bear out. In addition, can you read a book or you're a teacher and almost immediately undercover false teaching? Some of you are like drug dogs at the airport, you're like, pledging, semi pledging, universalist, Jehovah's Witness, I mean, you just have it man, like you just do. I'm making it up as I go. So, I'll be honest, this is one of my gifts, but I gotta be very careful with it because I could be the guy with the critical eye. I could find out everything that's wrong. I'll give you an example. I was talking to Grace about it this week, she's like, "Like, give me an example." So, C.S. Lewis' book "Mere Christianity," one of the greatest books read in this era, one of the best-selling Christian books of all time, first time I read it, I thought he missed the resurrection. Row, row, it's a thing, I mean and he does believe in it, but he forgot it. It sold millions of copies and I'm like, "Is Jesus alive?" It's a you know like, it's a...? We got to nail this down kids, it's a big deal. Now, the problem is, if you're always looking for what's wrong, you won't see what's right. And if you're always seeing for where they're wrong, you'll never see where they're right and you'll never see where you're wrong. So, if you have the gift of discernment, we need to walk in the Spirit and not the flesh. How many of you have a deep awareness of demonic presence? You're like, "Something's dark here, it's like, this is not the Lord, I don't sense the presence of the Holy Spirit." And or you can help people be delivered from demonic oppression. Even when people are like, "I'm struggling, I'm depressed, I don't know what's going on, you're like, "Well, that's not conviction, that's condemnation." God gives you conviction, Satan gives you condemnation, if you just feel really bad, but you don't know why, that's not the Holy Spirit, that's an unholy spirit. The truth will set you free. There's no now condemnation for those who are in Christ. And those are the people with a gift of discernment, they're like "Yeah, that's not what it says." And sometimes people have even had bad Bible teaching that's not very biblical. And so they're living out of their teaching and the first one with the gift of discernment says, "Actually, that's not what the Bible says." "Oh, really? Well, I was told that's what it says." But it's not, that's in first and second opinions. That's not in the Bible, they made that up. They made that up. The people with a gift of discernment, they can help us figure out the truth who God is and what God's will is. How many of you just have a gut feeling about people? You're just like, "I don't know, something off there," spidey senses tingling. Now, you may be right or wrong, but you need to not ignore or suppress that because you could be quenching or resisting the Holy Spirit. You just need to give it some time and see what the facts might be. And when people are confused about a doctrine or a leader or a teacher, do they tend to find you and say, "Man, I'm confused, what do you think?" You may have the gift of discernment. They're like, "I'm confused, could you help provide clarity?" Let me give you a historical example. One of my favorites, a man named Martin Luther, he is one of the leaders of what we now know as the Protestant Reformation. He had the gift of discernment. He was trained as an attorney and then he became a Catholic monk and he was taking vows of celibacy and poverty and he was living just a really painful life trying to pay God back for his sin through sort of hurting himself physically, he didn't know that Jesus already suffered so he didn't need to and then he comes to this understanding as a theological professor that we're not saved by our

