

“INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS”

1. Some Important Distinctions.
 - A. The phrase, “**the gift of the Holy Spirit,**” relates to salvation and refers to the permanent indwelling of God the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 10:45).
 - B. The phrase, “the gifts of the Holy Spirit,” relates to service and has to do with the energizing or enabling power of the Holy Spirit behind the exercise of spiritual gifts.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 12:7 say’s, “**But to each one** [e(/kasto)j (hekastos)- *each and every one*; meaning absolutely each and every believer] **is given the manifestation** [fane/rwsij (phanerosis)- an outward *evidencing*, active *exhibition* or *expression*; denotes / function of one’s spiritual gift] **of the Spirit for the common good** [‘common good’ is from *sumphero*, lit.,- *that which is profitable*; *sumphero* refers to the building up, strengthening and edification of / Body of Christ].”
 - 2) Look down to v. 11-- “**But one and the same Spirit works** [pres. act. ind. of e)nerge/w (energeo)- *energizes*] **all these things** [spiritual gifts], **distributing to each one** [believer] **individually just as He wills** [pres. act. ind. of bou/lomai (boulomai)- *will, decree, appoint*; / choice of this verb indicates careful and intelligent planning on / part of / HS when He selected / recipient of each particular gift in eternity past; / gifts are distributed *in time*, however, where they will benefit and function to / greatest degree].”
 - Principle:** There can be no *spiritual* gift until one first possesses the “**gift**” of salvation and the indwelling of the HS. The point is that no one has a spiritual gift before salvation.
 - C. Jesus gave the Church gifted men, but it is the *HS* who makes men and women “gifted” spiritually-- 1 Corinthians 12:11.
 - D. Let’s see if we can clarify this. According to Ephesians 4:8 Jesus gave the Church-- His Body-- gifted men, as a *general provision* at His ascension. Our Lord knew that in His absence She, meaning the Church, would need three things: authority, leadership and communication. It was these things He provided for through the spiritual gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11.
 - 1) **Authority**-- The authority of the apostles functioned till the absolute authority of the Word had been established in writing.
 - 2) **Leadership**-- for guidance, direction and oversight. This includes protection, caring for, and nurturing-- the job of the shepherd.
 - 3) **Communication**-- as the very *foundation* of her existence, for communication of the Word is the root from which all spiritual fruit is borne.
2. Spiritual Gifts and Unity.

- A. There is one Spirit who sovereignly bestows all spiritual gifts-- 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7 and 11.

In a context dealing with the abuse of spiritual gifts in Corinth Paul begins to lay down for us in 1 Corinthians 12 some of the principles governing them in the Age of Grace. In v. 4 he says, “**Now there are varieties** [diai/resij (dairesis)- *diversity*, distinction, *difference*] **of** [spiritual] **gifts** [xa/risma (charisma), / root of which is *charis*- ‘grace;’ it means- *a gift* freely and graciously given; used in / Word of God and in Christian literature *only* of gifts of divine grace], **but the same Spirit.**”

- B. There is one Lord over all the gifts-- 1 Corinthians 12:5. From the proper function of the gift bestowed on each believer will come service, *ministry*.

- 1) He continues in v. 5, “**And** [in addition to / fact that there are diversities and distinctions in / gifts themselves] **there are varieties** [same word as v. 4] **of ministries** [diakoni/a (diakonia)- *service*, function, *ministry*; refers, by way of application, to ministry types *and* locations], **and the same Lord** [Jesus Christ].”
- 2) Because every believer in the Church Age is a member of the Body of Christ, all Christian service is a continuation of the things that Jesus “**began to do and teach,**” Acts 1:1, during His incarnation on the earth.

- C. There is one God who makes the gifts effective, and it is He *alone* who is responsible for their impact *and* their results. You know what this does? If we understand this principle, if we believe and apply this principle, it makes the denominational numbers racket useless and obsolete!

- 1) V. 6 says, “**And there are varieties** [same word as vv. 4-5] **of effects** [results], **but the same God** [/ Father] **who works all things in all** {persons [e]nerge/w (energeo)- *work, energize, produce something in someone*.}” This means that the responsibility for the effects, or results, achieved from ministry belongs to God the Father.
- 2) Ministry will produce results, it will produce effects. *Energeo* is the Greek root of the words “**effects**” and “**works**” in v. 6. God is the power behind both.

- D. All spiritual gifts have one goal and purpose-- to edify, build up and strengthen the Body of Christ-- 1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:12-13.

- E. All gifts work by one motivation: love-- personal love for God the Father (motivational virtue) and impersonal love for all mankind (functional virtue).

