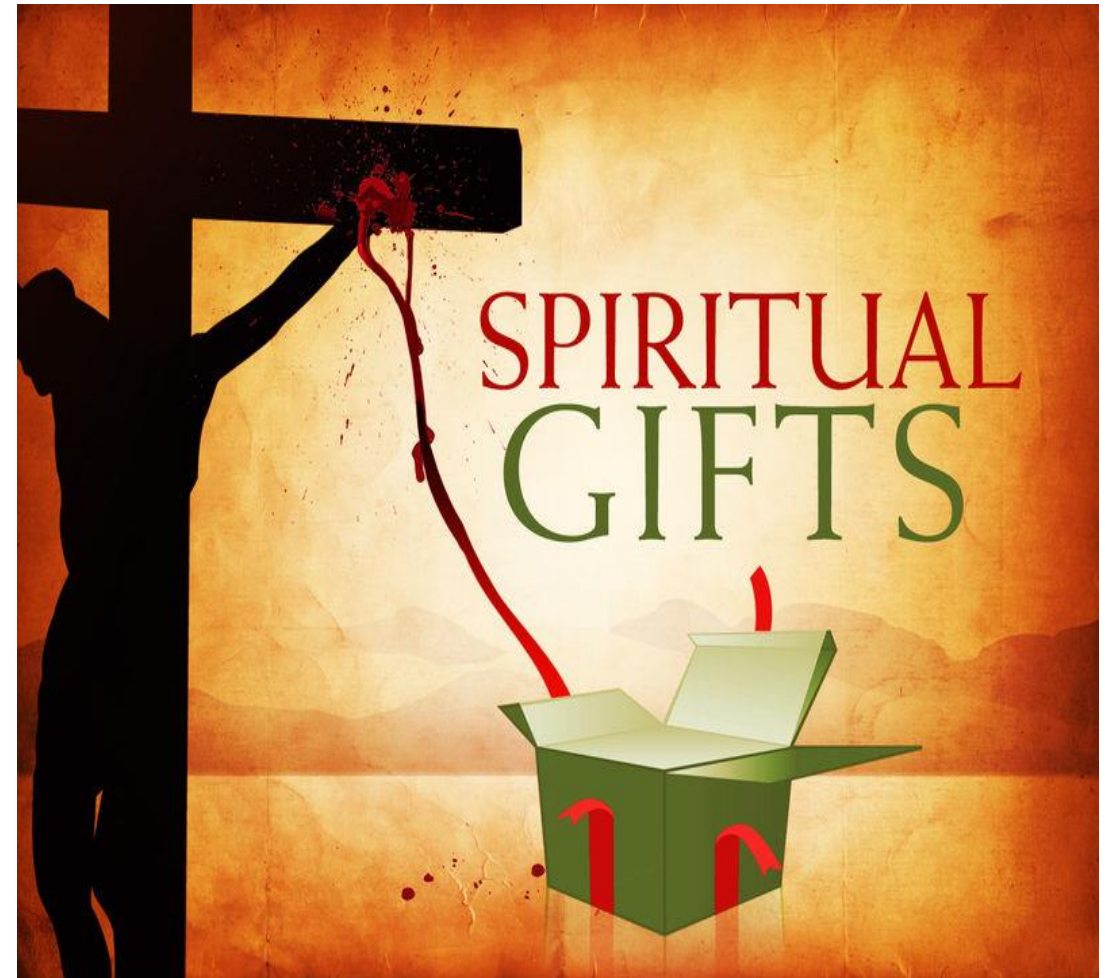


What every Christian Ought To Know.
#10 HOW TO DISCOVER HIS SPIRITUAL GIFT.

- Notice (Rom. 12:6-8) *“Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”*



AN INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Notice (1 Cor. 12:1) *“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.”* (IGNORANT)
- A spiritual gift may be linked to a “natural” talent, but it goes beyond natural talents. A Christian is **“SUPERNATURAL.”** These gifts are not **EARNED**, nor are they **LEARNED**. They are the Supernatural **“GIFTS OF GRACE.”**
- Nothing has been more abused in our modern time, and nothing more misunderstood in Evangelicalism than this whole area of **“SPIRITUAL GIFTS.”** And it is critical that we understand it because it is absolutely vital to the life of the Church. There is nothing that is any more vital, apart from the divine energy of God Himself, than the ministry that the believers have by way of their spiritual gifts, or their endowments from God for ministry.

