

# The 5 Leadership Gifts of the Holy Spirit

## A Practical Guide to Recognizing & Releasing Them

By Kevin Miller, with many book recommendations by Al Hsu

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-12: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

### Why care about these 5 leadership gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4?

- Not because they are more valuable than any other gift (1 Corinthians 12:21-25), but because they release other gifts. When people function as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, everyone else is equipped to use their own gifts.
- Because through these 5 leadership gifts Jesus Christ leads the church. As Bob Love points out:
  - Christ is our Apostle (Hebrews 3:1)
  - Christ is our Prophet (Luke 24:19)
  - Christ is our Evangelist (Matthew 9:35)
  - Christ is our Pastor (1 Peter 5:2-4)
  - Christ is our Teacher (John 3:2)

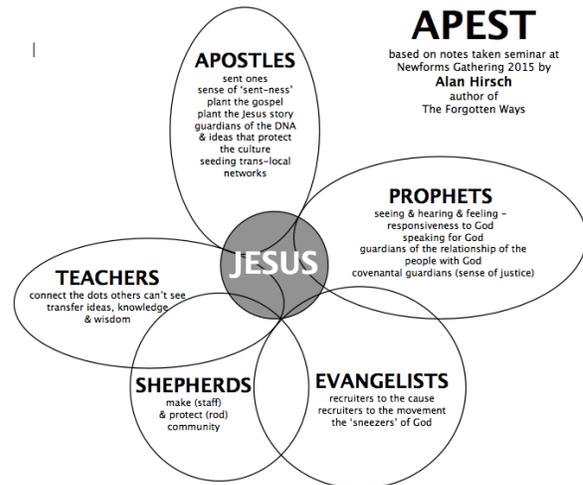


Image:<http://transformationhurrock.com/>

What is a simple way to describe each gift? (by J R Woodward)

- Apostles: Catalyze and Commission
- Prophets: Expose and Embody
- Evangelists: Invite and Excite
- Pastors: Guide and Guard
- Teachers: Interpret and Inform

What happens when each leadership gift is used?

- Apostles: People get to share in "God's kingdom come" as new works are begun and leaders raised up.
- Prophets: People return to God and his ways.
- Evangelists: People find new life and joy in the living God.
- Pastors: People know God's care and are guided to spiritual maturity.
- Teachers: People learn God's truth and are delivered from confusion and error.

### **What frustrates /motivates each leadership gift?**

- Apostles feel, “The church is missing Kingdom opportunities! It is too conventional and stuck.”
  - So you speak God’s Word to proclaim vision, for the Kingdom of God to expand and for the church to become fresh, expanding, responsive, networked.
- Prophets feel, “The church is colluding with the world’s immorality and systemic injustices!”
  - So you speak God’s Word to proclaim the anger of God for injustice and idolatry; the love of God for the contrite; and the vision of God’s future for the discouraged; to help the church become repentant, holy, just and hopeful.
- Evangelists feel, “The church is too inward-focused and uncaring about people away from God!”
  - So you speak God’s Word to proclaim the simple, powerful Gospel, to help people find their way back to God; and help the church become more seeking and welcoming of them.
- Pastors feel, “The church is too impersonal! What does numerical growth matter if we don’t care for the soul of each person and help each one grow in Christ?”
  - So you speak God’s Word to demonstrate the shepherding care of God and to guide each person to deeper love and faith, to help the church become more caring and spiritually mature.
- Teachers feel, “The church is so confused! Why do we remain immature and borderline heretical, when God’s Word is clear?”
  - So you speak God’s Word, to proclaim the beauty and power of his truth, to help the church become more grounded, mature, and balanced.

