

DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- I.** Introduction.
- A.** The Apostle Paul considered this doctrine and the understanding of it to be important for the local church individually and corporately. 1Cor.12: 1
 - B.** He wrote Timothy twice concerning Timothy's gift. 1Tim.4:14; 2Tim.1:6
 - C.** Every believer has at least one spiritual gift given at saving faith as assumed by 1Pet.4:10; "As each one has received (aorist active indicative of λαμβάνω – lambano) a spiritual gift..." Cf.Eph.4:7; 1Cor.12:7,11
- II.** The definition of the term "spiritual gift":
- A.** Spiritual gifts are Holy Spirit given abilities to minister to others. Cf.1Cor.12:4-11, note vs. 7 "...for the common good."
 - B.** Spiritual gifts are different than other natural abilities.
 - 1.** Spiritual gifts are bestowed by the H.S. based on grace. 1Cor.12:11
 - 2.** They are "spiritual" (πνευματικός – pneumatikos; cf.1Cor.12:1) as they are the manifestation of the H.S. 1Cor.12:7
 - 3.** The gifts are accomplished through human participation, but their effectiveness is due to the Spirit of God.
 - 4.** Natural abilities often complement one's gift(s) but are not a prerequisite.
 - C.** "Gifts" of the Spirit (1Cor.12:1,14) are different than "fruit" of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23).
 - 1.** Certain marks of the H.S. are common to all growing, Spirit-filled Christians. Joh.15:1-5
 - 2.** The certain result of all Christians in FHS include love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance and indicates Christian character.
 - 3.** In contrast, spiritual gifts are distinct, diverse and greatly varied and indicate Christian service/ministry. 1Cor.12:4-6
 - 4.** The presence or absence of any one gift should never be a test of whether or not a person is "spiritual" as the gifts are apportioned as God chooses. 1Cor.12:11,18
 - 5.** Therefore, both Christian character (uniform "fruit" of the Spirit) and Christian ministry (the role each individual plays in the local church as a member of the body under a diversity of "gifts") are works of the H.S.
- III.** Vocabulary.
- A.** The concept of gifts is presented in the N.T. having both material and immaterial (spiritual) emphasis.
 - B.** The vocabulary terms for gifts are not technical, but must be determined by context as to their nature.
 - C.** The predominate terms used for spiritual gifts include:
 - 1.** χάρισμα – charisma; noun; used 17x; emphasizes the gift as a matter of grace (non-meritorious) bestowal by God (most commonly used for spiritual gifts).
 - 2.** δωρεά - dorea; noun; used 11x; denotes a free gift stressing its gratuitous character.
 - 3.** δόμα – doma; noun; used 4x; lends greater stress to the concrete character of the gift than to its beneficent nature.
 - 4.** μερισμός – merismos; used 2x; emphasizes the distribution or imparting of spiritual gifts (Cf.Heb.2:4).

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- IV.** The universality of spiritual gifts among believers.
- A.** At the point of saving faith, each believer is bestowed with a gift(s).
 - B.** This is highlighted in the body metaphor of 1Cor.12:12-27.
 - 1. As each bodily part is pre-assigned its place in the anatomy under the laws of genetics, so is each believer assigned his/her place in the body of Christ
 - 2. The metaphorical use of the body parts such as the eye, hand, genital, ear, etc., denotes the diversity of the gifts given at the Baptism of the H.S. (cf.vs.13).
- V.** The significance of spiritual gifts.
- A.** Spiritual gifts are not a mark of spirituality (time logged under FHS) or of maturity (level of growth), but of the new birth.
 - 1. Ex. The Corinthian church was endowed with all the spiritual gifts (1Cor.1:7 “*so that you are not lacking in any gift...*”).
 - 2. Yet they were corporately as a local church carnal and immature (1Cor.3:1-3).
 - B.** Though not a mark of spirituality or maturity, spirituality and maturity mitigate the level of performance of a gift. 1Cor.12:6 “*...there are varieties of effects...*”
 - 1. Gifts apart from the FHS (αγαπη/love) are offensive and produce “dead works”. 1Cor.13:1-3
 - 2. Gifts apart from growth are limited. Cf.Rom.12:6b (The content of prophecy is in direct correlation to one’s ability to discern.)
 - 3. A mature adjusted believer is expected to have more insight in areas of application than a newer believer.
 - 4. With time and grade under sound doctrine, the believer would be expected to apply more consistently and to the measure of doctrinal culpability.
- VI.** Prerequisites for the normal function of the gifts:
- A.** Love/FHS. 1Cor.14:1 “*Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts...*”
 - B.** Spiritual growth. Rom.12:6b
 - C.** Membership in a local church (the niche God has designed for the proper use of the gifts). 1Cor.12:27 “*Now you yourselves (believers of the church at Corinth) are (lit.) a body of Christ/σῶμα Χριστοῦ (a corporate body) and individually members of it.*”
 - D.** Acclimation to your particular gift as it relates to the Royal Chain of Command (R/CC). 1Cor.12:14-27, as suggested by the body metaphor, all gifts are not equal in authority. All should be subservient to the leadership gifts (Heb.13:7), and each should function in harmony with the others (1Pet.4:10-11).
 - E.** Your gift must reside in an environment in which there is a formal structure (R/CC cp. 1Cor.14:40 “*But, let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.*” (This verse is in the context of the function of the gifts of a local church.)
 - 1. The leadership gifts (P-T and gifts in the office of Deacon) are responsible to provide the environment necessary so each gift has opportunity to employ its application for the overall management of the local church. 1Pet.4:10
 - 2. It is the P-T’s responsibility to provide the spiritual insight regarding Spiritual gifts with pertinent teaching, instruction, exhortation, etc., and the Deacon’s responsibility to provide the logistics (supplying of physical criteria) and administration of the gifts for their function as appropriate corporately. Act.6:2-4
 - 3. While gifts are free to function independent of hands-on leadership involvement (some needs may not necessarily be made known to the entire church or church leadership), their function still serves the purpose of carrying out the corporate needs of the church via understanding and application of BD.

