

"Spiritual Gifts"

Enablement For The Will Of God

Part I

Introduction:

From the first moment of the Believer's "new life" in Jesus Christ there is an inward desire, a "hunger", for fellowship with God Himself and a motivation to live a life that is "pleasing to Him". Enjoying His presence and following His "will" are constant points of focus in every day. There is great joy and fulfillment in knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior!

However, for most of us, as time passes we discover that we complicate and confuse the Christian life by reverting to what is natural to us – "self-life". We think that we can or must "live for Christ" in our own strength and effort. We "dedicate" and "rededicate" our lives, but failure always follows! We prove that we cannot live the Christian life in our own strength and ability. Frustration becomes part of our Christian experience until God, in His patience, teaches us that our total dependence must be on His life in us – that we are "in Christ"! Progressively we learn the basics of "The Christ-life for the self-life!", and, "Not I, but Christ!" We learn the truth of Galatians 2:20, and begin to take our Biblical "position" in Christ and to "rest" in Him as our life. We begin to enjoy new freedom and victory over the manipulation of "sin" and the "self-life"! The solution to our problem and frustration is to discover what God has provided for every Christian!

A similar experience happens for many Believers in their desire to "serve" Christ and to minister in His name. Sincere and lengthy attempts to "bear fruit" have often led to frustration or what we perceive as "failure" – *"I have no spiritual abilities that God can use!"* This is a very painful place for many sincere Christians. They are tempted to give up any hope of "bearing fruit" for Christ. But once again, the solution to our problem and frustration is to discover what God has provided for every Christian!

In the following weeks of Biblical study, we will examine the "provisions" God has made for every Believer called "**Spiritual Gifts**" – **His enablement for ministry in His name**. What a liberating truth it is to discover what God has provided for every Believer!

Three Things God Has Provided For Every Believer To Enable Effective Ministry

A. His _____:

1. II Timothy 3:16-17.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

- "Adequate" = artios = from aro ("to fit")
 - = "complete", "sufficient", "completely qualified"
 - (implying: "to serve its destined purpose")
- "Equipped" = exartizo = from artios ("complete")
 - = "to furnish or fit completely"
 - "to put in appropriate condition"

2. Hebrews 4:12-13.

"For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

- "Living" = zao = from zeo = "to be warm"
 - = "to have life, to be alive"
- "Active" = energes = "energy"
 - = "active", "powerful", "capable of doing"

Application: Do we _____ this about God's Word?

B. His _____:

1. Romans 12:2.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

- "Prove" = dokimazo = "to try, prove, discern, distinguish, approve"
 - (It has the idea of proving a thing, whether it be worthy to be received or not – God's will always proving to be good)
- "Will" (of God) = thelema = not a demand by God, but the "result" of God's gracious disposition; an expression of pleasure towards that which is liked; the object of God's good pleasure in carrying out divine purpose!

--“Perfect” = teleios = “goal” or “purpose”
= “Adult, full-grown, of full age, as opposed to little children”
(Cf: James 1:17 – God’s “perfect” gifts to His children meet their real or actual needs!)

2. Ephesians 2:10.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

--“Workmanship” = poiema = “a product”; “a fabric” (literal or figurative)
= “a thing that is made”

--“Prepared beforehand” = proetoimazo = “to fix up in advance” (lit. or fig.)

Application: Do we _____ this about our lives?

C. His _____:

1. I Corinthians 6:19-20.

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

--“Temple” = naos = from naio = “to dwell”
= “a dwelling (place)”

Note: The Temple itself was the heart and center of the whole sacred enclosure called “hieron”. The “naos” was the Holy of Holies. The Lord Jesus never entered the “naos” during His earthly ministry.

--The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, is a _____ to every Believer! (He is the “Helper” and “Guide”: John 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-15)

2. I Corinthians 3:16.

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

3. I Corinthians 2:12.

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.”

a. What are these “things”?

I the context of I Cor. 2:12 the reference is to “spiritual” wisdom, words, truth “taught by the Spirit”, 2:13.

b. Undoubtedly, the truths concerning “spiritual gifts” are included in the broader promise of “the things freely given to us by God.”

Application: Do we _____ these promises concerning the Holy Spirit?

The “Spiritual Gifts”

I. The “Definition” of a Gift:

“A ‘Spiritual Gift’ is a divine enablement of a special ability for service upon a member of the Body of Christ.”

--William McRae

A. The N.T. words:

1. **“Gift” = pneumatikos** → I Cor. 12:1.

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.”

--Gr. text: *“Now concerning spirituals . . . (gifts)*

pneumatikos = from pneuma (“spirit”) meaning “spiritual”

--Meaning: They are **divine** in their source!

--App: This “spiritual” source (supernatural) → not believed in our day!

2. **“Gift” = charisma** → I Cor. 12:4.

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.”

--Gr. text: *charisma = from charis (“grace”) + suffix “ma” indicating the result of “grace” → “A gift of grace; an undeserved benefit of grace.”*

--Meaning: The essence of a spiritual gift = **an ability!**

It is an ability to function effectively and significantly in a particular service as a member of Christ’s body, the Church.

--App: Consider our small Body of Believers at RWBC → what do you see?

*“_____” believers **gifted/enabled** by God to serve Him effectively!!!*

B. What a “gift” embodies: From William McRae.

1. **“Ability”:**

“Ability in any sphere of the Lord’s service, ability that enables one to do an effective work that glorifies God and advances the cause of Christ.”

2. **“Qualification”:**

“A Believer is qualified to serve in the work of God, not initially on the basis of human ability or training, but on the basis of the “gift” of God given to him/her.”

3. **“Strength”:**

“A Believer who possesses a divine, supernatural supply of strength to minister.”

4. **“Responsibility”:**

*“It naturally flows that if a gift is a divine endowment, then it surely involves responsibility. It is a **stewardship** – we stand responsible for our use of the time, money, bodies, and opportunities that have been entrusted to us. We are accountable for how we have invested the gift entrusted to us.”*

C. What about natural “talents”?

--It is imperative that we distinguish between a “spiritual gift” and a “natural talent”.

--Natural “Talents”: Are given by God as well as spiritual gifts!

1. They are derived from parents and family lineage.
2. They are possessed by “Believers” and “Non-believers”.
3. They are possessed from birth.
4. They are part of God’s “common grace” to all of His creation – for the mutual benefit of mankind.

“Such talents may and ought to be dedicated to God to be used for His glory and in His service, but they must always be considered consecrated talents, not spiritual gifts.”

--William McRae

	<u>Natural Talents</u>	<u>Spiritual Gifts</u>
1. <u>Source</u> :	From God; Through parents	From God; Independent of parents
2. <u>Possessed</u> :	From birth	From conversion
3. <u>Purpose</u> :	To benefit mankind on the natural level	To benefit mankind on the spiritual level
4. <u>Process</u> :	Must be recognized, developed, exercised	Must be recognized, developed, exercised
5. <u>Function</u> :	Ought to be dedicated by Believers to God for His use and glory	Ought to be used in humility for God’s glory

Helpful Questions: Distinguishing Natural Talents and Spiritual Gifts.

-- “Does a natural talent become a spiritual gift at the point of conversion?”

No! Spiritual “power” and “blessing” are missing where there is natural talent only.

-- “Can there be an overlap between a spiritual gift and a natural talent.”

Yes! A natural talent can be the “channel” for the exercise of a spiritual gift, but never the “source”!