

SPIRIT AS GIFT GIVER

Conversations on the Holy Spirit

The art of *meaningful* GIFT-GIVING is complex because it requires a level of **thoughtfulness** and **attentiveness** in order to ensure that the GIFT is meaningful - ***What makes a Gift meaningful?*** It must be...

1. **CONSIDERATE** - the gift fit them - personality, likes, wiring
2. **COMES AT THE RIGHT TIME** - It was what they needed at the time when they needed it [Visit, some money]
3. **CASCADES TO OTHERS** - There is nothing like a gift that blesses even more than the gift-recipient

Today, I want to explore with you **THE HOLY SPIRIT AS GIFT-GIVER**. Now, in the interest of full-disclosure, we are a Pentecostal Church: our roots are in the **Protestants, Evangelical, and Pentecostal** movements.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 -- "*Now about the **gifts of the Spirit**...*

[Now the phrase "*spiritual gifts*" or "*gifts of the spirit*" doesn't actually appear in the original text - it is in our English translations but it **doesn't occur in the text the Apostles wrote**. In some of your translations, they will put the word "**GIFTS**" in *italics* so that the reader can know **that that word was not in the original text**. It's been added in English to help us make sense of the text. Literally, what Paul says here is - "**NOW ABOUT SPIRITUALS**" or "**SPIRITUAL THINGS**" - Paul is saying, "**Now about things that the Spirit does...or the activities of the Spirit**"

Now the reason Paul says it this way is to help us avoid the thought that these "**Gifts of the Spirit**" are somehow like our **Christian SUPER-POWER**. It's less about possessing a GIFT and more about **BEING READY TO BE USED** by the Spirit in community. This is the activity of the Spirit!

"Now about the **gifts of the Spirit**...brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be **uninformed**. "I want you to be informed and knowledgeable" "not ignorant" WHY? Because this is important and beneficial.

Then Paul acknowledges the world that they live in...

2 You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute **idols**. **3** Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," **except by the Holy Spirit**.

[What Paul is saying is that there are lots of spiritual powers and people in touch with spiritual powers that are real and can influence you **BUT** we are the community where you can know when genuine, life-giving power is at work because when the Spirit is at work...clearly Jesus will be at the centre of it all...everything will lead us and **edify us into Jesus**.]

4 There are **different kinds** of gifts..." [In verse **4** he uses: the Greek Word "*Charisma*" - meaning a **divine GRACE or EMPOWERMENT**.], but the **same Spirit** distributes them. **5** There are **different kinds** of service, but the **same Lord**. **6** There are **different kinds** of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the **same God** at work.

Now, Paul does this often when he is writing about the "Gifts of the Spirit" - notice how he stresses **our UNITY** by reminding us that it all comes from the "**SAME - Spirit, God, Lord**"? And at the same time, he highlights our **DIVERSITY** by emphasizing the fact that we all have "**DIFFERENT KINDS of gifts, service and work**."

Paul starts out by stressing the **UNITY OF THE BODY** [provides the foundation] **and the DIVERSITY of the body** [without this groups of people can become polarized].

Paul is saying...before we learn anything about our **DIVERSITY** - or the differing gifts that Spirit gives - we need to **focus on our UNITY**.

Paul is showing us that fundamentally **everyone's salvation is the same**. **Every Christian becomes a Christian the same way**. My salvation is no different than yours - it's no less **powerful**, it's no less **miraculous**, it's **no less amazing**.

7 Now to each one [**Every Christian** receives spiritual gifts] *the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the **common good***.

COMMON GOOD: *edify, build-up, liberate others for the good of the community.* So a spiritual gift is an ability that comes to you freely (“gift”) for the purpose of ministering to needs (“service”) for the “common good”

8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of **wisdom**, to another a message of **knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, **9** to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another **gifts of healing** by that one Spirit, **10** to another **miraculous powers**, to another **prophecy**, to another **distinguishing between spirits**, to another **speaking in different kinds of tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**. **11** All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

The bottom line is that every Christian is in ministry. No one is merely a consumer of services; everyone is a distributor.