works, but by Jesus' works and he comes to the conclusion of something called justification by faith that we just unpacked in great detail in the book of Romans. And he has discernment, he's like, "No, no, no, no, it's not Jesus plus works in tradition, it's just Jesus plus nothing because Jesus plus anything ruins everything, just Jesus." So he has theological discernment. So, then he starts writing and teaching. Well, now he gets lots of demonic opposition. People are threatening his life literally. When he is at a place called the Wartburg Castle in Germany, Grace and I toured there a few years ago, he was hiding out under threat of death translating the Bible from the ancient languages to the current language of the German people and the devil literally showed up behind a locked door in the room he was in. I mean, Satan showed up. He freaked out, grabbed an inkwell and threw it at him which, I was like, should have been in Arizona, I mean like that. So, threw it, that's all he had so he threw an inkwell at him and then he goes on in his book to... He has a magazine called "Table Talk" and he writes more about Satan and demons than prayer and the Bible. He talks about Satan and demons all the time. He writes a book, he writes a song rather, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," and he talks about the world is filled with devils or demons. He was very aware of God is at work and so is Satan. Furthermore, his wife had the spiritual gift of discernment, Katherine. Here's crazy story. She was a nun in a convent. She read a little treatise that he wrote called monastic vows saying that you don't need to be celibate and single and chaste to serve the Lord and so somehow this little track got into the monastery and the nuns are like, "Get us out." So, they sent him a letter, they're like, "Get us out." So, Martin Luther organized. I don't know why I'm telling you this, but I got nothing else to do so. Maybe it's because I lack the sermon. Now, I'll just tell you the story. So, what happens is, they put barrels in the back of a wagon and then they go into the convent on Easter and they smuggle the nuns out in the barrels. So, all the nuns then get married except for Katherine, nobody wants to marry Katherine. She's... So anyways, nobody wants to marry... Holy Spirit is like, "Son." Okay, thank you, Father. So, what happens is nobody wants to marry Katherine so Katherine goes to Martin Luther and she's like, "You said you'd jailbreak us." When you're a monk jailbreaking a nun on Easter, that's next level, right there, that's what that is. So, they jailbreak the nuns and Katherine is very bold, she goes to Martin and she says, "If nobody's gonna marry me, you jailbreak me, you need to marry me." Okay, found all the single girls in the room, they're like "Yeah, I'm okay." All the single guys are like, "No." So, he got her set up to be married and then the guy backed out. He was like, "I'm out." So, then Luther had to marry her, his friends threw a funeral, they were devastated he married her. They asked him, "Why did you marry her?" Least romantic answer in history while he said, "To smite the devil." "So, dad tell us about mom, how did you guys...?" "Well, we decided to smite the devil one Easter and together ever since so..." So, then she gets pregnant and one of the German folklores was that the Antichrist would come from the illicit union of a monk and a nun. So, now they're like, here comes Chucky, here comes Chucky. What ended up happening though, they ended up building a really great, loving, healthy marriage. She was a theological genius, sat with him when he wrote a lot of his theological work and letters and she had the gift of discernment. And there were multiple occasions that God gave her prophetic dreams and visions that proved to be true and to save his life. So, there's one occasion she goes to bed, he was supposed to go out speak and she woke up in the middle of the night, she's like, "God gave me a prophetic dream. I saw you on the road, men were waiting to murder you, it's all a setup. You can't go, trust me."

