

UNWRAPPING YOUR PRESENTS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

Part One

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. Being filled by the Spirit and the characteristics of being filled:
- B. The purpose for the Spirit's filling:

II. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT INTRODUCED: (*See 1 Cor. 12*)

- A. Defining spiritual gifts: "Spiritual gifts are special abilities that allow me to function in the local church with ease and success. At the moment of salvation, they are given by the Holy Spirit and each born again believer has at least one. Since it is an unconditional gift, it cannot be lost but it can be misused." *Charles Swindoll*
- B. Differences between talents and spiritual gifts:
 - 1. Talents are special abilities prior to salvation that can be lost by abuse, misuse or neglect. They are designed, under the Holy Spirit's direction, to exalt Christ, rather than to carnally promote self, in the local church. (*See Jn. 15:26; 16:14*)
 - 2. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given at the moment of salvation and cannot be lost either by abuse or misuse since they have been given unconditionally. The inherent danger is that a believer can exercise them without being Holy Spirit filled as was the case in Corinth. (*See 1 Cor. 3:1-4*)
- C. There are five reasons for the Holy Spirit giving believers spiritual gifts:
 - 1. To exalt exclusively the person and work of Jesus Christ at the expense of self:
 - 2. For the local church to have all the necessary parts to function as an autonomous entity in any culture throughout the world: (*See 1 Cor. 12:14-20*)
 - 3. To humble every member to take the initiative and be a participant rather than a spectator in serving each other in the local church, the way a physical body functions: (*See 1 Cor. 12:20-24*)
 - 4. To force each member to sincerely need others and join with others in ministry embracing the fact that more can be done together in the local church than can be done individually:
 - 5. To unify the local church for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel in the community and throughout the world: (*See 1 Cor. 12:25; Jn. 17:11b, 21-22*)
- D. Spiritual gift lists in the Bible: (*See 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-30; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:11*)
- E. Three different groups of spiritual gifts:
 - 1. Service gifts: "Service gifts are the maintenance gifts that ministers to others behind the scenes and are rarely publicly acknowledged. They repair what is broken and lubricate the moving parts of the local church so everything functions harmoniously. The majority of believers have at least one of these gifts, yet they are rarely discovered because they are not as glamorous as the support or sign gifts, and therefore carnally overlooked. Only someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit will value them in others and in themselves.
 - 2. Support gifts: "Support gifts involve the ministry of the Scriptures. These gifts are given more authority and honor than most of the other gifts, so they have greater appeal to those carnally

minded. They are public scriptural gifts that do the shaping and building of the local church. Once again, the balance of Scripture is on display. The Holy Spirit knew that for the local church to reach any level of maturity in drawing others to Christ, it would need a maintenance ministry done to existing parts (service gifts), while conducting an aggressive building ministry (support gifts), to expand and further equip the local church in effectively "reaching their world for Christ". Every local church must have both maintenance ministry and a building ministry going on, or it will soon become a lifeless church of spectators."

3. Sign gifts: "Sign gifts were super-human abilities that altered the laws of nature. They were the most sought after gifts by those living in carnality, because of how it placed them in the spotlight with both believers and unbelievers. These gifts were given by the Holy Spirit so local church leaders could authenticate God's spokesman with the absence of the completed Word of God. Local church leaders could check out both the teacher and his message with these gifts being exercised. They, for the most part, were no longer needed after healthy local churches were multiplying, and God's Word complete in written form."

F. Admonishing regarding spiritual gifts:

1. Don't be "ignorant" concerning gifts. (*See 1 Cor. 12:1*)
2. "Stir up" (keep on stirring) your spiritual gifts as bellows do a fire. The idea is to follow through on your commitments so that your gifts will be practiced regularly, successfully, and joyfully. God will then be using you to glue this local church together, rather than fragmenting it. The key word here is "faithfulness."
3. "Don't neglect" your spiritual gift. When you find out what your gifts are, be diligent to faithfully practice them week in and week out, so you will be the unifying enabler of your local church's ministry. You can't loose, outgrow or retire from implementing them, since they are purposely given by the Holy Spirit to equip you for a lifetime of service in a local body of believers.

III. PRINCIPLES TO PERSONALLY APPLY:

(Together becoming "people of the Word" in principle AND in practice)

- A. Every believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit to be a choice part, each and every week, of the ministry in his local church.
- B. As you faithfully exercise your spiritual gifts in the local church, joy and peace will "referee" as to whether it is taking place in the flesh or as a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit.