

The Principles of Spiritual Gifts

- Spiritual gifts are given by the **Godhead**. Rom. 12: *God* has dealt to every man. Eph. 4: *He* (risen *Christ*) gave gifts unto men. 1 Cor. 12: To one is given by the *Spirit*. Spiritual gifts are sovereignly imparted. They cannot be sought or acquired (by faith). **1 Cor. 12:18** *God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.* What about **1 Cor. 12:31** *But covet earnestly the best gifts?* Collective desire that God might bring gifted individuals into the assembly.

- Distinction must be made between *individual gifts* and *individuals who are gifts*. **1 Cor. 12.8-10:** Spirit gives *gifts* to men. **1 Cor. 12.28:** God gives *men* as gifts to **the** church (also Eph. 4). Some **are** 'apt to teach', others are teachers. Some **are** evangelists, others 'do the work of an evangelist'. Those who are the gifts themselves will have a *wider* sphere of ministry (to the church at large).
- Some gifts are *more beneficial* than others. There were 'better' or 'preferable' gifts (1 Cor. 12.28). *First* Apostles, *second* prophets, *third* teachers (12.28). *Prophecy* was to be desired above tongues not interpreted. **1 Cor. 14.4** *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.*
- Some individuals are *more gifted* than others, e.g. Paul (all 18 gifts). **Matt. 25.15** *To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, each according to his (own) ability.* God considers each person's *natural* ability when distributing *spiritual* gifts. There is no room for envy. Those who are more gifted have greater **responsibility** (Jam. 3.1). Another believer may be more gifted, but they are **not** *more important*. All are vital and needed (1 Cor. 12.21-22).

How do I identify my spiritual gift?

Communion. Pray. Your spiritual gift is not a secret. *Get on your knees...*

Commitment. *I being in the way, the Lord led me.* Get **in** the way, not by the way. Get into local assembly activities.

Confirmation. What do you enjoy in the Lord's work? *Chara* (joy) is the root word of *charisma*.

Spiritual gift is a *manifestation* of the Spirit. It will be **recognised**. Prophets were to *evaluate* others' prophecies. Others will *appreciate* (hopefully) the exercise of this gift.

Cultivation. Gift requires development. **1 Timothy 4:14** *Neglect not the gift that is in thee.*

We must not be *negligent, careless* or *forgetful* in the use of gift.

The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

- **Equipping.** **Ephesians 4:12** *For the perfecting (equipping) of the saints, for (unto) the work of the ministry, for (unto) the edifying of the body of Christ.*

Spiritual gifts are to 'fully prepare' or 'fit' believers to serve (ministry) the Lord and His people.

'perfecting', root word = mending a net. *Spiritual gifts ensure the saints are fitted for catching and keeping fish!*

Note. **1 Pet. 4.10** *Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another.*

- **Edifying.** Spiritual gifts **edify** (*build up*) the body, i.e. strengthens the church *numerically* and *spiritually*.

Your spiritual gift is needed to help equip, support and strengthen the saints in their service.

You are needed. You are an essential part of the body (no inferiority complex please), symphony and masterpiece.

1 Corinthians 12:24 *God hath tempered (harmonized) the body together... As it hath pleased Him (12.18).*

- **Exaltation.** Not self-exaltation. **1 Peter 4:11** *...That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Practice of Spiritual Gifts

- **Stewardship of grace.** **1 Peter 4:10** *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold (multi-coloured) grace of God.*

As 'stewards' (household manager) we have been entrusted with spiritual gift. We are responsible for its use.

1 Corinthians 4:2 *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

Parable of Talents (Matt. 25). Master gives according to (natural) ability. Trade = work, labour, commit. Is it buried?

The faithful and commended servants were those who had a **proper appreciation** of their **Master.**

- **Strength of God. 1Pe 4:11** *Whoever speaks, let it be with God's words (oracles). Whoever serves, do so with the strength that God supplies, so that in everything God will be glorified.*

Speaking gifts – must be conscious that these are God's words. Thus saith the Lord.

Serving gifts – exercised in God's strength. He 'supplies the expenses' (physical/emotional/material).

Purpose: 'God is glorified'. I speak but they're God's words. Another serves but with God's resources.

Three practical points:

- Don't use spiritual gifts as an **excuse**. *I won't give to those in need because I don't have the gift of giving. I would go tracting but I am not an evangelist.* We are all exhorted to **give** (2 Cor. 9.7) and to **go** (Matt. 28.19).

There is no gift of tracting or door-knocking. Courage and practise! We must all go out with the gospel.

- **Spirituality**. Spiritual gifts do not make you **spiritual**. Corinthians gifted, yet carnal and immoral. Spiritual *gift* is not spiritual *fruit*. The *fruit* of the Spirit is produced in our lives as we 'walk in the Spirit'.

Feed what is spiritual.

- Spiritual gifts must be exercised with a motive of **love** (1 Cor. 13).

1 Corinthians 13:2 *And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.* ESV

Gift must not be exercised in a spirit of *selfish ambition, arrogance or irritability* but *patience and kindness*.