

Strength Through The Storms #13

God's Gifts

1 Corinthians 12.1-7

April 21, 2024

I suspect that most of us are not opposed to receiving gifts. I know it can be awkward, but gifts can be a good thing. They often express the love and or appreciation of the giver.

The greatest gift ever given is the gift of eternal life. Jesus spoke of this gift to the woman at the well.

John 4.10 Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

Paul wrote about that greatest gift...

Romans 6.23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2.8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Remember that a gift is not earned. If you earn it, it is a wage. Gifts are freely given – supposedly without stings.

Eternal life is just one of the many gifts God gives to us. We could not begin to identify all the gifts that God gives to people that comes automatically with salvation. These are known as SPIRITUAL GIFTS, which will be our focus today – in a general way. The title of the message is GOD’S GIFTS.

Read 1 Cor. 12.1-3

The first thing we need to see is what He says...

I. CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. That word “**concerning**” occurs in verse 1 in the NASB and KJV. The word is “**about**” in the NIV, and regarding in the NLT.
2. Notice that he says that this is something we must not be “**unaware**” of or ignorant of.
3. In spite of our pride, we must admit that we do not know everything. (**You may want to argue about that!**) To prove my point how many of you can tell me about...

Hob, Huz, Aziza, Carcas, Chalcol, Elihoreph? – Their names are in Scripture.

4. In the grand scheme of things, it is likely that you will not need to know who those

people are. I suspect you will not even need to know them to win Bible Trivia – although if they weren't important, they would not be in the Bible.

5. There is likely much in the Bible that you read and forget. You may not be able to recall names or places, BUT there are some things in the Bible which you need to not only know about but know well.
6. CONCERNING spiritual gifts, there are some very important things you need to KNOW.

1 Cor. 12.1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.

7. You need to know your own condition before you were saved. Paul says that you were a “pagan.”

8. Before you became a believer you could say (like Paul probably did before his conversion) “**Jesus is accursed.**” You won’t say that after becoming a Christian because of the Holy Spirit.
9. When you are genuinely a Christian you will say “**Jesus is Lord**” and really mean it because of the Holy Spirit. You can say it and not be a Christian, but you will be speaking a lie.
10. CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, you need some education, knowledge and retention which will come through the Holy Spirit.
11. Spiritual gifts are something you need to **KNOW** about intellectually and by experience.

They are necessary to do the ministry of the church.... Spiritual needs can only be met spiritually.

Spiritual Problem--Spiritual Cure

I picked up a recent book which I received from the AACCC Convention called "Caring for People God's Way." The book is written by three people Tim Clinton, Archibald Hart and George Ohlschlager. The book is considered a new guide for Christian Counseling and is designed to help Christian Counselors assist people in the healing process as God helps them through the healing process. The book paints a picture of how sick our current society is and the need -- the importance of becoming Christians who care for the sick God's way. They open the book with this thought:

When good King Josiah dies around 609 B.C. Israel was prosperous, strong, and safe in the world. Yet the people of Israel quickly declined both morally and spiritually, and their leaders grew corrupt. The whole nation refused to hear the prophets God sent, including Jeremiah, to call them to repentance and restoration. Amid the ongoing search for the good life, a great terror was about to befall them-the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the forced slavery of the Jews by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. -- but they would not turn their hearts. Jeremiah 6:14 captures the essence of that day, "They have healed the brokenness of my people superficially, saying, 'peace, peace,' but there is no peace" (NASB).

Interestingly, as today's prosperous generations search for purpose,

meaning and value, many are experiencing a pervasive sense of emptiness and isolation. And why shouldn't they? In a world flooded with distresses like father absence, abuse, violence, marital discord, and emotional problems there is a natural epidemic of escapism through consumerism, drugs, alcohol, sex, and suicide. Earnest Becker accents this thought concluding, "Modern man is drinking or drugging himself to death...or he is shopping which is the same thing." Living in denial, today's powerful and pampered generations have become 'tranquilized by the trivial,' though they find neither solace nor healing --crying "Peace, peace,' but there is no peace." Dallas Willard concludes, "Obviously, the problem is a spiritual one. And so must be the cure."

We agree. Our pressing concern at the inception of the 21st century is that people are hurting-and searching frantically for hope and new life. If there is ever a time for godly leadership, servanthood and biblical counsel, it is now." (Pages 3, 4).

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12. The second thing about spiritual gifts is the...

II. COMBINATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Read 1 Cor. 12.4-6

1. There is only one Holy Spirit, but there is a variety of spiritual gifts.

KJV: "diversities of gifts"

NIV: "different kinds of gifts"

2. Before we go further, we need to understand what a spiritual gift is. In verse 1 the word

“gift” is not in the Greek. It is inserted to make sense. We know that spiritual **“gifts”** is the subject because that word **“gift”** is found in verse 4.

