

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER 05 2026

you are gifted

Scripture Story: 1 Corinthians 12:4-28.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire),* chapters 18-20.
Key Text: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

What keeps young people from using their spiritual gifts and talents in your church and community? Are they lazy, unmotivated, or only committed to doing easy jobs that can be completed quickly? Perhaps they simply have not yet realized what their gifts are, and have not been given the appropriate avenue to live up to their potential?

Sadly, too few of us understand what it means to receive God's gifts and talents. It isn't a privilege; it's a responsibility. Although there are those who do not believe that they have any gifts, Scripture teaches us that God has given *all* Christians spiritual gifts—specially endowed abilities that enable them to do the work of ministry enthusiastically and effectively.

Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to all of Christ's followers so that the common good of His church can be achieved.

Spiritual gifts can be discovered and used effectively. And once we understand and apply these gifts in the right positions and projects, our lives become more fruitful and fulfilled.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that they are unique and when they accept Christ they are endowed with gifts, experiences, and talents that God distributes for the common good of His church. *(Know)*
- Realize that if we don't use our talents and gifts, they will be taken from us. Conversely, the more we use them, they become more evident and we become more effective. *(Feel)*
- Be challenged to reflect and research what their spiritual gifts are and apply them into the different needs of the church and community. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Spiritual Gifts and Ministries, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 17

"God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love" (Acts 6:1-7; Rom. 12:4-8;

1 Cor. 12:7-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. Use the following activity to further illustrate the importance of using the gifts that we have.*

Give each student one or more puzzle pieces from a fairly simple 50-piece puzzle. Explain that these pieces represent the gifts and talents that God has given them. The picture cannot be put together unless everyone contributes their piece. Everyone has a different piece—a corner, a side, a piece of sky, etc.—and they need to know what type of piece they have in order to know where to place them. Have them complete the puzzle as an illustration of what can come together when everyone contributes what they have.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

In Segovia, Spain, there is what remains of an aqueduct built by the victorious Romans in the year A.D. 109 For 18 centuries this aqueduct carried sparkling water from the mountains to one town.

Around the turn of the century it was decided that the aqueduct should be preserved for posterity. Modern pipes were laid and the sparkling water was rerouted through these new pipes.

Shortly thereafter, the aqueduct started to fall apart. Because water was no longer running through it, the sun dried the mortar and it crumbled. Then the stones sagged and fell into ruins.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

God is in the process of developing your gifts. Unfortunately, when you fail to use the talents that God has given you, they will be lost. When you read 1 Corinthians, you can see that Paul is aware that this church is relatively young. He doesn't designate specific leaders within the community but, instead, gives them a vision for what they (by the grace of God) will become. Here is a list of some of the gifts that Paul mentioned in his letters:

Wisdom
Knowledge
Faith
Healing powers
Prophecy
Discernment
Tongues
Interpretation
Administration
Leadership
Teaching
Miracles

Young people are like this young church of Corinth—they need time to mature, time to develop their gifts. Sometimes, some young people will deny that they have any gifts or talents. That isn't modesty or humility. That is a theological slap in God's face.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

What is a spiritual gift?

What it is not . . .

- A talent (something you just happen to be good at)
- An ability (a developed skill)
- A personality trait (whether environmental or genetic)

What it is . . .

- You get it when you become a Christian (Ephesians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 12:7).
- There are no believers without gifts.
- There are no unbelievers with gifts.
- It is a supernatural ability that works through God's Holy Spirit (1 Peter 4:11).
- The reason you have it is to do God's work.
- You supply the availability and God will supply the ability.
- Your gift is not for you—it is for the youth group and the church (Ephesians 4:12).
- God gave us all different ones so that we could all work together (Romans 12:4-6).

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story:

Romans 12:6 (NIV): "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us."

