

Christ's Commission

Christ was very clear about what His disciples were to focus on when He left the earth and went back to heaven. Whatever He told those early disciples extends to us as well not just those who are employees of a local church. Jesus' instructions to His disciples upon his departure can be summarized as follows:

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1. Preaching the Gospel to every creature and every nation under heaven (Mark 13:10; 16:15; Luke 24:47). And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15
 2. Witnessing of Christ to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
 3. Bringing healing and deliverance to all those in such need (Mark 16:16-18). And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.
 4. Baptizing all those who respond to the Gospel (Mt. 28:19). And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:18-20
 5. Making disciples out of all those who were converted (Mt. 28:19).
 6. Teaching the converted a lifestyle of obedience to all of God's commands (Mt. 28:20).
 7. Tending the converted as a shepherd (John 21:15-20).
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All of these elements are the essence of evangelism. Someone is not truly evangelized until they are settled in the faith, committed to a local church and functioning in their God-ordained gifts. All of these elements must be found in any organization that would like to call itself a church of Jesus Christ. All of these elements must be in our vision or our vision is not consistent with God's vision.

Your Individual Calling There is a "will of God" to which we have all been called (Col. 1:1, 8-9; 4:12).

Discovering this "will of God" will help us to determine our vision.

Key verses that deal with our calling as believers:

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1. John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. This verse teaches that... Vision and Values. God chose us with a purpose in mind that we would bear fruit. • God has appointed us to accomplish a certain work. • God's intention is that our work will live on after us (significance). • God is going to help us fulfill the work because it will be bigger than we are.
 2. Acts 20:22-24 And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. This verse teaches that... • We have a personal race to run. • There are obstacles and challenges to completing our race. • We must maintain focus, avoid distractions and be willing to pay the price of success. • God has a plan for our lives—the will of God (Col. 1:1, 9; 4:12).
 3. Colossians 1:9-11 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God... You cannot walk worthy of the Lord unless you know His will.
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Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:6–8	1 Corinthians 12:8–10	1 Corinthians 12:28	Ephesians 4:11	1 Peter 4:11
1. Prophecy 2. Serving 3. Teaching 4. Exhortation 5. Giving 6. Leadership 7. Mercy	1. Word of wisdom 2. Word of knowledge 3. Faith 4. Gifts of healings 5. Miracles 6. Prophecy 7. Distinguishing between spirits 8. Tongues 9. Interpretation of tongues	1. Apostle 2. Prophet 3. Teacher 4. Miracles 5. Kinds of healings 6. Helps 7. Administration 8. Tongues	1. Apostle 2. Prophet 3. Evangelist 4. Pastor 5. Teacher	1. Whoever speaks 2. Whoever renders service ^[10]

Descriptions

FIVEFOLD MINISTRY

Apostle: The title apostle comes from the Greek word *apostolos* which means "a messenger, one sent forth with orders" It refers to one who has been delegated authority by another in a foreign land. Apostles were the first leaders of the Church; they were commissioned by Jesus to initiate and direct the preaching of the gospel.

Prophet: In the New Testament, the office of prophet is to equip the saints for the work of service through exhortation, edification, and consolation (1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Corinthians 14:3 Ephesians 4:11). The prophet's corresponding gift is [prophecy](#). Prophecy is "reporting something that God spontaneously brings to your mind" Many, particularly Pentecostals and charismatics, distinguish between the "office of prophet" and the "gift of prophecy", believing that a Christian can possess the gift of prophecy without holding the prophetic office.

Evangelist: An evangelist is one who devotes himself to preaching the gospel. In the New Testament, evangelists preached from city to city, church to church.

Pastor: This term derives from a Greek word for "shepherd". In theory pastors are gifted to lead, guide, and set an example for other Christians. The grammatical structure of Ephesians 4:11 leads many to conclude that teacher and pastor should be considered one term (pastor-teacher). Even so, the two terms are not interchangeable; while all pastors are teachers, not all teachers are pastors. Pastoral Gifts include integrity and compassion.

Teacher: Someone who devotes his or her life to preaching and teaching the Christian faith. When teaching is provided for the Church by God, two gifts are actually given—to the Church is given a teacher and along with the teacher comes a divine capacity to teach.

Service: The word translated as "ministry" is *diakonia*, which can also be translated "service".^[30] Since there are many types of ministries and service to the Church, this then describes a broad array of gifts rather than a single gift.

