



[Title slide] Does anyone have any special talents? A secret ability? Some weird thing that only you can do? [Leader tip: Let some kids give some demonstrations.]

That was amazing. And perhaps a little questionable. Some of you might think you don't have any special abilities, others are nervous about sharing what you have. Here's the thing:

[Slide] YOU HAVE A SPIRITUAL GIFT

No matter what talents you know you have or have yet to discover, here is a bigger truth: God has given you an ability, a talent, a gift that can be used for His glory, to help build His kingdom. You have been given a gift of the Holy Spirit to use in building up the church. Scripture spells it out clearly:

[Slide] *1 Corinthians 7:7b (NIV) Each of you has your own gift from God.*

Each one of these diverse gifts are vital to our church being what God has called it to be. The Bible lists examples of gifts, things like **wisdom, knowledge, faith, preaching, teaching, serving, prayer, discernment, administration, helps, mercy**, and so on. Each are necessary for the church. Paul speaks to those of us who think we might not be as important or our role not as critical directly when he wrote:

[Slide] *1 Corinthians 12:22 (NIV) On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.*

Do you see that?

[Slide] YOU ARE INDISPENSABLE

Look around at this room of people for a moment. God is looking at each of you and saying that this church, our youth group, will never live up to all He has called it to be, all He has called it to do, all He desires for this body of believers, without you and the spiritual gift He has equipped you with.

Paul was thinking about all of this when he wrote to his young friend, Timothy, two thousand years ago from a prison cell. Yup, Paul was in prison for preaching the Word. The danger was very real. Timothy was a disciple of Paul, a student learning from him. Paul had left him in the city of

Ephesus to oversee the ministry there. Timothy was facing challenges of his own; there were false teachers taking advantage of Paul's imprisonment to pull away the believers and discredit the ministries of Paul and Timothy. I love his words to Timothy:

[Slide] 2 Timothy 1:6-7 (NIV) ⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Some have suggested that this language, “fan into flame,” was used by Paul because Timothy's faith was wavering, it was cooling off. But that isn't necessarily what was going on here; in the broader context, it seems more likely that Paul was challenging him to take the fire that was already in him and fan it bigger, to let it become the powerful, consuming fire – to live up to his full potential.¹ Paul reminded him that even in the face of all that was going on that he had the spiritual gift of ministry, of charisma.

[Slide] William Mounce writes in his commentary, **“Just because people are encouraged by someone does not mean that they are failing. It can mean that they are being encouraged to continue despite the pressure.”**²

The church recognized his gift of ministry when it laid hands on him. What does this mean? Timothy didn't receive a gift of the Spirit because people put hands on him, but the laying on of hands was the official recognition of that gift being present in his life. We do this each year when we pray over our mission teams and invite people around them to place a hand on their shoulder – to recognize as a church that these teens and adults are called to a ministry task.

Paul reminded Timothy, “Hey, God has given you this gift. We see it, we recognize it, so run with it.”

[Slide] And then Paul clarified the nature of Timothy's gift, the nature of all our spiritual gifts, when he wrote **“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.”**

¹ Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 226.

² William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), Kindle location 19,475.

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