### **Where to learn more about the 5-fold Leadership Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

#### Free articles

- “Three Overlooked Leadership Roles” by Alan Hirsch  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2008/spring/7.32.html>
- “The 5-Fold Ministry Gifts” by Bob Love:  
[http://transformationthurrock.com/Articles/457133/Transformation\\_Thurrock/Prayer/T\\_hurrock\\_Leaders\\_Prayer/TLP\\_Retreat\\_Day.aspx](http://transformationthurrock.com/Articles/457133/Transformation_Thurrock/Prayer/T_hurrock_Leaders_Prayer/TLP_Retreat_Day.aspx)

#### Recent books

- *Creating a Missional Culture* by JR Woodward
- *5Q: Reactivating the Original Intelligence and Capacity of the Body of Christ* by Alan Hirsch

## You might be an APOSTLE if...

*Next to each item, jot the name of anyone you know who fits this description.  
Star any that are true of you.*

- You initiate new churches, ministries (1 Corinthians 3:6; 9:1-2), and works to extend the kingdom of God. Some see you as a “spiritual entrepreneur” because you find energy in growth, expansion, reaching out.
- Like Paul, you want to go where the Gospel is not known. You’d rather lay a new foundation (1 Cor. 3:10), than build on someone else’s (Romans 15:20-21). You are more a pioneer than a settler.
- You see over the horizon. You are able to look at the spiritual landscape and see where God is working and what is coming (Acts 20:23, 25, 29-30).
- Your vision of what God wants to do is so real and compelling, that to you it seems much more real than current limitations. For example, if asked “How many small groups do you have?” you may answer, “We’ll have 14 by next fall” (Romans 4:17).
- You raise up leaders wherever you go (Titus 1:4-5; 1 Corinthians 4:14-17; 1 Tim. 1:2-3, 4:11-14), by laying on of hands—imparting to them and commissioning them (Acts 6:6; 2 Timothy 1:6). You get joy from disappearing into the background and allowing room for others to grow.
- You work more relationally than structurally (1 Corinthians 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8). You often serve as a connector and networker.
- You share deeply in Christ’s sufferings (1 Cor. 4:8-13), since you are looked down upon by nonbelievers and often opposed by believers (2 Timothy 1:15; 2 Timothy 4:14) or false apostles (2 Cor. 11:1-15; Revelation 2:2).
- You often have a bold faith that nothing is impossible for God; you may have seen God do unusual things through you--“signs, wonders and miracles” (Acts 2:43; 2 Cor. 12:12)
- You help resolve disputes and bring order and direction to the church (Acts 6:1-7; Acts 15:1-31; 1 Corinthians 3:3-5).

### **Challenges to using this gift**

- Because, like the Marines, you are the first to go into a new area (Ephesians 2:20), you end up doing some of all the leadership gifts: prophesy, evangelize, pastor, and teach. This can be confusing to you—“What am I?”--until you realize that what holds it all together is raising up new works and new leaders.
- Your vision is so compelling to you that you get frustrated when people explain why achieving that is harder than it looks or can’t be done like you said.
- Because apostles are literally “sent ones,” you end up moving on, which is hard on you—you sometimes feel lonely--and hard on the new believers and leaders you’re moving from (Acts 13:1-3; Acts 20:36-38)
- When you're pushing into new territory, geographically or spiritually, you can neglect the more important aspects of life, such as your relationship with the Lord and family.

### **Bible examples of this gift**

- The 12 apostles chosen by Jesus (Matthew 10:2-4), plus Matthias (Acts 1:21-26)
- Paul (Galatians 1:1) and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-3)
- Andronicus and Junia (Romans 16:7)

### **When to call an apostle**

- When the church needs a rallying point
- When the church needs peace or clarification of a contentious issue
- When the church is stuck

### **Where to learn more**

#### Free articles

- "Apostles Today?" by Skye Jethani  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2008/spring/15.37.html>

#### Recent books

- *Movements That Change the World* by Steve Addison
- *What Jesus Started* by Steve Addison
- *Pioneering Movements* by Steve Addison
- *Exponential: How You and Your Friends Can Start a Missional Church Movement* by Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson

#### Classic book

- *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It*, by Roland Allen

## You might be a PROPHET if...

*Next to each item, jot the name of anyone you know who fits this description.*

*Star any that are true of you.*

- You receive revelation from God, through Scripture, vision, dream, intuition. You feel a concern, you become aware of danger, or you sense a solution. You have a strong sense of the Lord's leading (Amos 3:7).
- You share in God's heart-broken love for, and anger over, his wayward people (Luke 13:34)—sometimes to the point of tears or physical distress. In your heart, there is this "dance"—to bear the Lord's anger against sin and rebellion (John 2:13-17) without letting it degenerate into sinful expressions of human anger (Numbers 20:9-12).
- You feel uncomfortable or taken aback with the word "prophet" applied to you—partly because you know that things don't go easy for prophets, and partly because you wrestle with your own inadequacies (Jer. 1:6).
- You feel acutely a sense of being set apart (Jer. 1:5). Sometimes you feel lonely in your gift (Psalm 69:7-9). But when you find yourself on the margins, God uses this placement to give you clarity of vision: you are removed from the trees to see the forest.
- You have moments of amazing spiritual boldness, power, and victory (1 Kings 18:16-46)—sometimes followed by "meltdown moments" when you just want to die (1 Kings 19:1-4, 13-14) or get out of speaking for God (Jeremiah 20:7-9).
- You have to face into fear in order to speak what God has commanded: the fear of losing a relationship, position, community or income (1 Kings 19:1-3).
- You speak God's truth in a way that "strengthens, encourages, and comforts" the church (1 Cor. 14:3-4; Acts 15:32). You don't just "afflict the comfortable," as most people think; you love to "comfort the afflicted," to assure the contrite heart that God will never despise it (Ps. 51:17).
- You speak God's truth to power (Matthew 14:3-5). You have a strong sense for justice and defending what is fair and right.
- The very events of your life point to God's work in an unusual way (e.g., Hosea 1, Ezekiel 4, Matthew 3:3-4).
- Sometimes the revelation you receive does not make sense to you, because its meaning and fulfillment may be partly now, and fully in generations to come (1 Peter 1:10-12; Isaiah 7:1-17).

### Challenges to using this gift

- People hate having their excuses for sin taken away (John 15:22), so they often reject you. You can become isolated, hurting, self-pitying, and withdraw from your gift. But still you must speak (Jer. 20:9)
- Sometimes you get weary because the people stand "outside of the tent" (Ex. 33:7-11) wanting to know what the Lord says but do not want to seek him for themselves.
- Churches know what to do with pastors, teachers, evangelists, and even apostles, but they don't know what to do with you, so they sometimes reject what you say (1 Thess.

5:19-20) or label you a troublemaker (1 Kings 18:16-18). But you need the church. Here's why: You "prophesy in part," without complete knowledge (1 Cor. 13:8-12), but you don't know which parts are from the Lord; that requires the church to discern (1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:20-21). It takes grace to submit your strongly-felt revelation to people.

- You often pick up on things that others are unaware of, so you need to ask yourself, "Is this awareness mine to act on?" As Oswald Chambers wrote, "God never gives us discernment so that we may criticize, but that we may intercede." Always pray; sometimes act.

### **Bible examples for this gift**

- Judas and Silas (Acts 15:30-32)
- Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:8-9)
- Agabus (Acts 21:10-11)

### **When to call a prophet**

- When there is fog or discouragement: "Where are you leading us, God?"
- When there is spiritual battle
- When there is an incursion of sin into the people of God that is not being repented of

### **Where to learn more**

Free article

- "The Saint Must Walk Alone" by A. W. Tozer  
<http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/tozer/5j00.0010/5j00.0010.39.htm>

Recent books

- *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience, Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* by Ronald J. Sider
- *Growing In the Prophetic: A practical biblical guide to dreams, visions, and spiritual gifts* by Mike Bickle. A pastor's hard-won lessons about how to, and how not to, release prophetic ministry in the local church.

Classic books

The best, of course, are the prophetic books in the Bible.