He said, "I trust you." It's not good to be alone, a prudent wife is from the Lord. So, he didn't go, it was true. She saved his life because of her spiritual gift of discernment. How about this one, helps or service? Romans 12:7 and 1 Corinthians 12:28 helps or service, some of your Bibles will say helps, others will say service, it's the same thing, you either help through serving or you serve through helping, is the ability to joyfully, this is the difference. People do work, but only people with the gifts of helps and service do so joyfully. If you're an employee, you know what the non-joyful worker looks like. Joyfully alongside others to help them complete the task that God has given them. People with this gift generally prefer to work behind the scenes, don't put me up front, just give me something to do. They also tend to find joy in helping alleviate the burdens and responsibilities of others. This gift is usually accompanied with an attitude of humility and sacrifice as well as the ability to perceive the needs of others, this is helps or service. Now, when we look at it in Jesus' ministry, his whole ministry is servant. the greatest leader in the history of the world is the servant of the entire world. Jesus said, "I didn't come to be served, but I came to serve." They come to Jesus one day and they have an argument, they're like, "Which one of us will be the greatest in heaven?" I'm thinking the guy with the virgin mother is probably the first round pick, but these guys didn't see it. They're wondering which one of them is going to be the greatest in heaven. And Jesus doesn't rebuke them, he redirects them. He says, "Oh, you want to be the greatest?" They're like "We do" He's like "Then be the servant of all." Philippians 2 says that our attitude should be the same as Jesus who humbled himself to serve us. And then Jesus... One day, it's crazy. They go into a house, they've been walking on the Roman roads, their feet are just covered in filth and the lowest servant in the house is supposed to clean the feet of the guests. And they don't, they're too proud. So, Jesus gets down and he cleans everybody's feet including Judas who would betray him. Jesus serves and he still does. And so ultimately, Jesus' whole life is one of service. Do you have this gift? Do you say things like, how can I help you? If you don't have the gift, you're like, "Yeah, I never even thought about asking that." How can you help me? You have the gift of being served. Or what do you need me to do? There are certain people who'll show up, they're like, "Well, what do you like to do?" They're like, "I don't care, what do you need me to do?" Gift of helps or service. "Well, what ener...?" "I don't care, just tell me what you need. I'm just here to help." And let me just say this, we could use more of these people, if you tried customer service lately, really, Oh my gosh, recently, Oh, my gosh, this spiritual gift... Some people say the spiritual gifts have ceased, I don't think they have. But if one has, it's service. The service industry is over. I waited on the line the other day for 30 minutes so they're like, "We'll be right back." You just violated one of the 10 commandments, you're a liar. And then I wait 30 minutes and then they come back, they're like, they hung up. So, I call him back, they're like, "You're calling again?" "Yeah," they're like, "We already hung up you," I say, "I know, I just need some help." They're like, "No, go to the website," I say, "Website is down." We live in a world where people have just found a way and this isn't in my notes, this is a little venting, but COVID is the excuse for no one to serve ever again. That's just what it is. People that have this gift, they like to be behind the scenes. They're like, "I don't need any attention, I don't need to be out front like pastor Mark. Make it a big deal of myself like that proud, arrogant guy with a thick neck and a lovely beard. I don't need to be like that. I like being behind the scenes." When people do a job poorly... Here's the key test of whether or not you have the gift of helps and service. If somebody is doing a bad

job, is your first thought to criticize or help? What do you think mine is? What, that was not a joke. I am.... Oh, Jeese, we're gonna go back to the gift of mercy again, you guys don't knock it off. When you see something and you're like, "Hey, they stink at that, we need to tell them," or it's you know what they're struggling with that we need to help them. That's the gifts of helps or service. Do you not much care what your role is as long as you're just doing something that's right and good and when people are like, "I'm not gonna do that because it's a lowly task," you're like, "Doesn't bother me, I'll do it. I'll change the kid's diaper, I'll pick up the trash, I'll run the errand, whatever, it doesn't matter to me." You're like, "I worship Jesus, he's a servant, serving isn't a thing for me." Now, here's a warning for those of you that have the gift of helps or service. You need to learn a very powerful word called...

- [Congregation] No.

- Oh, you've heard of this, you've heard of this, Because here's what people do, they just keep asking the people with gifts of helps and service, "Hey, do you wanna help?" And they're like, "Yes, I do." You are a finite human being. You need to say no to something so you can say yes to God's things. And sometimes you get overextended, burnt out, overwhelmed, you just got too much going on. You need to say no, to say no. And it's not that I don't love you, it's that I can only do so much. And what I would say is keep your priorities in order. If you're married, first help your spouse, you got kids, first help your kids then help somebody else and their kids, fine to help them, but if your family is struggling and their family is flourishing, you may be serving, but your priorities are inverted. Historically, I'm gonna give you another one of my favorite couples. Some years ago, I would take a husband, Grace would take the wife and read their biographies of some famous Christian ministry couples and then we'd share. So, one of my favorites is a guy named Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He was a Bible teacher in London, he was a country bumpkin, his grandpa was a pastor and he was not formally educated, but he was tremendously anointed and he was a fairly homely guy. So, he grew a beard to hide his face is what he said, but he had a great voice. And it's just weird story, he would always smoke a cigar on the way to preach his sermon, he felt like it made his voice sound better. And so just a tidbit, you're welcome. So, what happened with Spurgeon, he became a senior pastor in London at a very young age. And his fame skyrocketed and so people were flocking to hear him, they couldn't fit into the church. So, they created an event and something called the Surrey Musical and it was packed with people to hear this sort of anointed, young, Bible teacher and some of his critics thought, "Well, we need to disperse the crowd," so they got up and yelled fire to end this event, he came out to see that people actually believed there was a fire and there was a mass hysteria and people got trampled underfoot and died. This sent him into a lifelong battle with depression. The thought that people would come to hear him preach the Bible and that his critics would seek to empty the room and that ultimately, people who came to learn from him would die. It just devastated him. In addition, he had some medical problems. Some would say that he had gout, I think he probably had something called Bright's disease, Grace and I, we've studied them a lot. I went to London, I went to their house and I went to their gravesite where he's buried with his wife and the college has been relocated and tried to do a lot of firsthand historical work on this man because I respect him. And his wife, Susanna, she was very bright,

