

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION AND NATURE OF GIFTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Romans 12:6 ~ “Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, *each of us is to exercise them accordingly*: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;”

1 Corinthians 12:7 ~ “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

1 Peter 4:10 ~ “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

- The goal of this class is to develop a Biblical understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or Spiritual Gifts which the Holy Spirit has distributed according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:11).
- Today there is much confusion, distortion, abuse, or neglect of understanding the person and work of the Holy Spirit, especially concerning which gifts operate today and how.
- Some will say the Holy Spirit enables believers today to do great and powerful acts of healing, prophecy, speaking in unknown languages, and receiving higher degrees of spirituality. Others will ignore the Holy Spirit, deny His work and gifting, and abandon their role within the church to use their gifts for the edification of others.
- How should we understand and use our spiritual gifts? For this session, we will be looking at what Scripture says about the Holy Spirit’s gifts for the church and how we should respond to contemporary issues.
- Key Scripture: (Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:4; 7-8; 11-16; 1 Corinthians 12-14, 1 Peter 4:10-11)

Our schedule will look like this:

- Week 1: February 25 Introduction and purpose of the Gifts
- Week 2: March 3 Temporary and Permanent Gifts
- Week 3: March 10 Determining and Using your Gifts
- March 17 *Daniel Herceg: ministry update and time in the Word*
- Week 4: March 24 Contemporary issues in the church week 1
- March 31 *Easter- No Fellowship Group this week*
- Week 5: April 7 Contemporary issues in the church week 2

INTRODUCTION:

- God is the source of our gifts and gives the purposes for which we are to employ them, so we must have a right understanding of God and His Word. ¹
- While it is true that the Holy Spirit is involved in the enabling or empowering ministry of giving gifts, it is truly a Trinitarian work of gifting the believer.
- “God the Father has planned for and appointed the gifts (1 Cor. 12:18, 28). God the Son has provided these gifts (Eph. 4:7–8, 11). God the Holy Spirit indwells and empowers people with spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:11). All three persons of the Godhead are involved (1 Cor. 12:4–6).”²
- **Holy Spirit:** Likewise it is important to have a right understanding of the Holy Spirit.
- Coeternal and coequal with the Father and the Son, He also is a distinct person (cognition/intellect, volition/will, emotion/relation).
- The Holy Spirit is a person who wills, who receives worship (Heb 10:29), knows divine knowledge (1 Cor 2:10), and gives commands (Acts 8:29) and is grieved by sin (Eph 4:30).
- Especially important is the Holy Spirit’s role in the life of the church. The Spirit inhabits the church (Eph 2:22), is responsible for the unity and fellowship within the church (Acts 2:42ff; Eph 4:3-4), assists in worship (Philippians 3:3), inspires Scripture (2 Peter 1:21), guides (Acts 13:2), and teaches/convicts/illuminates (John 14-16).
- **Scripture:** Regarding our topic of spiritual gifts, we must hold Scripture as judge over and against experience and reason, not under.
- The news and TBN cannot be our guide in this topic, or what we conclude in our minds: we might find ourselves disagreeing with God and create counterfeit gifts.
- Rather, our end goal is to be in conformity with the mind of God, “to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” ~ Ephesians 4:13b

¹ Greg Bahnsen, *Presuppositional Apologetics: Stated and Defended*, ed. Joel McDurmon, (Powder Springs, GA;Nacogdoches, TX: American Vision;Covenant Media Press, 2008), 12. “Here we see that the ultimate standard for the Christian must always be the self-attesting word of God. This standard is accepted because of what it truly claims to be (the word of God) and not on the basis of independent human buttresses. This self-attesting revelation of God is objectively true and authoritative, even though subjective persuasion about it comes only by the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. By what standard, then, shall Christian apologetics proceed? By the standard of God’s self-attesting word.”

² John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., [*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 379.

WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

1 Corinthians 12:1 ~ “Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, **I do not want you to be unaware.**”

- First, the Spiritual gifts are quite important!
- The church should not be in the dark about how the spiritual gifts operate and how the Holy Spirit empowers each believer to build one another up within the body.

What they are not:

- Not a *place of service*. “Spiritual gift to serve in the city”
- Not an *age group* in which you serve. “Spiritual gift to serve in College age ministry”
- Not a *sign of spirituality*. “More spiritual, more gifts/more gifted”
- Not a *self-edifying gift*. 1 Cor 14:12. “Just for me”
- Not *contradictory to Scripture*.
- Not a *hyper-ecstatic experience* of heightened awareness, trance-like nature (1 cor 12:2-3)

Summary of terms used to describe the spiritual gifts in the Bible:³

- **Spirituals**, (1 Corinthians 12:1 (pneumatikon) ~ Something controlled by or characterized by the Holy Spirit. In context, here it is something that is given, not just a person who is spiritual.⁴
- **Gift**, 1 Corinthians 12:4): (*charisma*) ~ a grace, something undeserved, clearly given by God. God has showed his favor in giving it.
- **Administrations/Services**, 1 Corinthians 12:5 (*diakonion*) ~ Where we get our word for deacon. This means servant, or various ways the believer serves so that others may have needs met (Philippians 2:1-4). These are the activities of service.
- **Operations/energizing**, 1 Corinthians 12:6 (*energmaton*) ~ When God energizes or empowers the believer to take the Word and operate within me to bless others with truth. It is simply the activity of God to build up the church through each believer.
- **Manifestations/exhibition**, 1 Corinthians 12:7 (phanerosis) ~ This is the *display* of the gift. “The activity is by nature outgoing, with the result that it touches other lives. It must be seen, heard, or

³ John MacArthur, *Spiritual Gifts* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985) 56-60. See also James Stitzinger, “Spiritual Gifts: Definitions and Kinds”, TMSJ 14/2 (Fall 2003) 149.

⁴ “‘that which pertains to the Spirit,’ indicating the source or realm of these gifts. This does not imply that the gift must be supernatural, non-miraculous, or miraculous. It only denotes the source and the realm.” James F. Stitzinger, “Spiritual Gifts: Definitions and Kinds”, TMSJ 14/2 (Fall 2003) 152.

in some manner experienced by at least one person other than the gifted one. The Giver Never intended any spiritual gifts for private purposes, and to the extent that anyone uses a gift that way, he or she abuses that given ability.”⁵

- Gifts are clear, on display, made visible, so that it can profit others.

- A spiritual gift, then, is any ability and accompanying spiritual ministry and effect that God, through Christ, enables a believer to use, or motivates him to use, for His glory, in the body of Christ, through the energizing work of the Spirit.⁶
- Spiritual gifts are diverse and distinct among individuals yet they all contain gracious provision, a spiritual ministry, and most important, an effect or activity.⁷

Source of Spiritual Gifts

- These aren't abilities that we can develop on our own, though God may use our abilities, and talents.
- Before Christ, our abilities and talents were used for natural purposes. Now the Holy Spirit may use them for spiritual purposes in the church.
- The source of these grace gifts is God and God alone!
- Many places state that the gifts are given, even willed (1 Cor 12:11) by the third person of the trinity, God the Holy Spirit.
- **1 Corinthians 12:4-6** suggest that the Godhead is united in the effort of empowering the believer.
 - Vs 4: “varieties of gifts...the same Spirit”
 - Vs 5: “varieties of ministries...the same Lord”
 - Vs 6: “varieties of effects...the same God who works all things in all”
 - Vs. 7: “to each one is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
- God graciously enables the believer to use all of human faculties, resources, skills, and abilities, to produce in the church the desired effect of edification.

⁵ Robert L. Thomas, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999) 27

⁶ James F. Stitzinger, “Spiritual Gifts: Definitions and Kinds”, *TMSJ* 14/2 (Fall 2003) 143- 176.

