I CAN OPERATE IN SPIRITUAL GIFTS!

As a kid, one of the most magical events you experience is the day of your birthday party. All of your friends and family come together with their eyes focused on one thing: celebrating you! Streamers and balloons overwhelm the room. Cake and ice cream anticipate candles and consumption. Responsible adults willingly give you and your friends more sugary treats than your small frames can accommodate, as you joyously trample through your house, leaving an inevitable wake of fingerprints, smudge marks and messes of tropical storm caliber in every room you occupy. Birthday parties break all of the rules. Goodness gracious, blindfolded children are encouraged to wander with sharp implements that will likely pin something other than a tail on the donkey. Other children are handed baseball bats that, as “America’s Funniest Home Videos” has proven, hits a whole host of things other than a piñata! Birthday parties are messy. And somehow, your parents beam as they capture video footage of all the chaos.

And then, there are the presents — the best part of the birthday party for any kid. Those who know and love you spent diligent thought and heartfelt sacrifice to pick out just the perfect gift for you. That gift that matches your personality and your passions. That gift that you’ve been dreaming about for longer than you can remember. That gift that fills you with excitement.

When you came into the Kingdom of God, you experienced a spiritual birth, and all of heaven celebrated you! Your Daddy watches the chaos and the mess and has only beamed as he has watched you grow up in his Kingdom. At your spiritual birthday, he did something pretty incredible for you, too. The God who knows you and loves you spent diligent thought and heartfelt sacrifice to pick out just the right gifts for you. Gifts that match your personality and passions, and ones you might have even been dreaming for longer than you can remember.

But above and beyond what you imagined, the Holy Spirit makes all of his gifts available to you. Some of these reside within you while he releases others as needed at his leading. But they’re all yours. All you need to do is listen to his voice and follow him. Don’t leave any gifts wrapped in the package, waiting to be used. The party is in full swing all around you — join the celebration!

“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhort, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness” Romans 12:3-8 – Emphasis added.
“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills” 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (ESV) – Emphasis added.

“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” 1 Corinthians 14:1 (ESV) – Emphasis added.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:
1. Read the above passages on gifts of the Holy Spirit. Take a moment and tell God that you welcome all of his gifts and that you trust him to release them in your life as he wills! Tell him you will not limit what he can do through your life!
2. Some gifts seem to continually flow — like when someone walks as a teacher — they seem to “teach” in every situation they find themselves in. Are there any gifts on the list that you seem to walk in more naturally or regularly than others? What are they? Ask the Lord for deeper clarity about his gifts in your life!
3. All of the Holy Spirit’s gifts are available to us. Are there any gifts on the list you are “eagerly desiring” in your life right now? Which ones? Why? Ask God to activate them in you.

PRAYER:
Lord Jesus, I desire your spiritual gifts. I want your gifts to benefit others, at home, at work, at school, in my church and in my community. I receive all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to your plan. Help me to embrace them and to release them as you lead me. Every one of these gifts comes from you, so I refuse to be afraid or intimidated by any of them! Thank you for making them available and for the greatest gift of all, being your child. Lord, flow through me and be glorified in every part of my life!

LISTENING TIME:
Stop for a few minutes and ask the Lord what he wants to say to you. He might bring to mind a picture, a word, a song, an encouragement, a Scripture or an answer to a burden in your heart. Don’t rush or feel pressure to figure out the meaning of your impressions. Just invite him to speak and draw or write down what you sense. Afterward, ask God to help you discern and understand what he is saying to you. You might want to ask other trusted friends in the Kingdom for their input as well.

USE THE FOLLOWING SPACE TO RECORD WHAT GOD IS SAYING

(Additional note space in the back of the book).

TOOLS FOR FAMILY DEVOTIONS:
Read the lists of gifts in the Bible in Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and Ephesians 4:7-16. Share what new gifts you would like to operate through you. Pray together, eagerly desiring all of God’s gifts!

TOOLS FOR PRAYING FOR OTHERS:
Pray for your church to fully flow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit!