



How May I Serve You?

1 Peter 4:10-11

¹⁰ As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹ Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.



Here is the BIG IDEA in this lesson:

Our love not only displays our faith, it defends it.

Introduction:

Do you know what your spiritual gift is? Are you using it to serve the body of Christ? **The doctrine of Spiritual Gifts** is one of the fundamental teachings of *ecclesiology*, or *the study of the church*. It is also inextricably connected to *the doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. The study and understanding of Spiritual Gifts is *vitaly important* and *equally dangerous*, because at the heart of this issue are *the purposes and work of God*. And whenever God's purposes are at work, Satan's forces are there to hinder it.

Satan seeks to counterfeit the Spirit's gifts so that believers *ignore, neglect, misunderstand, abuse, or even pervert* them. Without a clear understanding and application of this teaching, the church and individual believers short-circuit one of the greatest means of grace and growth in the knowledge of God (*2 Pet.3:18*).

As disciples, we need to know what the Bible teaches about spiritual gifts and their benefit in our lives and in the church. Let's consider a general teaching about this important subject. What do we need to know about this issue of spiritual gifts?



Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

- A. According to 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, who is the source of spiritual gifts? (Cf. 1 Pet.4:10; 1 Cor.12:11)
- B. According to Ephesians 4:7-8, what are spiritual gifts the result of? (Cf. 1 Cor.1:4-7)
- Here we find the Apostle Paul telling the Corinthians that the grace of God was given to them in Christ Jesus at salvation; as a result, they were not lacking in any gift. The word "gift" (Cf. 1 Pet.4:10) comes from the Greek word "charisma." "Charis" means *grace* and the suffix, "ma," indicates that it is *the result of grace*. *Spiritual gifts are the result of unmerited and undeserved grace from God*. A spiritual gift is that *unique spiritual ability* ["Charis": grace or enabling power], *empowered by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the purpose of God for the church until Jesus returns* (1 Cor.1:7; Eph.4:12).
 - Spiritual gifts primarily deal with *understanding and experiencing God's power as He carries out His purpose in the church*.
- C. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1. What are spiritual gifts really all about?
- The word for "**unaware**," (*agnoeo*) means *not to know or to be ignorant of*. It is the term from which we get *agnostic*. This phrase is an imperative, which can be literally translated like this: "*stop being ignorant*." Paul didn't want these believers to be in the dark about "spirituals" ("*pneumatikos*") or "spiritual things or matters."
 - Why not? Because *misunderstanding spiritual gifts can lead not only to demonic deception, but it will also affect your spiritual growth and stunt the maturity of the church*.
- D. To help us understand or discern *when God is working versus when the devil or human ability is at work*, the Apostle gives a *negative* and *positive* test to the Corinthians. What are they? Read 1 Corinthians 12:3.
- **Test #1:** Know what the Spirit of God would never do.

He (the Holy Spirit) is not going to condemn or defame the Person or work of Christ in any way. He is not going to rob of the glory of the cross. He is not going to diminish the sovereign work of Christ in redemption. This would violate His ministry, which is to glorify Christ (*John 16:14*). Whenever Christ's person or work takes a back seat to anything else, we can know that whatever is happening is not being led by God, no matter how right it might seem.
 - **Test #2:** Know what the Holy Spirit will always do: lead people to know and obey Christ.

"*...no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit*"; that is, no one can understand who Jesus really is and submit to His Lordship by obeying His commands except by (means of) the enlightening and enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

So, if a person says that God is leading him, but he is not submitting to *the Lordship of Christ* and *obeying His commands* in the Word, he is not being led of God. The women in Corinth, who were the main culprits in this issue, were not even submitting to their husbands at home (14:34-36). Also, some of the men were not subjecting the teaching to the standard of the Scripture. They didn't want anyone questioning their ideas (14:27-32).

These two tests uncovered the real motivation behind what was taking place in the church (v.33). To put it plainly, *the issue of spiritual gifts is not about what you do for God*; rather, it is really about *discerning spiritual things* and *ministering* under the control of the Spirit's power to fulfill the purpose of God.

- E. What are the gifts? The gifts are listed in Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Corinthians 7:7, 12:8-10, 27-30, and 1 Peter 4:10-11.
- F. What are the purposes of spiritual gifts?
1. To _____ the saints for the works of service (*Eph.4:12*)
 2. To _____ believers in their pursuit of spiritual maturity or Christlikeness (*Eph.4:13, 15*)
 3. To _____ believers in the faith, which enables them to discern deception (*Eph.4:14*)
 4. To _____ believers as they walk by faith in this world (*Rom.1:11; 1 Pet.4:10*)
 5. To _____ the glory of God's wisdom through Jesus Christ (*1 Cor.12:12-26; 1 Pet.4:11*)

Every Christian, irrespective of his spiritual maturity or condition, has a *unique, spiritual ability* because of the indwelling grace of Christ given at salvation. But the fundamental thing to realize is that believers are not to *seek the gift* (1 Cor.14:1) or *the results of grace*, but *the grace itself*. In other words, God is the One we pursue as the Giver of Grace (1 Cor.4:7).

- G. Here are some basic truths about this issue of Spiritual [things or] Gifts:
- They affect *your* spiritual growth as well as *the church*. (*Eph.4:15-16*)
 - God *can* demonstrate His gifts even through those who possess a non-saving faith. (*Matt.7:21ff*)
 - Gifts properly used help *build, protect, and administer* God's grace to His people. (*Eph.4:11-13*)
 - Gifts vary in *strength* and *effectiveness* and belong to the body, not to the *individual*. (*Rom.12:5-6*)
 - Gifts can be weakened by *infrequency of use*. (*1 Tim.4:14*)
 - Spiritual gifts can be *strengthened by proper and frequent use*. (*2 Tim.1:6*)
 - Great faithfulness in the use of whatever gift you have *honors God* and *brings fruitfulness*. (*Matt.25:29*)



Application: Making Truth Stick

How do you discover your spiritual gift?

1. You must first have the right MOTIVE. (*Acts 8:19-22; 1 Cor.13:1-3; 14:1, 12*)
2. You must seek opportunities to EDIFY the body. (*1 Cor.14:12*)
3. You must use the one you have and be CONTENT with it. (*1 Cor.12:11*)

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Robert Murray M'Cheyne reminds us of a very important truth about gifts, and that is, "It is not great talents that God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus."

Being a doer of the Word (*2 Tim.3:16*)

1. What did I learn ("teaching")?
2. Where do I fall short ("reproof")?
3. What do I need to do about it ("correction")?
4. How can I make this a consistent part of my life ("training")?

Answer Key

Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

- A. the entire Trinity is involved in the energizing and activity of spiritual gifts
- B. they are gifts of grace from the exalted and triumphed Christ
- C. spiritual things or spiritual matters
- E. speaking gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers, word of wisdom and knowledge, discernment or the distinguishing of spirits), serving gifts (serving or helps, exhortation, giving, leading or administrating, mercy, faith), sign gifts (healing and miracles)
- F.
 - 1. equip
 - 2. aid
 - 3. establish
 - 4. encourage
 - 5. demonstrate

Note:

For further study, see *Spiritual Gifts: Discovering What They Are and How to Use Them*, Marvin R. Knight

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