

EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS A SPIRITUAL GIFT

Ephesians 4:11-16; 2:19-22; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6
(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: The Church of today does not seem to be operating in the manner prescribed in the New Testament for there is a division between the clergy and laymen that hinders the cause of Christ. For some reason Church members seem to think that the pastor is the one to do the ministering yet scripture is very clear that every believer is a "minister" and each believer has been given a specific gift to be used in his/her ministering for the Lord. Every believer is a member of the body of Christ, given a gift for ministry to the Church and to the world. If YOU are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have been given a spiritual gift to be used in the Lord's service. Do YOU know what your gift is and if so, are YOU using it?

I. STEWARDSHIP GUIDELINES OUTLINED IN GOD'S WORD

1. *1 Peter 4:10-11*

- "Gift" is used to describe the spiritual ability given by the Holy Spirit for God to enable the believer to serve the body of Christ.
- Every believer has at least one spiritual gift, by the choice of the Holy Spirit.
- "Gifts" are accountable for and the believer is responsible for proper use.
- "Gifts" are given for the purpose of serving one another, never for some selfish or personal gain.
- "Gifts" are in two basic categories: speaking (teaching, exhortation, etc.) and serving (showing mercy, helping, administration, giving, etc.).
- The gift of "speaking" emphasizes that the speaker is to speak the Word of God, not his/her own personal opinion or viewpoint.
- The gift of "serving" is to be done in the strength God supplies rather than in one's own strength.
- No matter what the gift, no matter what is done, all is for the glory of God.

2. *1 Corinthians 4:1-3*

- Christians are servants of the Lord Jesus and stewards of the ways of God, not somebody to be put on some pedestal to be idolized.
- What God requires is that each believer has a faithfulness that comes from the heart and service for no other reason.
- The only opinion about one's service, use of his/her gift is what God thinks and nobody else.
- Spiritual gifts are from God and are never to become a matter in which one boasts or puts another person down for lack of a gift like his/hers.

II. DEFINITION OF GOD'S SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. God's gifts are gifts of grace, never earned or merited.

- They are a special grace-given ability.
- They are given by the Holy Spirit.
- They are given to each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- They are to be used for service to the body of Christ that it may grow.
- They are given for the glory of God.

2. God's gifts are not:
 - Not some office in a local church (elder or deacon) for an office and a gift are not the same thing.
 - Not a particular geographical area or place of service. It is an ABILITY to serve, not a place.
 - Not to be used in a particular age group (children, teens, adults, etc..)
 - Not a particular specialty or method of ministry (radio, television, etc.).
 - Not a change of one's personality into something different.

III. HOW GOD'S SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE DISTRIBUTED

1. God's spiritual gifts are the work of the Holy Spirit only. *1 Corinthians 12:4*
2. Spiritual gifts are given to every believer with no single believer having all the spiritual gifts, but at least one.
3. Spiritual gifts are given on the basis of grace.
 - Not on degrees of spiritual maturity.
 - Not on levels of education.
 - Not on prayer requests.
4. Not all spiritual gifts listed in the scriptures have been given for every generation.
 - Certain gifts were given at the earliest stage of the Church to authenticate the message of the apostles and prophets and to lay the foundation of the Church. (*Hebrews 2:3-4*)

IV. HOW GOD'S GIFTS ARE TO BE DEVELOPED

1. God's spiritual gifts are to be discovered, developed and used through faith, hard work and prayer.
 - *Romans 12:3; Colossians 1:29-2:2; 1 Corinthians 15:10; 12:31*

V. GOD'S GIFTS DESCRIBED

1. The gift of Apostleship is one who is sent, or a messenger, such as the leaders who laid the foundation of the Church and were given special signs. *Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28*
2. The gift of Prophecy is that of preaching, speaking with a message directly from God through special revelation, being authenticated in some way by God, Himself. A gift limited in need and use.
 - *Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:1-40; Ephesians 4:11*
3. The gift of Miracles and Healing is the ability to perform special signs, such as healing and miracles for the purpose of serving and honoring God. *1 Corinthians 12:28, 29, 30*
 - God can heal apart from someone exercising the gift of healing for He does answer prayer.
 - It is not God's will to heal everybody (Paul kept his "thorn" in the flesh).
 - Miracles and healings have nothing to do with supernaturalism (faith healers).
 - Not all these thoughts apply to every case, but are pertinent to the question of healing today.
4. The gift of Tongues is the God-given ability to speak in another language, such as at Pentecost. *Acts 10:46; 11:15*
 - "Unknown tongues" has been abused through time for it requires the gift of interpretation as a parallel gift.
 - The gift of tongues was given as a sign to unbelievers and especially unbelieving Jews.
 - One cannot say that God would never give this gift or others in today's time but all experiences need to be measured by the written Word of God.

5. The gift of Evangelism involves the kind of message preached and where it is preached being that of place to place, not permanent as in a pastorate. ***Ephesians 4:11***
6. The gift of Pastor is to shepherd, provide leadership, care and protection for a portion of God's flock. ***Ephesians 4:11***
7. The gift of Ministering means to serve and is the gift of helping or serving others and is one of the basic gifts which all Christians can have and use for the Lord's glory. ***Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:12***
8. The gift of Teaching is the God-given ability to explain God's Word and often it is the only gift that a believer has other than that of the gift of being a Pastor. ***Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11***
9. The gift of Faith is the God-given ability to believe God's power to supply specific need although every believer has been given some degree of faith, but not every has been given the gift of faith. ***1 Corinthians 12:8-10***
10. The gift of Exhortation is that of encouraging, comforting and admonishing others. ***Romans 12:8***
11. The gift of Discerning Spirits is the ability to distinguish between true and false sources of "revelation" when being spoken/preached. There have always been those who claim that what they say is from God, when it was not. ***1 Corinthians 12:10***
12. The gift of Showing Mercy is similar to the gift of Ministering for it involves tending to those who are sick and bothered. ***Romans 12:8***
13. The gift of Giving involves sharing one's own wealth (money) with others, simply with no thought of return or recognition in any way. ***Romans 12:8***
14. The gift of Administration is the ability to guide/rule the Church. ***Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28***

VI. HOW TO DETERMINE GOD'S CALLING (GIFT)

1. Determining God's call is not some feeling or an emotional high or by allowing someone to make you feel guilty, etc.
2. Determining God's will starts by consecrating one's life in response to God's goodness.
3. By realizing that God wants to use each believer.
4. By realizing that God has already given a spiritual gift that is to be used.
5. By letting God put His burden for others on one's heart.
6. By not being afraid of making mistakes or doing the wrong thing.

CONCLUSION:

1. Gifts are to be used according to the truth of God's Word and not with someone's personal ideas.
2. Gifts do vary even within the same area (teaching, exhortation, etc)
3. All gifts are important and much needed.
4. The Holy Spirit gives gifts according to His own choice and purpose.
5. Gifts are primarily God's place of service for believers.
6. Where and how one uses his/her gift is a matter of God's leadership and not one's own choosing.
7. Every believer is to show mercy, give, walk by faith and help others, however God has given some the gift of excelling in some of these areas.
8. By realizing that God has called every believer into ministry for Him, that He is with each and every believer, no matter what.