3. **The Greek word translated gifts is really a good word to know. The Greek word here is “charismaton.”**
4. **The root word is “charis” which is translated “grace.” (I knew a guy who named his daughter Charis – a beautiful name and a beautiful word.)**
5. **“Charis” comes from the word “chairō” which means “to rejoice,” or cause joy. Grace is a favor or kind, joyful expression of God that is not earned or deserved. It means “unmerited favor.”**
6. **The Greek word in our text is “charisma” which means “a divine gratuity, a**

spiritual endorsement, or miraculous activity.

7. A spiritual gift is a supernatural gift or endowment given to an individual which God chooses. It is not necessarily based on talent but could be something that takes that talent to the next level.

Talents can be used by God, everything should be used for the glory of God - 1 Cor. 10.31 ...do all to the glory of God.

THE KNACK

As most of you probably know, I like computers. When we were in South Dakota, our Director of Missions was always calling me for help with computer things. He would sometimes get a new program and install it on the office computer, and then, he couldn't figure out how to use it. So, he'd call

me for help. I'd go to the office, sit down at the computer, and run the program. It would be a program that I'd never seen before. I'd ask him, "What do you want to do first?" He'd tell me, and I'd start clicking certain places and find what it was he wanted to do, and figure out the steps he had to take to get done what he wanted to do. It's like I've got a knack for some of that. I'm not ready to call that a spiritual gift, but God has given that ability to me, and I can help when people have some computer questions.

So, an easy way to explain spiritual gifts is that they're kind of like us having a knack for doing something, but it's a God-given and Spirit-empowered ability that God wants us to use to minister to others in the church, and to advance His kingdom.

8. Every child of God has at least one, and possibly more spiritual gifts which they received at the point of salvation, though it may be a while before they can identify it.
9. Just as each believer is a unique part of the body of Christ, we do not all have the same spiritual gifts.
10. We are not going to get into specific spiritual gifts today, the Bible mentions the following:

Knowledge	Exhortation	Service/Helps
Wisdom	Shepherding	Mercy
Prophecy	Faith	Giving
Discernment	Evangelism	Hospitality

11. This is not an exhaustive list, and there are likely other gifts that are not specifically mentioned in Scripture.

12. Understand that there are a variety, or COMBINATION of spiritual gifts, and God chooses which gifts to give to each person. All are important – none are necessarily more important than others. (1 Cor 12.31)
13. Even though you may not have a specific gift, does not mean that you are not given the task associated with the gift.
14. For example, not everybody has the gift of evangelism, but we are all to evangelize. The same thing is true in all the others to some extent.
15. Why are there a “**variety**” of gifts?

1 Cor. 12.5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

There are different ministries that require different gifts.

16. Notice verse 6:

NASB: “...varieties of effects...”

KJV: “...diversities of operations...”

NIV: “...different kinds of working...”

NLT: “...God works in different ways...”

17. **The Greek word translated “effects” is “energema” which is where our word “energy” comes from.**

18. Not only are spiritual gifts supernaturally acquired, but they are also supernaturally energized for their purpose.

19. Finally, we need to understand that spiritual gifts are given for...

III. THE COMMON GOOD

1. Look at what God says in verse 7.

1 Cor. 12.7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

2. **That word “manifestation” means “to make known.”**
3. The Holy Spirit’s ministry is “**made known**” and to be exercised for the common good.
4. Spiritual gifts are not for the exaltation of the believer. They certainly are nothing to brag about, because you didn’t have anything to do with your spiritual gift. It is a grace gift freely given to you by God.
5. The “**common good**” means that your gift is to be used for and result in the common good of the church.

Get Off The Bench And Get In The Game!

A well-known coach was once asked,

“How much does college football contribute to the national physical-fitness picture?”

“Nothing,” the coach replied abruptly.

“Why not?” the startled interviewer asked.

“Well,” said the coach, “the way I see it, you have 22 men down on the field desperately needing a rest and 40,000 people in the stands, desperately needing some exercise.”

A similar situation exists in many churches today. When you compare the members who actively participate,

you often find a rather pathetic situation. It's not unusual to have a small group of diligent Christian workers struggling "down on the field" while others in the congregation are acting like spectators, "sitting on the sidelines, eating hot dogs and popcorn."

God's strategy for the accomplishment of His program is not like a sports event. It does not call for the job to be done only by the "professionals." In the game of life, all believers have their own positions and spiritual gifts that they must exercise "for the profit of all" (1 Cor. 12:7).

My friend, if you've been sitting in the stands, you're badly needed down on the field!

- M R De Haan II

6. Your gift is not necessarily restricted to the local church but can and should extend to the church at large – the universal church and the kingdom of God.

Conclusion

Do you have a spiritual gift? If you are a Christian, the answer is clearly yes! God has gifted you for the purpose of serving Him. Are you doing that?

You do not have a spiritual gift if you are not a Christian. You may have great natural talent – but not a supernatural spiritual gift. If you are not a Christian, I challenge you to give your heart and life to Christ today.

Prayer