

Knowing Your Spiritual Gifts

INTRODUCTION

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). The Holy Spirit is just as much alive today as He was when the New Testament was written. Before we move forward in exploring the dynamics of *Knowing Our Spiritual Gifts*, we need to accept all the work of God through the Holy Spirit in modern times just as the disciples were called to accept the work of the Holy Spirit over 2000 years ago.

IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS

Understanding and knowing what God says about Spiritual Gifts is the starting place of our journey. Even though man has many opinions about the topic, God has plenty to say about His gifts to us – after all, He is the giver of these gifts.

Many Christians choose to “stay in the dark” as to the full understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Ignorance is not bliss! If I was to give you a gift and you choose not to open it, you will never have the privilege of using the gift for its intended purpose. The same thing goes for our spiritual gifts, we were given these gifts upon the day of our salvation and God expects us to open the package and use the gift to accomplish His purposes.

A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

There are four requirements presented in the scriptures that each of us will need to embrace before we can discover the fullness of His gifting in us:

1. We must have the Holy Spirit living within us. (Born-again Christian)
2. Do not to be afraid of having the Holy Spirit live and operate through us in the capacity He desires to manifest through us.
3. We should desire to have the Body of Christ function in the capacity it is intended and designed to operate – being willing to allow God to use us to edify one another.
4. We should join God where God is at work, not following our flesh or using God’s gifts to benefit ourselves.

THINGS TO COME

Here are a few topics to look forward to in this study:

- *Discovering your spiritual gifts*
- *The Body of Christ is like a tool box*
- *Who gets these gifts*
- *What is a spiritual gift?*

- *Understanding the Occupational Gifts*
- *Understanding the Manifestation Gifts*
Spiritual testing

USING YOUR ELDERS FOR UNDERSTANDING

The Lord Jesus reveals to us in 1 Timothy 4:14; *Do not neglect the spiritual gifts within you, which were bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery (church leadership).*

It is my desire for each person that goes through this study to experience the fullness of His gifting within them. It is the responsibility of your church leadership to help you discover your gifting. Do not hesitate to contact your pastor to get your questions answered. This study is to start the process of you embracing all that God has for you regarding His spiritual gifts.

DO NOT LOOK DOWN ON YOUR YOUTHFULNESS

Many people do not think they are mature enough to use their gifting or they think that they have not been saved long enough to be used by God fully. Nothing could be further from the truth. Once you have received the Holy Spirit upon salvation, you are qualified to be used by God.

1 Timothy 4:11-16 tells us: *“Prescribe and teach these things. Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gifts within you, which were bestowed upon you; through the prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; preserve in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.”*

God wants us to be prescribing and teaching these things. Prescribing meaning, writing them down, and then teaching them to the Body of Christ. We are being called by God to know our gifting. We are not to look down on our youthfulness. He wants us to speak with the power of God, allowing the Holy Spirit to speak through us. He allows the fruit of the Holy Spirit to show through our conduct, His love, appropriating the measure of faith He has put within us and walk in the purity of His light while we live. In fact, we are to be examples to those who are Christians, teaching them by example how to walk after the Spirit and operating in the fullness of His gifting within us.

How do we accomplish this? It is accomplished by being devoted to the scriptures. Since the Word of God is alive and sharper than a two-edged sword, by teaching what God's Word says, we will exhort one another to function in their God given gifts.

God wants us to take pains with these things – take this matter on as a burden. He desires for us to be absorbed in them, soak them up like a sponge. This is how we reveal our progress in our walk with Him to the world around us. When people see God’s gifting flowing through us, they see God!

Lastly, God wants us to pay close attention to our teachings regarding this topic. This topic needs to be handled by God through us. Many churches have been divided over the topic of spiritual gifts. The gifts are for unity, not to bring more division.

DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

You have just begun the process of discovering your spiritual gifts. Some of you have known for many years and some may be just “looking into it.” In either case, God knows you are interested in *Knowing Your Spiritual Gifts*. Here is a list of items to keep in mind as you explore the realities of God’s gifts:

