

Lesson 8

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

INTRODUCTION:

Purposes of study:

- To understand the different kinds of gifts and ministries
- To understand the purpose of our giftings
- To help discover our own spiritual gifts

LESSON OUTLINE

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 - B. Purpose of our giftings
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 - D. What are the differences between human talents and spiritual gifts?
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Serving the Lord is a privilege*

The importance of discovering your spiritual gifts: **Matthew 25:14-30**

In this parable – we can learn a few truths:

1. God is a giver of gifts or talents:

Ephesians 4:11 : *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets,”*

2. All **believers** have been given gift/gifts :

Matt 25:15

To one he gave...	5 talents
To another he gave...	2 talents
To another he gave...	1 talent

Romans 12:6 : *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.”*

3. God requires **accountability** from His people:

Matt 25:19: *“After a long time the Master of those servants returned and settled **accounts** with them.”*

4. Some truths about the unproductive servant:

- a) He had a wrong **understanding** of God

Matt 25:24. *“...hard master...”*

Hosea 4:6 : *“My people perish for lack of knowledge.”*

- b) He had **fear**

Matt 25:25 *“I was afraid...”*

Fear has kept people from achieving goals and plans.

2 Timothy 1:7 : *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, love and of sound mind.”*

- c) He was a **lazy** person

Matt 25:26 "God called him: "You wicked, lazy servant!"

- d) God is a **Rewarder**

Matt 25: 21,23 "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things... Come and share your master's happiness!"

B. Purpose of our giftings:

2 Corinthians 3:4-6

Ephesians 4:12-13

1 Peter 4:10

In Acts 8:19-23 - Simon the Sorcerer or saw the anointing in Peter and John. So he wanted the same anointing that he may also lay hands on others. The scripture said that his motives were not right.

1. To bring **life**: **2 Corinthians 3:4-6.**

v6 says "He had made us **ABLE** or competent as ministers."

It does not say that 'He is going to make us' but has already **MADE** us competent. As ministers of a new covenant - A covenant of the Spirit that gives **LIFE**

2. To **equip** God's people: **Ephesians 4:12**

Ephesians 4:11-12 : says that the gifting is given to "prepare God's people to do the works of the ministry."

- a) To be instrumental for unity v**13**.
b) To help God's people to maturity v**13**.

3. To **serve** others: **1 Peter 4:10**

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Here, we see that the gift that we have is "received" and not something that we earned or worked for. The purpose of our gifting is that we might be able to serve others.

C. The prerequisites of our giftings: Romans 12:1-3

1. **Rom 12:1:** To present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

1 Peter 1: 15-16: *"But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written : 'Be holy, because I am holy.'"*

2. **Rom 12:2:** Not to be conformed to the ways/patterns of the world.

1 John 2:15-16 *Lust of flesh, Lust of eyes, Pride of life.*

3. To walk the way of Love

1 Corinthians 14:1: *"Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy."*

Whether our giftings be leadership, teaching, or administration, or tongues or healings - we must walk in the way of love.

D. What are the differences between human talents and spiritual gifts?

	Talents	Gifts
1	Inherited from forefathers.	Given by the Holy Spirit.
2	Present from natural birth.	Present from new birth.
3	God-given to all members of the human race.	God-given to members of Christ's Body.
4	For human activities.	For ministry of the Body.
5	Can be operated independent of Spirit.	Dependent on the Holy Spirit
6	Ministers primarily on natural level	Ministers on spiritual level.
7	Effects are usually temporal/finite.	Effects are eternal/ infinite.
8	Glorifies self.	Glorifies God.

E. *What are the differences between the fruit of the spirit and the gifts of the spirit?*

Galatians 5 1 Corinthians 12 Romans 12 Ephesians 4.

	Fruits	Gifts
1	Defines what a Christian is	Determines what a Christian does
2	Same in every Christian	Different in each Christian
3	Satan cannot imitate	Satan can imitate
4	Deals with character	Deals with service/ ministry
5	Is an end in itself	Is a means to an end
6	Permanent/ Eternal	Will cease
7	According to spirituality and maturity	Not according to spirituality

II. DIFFERENT KINDS OF GIFTS AND MINISTRIES

A. *Three Main Categories of gifts and ministries*

God has not limited our Christian service to talents we inherited from our family or learned in school. By His grace, God has bestowed upon every believer very special abilities called "spiritual gifts." The Bible explains three types of special giftings for Christian service.

- **Ephesians 4:7-16** identifies **leadership gifts** (Gr. *doma*), given by Jesus following His resurrection, so that the Church would get training, encouragement and direction for its ministry.
- **Romans 12:6-8** lists seven special kinds of **service gifts** (Gr. *Diakonia*), and the Word says every Christian has one or more of them at his disposal.
- **1 Corinthians 12:8-10** names nine **manifestations** (Gr. *Phanerosis*) of the Holy Spirit so believers can have supernatural help, guidance and encouragement in the Body of Christ.

In addition to this arsenal, several other gifts are indicated in Scripture. In this chapter we identify twenty-five "*spiritual gifts*" and we also include a "*spiritual gift check list*" so each reader may ascertain which special abilities God has reserved for him.

B. General Summary of the service gifts, manifestation and leadership.**1. Apostle: Ephesians 4:11**

Ability that God gives to exercise leadership over a number of churches and is able to guide in spiritual matters. 2 Corinthians 12:12 tells us that he moves in signs, wonders and miracles. Some people say that this gift has passed off since the 12 apostles. According to **Ephesians 4:11-13** - Paul says that the 5-fold ministries are given till we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God and become mature. We are yet to reach the unity in the faith. As such, today, we can still expect the ministry of an apostle.

2. Prophet: Ephesians 4:11

One who is able to know the mind of God and to be God's spokesmen. Through the revelations of the Holy Spirit, he is able to know the past, present or future of a situation. For example, Prophet Nathan knew about David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba (**2 Samuel 12**). Prophet Agabus was given the revelation about the future of Paul. (**Acts 21:11**)

3. Evangelist: Ephesians 4:11

One who is given the ability to bring many souls to Christ. Philip is called the evangelist in **Acts 2:8**. In **Acts 8:5-6**, Philip went to Samaria and preached the word of God with signs and wonders. As a result of it, many were healed and turned to the Lord.

4. Pastor: Ephesians 4:11

One who is given the ability to shepherd God's people, nourishing, comforting and guiding them in the ways of the Lord.

5. Teacher: Ephesians 4:11

One who is given the ability to communicate God's truth in a way that God's people can understand whereby growing as a result of it.

Note: No.1-5 are commonly known as the 5-Fold Ministry.

6. Word of Wisdom: 1 Corinthians 12:8

A revelation given by the Holy Spirit to the individual so that he has the insight to apply knowledge for the edification of the body of Christ.