Exhortation: The ability to motivate Christians "to patient endurance, brotherly love, and good works".^[31]

Giving: Those with this gift share their own possessions with others with extraordinary generosity. While all Christians should be givers, those possessing this gift will go beyond this normal giving.^[31]

Leading: This gift speaks to the various leadership roles found in the Church. While many think of roles such as administration, management of funds, strategy planning, etc. as functions outside of the supernatural realm, in reality individuals in these positions are just as in need of supernatural empowerment as are ministers of the gospel.^[32] Some writers consider the gifts of governments and leading to be the same gift, but others consider them closely related yet different.

Mercy: Possibly identical to the gift of helps, the mercy-shower possesses a ministry of visitation, prayer, and compassion to the poor and sick.^[32]

Word of wisdom: An utterance or message of wisdom supernaturally granted to an individual. For Paul, wisdom refers to "the knowledge of the great Christian mysteries: the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ, and the indwelling in the believer of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2; Ephesians 1:17)".^[1]

Word of knowledge: The knowledge referred to is often said to relate to understanding Christian doctrine or scriptural truth.^[1] It is sometimes said to be connected with the ministry of teachers.

Faith: This refers to that strong or special faith "which removes mountains, casts out devils ([Matthew](#) 17:19–20), and faces the most cruel martyrdom without flinching".^[1] It is distinguished from the "saving" and "normal" Christian faith.^[33]

Gifts of healings: The ability to supernaturally minister healing to others. The plural indicates the variety of sickness healed and the many forms the gift takes, such as healing by anointing with oil, by the [laying on of hands](#), by saying the name of [Jesus](#) or by the [sign of the cross](#).^[1]

Working of miracles: The performance of deeds beyond ordinary human ability by the power of the Holy Spirit.^[1]

Visions. An outpouring of this gift is prophesied in Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17 shows that early Christians believed this prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Visions tend to be more private experiences than the other gifts. Some researchers expand the definition of visions to include a strongly felt presence.^[34]

Discerning of spirits: The capacity to discern, distinguish, or to discriminate the source of a spiritual manifestation—whether it emanates from a good or evil spirit. It seemed to have been particularly associated with prophecy as it would be necessary to know whether a prophetic utterance was truly inspired by God.

Tongues: The supernatural ability of speaking an unlearned language.^[1] Paul seems to have distinguished between the public use of the gift (which must always be interpreted) and the private use which was for the spiritual strengthening of oneself.^[36] Currently among Christians there is a dispute as to whether tongues were/are always [xenoglossy](#) (speaking an unlearned human language) or whether it also included/includes [glossolalia](#) (speaking an unlearned and allegedly non-human language of heavenly or angelic origin).

Interpretation of tongues: This gift always follows the public exercise of the gift of tongues.^[1] In 1 Corinthians 14, the Apostle Paul required that all speech in Christian worship should be intelligible. This required that speech given in an unknown tongue be interpreted in the common language of the gathered Christians.

Helps: This gift has to do with service to the sick and the poor.^[1] Possessor of this gift has a "spiritual burden and a God-given love for the needy and afflicted".^[37]

Administration: Also called the gift of governing,^[1] the Greek word translated "governments" is *kubernesis*, the verb form of which means "to steer" or "to be a helmsman". This gift then refers to the God-given capacity to lead or guide the Church through storms and difficult seas.^[37]

Other spiritual gifts

While not specifically defined as spiritual gifts in the Bible, other abilities and capacities have been considered as spiritual gifts by some Christians.

Some found in the Old Testament such as:

- craftsmanship [Exodus](#) 35:30–33)
- interpretation of dreams (e.g. Joseph and Daniel) [genesis](#) ch43-50, [daniel](#) ch3
- composing spiritual music, poetry, and prose
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Some are found in the New Testament such as:

- [celibacy](#) (1 Corinthians 7:7)
- hospitality (1 Peter 4:9–10)
- [marriage](#) (1 Corinthians 7:7)

- (effective) witnessing (Acts 1:8, 5:32, 26:22, 1 John 5:6)
- [intercession](#) (Rom. 8:26–27)

Intercession is the use many of the other gifts listed in the scriptures. We are all commanded by God to pray but we know that some Christians actually have a gift of Intercessory Prayer. Just as we are all commanded to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone but some Christians have the gift of evangelism which makes it easier for them to carry out this command.

