

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Every Christian has been given at least one spiritual gift by the holy Spirit. Sadly, most Christians think of themselves more as spectators than active participants. Sometimes Christians who are actively involved in the ministry of their church don't function in the area that corresponds with their spiritual gift/s. Perhaps one reason why so many Christians have chosen to not be involved or do little in their local church is because they have watched others try to accomplish things which those people were not spiritually equipped. The answer to the lack of Christians using their spiritual gifts is usually that they don't properly understand spiritual gifts.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING WHAT ONE'S SPIRITUAL GIFT IS

1. The importance of spiritual gifts in the Scriptures.
 - A way of measuring the importance of a spiritual matter is to look at the amount of space that is devoted to it in the Bible.
 - Spiritual gifts is the subject addressed in 1 Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12; Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4 as well as in other places in the bible.
 - Spiritual gifts are important to the Holy Spirit who inspired the writing of the Word of God.
2. The basic nature of spiritual gifts.
 - 1 Corinthians was written to immature Christians.
 - Spiritual gifts are emphasized much in Paul's letter to those immature Corinthian Christians.
 - Spiritual gifts are fundamental to the Christian life.
3. Spiritual gifts are a matter of one's stewardship.
 - As each person receives a special gift, then uses it in serving another, being a good steward of God's grace is important.
 - As a Christian is accountable for his/her use of the material things God blesses him/her with, and with his/her use of time, so is the Christian accountable for the use of his/her spiritual gift/s.
 - It is hard to be a steward of something one knows nothing about or even doesn't know that he/she has it to begin with.
 - It would do every Christian a lot of good to take an inventory of what one has, materially and spiritually.
 - Spiritual gifts are of great practical value and benefit to the Christian.
 - Spiritual gifts are of such value to the Christian, that he/she simply cannot afford to be ignorant of such gifts.
 - Christian, knowing your spiritual gift/s will enable you to find your place of ministry in your Church.
 - Christian, knowing your spiritual gift/s will enable you to determine your priorities.
 - Christian, knowing your spiritual gift/s will be of great help in understanding God's will.

II. THE PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. A spiritual gift is the God-given capacity of every Christian to carry out his/her function in the body of Christ.
 - Spiritual gifts enables one to carry out his/her task within the body of Christ in a way that no one else can.
 - Spiritual gifts are not primarily for the benefit of that Christian, but the entire body of Christ.
 - The right spiritual gift will be given to properly function within the guidelines of the Scriptures.

III. THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Spiritual gifts unite both divine and human.
 - Spiritual gifts cannot be understood if only the human element is approached.
 - Spiritual gifts are spiritual in nature for they are given by the Holy Spirit to every believer.
2. The spiritual gift involves the human believer to be involved in some personal, physical act.
3. Spiritual gifts are not to be confused with natural human talents, yet at the same time, those spiritual gifts are not totally separated from the believer's natural talents and abilities.
4. Spiritual gifts, as with natural human talents and abilities, must be developed with study, training and much experience.
5. Spiritual gifts produce unity through diversity.
 - ***"...There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons..."(1 Corinthians 12:4-6)***
6. Two Christians can have the same gift and use it in almost the same situations, but there will be much difference in the effects for the same gift may produce different effectiveness in each person.

IV. SOME MISCONCEPTIONS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Confusing spiritual gifts with spirituality.
 - Those with the gift of tongues thought themselves to be higher up the spiritual ladder than those who didn't have that gift.
 - Paul made some corrective statements to those who thought themselves to be superior.
2. A spiritual gift excuses one from other responsibilities.
 - Some think that their gift is all that they have to use and often have not time for others who are struggling, no time to visit the sick, no time to comfort those in mourning.
 - One's spiritual gift does cause a priority, but does not excuse one from the same responsibilities that every Christian has.
 - It is foolish to spend a great amount of time in an area where one is not gifted, for he/she can be of much more use in the area of his/her spiritual gift.
3. Some are obsessed with knowing all about all the spiritual gifts.
 - Knowledge of gifts does not replace using one's spiritual gift.
 - Many Christians insist on knowing what their spiritual gift/s are before beginning to serve the Lord in any way.
 - They are more interested in knowing than in serving.
 - Christians should learn to serve, not to study simply to learn.
4. Some focus upon the spiritual gifts of the giants of the faith but in doing so, make the mistake of focusing on the extraordinary gifts and the places the gifts are used.

V. DISCOVERING ONE'S SPIRITUAL GIFT/S

1. God has given every believer in Jesus Christ a gift or gift and He intends for each believer to know his/her gift, to develop it and to use it for His glory.
 - Christian! You have a spiritual gift.
2. Every believer has the gift of faith, the supernatural ability to trust God.
3. Obey the Scriptures.
 - Most don't know what their spiritual gift is because they have never tried to do it.
 - Do the things which need to be done and in doing what needs to be done, one's gift can be discovered.
4. Devote one's self to what he/she does best.
 - There are some things that a person can do better than anyone else.
 - This can be a clue to where one needs to concentrate his/her efforts.
 - God will send opportunities which will aid a person in enhancing his/her spiritual gift/s.

CONCLUSION:

1. Spiritual gifts are no mystery, they are more like baby food.
 - One can know his/her gift and then can be a more faithful steward.
2. There is a diversity in kinds of gifts and in the area of ministry of that gift and the degree of success with using that gift.
 - Never measure one's self with the "greats" of Christians using their spiritual gifts.
3. Do not let that spiritual gift go to one's head and become proud.
4. Do not despise or ignore the abilities God has given and fail to use that gift, thinking that nobody will ever notice.
5. All of God's gifts are gifts of grace, never earned, never given to please, but never before one has received the first gift - that of salvation.
6. One must accept and confess that he/she is a sinner deserving nothing from God but judgment.
 - Trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ, then be filled with the Holy Spirit and THEN will come some spiritual gift.