

DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

September 16, 1992

- I. The apostle Paul considered this doctrine to be important, 1Cor.12:1 *"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant."*
- II. The definition of the term *"spiritual gift"*.
 - A. Spiritual gifts are Holy Spirit given abilities to minister to others (1Cor.12:7 *"But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good"*).
 - B. Spiritual gifts are different from other natural abilities. The word *"gift"* (χαρισμά charisma) implies a non-meritorious bestowal; the term *"spiritual"* (πνευματικόν pneumatikon) indicates the source being the supernatural (the Holy Spirit). They are accomplished through human participation, but their effectiveness is due to the Spirit of God. Natural abilities often complement one's gift(s).
 - C. *"Gifts"* of the Spirit, 1Cor.12:4, are different from the *"fruit"* of the Spirit (Gal.5:22,23).
 1. Certain marks of the Holy Spirit are common to all growing, Spirit-filled Christians.
 2. The certain results in all Spirit-filled Christians include love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (Gal 5:22).
 3. In contrast, *"gifts"* are distinct, diverse and greatly varied (1Cor.12:4-6 *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons"*).
 4. The presence or absence of any one gift should never be a test of whether or not a person is *"spiritual"*. The gifts are apportioned as God chooses (1Cor.12:11,18 *"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills"; "But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired"*).
 5. Therefore, both Christian character (uniform *"fruit"* of the Spirit) and Christian ministry (diverse *"gifts"* of the Spirit) is works of the Spirit of God.
- III. The extent of spiritual gifts.
 - A. The Bible teaches that every Christian has one or more gifts (Eph.4:7,8 *"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN"*).

- B. At the point of salvation the believer is endowed with a gift(s), as seen in the body metaphor. As each bodily part is pre-assigned its place in the human body under the laws of genetics, so each of us is assigned an "eye", "foot", "hand", "private parts", "ear" function, etc., via the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1Cor.12:13 *"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit"*; Rom.12:4-6a *"For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us each exercise them accordingly"*).
- IV. The significance of spiritual gifts.
- A. Spiritual gifts are not a sign of spirituality or of maturity, but of the new birth. The Corinthian church was endowed with all the spiritual gifts (1Cor.1:7), yet the Corinthians were carnal and immature (1Cor.3:1,3).
- B. However, spirituality and maturity affect a gift's level of performance (1Cor.12:6, *"varieties of effects"*).
1. Gifts apart from love (FHS) are offensive (1Cor.13:13).
 2. Gifts apart from growth are limited.
- V. Prerequisites for the normal function of the gifts.
- A. Love (1Cor.14:1 *"Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts"*).
- B. Growth from the teaching gifts (Eph.4:12 *"for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ"*).
- C. Membership in a local church is the designated environment for the function of the gifts (1Cor.12:27 *"Now you [church at Corinth] are a body of Christ, and individually members of it"*).
- D. Acclimation to your particular gift as it relates to the royal chain of command (RCC). As suggested by the body metaphor, all gifts are not equal in authority. All should be subservient to the leadership gifts (Heb.13:17) and each should function sympathetically with the others (1Pet.4:7-11).
- E. Your gift must reside in an environment in which there is a formal structure (1Cor.14:40 *"But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner"*). The leadership (Pastor-Teacher and deacons) must provide the environment so you will have a niche in which to serve when you are ready to apply.
- VI. Some ways of viewing the gifts.
- A. Greater and lesser.
1. The greater gifts are those gifts which involve edification and authority (1Cor.12:24 *"Whereas our members of high standing have no need of it"*; 1Cor.12:31 *"But show a greater interest in the greater gifts"*).
 2. The lesser gifts are enhanced by association with the greater (1Cor.12:24 *"giving much more honor to that member which is inferior"*).