Illus.: Jesus answering the trap question set by the Pharisees **Matthew 22:21**. "Give to Caesar what is Caesars, and give to God what is God's."

7. **Word of Knowledge:** **1 Corinthians 12:8**

A revelation given by the Holy Spirit to the individual so as to know the facts of a situation whether in the past or present. In so doing, the person or body of Christ is edified, corrected or comforted.

8. **Discerning of spirits:** **1 Corinthians 12:10**

It is the discernment given by the Holy Spirit to know whether in a given situation it was motivated by the human spirit, demonic spirit or the Holy Spirit.

Illus.: **Acts 16:16-18**

Note: No. 6-8 are commonly known as Revelational Gifts.

9. **Gift of tongues:** **1 Corinthians 12:10**

It is the ability that God gives to His people to speak in a language they have never learned before. At times they become the mouth piece for God to release certain pertinent messages from God to His people.

Illus.: **Acts 16:16-18**

10. **Interpretation of tongues:** **1 Corinthians 12:10**

It is the ability that God gives to His People to interpret the message of tongues so that the Body of Christ may understand and be edified. The interpreter in the natural would not know what was spoken if not for the revelation given by the Holy Spirit. Please note that interpretation is not translation.

11. **Prophecy:** **1 Corinthians 12:10**

It is the ability that God gives to His people to communicate His message concerning a present or future situation.

Illus.: **Acts 21:9** - Philip's 4 daughters.

Note: No. 9-11 are commonly known as Gifts of utterances.

12. **Gifts of faith:** **1 Corinthians 12:9**

It is the assurance given to certain individuals so as to believe God for the impossible.

Illus.: George Mueller had the gift of faith to believe God to supply the needs of his orphanage without telling anyone his needs.

13. **Gifts of healing:** **1 Corinthians 12:9**

It is the ability given by the Holy Spirit to His people so as to empower them to heal sicknesses apart from natural means.

Illus.: **Acts 3:1-10**

14. **Gifts of Miracles:** **1 Corinthians 12:10**

It is the ability given to members in the body of Christ to perform miracles so as to overrule the course of nature.

Illus.: **Luke 8:24** - Jesus stifling the storm.

Note: No. 12-14 are commonly known as Power Gifts.

15. **Gift of helps** (service): **1 Corinthians 12:28 ; Roman 12:7**

The ability given to members in the body of Christ to use their talents for the edification of the body of Christ. They are a great help to others so that others may concentrate on their ministries because of the assistance given by the gifts of helps.

Illus.: **Acts 6:1-4, Acts 9:36**

16. **Exhortation / Encourage:** **Roman 12:8**

The ability given to individuals in the body of Christ so that through them other believers are helped, motivated, encouraged and inspired.

17. **Giving:** **Romans 12:8**

The ability given to certain members of the Body so that they are able to give financially or materially so that the work of the Lord may progress.

18. **Leadership:** **Romans 12:8**

The ability given to certain individuals in the Body of Christ so that they are able to lead (not Lord) others to the accomplishment of God given goals and purposes.

Illus.: **Acts 15:13,19**

19. **Mercy:** **Romans 12:8**

A compassion given to individuals so that they are enabled to empathize with the sufferings of others, leading them to help, comfort or strengthen those in need. Through them, others experience the mercy and love of Christ.

Illus.: Mother Theresa

Note: No. 15-19 are commonly known as Motivational Gifts.

20. **Hospitality:** **Romans 12:13**

A warm-heartedness that enables them to provide accommodation or food to those in need, thus making them feel "at home".

21. **Gift of Administrator:** **1 Corinthians 12:28**

It is the ability given to individuals to help the body function smoothly and through his organisational skills, plans and goals are accomplished.

22. **Celibacy:** **Matthew 19:10-12**

It is the ability given to individuals that they feel contented as singles, even though unmarried, they are able to devote their total attention for the gospel's sake (without divided attention for family concerns).

23. **Intercession:** **Luke 2:36-37**

The ability given to individuals in the body of Christ so as to give themselves to prayer and intercession.

Illus.: Anna the prophetess.

24. **Musicians:** **1 Chronicles 15:20-21**

The ability given to individuals to minister to the Lord and His people, aiding in worship to the Lord.

25. **Singers:** **1 Chronicles 15:16**

The ability to minister in songs to the Lord and His people.

III. A STUDY ON THE MANIFESTATIONAL GIFTS IN 1 CORINTHIANS 12: 8 - 10

A. *The gifts described*

The great spiritual revival which is sweeping the world at this time has often been called the "*Charismatic Revival*."

This phrase has been employed to describe an extremely important aspect of this revival. The Gifts (Greek - charisma) of the Spirit are being restored to the Church. These produce the supernatural manifestations which were so powerfully obvious in the New Testament Church.

These manifestations, or Gifts of the Spirit, have been noticeably absent from the Church from many centuries. In the past fifty years, God has been restoring these and His restoration program has been accelerated greatly in the last 30 years.

The restoration of these blessings creates a great need for teaching on these important subjects.

Paul told the church at Corinth: "*Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant*" (**1 Corinthians 12:1**).

1. Categories of Gifts

There are many Charismatic gifts mentioned in the Bible. The main areas of reference are: **Romans 12:3-9; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11.**

For the purpose of this study, we will limit ourselves to a consideration of the nine manifestations listed in **1 Corinthians 12:8-10**.

To simplify our study of them, we will classify them in three categories:

- a) Gifts of Speech
 - (i) Tongues
 - (ii) Interpretation of Tongues
 - (iii) Prophecy
- b) Gifts of Revelation
 - (i) A Word of Wisdom
 - (ii) A Word of Knowledge
 - (iii) Discerning of Spirits

- c) Gifts of Ability
 - (i) Gift of Faith
 - (ii) Gifts of Healings
 - (iii) Working of Miracles
2. Whom may the Spirit use in the operation of such gifts?
- a) Any member of the Body may be used (**1 Corinthians 12:7, 11; 14:26, 31**). No member should come behind in any gift (**1 Corinthians 1:7**).
 - b) We should be filled with the spirit (**Ephesians 5:18**).
 - c) We must be desirous of being used in this way (**1 Corinthians 12:31**).
 - d) We should not be ignorant concerning the operation of the gifts (**1 Corinthians 12:1**).
 - e) We must be desirous of spiritual gifts (**1 Corinthians 14:1-6**).
 - f) We should be motivated by genuine love for the body (**1 Corinthians 13**), and a pure desire to edify the body (**1 Corinthians 14:12**).
 - g) We should seek to excel in the operation of the gifts (**1 Corinthians 14:12**).
3. The **Gift of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10)**
- a) Two functions. This manifestation of the Spirit has two functions:

Firstly as "devotional tongues, "the purpose of which is to edify the person using it."