he adored her, beautiful marriage, their love letters are adorable. And they had twins and then she had a medical procedure go bad so she spent most of the rest of her life bedridden, hospitalized, sick, incapable of being at his side. And so what he decided was that he was gonna help her and she decided that she was gonna help him. So, without telling her, he custom-built one of the first handicap accessible, we will call them ADA homes in the history of the world. Low cabinets so that if and when she was well enough to do some things, everything was at her level. He didn't tell her, he surprised her. And he put her initials on the towels, it was just a beautiful gift he gave her and he built his study right next to their bedroom so that when he was studying and writing, he could open the doors and she would be with him though bedridden. It was beautiful. And she decided, "I needed to not only emotionally help my husband through this ministry that is hard for him." He was ripped in the press weekly in London, he was just eviscerated constantly. He was never even allowed to come to preach in America because we rejected him. And so what happens is she creates something called Mrs. Spurgeon's Book Fund from her bed alongside of her husband, she gives away 200,000 copies of her husband's books to poor pastors around the world so that they could learn to teach the Bible like her husband. So, they're a loving, beautiful couple. He would sometimes in the winters need to go to the south of France because the weather really ruined his health and I think he had seasonal affective disorder as well and she couldn't travel with him because of her health so he hired a photographer and he would write her a letter almost every day, take a photo and send it all the way back to London. Even though they were both sickly and had complications and issues, they both figured out how to serve one another. They learned how to care for one another, they learned how to help one another. How about this gift, administration? If some of you are thinking to yourself, "I don't think he's going to make his timeline that was allotted for the sermon," you have the gift of administration. And I don't believe in it. So, I'll just be done when I'm done. 1 Corinthians 12:28, administration is giving direction and making decisions on behalf of others that result in efficient operation and accomplishment of goals. It often includes the ability to organize people, things, information, finances, et cetera and here's a life verse of the administrator, things are done in a fitting and orderly way. You are the button it up people, you tuck your shirt in. You're those people, you're the people who like things in order, you like schedules, you like budgets, you like plans, you like policies, you like to have efficiency and stewardship. Jesus' ministry includes this, he picks an inner circle of three, Peter, James and John, then 12 disciples, then he has a group of 70 that he sends out two by two, groups upwards of 120, he architects and organizes his ministry by levels of leadership. Today, Jesus Christ is ruling and reigning from heaven, he died and he rose, he's alive and well, he's King of kings, Lord of lords and he is literally administrating all of human history. He's bringing every prophetic detail and promise of his word to pass so that he will return to fulfill everything that he planned in advance to do. Do you have this gift? When you read the Bible, do you gravitate toward people like Joseph or Nehemiah? Sometimes the people in the Bible that we gravitate toward, it's because they're people like us, they have our gifts. Do you gravitate toward the books of the Bible that are about building something, architecting something, organize something, increasing efficiency? If you've read the book of Numbers, you probably have the gift of administration. When things are poorly organized, you're like, "We need to fix this," and then you wanna help fix it, when things are chaotic or a mess, does that bother you, but you wanna

