

# Gifts of The Spirit (4)

Continued from previous session.

## Background (Reviewed)

There are some key Bible passages that speak about spiritual gifts. In these 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

Having considered how we position ourselves to receive God's gifts, and looked at how we identify the gifts God has given, how our personality and attitude affect how we use our gifts, we now consider where we use our gifts – our place of service. Where we **serve** will be influenced by our **passion** and **calling**.

## Serve

In previous weeks we have noted that the gifts of the spirit are to be used for the benefit of others – they are given to be used to bless and benefit others. That is why we started by emphasising the need to live in a right relationship with God, as it is only out of this right living that we can be used by God to bless others. This is a life of sacrifice (Rom 12v1), a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit, where the gifts are used in love (1 Cor 13v1-3).

*Service is first of all **to God**.* Romans 12 v 1 tells us to offer ourselves to God. Your life, every moment of every day can become worship – but only as it is given over sacrificially to God. Life becomes worship as we resist the world, are transformed and changed so we become people who seek, find and discover God's will and purpose.

*Service is of **different kinds**.* 1 Corinthians 12 v 5 makes it clear that there are different types of service – different ways of serving the one Lord. This means I must expect other people to serve God in a different way that one God has called me to. In Ephesians 4 we read that **some** were given to certain roles – that means that some were not. But the goal and objective is the same: "to prepare God's people for works of service" (v12). In other words, some people (a small number?) were called by God to help everyone else serve. Service is the goal.

But where do we serve?

## Calling

Calling has been defined as, “A conviction of God’s plans and purposes for you for the immediate or long term future.” We often associate calling with a task or ministry – but is this really Biblical?

Romans 1 v 6-7	Called to belong to Jesus
2 Thess 2 v13-14	Called to be saved
1 Tim 6 v 12	Called to eternal life
Gal 5 v13	Called to be free of the law
1 Cor 1 v 2	Called to be holy
1 Peter 3 v 9	Called to bless others

The biblical teaching about calling reminds us that service and gifting flow out of character – if our character is right then we are useful to God.

Spiritual gifts are appreciated when used by a person who is also marked by the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the spirit in Gal 5 v 22ff is a description of the **nature of the believer** that is conformed to the **nature of Christ**. As we become more like Jesus Christ, so our lives are more yielded to the Holy Spirit, and so the gifts of the Spirit can flow more easily.

### Anointed or Appointed?

But we can’t stop there because there are passages in the Bible that clearly indicate that God calls people to specific tasks and roles. In the Old Testament we see the prophets called by God, **anointed** for a specific task.

- Lev 8 v 12 / 30 Aaron is anointed to set him apart to serve as a priest
- 1 Sam 10 v 1 Samuel anoints Saul for leadership
- 1 Sam 16 v 13 Samuel anoints David as King
- 1 Kings 1 v 39 Solomon is anointed King
- 1 Kings 19 v 16 Elisha is anointed as prophet

The anointing was often a sign of the Holy Spirit coming upon a person to equip and empower them for a specific role: hence prophet, priest and King.

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all people (Acts 2), and so we see a new word used: **appoint**.

- Mark 3 v 14, 16 Jesus appointed the twelve
- Luke 10 v 1 Jesus appointed 70 others
- John 15 v 16 appointed to be fruitful
- Acts 14 v 23 Elders are appointed
- 1 Cor 12 v 28 appointed or “placed”

To discover your calling is to find the place, or position, for which God has equipped and gifted you.

Calling is the inward working of the Holy Spirit to build **CHARACTER** that is revealed and expressed as the Holy Spirit works through you in **ACTIVITY**.

## Passion

Passion is about your heart. It's what gets you excited, what motivates you, compels you, energises you. Here are some comments that relate to this thought:

Heart is where you are centred, where you desire to serve, the altar upon which you wish to place your talents. Giftedness is what you are. Heart is where you will be most likely to apply what you are.

Tom Paterson, *Living the Life You Were Meant to Live*

The fact is, I can't care about everything equally. There are some things I care more about than others. That does not diminish the importance of any issue or concern. It simply means that my heart is drawn toward certain involvement . . . my passion leads me to make commitments.

Bruce Bugbee, *What you do best in the body of Christ*

God has given each of us a unique *emotional* "heartbeat" that races when we think about the subjects, activities, or circumstances that interest us. We instinctively care about some things and not about others. These reveal the nature of your heart . . . are clues to where you should be serving.

Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*

Our *heart* is important. We need to serve from the *heart*. We love God with all our *heart*. Here are some biblical examples that show the importance of our heart:

- Ex 25v2 - God only wants offerings from people whose *heart* prompts them to give.
- 1 Chron 28v2 – David had it in his *heart* to build a temple, a house for God.
- Neh 2v12 – God put the need of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's *heart*.
- Matt 6v21 – Jesus said that your *heart* is connected to what you value and treasure.

A key verse to help us understand this is Psalm 37v4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart".

1. Delight yourself in God. Make God your focus. Treasure God more than anything else in life. As you do this something will happen – your heart will change, to become like God's heart.
2. Allow God to put His desire into your heart. As you grow in your relationship with God so He will impress certain things on your heart. Things that will draw you, burden you, excite you, provoke you. The key is then to go back to God in prayer – taking this desire and burden back to God.
3. Ask God to give you the desire of your heart. You can boldly ask God for this because He has worked in you and put the desire within you – so you are effectively praying what God has burdened you to pray for.
4. Be ready to be part of the answer to your own prayer! As you pray, so God will open up opportunities for you to personally get involved in some way. Embrace those opportunities, use the gifts God has given you to achieve the desires that He has placed within you.

**God is calling us above all else to be the kind of people whose theme and passion are the supremacy of God in all of life**

J Piper, [Let the Nations be Glad](#), p38

So what excites you? What is your *passion*? What is it that excites your heart?

Erik Rees (S.H.A.P.E.) suggests that you ask yourself the following questions:

- ***What drives you?***  
This is about the “deep yearning of your life”. We are encouraged to “listen for the whispers of secret prayers and desires”.
- ***Who do you care about?***  
This is about groups of people: young people, older people. It is about identifying a type of person who feel drawn to care for.
- ***What Needs do you want to meet?***  
This is about identifying a need you feel drawn to meet: it could be spiritual, physical, emotional, relational, educational, or vocational.
- ***What cause do you want to champion?***  
There are so many causes that people can identify with: recovery programmes, marriage support, homelessness, etc.
- ***What is your dream?***  
John Eldredge writes, “Our goal here is to recover that adventure God wrote on your heart when he made you. Your deepest desires reveal your deepest calling, the adventure God has for you. . . So if you had permission to do what you really want to do, what would you do?”

## Conclusion

Our gifts are exercised most effectively in ***service to God***, as we follow our ***calling***, which is indicated by the ***passion*** God has, or is, placing in our hearts.