

"Spiritual Gifts"

Enablement For The Will Of God

Part IV

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** . . ."*

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:

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

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

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

2. The ascended Christ now reigns in majestic glory and power, Eph. 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)

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

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

1. Four Biblical texts support this teaching:

- a. Ephesians 4:7 → “*But to each one of us grace was given . . .*”
- b. I Corinthians 12:7 → “*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit . . .*”
- c. I Corinthians 12:11 → “*. . . distributing to each one individually just as He wills.*”
- d. I Peter 4:10 → “*As each one has received a special gift employ it in serving . . .*”

2. Four practical facts emerge from this teaching:

- a. You have at least ONE spiritual gift.
- b. You may have MORE than one gift, depending upon interpretation of the text.
- c. You do not have ALL the spiritual gifts.
- d. Your gift is essential to the proper FUNCTION 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 “BENEFIT” of others.

“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good,” I Cor. 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 “SOVEREIGN” 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!”

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

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.
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.

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

--If there were any basis other 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!
2. False Humility → Thinking that it is wrong to claim to have a spiritual gift!

III. The “Description” of the Gifts:

Romans 12:6-8

Prophecy
Service
Teaching
Exhortation
Giving
Leading/Administration
Showing Mercy

Ephesians 4:11

Apostleship
Prophecy
Evangelism
Pastor-Teacher

I Peter 4:11

Speaking
Serving

I Corinthians 12:6-10

Word of Wisdom
Word of Knowledge
Faith
Healing
Miracles
Prophecy
Distinguishing spirits
Speaking in tongues
Interpreting tongues

I Corinthians 12:28

Apostleship
Prophecy
Teaching
Miracles
Healing
Helping
Administration
Speaking in tongues

I Corinthians 12:29-30

Apostleship
Prophecy
Teaching
Miracles
Healing
Speaking in tongues
Interpreting tongues

A. General Observations:

1. There are _____ lists of “spiritual gifts”.
2. There are a total of _____ “gifts” listed.
3. There is _____ of several of the “gifts” within the six lists.
--See: “Prophecy” → appears in _____ of the lists!
4. A consistent method of _____ must be used with each list.
--This will demand that each “gift” be defined in the same way in each list.
Some want to see “Healing” as physical in one list, but spiritual in another.
5. Our method of interpretation will be:
 - a. “Literal” → Each word will be interpreted to mean what it says!
 - b. “Historical” → Each word must be placed in its “normal” historical setting!
 - c. “Grammatical” → Each word must be understood as implied by the original text!
 - d. “Contextual” → Each word must be understood in the context where it appears!
6. Our interpretation must be exegetical, not experiential → We must not define these gifts solely on the basis of present-day usage and practice!
7. We must address the question: “Are all of these spiritual gifts _____ today?”
--The answer is determined by a “_____” method of interpretation of all of God’s revealed truth!

--A consistent "Dispensational" interpretation of God's overall plan in human history reveals that some of the spiritual gifts are no longer _____ by God!

B. Helpful Categories for the 18 Separate "Gifts": I Corinthians 12:4-6.

"Now there are varieties of gifts . . . varieties of ministries . . . varieties of effects . . ."

1. I Corinthians 12:6-10

2. I Corinthians 12:28

→ The "_____" Gifts!

3. I Corinthians 12:29-30

4. Ephesians 4:11

→ The "_____" Gifts!

5. Romans 12:6-8

→ The "_____" Gifts!

6. I Peter 4:11 → A "Two-fold Summary": "_____" and "_____".

C. Discussion of the Three Major Categories:

The "_____" Gifts
(**"_____"**)
I Cor. 12: 6-10, 28, 29-30

1. Each of these gifts was _____ → Each _____ in the early N.T. Church or "Assembly" of Believers.
2. These gifts were supernatural "_____" of the Holy Spirit who now "_____" all Believers.
3. Each of these "gifts" had a special _____ → to enable the newly born Church to function effectively in their moment of history.
4. **Major factor:** The canon (completed record) of the N.T. Scriptures was not finished until near the end of the first century and many local "Assemblies" did not have any written portion of God's Word. Much of the new Church was dependent

on the verbal preaching of the N.T. “apostles”, “prophets”, and “evangelists”!
--Several of the “sign” gifts allowed the infant Church to have God’s Word before it was available in written form to the local “Assemblies”.

5. **Major factor:** Jesus had told the leaders of the Jewish nation who demanded miraculous “signs” to prove He was “Messiah” that they would get only one sign – the “sign of Jonah” (His bodily resurrection), Matt. 12:39; 16:4; Lk. 11:29.
--Several of the “sign” gifts gave supernatural **proof** of Jesus’ resurrection and of Jesus’ claims to be Israel’s promised “Messiah”! (See: Isaiah 28:11)

6. **Conclusion:** The “sign” gifts were **no longer needed** in the early Church after:
- a. The canon of Scripture was made available to the Church;
 - b. The nation of Israel had been given a final opportunity to recognize Christ as Messiah!
- These “gifts” are said to have “*ceased*” or to “*be done away*” → **I Cor. 13:1-13**.
- 1) Paul addresses the selfish abuse of the “sign” gifts in Corinth, 13:1-7.
 - a) Possession of the “sign” gifts is not the mark of spiritual maturity!
 - b) Paul’s argument in these verses is against the immature and selfish infighting of the Corinthian Church. The gifts are never for “self” or for personal benefit or recognition!
 - c) Demonstration of Christ’s selfless “love” is the “more excellent way”!
 - 2) Paul addresses the function of the “sign” gifts before the Scriptures are available in printed form, 13:8-12.
 - a) The Believer “*knows in part*” until “*the perfect comes*”.
--This certainly refers to when we see Christ “*face to face*”!
--It also would refer to the “partial” knowledge of God and His truth until the Church possessed the written Word of God!
 - b) The need of the early Church was for the completed canon of Scripture!

7. **Warning:** Without an understanding of these two major factors, there can be no adequate understanding of the original purpose of the “sign” gifts in I Cor. 12!
--The danger is to attempt to restore or repeat what has “*passed away*” in God’s plan and purpose! This produces great confusion and discouragement!
--Your “spiritual gift” is **not** one of the “sign gifts”!

8. **Observation:** There are many genuine and Godly Christians who do not believe that the “sign” gifts have “*ceased*” or “*passed away*”.
- a. Some believe that they have remained operative since God gave them in the early Church → therefore, they are actively given and exercised today!

- b. Some believe that they did “*pass away*” for much of the Church’s history since the first century, but **now** they have been restored at the “*end of the age.*”