In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul writes, “**If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have {the gift of} prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed {the poor,} and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.**”

3. Description of the Gifts.

- A. A spiritual gift is the divine *enablement* or *capacity* given to each believer for accomplishing a specific area of service in the edification of the Body of Christ-- Ephesians 4:7-16.
- B. Each spiritual gift is sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit at salvation; in this way His engifting of each believer is personalized-- cf. 1 Cor. 12:7 and 11.
- C. Just as the believer's salvation is eternally secure, so is his spiritual gift. Romans 11:29 say's, "**for the gifts and the calling of God are *irrevocable*.**"

Definition: Irrevocable means *not* to be revoked or recalled; incapable of being retracted; unalterable, *immutable*.

Principle: The believer can never lose his spiritual gift or have it taken away from him.

- D. Twenty different categories of spiritual gifts are mentioned in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. Ten of these are *temporary* in nature: Apostle, Prophet, Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Discerning of Spirits, Faith, Healings, Miracles, Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues; and ten are *permanent*: Pastor-Teacher, Evangelist, Teacher, Helps, Mercy, Giving, Exhortation, Service, Administrations, Ruling. Scripture distinguishes between temporary and permanent gifts.

In 1 Corinthians 13:8 Paul wrote, that "**Love *never* fails; but if {there are gifts of} prophecy, they will be done away; if {there are} tongues, they will cease; if {there is} knowledge, it will be done away.**"

- 1) Prophecy, tongues and knowledge were temporary spiritual gifts-- supernatural in their manifestation-- which functioned in the pre-canon period of the CA. That is, before the Canon of Scripture was complete in written form.
- 2) The phrase "**will be done away**" as related to the temporary gifts of both prophecy and knowledge is from the same root verb. The 3rd p. pl. and 3rd p. sg., fut. pass. ind. of *katarge/w- abolish, wipe out, set aside*, in the passive voice it means- *bring to an end, or be caused to pass away*.
 - a. The passive voice, used with both prophecy and knowledge, means that the subject receives the action of the main verb.
 - b. Both prophecy and knowledge received the action of termination by being worked upon by an outside force. The completed Canon of Scripture became the outside force that rendered both prophecy and knowledge no longer necessary.
- 3) The verb used with the temporary gift of tongues is the 3rd person plural fut. mid. ind. of *pau/w (pauo)*, which in the middle voice means- *stop oneself, cease*. Used "of speaking in tongues, which will come to an end; 1 Cor. 13:8". *Arndt & Gingrich*, p. 638
 - a. The middle voice, used with tongues, indicates that the gift of tongues would work against itself to bring about its own termination, i.e., work itself out of a job.

- b. Tongues were a sign, a warning to unbelieving and reversionistic Israel of the impending 5th cycle of discipline-- national destruction-- Isaiah 28:11 cf. 1 Corinthians 14:21-22. Cf. 'Fulfillment of Tongues'-- 4 pp.
- c. The prophecy related to tongues was fulfilled in 70 AD Tongues as a prophetic warning had a *limited* use from the beginning and when their usefulness had run its course, tongues *ceased* in and of themselves.

In vv. 9-10 he said, **“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.”**

- 1) **“Part”** is the gen. sg. of *meros* (meros)- *partly or imperfectly*.
 - a. *Meros* is an adjective that describes divine revelation, namely, that divine revelation prior to 96 AD was partial and fragmentary.
 - b. In the pre-canon period of the CA, those who communicated doctrine by means of either the gift of knowledge *or* prophecy could do so only on the basis of what they knew. They knew **“in part,”** and consequently, they taught **“in part”**-- v. 9.
 - c. Paul is anticipating the completion of the Canon and the termination of certain temporary spiritual gifts when he declares in v. 10 that **“the partial will be done away,”** i.e., “when the Word of God is complete, the temporary gifts will be abolished, set aside.”
 - d. With the full disclosure of Scripture in 96 AD, the spiritual gifts of prophecy and knowledge were no longer necessary and subsequently abolished or brought to their end.

Conclusion: According to vv. 8 and 10 of 1 Corinthians 13, both the *functions* of the gifts and the *gifts themselves* were temporary.

- 2) The word **“perfect”** in v. 10 refers to the completed canon of Scripture. From the nom. neut. of *teleios* (teleios)- *complete, perfect*; as opposed to what is partial and limited.

The nominative case tells us that *teleios* is the subject of the sentence; but how do we know **“the perfect”** is a reference to the completed canon of Scripture and not to Jesus Christ?

- a. The use of the neuter gender indicates a complete or perfect *thing* as opposed to the masculine or feminine which would indicate a person.
- b. The neuter gender of *teleios* approximates the neuter gender of *bibli/on* or Bible.

- 3) The main principle here is that the temporary gifts functioned and existed *only prior* to the completion of the canon of Scripture.