Secondly, as the Gift of Tongues which, used in conjunction with the companion Gift of Interpretation of Tongues, is for the edifying of the whole Church, as well as the individual's understanding.
 - b) Guidelines for the use of tongues in a public assembly:
 - (i) Its use should be motivated by love (**1 Corinthians 13: 1**).

- (ii) It should be accompanied by interpretation (**1 Corinthians 14:5, 13, 28**).
- (iii) It should be confined to two or three utterances each, one at a time in any large gathering (**1 Corinthians 14:27**).

Seek to be yielded to the Spirit. This is often a gentle stirring in your spirit, a growing excitement and anticipation.

You do NOT have to speak out immediately. The spirit within the prophet is subject to the control of the prophet (**1 Corinthians 14:32**). You can wait quietly for the right moment to speak. He will never cause confusion, for He is not the author of confusion (**1 Corinthians 14:33**).

Remain calm and relaxed; and when the Spirit prompts you, speak in a normal but clearly audible voice.

4. The **Interpretation of Tongues** (**1 Corinthians 12:10**)

This is the companion gift to that of Tongues, and is always used in conjunction with that gift. It is the supernatural enablement, by the Holy Spirit, to interpret tongues into the known language of the congregations. It is NOT, the gift of translation. The interpreter does not understand the tongue employed in the utterance which was given.

a) Who may use this gift?

The interpretation of tongues is given "*as the Spirit wills*" (**1 Corinthians 12:11**). All who speak in tongues are clearly told: "*Let him who speaks in a tongue, pray that he may interpret*" (**1 Corinthians 14:13**).

When that person speaks in tongues, wait quietly until it is concluded. When you begin to speak, you may only have the first sentence of the interpretation and a brief idea of what is to follow. Take care not to speak "*beyond the proportion of your faith*" (**Romans 12:6**).

When the interpretation is complete, and you sense that the Spirit has finished all He wishes to say, then stop! Do not then seek to interpret the interpretation. Leave that to the people to allow the Holy Spirit to apply the exhortation or comfort given to themselves.

If there are any believers present who are regularly used in the vocal gifts, they should try to evaluate whether the words are truly from God (**1 Corinthians 14:29**).

5. **The Gift of Prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:10) 13**

Simply translated, the word "*prophecy*" means "*to utter inspired words.*" According to **1 Corinthians 14:31**, all believers may exercise this gift at some time, as the Spirit wills.

Everyone may prophesy one by one, and not more than three times in any one gathering where many have the gift and are waiting to exercise it. (**1 Corinthians 14:29,33**)

a) **Its Purpose.** The purpose of such prophetic utterance is to:

- (i) **To Edify.** This means to build up, strengthen the believers.
- (ii) **To Exhort.** Stir up the believers. Confront and challenge them.
- (iii) **To Comfort.** To speak encouragingly, words of comfort. Oftentimes a prophecy may include all three of these elements.

b) **Three misunderstandings about prophecy:**

- (i) **It should not be confused with preaching**
By careful preparation of his mind and spirit, a preacher can minister understanding to the people.

In contrast, the Gift of Prophecy is not the result of careful study. It is usually an unpremeditated, spontaneous speaking forth by the Spirit.

- (ii) **The Gift of Prophecy is not for foretelling the future.**
This, gift is for "*forth-telling*" rather than foretelling. Its purpose is for edification (building up), exhortation (stirring up) and comfort (cheering up), and not for seeking to predict future events (see **1 Corinthians 14:3**).

Whenever there is an element of prediction within a prophecy it is usually because there is another gift (Word of Knowledge or Wisdom), working along with it.

- (iv) This gift is not for personal guidance. If we are in need of personal guidance, we should ask Jesus Himself for it (**James 1:5**).
- c) Scriptural teaching on the gift of prophecy:
- (i) Prophecy is for speaking supernaturally to men (**1 Corinthians 14:3**). It conveys the mind of the Lord to the Church.
 - (ii) Prophecy requires no interpretation.
 - (iii) Prophecy convinces the unlearned (**1 Corinthians 14:15, 16**). Through the operation of the Gift of Prophecy, the unbeliever will:
 - * Be convinced of all. * Be judged of all.
 - The secrets of his heart will be made manifest.
 - Fall before God in humility.
 - Acknowledge that God is truly amongst you.
 - Worship God.
 - (iv) Prophecy functions so that believers may learn (**1 Corinthians 14:31**). It is learning of spiritual truths through the anointing of the Spirit. Such teachings should be tested by the written Word of God before being digested.
 - (v) Everyone should desire and covet this gift (**1 Corinthians 14:1, 39**).
 - (vi) The person operating the gift is responsible for its use or abuse (**1 Corinthians 14:32**). It is the prophet who is speaking on behalf of God, and the prophet has control, at all times, of all that he or she is saying.
 - (vii) Because those who prophesy can make mistakes, prophecy must be judged (**1 Corinthians 14:29; note Deuteronomy 18:20-22; Jeremiah 14:14, 15; 23:30**).
 - (viii) Guidelines for judging a prophecy:
 - *It should never contradict the written word of god.*
 - *It should always exalt Jesus Christ, and never denigrate Him*

- It should edify, exhort and *comfort the believers*. ‡
- It should "witness" with the majority of believers present
- It should not break the spirit of the meeting, though it may change the course of it.
- It should come to pass, if there is a predictive aspect.
- It should pass the "fruit test"

(**Matt 7:16**), Speaking of false prophets, Jesus declared: "Ye shall know them by their fruit."

- (ix) How to prophesy. Be relaxed. Do not be under a strain.

Quietly wait upon the Lord in your spirit. Keep your mind open to His voice. Do not prophesy beyond the proportion of your faith (**Romans 12:6**).

6. A word of knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8)

DEFINITION: A Word of Knowledge is a fragment or small item of God's knowledge, given to a person by the Holy Spirit.

It gives us certain facts and information through the supernatural revelation of the Holy Spirit. This information was previously unknown to the person, and the knowledge could not be gained by any natural means. It is supernaturally imparted.

a) Examples from scripture:

- (i) **In the ministry of Jesus.** Jesus knew certain facts about Nathaniel before He ever met him (John 1:47-50). Jesus knew many facts about the woman of Samaria, although He had never previously seen her (John 4:18-20).
- (ii) **In the early church.** Ananias received specific information in great detail about Saul, whom he had never met before. (Acts 9:10-20).
- (iii) **In the Old Testament.** In 2 Samuel 12:1-14, God revealed to Nathan certain facts and details regarding David's transgression.

- b) **Distinction.** A word of knowledge is distinct from human knowledge gained by natural means.

A Word of Knowledge cannot be gained by intellectual learning. Nor is it the ability to study or understand or interpret the Bible.