⁷ Stitzinger, 161.

Recipient of Spiritual Gifts: Given by God and empowered

1 Peter 4:10 ~ As **each one** has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Ephesians 4:7 ~ But to **each one** of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

1 Corinthians 12:7 ~ But to **each one** is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good

1 Corinthians 12:11 ~ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to **each one** individually just as He wills.

- Each and every believer is born-again, sealed with the Spirit and indwelt with the Spirit, and gifted by the Spirit!
- In 1 Corinthians Paul is writing to saints, though they are quite carnal. The context remains believers in Corinth, no matter how carnal they seem to be, they have gifts, they are simply misusing or abusing the gifts, or are employing counterfeit gifts.
- The context of 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 comes just after fellowship around the Lord's Table and just before the discussion on the nature of the church described as the unified body of Christ.

Ephesians 4:7 "But to each one of us **grace** was **given** according to the measure of Christ's gift."

- The word *grace* here is also used in Romans 12:6 and 1 Peter 4:10 and refers to the gracious gift which was given by God to each one who has been transformed by the gospel.

Number of Gifts: Unique Gift(s) Given

How many gifts are there?

- Some will categorize the gifts listed to summarize that there are only 4, and others stretch the number to nearly 30 gifts.
- It seems likely that there are 18. "No one has ever suggested an additional gift of the Spirit that does not come under the heading of one or more of the eighteen."⁸
- Some suggest less, eliminating the roles given to the church in Ephesians 4.

⁸ Thomas, Robert, *Understanding Spiritual Gifts*, 173. He uses the example of preaching being under teaching/exhortation. His list includes: apostleship, prophecy, distinguishing of spirits, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, effecting of miracles, tongues, interpretation of tongues, evangelism, teaching, pastor-teacher, exhortation, helps, showing mercy, giving, governing.

How many gifts does each person receive?

1 Peter 4:10 ~ “As each one has received a gift (sg), employ it (sg). . .”

- Just one?
 - Yet doesn't it seem like some people are gifted in more than one way that edifies the body?
 - The Spirit uniquely distributes a composite blended mix of gifts to each person
 - It is like a single package with an assortment of gifts inside.
 - The list describes something what Pastor Todd calls the “primary colors that the Holy Spirit sovereignly mixes in each believer's life for the exact ministry He has ordained for them.
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- Example of Timothy:
 - Told to **PREACH!** (2 Tim 4:2a)
 - Told to **DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST** (2 Tim 4:5b)
 - Told to **TEACH FAITHFUL MEN** (2 Timothy 2:2b)
 - Told to **REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT** (2 Thimothy 4:2b)
 - His giftings must have included the God-given ability to effectively preach the word, evangelize the lost, making disciples, and the ability to patiently exhort believers in Ephesus so they would be built up in Christ.
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- The degree, variety which each person has depends on what the Lord enables them to handle by His grace according to the proportion of his faith given them (Romans 12:6).
 - Hypothetical Examples:
 - Tim may be a great preacher, an okay administrator and have a sprinkling of mercy as he talks with people.
 - Axel may be blessed with the ability and heart to be so generous in giving, be okay an average preacher, a better teacher in 1-1 settings, many people seem to have come to saving faith because of his evangelistic efforts, but he is not quite as affective as Tim at his ability to have compassion with hurting people.
 - Roberta has a keen eye for those hurting and always has the patience of a grandma, always seems to endure through so many trials with great confidence in the Lord with a knack for remembering Scripture when needed, but because of her blindness, the Lord hasn't gifted her with service in the same way as Antoinette.
 - Antoinette has just joy in serving, always giving her time, writes encouraging letters to people on their birthdays, always in the prayer closet for her brothers and sisters in the

Lord, and is able to patiently and humbly correct those in sin, by God's grace. She's a follower, but loves having people in her home to encourage them.