E. In 1 Peter 4:11, Peter breaks the permanent gifts down into two types-- communication and service.

In 1 Peter 4:10-11, Peter writes to the persecuted believers of Asia Minor, “**As each one** [e(/kasto)j (hekastos)- *each and every one*] **has received a {special} gift** [xa/risma (charisma)- *a gift freely and graciously given; / technical NT term for a spiritual gift*], **employ it** [sg.; How?] **in serving one another**, [then he explains this service with / phrase:] **as good stewards** [oi)kono/moj (oikonomos), from *oikos*- ‘house,’ and *nemo*- ‘administer, arrange, distribute;’ *manager of a household or an estate*; usually a freedman or a slave given responsibility for (1) / rule and management of household affairs, (2) / care of receipts and expenditures, (3) direction of / other slaves and supervision of / children under age {both responsibilities included distributing their daily portions-- Isa. 22:15; Lk. 12:42}; *oikonomos* speaks of / proper use and disposition of something entrusted to one’s care] **of the manifold grace of God** [this is simply / *distribution of / grace that God has given you, i.e., your spiritual gift, to / other slaves, believers in / Lord Jesus Christ*]. **Whoever speaks {let him speak,} as it were** [pres. act. ind. of lale/w (laleo)- *discourse, proclaim, communicate* something; Peter uses this form of *laleo* for ‘whoever faithfully and consistently *communicates*’], **the utterances** [lo/gion (logion)- *divine communication or revelation; / same word Paul uses in Rom. 3:2 for / Jewish custodianship of divine revelation in / Age of Israel*] **of God** [emphasis here is on / fact that the one exercising a communication gift is to *laleo logion*- ‘speak the Word of God;’ this defines / scope of / communicator’s ministry in very lucid, direct and elementary terms]; **whoever serves** [*diakoneo*- ‘wait, attend upon’], **{let him do so} as by the strength which God supplies** [i/sxuj (ischus)- *inherent strength, might or power* (displayed); / strongest Greek word for power; lit.- ‘by / displayed power of God,’ His *omnipotence* manifested in / life of / believer]; **so that in all things** [/ exercise of every spiritual gift] **God may be glorified** [this gives us / *goal* of all Christian service, and reminds us of our Lord’s words in Mat. 5:16, that ‘your good works’ are to ‘...glorify your Father who is in heaven;’ if *that’s* not / goal, then it’s not *His* glory, its *ours*; Mat. 6:1 illustrates / distinction between serving God and serving *self*] **through Jesus Christ** [i.e., through / members of His Body carrying out His will], **to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

- F. Spiritual gifts must be developed and refined. This implies *preparation*, which comes through spiritual growth, and *practice*.
- G. Romans 12:6-8 emphasizes that each believer is to minister in his *own gift* and should not attempt to intrude into work that he is not gifted for.

Paul told the struggling believers in Rome, that “**...since we** [used corporately-- CA believers] **have gifts** [in / plural] **that differ according to the grace** [singular] **given to us, {let each exercise them accordingly}; if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”**

The day will come-- at the Bema Seat-- when the Lord Jesus Christ will ask each of us: “What have you done with what I gave you?”

Principle: Every believer has only one spiritual gift, but the spiritual believer can function in *any* gift area.

- 1) Gift function *outside* the realm of one’s own spiritual gift is possible, but it is always accomplished with some degree of difficulty.

- a. Each spiritual gift has a ‘function,’ and it is possible for a believer to *function* in a spiritual gift without possessing the gift.
 - b. We may designate this ‘grace function,’ as opposed to ‘gift function.’
 - c. Grace function is the means whereby any believer exercises a spiritual gift that he or she *does not* possess.
- 2) The *spiritual* believer functioning outside the area of his spiritual gift *willingly* turns over the reins of responsibility to someone with the appropriate spiritual gift when that person appears on the scene.
- 3) There are at least two things that cause a Christian to contend that he or she has more than one spiritual gift:
- a. A lack of humility.
 - b. And / or a lack of doctrinal understanding *and* discernment regarding spiritual gifts.
- H. Spiritual gifts are distinct from natural talents. Talents are related to physical birth and are inherited genetically from our parents, through procreation. Spiritual gifts are related to spiritual birth and are given by God the HS. Spiritual gifts are supernatural.
- I. The gifts of the Spirit are different from “**the fruit of the Spirit.**” The presence of a gift is evidence of the indwelling of the Spirit but the presence of fruit-- the character of Christ-- is evidence of the Holy Spirit’s empowering influence *in* and *through* our spiritual growth.

Spiritual gifts can be imitated; the fruit of the Spirit *cannot*. Unless the fruit-- which represents Christian character and virtue-- exists, the exercise of the gift is human good and unacceptable to God. It is far better to pursue the fruit by focusing on the objective of the Spiritual Life, which is becoming like Jesus Christ, than it is to pursue the gift.

4 Principles and a Conclusion

- 1) Service without character is energy of the flesh work.
- 2) Service in and of itself *cannot* produce character!
- 3) Christian service is a definite out-working and consequence of Christian character.
- 4) Character is a result of spiritual growth; service is a result of character.

Conclusion: Where the fruit exists through spiritual growth, the function of the gift will surely follow.