- c) Its employment in Scripture
 - (i) **To uncover sin** (2 Samuel 12: 1-10; Acts 5: 1-11).
 - (ii) **To bring people to God** (John 1:47-50; 4:18-20).
 - (iii) **To give guidance and direction** (Acts 9:11).
 - (iv) **To minister encouragement in periods of despondency** (1 Kings 19:9-18).
 - (v) **To impart knowledge of future events** (Acts 11:27, 28).
 - (vi) **To reveal hidden things** (1 Samuel 10:22).
- d) The operation of this gift
 - (i) **It is supernatural in character** not obtained by logic or deduction, reasoning, etc.,
 - (ii) **It operates by faith.** The person receiving the revelation does so by faith.
 - (iii) **The revelation is received in one's spirit** - not in the intellect or the emotions.
 - (iv) **It is not essentially a vocal gift.** It may be received quietly within the a person's spirit or audibly on occasion (Acts 9:11).
 - (v) **It may become vocal when shared with others** (John 4:4-7; 18).
 - (vi) **Any Spirit-filled Christian who is willing to hear God's voice may experience this gift.**
 - (vii) **It is an invaluable asset in the ministry of counseling.**
 - (viii) **Obedient action and response is essential** to the continuing function of this gift in one's ministry.
 - (ix) **Frequently manifested in conjunction with the Word of wisdom.** This is the divinely imparted wisdom to know what to do about a Word of Knowledge and how to apply it correctly and wisely.

7. A Word of Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8)

This gift stands at the head of the list in terms of its importance. It enables us to speak and act with divine wisdom, and thus ensures the correct use and application of other gifts.

When the Word of Wisdom is absent, the other gifts can be used wrongly, which causes much confusion.

- a) **Definition.** The Word of Wisdom is a fragment of divine wisdom supernaturally imparted by the Holy Spirit. It supplies one with the immediate wisdom to know what to say or do in a given situation.

God frequently gives it together with the Word of Knowledge, so that believers can know how to apply that Word of Knowledge correctly. God revealed to Ananias the whereabouts and condition of Saul through a Word of Knowledge. He also showed him, by the Word of wisdom, what he should do in this difficult situation.

- b) **Illustration.** God (Who knows all things) extracts, from His infinite store of wisdom, the particular portion of wisdom needed for one of His children. He sends this by the Spirit.

- c) **Distinction**

THE WORD OF WISDOM

- (i) Is not natural wisdom.
- (ii) Is not the wisdom gained from academic achievement.
- (iii) Is not wisdom gained from experience.
- (iv) Is not even the wisdom to understand the Bible.
- (v) Is *supernatural* in character.
- (vi) Is given as the Holy Spirit wills (1 Corinthians 12:11).
- (vii) Is given for a specific need or situation.
- (viii) Is *not* the gift of wisdom, but *the word of wisdom*.

- d) Some Biblical Examples

- (i) Luke 4:1-13. Jesus tempted in the wilderness. The replies which Jesus gave to Satan were words of wisdom imparted by the Holy Spirit.

- (ii) Luke 20:22-26. The Scribes tried to trap Jesus; but the Word of Wisdom, given by the Spirit, confounded them all.
 - (iii) John 8:3-11. Again the Scribes and Pharisees sought to trap Jesus
 - (iv) Acts 6:1-5. Giving wisdom in church administration.
 - (v) Acts 15:28. Solving a church crisis.
 - (vi) Acts 27:23-24. Gave Paul control of the situation, resulting in the salvation of many lives.
- e) **Notice:** The Word of Wisdom is promised to all Christ's disciples. *"Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what you shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able contradict or resist."* (Luke 21:14,15).
- f) **Observation:** The Word of Wisdom is not essentially a vocal gift, but rather a gift of revelation. It is received quietly within one's mind or spirit. It is often given when counseling, preaching or prophesying, or when a command of God is given, SO that we know how to respond to the command.

8. **Discerning of spirits** (1 Corinthians 12: 10)

Discerning of Spirits is a more important subject than we generally realize. If this spiritual gift were used more frequently when casting out demons, many problems we face would be minimized.

Discerning of Spirits is the third of the *revelation gifts* (the Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge are the other two). It is imparted by the Holy Spirit so that we can see into the spiritual realm to distinguish between the spirit of Satan (evil spirits), the Spirit of God and the human spirit. By this gift, we can discern the origin of certain actions, teachings, circumstances, etc., that have been inspired by spirit beings.

This gift is more limited than the other two revelation gifts. The revelation given in this instance is limited to the origin of the behavior in question.

It supplies us with needed insights available in no other way.

- a) **The function of the gift.** The Gift of Discerning of Spirits gives one a supernatural understanding of the nature and activity of spirits. It enables one to distinguish between the divine, satanic and human origin of spiritual activity, and reveals the nature of the spirits themselves.

Satan always tries to counterfeit the works of the Holy Spirit.

Many times, his counterfeit looks so much like the real thing that we could be deceived.

In the account of the girl with the spirit of divination in Acts 16, Paul challenged the spirit which might easily have deceived other servants of God.

The girl gave a perfectly true statement when she said: .

*"These men are servants of the most high God, who show to you the way of salvation, "*but the spirit speaking was an evil spirit.

- b) **The operation and need for the gift today.** ~~The Gift of~~

It is absolutely essential that this gift operate if the Church is going to accomplish her full mission and destroy the works of the devil.

This supernatural gift is especially necessary for missionaries and workers in lands where spiritism, satanism and occultism abound.

- c) **How the gift of discerning of spirits operates.** The first and most obvious function of this gift is to reveal the presence of evil spirits in the life of people or churches. However, it also functions to evaluate the source of a prophetic message, a particular teaching, or some supernatural manifestation. The person functioning with this gift will be able to tell whether the source of the message or act is demonic, divine or merely human.

If the source is discerned to be demonic, the person functioning in this gift will also usually be able to reveal:

- (i) The *Nature* of the demon. This is what his work is, whether lying, causing infirmity (such as cancer, blindness, dumbness, etc.), unclean behavior and the like.

- (ii) The *Name* of the demon. This is usually revealed with the nature of the demon.
- (iii) The *Number* of demons. This happened in the case of Legion (Mark 5:1-9) and the seven devils, which Jesus cast out of Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2). It is not at all uncommon for a person to be demonized by more than one spirit at a time.
- (iv) The *Strength* of particular demons. Know by revelation which of several demons is strongest and has greatest authority.
- (v) *Getting* information. Often, demons will give much information verbally *themselves*, to one they know has supernaturally discerned their presence and who has power to cast them out.

However, since demons can be counted on to lie, it is a good idea to count on insights and understanding supernaturally given by the Holy Spirit.

- d) **Discerning Of Spirits Doesn't Always Give One The Faith To Expel Demons.** Although the Gift of Discerning of Spirits is essential for effective deliverance, it is not sufficient by itself. It must work in concert with the Gifts of Faith and Miracles.

9. The **gift of faith** (1 Corinthians 12:9)

Faith often deals with the future, the unseen and things not physically possible. The gift of faith is the special endowment given to someone God is calling upon to take impossible action-steps because of what God has spoken to them.

