

The Gifts of the Body, Part 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

God has set in order a plan for the orderly function of the body. In this plan, each believer has certain spiritual gifts which the Holy Spirit gives to minister to the rest of the body. Our gifts are not so much for us individually as they are for the other members of the body of Christ. This network of inter-mutual ministry strengthens every part of the body and allows it to grow strong and healthy. In our last lesson we saw some of the basic principles regarding this divine plan involving spiritual gifts. By way of summary and review, the following are Ten Basic Principles Regarding Spiritual Gifts:

- (1) Spiritual gifts are important and essential for the health of the body (1 Cor. 12:1).
- (2) The Holy Spirit is the source of these gifts (1 Cor. 12:11).
- (3) The gifts are not natural abilities (1 Cor. 2:1,4).
- (4) There is no hierarchy in the gifts (1 Cor. 12:15-27).
- (5) The gifts are not a sign or guarantee of spirituality or infallibility (1 Cor. 12:7,11; 14:29,32,37).
- (6) The gifts, when rightly exercised in the Spirit, have the promise of divine energy (1 Cor. 12:4-7).
- (7) When the gifts are used, the body profits (1 Cor. 12:7).
- (8) The gifts of the Spirit are different from the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22,23).
- (9) You can have a gift and not be using it (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).
- (10) Spiritual gifts come in combinations (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

I. THE DEFINITIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. The Permanent Edifying Gifts

These are the gifts which edify or build up the body. They began in the early church and still go on today.

1. THE GIFT OF PROPHECY (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6)

a. *The definition*

The gift of prophecy is not foretelling in the future, it is the gift of preaching. It means “to tell forth, to declare.” It is a Spirit-given ability to proclaim the truths of Jesus Christ, in the energy of the Spirit of God, with God-given results.

b. *The difference between the gift and the office*

The gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet are two different things and are not to be confused!

1) *1 Corinthians 12:10,28*

These verses show us the difference between the gift and the office. Verse 10 says that prophecy is a gift, but verse 28 says, “*And God hath set some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...*” Those are not gifts, those are men. Notice the phrase, “*And God hath set some...*” It doesn’t say, “*And God hath given a grace gift.*” The word “*set*” means “*appointed*” and “*some*” refers to men not gifts. The gifts are also made distinct from the men by the phrase “*after that*” in the middle of the verse. God established certain men in the church, and on top of that He gave certain gifts. The gift of prophecy is distinct from the office of the early church prophet.

2) *Ephesians 4:11,12*

Here is the same thing. The verse refers to gifted men, not gifts. Paul says, “*And He gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints...*” These are not spiritual gifts, but gifted men given to the church. The prophet and the gift of prophecy are thus distinct. Now may I add that the New Testament prophets belonged to a special call for a special time in history - the first century church, the apostolic era. There are no ?prophets? today anymore than there are apostles. The prophets undoubtedly had, as one of their gifts, the gift of prophecy; but they were a special breed for the beginning years of the church and have ceased to exist. Prophets have ceased but the gift of prophecy (preaching) still goes on.

c. *The standard for true preaching*

1 Corinthians 14:37 says, “*If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*” In the early church, the standard for a prophet was whether or not his words squared with the words of Jesus Christ. There are no more prophets, but the gift of preaching today is exercised under the same standard. Peter said, “*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God*” (1Pet. 4:11). The standard for preaching is not *Time* magazine, *Newsweek*, or politics. It’s not somebody’s philosophy or a book review. The standard for preaching is the Word of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-8, 13).

d. *The scope of the gift of preaching*

Having the gift of preaching does not necessarily mean that it has to be exercised in a formal setting. The gift on preaching could be used to proclaim the truths on Jesus Christ to children, to young people, or to a class of adults numbering 2, 3, or 10,000. It doesn’t have to be exercised from a pulpit, but can be in a small group at any age level.

e. *The shared responsibility*

Though this is a special gift given only to some, all Christians are to be preachers to some degree (Acts 1:8).

