

"Spiritual Gifts"

Enablement For The Will Of God

Part III

Introduction: The Word of God clearly teaches that He "gifts" or "equips" every Believer to be "adequate" for all that the will of God brings into our lives. It is sad that so many Christians are unaware of God's spiritual provisions – His "enablement" for effective ministry and service! Many of us have never discovered or developed our spiritual gifts. Dr. Charles Ryrie suggests that understanding these Biblical truths can, "redirect your life and service for Christ." This is our purpose and desire in this brief study.

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: The source of a spiritual is God; they are **divine/supernatural** !

--App: **Every Believer has a "divine enablement" from the Holy Spirit!**

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!**

--App: **Every "Assembly" of Believers is composed of individuals who are 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.”*

C. What about natural “talents”?

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

	<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 (as a source).

-- “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”!

II. The “Distribution” of the Gifts:

“The distribution of the gifts is a work so profound, so important, so extensive, that it involved the entire Godhead. This places the distribution of spiritual gifts in the same category as the work of creation and redemption. In each case, all three Persons of the Trinity are active.”

--William McRae

--The work of the Father, Romans 12:3.

--The work of the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians 12:9;

--The work of the Son, Ephesians 4:7-11.

A. Gifts are distributed by the “**ASCENDED**” Christ, Ephesians 4:7-11.

1. The source of all “Spiritual Gifts” is Jesus Christ, 4:7.

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”

*“But is it really true that the Jesus who once walked the earth is now so highly exalted, so glorious, and so richly endowed with **authority** that He is able to bestow His gifts upon the church and upon its members in lavish quantity?”*

--William Henricksen

a. Paul → Eph. 1: 3, “. . . who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

b. Peter → II Pet. 1:3, “. . . His divine power has granted to us everything that pertains to life and godliness . . .”

2. The ascended Christ now reigns in **majestic glory and power**, 4:8.

*“Therefore it says, ‘**WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH,**
HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES,
AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.’ ” (Psa. 68:18)*

a. This quotation from Psalm 68:18 is “**PROPHETIC**” of Messiah.

The one who had been held captive has now conquered and now holds all authority!

b. Proper interpretation requires understanding of the ancient “**Triumph**” or “**Victory March**”.

c. The “ascension” of Jesus Christ back to Heaven, after the humiliation of His death on the cross, is an historic portrayal of Christ entering into the glory of Heaven and rewarding “His own”!

“(Paul) sees Christ’s ascension as a triumphant victory march into heaven. Now seated upon the throne, the Conqueror is distributing spiritual gifts to His people, gifts that are the ‘spoils of Calvary’. . . . These gifts have been purchased by His precious blood. They are the result of the Cross. The believer who realizes this will appreciate their value. These gifts are extremely costly. They cost Jesus Christ His life.”

--William McRae

3. God-given “dignity” is attached to the spiritual gifts Jesus Christ gives to “His own”, 4:9-11.

*“(Now this expression, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that **He might fill all things**.) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers . . .”*

*“Your spiritual gift, whatever it is, has constituted you a part of the ministry. To be in the ministry of Jesus Christ, serving Him, is a matter of **dignity** because you have been qualified, called, and equipped to engage in that ministry by means of something the ascended Christ has given you. . . . What **dignity** there is in being entrusted with a faculty for service from the glorified Master Himself.”*
--William McRae

B. Gifts are distributed to “_____” individual Believer.

1. Four Biblical texts support this teaching:

- a. Ephesians 4:7 →
- b. I Corinthians 12:7 →
- c. I Corinthians 12:11 →
- d. I Peter 4:10 →

2. Four practical facts emerge from this teaching:

- a. You have at least _____ spiritual gift.
- b. You may have _____ than one gift, depending upon interpretation.
- c. You do not have _____ the spiritual gifts.
- d. Your gift is essential to the proper _____ of the Body of Christ.

“The metaphor chosen by the Holy Spirit and used by Paul in I Corinthians 12 to describe the local church is the physical body. Nothing is clearer from this metaphor than the fact that each member of the body has a particular role which is essential for the efficient functioning of the entire body.” --W. McRae

C. Gifts are distributed for the “_____” of others.

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

Two serious errors exist in the Church today:

1. Christians who believe that “spiritual gifts” are given for **self-edification**.

--Self-edification is not a Biblical goal of the exercise of spiritual gifts.

The Greek text of I Cor. 13:5 says, “*Love seeketh not the things of itself.*”

2. Christians who **withhold** their “spiritual gift” from benefiting the Body.

--Whether intentional or unintentional, not functioning in the Body results in impoverishment of the Local Assembly – a vital part is missing!

D. Gifts are distributed by the “_____” ministry of the Holy Spirit.

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

--The distribution of the “spiritual gifts” is a sovereign act →

“No one dictates to the Dispenser! He does as He wills!”

“Why has He chosen to give you a particular gift? . . . It is because this particular gift fits you most perfectly for His plan and purpose for your life. Few things are more important for a Christian than knowing what his or her gift is. That knowledge will often be a signpost pointing the believer in the direction of God’s will in specific instances. One of the most obvious indicators of God’s will for your life is your gift. . . . The believer who grasps the sovereignty of God in this area of life, as well as in every other area, will be delivered from a complaining spirit. He will learn to be content and grateful, rejoicing in the Lord always. God is the One who has given us our gifts. It was His sovereign, wise, all-knowing choice.”

--William McRae

E. Gifts are given at the time of “_____”.

1. The “gifts” are given by the Holy Spirit.

--We do not receive the Holy Spirit until the moment of salvation, I Cor. 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.”

2. The “gifts” are given for the benefit of the Body of Christ.

--We are not in the Body until our salvation, I Cor. 12:13.

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slave or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

F. Gifts are distributed on the basis of God’s “_____”.

--If there were any other basis than “grace”, they would cease to be **gifts!**

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” Ephesians 4:7

--This basis of “grace” guards against two evil extremes:

1. Arrogant Pride → Giving credit to “self” for what God has provided!

“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.” Romans 12:3

2. False Humility → Thinking that it is wrong to claim to have a spiritual gift!

Many Christians falsely believe that “self-depreciation” equates to _____ and _____! (*“I’m just a nothing, a nobody; God hasn’t gifted me!”*)

--The Believer must “_____” who he/she is in Christ!

--The Believer must “_____” with what God says!

“But by the grace of God I am what I am . . .” I Cor. 15:10