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- VII.** Some ways of viewing the gifts.
- A.** Greater and lesser gifts. 1Cor.12:22,23
1. The greater gifts are those gifts that involve edification and authority. 1Cor.12:24a *“Whereas our members of high standing have no need of it.”* cp.12:31a *“But earnestly desire the greater gifts.”*
 2. Association with the greater gifts enhances the lesser gifts. 1Cor.12:24b *“...giving much more honor to that member which is inferior”.*
 3. The greater gifts are those that tend to communicate. 1Cor.14:1 *“...desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.”*
 4. The occupational hazard is that the lesser gifts tend to be jealous of the greater and the greater despise the lesser. 1Cor.12:14-21
- B.** Communicative and service gifts. 1Pet.4:11
- C.** Temporary and permanent gifts.
1. The temporary gifts were those gifts given the Church during the apostolic era from 33AD – circa 100AD.
 2. These gifts were essential to the foundation era. Eph.2:20
 3. They were done away with when the canon (i.e. the 27 books of the NT) was completed. Cp. 1Cor.13:8,10 *“the perfect”* to Jam.1:25 *“the perfect law”* a.k.a. *“the will of God...that which is good and acceptable and perfect”* (Rom.12:2) where all are synonymous for the Bible. Also cp.1Cor.13:12 and Jam.1:23 where *“mirror”* is synonymous with the Bible.
 4. The temporary gifts carried the Church until the N.T. was completed.
 5. The permanent/extant gifts carry the Church until the Rapture.
- D.** The Sign and Infancy gifts.
1. Some temporary gifts were “sign” gifts to substantiate, corroborate and authenticate the message of the resurrection by those who saw it or knew someone who had eyewitnessed it. Act.1:21,22; 2:32,43; 3:12-16; 4:23-33; 5:12,15-16,29-32; 6:8; 8:5-7,13; Rom.15:18,19; 1Cor.14:12-22; 2Cor.12:12; Heb.2:3-4
 2. The “sign” gifts were not primarily for the Church, but for unbelievers. 1Cor.13:11
 3. Some temporary gifts were “infancy” gifts to nurture, protect and edify the Church before the coming of the N.T. canon. 1Cor.13:11
 4. Errors associated with these gifts:
 - a. Sign and infancy gifts are for the Church now. 1Cor.13:11 *“...when I became a man, I did away with childish things.”*
 - b. Sign gifts (healings, miracles, and tongues) should be preferred. 1Cor.14:1,3-6
 - c. All believers should or could have any particular gift (like “tongues”). 1Cor.14:1,5
 - d. A certain gift like tongues indicated spirituality or maturity.
- E.** The analogy of gifts to bodily parts teaches: 1Cor.12:15-27
1. The foot or hand = subordination and service gifts such as helps. Vs.15
 2. The senses represented by the eye (seeing), ear (hearing) and smelling (nose) inform the body to act or react and can = gifts such as exhortation, healing (today, mercy), teaching and administration. Vs.16,17
 3. The head = authoritative gifts to include Apostles, prophets and teachers; today it would include P-T, administrative and managerial gifts with rank and teachers.
 4. The less honorable parts that we bestow more abundant honor represents “service with glory” like a “ring finger” and = gifts that by nature get noticed. Vs.23a