step in and bring order and make things designed in such a way that they're most effective? Do you like seeing maximum return on investment? Money, people, energy, you're like, "If we're gonna do something, let's get the most out of it." Are you a person who has a high risk radar or and looks at the downside? This is the downside of those who have the gift of administration. Sometimes you could say, "Well, that's risky." Everything in life has risk. And what happens is sometimes the person with the gift of administration and the person with the gift of leadership, they have conflict because the leader's like, "We need to take a risk," and the administrator is like, "We shouldn't take risks." And it's that tension that makes us better. But what can happen is with the shadow side of the gift, if you don't trust leadership, you can become very controlling. You will control information, financial flow or policy. Some of you work in companies where the administrators have overtaken the leaders and as a result, you can't do your job because there's too much policy and there's not enough risk. And so what can happen is sometimes too with people to give them administration, they get so fixated on a detail, they lose sight of the entire mission. And so this is where sometimes there can be tension between gifts like leadership and administration, but they work best together. Do you have this gift? Do you naturally organize your life, your schedule, your finances? Or you're just a person who's put together? How many of you have got multiple kids, one's got the gift of administration, the other doesn't? And you could totally tell by just walking in their room. One is like, "Oh my gosh, why didn't you call 911 when we were robbed? The whole place is just ransacked." They're like, "No, I live here." You're like, "You're a hoarder, like what the...? Then you go into the other kid's room and they've got their clothes alphabetized by color and they've got their outfits laid out from third grade to retirement, you're like, "That's amazing." The different, these are just the ways that we act. How many of you right now, if I went into your car, this is what I'm thinking about. You can tell a gift administration by going in someone's car. If you go into someone's car you're like, "Are you...?" "No, I just keep a lot of stuff here in case I need it. Snacks, tools, jumper cables, there's stuff here, extra underwear, fruit snacks, you just never know, you just see this for you," that's not the gift of administration. You go into somebody's car and everything's clean and it's vacuumed and they've got everything organized and even their storage compartment is all put, you're like, "Wow, gift of administration or OCD or high control freaker or serial killer." I mean, there's just options. So, let me give you another historical example. You ever heard of St. Patrick? Here's a little thing, was he Irish? No. Was he a saint? No. Huh, okay, you don't have to the gift of discernment. He wasn't Irish and he's not a saint, the Catholics never canonized him saint, he was actually from Great Britain. So, around the age of 16, Irish pirates... These are my people by the way, I'm just gonna come out of the closet and tell you, literally my ancestors literally are Irish, we were the old Driscolls, like I got a patch and a pirate, like I got the whole thing. We were pirates. So, the Irish pirates kidnapped him, made him a slave. So, for, I think maybe a couple decades, he is far away from home, he is isolated, he's in the middle of nowhere, he's in danger and so guess what? He starts talking to God. His grandpa was a pastor, his dad was a believer, he was a prodigal kid, gave his life to the Lord out in the middle of the field, totally abandoned as a slave. And then one day God gives him a prophetic dream and vision, says, "Time for you to go home and here's where you're gonna go." So, God shows him in the vision how to escape slavery, make it through all the checkpoints, walk 200 miles to a boat that will take him home. He does, it works. He gets there, he's got no money for passage. Shouts