1. Be willing to explore what God has for you. Read each of the scriptures stated in this study. Use this booklet as a Bible Study. Pray through each scripture. Learn what the gifts are, how they are used, what characterizes them and how they function within the Body of Christ.
2. Don’t lean upon your feelings. Many look to their feelings to label their gift. God will reveal your gift(s) through the presbytery (elders) of your church. The Spirit will bear witness with the process and the location of the gift if it is of God. It is true that when you are functioning in your gift, you will “feel” like you have found your “niche.” When or if you are functioning in a task that is not your gifting, you will “feel like a fish out of water.” You just won’t be able to function in a comfortable and free manner. It is a true statement that God does not strap you with a gift you will not enjoy.
3. When functioning in your gifting, you will see the positive results. Since spiritual gifts are designed to benefit the Body of Christ, not yourself, you should see the fruit developed in the lives of the people you are helping. You will not see a positive result if you are using your gift to exalt yourself or by using a gift, you really don’t have.
4. Expect confirmation from the Body of Christ. It is a good idea to allow the Body of Christ to be a part of the process of confirming your gifting. God speaks through the Body. People observing us are equally as important as the Spirit’s revelation in our prayer time. That’s because it is the same thing. If you believe you have particular gifts and no one else agrees with you, then you should go to the presbytery (church leadership) for confirmation.
5. The Lord is the One to lead you to discovering your gift. Even though God uses the above process, God reveals His gifts in you. Remember that He is the gift Giver and He knows what is in His “gift bag.”

As God reveals more of His supernatural ways, you openly accept His manifestations of the Spirit in a manner that is worthy of His calling. Do not limit God to your human reasoning – let God be God even in your gifting.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Before you can move forward in *Knowing Your Spiritual Gifts*, you need to be willing to be sacrificed. Allow me to explain. Romans 12:1 tells us; *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this work; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”*

Before God moves through us mightily, He needs to know that you and I are willing to be used in any way He desires. We must be Holy (walk after the Spirit), acceptable to God (in His Son). When we are doing things of the world (walking after the flesh), you can pretty much forget your gifting being manifested within you by the Lord. God will not use His precious gifting to better the world. He only uses His gifting to better the Kingdom of God.

Of course, that leaves us with a small problem, what if the mind is worldly? Then it is time for renewal. Our lives are transformed into the image of Christ through the process of having our minds renewed. There is nothing you can do to renew your mind; reading, praying, talking, listening or having hands laid on you will renew you. This renewal process is a Spirit work. As we set our minds on heavenly things, we then are allowing the Holy Spirit (who lives within us if we are saved) to renew our minds. When we set our mind on worldly things, we act worldly. When we set our mind on the Spirit within us, we then experience being Spiritually minded, having Spiritual thoughts, then Spiritual words (1 Corinthians 2:13).

When we lay our lives down as a living sacrifice and then allow the Holy Spirit to renew our worldly minds, then we can prove to the world (and fellow Christians) what is good, truly acceptable and what the perfect will of God is. This is accomplished by and through God using His gifts within His children.

THE BODY OF CHRIST IS LIKE A TOOL BOX

The Word says that we are the very Body of Christ. We also are to understand that we are all individual parts that make up this Body (Romans 12:4). Christ is the head over the body just as your head is in charge of your body. Your body does what the head decides to do – that is why your mind needs daily renewal. Your thoughts need to be yielded to the Holy Spirit.

Let's take a look at Romans 12:4-8; *“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 each exercise them accordingly...”*

Picture the Body of Christ as a toolbox and the tools within the toolbox are the members of the Body of Christ. God is the Owner of the *Fix and Repair Shop*, Jesus is the manager and the Holy Spirit is the

mechanic. Individual members of the Body of Christ are the tools the Holy Spirit uses. The Owner determines the project and all those who work for the Owner use all their very being to carry out the commands and desires of the One who owns all things.

I would think that it would be critical for the Holy Spirit to know everything there is to know about the tools within the toolbox. The Holy Spirit does know the design and function of each tool in order to carry out the will of the Owner (Heavenly Father). Therefore, it now becomes quite important for the tools to be who they are and not attempt to be anything other than themselves.

Imagine one or more of the tools trying to be another tool instead of being who they are – you know, a screwdriver tries to do the job of a pair of pliers. Sounds silly huh? Not really! This is exactly what the Body of Christ has the tendency to do. Tools trying to be like tools they admire. Tools want to be like tools that seem to have greater importance and rewards. Tools want to be in the hands of the mechanic more than not. If I were a tool, I certainly would not want to be in the hands of the mechanic as much as possible. In fact, it would be fun to be the mechanic's favorite tool!

Also, imagine that these tools having legs, arms, mouths and minds of their own. Now we have some potential problems. When the mechanic reaches into the toolbox to get the right tool to do the Owner's will, one or more of these tools are running around the shop *doing their own thing*, it makes it challenging to get anything done. What is the mechanic to do? Well, He will use the tools that are willing and waiting. For the waiting tools are secure in their design. They will wait on the mechanic as long as it takes to do the part of the job they were designed to do.

Think of the work the mechanic could get done if every tool accepted who they were, understood their purpose and was willing and ready to be used by the mechanic. Wow! We could have the world "fixed" in no time.