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5. The unseemly members (private parts of the body that should be kept covered) = gifts that are private in nature such as giving. Vs.23b
6. Corporately the body is so structured that each part is to look out for the other in ways befitting each part (gift).
7. No division in the body = it is the entirety of the gifts that make up the body corporately and there should be no negligence in caring for each part. Vs.25
8. When one part suffers, all suffer and when one is blessed, all rejoice with it = the effect each gift has upon the church and the proper attitude the church should have regarding the function or lack of function of each gift. Vs.26
9. Being individual members of the body of Christ represents that it is the believer's responsibility to ascertain his or her gift and function under it. Vs.27

VIII. Classification and identification of the gifts.

A. Spiritual gifts are listed in 3 different N.T. passages. Rom.12:4-8; 1Cor.12:8-11,28; Eph.4:11

1. They name 16-20 different gifts depending on whether or not certain ones are the same gift by different names; e.g., "teacher" and "pastor-teacher", "ministry" and "helps", "managerial" and "administrations".
2. All Christians manifest many of these ministries in limited ways, but concentration in and exceptional ability for a particular one is a "gift".
3. One may apply "helps, mercy, exhortation, etc.," in their normal Christian walk, but this does not mean necessarily that one has that particular gift.

B. The listing, according to passage, is as follows (temporary gifts are asterisked):

1Cor.12:8-11,28 (13 gifts)

1. *Prophecy (10,28)
2. *Apostles (28)
3. *Wisdom (8)
4. *Knowledge (8)
5. *Healing (9,28)
6. *Miracles (10,28)
7. *Discerning of spirits (10)
8. *Tongues (10,28)
9. *Interpretation/tongues (10)
10. *Faith (9)
11. Helps (28)
12. Teachers (28)
13. Administration (28)
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.

Rom.12:4-8 (7 gifts)

- *Prophecy (6)
- Ministry (7)
- Teaching (7)
- Managerial (8)
- Exhortation (8)
- Giving (8)
- Mercy (8)

Eph.4:11 (4 gifts/offices)

- *Prophecy (11)
- *Apostles (11)
- Evangelism (11)
- Pastor-Teacher (11)

C. Each gift explained following the above numbering:

1. Prophecy was a gift primarily of inspired utterance of prophetic truth not yet recorded in the Bible.
 - a. It was a temporary gift given to the early church to provide the new doctrine necessary to function in the church age dispensation. 1Cor.13:8-10

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- 11.** The ability (at the direction of others) to help out or serve in a practical way.
 - a.** It is a permanent gift.
 - b.** It is a very common gift.
 - c.** Should function corporately under administrative gifts.
- 12.** The ability to communicate/articulate to others divine viewpoint in an academic capacity.
 - a.** Men or women may have this gift.
 - b.** A permanent gift.
 - c.** Relatively few have this gift. Jam.3:1
 - d.** It is a part of but differentiated from the office of P-T.
 - e.** Application today is prep school teachers as there is to be only one who teaches adults. Joh.10:1-5
- 13.** Administrative/managerial gift(s) have the ability to administer or be a leader in God's work.
 - a.** A permanent gift.
 - b.** Possessed by few.
 - c.** A good gift for one in the office of Deacon, though not required.
- 14.** Exhortation is the gift of "exhorting/encouraging/stimulating or motivating" believers to apply.
 - a.** A permanent gift.
 - b.** It has ability to discern and "troubleshoot" other believer's problems.
 - c.** Barnabas had this gift. Act.4:36
 - d.** It generally entails a one-on-one occurrence but could include others.
 - e.** It is not a license to bully, play P-T or invade someone's privacy.
 - f.** One with this gift should not attempt exhortation towards the congregation unless authorized by the R/CC.
- 15.** The gift of giving is the exceptional ability to contribute financially to the Lord's work.
 - a.** A permanent gift.
 - b.** Does not demand that one is wealthy to have this gift.
 - c.** It is a "private parts gift" and its exercise should never be advertised publicly before the local church.
 - d.** This gift is separate from the application of "grace giving". 2Cor.9:7
- 16.** The ability to show mercy in the ability to help the sick, aged, needy, etc., and is different from "helps" in its objects of compassion. A permanent gift.
- 17.** The gift/office of evangelism is the extraordinary ability to minister the gospel Ph₁ to unbelievers.
 - a.** It carried the rank and file of an office. Eph.4:11
 - b.** The term "evangelist" is only used 3x in the NT.
 - c.** The disciples functioned as evangelists under the term "fishers of men". Mat.4:19; Mar.1:17
 - d.** Evangelists today should be trained in order to fulfill the requirement of all this listed offices as stipulated in Eph.4:12-13.
 - e.** The only examples of an evangelistic office seen functioning is Philip the evangelist of Act.21:8 and Timothy of 2Tim.4:5. (Evangelist/εὐαγγελιστής of Act.21:8 is the same word as Eph.4:11; 2Tim.4:5.)
 - f.** It appears that this office functioned under the temporary gift of prophecy in the early church later to be absorbed by the gift of teaching.