It is a misconception that we have to discover our gifts first before volunteering to serve in the appropri-

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Modeling

Each student should be encouraged to complete their *Cornerstone Connections* lessons in advance. Make sure you have thoroughly studied the lesson yourself as well. If your students haven't already started the habit, encourage them to begin sharing what they have already *written down*. Make efforts to draw out quiet members, and discourage the overly talkative from saying too much. If a person has a "wrong" answer, ask if anyone else has another thought on the verse, or get someone to reread the verse and draw out further insights with questions. Be sure to give others room to see key points differently.

ate place. Many times we won't know what we are gifted or not gifted in until we get involved. There are so many ministries out there that you'll have ample opportunities to experiment. You'll eventually learn what you're good at.

Galatians 6:4 (CEV): "Do your own work well, and then you will have something to be proud of. But don't compare yourself with others."

There is a line in the poem "Desiderata," by Max Ehrmann, that says:

"If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself."

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:12 (NIV): "We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise."

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on specific aspects of the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary states that the Corinthian believers were under the misguided notion that there were some gifts more important than others. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul takes them to task and explains that all gifts are from God, and are meant to benefit the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 12:11). Thus, no one can boast that they are more favored since all are primed toward the same goal.

The following is an elaboration of the meanings behind some of the gifts, as explained in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary:*

- Wisdom—"A man possessed of this gift was not only wise, he was able also to explain his wisdom to others." For a contrast between wisdom and knowledge, see Proverbs 1:2.
- Knowledge—An "ability to apprehend facts," or in terms of the gospel, the ability to understand spiritual truth and arrange it in an orderly manner

Teaching From the Lesson

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite students to share the Key Text *with the class if they have committed it to memory.*
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Great Controversy. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

in order to facilitate explanation to others.

- Faith—This faith mentioned here is not simply the belief that all Christians have. It is a special manifestation of faith that enables the wielder to undertake exceptional tasks for the glory of God.
- Healing—See Mark 16:18; Acts 3:2-8; Acts 14:8-10, etc.
- Miracles—This was "a special gift performed under divine direction."
- Prophecy—"The power to speak authoritatively for God, or on God's behalf, either by foretelling future events or by declaring God's will for the present." See Exodus 3:10, 14, 15; Deuteronomy 18:15, 18; 2 Samuel 23:2.
- Discernment—The ability "to distinguish between divine and counterfeit inspiration."

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Talk about specific things someone could do in the following areas to put their gifts to work. Come up with at least two ideas for each area.

1. Home
2. School
3. Youth group
4. Church (outside of youth group)
5. Work
6. Other (your choice)

Then pray when you are finished.

Summary

Share the following story in your own words:
As mentioned in Lesson 1, Mrs. ten Boom's gift was doing practical things to help others—knitting, baking, or making gifts. Even after she had a stroke she would communicate to her daughter Corrie about people that she felt needed to be reached out to and encouraged.

- What is your situation?
- Are you willing to serve regardless of the affirmation from others?
- Are you willing to serve regardless of the inconvenience to you?



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire),* chapters 18-20.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 1 Corinthians 12:4-28.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire),* chapters 18-20.

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Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"Like the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, the advent movement appeared in different countries of Christendom at the same time. In both Europe and America men of faith and prayer were led to the study of the prophecies, and, tracing down the inspired record, they saw convincing evidence that the end of all things was at hand. In different lands there were isolated bodies of Christians who, solely by the study of the Scriptures, arrived at the belief that the Savior's advent was near" (*The Great Controversy,* p. 357).

keytext

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

(1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NIV)

what do you think?

Read the following definitions of "servanthood" and "stewardship." Then decide if you agree or disagree. Explain why.

Servanthood is all about our heart toward God and our attitude toward ministry. According to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, using our spiritual gifts without love accomplishes nothing. Authentic devotion to serving, honoring, and worshipping Christ is essential for effective ministry.

Stewardship has to do with accountability. Once we identify and grow in our understanding of our spiritual gifts, we must be responsible in the way we use them. First Corinthians 12:1 reminds us that it is our duty to identify what our spiritual gifts are because we will be held accountable for how we use them (1 Peter 4:10; Matthew 25:14-30).

did you know?

Each of us is truly unique. Did you know that each of us has 100 trillion cells in our body? And for each of those cells, there is a DNA strand that holds 6 gigabytes of memory. So, each of us has the potential to house 600 trillion gigabytes of memory! Amazing! Also, DNA molecules can combine in an infinite number of ways. The number is 10 to the 2,400,000,000th power. There is no one like you! God made you special.