- There are **THREE** categories of gifts. There are **SIGN** gifts, there are **SPEAKING** gifts, and there are **SERVING** gifts. That's easy to remember, each with an "**S,**" **sign, speaking, serving.**
- **SIGN GIFTS** were intended for a reason, for signs pointing to something very significant.
- They were unique to the time of the apostles. They were unique to the New Testament age. They were unique to the establishing of the new covenant, to the time when Israel rejected the Messiah, when the apostles' teaching **NEEDED TO BE AUTHENTICATED.**
- They were unique to the time of the writing of Scripture. That's why they are called in **2 Corinthians 12:12** **special gifts** or **signs** that belong to an apostle. ***“The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.”*** So, the sign gifts, or the miracle gifts, tongues and healing and miracles and so forth, interpretation of tongues, those miracle gifts were for the **APOSTOLIC PERIOD.**

- These gifts are also referred to in (Heb. 2:4) *“God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”* Also, in (Mk. 16:20) *“And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”*
- **SIGN GIFTS** attended the works of the apostles so that the people would **KNOW that they were from God**. There was no Bible. There was no New Testament to compare their teaching with, so it was the miracles that **“AUTHENTICATED”** them.
- Sign gifts are included in (1 Cor. 12) where Paul talks about the gifts. (1 Cor. 12) was written about 54 A.D., 54 in the year of our Lord, after Christ's birth. By 58, Romans is written. And what is intriguing is that in Paul's list of gifts in **Romans**, unlike his list of gifts in Corinthians, **none** of the miraculous/**sign** gifts is mentioned. They were very much a part of the list of 1 Corinthians a few years earlier. They are **not mentioned** at all in the list in Romans.
- Spiritual gifts are also found in **Ephesians**, written about 63 A.D. and **they're not mentioned there**. And you find (1 Peter 4) mentioning the gifts and that's in 66 A.D. and **they're none of them either**.

- You can see even in the sequence of New Testament books that there was a ***DIMINISHING OF THOSE GIFTS.***
- If the sign gifts have passed away with the apostles, what is left? Notice (**1 Pet. 4:10**), "**As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**"
- You've been given gifts by God's grace, as you have received a gift, minister it as a good steward. You don't **OWN** your gift; you only **MANAGE** it for God. It's His. So, as you've received it, **USE IT FOR HIS GLORY.**
- Then the Lord divides those gifts into two kinds. **Notice verse 11. "*Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies..*"** And he divides the gifts into those **two** categories: **speaking gifts** and **serving gifts**, says nothing about **SIGN** gifts, which **again** were **UNIQUE, TO THE APOSTOLIC ERA.**

- In **(Rom. 12)**, there's no mention of the **sign gifts**. Paul is giving instruction here for the ongoing life of the church. There's no need to correct the Roman church as there was need to correct the Corinthian church because they were misusing, counterfeiting and abusing those sign gifts. But that is not the issue in Romans and when he speaks here to the ongoing life of the church, he says nothing about the sign gifts, as **Ephesians** says nothing about it, as **1 Peter** says nothing about it.
- So basically, we are left with **TWO CATEGORIES OF GIFTS**;
 1. **THE SPEAKING GIFTS**, such as **PROPHECY, TEACHING** and **EXHORTATION**.
 2. **THE SERVING GIFTS** such as **SERVING, GIVING, LEADING**, and **SHOWING MERCY**.
- ***Paul leaves out the sign gifts*** because they have an end to them. **WHY?** Because they belong to a unique era and not the ongoing life of the church. And his instruction here for the ongoing ministry of the church does not include them.

THE SPEAKING GIFTS-PROPHECY

- Prophecy: Notice (Rom. 12:6) "if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;"
- To often prophecy is misunderstood. It's basically the gift of **PREACHING**, of *proclaiming*. There are people who believe that it is a supernatural apostolic gift that has ceased. That is simply **NOT TRUE** because of its inclusion in (**Rom. 12**), and (**1 Cor.**) where the sign gifts are listed.
- Now **PROPHECY** is a very important gift, In fact, the apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians said the most about prophecy and tongues. The reason being if you'll remember, **TONGUES** was being **ABUSED** and **PROPHECY NEGLECTED**.
- But it's an essential gift. Do you remember (**1 Cor. 14: 1-5**) "**Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophecy.** **2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit, he speaks mysteries.**

- **3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. 4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. 5 Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.” Paul really puts the emphasis on the IMPORTANCE OF PROPHECY.**
- Now the **GREEK TERM “PROPHECY”** tells us exactly what it means. It is the term *prophteia*. The verb is *prophteu*. It simply means to **“SPEAK PUBLICLY, TO SPEAK BEFORE, LITERALLY.”** Before what? Before people, to get up and speak. That's all it means. There's Nothing mystical, or supernatural in that sense. It simply means to speak before people. It is the gift of public speaking.

- Now prophecy may be included in a supernatural way, like a prophet of the O.T. or the N.T. Their primary purpose was “**FORTHTELLING**, and **FORETELLING**, the **FUTURE**.” But its primary significance is **PUBLIC SPEAKING**. In the O.T, you will find that prophets

1. **INSTRUCTED.**

2. **EXHORTED.**

3. **WARNED.**

4. **REBUKED.**

5. **ENCOURAGED.**

6. **THEY STRESSED DUTY.**

7. **OBEDIENCE.**

8. REPENTANCE.

9. THEY PROMOTED REVERENCE.

10. THEY CALLED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

11. THEY CONDEMNED SIN.


12. THEY WARNED ABOUT JUDGMENT.

13. THEY PROMISED BLESSING.

- It wasn't always brand-new revelation. It was simply public speaking in giving forth the message of God. Their emphasis usually was in a practical application, making the Word of God relevant to life. They were relevant communicators of God's Word.
- The best definition anywhere of the *prophetic gift* is found in (1 Cor. 14:3) **“But one who prophesies speaks to men...”** That's what the prophecy gift is, it's a **SPEAKING-TO-MEN GIFT.**

- This speaking gift is mentioned in (1 Pet. 4:11) "**Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances (oracles) of God;**" It's a speaking gift that uses the **WORD OF GOD FOR ITS CONTENT.**
- **EXAMPLE:** When God called Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt in (Ex. 4-7:1) Moses said I can't do it, I can't speak publicly. God said to him in
- (Ex. 4:14-16) "**Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 "You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. 16 "Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him." Notice 7:1 "and your brother Aaron shall be your **PROPHET.**"**
- In other word's, Aaron will be your ***public speaker***. He was not a supernatural prophet; He was just a man who **STOOD IN FRONT OF PEOPLE AND SPOKE.**

- **THERE ARE OTHER EXAMPLES FOUND IN THE O.T.**
- **(Num. 11:25-26,) (1 Kings. 18:29,) and (1 Chron. 25:2-3)** and then, we see it in **(Matt. 7:22)** where many people are going to stand at the judgment and say, ***“...‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name,”*** We've been Your preachers, we've been Your public speakers, we've stood up in front of crowds and spoken on Your behalf. So, Aaron was going to be Moses' speechmaker. That's the idea.
- Again, looking back at **(1 Cor. 14:3)** really sums it up beautifully. It says, ***“he that prophesies speaks unto men.”*** **FOR WHAT PURPOSE?**
 1. For ***EDIFICATION:*** To build them up.
 2. For ***EXHORTATION:*** To challenge them to obedience.
 3. For ***COMFORT:*** To comfort them in time of need.

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- It isn't necessarily for telling the future. It isn't necessarily supernatural revelation. It is public speaking with the purpose of building up, challenging to obedience and comforting. And the content of it is the oracles of God. It may be to **UNBELIEVERS**. It may be to **BELIEVERS**.
 - **IT IS A PUBLIC SPEAKING GIFT, *PROCLAIMING* THE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD.**
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