I certainly hope you are seeing the parallel. God has many members to His Son's Body. Within each of these members, God has carefully and methodically placed His Gifts to accomplish the work assigned to His Son and the Holy Spirit. Having each member exercise their gifting when the Holy Spirit calls upon them, would pull the Body of Christ together and unify the Church in such a way that the world, flesh and the devil would be in serious trouble.

Don't get me wrong, God is in control and He is accomplishing all of what needs to be done, fully knowing He doesn't have full cooperation with His Son's own Body. However, God certainly is calling us to join Him where He is at work. The Body members joining Him where He is at work will add to the proving of the will of the Father to the world, all of flesh and even to the enemy, Satan.

WHO GETS THE GIFTS?

The Lord has not given everybody a gift(s), only those who have accepted the Lord into their lives. Once a person has accepted Christ, the Holy Spirit delivers the gift, so to speak. 1 Peter 4:10 tells us; "*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*" The Holy Spirit also gives a manifestation. Let's look at 1 Corinthians 12:7; "*But to each one is*

given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." It is for the good of building up the Body of Christ.

The Church's growth is dependent upon God causing the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6). However, the Lord is also clear that we are to plant and water. The planting and watering is done through the very gifting He has placed within each Body member.

GOD NOT ONLY GIVES GIFTS BUT A CALLING AS WELL

Once a person gains an understanding regarding their gifting, they need to have a ministry of "a calling" to have the gift to function within. When a person functions in a gift that is not theirs, they end up laboring to do the work. They seem to "run out of energy" in doing good. If a person is using their gift but it is being used within the wrong "calling," it usually causes more work for the people they are working alongside. They end up giving the appearance of "doing their own thing." Therefore, understanding the calling can be equally as important as understanding the gifting.

There is a general calling and a specific calling. General calling is the Body of Christ, as a whole – being called to serve one another. Specific calling is like an occupation or a job. Specific calling determines a particular way or a particular setting in which the person uses their gift i.e.; Sunday school teacher, worship team, clean up duty, secretarial work, or preaching from the pulpit.

IMPORTANT POINT: God does not give a gift without giving a calling. If the person does not have a calling with the gifting, the person will spend the gifting on himself/herself, which is self-abasement. More like self in the basement!

WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT?

A spiritual gift is a God given ability planted within your soul by the Holy Spirit given upon the day of your salvation. Every member of the Body of Christ receives at least one.

The Greek word used for spiritual gift is "charisma," which means, "grace." Each member of the Body is given a special measure of grace – unmerited favor (Ephesians 4:7). In this unmerited favor, God moves through this measurement to accomplish His will.

Grace means God does the work and law means man does the work for God. When grace is motivation us, we know that God is doing the work through us. When the law motivates us, we can be certain that it is self who is doing the work and that means we are using our gifting to do what we want. Understand this, Grace and Gifting have the same meaning. God is the One using the gifts.

In conclusion: spiritual gifts are supernatural or God breathed abilities to empower believers to do His work for the common good of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7).

GIFTING MANIFESTING AS WE COME TOGETHER

The time God moves the most significantly is when the Body is gathered together. When two or more gather together in His name, He will be there ready to move within the Body. It could happen in a one-on-one discipleship setting or in a group dynamic. The fact that we are looking to a God that is alive and ready to reveal Himself to us puts us in a position of expecting God to do a work.

First, we need to come empty handed. If you have any things that you need to hand over to the Lord (acts of rebellion), now is the time to drop those before the feet of Jesus. God, most likely, will not fully use you if you are struggling with present acts of rebellion. If you do decide to use your gifting with the rebellion in your heart, the gifting will promote self - mixed with flesh. That spells PROBLEMS. You certainly will end up hurting someone and/or yourself.

Secondly, when you gather, come to listen. Watch your leader! God moves through leaders. Be listening inside for the Lords prompting and be watching in the group as to what might be going on in the lives of the people. God will often prompt one Body member to help another member to use their gifting. For example, *I am noticing Jim that you might have something to say, would you like to share with the group? Are you receiving a Word from the Lord?* Etc.

Be watching for pain. The eyes never lie. Constantly be on the alert for people's facial responses. Many times new comers do not feel comfortable sharing unless they are prompted to do so.

Thirdly, it is important to know that when you come together that you be transparent. You need to be willing to share your life openly with everyone in the gathering. Transparency is what communicates trust. If you are willing to be open and transparent, then the person(s) God wants to minister to will be more apt to receive the help God has for them.

To order the "Knowing Your Spiritual Gifts" workbook, [click here](#).