The gift of faith is a special dispensation of faith which God grants a Spirit filled believer when the task He has given that believer requires more than ordinary *or general* faith.

General faith grows as a result of feeding on the Word, being exercised through the circumstances of life, and the like. It can develop to a very high degree. However, the Gift of Faith has a superior function to even the highest degree of general faith.

a) **How Does The Gift Of Faith Work?**

The gift of faith seems to operate in a rather passive manner, but this is not always so. Daniel's protection from the lions is a passive instance of the gift of faith.

This impression that the Gift of Faith functions passively is because it often works in cooperation with more dramatic gifts (e.g., the Working of Miracles, the Gifts of Healings, etc.)

The gift of faith also operates through the speaking of words of command and words of faith: *"I believed, therefore have I spoken"* (2 Corinthians 4:13). Those words a man of God speaks when inspired by the Spirit are backed by God *as His own word*.

The results are not always immediate but they are sure. And this gift can function in many ways (e.g. for blessing, for cursing, for creating, for destroying, etc.) There are some notable examples of the gift of faith working through the spoken word:

- (i) **Joshua commands the sun and the moon to stand still** (Joshua 10:12-14).
- (ii) **Elijah controls the weather by his word.** *There shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word ... and it rained not upon the earth for the space of three years and six months"* (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17).
- (iii) **Paul silences Elymas :** *"You shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season"* (Acts 13:8-11).
- (iv) **Peter speaks god's judgments on Ananias and Sapphira** (Acts 5).

The Scriptures teach the principle of the Word of Faith: *"... he shall have whatsoever he **saith**..."* in relation to the injunction, *"have faith in God"* (Mark 11:22-23) and *"Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee"* (Job 22:28).

10. **The Gifts Of Healings** (1 Corinthians 12:9)

The three references to this gift in 1 Corinthians 12 are in verses 9, 28 and 30. In each of these, the original reading for both words are *plural*, making the correct translation of this phrase *"Gifts of Healings."*

Gifts of healings operate supernaturally to heal diseases and infirmities with out natural means of any sort. It is the power of the Holy Spirit which comes upon a person's body, dissolving their disease and driving out their pains to heal them.

The use of the plural nouns here illustrates that there are many Gifts of Healings for different diseases. Some with a Gift of Healing may have great success with blindness; others may have success with deafness or cancer, etc.

Jesus will deliver from *every* sickness, weakness, plague, deformity and affliction. There is a great variety of the manifestations of this gift (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

The exercise of the Gifts of Healings does not give the gifted an ability to heal all the sick all the time.

- a) The purpose of gifts of healings
 - (i) To deliver the sick and suffering and to destroy the works of the devil in human bodies (1 John 3:8; Acts 10:38; and Luke 13:16).
 - (ii) To prove Christ's claim to be the Son of God (John 10:36-38).
 - (iii) To confirm the word (Mark 16:17-20; Acts 4:29, 30, 31, 33).
 - (iv) To attract people to the Son (Matthew 4:23, 25).
 - (v) **To bring glory to God** (Mark 2:12; Luke 13-13, 18:43; John 9:2,3).

The Holy Spirit gives gifts of healings to the servant of God to pass on to whomever the Lord desires to heal for His own purpose.

Naaman had difficulty receiving the gift of healing which God had sent him through Elisha.

Healing often requires a double act of faith: faith to receive and faith to administer the gift of healing.

11. Working Of Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10)

A miracle happens when God intervenes in the ordinary course of nature. The gift of the working of miracles comes when God endues us with power by the Holy Spirit to do something completely outside of the range of human ability.

He gives it to us at a specific time for a special purpose.

All the Gifts of the Spirit are miraculous, but the use of the word *miracle* in this instance refers to *acts of power*.

- a) **Miracles give undeniable proof of the resurrection.** If Jesus were not alive, His Name would have no power to heal the sick and work miracles (Acts 4:33).
- b) **The working of miracles in Jesus' name accomplished the following:**
 - (i) Gave boldness. It gave boldness to the believers to preach Christ.
 - (ii) Encouraged prayer. It made believers pray to have more of God. (Acts 4:31).
 - (iii) Convinced of sin. It convinced and convicted men of their sins (Acts 5:28, 33)
 - (iv) Converted five thousand. Five thousand were converted in one day through one miracle (Acts 4:4, 5:14).
 - (v) Glorified God. All men glorified. God for what was done (Acts 4:21).
Spread the gospel. It spread the gospel quickly (Acts 5:14-16).
- c) Everywhere the disciples preached, healed the sick, cast out demons and worked miracles, multitudes turned to Christ:
 - (i) **In Samaria.** Samaria gave heed to Philip, **hearing** and **seeing** the **miracles** which he did (Acts 8:6).
 - (ii) **In Sharon and Lydda.** All the inhabitants of Sharon and Lydda turned to the Lord when Peter told Aeneas: "*Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.*" (Acts 9:34,35).
 - (iii) **In Joppa.** Many people in Joppa believed when Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:42).
 - (iv) **In Lystra.** The people at Lystra thought the gods had come down to them when they saw the crippled man walk and leap at Paul's word (Acts 14:8-18).
(Acts 5:12-16)
 - (v) **The Book of Acts.** The Book of Acts closes with a profusion of miracles (Acts 28:8).

- d) **Practical Operation Of The Gift**
 - (i) **The anointing of the Holy Spirit** to create special confidence and authority.
 - (ii) **A word of faith** and authority. Elijah said that the God who answered by fire should be Israel's Lord. The fire which came down was an example of the working of miracles (see 1 Kings 18:21-39).
 - (iii) **A bold act of faith**

IV. THE FUNCTIONAL GIFTS

A. The gift of Prophecy

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them, if prophecy, in proportion to our faith Let (your) love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good." (Romans 12:6 and 9 RSV)

1. New Testament example of a New Testament prophet: Simon Peter (Read the first 10 chapters of Acts and the Books of Peter I & II)
2. Characteristics of a person with the **functional** gift of prophecy:
 - a) He is both verbal and articulate.
 - b) He possesses a **boldness** and frankness that is sometimes frightening; which makes him a very 'public person.'
 - c) He repeatedly uses scripture to substantiate and validate the truth he proclaims.
 - d) He has the ability to discern the evil character and motives of others. (Such as Peter does with Ananias and Sapphira, Chapt. 5 of Acts).
 - e) He has a burning desire to break the self-will of others.
 - f) He insist upon his listeners giving some kind of **outward** demonstration or evidence of their acceptance of the truth he has proclaimed; such as "Repent and be baptised."

A prophet almost totally ignores the criticism of others.

3. The common danger to all who have the gift of prophecy is:

"HE IS PROPOSITIONAL, RATHER THAN RELATIONAL."

