TOPIC: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The Bottom-Line Up Front:

- Spiritual gifts inventories can provide some insight into a person's gifting, but they give a limited picture.
- PWOC's Third Aim is *To Develop Women's Spiritual Gifts*. How do we do that? This training suggests a practical approach of trial-and-error within a learning environment.
- Acting as a "mirror" for others—telling them what you see, affirming their gifting, asking good questions—is an important role for leaders.
- Note that this is a slightly longer training (25-35 minutes).

Introduction (5-7 minutes):

- The three main passages in the Bible on spiritual gifts were all written by the Apostle Paul in the form of letters (epistles) to the believers in Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus. Note that these lists are not exhaustive. Argument can be made for other spiritual gifts that appear elsewhere in Scripture, such as Worship, Hospitality, Intercessory Prayer, etc.
    - **Romans 12:6-8**—Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Encouraging (Exhorting), Giving (Generosity), Leadership, Mercy (Compassion, Kindness)
    - **1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28**—Word of wisdom, Word of knowledge, Faith, Healing, Working of power (Miracles), Prophecy (Prophet), Discerning (Distinguishing) of spirits, Tongues, Interpretation of tongues, Apostle, Teacher (Teaching), Helps (Service, Assistance), Administration (Ruling/Leadership/Guidance/Managing)
    - **Ephesians 4:11—**Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor (Shepherd), Teacher
- Spiritual gifts inventories/assessments/tests are typically the focal point of a teaching on spiritual gifts. Consider that for a moment… Do you think any of the believers in Rome, Corinth or Ephesus took a spiritual gifts inventory? What do you suspect Paul would think about how we have used his writing on spiritual gifts? Perhaps he would be amused/baffled/intrigued?
- Our Third Aim in PWOC is: *To DEVELOP Women's Spiritual Gifts*. How do we do that? *Hold a 1-minute meeting with a person you are sitting near. Share your thoughts.*

1. **Discovering Gifts by Doing** (10 minutes):
   - **Note:** Though this training focuses on discovering and operating in our spiritual gifting, the concept of *obedience* should not be overlooked. Sometimes God will call us to tasks or positions which are not necessarily a good fit for our natural and spiritual gifts. When this is the case, our obedience to our Father, who knows us better than we know ourselves, is of utmost importance. It becomes an opportunity to see His strength in our weakness.
   - Spiritual gifts inventories can give us insight into our gifting, but *actually operating in our gifts* is far more informative and definitive than an online assessment. Learning how God has gifted us is a process of trial-and-error which requires a learning environment. As an individual, I learn the ways God tends to use me (to partner with me) and the ways He does not.
   - **When all three of these statements are true, spiritual gifting is likely present:**
     1) The person is good at something.
     2) The work is fulfilling and/or there's a sense of partnering with God even if the task is challenging.
     3) It positively impacts the Kingdom and draws others closer to God.
   - The leader must give her people room to explore. None of the above statements can be confirmed or discounted without ***doing***. We need to offer broad opportunities for our people to try things out, with plenty of room to fail, which is an important part of the process. We also need to give them "an out" from a current commitment to try something different.
     - What could this look like on the Board? On your Ministry Team? In the PWOC body? *Take about 5 minutes to discuss as a Board. You may want to write your answers on a whiteboard or chart paper.*

2. **Reflective Feedback—Being a "mirror"** (3 minutes):
   - Part of the process of finding our gifting (and ministry niche) is to accept feedback from others. Since we are part of the body of Christ, with all its members serving together, other members of the body have a say in our perceived gifting. I can declare all day long that I'm a teacher, but if the body does not perceive me as such, and if my teaching is not drawing them closer to the Lord, then I may be mistaken. This is all part of the trial-and-error process. The truth is I AM GIFTED, I just have to find out *how*.
     - **1 Peter 4:10** *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*
     - **1 Corinthians 12:7** *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

- Leaders need to provide this feedback to their people. Often, just "being a mirror"—reflecting back (calling out) the strengths you see in others is enough to help them find their place. We help each other refine our personal callings to find the best applications for our unique gifting. Let others do this for you as well. Be open to constructive criticism; we cannot see ourselves as clearly as we think we can.
- **Caution:** Resist the urge to compare giftings. Remember that each gift/set of gifts is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Comparing, downplaying, promoting or demeaning has no place; it is short-sighted and makes the assumption that one facet (manifestation) of the Holy Spirit is superior/inferior to another.

3. **Ask Good Questions** (10-15 minutes):
   - Asking good questions is a fabulous, but greatly underused tool for helping people discover their gifting. Good questions can help our women "connect the dots" of what God is already doing in their lives. The temptation is to *tell what you know* or to advise, which comes very naturally to most of us. It can be far more powerful *to draw the answer out* of the other person; that way they are part of the discovery process and have a vested interest—much like a child discovering and digging out a seashell from the sand for herself rather than being handed one by a parent.
   - **Note:** Questions like the ones below can be used for anyone who is trying to discover their spiritual gifts. A conversation like this can happen in a natural, unscripted way.
   - **Directions:** *Work with a partner. You will have about 5-7 minutes each. One person asks questions (P1) and the other answers (P2). If it's your turn to ask questions, ONLY ASK QUESTIONS—avoid slipping into giving advice or sharing your own experience.*
     - *Face each other, make good eye contact. Be compassionate listeners for one another. Trust the Spirit of God to do His good work.*
     - *P1 will go down the list and ask all 7 questions (one at a time). If at any point P2 gets stuck, P1 should try asking the same question in a different way.*
     - *P1 can also ask clarifying questions to draw out more information.*
     - *When all 7 questions have been asked and answered, switch roles.*

       1) What is the most rewarding thing you've ever done in ministry/PWOC/church?
       2) How did you feel when you were part of that? *(wait for answer)* How else did you feel?
       3) What was the response of others that you worked with?
       4) What's another activity you've been part of that's related to the one you shared?
       5) What was that experience like for you? How did you feel?
       6) What strengths do you bring to activities like the ones you mentioned?
       7) What do you sense God is calling you to do next?
   - **Debrief:** What was that experience like for you? Which role was easier? Did you have any "aha moments"? *If time allows. Discuss these questions as a Board.*