

“Understanding Spiritual Gifts” I Corinthians 12:1-7

Introduction:

We pray this brief study of spiritual gifts will help you understand what gifts God has given you and how best you can utilize them in serving in the local church.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-7 (NKJV)

¹ *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:*

² *You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.*

³ *Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.*

⁴ *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

⁵ *There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.*

⁶ *And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.*

⁷ *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

I. The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--*

¹⁶ *from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

There are several purposes for spiritual gifts

When you were saved, God saved you of course to give you eternal life, but He also saved you to enjoy serving Him on earth as you use your gift to serve other people and edify the body the Christ!

A. Realize Who You Are In Christ

If people really understood who they are in Christ it makes the Christian journey make sense.

B. Realize Who Christ Is In You

Spiritual gifts are expression of Christ living in you.

C. Recognize Your Value To The Body of Christ

There is unity in the body of Christ but there is also diversity

Every member of the body of Christ has value to the body life of the church when they discover who they are in Christ, and who Christ is in them!

D. Serve The Body of Christ Through Your Spiritual Gift

Serving is joy when you serve from your gift and not from guilt!

II. The Principle of Spiritual Gifts

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

A. What Are Spiritual Gifts?

Drives, opportunities, and results given by the Holy Spirit to achieve God's Supernatural goals

As we are born in the family of God we take on a debt of love!

God gives spiritual gifts so that we are able to pay our debt of love

Spiritual gifts are abilities given by the Spirit so that we can operate in love to fulfill the will of God!

There is difference in a spiritual gift and a talent

Talent- is a natural giftedness

Gift- is a supernatural giftedness

Illustration: Let's say that a preacher has the motivational gifts of prophecy which is to proclaim truth or preaching!

When the preacher was in school, and before he was saved, he was so shy about standing in front of the class that when required to present an oral book report, he would rather receive an "F" than have to stand in front of the class and speak.

When the preacher got saved, however, God supernaturally gifted me by Divine appointment with the gift of Prophecy to proclaim truth!

B. Who Is Given A Spiritual Gift?

Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift.

It is activated at Salvation when the Holy Spirit unites with our spirit.

Romans 8:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

When are born physically, we possess certain natural abilities. When we are born again spiritually, God takes these natural abilities and turns them into means by which He can work through us supernaturally!

Ephesians 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ *Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."*

Ephesians 4:12-13 (NKJV)

¹² *for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*

¹³ *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;*

C. How Many Gifts Does Each Christian Have?

There are 3 types of gifts

Motivational

Ministry

Manifestation

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (NKJV)

⁴ *There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

⁵ *There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.*

⁶ *And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.*

⁷ *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

We have one motivational gift and the possibility of many ministry and manifestation gifts.

Motivational gifts- Greek word for gifts is "charisma" which means joy Charis is the greek word for Grace.

Grace is a God given desire and power to do His will

Manifestation gifts- the Greek word for operations is *energias* which means energy

As God gives power through our motivational gift the effects produced by it are the operation or the manifestation of the Spirit.

Ministry gifts- Each Christian may also have several ministry gifts given by the local church.

1 Corinthians 12:28-31 (NKJV)

²⁸ *And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.*

²⁹ *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?*

³⁰ *Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?*

³¹ *But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.*

Notice he says to desire or covet the best gifts those that are helpful to strengthen the believers

D. Why Do We Receive Only ONE Motivational Gift?

So we can concentrate on it!!

Romans 12:6-8 (NKJV)

⁶ *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;*

⁷ *or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;*

⁸ *he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

So we can see our need for each other!!

Romans 12:3-5 (NKJV)

³ *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.*

⁴ *For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,*

⁵ *so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

The ear is designed to carry out a different function than the eye, and the hand a different function than the foot.

Gifts are distributed so that no Christians will think of himself more highly than he should.

If one Christian had several motivational gifts, he would be self sufficient and would not need other church members.

E. How Do We Discover Our Motivational Gift?

Accept Christ as Savior

Have victory over sin

Concentrate on the needs of others

Discern your real motive for helping others

Identify what Christians do that irritate you

Understand the categories of gifts

Distinguish the characteristics and Misuses

III. The Categories of Spiritual Gifts

A. Motivational Gifts

Romans 12:3-9 (NKJV)

³ 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.

⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

⁶ 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;

⁷ or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;

⁸ he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

What The Motivational Gifts Are

1. Prophecy

2. Serving

3. Teaching

4. Exhorting

5. Giving

6. Organizing

7. Mercy

How The Gifts Are Used Today

Prophecy-To proclaim Truth and Expose Sin

In The OT, Prophets predicted the judgment for the sins of God's people.

The motivation of a prophet is to use the scripture to reveal unrighteous motives and actions

Serving- meets needs for others

The mature motivation of a server is to minister to Christ by meeting the needs of others

Teaching- clarify truth and validate Spiritual Information

The motivation of a teacher is to make sure that the facts are accurate so that, decisions based on them, can also be correct

Exhorting- stimulate faith and promote growth

The motivation of an exhorter is to see Christians grow in faith and maturity so that unbelievers will be attracted to the Gospel by their lives

Giving- Entrust assets and maximize results

The motivation of a giver is to make wise investments in order to advance the work of the Lord. He/she is very alert to how the funds are used. In order to have more funds available, the giver is frugal with personal spending. Givers who do not have assets are motivated to find other sources where funds or resources can be obtained.

Organizing- plan ahead, complete task

The motivation of an organizer is to coordinate the efforts and the resources of many to achieve agreed upon goals. Organizer is able to visualize the final objective and know how and when to delegate tasks.

Mercy- remove stress and share burdens

The motivation of mercy is to mentally and emotionally relate to feelings of those around him. Mercy will concentrate on empathy and comfort in times of distress.

B. Ministry Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:28 (NKJV)

28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

- ***Apostles- sent forth, missionaries***

In the NT days < The Apostles referred to the 12 disciples.

The Greek word means – “sent forth”

Paul was sent forth as an apostle

The latin word is missionary

- ***Prophets- proclaimers, confront Christians***

A pastor who proclaims God’s truth in the pulpit

- ***Teachers- instructors that certify the message***

Ministry of a pastor can also be a teacher.

- ***Miracles-supernatural deed, active faith***

This ministry gift grows out of believing prayer.

As we exercise faith in prayer, God is able to accomplish His timing

- ***Healings- Spiritual, mental, physical restorer***

Healing was a part of Christ’s earthly ministry

So it should continue to be an outreach of the church

Medical clinics, medical missions should serve the community.

Church should bring healing to the soul and the spirit of people

- ***Helps- assist the leadership and aid the needy***

Taking care of the fatherless, the widow and the poor

- ***Governments- overseers, guide the local church***

Those in official capacities who guide the local church.

Organization would be in this category

- ***Tongues-various languages, must be tested***

C. Manifestation Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NKJV)

⁷ *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

⁸ *for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,*

⁹ *to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,*

¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Word of Wisdom- the ability to see things from God's Perspective

Word of Knowledge- the ability to comprehend Christ and His Word

Faith- visualizing and hearing God from the Word as to what God wants to accomplish

Healings- removing diseases from the spirit, soul and body

Miracles- expression of prayer

Prophecy- bringing light to secret motives of the heart

Discerning Spirit-recognizing what is of God and what is of the world, flesh and devil

Various tongues- Holy Spirit energizes the tongue to edify believers

IV. The Gift of Prophecy

Romans 12:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

Love without hypocrisy- easy to love those who don't agree with you

What principle does the prophet most need to exercise? Clear conscience

It will allow the prophet the speak truth boldly with love.