Now, there are a few lists of GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT in the Bible - and in our community groups Dr. Van is going to unpack them in greater detail. [3-4 lists of gifts] And they differ greatly from the FRUIT of the SPIRIT in that the **ALL-OF-THE-FRUIT** is available for every believer - the **GIFTS-OF-THE-SPIRIT** are given to every Christian as the Spirit determines. One author described the gifts as being in these three categories:

- PROPHETIC GIFTS
- PRIESTLY GIFTS
- KINGLY GIFTS

The prophetic gifts [or TALKING gifts] - these are abilities based on understanding and articulating truth - they would be gifts like:

- EXHORTATION
- TEACHING
- PROPHECY
- PASTORING
- EVANGELISM
- DISCERNMENT
- KNOWLEDGE
- MISSIONARY/APOSTOLIC

- TONGUES / INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

Priestly Gifts - [Serving Gifts] - these are abilities based on understanding and supplying basic needs.

- GIVING
- SERVICE
- HELPS
- MERCY
- HOSPITALITY
- HEALING
- MIRACLES

Kingly Gifts - [Serving Gifts] - these are abilities based on understanding direction and group needs.

- LEADERSHIP
- ADMINISTRATION
- WISDOM
- FAITH

Can you imagine if we found ourselves out of balance as a community of believers? All in the “*Talking Gifts*” not the “*Leading Gifts*” of all in the “*Leading Gifts*” and none in the “*Serving Gifts*”?

Now there are three ways we should understand these gifts:

#1. Recognize how CONSIDERATE the GIFT-GIVER IS - the Spirit distributes these gifts in line with our wiring, personality and abilities.

How do you discover what your spiritual gifts are? Ask yourself...

A. AFFINITY - **What people needs do I resonate to?** Don't start with yourself...what are you drawn to? What burdens you? Look at the concrete needs in our city, in our church - what needs reverberate in you?

B.. ABILITY - **What are my gifts and abilities? What am I good at? What do people say I am effective in?**

C.. OPPORTUNITY - **What doors for service are open? What needs to be done?**

#2. Recognize how APPROPRIATE the GIFT-GIVER is - the Spirit uses people who are open at the appropriate time.

The GIFTS are given with an expressed purpose in mind: **Ephesians 4:12** - *“For the **perfecting of the saints**, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ.”* [KJV]

That is what Paul is saying is suppose to be happening. We are sitting with people in church who are dislocated:

- **Spiritually** - out of alignment with God or with community
- **Physically** - in pain
- **Emotionally** - disconnected

We are ALL out of alignment...dislocated. And what God wants is every part of the Body to get in alignment for the WORK OF MINISTRY. Every part of the BODY has a function or a ministry.

The gifts of the Spirit are abilities given to **LIBERATE PEOPLE**, to **MINISTER TO PEOPLE**, to **GIVE OURSELVES TO PEOPLE**. Well...we need to be in proximity to people in order to able to deliver “perfecting ministry.”

#3. Recognize how BENEFICIAL the GIFTS are to OTHERS - Recognize the **GIFTS** are more like a **GIFT-CARD** and less like a **KEEPSAKE**. **The gifts are meant to be spent on others.** So when we serve - we serve others for their sake not ours. When we prophecy, we are focussed on edifying others not being noticed.

Matthew 7:22-23 - *“I can see it now — at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying, ‘Master, we **preached** the Message, we **bashed the demons**, our **God-sponsored projects** had everyone talking.’ And do you know what I am going to say? ‘You missed the boat. **All you did was use me to make yourselves important.** You don’t impress me one bit. You’re out of here.’”* - The Message

See - the caution Jesus is describing - is that **you could look at your effectiveness as evidence that God is with you.** The development of the **FRUIT of the Spirit** allows us to let the **GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT** to benefit others and not ourselves.

One of the key indicators of whether or not the **FRUIT** or the **GIFTS** come first is how people respond when they are corrected when using the Gifts of the Spirit - is there a humility about them? Can they be corrected?

You see the danger is that or **GIFTS actually MASK our lack of spirituality.**

You see...no one has all of the gifts...we need GRACE to help us to allow others to lead in areas, serve in areas...