2. THE GIFT OF TEACHING (Rom. 12:7)

a. *The distinction between the gift and the office*

The gift of teaching is distinct from the teacher. There is a gift of teaching, and there is a gifted man, a teacher (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

* *Did the office of a teacher end along with the office of the apostles and prophets?*

No, it did not! The office of teaching still exists today. God still appoints teachers. Only the apostles and the prophets ended with the apostolic era. This is because they were the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:2b; 3:5). The foundation belongs at the beginning and only at the beginning. The church moved from the foundation of the apostles and the prophets to the continuing ministries of the

teachers, pastors, and evangelists.

It's one thing to have the gift of teaching; it's another thing to be an appointed teacher. Teachers were appointed in the early church and given specific positions to teach, which is true today. Some of the great professors in evangelical seminaries, and some of the great Bible teachers who travel the world have obviously been placed by God as teachers given to the church to teach the Word. And along with this office, they have the gift of teaching. However, a person may have the gift of teaching and not be appointed to a teaching office in terms of a total ministry to the church. There are many body members who have not been called to a ranking position as a teacher, yet have the gift of teaching.

b. *The difference between preaching and teaching*

Preaching is a proclamation; teaching is a study. Teaching is the ability to take a new Christian and teach him the truths of the Word of God. It's one thing to declare and proclaim; it's something else to sit down with a new Christian, put your arm around him, and instruct him in the things of God. To teach is to pass on the truth of God's Word so others receive and implement it. Teaching emphasizes content while preaching emphasizes communication. As some have the gift of proclaiming, others have the gift of personal instruction.

c. *The shared responsibility*

Every Christian does not have the gift of teaching, but every Christian is to be in some sense a teacher. We are all responsible for this. In Galatians 6:6 it says, "*Let him that is taught in the Word share with him that teacheth in all good things.*" There is to be an interaction of spiritual truth. In 2 Timothy 2:2 it says, "*And the things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*" And in verse 24, "*The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach....*" Every believer has the responsibility to teach at some level.

In the body, preaching and teaching provide a balanced ministry: evangelism and edification.

Preaching is motivation, and teaching is instruction.

3. THE GIFT OF FAITH (1 Cor. 12:9)

Faith is one of the Spirit-given gifts. Now every believer has faith as one of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), but some have the gift of faith. I believe this gift could just as well be called "the gift of prayer." It is not just faith in something for no reason. Jesus said in Matthew 21:22, "*And all things, whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*" Faith is what moves the hand of God. Some Christians just have a supernatural capacity for believing God, characterized by total and joyous dependence on Him (cf. Acts 27:25).

4. THE GIFT OF WISDOM (1 Cor. 12:8)

a. *The definition*

The gift of wisdom is the ability to see deeply into the mysteries of God. It is the kind of insight that sees what the natural eye can't see, and hears what the natural ear can't hear. It is the ability to take a simple phrase of Scripture, or a simple truth of God, and pull out of it all the spiritual truth and mystery that is there. Wisdom then takes those truths and applies them to life. A simple definition of wisdom is this: The application of spiritual truth. The gift of wisdom is the Spirit-empowered ability to apply spiritual truth to life in a practical way.

b. *The shared responsibility*

As with the previous gifts, all believers are to have wisdom to some extent. Paul's prayer for the Colossians was that they be *filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom?* (1:9). James 1:5 says, "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.*" In a sense, we're all to have wisdom; but some have the gift of wisdom rising above to minister to the body in a unique way.

5. THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE (1 Cor. 12:8)

a. *The definition*

The gift of knowledge is understanding the facts -- scholarship in a human sense. People with this gift are able, by the Spirit of God, to spend their lives in research, searching out the things of God, studying ancient manuscripts and archeology, and working on the scholarly problems of exegesis, history, etc. Did you know that we build our faith upon the work of those with this gift? Our Bible didn't just drop out of heaven--it took years and years of labor and research by scholars to determine which manuscripts were right.