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6. Since it was not necessary to “straighten” Rome out, Paul simply lists the premier temporary gift of prophecy as notation that all the temporary gifts were functioning properly.
 7. He then emphasizes the permanent gifts that would be essential to carry the church at Rome forward in time as they continued to advance spiritually.
- X.** The corporate impact of the spiritual gifts by Divine design.
- A.** As Paul has made clear in 1Cor.12, the gifts are designed to function as a corporate body of Christ.
 - B.** Peter further makes clear in 1Pet.4:10 that the spiritual gifts are to be directed “toward one another” (εἰς ἑαυτοῦ - eis heautou; reflexive = lit. “to ourselves”; 4:10b).
 - C.** Each local church has a priority of responsibility to apply their gifts corporately to ensure the spiritual health and well-being of their individual members.
 - D.** Paul taught the same principle of priority in application in Gal.6:10
 - E.** It is each individual member of the local church that is responsible to plug in to their respective gift to serve the church corporately (4:10a).
 - F.** Peter in his own words iterates that the whole is dependent upon the parts and vice versa complimenting Paul’s body metaphor.
 - G.** It is the function of the gifts corporately that manifest the grace of God in application (4:10c).
 - H.** It is through the gifts that the local church is to manage God’s plan as good stewards.
 - I.** This establishes the appropriate ministries of a local church as designed by God.
 - J.** Ministries not as a result of a particular gift is nothing more than traditions of men.
 - K.** 1Pet.4:11 makes clear that the gifts find their source for application from God.
 - L.** The ultimate result of individual into corporate function is to glorify God as a L/C.
- XI.** Some further misnomers regarding spiritual gifts and offices.
- M.** There are those that advocate that the gift of prophecy remains extant in a hybrid form.
 - N.** These contend that the Roman listing is dedicated only to permanent gifts, since prophecy is the only otherwise temporary gift listed.
 - O.** This goes in the face of clear Scripture that dictates otherwise. 1Cor.13:8
 - P.** The noun “prophecy/προφητεία – propheta” in 1Cor.13:8 is the same noun in Rom.12:6. *See Doctrine of Prophets and Prophecy*
 - Q.** There are those that claim that the office of P-T listed in Eph.4:11 is not a spiritual gift and the office is not subject to any particular spiritual gift.
 - R.** They hold to Paul’s isolated use for the term “gifts/δόμα – doma” in Eph.4:8 as not being used in a spiritual gift sense.
 - S.** However, Paul uses another unique word “δωρεά - dorea” that clearly indicates spiritual gifts in Eph.3:7 and 4:7, and it is not used elsewhere in the N.T. in that vein. Cf.Act.8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Rom.5:15,17; 2Cor.9:15; Heb.6:4
 - T.** In the epistle of Ephesians, Paul chooses not to use the common word for “spiritual gifts/χάρισμα – charisma” but others to highlight a different nuance of their nature.
 - U.** Otherwise, Paul associated Timothy’s spiritual gift (charisma) with his office. 1Tim.4:14; 2Tim.1:6
 - V.** As to particular gifts corresponding to the particular offices, who ever heard of a prophet that could not prophesy is the only example needed to debunk that idea.

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- XII.** The recognition and development of the gifts.
- A.** An inclination and desire for particular kinds of tasks may mark the presence of a gift. 1Cor.14:1 “*desire earnestly spiritual gifts.*”
 - B.** Recognition by others and effectiveness marks a spiritual gift. Act.13:2; 1Cor.9:1,2; 1Tim.3:10; 4:14; 2Tim.1:6
 - C.** As you attempt various tasks under mature leaders you will discover your gift and niche.
 - D.** Those not exercising a gift should indicate your availability and interest. Even if it is in some small way, it is a beginning and is important.
 - E.** Some gifts (like P-T) call for specialized training (seminary) and fall under the Timothy principle. 2Tim.2:2
 - F.** A local church should be desirous of all gifts (1Cor.14:1) and should pray and seek for believers with certain gifts.
 - G.** Deacon is not a gift but an office. *See Doctrine of Deacons*
 - H.** Hospitality is not a gift, but an application incumbent upon all believers. *See Doctrine of Hospitality*
 - I.** The ultimate preparation for any gift is consistent face-to-face teaching. Eph.4:11,12; 1Tim.4:14