

# Gifts of The Spirit (2)

Continued from previous session.

## Background (Reviewed)

There are some key Bible passages that speak about spiritual gifts. In this studies these will be looked at in different ways, to draw out different perspectives, helping us look at:

- Positioning ourselves to receive
- Identifying your gifts
- How you use your gifts
- Knowing where to serve
- Moving forward

Three key passages from the Bible that we need to consider are as follows:

1. Romans 12
2. 1 Corinthians 12
3. Ephesians 4

In these passages there are a number of specific gifts mentioned, as well as some pointers and principles on how to understand and use the gifts God has given us. We need to note that whenever these passages are studied we come with our own thoughts and understanding. Various “gifting” questionnaires and self evaluation papers have been written on this topic. But they do not agree on which gifts are listed in the Bible, nor on what each of these gifts are.

Reminder from last session: it is clear that we need to have an understanding of the importance of right living, unity and diversity. These topics are the essential background to a proper understanding of what the gifts of the spirit are and how they are to be used.

With this in mind let us consider how we can identify our gifts.

## Identifying your gifts

### **a. Attitude counts**

We are told clearly in 1 Corinthians 12 v1 that we are not to be ignorant in regard to spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 14 v 1 we are told to eagerly desire these gifts.

Our attitude is therefore important. We are to be informed and eager.

### **b. Be informed**

1 Corinthians 12 v 4-6 gives us an insight into what the spiritual gifts are and how they operate. There is a progression of thought which is interesting.

They are “charismata” – Grace gifts. We are **graced** (v4) by God so that we are equipped for **service** (v5). Spiritual gifts are an ability of grace, and also for communicating grace. This is because it is God’s grace **working** (v6) in us and through us. This working is made possible by the Holy Spirit who is **manifested** (v7) in us and through us. Spiritual gifts are a revealing of the Holy Spirit in us.

All of this is for the purpose of building up the Church. It is NOT about the gifts we may or may not have, but about God blessing people, building up their faith – spiritual gifts are not about the individual but about the **body**. Note how the body is referred to in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4.

### c. Examples

In each of our three passages there are sections which give examples of gifts. In fact in 1 Corinthians 12 there are two sections which list types of gifts.

Romans 12	1 Cor 12 v 8-11	1 Cor 12 v 28-30	Ephesians 4
Prophecy	Word of wisdom	Apostles	Apostle
Serving	Word of knowledge	Prophets	Prophet
Teaching	Faith	Teachers	Evangelist
Encouraging	Gifts of healing	Miracles	Pastor
Giving	Miracles	Gifts of healing	Teacher
Leading	Prophecy	Help others	
Sowing mercy	Distinguishing of Spirits	Administration	
	Speak in tongues	Tongues	
	Interpret tongues	Interpretation	

Some people consider these to be a complete list of spiritual gifts, yet others disagree and point to other bible verses which add to this list. Additional passages relating to gifts include:

- 1 Corinthians 7:1-9 - Celibacy
- 1 Peter 4:9-10 - Hospitality
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 - Martyrdom
- Ephesians 3:6-8 - Missionary
- 1 Corinthians. 13:1-3 - Voluntary Poverty
- Ephesians 6:18 - Intercession / Prayer
- Luke 1:1-3 - Writing

If these are not exhaustive lists, but just examples, then there could be other gifts not specifically listed.

**Note:**

From our 4 main passages listed above it might also be helpful to draw out another distinction. There are two types of contexts here. Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12: 6-8 are talking about gifts or abilities that a person may have. The end of 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 speak about people exercising gifts and abilities. As such an “apostle” is a description of a person fulfilling a role / ministry.

#### **d. Definitions**

Another question is how you define or explain what each of these gifts is. Various lists exist that seek to explain or define the words used in the Bible, but each list is written by a person who has developed their own understanding of that gift. SO you can get very different definitions.

For example, what is a “word of knowledge”?

One questionnaire explains it as “The special gift whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to understand in an exceptional way the great truths of God's Word and to make them relevant to specific situations in the church.” Another definition says: “This is the supernatural revelation of facts about a person or situation, which is not learned through the efforts of the natural mind”. So which definition do you believe? I guess one factor that will affect your choice will be your experience or belief in terms of the Holy Spirit speaking to a person: if you reject the idea of the Holy Spirit speaking to you then you will reject the definition of this gift being divine revelation. It is important to note how your preconceived ideas can influence your understanding of what each gift is.

#### **e. Back to you**

Notice that in the middle of two chapters on gifts there is a chapter on love. This takes us back to our attitude. Gifting is **not** about the person using the “gift”. It is about the person you are serving. In one sense, the gift is for the recipient not the person delivering the gift. A good gift used in an unloving way is not what is wanted (1 Cor 13 v 1-3). The goal, the thing we should strive for, is the loving use of the gifts.

So **how you use** the gift is very significant.

We need to also remember that it is the Holy Spirit who gives the gifts. He determines who has which gift and in what measure. So if you want a particular gift, or are troubled because you don't have a gift, then that is something you need to resolve between you and God.

So **how you view** the gift is very significant.

Once you start to look at Spiritual Gifts you have to anticipate that people will start to want certain gifts, and then become concerned that they don't have that specific gift. So, here are some pointers:

- Go ask God
- Seek Him in persistent prayer
- Ask yourself why you want the gift
- Where would you use this gift?

#### **f. What are my gifts?**

There are a lot of self evaluation questionnaires about (see the list of websites attached to last session notes). Self evaluation is not always a good thing – these questionnaires reflect back to you your understanding of yourself. More significant is

the evaluation of someone else who knows you well – but it has to be someone who knows you well. Best of all, is an in depth discussion with someone else who can specifically question you about your experiences and desires. Through this process of discussion your own views can be evaluated and considered and a more objective conclusion reached.

For example, a group of Elders were asked to state what they thought their area of gifting was. One of the group stated “Pastoral”. It even came top on the self-evaluation he completed. But everyone else in the group knew that he was not gifted in that area because every time he tried to speak to people he “put his foot in it”.

Here are some questions to help you in your evaluation:-

1. What can you do? What do you do now?
2. What do you feel drawn towards? (Psalm 37:4)
3. What has God said to you? Are you being called into a certain ministry?
4. What do you want to do?

Remember that it is also important to know what you **cannot** do and to accept your limitations.

It is also important to remember that seasons change and that not all gifts last for ever (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).