4. God's answer for this danger:

"LET YOUR LOVE BE GENUINE." (Romans 12:9)

POINT: Unless a person with the **functional** gift of prophecy learns how to temper his boldness, frankness, and insensitivity with the love of Christ, he will do more harm than good! But when he does learn to temper his proclamation of the Gospel with love, he is God's most powerful weapon against evil and for good.

B. *The gift of Serving*

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them, "if it is serving, let him serve"..... (but) love one another with brotherly affection (and then) outdo one another in showing honor." (Romans 12:6, 7 & 9)

The word "serving" as it is used in the Bible, comes from the Greek word "Diakonate," from which we get our designation of "deacon" for certain Christian workers.

Therefore, the gift of serving deals with meeting the physical and practical needs of others.

(On the other hand, the gift of mercy deals with meeting the psychological and emotional needs of others. By far, the largest percentage of Christians will have either the gift of serving or the gift of mercy; because these gifts are the most needed ones.)

1. New Testament examples of the gift of serving:

The 7 deacons, especially Stephen and Philip, in Chapter 6 of Acts. The first Church had 3 requirements before a person could be chosen as a Server (Deacon) (Acts 6:1-3).

- a) A good reputation
- b) Filled with the Holy Spirit, and Wisdom (Knowing how to live right).

- c) Also, Jesus gives us some insight into the gift of serving, in a look at Martha in the 10th chapter of Luke.
2. Characteristics of a person with the gift of serving:
- a) A burning desire, or almost compulsion, to meet the **practical** needs of others and of the church.
 - b) He has real **insight** into the practical needs of others and can recognize those needs when others cannot.
 - c) Since it is very hard for a Server to ever say '**No**' when he sees a need, he has a tendency to get involved in too many things and often spreads himself too thin.
 - d) A Server often gets so involved in meeting the practical needs of others, that he tends to neglect their **spiritual** needs.
 - e) A Server **expects** everyone else to be just as dedicated and just as energetic in serving as he is (Note: Martha In Luke 10). This often causes others to think that a Server is "pushy."
 - f) Usually the immediate job is so important to a Server that it becomes "the end" instead of "a means to the end," causing a Server to become confused about his **priorities**. This too is what happened to Martha.
 - g) One of the most distinct characteristics of a Server is that he wants to get the job done as quickly as possible, like both Martha and Philip, so that he can carry on to the next job. This is perhaps the most distinguishing characteristics; but a Server is preoccupied with **immediate** goals while an Administrator usually sees the big picture and is concerned about long-range goals.
 - h) This preoccupation with immediate goals and this desire to get the immediate job done quickly, makes it hard for a Server to work under the **direction** of others and makes him absolutely detest going through "red tape" which he will go to any length to avoid.
 - i) Servers always have tremendous physical **stamina** and can keep going when everyone else stops to rest; and again Martha is a good illustration of this.

- j) Servers are extremely **sacrificial** people. In fact, they are the most sacrificial of all Christians and think nothing of sacrificing their own time and money to get the job done.
 - k) But this sacrificial nature of a Server can become a fault instead of an asset; for it tends to make a Server **judgmental** of others who he thinks should sacrifice in the same way. (Note Martha's judgmental attitude toward Mary). Consequently, his family often feels neglected as the Server runs off to do something for someone else or for the Church.
3. The common danger to all who have the gift of serving:
- a) He is more job oriented, than "people oriented".
 - b) He tends to undermine his relationships in order to get a job done.
4. God's answer for this danger:
- a) Jesus says in the Upper Room that anyone who works for Him must have "A Servant's Heart," that is a heart for people; because the end must always be RECONCILIATION (right relationships); not a job.
 - b) This is why the first Church set 3 requirements for every Server; "A good reputation, filled with the Holy Spirit, and wisdom; because wisdom in the Bible means knowing how to use God's gifts right."
 - c) This is why Paul admonishes every Server: "*Love one another with brotherly affection; (and then) outdo one another in showing honor.*"
(Romans 12:10)

POINT: He sends us His Holy Spirit to give us "A SERVANT'S HEART", which is His own heart. A heart that want to give instead of to get. A heart with genuinely brotherly affection. A heart which motivates us to "outdo one another for the right reason," that is, for the reason of reconciliation with God and with other people.

C. *The gift of Teaching*

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.... let us use them ... he who teaches, in his teachings ... Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord." (Romans 12:6-7, and 11)

1. New Testament example of the gift of teaching:

The Apostle Matthew.

2. Characteristics of a person with the gift of teaching:

- a) He always presents his material in a **systematic** way. This is perhaps the single most distinguishing and outstanding characteristic of a person with the gift of teaching.
- b) A teacher will always insist upon all **similar** thoughts fitting together in context. Every person with the gift of teaching is painfully disturbed when others take material out of context and use it as the basis for teaching or preaching.
- c) He arranges them in a way where they are easy for the reader to **remember** and memorize. Good examples of this are the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount and "The Seven Woes" in Chapter 23.
- d) A teacher always insists upon using **words** accurately. You can almost see a person with the gift of teaching flinch when a speaker uses a word wrong or mispronounces it. The right use of words is extremely important to a person with the gift of teaching.
- e) A teacher honestly believes that his gift of **teaching** must be the basis for everything else in Christianity.
- f) Matthew quotes more **scripture** than any other Gospel writer in order to validate the truth he presents. This is another distinct characteristic of a teacher.
- g) A teacher will go to great length to fit all **new** truth into the framework of truth already established and already accepted.
- h) A teacher tends to be more **theoretical** than practical. This is because he gets so involved in the theory of truth that he fails to explain the practical aspects of it.

- i) A teacher genuinely loves researching the truth. Often the research is even more appealing to a person with the functional gift of teaching than actually presenting the material. He dearly loves to dig out the truth.
 - j) A teacher will inevitably insist upon knowing the authority before accepting a new truth. For example, when you tell him something new he is apt to answer with, "What is your authority for that?" This trait tends to make others think of a teacher as cold and legalistic.
 - k) A teacher naturally tends to become proud of his learning, for he is constantly acquiring more of it.
 - †) Finally, a teacher is tempted to neglect the word of the Holy Spirit in interpreting the truth of scripture and depend only upon his own learning.
3. Common danger to all who have the gift of teaching:
- a) HE TENDS TO BE MATERIAL – MINDED INSTEAD OF PEOPLE-MINDED.
 - b) He tends to substitute his own philosophical ideas for relationships.
4. God's answer for this danger:

"Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord." (Romans 12:11)

POINT: Unless a person with the gift of teaching is "aglow with the Spirit", that is actually alive in the Spirit and the Holy Spirit alive in him, while he is doing his research and his teaching, he will give in to the temptation of thinking his material is the most important thing of all.