- Read about Elijah, Elisha, and others like them (1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles)
- Read the prophets from Isaiah through Malachi
- In the New Testament, read James, Jude, and Revelation

## You might be an EVANGELIST if...

*Next to each item, jot the name of anyone you know who fits this description.*

*Star any that are true of you.*

- You often spend time with people who aren't believers (Mark 2:13-17). You enjoy them, and they enjoy you. In fact, sometimes you feel more comfortable around non-believers than around believers.
- In a way, you are the "pastor" of some friends who don't go to church. They seem drawn to you and ask you about spiritual things (Matt. 9:37-38).
- You share in God's heart of compassion for the "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" who do not know Him (Matt. 9:36). You are attracted to people in pain. While others might see this person's issues, you notice his or her need.
- You don't get tired of the simple Gospel message, and you've never lost your sense of wonder and freshness when you came to Christ (Rev. 2:4).
- Sharing the Gospel is almost like breathing for you; it flows naturally (Acts 8:5, 12, 35, 40).
- You accept that there will be difficulty and rejection sometimes when sharing your faith (2 Timothy 4:5). That doesn't make you quit doing it.
- Nothing makes you happier than to see someone taking a step toward faith, and especially, accepting Christ (Luke 15:7).

### **Challenges to using this gift**

- You don't have much patience for churches and leaders that are inward-focused; you're tempted to express frustration rather than do the long, slow work of leading other Christians to focus outward.
- You so want to reach new people, that you are flexible in adapting Christian practices. But you may not appreciate the need for church structure, practice, or discipline.
- Churchgoers may not understand why you don't serve more inside the church.

### **Bible examples for this gift**

- Philip (Acts 8:12, 35, 40; 21:8)
- Timothy (2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:2)

### **When to call an evangelist**

- When the church is great for the people who are already there but not as good at drawing people in
- When it's been a long time since a nonbeliever came to Christ in your midst

### **Where to learn more**

Free article

- "Outreach and Evangelism: What Works Today?" by Rob Toal

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/state-of-church-ministry-2017/outreach-and-evangelism-what-works-today.html>

Recent books

- *Reimagining Evangelism* by Rick Richardson
- *Evangelism Outside the Box* by Rick Richardson
- *True Story* by James Choung
- *I Once Was Lost* by Don Everts and Doug Schaupp
- *Beautiful Feet: Unleashing Women to Everyday Witness* by Jessica Leep Fick

Classic books

- *Out of the Saltshaker into the World* by Becky Pippert
- *How to Give Away Your Faith* by Paul Little

## You might be a PASTOR if...

*Next to each item, jot the name of anyone you know who fits this description.  
Star any that are true of you.*

- You carry a spiritual responsibility for people (2 Corinthians 11:28). When they are doing well, you rejoice (2 John 1:4), and when they are led into sin, you burn with concern (2 Corinthians 11:29).
- You speak God's Word to someone to bring hope, perspective, and growth (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- When people have needs or concerns in their lives, they come to you (John 10:4-5). It's not unusual for someone to say to you, "I've never told anyone this before."
- You take seriously being an example to others (1 Timothy 4:12 and 1 Peter 5:3).
- You're not in it for the money (1 Peter 5:2 and 1 Timothy 3:3); even if you didn't get paid anything, you would provide spiritual care and guidance for other people.
- You have a way of leading someone without lording it over him or her. You can guide without needing to control (1 Peter 5:3).
- You are willing to sacrifice for others—your time, money, prayer, convenience (John 10:11).
- You work to learn and use people's names (John 10:3; Romans 16:1-15). The personal touch is important to you.
- Sometimes you have a God-given urgency to check on someone, and often when you do, you find out the person was in distress and needed you right then.
- People tend to listen to you and follow you (John 10:27).
- For you, small talk isn't small; it's a way of listening with care to someone about his or her life. And based on what you hear, you "rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15).
- When someone says, "Pray for me," you take that request to heart (Ephesians 6:18).
- Speaking the hard word to someone isn't easy for you, but you try to do it anyway, because you know that only by "speaking the truth in love" will we become mature (Ephesians 4:15).
- For you, staying in one place for a long time just makes your pastoral gift that much richer, because you get to know people so well. You delight in seeing people mature in faith over time (2 Timothy 1:5-6).
- In your life, friends often become more like family--like sons and daughters or fathers and mothers (1 Timothy 1:2; Philemon 10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2).
- You notice and respond to the person who's hurting (Isaiah 40:11, contrasted with Ezekiel 34:4).
- You have a radar for when someone wanders away from church, God, faith, or prayer, and you reach out to check on them (Luke 15:3-6, contrasted with Ezek. 34:8).