You have a God-given personal style and ministry passion. Understanding your unique gifts and style will enable you to thrive in your relationship with God and in your ministry.

INTO THE STORY

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

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

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. . . . "

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues."

(1 Corinthians 12:4-13, 27, 28, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Circle the gifts that Paul lists in the passages above. Who gives these gifts? Which one is the best and/or most important? Reinforce your answer with biblical texts.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Find definitions/descriptions for the following spiritual gifts:

- Wisdom _____
  _____
- Knowledge _____
  _____
- Faith _____
  _____
- Healing _____
  _____
- Discernment (distinguishing between spirits) _____
  _____

Who is the minister at your church? Reread 1 Corinthians 12:7. What would Paul say about your answer?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What might some of your spiritual gifts be? If you don't know, how can you find out?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What do you think the church would look like if everyone lived out their spiritual giftedness?

_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back" **(Luke 6:38, NLT).**

"So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't" **(Romans 12:5, 6, *The Message*).**

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" **(1 Peter 4:10, NIV).**

"You shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb" **(Psalm 139:13, *The Message*).**

"So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them." **(Matthew 25:28, 29, NIV).**

further insight

"Men are instruments in the hand of God, employed by Him to accomplish His purposes of grace and mercy. Each has his part to act."

—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 343

Sabbath

Read Matthew 25:14-30.

Complete the *What Do You Think?* activity. The words "servanthood" and "stewardship" are misunderstood by many people. For some, servanthood means to allow others to dictate how we live our lives. And for others, stewardship refers only to money.

How were the definitions for *servanthood* and *stewardship* similar to your current understanding? How were they different? How would you rewrite the definitions?

Servanthood: _____

_____

_____

Stewardship: _____

_____

_____

Sunday

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 13.

Read the *Into the Story* section of this week's lesson, and answer the *Out of the Story* questions. The context in which the apostle was writing was that there were people in the church who thought that their spiritual gifts were superior to others' gifts. They had become proud. That's one reason he stressed love in 1 Corinthians 13. Without love, our gifts won't make an eternal difference.

But what do you do if you don't like the gifts you have? Or it seems as if everyone else has better ones? If we use our gifts out of a heart of love, can all giftedness—small or large—make a difference? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

To take a spiritual gifts inventory, go to https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service (retrieved July 16, 2025). After you've tallied your results, review them with a trusted family member or teacher. Ask him or her for feedback: Which ones that you discovered do they see manifested in your life? How might they see you using your gift in service? What guidance might they have for you in regard to the "next step"?

Monday

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

Read through the *Key Text* for this week. It reveals a pattern to us:

Different gifts	Same Spirit
Different service	Same Lord
Different working	Same God

What does this tell us about the Spirit? About Jesus? About God?

_____

_____

_____

Tuesday

Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Read this week's *Flashlight* quotation. Ellen White tells us that Christians in different countries, who had no contact with each other, were coming to the same conclusions about Christ's second coming. Why? Because they were all studying the same book—God's Word—and were being led by the same Spirit.

At different times, in different places, God imparts the wisdom necessary for that situation. *Discernment* is one of the spiritual gifts that God promises to give. Do some research to determine what it means to have the spiritual gift of discernment. How can that gift be used to serve others?

_____

_____

_____

Wednesday

Read this week's *Punch Lines*. There are several themes that you will find throughout these Scripture texts. Match the text with the theme.

Matthew 25:28, 29	Givers receive more than they give
Luke 6:38	Serving grace
Psalm 139:13	I've got to be me
1 Peter 4:10	God's math sure is different than my math homework
Romans 12:5, 6	God knew me before I knew me

Thursday

Read Romans 8:14.

How would an understanding of your spiritual gifts influence your future—your choice of career, spouse, ministry?

_____

_____

_____

Friday

Read 1 Peter 4:10.

What God-given ability or personal experience can I offer to my community? In what ways can I see myself passionately serving others—and loving it?

_____

_____

_____

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 18, 19, 20.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.