

A Teaching Outline

Our Gifts Are For

Encouragement

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Spiritual gifts come from the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

However we go on to think of them in terms either of giftedness (human ability to do things skillfully and well) or of supernatural novelty (power to speak in tongues, to heal, to receive messages straight from God to give to others, or whatever).

We need to form the habit of defining gifts in terms of Christ, the head of the body, and his present work from heaven in our midst. In this we are unscriptural.

1 Cor. 12:4-11

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. [5] And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

[6] And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. [7] But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

[8] For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

[9] To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

[10] To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: [11] But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Paul makes it clear that spiritual gifts are given in Christ; they are enrichments from Christ. 1 Corinthians 12 assumes the Christ-oriented perspective that 1 Corinthians 1:4-7 established. It is vital that we should see this, or we shall be confusing natural with spiritual gifts to the end of our days.

Nowhere does Paul or any other New Testament writer define a spiritual gift to us. But Paul's assertion that the use of gifts edifies (1 Cor. 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26; Eph. 4:12), shows what his idea of gift was.

For Paul it is only through Christ, in Christ, and by learning of and responding to Christ, that anyone is ever edified.

So spiritual gifts must be defined in terms of Christ as actualized powers of expressing, celebrating, displaying, and thus communicating Christ in one way or another, either by word or deed.

Our gifts are without repentance.

Romans 11:29

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

In this passage Paul shows how the Jews and the Gentiles benefit each other. Whenever God shows mercy to one group, the other shares the blessing. In God's original plan, the Jews would be the source of God's blessing to the Gentiles.

When the Jews neglected this mission, God blessed the Gentiles anyway through the Jewish Messiah. He still maintained his love for the Jews because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The privileges and invitation of God given to Israel will never be withdrawn. But someday all faithful Jews will share in God's mercy. God's plans will not be thwarted: He will "have mercy on everyone."

Gifts are different, but God's spirit is the same.

1 Corinthians 12:4

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

Illustration:

Several years ago, two students graduated from the Chicago-Kent College of Law. The highest ranking student in the class was a blind man named Overton and, when he received his honor, he insisted that half the credit should go to his friend, Kasprzyak.

They had met one another in school when the armless Mr. Kasprzyak had guided the blind Mr. Overton down a flight of stairs. This acquaintance ripened into friendship and a beautiful example of interdependence.

The blind man carried the books which the armless man read aloud in their common study, and thus the individual deficiency of each was compensated for by the other. After their graduation, they planned to practice law together.

Gary Inrig, [Life in His Body](#).

Understand spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:1

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

The spiritual gifts given to each person by the Holy Spirit are special abilities that are to be used to minister to the needs of the body of believers.

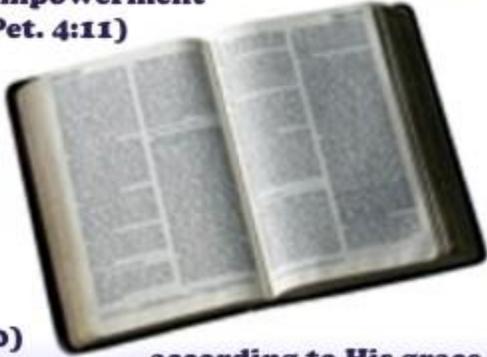
This chapter is not an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts (see Romans 12; Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 4:10, 11).

There are many gifts; people have different gifts; some people have more than one gift, and one gift is not superior to another. All spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit, and their purpose is to build up Christ's body, the church.

Instead of building up and unifying the Corinthian church, the issue of spiritual gifts was splitting it.

Spiritual gifts had become symbols of spiritual power, causing rivalries. Some people thought they were more "spiritual" than others because of their gifts. This was a terrible misuse of spiritual gifts because their purpose is always to help the church function more effectively, not to divide it.

We can be divisive if we insist on using our gifts our own way without being sensitive to others. We must never use our gifts as a means of manipulating others or serving our own self-interests.



Spiritual Gifts
according to the Bible --

bestowed on each believer
(1 Cor. 12:7, 18; 1 Pet. 4:10)

a special divine empowerment
(1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 Pet. 4:11)

to be used within
the context of the
Body of Christ
(1 Cor. 12:7;
Eph. 4:12; 1 Pet. 4:10)

by the Holy Spirit
(1 Cor. 12:7-9, 11)

to accomplish a given
ministry God's way
(1 Cor. 12:4-6)

according to His grace
and discernment
(Rom. 12:3-6; 1 Pet. 4:10)

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God sees the gifts cast into the treasury.