### **Challenges to using this gift**

- In the midst of people, you may feel lonely; at times it can feel like you're "Everybody's pastor and nobody's friend." (So it's important to cultivate friends and confessors.)
- Your compassion for people means you may delay or resist speaking the corrective word to them.
- You can sometimes "need to be needed" and get over-involved in a person's crisis, rather than letting him or her take the responsibility (Galatians 6:2 without the balance of Galatians 6:5).

### **Bible examples of this gift**

- Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2-4)
- Titus (Titus 1:4-5)

### **When to call a pastor**

- When people feel uncared for and unknown
- When people need to take a next step in their spiritual growth
- When people wonder where God is in this situation in their life

### **Where to learn more**

#### Free articles

- "4 Conversation Skills that Transform" by Kevin Miller  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2012/summer/conversationskills.html>
- "Your Most Undervalued Role" by Lee Eclov  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/april-web-exclusives/your-most-undervalued-role.html>

#### Recent books

- *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* by Eugene Peterson
- *Pastoral Graces: Reflections on the Care of Souls* by Lee Eclov
- *The Pastor: A Memoir* by Eugene Peterson

#### Classic book

- *The Book of Pastoral Rule* by Gregory the Great

## You might be a TEACHER if...

*Next to each item, jot the name of anyone you know who fits this description.*

*Star any that are true of you.*

- When you teach, there is a sense of spiritual authority (Mark 1:21-22).
- You have a passion to teach accurately (Acts 18:25) and compellingly, so you are willing and even happy to learn from others, so that you can do that (Acts 18:25-26).
- When you teach, "people's hearts burn within them"; there is a sense of the life and power of God at work (Luke 24:27-32).
- You enjoy learning in order to help others—especially studying Scripture (Acts 18:24).
- People say your teaching is a great help to them (Acts 18:27).
- You have a God-given confidence in the power of God's Word (Isaiah 55:10-11).
- You are able to make things clear, helping people understand what they otherwise wouldn't (Nehemiah 8:8).
- To you, it's not enough for people to understand doctrine or theology; you want to see their lives transformed (Titus 2:1-15).
- Even though you may use humor, in your teaching there is a "seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:7-8). What you're teaching matters to you.
- While doing other things—driving the car, trying to fall asleep—you get ideas for teachings you could give. The Spirit guides you to the right topic and approach (Jude 3).
- It would make you happy to "devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13).
- Sometimes when you're teaching, the Holy Spirit gives you words to say that you were not planning to say; they came in the moment and were just what was needed (Luke 12:12).
- If someone really wants to learn, you have a great patience for carefully instructing them (2 Timothy 4:2).
- People comment that your teaching hit them right between the eyes, or it's as if you were preaching just to them (Hebrews 4:12-13).
- You get discouraged if people hear a teaching and do not take it to heart (Jeremiah 5:21-23; 2 Timothy 4:3).
- As your teaching matures, sometimes your teaching corrects, sometimes it rebukes, sometimes it encourages—it depends on the passage of Scripture and God's leading more than your temperament (2 Timothy 4:2).

### Challenges to using this gift

- Because you can understand and explain spiritual maturity, you may think you've gotten there yourself. It's easy to talk farther than you walk (Matthew 23:1-3).
- Because your words have influence over others, you will be judged more strictly for what you say (James 3:1-2).

### **Bible examples for this gift**

- Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)
- Ezra (Nehemiah 8:1-8)

### **When to call a teacher**

- When Christians are disagreeing about an issue
- When people don't know how to take the next step in their spiritual life
- When people need understanding in order to obey (Matthew 28:20)

### **Where to learn more**

#### Free articles & podcast

- Hundreds of free articles: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/topics/preach/>
- "Monday Morning Preacher," free podcast by PreachingToday.com (full disclosure: Fr. Kevin frequently guest-hosts) <http://www.preachingtoday.com/media/podcast/>

#### Recent books

- *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* by Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson
- *The Glory of Preaching* by Darrell W. Johnson

#### Classic books

- *Preaching and Preachers* by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
- *Between Two Worlds* by John Stott