

# UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS Part 6

We've been discussing the subject of "Understanding Spiritual Gifts." Recently we've been discussing the importance of discovering and operating in the RIGHT GIFT!

## **1 Corinthians 12:31**

***31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.***

Notice, Paul says, "Covet the BEST gifts"—or, we might say, the RIGHT GIFT! Paul goes on to say, "I'll show you a more excellent WAY." In other words, there's a "right" and a "wrong" way to seek spiritual gifts. The *right* way is to do it in *love*. (This is explained for us in [1Corinthians 13!](#))

When we are concerned with "loving" (or serving) one another, we will find the right gift for us! We'll discover it by observing how others are blessed (edified) by what we do. In fact, if we had to explain this process, we would say...

## **STEP ONE: LOOK FOR FRUIT**

If people aren't being edified by what you're doing, try something new. If, however, you are seeing success (or fruit), move to the next step.

## **STEP TWO: IDENTIFY THE GIFT**

Most people stop with step one. They don't really care what 'gift' their gift is. They're content with knowing that they're helping people. However, when we take the time to actually 'identify' our gift, it reminds us that our work (success) is being fueled by the grace of God!

### **1 Corinthians 15:10**

***10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.***

Additionally, when you know which gift you're actually operating in, you can move on to the THIRD and final step.

## **STEP THREE: EXCELL IN THE GIFT**

In order to excel in any gift, you must have the right ATTITUDE and the right WAY or method of exercising the gift. There's a particular manner that every gift must be ministered in order to obtain optimal results.

In [Romans 12](#) Paul lists seven different spiritual gifts. Following each gift, Paul outlines a specific ATTITUDE we should have when exercising that gift. Take, for example, the last gift listed in [Romans 12](#)—the gift of *mercy*.

## THE GIFT OF MERCY

**Romans 12:8**

***8 ...he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.***

Notice, after Paul lists the gift of mercy he gives us the proper attitude we need to have when exercising this gift—*cheerfulness*. Lastly (and this is where most people miss it), Paul gives us the proper way this gift should be exercised in verse 15. (Most people assume that the admonitions in [Romans 12:9-15](#) are random. However, there are 7 admonitions listed in these verses. These seven admonitions correspond to the seven spiritual gifts listed in verses 6-8!)

**Romans 12:15**

***15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.***

Notice, the gift of mercy should be expressed through empathy. (Empathy says, “I’m sorry WITH you,” not simply “I’m sorry FOR you.”) So, to summarize...

***The Gift: MERCY***

***The Attitude: with CHEERFULNESS***

***The Way: with EMPATHY***

Moving up the list, we come to the gift of ‘leadership’.

## THE GIFT TO RULE

**Romans 12:8**

***8 ...he that ruleth, with diligence;***

If we were to summarize the gift to rule, we would say...

***The Gift: RULE***

***The Attitude: with DILIGENCE***

***The Way: without REVENGE***

Next, we have...

## THE GIFT OF GIVING

**Romans 12:8**

***8 ...he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity;***

## **The Gift of Giving**

### **The ability to generously give to the needs of others.**

I want to emphasize the word “generously” because this is what “with simplicity” means—with liberality or generosity.

#### **Acts 4:32–34**

***32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,***

Did you notice WHY these believers gave so generously? —Because great GRACE was upon them! In other words, the Church was operating in the gift (grace) of giving. Moreover, when this gift is operating in the Church, there will be no “lack” among God’s people. We should point out that this ‘grace’ (gift) is not just given to the wealthy.

#### **2 Corinthians 8:1–2**

***1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.***

Notice, the church at Macedonia operated in this gift even though they were in great POVERTY! Finally, what’s the proper way to exercise this gift?

#### **Romans 12:13**

***13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.***

Notice, this gift should be exercised:

- a. For the ‘necessities’ of the saints
- b. For strangers (the word “hospitality” means to entertain or welcome strangers)

#### **3 John 5–6**

***5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; 6 which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:***

Apparently, whatever we do for the brethren (saints) we are ALSO to do for strangers. Furthermore, we are not only to 'receive' (welcome) strangers, but we are to 'send them forward' or give them something to take with them on their journey!

In summary...

***The Gift: GIVING***

***The Attitude: with GENEROSITY***

***The Way: to SAINTS AND STRANGERS***

We come now to the fourth and final gift in verse 8.

## **THE GIFT OF EXHORTATION**

***Romans 12:8***

***<sup>8</sup> Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation:***

***The Gift of Exhortation***

***The ability to encourage others to ACT ON GOD'S WORD (i.e. to live out their obedience).***

Paul commands those who have been given the gift of exhortation to "wait on their gift."

***Romans 12:7–8***

***<sup>7</sup> Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;***

***<sup>8</sup> Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation:***

The words "wait on" means to give (or devote) yourself to a thing.

Now, Paul could have given this command concerning ANY gift. However, he choose to emphasize this in connection with the gift of exhortation.

Why? Those with the gift of exhortation might be tempted to abandon this gift because...

- i. Exhortation is not as visible (or glamorous) as other gifts.
- ii. Exhortation requires a little more work (or effort) in order to see results.

For these reasons Paul says, "Stick with it!"

Lastly, Paul gives us a few details on how the gift of exhortation should be exercised.

**Romans 12:12**

***12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;***

Here Paul tells us HOW the gift of exhortation should be exercised. The gift of exhortation is primarily concerned with helping people to...

- a. Rejoice in hope (not just when things look promising)
- b. Remain patient in tribulation (not just in the good times)
- c. Be instant (constant) in prayer (even when answers seem delayed)

So, if we were to summarize this gift...

***The Gift: EXHORTATION***

***The Attitude: DEVOTED***

***The Way: encouraging PATIENCE, REJOICING and PRAYER***