GIFTS OF GRACE

Discovering and Using Our Spiritual Gifts

EMPOWER BIBLE STUDY

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LESSON 2

Making a List, Checking It Twice: What Are the New Testament Spiritual Gifts?

Summarized Working Definition of "Spiritual Gift":
"A supernatural ability given by grace empowering believers for service and displaying the presence of God in our lives."* Or: *"A God-given ability to serve the church effectively."

- **WHAT KINDS OF GIFTS HAS GOD GIVEN TO US?**
  Having come to an understanding of the *nature* of spiritual gifts in Lesson 1, we now seek to find exactly what gifts God has given. No one biblical passage offers a complete list of the gifts. Peter identified speaking, serving, and hospitality. Paul wrote about the gifts in his letters to the churches at Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus. Let's compare all these texts on spiritual gifts.

- **VARIOUS NEW TESTAMENT LISTS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

  - **Paul's short list is *Ephesians 4:11*: *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, & teachers*.**

    - ***Note:*** We find the gifts of *evangelist* and *pastor-teacher* only here. Some laypersons may be uncomfortable identifying themselves with the terms *evangelist* and *pastor,* which they associate with full-time ministers. Yet, we should understand that *evangelism* and *pastoring/shepherding* are gifts that God gives to laypersons as well.

    - How do we get from *pastor* to *shepherding?* Greek *poimen* = Latin *pastores* = English *pastor.* They all mean *shepherd.* This gift *per se* is not restricted to vocational pastors.

  - **Paul lists seven more gifts in *Romans 12:6-8*: *prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, ruling, showing mercy.***

    - ***Note:*** These words appear in different places in the English New Testament with slight differences in wording. So that we will all be talking about the same thing in this study, we will use these terms: *prophecy, service* (sometimes translated "ministry"), *teaching, exhortation* (meaning "encouragement"), *giving*, *leadership* (often translated "ruling," but literally meaning "leading"), and *mercy.*

  - **Paul included two lists when he wrote to the Corinthian church. The first list appears in *1 Corinthians 12:8-10*: *word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues [languages], interpreting tongues.***

    - ***Note:*** Of the nine gifts in this passage, all but *prophecy* are found only in this list. Some of the Corinthians thought *wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, discerning of spirits, tongues,* and *interpretation of tongues* were the best gifts. They thought these

"sign gifts" distinguished those who were "really spiritual" from those who were not. Paul's primary purpose in 1 Corinthians 12-14 is to correct that notion.

- **Look at *1 Corinthians 12:28-31* for Paul's final listing of gifts: *apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healings, helps [helping], governments [administration], tongues.***

  - ***Note:*** Only two gifts that we have not already identified are included here: *helps* and *governments*. Some Bible scholars equate the gifts of *helps* and *governments/administration* with the gifts of *service/ministry* and *leadership/ruling* in Romans 12. Although there are similarities in these terms, the New Testament Greek words are all different; so we should treat them as four separate gifts.

COMPOSITE LIST

Compiling all the lists, we find the following ***21 separate gifts*** in the New Testament*:

1. ***Apostleship***
2. ***Prophecy***
3. ***Evangelism***
4. ***Shepherding (Pastoring)***
5. ***Service (Ministry)***
6. ***Teaching***
7. ***Exhortation***
8. ***Giving***
9. ***Leadership (Ruling)***
10. ***Mercy***
11. ***Wisdom***
12. ***Knowledge***
13. ***Faith***
14. ***Healing***
15. ***Miracles***
16. ***Discernment***
17. ***Languages***
18. ***Interpretation***
19. ***Helping***
20. ***Administration (Governing)***
21. ***Hospitality***

** This list includes the gift of hospitality from 1 Peter 4:9 that we observed in Lesson 1.*

SOME QUESTIONS & OBSERVATIONS

- ***Key List?***
- ***Overlap?***
- ***Complete Lists?***

A COMPLETE PICTURE OF JESUS AND HIS CHURCH

- When Jesus was on earth, He was equipped with every spiritual gift (Colossians 1:18-19).
- When Jesus ascended to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit as He had promised, Jesus distributed His gifts throughout His new body, the church.
- God wants our community to see a clear, complete, and compelling picture of everything *Jesus* is and does. They can only experience the fullness of *Jesus* in the context of a local church where all members are exercising the gifts bestowed on them by the risen Christ.

CONCLUSION

Review the verses and lists of spiritual gifts. Ask God to reveal your gifts to you as we progress through this study. Pray and pledge to use your gifts to serve others and build God's church.