Knowledge is the academic side of truth, while wisdom is the application side. Sometimes those with the most knowledge have the least wisdom, and some Christians are gifted with both. But remember, none of these gifts operate on human ability. These are spiritual gifts, not intellectual; they don't come about by education, but by a sovereign act of the Spirit.

b. *The shared responsibility*

Even though there's a gift of knowledge, all Christians are responsible to have knowledge. All are responsible to show themselves approved unto God (2 Tim. 2:15). Paul prayed that the Colossians would be "*filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom*" (1:9). And in 1 Corinthians 1:5 Paul says, "*That in everything ye are enriched by Him...in all knowledge.*" Even though we are all to have these spiritual qualities, there are some who are specially gifted by the Holy Spirit with the gift of knowledge to minister to the body.

6. THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS (1 Cor. 12:10)

a. *The definition*

God wants to protect the church from false doctrine, so he gives certain members of the body the ability to discern what is of God and what is of Satan. This is important because the body faces continual opposition from a host of demons who always pose as messengers of light, trying to counterfeit the gifts of the Spirit and sap the energy of the church. God gave this gift so that men could distinguish between the true and the false. This is, of course, something beyond natural insight.

b. *Peter's demonstration*

Peter had the gift of discerning spirit. In Acts 5:3 Peter said to Ananias, "*Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?*" How did Peter know? Peter knew that Satan had filled the heart of Ananias because he had the spiritual gift of discerning spirits.

c. *The shared responsibility*

Some have the gift of discerning spirits, but is it not true that every Christian is to be discerning? In 1 John 4:1 it says, "*Beloved, believe not every spirit but test the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*" Every believer is to be sensitive to spirits, knowing whether they're of God or Satan.

7. THE GIFT OF SHOWING MERCY (Rom. 12:8)

The next three gifts are called the love gifts. Although all the gifts are to be ministered in love (1 Cor. 13:1-3), there are three distinct love gifts that minister to the body. The first one is the gift of showing mercy.

a. *The definition*

The gift of showing mercy is the gift of the Spirit which manifests itself in compassionate kindness; not on a human level. But Christ's love manifested by the Holy Spirit through the believer to the body. It's not just sympathy, nor is it exercised out of duty; it's the compassionate love of the Holy Spirit which is expressed in deeds of kindness.

b. *The shared responsibility*

If certain people have the gift of showing mercy, does that mean that the rest of us don't have to?

No, of course not! Obviously, all believers are to show deeds of mercy. In James 2:15, 16 it says, *"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled', notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?"* The implication is obvious. It behooves us to be merciful. In Galatians 6:2 Paul says, *"Bear ye another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."* In 1 Corinthians 12:25 it says that we are to *"to care for one another."* So, we're all to be showing kindness; yet, some have the gift of showing mercy to minister to the whole body.

8. THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION (Rom. 12:8)

a. *The definition*

The gift of exhortation is the second love gift. The Greek word for exhortation is *paraklesiv*; and the *paraklesiv* is the act done by the *parakletov*, which means "one called alongside to help." So, the *paraklesiv* is "the act done by the one called alongside to help." Exhortation is not standing in the pulpit browbeating. It's not even a public gift. The gift of exhortation is the ability to get alongside somebody and comfort them with love. The gift of exhortation is one of the most wonderful and precious of all grace gifts. In fact, in John 14:16, the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, the *parakletov*, from which we get the word "*paraklete*" -- one who comes alongside to help. even Jesus, in 1 John 2:1, is referred to as an Advocate. The word "advocate" is also the Greek word *parakletov*. So, the person with the gift of exhortation is used by the Spirit to come alongside members of the body to minister comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counsel.

b. *The distinction between the gift of showing mercy and gift of exhortation*

The gift of showing mercy is a ministry of acts of love, while the gift of exhortation is a ministry through words of love, counsel and comfort.

c. *The shared responsibility*

All there are some who have this gift of exhortation and have the ability, given by the Spirit, to comfort, sympathize, and share words of counsel, we are all to put our arms around each other and help. Hebrews 3:13 says, *"But exhort one another daily."*

d. *The example of Paul*

Paul showed this gift of exhortation in his first letter to the Thessalonians. In chapter 2, verse 7 he said, *"We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children."* Paul had the gift to just express himself in gentle counsel.