D. The gift of Exhortation

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them ... he who exhorts, in his exhortation ... Rejoice In your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."
(Romans 21:6, 8a, and 12)

A Christian Exhorter is one who strongly urges others to live by faith and earnestly advises them exactly how to do it. Exhortation, in a Christian sense, is the practical application of Christian truth to daily living. An Exhorter explains how to make Christian theory into a daily way of live. He tells others how to make Christian truth into a workable, living reality.

1. New Testament example of the gift of exhortation: The Apostle Paul
2. Characteristics of a person with the gift of exhortation:
 - a) Above all, he is **practical**. He emphasizes that Christianity is a daily way of life instead of a Philosophy or religion. In fact, an exhorter is painfully bored by preaching and teaching which is theoretical instead of practical. Paul says, "For the Kingdom of God does not consist of talk, but of power." (1Corinthians 4:20)
 - b) And this power is the **grace** of God. An exhorter's constant theme is: "What is impossible with men is possible with God." This is why he continually denounces "a life of law" and strongly urges "a life of grace."
 - c) Exhorter is prone to view suffering and trouble as man's **opportunity** to grow in grace and he cannot understand why others cannot see this. This often causes others to think that he is hard and calloused.
 - d) An exhorter not only sees man's predicament as sin and what sin has done to him; but he is also able to visualize and verbalize what that person can be when God perfects him with His sanctifying love.
 - e) An exhorter is very much aware of his **listeners** and craves their approval and acceptance of his message. A prophet, who is generally unaware of his listeners; but an exhorter is always eager to hear how his listeners react to his message.)
 - f) An exhorter's methodology is to give **specific** prescriptions or specific projects to others for overcoming their specific problems and weaknesses. This is the way an exhorter preaches, teaches, and counsels. He states the problem then says: "Here is God's answer: 1,2,3."
 - g) An exhorter is very **persevering** as long as others listen to him but when their interest wanes he also loses interest in them and goes on to someone else.

3. The common danger to all who have the gift of exhortation:

"Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."
(Romans 12:12)

This is what God revealed to Paul about himself while he was sorting things out in Arabia, and this is why he admonishes all exhorters with admonition in Romans 12.

POINT: There is a tendency for the exhorter to move on to another person if his advice is not heeded. But Paul says, *"Do not lose hope, be patient even in failure and put your trust in God by constant prayer instead of in your own formulas, projects and prescriptions."*

E. *The gift of giving*

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them; ... he who contributes, in liberality... (but) contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality." (Romans 12:6, 8 and 13)

All Christians are called to be faithful Christian stewards, which means to put God first in use of time, talents and money. This is why the Bible emphasizes the tithe and requires that the tithe come off of the top and not be simply "leftovers". But the Bible is also clear that certain Christians are chosen by God to function in the Body of Christ as "Givers" and, therefore, are given the spiritual gift of Giving or Contributing as their primary "Functional Gift."

1. New Testament example of a person with the gift of giving: Barnabas

We first meet Barnabas in Chapter 4 of Acts. His name was Joseph and the apostles called him "Barnabas which means in Hebrew *"Son of Encouragement"* which is the perfect name for a person with the gift of giving.

2. Characteristics of a person with the Gift Of Giving:

- a) A giver has the ability to make **money** and accumulate assets. God never calls us to do anything without first giving us the power to do it. Barnabas was a landowner and a man of means. (So was Ananias, who was also given the gift of Giving; but misused it.)

- b) A giver **supports** and undergirds the ministry of others as his primary call and ministry, which means that he must put his trust in his fellow men and their particular ministries.
 - c) A giver wants to have a definite part in the ministry he supports. Consequently, sometimes others think he is trying to **control** that ministry with his money when, in fact, he is simply being sure his investment is not wasted; which is another example of his good, sound business practices.
 - d) A giver is very **discerning** about the ministries which other people propose to him. Barnabas had his discernment about both the ministries of Paul and Mark.
 - e) A giver absolutely refuses to be **pressured** into giving. This refusal by a giver to respond to special appeals and pressure often leads some people to think he is selfish; when, in fact, he is the most generous of all Christians.
 - f) A giver sometimes will use his giving to **motivate** others to give to the same cause, if he thinks this is essential to get the ministry off a dead center. This is what Barnabas did in leading off by giving his land to the early Church.
 - g) But most often a giver wants to avoid publicity and prefers to give **quietly**. He does not need the glory that an exhorter needs to keep going for he already has this in his ability to make money and to succeed in business. Although, in the 14th Chapter of Acts, Barnabas is called an apostle right along with Paul; Barnabas was still willing to be second and let Paul get all of the glory.
 - h) It upsets a giver to see others **waste** money because he is able to envision how this money can be used for ministry.
 - i) A giver receives so many appeals and requests for giving, that this natural temptation is to say "no" when he is offered an opportunity to give.
3. The common danger to persons with the gift of giving:
- TO BECOME CAUSE-ORIENTED INSTEAD OF PEOPLE-ORIENTED.
- It is the danger of being cause-minded instead of relational.

4. God's answer for this danger:

"Contribute to the needs of the saints, and practice hospitality."
(Romans 12:13)

- a) In one sense, without Barnabas almost every other ministry we read about in the New Testament could not have happened:
 - (i) Barnabas underwrote the organization of the first church in Jerusalem and the ministry of Peter,
 - (ii) he is responsible for getting the first Christian deacons started in their ministry of serving,
 - (iii) and for starting the first church outside of Palestine, the church in Antioch,
 - (iv) for Paul being accepted as a member of the Christian church and
 - (v) Paul's first missionary journey.
 - (vi) Barnabas is responsible for saving John Mark for ministry, which means he is responsible for the first Gospel to be written, the Gospel of Mark, which is foundation for both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

POINT: Without the gift of giving, hardly anyone else can carry on a ministry because resources are essential.

F. *The gift of Administration*

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them ... he who gives aid, with zeal ... Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them." (Romans 12:6, 8, 14)

This gift of administration is referred to many different names in different translations of the Bible, such as: Revised Standard Version: "*One who gives aid*;" King James Version: "One who rules;" New English Bible: "*Gift of administration*;" and in others as: "*An organizer*" "*one who is in authority*" "*one who presides*," and "*one who leads*." I think the "*Administrator*" best describes the overall characteristics of this gift.

1. New Testament examples of persons with the gift of administration:

James, the brother of Jesus and John Mark.

James, the brother of Jesus, was the acknowledged leader of the first Christian Church. John Mark, author of the Gospel of Mark, was the acknowledged leader of the great church in Rome following the persecution by Nero.