3. The greater gifts are those which tend to edification (1Cor.14:1 "*Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy*"; cp. vss.3,5,12).
 4. The occupational hazard is that the lesser gifts tend to be jealous of the greater and that the greater despise the lesser (1Cor.12:14-21).
- B. Edification and service gifts (1Pet.4:10,11).
- C. Temporary and permanent gifts.
1. The temporary gifts were those gifts given to the Church during the apostolic era (33-100AD).
 2. These gifts were essential to the foundational era (Eph.2:20; Heb.2:3,4).
 3. They were done away with when the N.T. canon was completed, cf. (1Cor.13:8-10; Jam.1:23,25).
 4. The temporary gifts carried the Church until the Bible was completed.
 5. The permanent gifts carry the Church until the Rapture.
- D. The sign and "infancy" gifts.
1. Some temporary gifts were "*sign*" gifts (to substantiate, corroborate, and authenticate the message of the resurrection by those who saw it or knew someone who had eye witnessed it (Act.1:21,22; 2:32,43; 3:12-16; 5:12,15,16; 6:8; 8:57,13; 2Cor.12:12; Heb.2:3,4).
 2. The "*sign*" gifts were not primarily for the Church, but for unbelievers (1Cor.14:22).
 3. Some temporary gifts were "infancy" gifts, to nurture, protect and edify the Church before the completion of the New Testament canon (1Cor.13:10).
 4. Errors associated with these gifts.
 - a. Sign and infancy gifts are for the Church now (1Cor.13:11 "*When I became a man, I did away with childish things*").
 - b. Sign gifts (healing, miracles, tongues) should be preferred (1Cor.14:1,3-6).
 - c. All believers should or could have any particular gift, like "tongues" (1Cor.14:1,3-6).
 - d. A certain gift (like "tongues") indicated spirituality or maturity.
- E. The analogy of gifts to bodily parts teaches:
1. Subordination and service (hand or foot, 1Cor.12:15).
 2. Authority (head, 1Cor.12:21).
 3. Giving (private parts gifts, 1Cor.12:23b).
 4. Service with "glory" (like a finger with an attractive ring, 1Cor.12:23a).
 5. The senses sight, hearing, smell, 1Cor.12:16,17.
 6. Corporately the body is so structured that each part is to look out for the other in ways befitting each part (gift).
 7. When one part suffers, all suffer; when one is blessed, all rejoice with it, (1Cor.12:24-26).
- VII. Classification and identification of the gifts.
- A. Spiritual gifts are listed in three principle New Testament passages (Rom.12:4-8; 1Cor.12:8-11,28; Eph.4:11).

1. They name 16-20 different gifts (depending on whether or not certain ones are the same gift by different names; e.g., "teacher" and "Pastor-Teacher", "ministry" and "helps", "managerial" and "administrations").
 2. All Christians manifest many of these ministries in limited ways, but concentration and exceptional ability for a particular one is a "gift".
- B. The listing, according to passage, is as follows (temporary gifts are asterisked):

1Cor.12:8-11,28 (13 gifts)	Rom.12:4-8 (7 gifts)	Eph.4:11 (4 gifts)
1. *Prophecy	*Prophecy	*Prophecy
2. *Apostles		*Apostles
3. *Wisdom		
4. *Knowledge		
5. *Healing		
6. *Miracles		
7. *Discerning of spirits		
8. *Tongues		
9. *Interpretation of tongues		
10. *Faith		
11. Helps	Service	
12. Teachers	Teaching	
13. Administration	Managerial ("leads")	
14.	Exhortation	
15.	Giving	
16.	Mercy	
17.		Evangelists
18.		Pastor-Teacher

C. The temporary gifts (10 of them).

1. The gift of prophecy:
 - a. Stopped with the completion of the Bible (1Cor.13:8 "*Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away*").
 - b. Was for believer and unbeliever alike (1Cor.14:22,24,25).
2. The gift of Apostle.
 - a. The highest ranking and most important of the temporary gifts.
 - b. Only twelve men were selected as apostles. (Paul became the 12th, not Matthias.)
 - c. Qualification was to be an eyewitness handpicked by Christ Himself (1Cor.9:1).
3. The gift of "the word of wisdom" supplied early churches with needed information.
4. The gift of "the word of knowledge": same as point 3 above.
5. The gift of "healing".
 - a. This gift was a sign.
 - b. It has passed from the scene.
 - c. God heals today, but apart from healers.
 - d. He heals in part by "the prayer of faith" (Jam.5:14,15).
6. The gift of "miracles".
 - a. It was a seal of apostleship (Act.13:4-12; 2Cor.12:12).
 - b. Miracles have not ceased only the gift.