9. THE GIFT OF GIVING (Rom. 12:8)

a. *The definition*

The third love gift is the gift of giving. This gift has direct reference to the material ministry; food, clothes, money, houses, whatever it is that you desire to give. This Spirit-given gift is related to the Holy Spirit's supervision of everything that the believer possesses, but it is unrelated to how much he has. The gift of giving doesn't have anything to do with your pocketbook, it has only to do with the sovereignty of the Spirit of God who gives the gift of giving. In fact, some of the people who have the gift of giving are the poorest people around. Now it seems obvious, that along with the gift of giving there may come a surplus of funds as well, so that the person with the gift is able to give to a great extent. The gift of giving is to provide for the need of others who cannot supply their own needs. Ideally, if all those who have been gift the gift of giving would release themselves and exercise their gift through the energy of the Spirit, Christians could take care of all the material needs in the body and we wouldn't have to be hooked up with the governmental welfare agencies. We ought to be taking care of our own!

b. *The shared responsibility*

Even though some have the gift of giving, every Christian is to give. 1 Corinthians 9:7 says *"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God*

loveth a cheerful giver.“

10. THE GIFTS OF ADMINISTRATION (Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 12:28)

a. *The definition*

The gift of governments (1 Cor. 12:28), and the gift of ruling (Rom. 12:8) are both the same gift. These are the gifts of administration and belong to those in places of spiritual authority. For example, pastors, teachers, or evangelists would exercise this particular gift. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12 Paul writes, *“We beseech you, brethren, to now them who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.”* Some people have the place of being over others, to care for them—not to lord it over them, to hammer them down, or to brutally subject them, but to teach them and instruct them. 1 Timothy 5:17 says, *“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.”* This same teaching is found in Hebrews 13:7,17 and 24, *“Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their manner of life...Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you...Greet all them that have the rule over you.”* The pastor, or elder, who is given the oversight of the flock must exercise the gift of government or ruling. This gift is not limited to pastors in local churches. It is also exercised by those in leadership in Christian ministries like mission societies, youth organizations, and evangelistic associations.

b. *The shared responsibility*

Now obviously we can't all have the gift of ruling. If we did there would be a whole lot of chiefs and no Indians. But the Bible does teach that every believer is to rule his own house, his own spirit, and to subject his own body. So, in a sense, we are to keep the rule over these areas.

11. THE GIFT OF MINISTRY (Rom. 12:7) OR HELPS (1 Cor. 12:28)

a. *The definition*

Both of these terms mean service; these are the gifts of assistance. The word translated “deacon” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word for “service,” diakonia. Therefore, the word “deacon” literally means servant. Those who have the gift of ministry or helps are the helpers, the people who labor behind the scenes.

b. *The shared responsibility*

This gift, like all the others, is common to all Christians in a lesser sense. We are all to serve one another. Galatians 5:13 says, *“By love serve one another.”* We are all called to serve, but some are specially gifted for the service of the body.

Now those are the eleven permanent, edifying gifts. Every single one of these gifts was a characteristic of Jesus Christ. When Christ left this world He formed a new body, the church. And this new body is to manifest His nature in the same way His fleshly body did. So, naturally, His spiritual body will have the same attributes as His fleshly body. That is what these spiritual gifts are—they are the reproduction of the attributes of Christ into His body, the church. The Holy Spirit has given these grace gifts to the church so that we might be the continuing life of Christ, radiating His person and attributes to the world. This is why it's so important that we exercise our gifts.

We saw, in the discussion of these spiritual gifts, that each one of us should manifest all these qualities in our lives, although to a lesser degree where we are not specially gifted. Why? Because as Christians, we are all called to be like Jesus Christ. So, as individuals, we are to be living examples of Christ; and as a total body, we are to reflect His nature to the world.

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