

WEAKNESSES, TALENTS AND GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: TAPPING HIDDEN STRENGTHS TO HASTEN THE LORD'S WORK TODAY



WE ARE CAPABLE OF MORE THAN WE MAY KNOW.

Our Father in Heaven loves all his children. As we discover and develop the talents and spiritual gifts we have been given, we can become the Lord's hands in blessing and strengthening others. We can also find comfort in knowing weaknesses aren't all that bad.

What's the difference between a talent and a gift of the spirit?

TALENTS: These are skills we acquire because we take an interest in something and work at it until we become proficient. Their purpose is to add color and variety to our lives, and help us to serve and uplift others. Sometimes the Lord directs us towards certain areas of interest, where we will find talents that we might not otherwise have discovered. Everyone has some talents to magnify through practice and sharing.

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: These are "Blessings or abilities that are given by the power of the Holy Ghost. God gives at least one of these gifts to every faithful member of the church. As we receive these gifts, they strengthen and bless us individually and help us serve others. (see: D&C 46:8-12)" Source: True to the Faith, (2004), 166

Spiritual gifts are given specifically for the building up of the Lord's kingdom on Earth. They are given at baptism, later as needed, and sometimes when earnestly prayed for. It usually depends on our faithfulness and on the needs of those we serve. When given to us, we must work to develop our gifts, and not neglect them. Spiritual gifts may also be given by the Lord to people who are not of our church. He can and does give them to anyone He

pleases, as is His right. However, as members of Christ's church, receiving a gift of the spirit is part of our inheritance. We are promised that everyone will receive at least one gift at baptism. It is then up to us to discover and then use it well.



We are encouraged to ask our Father in Heaven what gifts He has given us. ***"...Seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given; for verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefitted that seek or ask of me".*** Doctrine and Covenants 46:8-9 (See also verse 26)



Examples of Spiritual Gifts in the Scriptures:

- Knowledge “that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the

world” (D&C 46:13).

- The capacity to believe the words of those who testify of Jesus Christ (see D&C 46:14).
- Knowledge of “the differences of administration” (D&C 46:15; see also 1 Corinthians 12:5). This gift is used in administering and leading the Church.
- Knowledge of “the diversities of operations,” which helps us discern whether a teaching or influence comes from God or from some other source (D&C 46:16; see also 1 Corinthians 12:6–7).
- The gift of “the word of wisdom” (1 Corinthians 12:8; D&C 46:17). This does not refer to the law we know as the Word of Wisdom. Rather, it is the gift of wisdom— the ability to use knowledge in righteous ways.
- The gift of “the word of knowledge” (1 Corinthians 12:8; D&C 46:18).

- The ability to teach by the power of the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 10:9–10; see also D&C 46:18).
- The gift of faith (see 1 Corinthians 12:9; Moroni 10:11).
- The gift “to have faith to be healed” (D&C 46:19).
- The gift “to have faith to heal” (D&C 46:20; see also 1 Corinthians 12:9; Moroni 10:11).
- “The working of miracles” (1 Corinthians 12:10; D&C 46:21; see also Moroni 10:12).
- The gift of prophecy (see 1 Corinthians 12:10; Moroni 10:13; D&C 46:22). John the Beloved taught that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10).
- “The beholding of angels and ministering spirits” (Moroni 10:14).
- “Discerning of spirits” (1 Corinthians 12:10; D&C 46:23).
- The gift to speak in different languages, or tongues (see 1 Corinthians 12:10; Moroni 10:15; D&C 46:24).
- The gift of “the interpretation of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:10; D&C 46:25; see also Moroni 10:16).

Source: True to the Faith, (2004), 165–67

SIX STEPS: START DEVELOPING YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS

1. Seek out what you have already been given! Evaluate strengths and abilities, and consider patriarchal blessings as a possible source of information. Family and friends can often help uncover great things you might not have previously acknowledged. Ask Heavenly Father to help you learn what tools He has given you to help hasten His work. (see D&C 46:7-9)

2. Have a desire to serve God, and to spend the time and effort required to develop the spiritual gift or talent you are seeking. (D&C 4:3-5)

3. Have faith and hope and charity. Heavenly Father will strengthen you, and you must humbly hope and trust He will. Be pleased to see others developing their gifts and talents as you continue to grow, too. (see Ether 12:27-28)

4. Learn skills necessary to develop spiritual gifts and talents. Take a class, ask a mentor to teach you, and studying books. Scripture study and prayer are always very valuable, as inspiration comes as a result of doing these things. (see D&C 88:118, then 80)

5. Practice using gifts and talents with a spirit of love and service to others. Faith without

works is dead. (see James 2:18) Every skill and attribute takes effort and work to develop. The mastery of anything must be earned.