Luke 21:1

And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

When we consider ourselves generous in giving a percentage of our income to the Lord, we resemble those who gave "a tiny part of their surplus." Here, Jesus admired the woman's generous and sacrificial giving.

Illustration:

The American industrialist, Henry Ford, was once asked to donate money for the construction of a new medical facility. The billionaire pledged to donate \$5,000. The next day in the newspaper, the headline read, "Henry Ford contributes \$50,000 to the local hospital." The irate Ford was on the phone immediately to complain to the fund-raiser that he had been misunderstood.

The fund-raiser replied that they would print a retraction in the paper the following day to read, "Henry Ford reduces his donation by \$45,000."

Realizing the poor publicity that would result, the industrialist agreed to the \$50,000 contribution in return for the following: That above the entrance to the hospital was to be carved the biblical inscription: "I came among you and you took me in."

Bits & Pieces, March 3, 1994, pp. 1-2.

All people do not have the same gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:30

Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

The most helpful gifts are those that are beneficial to the body of Christ.

Paul has already made it clear that one gift is not superior to another, but he urges the believers to discover how they can serve Christ's body with the gifts God has given them.

Your spiritual gifts are not for your own self-advancement. They were given to you for serving God and enhancing the spiritual growth of the body of believers.

Covet the best gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:31

But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

The great violinist, Nicolo Paganini, willed his marvelous violin to Genoa -- the city of his birth -- but only on condition that the instrument never be played upon. It was an unfortunate condition, for it is a peculiarity of wood that as long as it is used and handled, it shows little wear. As soon as it is discarded, it begins to decay.

The exquisite, mellow-toned violin has become worm-eaten in its beautiful case, valueless except as a relic. The moldering instrument is a reminder that a life withdrawn from all service to others loses its meaning.

Bits & Pieces, June 25, 1992.

Desire spiritual gifts that you may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:1

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

The ability to prophesy may involve predicting future events, but its main purpose is to communicate God's message to people, providing insight, warning, correction, and encouragement.

Gifts differ according to the grace that is given us.

Romans 12:6

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Seek to edify the church through your gifts.

1 Corinthians 14:12

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

God gave gifts to men.

Ephesians 4:8

Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

God bears miracles according to his own will.

Hebrews 2:4

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Definitions from Dr. Earl Radmacher and Gordon McMinn Teaching gifts.

Prophecy:

Setting before people the Word and wisdom of God persuasively.

Encouragement:

Drawing alongside to comfort, encourage, rebuke, and lead someone into insight toward action.

Teaching:

Laying down in a systematic order the complete truth of a doctrine and applying it incisively to life.

The message of wisdom:

Locating formerly unknown principles as well as combining known principles of God's Word and communicating them to fresh situations.

The message of knowledge:

Arranging the facts of Scripture, categorizing these into principles, and communicating them to repeated or familiar situations.

Service Gifts.

Contributing:

Giving most liberally and beyond all human expectation. Mercy: Being sensitive or empathetic to people who are in affliction or misery and lifting internal burdens with cheerfulness.

Illustration:

A mother wanted to teach her daughter a moral lesson. She gave the little girl a quarter and a dollar for church "Put whichever one you want in the collection plate and keep the other for yourself," she told the girl. When they were coming out of church, the mother asked her daughter which amount she had given. "Well," said the little girl, "I was going to give the dollar, but just before the collection the man in the pulpit said that we should all be cheerful givers. I knew I'd be a lot more cheerful if I gave the quarter, so I did."

Bits & Pieces, February 4, 1993, p. 23.

Helps:

Seeing tasks and doing them for or with someone in order to lift external burdens.

Distinguishing spirits:

Detecting a genuine or spurious motive by distinguishing the spirit-source behind any person's speech or act.

Evangelism:

Communicating the gospel with power and persuasiveness as well as equipping the saints for evangelism.

Leadership Gifts.

Leadership

Inspiring Christian followers by leading them aggressively but with care.

Administration

Legislative ability:

Collecting data, set policy, and develop plans which will guide a course of action with wisdom.

Faith:

Seeing through any problem to the Ultimate Resource.

All the gift given by the Holy Spirit to edify the body of Christ are still for today, but if so, one thing is clear: they are given sovereignly by the Spirit for specific purposes and are the exception, not the rule. (According to Pastor Harold Bollinger)

Today in the Word, July, 1990, p. 19.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

New American Standard Bible

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print



