

If I have a gift, why haven't I known it

One of the categories of spiritual gifts is the personality, or motivational, gifts. The best way to measure whether or not you are operating in the sphere of your motivational gift is by this simple test: Joy is the byproduct of operating in your motivational gift. Frustration is the byproduct of trying to operate outside it. As you function in the giftedness that God has given you, you will have joy.

Why You May Not Know Your Motivational Gift

1. You were never taught about it.

This is probably the major reason for most people. It is estimated that fewer than 10 percent of (American) churchgoers know motivational gifts even exist.

2. You have never received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.

While every person is gifted by God whether he or she is a Christian or not, the receiving of Christ releases the motivational gifts in far greater measure and opens the way for the gifts to be used as God intended.

3. You are not being fed spiritually.

Just as a newborn baby needs nourishment, so the person who is "born again" needs spiritual sustenance in order to grow. Many people have been led to Christ but not given follow-up instruction or encouragement. Their ability to recognize their giftedness, like the rest of their spiritual progress, is limited.

4. You have had confusing teaching on the motivational gifts.

Since the same word in English is used to translate the three different Greek words for "gift" in the New Testament, it has led some to suppose that all biblical teaching on gifts should be lumped together. You may have heard teaching that combines the nine manifestation gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, the five ministry gifts of Ephesians 4:11, the seven motivational gifts of Romans 12-and a few others, like celibacy, as well. The result? Confusion! You may have even taken a test made up of as many as twenty-six "gift" possibilities. Yet, when you were finished, you still felt unsure of your giftedness.

It is important to have clear teaching on our gifts so we can identify them and use them for the glory of God and in service to others. It is only when the motivational gifts of Romans 12 are identified as the gifts that we possess that the Body of Christ can begin to fully function in them. Even when we know about the gifts, however, and have singled out our own, we may not be flowing freely in them in our lives.

Obstacles That Block the Flow of Motivational Gifts

1. You may have bondages that hinder the flow of your gifts.

Just as debris in a river can block the flow of the river, so the bondages in our lives may block the flow of our God-given motivational gifts. The most common bondage we see is that of fear. Incapacitating by its very nature, fear prevents our developing the full potential of our gifts. Such bondage generally results from negative childhood conditioning. Unfortunately, not every child is brought up in a positive home atmosphere. Divorce, fighting parents, alcoholism, drug usage, occult practices, mental wellness, parents who abuse their children with words or actions all these limit the freedom with which the grown individual will function.

On a survey questionnaire where people were asked to comment on what they were like as children, common responses were, "I'm sorry, but I could not complete this. Memories of my childhood are too painful". Happily, a person can be helped from such bondage with good Christian counseling and ministry.

2. Anger can block the flow of your gift.

Anger is our response to being abused, wounded or rejected. If the anger is not resolved, it is either expressed (as in rebellion, retaliation, resentment, hatred, violence etc.) or suppressed (as in self-pity, self-hatred, depression and even suicide). Three steps are necessary to dislodge the obstacle of anger: There needs to be (1) complete forgiveness of all who have angered us in any way, (2) deliverance and (3) inner healing prayer.

3. Trying to be someone other than yourself prevents the natural expression of your gift.

Sometimes other people put pressure on us to conform to a certain image. Or we ourselves may try to imitate someone we admire. Unless this role model happens to have the same motivational gift, we do, this can hamper the flow of our own giftedness. When someone takes a motivational gifts test, they can discover excitement as they find out who they are and are released to be themselves and follow God's plan for their lives.

4. Poor self-image can hinder the operation of your gift.

Many people have some degree of a self-image problem stemming from the problems and pressures of childhood. A child is designed by the Creator to be nurtured by loving parents who will build basic trust and confidence. Not all children are so fortunate. The condition of our fallen world leaves much to be desired; often parents have themselves lacked the nurturing that would have made them confident persons. But no matter what damage has been done, we can be grateful that we are being transformed into Christ's image as we abide in Him.

5. Irresponsibility can impede the flow of your gift.

Who me? Irresponsible? Only you can check it out. Here is the principle: "Everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more" (Luke 12:48, RSV). Those who have been greatly endowed have a greater responsibility for using all that they have to help others. To neglect to use your gifting is to be irresponsible.

As you discover your motivational gift (or gifts) you may find you have not used them well. Do not let that be a source of discouragement or guilt. It is possible that you did not realize your giftedness was there, let alone what to do with it. So, relax, read on and discover. Then you can become responsible.

6. Sin can block or distort the working of your gift.

There's no doubt about it. Sin pollutes. It pollutes every area of our lives and our motivational gifts are no exception. In fact, the degree to which we are able to use our gift is dependent upon the degree to which we are in the will of God. Or, conversely, the more we entertain sin in our lives, the more the function of our motivational gifts is polluted.

Sometimes we commit sins of omission because we are not aware of God's will on a matter. Other times we sin deliberately, doing something we know is wrong. But you can get rid of known sin in your life-and ask God to reveal to you any unknown sin so you can get rid of that, too, if you want your motivational gifts to flow freely and beautifully through your life.

The Holy Spirit Empowers the Gifts

You may be doing everything else just right in your life, but if you are not in touch with the power of the Holy Spirit you are missing the great dynamic of the third Person of the Trinity, freely available to every believer. Paul expressed it this way: "But ever be filled and stimulated with the [Holy] Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). It's part of our inheritance. It's ours for the asking.

God the Holy Spirit wants to be released into our lives to become that well of living water – the sap that flows as we abide in the vine. The ongoing flow of the Holy Spirit in a person's life invariably increases the pure and effective flow of that person's motivational gifts.