

# DOCTRINE MATTERS: ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

## Message 26: Spiritual Gifts, Pt 1: An Introduction

### Definition of Spiritual Gifts:

*"Spiritual gifts, to put it as simply as I know how, are the more or less concrete and tangible ways in which the Holy Spirit manifests his presence in and through the individual members of the church."*

- Sam Storms

### 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is **the same God who empowers them all in everyone**. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit **for the common good**. <sup>8</sup> For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> **All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.**

### 1 Corinthians 14:26 (ESV)

<sup>26</sup> What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. **Let all things be done for building up.**

## The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

### 1. For the "\_\_\_\_\_"

#### 1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

#### 1 Corinthians 14:12,26 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

<sup>26</sup> What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

### 2. To \_\_\_\_\_ to carry out its ministry until Christ returns

#### 1 Corinthians 1:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> ... so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

#### 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

### 3. To give a foretaste of \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1 Corinthians 1:4-7 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— <sup>6</sup> even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— <sup>7</sup> so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

### 4. God's \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1 Peter 4:11 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup> ... whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

## How many gifts are there?

What is clear: At least 6 gift lists can be found in the New Testament. No two lists are identical; thus, they are *representative*, not *exhaustive*.

- For, no list is the same: 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 8-10, 28; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11.
- For, not all the gifts are included in the various lists: for example, marriage and celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7).
- For, there is a great variety of gifts, ministries and workings which manifest the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-7).
- Therefore, it is not helpful to try to discern spiritual gifts from inventories of lists.

### 1 Corinthians 12:28

1. apostle
2. prophet
3. teacher
4. miracles
5. kinds of healing
6. helps
7. administration
8. tongues

### 1 Corinthians 12:8-10

9. word of wisdom
10. word of knowledge
11. faith
- (5) gifts of healing
- (4) miracles
- (2) prophecy
12. distinguishing between spirits
- (8) tongues
13. interpretation of tongues

### Ephesians 4:11

- (1) apostle
- (2) prophet
14. Evangelist
15. pastor-teacher

### Romans 12:6-8

- (2) prophecy
16. serving
- (3) teaching
17. encouraging
18. contributing
19. leadership
20. mercy

### 1 Corinthians 7:7

21. marriage
22. Celibacy

### 1 Peter 4:11

- whoever speaks (covering several gifts)
- whoever renders service (covering several gifts)

**The order of the lists varies, so we cannot conclude anything as to importance of one gift over another.**

Except that Paul is deliberately downplaying the more spectacular gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

**Some gifts may be temporary (1 Cor. 12:7, 11).**

Because the Spirit gifts individuals as He wills, we have to be open to the reality that He may gift individuals for particular needs of the body (i.e., Exodus 31:1-11).

**No one person possesses all the gifts; we all have differing gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-11, 30)!**

It is not wrong to desire a gift, but we should long for those that build up the body most (12:30; 14:1).

BUT, the Spirit gives gift(s), ministries, activities as He desires, not as we want (12:11b)!

**Paul has broadened the understanding of gifts to include the ordinary with extra-ordinary.**

Paul has demolished the idea that the Spirit is manifested only in the spectacular gifts (12:4-6).

All the gifts (ordinary and extra-ordinary) are given and empowered by the Spirit (12:11).

**Gifts are given in varying measure and have varying strength. (Rom 12:6, 1 Cor 12:4-11, 1 Tim 4:14, 2 Tim 1:6)**

This removes all pride because our gifts are at God's discretion. It also wars against laziness, as we must use/develop the gifts God has given us.

## How do I discover my spiritual gift(s)?

*A better question:*

*Why this is important:*

We tend to get hung up on particular gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul broadens the categories of gifts under the umbrella the manifestation of the Spirit and argues that we manifest the Spirit when we serve one another in faith and in love (1 Corinthians 12:7; 13:1-3). Therefore, let us serve one another in faith and in love. **How?**

**1. First, find out \_\_\_\_\_.**

What are the biblical needs of any body? There are, of course, word ministry needs (preaching, teaching, etc. – Ephesians 4:11). There are also serving needs: widows, orphans, elderly, parents, children, single mothers, etc. (1 Peter 4:10-11). Ask the leadership of your church to find out what specific needs exist.

**2. Once you see and begin to understand the needs of the body, \_\_\_\_\_!**

Pray for the particular needs of the body (Ask the leadership how you can join them in praying for the needs of the body). Pray that the Lord of the harvest would raise up laborers. Pray that the leadership of the body would have wisdom in guiding these ministries. Then, ASK the Lord if He is calling you to serve in one of those areas.

**3. Ask yourself, “\_\_\_\_\_?”**

Why do we think that doing the Lord’s will has to be miserable? If the Spirit has gifted us, and if we are growing in grace, then we will enjoy serving the Lord and the body with these particular gifts. However, there may be areas of need that you may not be thrilled about (i.e., nursery) but that are important needs. The Lord may also have equipped you with certain capacities (i.e., accounting) that would serve the body well but which you may be reluctant to use because that is what you do all day, every day. Serve the body! Normally, it will be a delight!

**4. \_\_\_\_\_ – from elders (leaders), mentors, small group leaders, etc.**

Mature Christians with whom you spend much time will be observing you and caring for you. They will be a valuable asset in either confirming or denying whether or not you have particular gifts in certain areas. Listen to them wisely.

**5. \_\_\_\_\_! Don’t just sit there, do something!**

Each of us is gifted for the common good; therefore, let us use our gifts (1 Peter 4:10-11). We don’t have to wait until we have discovered our gifts to serve. Serve the church! As you are serving, you may even discover that you really enjoy it; the leaders in your church may confirm what they see; and you will have discovered one of the areas where the Spirit has equipped you to build up the body in love. Imagine that! You discovered your gift(s) while serving. Don’t just sit there, do something! May the Lord deliver us from consumerism!