6. Share your gifts and talents with others. It is by using and sharing your God-given abilities and attributes that they grow (see Matthew 25:29). Doing so with an eye single to the glory of God will benefit the lives of everyone within your circle of influence. (see D&C 82:18-19)

“Let your light so shine before men that they might see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”(see Matthew 5:16)



“In a very real sense not one of us is qualified, but it seems that God continually chooses the most unqualified to do his work, to bear his glory. If we are qualified, we tend to think that we have done the job ourselves. If we are forced to accept our evident lack of qualification, then there's no danger that we will confuse God's work with our own, or God's glory with our own.”

— Madeleine L'Engle

THANK HEAVEN FOR WEAKNESS. SAY WHAT?

We cannot talk about gifts of the spirit without the subject that seems to be its opposite. Weaknesses. They are also “gifts”. Heavenly Father has given them to us, to help us to be humble and remember to lean on him.

In the Book of Ether, Moroni acknowledged the gift of faith given to him and his ancestors, but then lamented his own weakness at writing. He compared his people's weakness in this against the strengths of the brother of Jared, who was powerful at convincing through the power of the written word. He also worried that future generations would mock him for his writing, despite his strong testimony. The Lord's response was comforting:

26)...“Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient that they shall take no advantage of your weakness;

27) And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.

28) Behold, I will show unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will show unto them that faith, hope and charity bringeth unto me- the fountain of all righteousness.” (Ether 12:26-28)

We can all be comforted by the knowledge that faith precedes miracles and that blessings come to those who earnestly want to also bless others. It is part of our Father's plan to help us progress. We must not forget to work on overcoming our weaknesses. Nor should we be consumed by them, and push aside the unique strengths Heavenly Father has given each of us to make a difference in the world. Besides, our weaknesses can be turned into talents, or even spiritual gifts, with the Lord's help. Many tender mercies come to help us through life.

When I was eleven or twelve, I had a very difficult time relating to others my own age. Casual conversation with peers seemed impossible, and I was frequently bogged down by my own feelings of inadequacy. Moreover, I was bullied by a few children who seemed determined to remind me how ugly and stupid they thought I was; but, I wasn't. I was neither ugly, nor stupid, but like the ugly duckling in the famous story, I felt that I didn't belong because I was different. Many tears were shed, and prayers were poured out, asking that the other children might see I was a good person, and a loyal friend. In my little heart, I solemnly promised that I would never treat another person the way I had been treated, because I knew how painful the experience felt.

Gradually, over several years, my social skills increased and I learned a few things about presenting myself well to others. I even changed schools to get a fresh start. Above all, I kept my promise to the Lord. Within a few months of changing schools, I had several students ask me if I would run for student body president. It was a wonderful feeling. I felt empowered to lift and strengthen others; to forget my old insecurities and get to work serving my school community. Heavenly Father had helped me turn my social awkwardness into confidence. I am an adult now. I still work to magnify the gifts I've been given, and I have faith that feelings of love and understanding will continue to develop and grow as long as I strive to serve the Lord in His way: openly; freely; without judgement or reserve. It is a wonderful feeling to be able to lift others and help them feel God's love for them, too.

“That which we *persist* in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the *nature* of the thing is changed, but that our *power* to do is *increased*” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* [2002], 35).



ABOVE ALL, GIVE THANKS. The Lord said, “A commandment I give unto them, that they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation” ([D&C 84:73](#)). We must remember that spiritual gifts are sacred (see [D&C 6:10](#)). In return for giving us these gifts, the Lord asks that we “give thanks unto God in the Spirit for whatsoever blessing [we] are blessed with” ([D&C 46:32](#)).

Videos :

“Gifts of the Spirit Come to the Obedient”- <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2010-07-044-gifts-of-the-spirit-come-to-the-obedient?lang=eng>

“Extraordinary Gift”-<https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2013-03-001-extraordinary-gift?lang=eng>



“The Tender Mercies of the Lord”- <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2010-03-05-the-tender-mercies-of-the-lord?lang=eng>



WORKSHEET:

As you consider Moroni's experience in Ether 12, identify one personal weakness you have that you dislike, but might have hidden benefits.

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List three specific things you will do to turn this weakness into a strength.

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What are one or two talents you know you have? -OR- Name one talent or gift you would like to develop.

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What are three specific things you can do to magnify/develop your talent(s)?

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Identify a gift of the spirit you feel you may have. Consider these sources: patriarchal blessing, scriptures, personal revelation, comments from others (especially spouse, children or recipients of your service).

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What are three specific things you will do to magnify your gift?

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“It is the privilege of every Latter-day Saint to approach Heavenly Father in prayer and ask Him to help them identify the gift that they have had bestowed upon them, to ask for His assistance in cultivating it throughout their lives, and to petition Him to receive additional gifts for the benefit of themselves and the rest of His children.” - Matthew B. Brown

“Be yourself. No base imitator of another, but your best self. There is something that you can do better than another. Listen to the inward voice and bravely obey that.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson

FHE ACTIVITY IDEA: Have everyone write the names of the entire family on a piece of paper. Each person then writes down some of the talents and gifts they think each family member has. Read them aloud, and feel the Spirit telling each person they are valued and important!