- Tomas is a leader and understands what direction his small group needs to go so they will grow more and more, and he is pretty good at loving others through serving, and he wants to grow in the area of generous giving because his salary seems to be increasing and some of his time is opening up too!

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 ~ “Now there are **varieties of gifts**, but the same Spirit. And there are **varieties of ministries**, and the same Lord. There are **varieties of effects**, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

- A variety of gifts/ministries/effects given, all from God, all for the same purpose.
- “No Christian is a carbon copy of another when it comes to spiritual gifts.”

Purpose: Given to Edify the Body of Christ and Glorify God

- Simply put, the gifts are given to believers to enable them to minister to other believers.

1 Corinthians 12:7 ~ “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for **the common good.**”

- “Common good” here means “to be advantageous, help, confer a benefit, *be profitable/useful*, especially to others.”⁹ You contribute to the good of the body with your gifts. It is to everyone else's advantage when the gifts God has given you are exercised. Everyone else gains when you employ these gifts!

1 Corinthians 14:12, 26 ~ “So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound **for the edification of the church**...Let all things be done for **edification.**”

Romans 12:10 ~ “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; **give preference to one another in honor**”

- Paul tells the church at Ephesus that corporately they were gifted with *people* for this purpose:

⁹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 960.

Ephesians 4:11-12 ~ “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ”

- Verse 13 continues with the end goal in mind, unity, knowing Christ, and maturity in Christ’s righteousness:

“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

- Just after giving the list of gifts to the Romans, Paul says that life in the church is about devotion to one another and to “try to outdo one another in showing respect”¹⁰
- Honor or respect here at the end of Romans 12:10 is the same word used in 1 Corinthians 12:24, when Paul says for each member to show honor

1 Peter 4:8 ~ “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

- Peter too reminds us that gifts are accompanied by a fervent love for one another.

1 Peter 4:10 shows us 3 reasons why God supplies us gifts ~ “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in **serv**ing one another as **good stewards** of the manifold grace of God.

Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; **so that** in all things **God may be glorified through Jesus Christ**, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

- Purpose to serve to one another just as God knows the church needs.
- Purpose to be responsible as entrusted administrators of God’s grace.
- Purpose to glorify God through Jesus Christ in all our service!

Revelation 4:11 ~ “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created”

¹⁰ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#), 869.

- Individuals within the church are gifted to edify each other, love one another, benefit and profit each other, faithfully serve one another and prove the glory of Christ in us.
- The church is graciously gifted to be brought into Christlikeness-till we all come to the full stature of Christ.¹¹

Self-edification?

- A by-product is that when others are edified, we benefit too, but this is not the primary purpose.
- The church suffers when we seek self-interest above the common good (1 Corinthians 12:2-3).

Relationship between Gifts and Abilities and Talents

- Natural Abilities, talents, life circumstances, and resources aren't your gifts, but God can gift you to use them.
 - Teaching through song
 - Serving through physical labor, technological skills,
 - Preaching through effective communication skills
 - Evangelism through using photographic memory
 - Mercy and service through exceptional listening skills,
 - Using your current life circumstances in order to steward your gift of _____
- Example:
 - Preachers may be gifted in speech, but only by the Holy Spirit will there be an effect on the listeners which he had no control over!
- Example:
 - Those who sold property and possessions to give to the church in Acts 4:32-5:11 so that no one would have need of anything: They were generous in giving because the Lord employed their hearts to give their possessions.

¹¹ John MacArthur, *Spiritual Gifts*, 29.

James Stitzinger: “A spiritual gift, then, is any ability and accompanying spiritual ministry and effect that God, through Christ, enables a believer to use, or motivates him to use, for His glory, in the body of Christ, through the energizing work of the Spirit. God may grace the believer with a gift or gifts, or bring them to light, at salvation or later, but these abilities are only gifts when used for edification in the church.”¹²

God graciously enables every believer to use any of their human faculties, resources, skills, and natural abilities, to produce in the church the desired effect of edification of others and glory to God.

¹² Stitzinger, 161.