praises like, "God, you brought me this far, what now?" God sends a herd of pigs running out of the woods to St. Patrick and then he gives them to the vessel owner to pay for his voyage home. I mean, crazy story. He gets home and he goes to seminary and he commits his life to ministry and then God says, "You know what, now that you're ready, you're gonna go back to the Celtic, Irish people that enslaved you." How many of you would be like, "Nah? Nah, you're gonna have to do a Jonah, you find a fish to get me there and we'll talk about it." So, he goes, now the problem with the Irish people, there was no national government, there was no national law, it was 150 warring clans and tribes that just attacked and robbed each other, it was total anarchy. Just complete Portland, it was nonsense. Those with the gift of discernment could decide whether that was over the line. But if you're in Portland, you know it's true. So nonetheless, what happens is, he goes back and not only does he preach and teach and lead people to Christ, he finds a way to finally for the first time evangelize these crazy people and he sets up church planning and Bible teaching seminaries and educational systems all over. I've been there with my dad, we've been to some of the ancient ruins that he founded and God used him to reach people that nobody else was gonna figure out how to reach. Here's the next one, the gift of giving. Romans 12:8, giving is the ability to give money and other forms of wealth joyfully, wisely and generously to meet the needs of others and help support ministry. Jesus, he teaches about 25% of the time on stewardship and generosity and giving. In addition, Jesus pays his taxes to the government, he pays his tithe to God and the Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. That Jesus whole life is giving, the Bible says that God loves a cheerful giver. The Bible says that it's more blessed to give than receive, the blessing is not that we give to get, but in giving, we get a blessing because giving is a blessing. Our God is a giver, He is not a taker. Do you have this gift? Do you see the needs of others and like to meet them? Are you looking for places that you could help and you could give? Here's a car, here's a job, here's money. You wanna go on vacation? I got a vacation house, here's the keys. Oh, you just had a baby? Well, we've got all of our baby clothes that our kids just... You're always like, "What can I do?" My wife has this gift, when we first got married, I looked under the bed, it was filled with presents. And like we're broke, we're broke, college broke, I'm like, "What do we do?" She's like, "well, we need presents." I was like, "Actually, we don't." I've never given a present. I got saved and then God gave me the spiritual gift of giving, but she had it since she was a little girl. She's like, "Well, I've got gifts here for babies and gifts here for moms and gifts here for newly married people." And she said, "That way, if somebody comes over, I just wanna make sure we give them a gift." I don't know if anybody's ever left my house without getting something. She just gives, that's just what she likes to do. So, we had to put that in our budget. So, this is where sometimes your spiritual gifts you gotta consider one another. How many of you this sounds like you? You see, God is owning everything and you as the manager, so you're like, "It doesn't bother me to give it away, it's His anyways, it's His, so what do I care? If He wants me to give it to them, I'm glad to do so." When you get something, a home, a car, a vacation spot, is your first instinct is who can we share this with? How about this? Do you live with a deep sense of, "Oh, like, God has been so generous to me, Oh my gosh, I'm so grateful." And do you look for opportunities to give when no one else is asking? So, like I just like to give and help. So, the downside of this gift, the shadow side is again, like the people have the gift of helps or service, you need to learn what word?

- [Congregation] No.

- No, because sometimes, you'll be a generous person, but not a good steward. So, there's two sides of the same coin. You be good steward so you can be generous. If you're just generous, you could be giving money to the wrong people and things. So, you wanna be a good steward asking God where He wants you to put His money. My wife, Grace has this gift very, very strongly and I got it as a Christian and I grew in it over time and I believe this is a gift that God has put on our family, we love to give, it's something that we got to raise the kids to look for opportunities and needs. We've just really been blessed of God to give. I was gonna share some details, but I just don't think I will. I just will say I just wanna publicly thank the Lord for all the times that we were able to give upwards of 100% of our income as our annual tithe. That's what we've been able to do at various points in our life and God has supernaturally provided for us. Grace grew up seeing God provide and it was new to me, but now I've seen the same thing. If you have the gift of giving, you just say it belongs to the Lord, He gives it to me and I'm gonna give it away and whatever He's got next, I'm ready to go. There is a man named R.G. LeTourneau, he was a successful businessman who created his own line of earthmoving equipment, 300 inventions, hundreds of patents. Every year as a Christian, his goal was I wanna give more than I did the year before in terms of percentage. So for him, 10% tithe was not a ceiling, but a floor. It's not a place to end, it's a place to begin. Eventually, he got to the point of reverse tithing, he kept 10%, gave 90% away. And what he said was he said, "I shovel out the money and God shovels it back, but God has a bigger shovel." And Jesus says if you're faithful with little, I can trust you with much and the context is finances. Those of you with the gift of giving, some of the richest people I know are some of the most generous people I know. And so I hate it in our culture when it's like well rich people are bad. Well, maybe they were good stewards and maybe they're generous and so maybe God has blessed them because they're gonna do with the money what He would have them to do. I don't care how much you make, I care what you do with it and so does God. Last gift is faith. 1 Corinthians 12:9, this is one of my wife's gifts which is why she married me. So, faith is the ability to envision what needs to be done and to trust God to accomplish it even though it seems impossible to most. You faith people, you're just like God can do anything, I've seen him show up and then somebody says, "I don't think so." You start them telling stories. You're like, "Well, He created the heavens and the earth, He parted the Red Sea, He took down the walls of Je..." I mean, you're rolling man, you're gonna start in the Old Testament and you're not gonna finish until they agree with you. And then you're gonna tell your own stories. My grandma, she had cancer, we prayed, she's fine. You wanna call her and ask her if God's real? I mean, now you're taking cancer grania, like what the heck, like, I can't win, you're the people who just you know what? God can do it. You know how you have the gift of faith? You sleep. My wife has the gift of faith, I struggled with it. So for years, here's gonna just cause, I'm popping out, I'm like, "Oh, Oh." Here's Grace, . Gift of faith right there. Wake up in the morning she be like, "How did you sleep?" I'm like, "I didn't." She's like, "I slept fine." I was like, "Why?" She's like, "God's in control." I was like, "I'm not sure." At some point, you've got to grow in your faith to trust God. Jesus' whole life was one of faith. Roman says if it doesn't proceed from faith, it's sin, everything he did proceeded from faith. His mom

