**Lesson #17A WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

**Reading Material**

The Bible plainly tells us that every Christian is given a spiritual gift, with some ability to serve the church. The body of the church needs a variety of gifts as mentioned in scripture.

What is my spiritual gift is the question most asked when this subject is taught?

Some will say to look down the lists in Scripture in order to discover your gift. The problem with that answer is that the lists are not necessarily exhaustive; they are not complete, except in general categories. There have been test or at least a series of questions that after answering them you will know your spiritual gift. Most often the questions are answered from the viewpoint of the person seeking to know their gifts. Their responses can be bias and leaning toward their desires or talents.

Some say to pray for a gift, but that may cause us to seek the more noticeable gifts. The purpose of the gifts are to edify the body not to lift ourselves up, for the gifts are sovereignty given, *"as it pleased Him" (I Corinthians 12:18; see also verse 11)*. The church body is to desire spiritual gifts for the body. For a person to pray for the gift of teaching or preaching may be inappropriate for God may have already determined your gift.

I do believe that Spiritual gifts are not given to a person all at one time. We are all given at least one spiritual gift at our conversion. If we use that gift to the glory of God, He will add to your gift’s other ones. Remember the parable of the Talents.

He goes to great lengths to let you know that you have one and that you should use it to the good of the body, but he neither asks nor answers the question of how to discover your specific gift.

**The Desire Will Come**

First of all, examine your desires. Simply ask yourself, "What do I want to do?" If God gifts you a certain way, it is reasonable to assume that He will with that gift also give you the desire to exercise it. For example, I struggled a while with the decision to preach, but it was not because I didn't want to preach. I felt unworthy, inadequate and not called to do that. I worked where God had called me for seventeen years, then He called me to another level of service. God gave me the desire and He is developing the gift. You will find the same.

Now be careful! You must examine your motives as well -- they can be deceiving. Your "call to service" may in reality merely be a desire to excel or to be noticed. This was one part of the Corinthians' problem -- they wanted the gifts which made them noticed and prominent.

*1 Corinthians 12:26-30 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? NKJV*

Many, it seems, have wanted the more prominent gifts and the lead because of the honor associated with such activity. But desire for prominence is not a proper motive; desire to serve others in the best way possible is.

**What Does the EVIDENCE Say?**

Next, examine the evidence. Don't be naive like the man who was sure that he had the gift of teaching but was puzzled why no one else seemed to have the gift of listening! Now certain gifts must be developed, sharpened; but if the evidence says there is no giftedness, then find another area of service. If you have been successful in encouraging, comforting, or even patiently rebuking people in the Lord, your gift may be exhortation. And so, on it goes -- simply examine the evidence in light of your desires.

**What Opportunities Are Coming Your Way?**

Finally, examine the opportunities God has given you. Simply ask what is available. Look to see what is needed in the church. Endeavor to find how you can serve and best benefit the body. Simply look for a need, which you are able to fill.

Gifts are not given to us so that we do not have to do anything else. What type of member would we be if we were to say that, "my spiritual gift is singing so please do not as me to help clean up after service?

**Seek the Gift God Has Given You Not the One You Want.**

Do you wonder what is your gift? Have you been asking that question in frustration with some of the answers given you? Then it is time to begin searching for a place of service -- teaching, giving, helping, or whatever. Having found a place of service, which you are able to fill effectively, you will have discovered your gift. The gift will become evident by your very exercising of it. Prove yourself faithful in what you are doing and God will elevate you in and for His service

*Matthew 25:23 (NKJV) 23 His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

Since that is the case, it would be much more in keeping with the apostle's instruction not to ask, "What is my spiritual specialty?" but to ask simply, "Where can I best serve?" Within the range of opportunities God has placed before you, where can you be most effective? What are the needs that face you? And how are you best able to meet those needs?

The above verse was taken from the “Parable of the Talents”. Here is an application I learned from that parable.

*Matthew 25:15 (NKJV) 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.*

We may only be given the gifts that we can handle. To one 5, to another 2 and another 1. The one given the 1 talent proved that he could not handle the one so why should he be given 5.

**The difference between a skill, a talent and a Spiritual gift?**

**What is a Skill?** The ability to do something well; having the expertise. It could have been obtained by education, training, experience. Skills for the most part are not spiritual gifts.

**What is a Talent**? A natural aptitude or skill. Both of these could be possessed by any unbeliever.

**What is a Spiritual Gift?** In Christianity it refers to an endowment or extraordinary power or ability given by the Holy **Spirit** often without any prior ability to do what the gifts blessed them to do.

*Acts 2:4–6 (NLT) 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. 5 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. 6 When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.*

We should use our spiritual gifts and our learned skills and our natural talents for the glory of God.

**What is the difference between the ‘gift of the holy spirit, "gifts coming from the Holy Spirit and the Spiritual office coming from Jesus?**

**Gift of the Holy Spirit comes from God.**

*John 14:26 (NKJV) 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 15:26.*

The Holy Spirit was given to as a guarantee of our salvation and inheritance Eph 1:15.

*2 Corinthians 1:22 (NKJV) 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

*Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. NKJV*

*Acts 11:16–17 (NKJV) 16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?”*

**Spiritual gifts of office come from Jesus.**

*Ephesians 4:11–12 (NIrV) 11 He is the One who gave some the gift to be apostles. He gave some the gift to be prophets. He gave some the gift of preaching the good news.* ***And he gave some the gift to be*** *pastors and teachers. 12 He did it so that they might prepare God’s people to serve. If they do, the body of Christ will be built up.*

**What are spiritual gifts?**

The Spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit. The gifts from the Holy Spirit are those special gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit upon Christians for the purpose of building up the church.

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*1 Cor 12:4-11 4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one* ***and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*** *NKJV Rom 12:6-8*

As you look at the above passage you can see that there are no Spiritual offices listed such as Pastors, Evangelist, Apostles or Prophets.

Definition: SPIRITUAL GIFTS (Grk. ta pneumatika, the spiritual supply; charismata, "gifts"). A phrase used to denote the endowments bestowed by the **Holy Spirit** in the primitive church (1 Cor 12:1).

 1. We get our word charisma and charismatic from this root word.

Who has these gifts?

They are given to whomever the Holy Spirit chooses (Wills).

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