What is intercession? Simply put it is praying for others. Praying to God about others. Many times when we pray we tend to focus on ourselves but a true intercessor usually focuses on others.

How do you know if you have the Spiritual Gift of intercession? Well, as with the other spiritual gifts this is not something you can control. You either have it or you don't, and the sign of the gift is the fruit of its use. Some signs of this gift:

- You have a deep concern for others who may be walking in a sinful path
- You have a deep concern for certain regions or areas that other don't seem to notice. Do you know someone who is constantly asking you to pray for something that you don't feel a particular interest in? For example, they always want to pray for the government. Not that this is not an important area to focus on but this is their constant request. That is usually a sign that they have been given the assignment from the Lord to pray for the government.
- You have compassion to the point of tears for persons or places that have no direct connection to you.
- You have knowledge about persons or places that are not directly connected to you.
- You have an ability to related to people or places that are not directly connected to you.
- You get lost in prayer and can pray for a much longer period of time that most.
- The first thing that you do or think when you hear about a problem is pray.
- When you pray words come out of your mouth with information that you didn't know you knew.
- You are very sure within your heart that when you pray for certain things the prayer is being answered instantly.
- You have the ability to exercise more faith than others for miracles in prayer
- You are happy to pray for others and consider it a honor that they would ask you.
- You sometimes experience an emotional or even physical pain for others when praying for them.
- And the most important trait is that things happen or answers to prayers come very fast when you pray.

VISION ACHIEVERS

What are some common characteristics of vision achievers?

- Vision achievers know what their place is and what they are suppose to do (Pro. 27:8).
- Vision achievers know how to distinguish between fantasy and reality (Heb. 13:9).
- Vision achievers have the ability to focus (Mt. 6:24; 1 Cor. 15:58; Jam. 1:6-8). "You cannot be anything if you want to be everything." –Solomon Schechter
- Vision achievers have the ability to discipline themselves to stay on focus (Ps. 90:12). "Maturity is revealed by what I do with my free time." –Bill Gothard
- Vision achievers love the idea of a challenge.
- Vision achievers are constant learners. Henry Ford once said: "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life

is to keep your mind young.” They learn from study. They learn from observation. They learn from experience. They learn from correction (Heb. 12:5-11).

- Vision achievers are willing to sacrifice present comfort for long-term gain (I Cor. 9:24-25)
- Vision achievers are able to adapt and change. Those who embrace change are those who understand that they cannot anticipate everything from the beginning. Only God can do this (Is. 46:9-10).
- Vision achievers are able to stay relevant to the culture and the times.
- Vision achievers have trained their mouths to speak words of faith (Mark 11:23; Pro. 6:2; Rom. 10:8-13). You are snared by the words of your mouth; you are taken by the words of your mouth. Proverbs 6:2
- Vision achievers are able to make bold decisions (I Kgs. 18:21).
- Vision achievers are able to motivate others to join them in the work
- Vision achievers are willing to invest in people.
- Vision achievers draw strength from other vision achievers.
- Vision achievers turn obstacles into opportunities. “Both optimists and pessimists contribute to our society. The optimist invents the airplane and the pessimist the parachute.” –Gil Stern

Optimist	Pessimist
Sees the Silver Lining	Sees the Cloud
Sees the Donut	Sees the Holes
Glass is Half Full	Glass is Half Empty
Sees the Potential	Sees the Problems
Anticipates the Best	Believes the Worst
Expect Things to Succeed	Expect Things to Fail
Laughs to forget	Forgets to laugh
Says, “Good morning Lord!”	Says “Good Lord, its morning!”
Happy	Depressing
Healthy	Unhealthy

- Vision achievers have the patience to wait for the vision to be realized.
- Vision achievers have a sense of accountability to God and others.

What are some of the obstacles to vision that vision achievers overcome?

The Voice of Satan, Mental Doubts or Worry, Discouragement, Overwhelming Circumstances, Physical Weaknesses or Inadequacies, Lack of Financial Provision and Resources, Past Failure and Unforgiveness

The Opposition of Small Thinkers. Every environment has its share of small thinkers who are ready to burst every bubble of enthusiasm that vision can create.

Small Thinkers	Big Thinkers
See the problems	See the opportunities
See the cost	See the reward
See the work	See the harvest
Ask “Why?”	Ask “Why not?”

How does Paul model the characteristics of a vision achiever?