and his dad, big faith. God shows up, "Hey, Mary, you're a virgin, you're gonna give birth to the Son of God. Your fiance is gonna hang in there. Don't worry, everybody's gonna hate you, but it'll be all right." She's like, "Cool, huh, I'm 14, go to Joseph." "Hey, your girl's pregnant," and like, "Oh, she's virgin." "Yep, her, trust me, we got this." Joseph's like, "I'm in." That's faith. When you're two teenage kids in a small rural town and one's pregnant and you haven't slept together and you're supposed to be married, even if you didn't have health class, you're like, "I think I know how this works." But they both trusted that God would do what God said He would do. Do you have this gift? Do you view obstacles as opportunities to trust God for the impossible? People who got the faith you're like, "Okay, I got bad news." They're like, "Awesome. That means God's gonna show up bigger than ever," and you're like, "What the..." You are the faith people. Do you find yourself telling stories about what God has done? People are struggling, you're like, "Oh, let me tell you some stories. Huh, you'll be fine, you're depressed now, when I'm done, we're gonna collect the offering, this can be real good. I'm gonna tell you how God has shown up." Do you find others coming to you for hope when they're struggling? People are like, "I'm dying. I'm devastated. Can I talk to you?" Because sometimes when you don't have faith, you need to borrow somebody else's. Do you have an effective prayer ministry? You're like I just ask God for stuff and He shows up. Now, here's the shadow side. If you have the gift of faith, don't use that as an excuse to be irresponsible. So, if you're like, "I don't need to go to work, I just trust the Lord." And the Lord said to go to work. There're things that God assigns to us as our responsibilities and faith is not irresponsibility, it's walking in those responsibilities, trusting God to be faithful to His promise to those who are obedient. Let me give you one historical example, George Muller, he said, "God delights to increase the faith of His children." He was a man of faith and he lived by prayer. Charles Dicken's book, "Oliver Twist" motivated him to open the United Kingdom's first orphanage for orphaned boys and girls. He's a Christian. He began without any finances and he never once asked for money. His first orphanage, she started with 30 kids and sometimes he would get the kids together for dinner and they'd all be sitting there and they'd be like, "What's for dinner?" He'd be like, "I don't know. We don't have any food or money." "Okay, what do we do?" "We're gonna pray and then we'll see God provide." And there are innumerable stories if you look at the life of George Muller where he is sitting at the table with orphaned boys and girls, they're praying, guess what? Somebody knocks on the door, has dinner, say like, "Yeah, God spoke to me, said to bring dinner." Of course, these kids met Jesus and learned about faith because they lived by faith. We pray, provide us our daily bread, but we don't really believe that because it's already in the pantry. They literally were praying for their daily bread. And by the time he was done, he cared for 10,000 orphans, printed Bibles and books, supported 130 missionaries, opened a Bible college, taught on faith in over 30 nations and died totally poor, kept nothing for himself, gave it all away. Gift of faith. Let me just ask this in closing, what sounds like you? Does any of this sound like you? These are the serving gifts, next week, we'll deal with the speaking gifts. How about your spouse, your friends, your kid, your kids, your grandkids, your friends? Is anybody coming to mind? Is the Holy Spirit bringing in anybody and like, can you encourage them this week and say, "You know what, I was thinking about this and it reminded me of you." Holy Spirit, I thank you for an opportunity to teach and have a little bit of fun and Lord God, I thank you that there's joy and freedom in the spirit. And God when we think about how wonderful it is that you gave us gifts, God, I just wanna pause