Biblical Example- Peter

CHARACTERISTICS

1. Need to express themselves

2. Quick impression of people

3. Alertness to dishonesty

4. Desire for justice

5. Open about their own fault

6. Wholehearted involvement

7. Loyal to truth vs. people

8. Willingness to suffer for right

9. Persuasive in defining truth

MISUSES

Exposing without restoring

Jump to conclusions

Reacting harshly to sinners

Being unforgiving

Condemning themselves

Very impulsive

Cutting off people who fail

Lacking tactfulness in rebuke

Dwelling on the negative

V. The Gift of Serving

Biblical Example- Timothy

CHARACTERISTICS

- 1. Sees and meets practical needs*
- 2. Free others to achieve*
- 3. Disregard for weariness*
- 4. Difficulty in saying no*
- 5. Alertness to likes and dislikes*
- 6. Need of approval*
- 7. Likes short range projects*
- 8. Puts extra touches to jobs*
- 9. Meets needs quickly*

MISUSES

- Giving unrequested help*
- Letting things be too important*
- Working beyond physical limits*
- Neglecting God-given priorities*
- Reacting to overlooked needs*
- Resenting lack of appreciation*
- Working people around their schedule*
- Being frustrated with time limits*
- Interfering with God's discipline*

VI. The Gift of Teaching

Biblical Example- Luke

CHARACTERISTICS

- 1. Need to validate Information*
- 2. Will check out teachers*
- 3. Rely on established resources*
- 4. Present truth systematically*
- 5. Gather many facts*
- 6. Require Thoroughness*
- 7. Uneasy with subjective Truth*
- 8. Remains loyal to accepted teachers*
- 9. Clarify misunderstandings*

MISUSES

- Becoming proud of knowledge*
- Despising lack of credentials*
- Depending on human reasonings*
- Criticizing practical application*
- Showing research skills*
- Rejecting scriptural presuppositions*
- Putting mind above the Holy Spirit*
- Taking teachers to extreme*
- Arguing over minor points*

VII. The Gift of Exhortation

Biblical example: Paul

CHARACTERISTICS

- 1. Committed to Spiritual Growth*
- 2. Able to see root problems*
- 3. See steps of Action*
- 4. Raise hope for solutions*
- 5. Turns problems into benefits*
- 6. Desire to be Transparent*
- 7. Gain Insight through experience*
- 8. Urgency to act on clear steps*
- 9. Desire to share face to face*

MISUSES

- Keep others waiting for them*
- Looking to themselves for solutions*
- Being proud of visible results*
- Starting projects prematurely*
- Treating people as projects*
- Sharing private illustrations*
- Presenting truth out of balance*
- Setting unrealistic goals*
- Giving up on uncooperative people*

VIII. The Gift of Giving

Biblical Example- Matthew

CHARACTERISTICS

- 1. Able To See Resources*
- 2. Invest Self with Gift*
- 4. Hopes gift answers prayer*
- 5. Desire to give secretly*
- 6. Concern that giving will corrupt*
- 7. Exercise personal thriftiness*
- 8. Use gifts to multiply giving*
- 9. Confirm amount with counsel*

MISUSES

- Hoarding resources for self*
- Using gifts to control people*
- Feels guilty about personal assets*
- Rejecting pressure appeals*
- Giving too sparingly to family*
- Giving to a project vs. people*
- Causes people to look to him vs. God*
- Waiting too long to give*

VIX. The Gift of Organizing

Biblical Example: Nehemiah

CHARACTERISTICS

1. Able to visualize final results
2. Needs loyalty in associates
3. Ability to delegate
4. Withstand reaction to task
5. Makes job look easy
6. Very alert to details
7. Complete task quickly
8. Able to be decisive
9. Completion involves clean up

MISUSES

- Viewing people as only resources*
- Building loyalty with favoritism*
- Uses delegation to avoid work*
- Unresponsive to appeals*
- Projects ahead of people*
- Overlooking workers serious faults*
- Failing to explain or praise*
- Forcing decisions on others*
- Losing interest in finished job*

X. The Gift of Mercy

Biblical Example: John

CHARACTERISTICS

1. Deeply loyal to friends
2. Need for deep friendship
3. Empathize with hurting people
4. Decisions based on beliefs
5. Deeply sensitive to loved ones
6. Attract people in distress
7. Desire to remove hurts
8. Measure acceptance by closeness
9. Attracted to Prophets

MISUSES

- Taking up offenses*
- Becoming possessive*
- Tolerating evil*
- Failing to be firm*
- Leaning on emotions vs. reason*
- Defrauding opposite sex*
- Reacting to God's purposes*
- Failing to show deference*
- Cutting off sensitive people*