

UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS Part 4

We've been speaking to you about spiritual gifts . We've discussed how there are a diversity (different kinds) of spiritual gifts. We even took the time to show you the different places in the New Testament where spiritual gifts are listed and found that there are between 18-22 different spiritual gifts.

In addition, we talked to you about operating in spiritual gifts and how to operate in a spiritual gift requires cooperating with the Spirit of God. Moreover, one of the simplest ways to learn how to cooperate with the Spirit is to spend time praying in the Spirit (or in tongues).

Now, someone might object and say, "Doesn't the Bible say that ALL do not speak with tongues?" The answer is, yes. However, the Bible is talking there about addressing the Church in tongues. But, tongues are not just given to address the Church. Sometimes tongues are spoken to God and intended to edify the speaker. ALL believers can operate in this kind of tongues!

Today, I would like to talk to you about discovering your role in ministry. Everyone has been given a role or an assignment in the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:17–18

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Although everyone has been given a role in the body of Christ, *finding* that role can be difficult. So, how do we FIND our gift and/or role in ministry?

First, we must understand that spiritual gifts/roles aren't intended to be *found* as much as they are intended to be *recognized*. If we focus on trying to "find" our spiritual gift, we will wait until we know for certain our spiritual gift/role BEFORE attempting to serve. On the other hand, if we allow our gift/role to be "recognized," we won't look for certainty. Instead, we'll look for opportunities!

Ecclesiastes 9:10

10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

If you truly want to discover your spiritual gift or role in ministry, not only should you look for opportunities, but you should ask yourself the following questions...

ARE OTHERS BENEFITING FROM WHAT I DO?

1 Corinthians 12:7

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Since the goal of spiritual gifts is to profit (benefit, edify) others, then look for times when people are benefited by what you do!

Many people try to discover their spiritual gift by focusing on what they ENJOY doing. But, who cares if you enjoy doing something if no one's benefiting from what you're doing? However, if someone's benefitting from what you're doing, this may be a sign that this is what you're called to do!

Now, just because no one's benefiting from what you're doing doesn't mean you're operating out of position. It could mean that you simply haven't given yourself FULLY to it.

1 Timothy 4:14–15

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

Before your gift can edify others you may need more expertise on your part.

1 Corinthians 14:12–13

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. 13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

Sometimes before others are edified by what we do we must 'excel' in our gift. Sometimes that means maturing and adding more experience. Other times that might mean supplying something additional (like interpretation) to our gift. (Sometimes spiritual gifts require something additional to be profitable!)

A SECOND question we need to ask when trying to discover our spiritual gift is...

ARE PEOPLE CONSISTENTLY EDIFIED BY WHAT I DO?

When it comes to determining which ministry we've been called to, repetition matters. In other words, you need a consistent record of good works before we can say you've been called to a certain ministry. For example, just because you prophesied (or had a dream) one time doesn't mean you're a prophet. However, if you are prophesying with consistent results, then that's another thing.

1 Timothy 3:10

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

When you “prove” things you’re trying to determine how reliable and CONSISTENT that thing is!

Still, before we settle on a ministry there’s a THIRD question we must ask...

DO MATURE BELIEVERS AFFIRM WHAT I’M DOING?

In other words, does anyone (besides yourself) recognize your gift? The question ISN’T, “Do I see it?” The question is, “Do others see what I see? If so, how *mature* are these people?”

1 Timothy 4:14

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Paul, along with a handful of elders (presbytery) “laid their hands” on Timothy RECOGNIZING that he had a gift!

The Bible does not endorse unrecognized, or even self-recognized, ministry. This is because unrecognized or self-recognized ministry often leads to division in the Church!

Galatians 2:1–2

1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

Notice, to avoid potential conflict in the Church, Paul shared his “revelation” with the leaders in Jerusalem before sharing it with the world. When we don’t submit our gift to others the danger is not only division, but also DECEPTION.

Revelation 2:19–20

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. 20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

This is why we have so many “self-professing” apostles and prophets! We should not be promoting ourselves or putting ourselves forward.

Proverbs 25:6–7

6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: 7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither;

Than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince

Whom thine eyes have seen.

Instead of putting ourselves forward, we should wait and let others recognize the gift that is upon us. To put it another way—we should let our gift make room for us!

Proverbs 18:16

16 A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

Therefore, look for “fruit” (results, edification) to help you determine your gift. Also, wait until you see consistent results before you start trying to give “titles” to people or accept them yourself. Finally, don’t rely on your own assessment to determine your gift or office. Instead, let others do that for you!