and say thank you that you're a God who serves, that Lord Jesus, you looked down at humanity and our rebellion and our folly and our death and you decided, "I'm gonna go down there and serve those people and help them." And then you lived without sin and you died and you rose and you conquered Satan, sin, death, hell and wrath and you ascended into heaven and you're still serving, you're sending the Holy Spirit, you're giving us gifts, you're giving our life meaning, value and purpose, you're preparing a place for us. And Lord Jesus, all of eternity will be served by you, will be living in the kingdom that you created, will be eating the food that you provide, will be living in the homes that you build. That everything will be a gift from you and that everything will be to your glory and for our good and that everything will be an example of how you serve us, we bring nothing into the kingdom, but we have everything because you serve us so faithfully, I gotta pray for these dear saints in the room and online that they would just get to figure out who they are and what you have them to do so they could be part of what you're doing until you return, we ask for this grace in Jesus' good name, amen.

- My name is Scott, this is my wife, Heather and we've been attending Trinity Church for about three years now. We serve in student ministry which is middle school and high school students. I'm a student chaplain so my role is to help support and train, just be there for the leaders that in turn work with the students. When I first started going to church and first felt the need to serve, I remember telling her and telling myself, "I don't know where I wanna serve." For the last few years, I've been serving students and that's absolutely where I believe God wants me and I think what keeps me coming back is just the mistakes I've made in the past, if I can use that experience in conjunction with the truth and the word of God, that's where God wants me to really try to be helpful to our student leaders and our students. We have four kids and at one point, all four were serving at the same time and that was really cool and even now at Trinity, we serve with our family, that we're blessed to serve alongside our son on a weekly basis and students and it's really cool to see how God is working through him and the family that he has here at the church. It's fun, the kids keep you feeling young even when you're not so there's a lot of fun stories with students, but probably my biggest memories, the recent memory when we went to camp. This year, we were blessed to actually take kids to a camp, the Holy Spirit showed up, God's power and action just showed up in the leaders, in the students and it was an awesome camp, it was the best camp I've ever been a part of, that's gonna be a memory forever. But by far, that's my best memory about serving the students just because I did not expect it. We showed up and God did the work. I would encourage people to sign up and show up. Just show up and see how God can work through you and where God wants you to serve. I spent my whole adult life not pursuing God or wanting a relationship with Jesus, I just did it my own way and I got to a point in my life when we got to a point in our marriage and raising our kids where my way was not working. I wanted blessing, I wanted our families to be blessed, I wanted to do better and fix things and I didn't know what would fix it, but I thought the church could help. Once I dove in and once we started serving, that is when I experienced these things that I was seeking. The blessing is in serving, the Bible talks about in Proverbs 11, he who blesses will be enriched himself and that's true, the word of God is true and that is absolutely true in our life and that's true in my life. I truly believe the joy and the blessing and the changes that we've experienced as a family is just simply because we've showed up and tried to love and

serve others. God will plug you in and the Holy Spirit will move you to help, all to the glory of God.

- [Scott and Heather] We are the Bruch family and we found our position on Team Jesus.