

# UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS Part 5

## **1 Corinthians 12:1**

***1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.***

The Corinthians' *ignorance* concerning spiritual gifts had less to do with the existence of spiritual gifts (they knew spiritual gifts existed) and MORE to do with the *correct use of spiritual gifts!*

It's not enough to simply have (or operate) in the right spiritual gift. We have to operate them the right way AND with the right attitude. Moreover, these three things (operating in the *right gift*, in the *right way* and with the *right attitude*) is the key to FULLY understanding spiritual gifts! Unless we understand how to operate the right gift, the right way and with the right attitude, we will inevitably fall into error.

For example, if we ONLY focus on operating in the right gift, but fail to operate in that gift the *right way*, we will risk getting...

## **OUT OF ORDER**

### **1 Corinthians 14:40**

***40 Let all things be done decently and in order.***

When we talk about getting *out of order* we're talking about operating in spiritual gifts in a way that does not benefit others. (The Corinthians were operating in the gift of tongues, but they were doing it without an interpreter. As a result, they were operating *out of order*.)

On the other hand, if we ONLY focus in operating our gifts the right way, but fail to operate in them with the right *attitude*, we will risk getting...

## **OUT OF CHARACTER**

### **1 Corinthians 13:1–3**

***1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.***

Notice, it's possible to operate spiritual gifts the right way (with great precision), but do so with the wrong attitude (i.e. without love). When we do this we'll be guilty of operating *out of character*. Moreover, when we operate spiritual gifts *out of character*, operating in our spiritual gift will not profit us.

**Matthew 7:22–23**

***22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.***

Finally, if we ONLY focus on operating the right way and with the right attitude, but we do not make sure that we're operating the right gift, we risk getting...

## **OUT OF POSITION**

The right gift is the gift that God has assigned to me.

**1 Corinthians 12:18**

***18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.***

Notice, God has placed each of us in the Body as it has pleased Him.

Therefore, if we operate in a place that we have not been called to, we will be guilty of operating out of position.

Therefore, we want to make sure that we're always IN POSITION, IN ORDER, and IN CHARACTER. Paul actually goes into great detail regarding these three facets of spiritual gifts in [Romans 12](#).

For example, in [Romans 12:6-8](#) Paul lists 7 spiritual gifts (beginning with the gift of prophecy and ending with the gift of mercy). Also, after each spiritual gift he includes the right attitude one must have when operating that particularly gift. Finally, in the verses that follow (verses 9-15), Paul gives 7 different admonitions. At first glance, these appear to be random admonitions. However, when we examine them further we discover that they represent the right WAY each spiritual gift is to be exercised!

Let's look at these starting in REVERSE order.

**Romans 12:8**

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

The last gift Paul lists in [Romans 12](#) is...

## **THE GIFT OF MERCY**

**The ability to show care and concern to others**, particularly in *difficult* times.

We're also told the RIGHT ATTITUDE to have when operating this spiritual gift.

### **Romans 12:8**

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

Notice, those who operate in the gift of mercy must do so *cheerfully*. The word 'cheerfully' also appears in [2Corinthians 9:7](#) ("God loves a cheerful giver"). Thus, doing something cheerfully means to do it *without resentment*.

Lastly, we are given the RIGHT WAY to exercise this gift.

### **Romans 12:15**

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

In other words, we are to exercise the gift of mercy through empathy (rejoicing WITH THEM that rejoice, and weeping WITH THEM that weep.). Empathy is not, "I'm happy FOR you," or "I'm sad FOR you." Empathy is, "I'm happy WITH you" or "I'm sad WITH you!"

Also, empathy is not about "explaining why" someone feels a certain way, nor is it about "trying to fix" what's going on. Instead, empathy is simply making sure the person is not alone in their pain, sorrow or even their happiness!

Therefore, we can summarize the gift of mercy this way...

**THE GIFT:** *Mercy*

**THE ATTITUDE:** *Cheerful (or without resentment)*

**THE WAY:** *With Empathy*

Again, working backwards, the next gift on Paul's list is also found in **Romans 12:8**.

### **Romans 12:8**

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

## **THE GIFT TO RULE**

**The ability to lead, guide and direct the actions of others.**

Paul refers to this gift in 1 Corinthians 12:28 as ‘governments’. ‘Governments’ means to steer or to pilot a ship.

We’re also told the PROPER ATTITUDE when operating in this gift.

***Romans 12:8***

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

The word ‘diligence’ means with intense effort and hard work (enthusiasm). Thus, ‘ruling’ (or leadership) is work. It’s simply a *different kind* of hard work.

Finally, we are also told the RIGHT WAY this gift is to be exercised.

***Romans 12:14***

***14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.***

Leaders are reminded that, even though they may be persecuted, to always bless, and not curse. In other words, leaders are not to use their position for revenge!

To summarize the gift of ruling (leadership) we might say...

**THE GIFT:** *Rule (Leadership)*

**THE ATTITUDE:** *With Diligence*

**THE WAY:** *Without Revenge*

[Romans 12](#) reminds us that to truly operate in spiritual gifts *with understanding*, we must ensure that we’re operating the *right gift* the *right way* with the *right attitude*! Moreover, to avoid getting **out of order** when operating spiritual gifts, we must ask ourselves, “How am I serving?” To avoid being **out of position** when operating spiritual gifts, we must ask ourselves, “Where am I serving?” And, to avoid getting **out of character** when operating in spiritual gifts, we must ask ourselves, “Who am I when I’m serving?”