7. The gift of "discerning of spirits".
 - a. Ability to test the authenticity of the claimed gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and prophecy in the early church.
 - b. The basis for testing all experience today is the completed, written Word of God (1Jn.4:1).
 8. The gift of "tongues".
 - a. This gift has ceased (1Cor.13:8).
 - b. Involved bona fide languages (1Cor.14:10; cp. Act.2:6-8).
 - c. It was a "sign" gift (1Cor.14:22).
 - d. It was a sign to the Jews (1Cor.14:21, Isa.28:11).
 - e. It was primarily a sign for unbelievers (1Cor.14:22).
 9. The gift of "interpretation of tongues".
 - a. Ceased with "tongues".
 - b. Tongues were not to be exercised when this gift was absent (1Cor.14:28).
 10. The gift of "faith":
 - a. Is another "sign" gift.
 - b. Dealt with unusual situations.
- D. The permanent gifts (8 of them).
1. The gift of "helps" or "ministry".
 - a. This is a very common gift.
 - b. It constitutes the ability to minister in physical service at the direction of others.
 - c. It should function under the administrative gifts.
 - d. Hands and feet illustrate these gifts.
 2. The gift of "teaching":
 - a. Operates under the supervision of Pastor-Teacher.
 - b. Is toward children but not adults.
 - c. Could be toward Pastor-Teacher candidates.
 3. The gift of "management" or "administration":
 - a. Should be manifest in leadership.
 - b. Does not have to be in connection with a church office.
 4. The gift of "exhorting".
 - a. A special God-given ability to encourage, motivate, and troubleshoot.
 - b. Barnabas had this gift (Act.4:30 "*son of exhortation*").
 - c. Not a license to bully someone, play Pastor-Teacher (PT), or invade someone's privacy (e.g., busybody).
 5. The gift of "giving".
 - a. The grace to see and meet various monetary needs of the local body.
 - b. Privacy of those giving should be protected.
 6. The gift of "showing mercy".
 - a. A special ability to help the sick, aged, needy, etc.
 - b. Different from "helps" in its objects.
 7. The gift of "evangelism".
 - a. A special ability to evangelize unbelievers.
 - b. Not merely "mass evangelism".
 - c. Like all gifts, it should operate under the RCC and through the local church.
 - d. Some teach that it is not longer extant.

8. The gift of "Pastor-Teacher".
 - a. The title is not of two different gifts. (The omission of the Greek article between the two substantives indicates this is a single gift with a twofold function).
 - b. The word "pastor" means shepherd, which implies he should be with (face-to-face) his sheep to lead, feed, and protect (Jn.10:1-16; Act.20:28; 1Pet.5:15).
 - c. The word "teacher" means the ability to instruct academically.
 - d. A local church should follow (and so should each sheep) one "drummer" at a time (Rev.2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14; Jn.10:26).
 - e. This gift is designed to equip the other gifts to execute the royal imperatives (Eph.4:11,12).

VIII. The recognition and development of the gifts.

- A. An inclination and desire for particular kinds of tasks may mark the presence of a gift (1Cor.14:1 "*desire earnestly spiritual gifts*").
- B. Recognition by others and effectiveness marks a spiritual gift.
- C. As you attempt various tasks under mature leaders, you will discover your gift and niche.
- D. Those not exercising a gift should indicate your availability and interest. (Even if it is in some small way, it is a beginning and is important.)
- E. The gift of Pastor-Teacher calls for specialized training (2Tim.2:2 "*And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also*").
- F. A local church should be desirous of all gifts (1Cor.14:1) and should pray and seek for believers with certain gifts.
- G. The ultimate preparation for any gift is consistent face-to-face teaching (Eph.4:11,12).

IX. The parable of the talents (Mt.25:14-30) teaches that while we may possess greater or lesser allotments of grace (gifts), we can attain to the same eternal reward.

1Pet.4:10,11 *"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as 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."*

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