2. Characteristics of an Administrator:

- a) First and foremost, an administrator is a "**man of action**." Keep things moving toward his ultimate goal. Consequently, the Gospel of Mark is a "*book of action*." It's most characteristic word is "*immediately*" (RSV). The theme of the book of James is also action: "*Be ye doers of the Word, not hearers only*." "Men of action" cannot avoid bumping into other people and stepping on others; so an administrator makes more enemies than almost anyone else except perhaps, a prophet.
- b) Not only is the "immediately" important to an administrator, but so is the word "authority." An administrator is very **authoritative**. James lays down one rule after another about what other people should do. And no other Gospel emphasizes the authority of Jesus as much as Mark. An administrator wants everyone under authority, so he can continually check up on them.
- c) An administrator will step forward and assume responsibility and leadership if no structured leadership exists. Like James did in the early Church and like Mark did following Nero's persecution of the Roman Christians.
- d) An administrator has the ability and the willingness to **delegate** responsibility and authority. Because of this characteristics, James delegated missionary responsibility to both Peter and Paul and the Christian Church spread throughout the known world of that day.
- e) An administrator has the ability to see the overall picture and clarify long range **goals**.
- f) An administrator is especially gifted in **organizing** that for which he is responsible. This is why James was chosen to organize the first church and Mark was chosen to organize the confused and persecuted Christians in Rome. appealing to the

Christians in dispersion to stop their confused, disorganized ways and become a stable, organized body.

- g) An administrator gets more **criticism** and more heat, as a result of this gift than all others put together. (This is still true in the church today: It is the administrative decisions that cause most of the dissension, such as decisions about money, employees, salaries, offices, vacations, etc.)
- h) An administrator is eager to **complete** a task as soon as possible and get on to the next one. This is certainly one reason why Mark is the shortest Gospel and why he spends no time on details, like the other Gospel writers do. James writes in the same way.
- i) An administrator is able to **discern** the personnel resources available to him for the task at hand. So, God equips an Administrator with this special gift of discernment about people.
- j) An administrator is able to sit quietly by and listen to others discuss a task or a problem and then go right to the heart of it and pinpoint the **answer** that is needed. This is exactly what James did at the Jerusalem Council meeting about circumcision of Christians.
- k) An administrator is a stickler for following the **rules** he has devised or adopted. Read James and you will find him laying down one rule after another and insisting upon strict adherence to these rules. In Chapter 2 of Galatians, Paul is very critical of James for this legalism and says this is what is leading Peter astray.
- l) Finally, pressure is "*meat and drink*" for an administrator, and he does his best work under **pressure**. Witness James arising to his full stature and leadership in the early Church, under the persecution of the Jewish authorities and the dissension and disagreement among the early Christians. Likewise, Mark came into his own because he, better than anyone else in the Roman Church, could handle the pressure of an evil and frightening persecution under Nero. Mark wrote his great Gospel under almost unbearable pressure.

3. The common danger for persons with the gift of administration:

HE TENDS TO BE MORE ACTION ORIENTED THAN PEOPLE ORIENTED.

And because he is a "man of action" whose primary drive is to get things done, and in doing this almost always finds himself on the "hot seat" with others, he is subject to this tremendous temptation:

And administrator is constantly tempted to react in kind to those who oppose him, instead of acting according to God's guidance and will.

4. God's answer for this danger:

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them." (Romans 13:14)
that is, do not let other people control your life, but be under the complete control and dominion of God.

POINT: No one ever makes a friend out of an enemy (or wins another for Christ) by treating him like an enemy or an antagonist; but the only way to make a friend out of an enemy is to treat him like a friend.

G. *The gift of Mercy*

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them ... he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness ... Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." (Romans 12:6, 8b and 15)

Remember, that by far the most prevalent functional gift among Christians are the gifts of serving and mercy; because they are the most needed.

Approximately one-third of those reading this will have the gift of serving and another one-third of the gift of mercy.

1. New Testament example of a person with the gift of mercy: Luke
2. Characteristics of a person with the gift of mercy:
 - a) First and foremost, he is an extremely sensitive person, both to the feelings of others and his own feelings. He has what we call "empathy". At the same time, his own feelings are easily hurt, which often causes others to be less than frank with him for fear of hurting him.

This keen sensitivity gives a person with this gift of mercy a very deep appreciation of beauty. Luke is often called the most beautiful book in the world. "The Magnificat" of Mary and "The Benedictus" of Zachariah.

A server has no compunction about "pushing" another to get the job done, but this is totally contrary to the character of a person with the gift of mercy.

- b) He is very interested in people, and has an innate **love** for people. You will recall that a prophet is also interested in people, but he is interested in them in mass, while a person with the gift of mercy prefers a one-on-one relationship. Luke mentions 110 different persons in Acts and gives us factual details about them on almost every page.
- c) He is especially attracted to people in **distress**. Luke alone shows us the sensitivity of Jesus to the poor and the outcasts, such as the parables about the "Rich Man and Lazarus," "The Prodigal Son," "The Good Samaritan," etc.
- d) A person with the gift of mercy emphasizes the **healing** ministry above all other aspects of ministry. Which means that he also emphasizes **prayer** more than any other group of Christians. Luke mentions the Holy Spirit more in Luke and Acts than all other books in the New Testament combined.
- e) But his interest in healing is not concerned only with the physical or even primarily with the physical for his deepest concern is about the mental and **inner** distress and anguish of others. This, again, is a distinguishing characteristic from a Server. The Good Samaritan did not stop with just binding up the wounds but make sure that he could rest at ease about the future and not be burdened down with fear and anxiety.
- f) Because he will go to almost any lengths to keep from hurting the feelings of others, this makes a person with the gift of mercy a very **indecisive** person. He must learn to deal with his fault before he can exercise real leadership in the church.
- g) Because of his extreme concern for outcasts and "down-and-outers," he has a tendency to ignore that "up-and-inners" also hurt and also have just as many needs. If you were to read only the Gospel of Luke and Acts, you could easily come to the mistaken opinion that poverty is a virtue. This concern for

"down-and-outers" can also cause problems and tension in the family.

- h) A person with this gift is the most **tolerant** of all Christians. Luke continually emphasizes the "universality" of the Gospel. To Luke, race, sex, and nationality makes absolutely no difference.
- i) There is a basic tenderness and kindness about a person with the gift of mercy, which exemplifies itself in **speaking** words of endearment and in touching other persons. Luke emphasizes the "laying on of hands" in his Gospel and in almost as much as the rest of the New Testament put together. Such familiarity can easily be misunderstood or the cause of jealousy by a mate.
- j) Because a person with the gift of mercy has an **eagerness** to help others in distress, who "butts in where he has no business." So, again the proper restraint must be used to avoid this.
- k) A person with the gift of mercy is a very **sacrificial** person. Like a server, it is almost impossible for him to say 'No'. But, whereas, a server sacrifices to get a job done, a person with the gift of mercy sacrifices to alleviate pain and suffering of others.

3. The common danger for persons with the gift of mercy:

HE TENDS TO BE MORE FEELING-ORIENTED THAN "LOGICAL."

Consequently, he is constantly tempted to live by feelings alone, instead of balancing his life between feelings and logic.

4. God's is answer for this danger:

"Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep." (Romans 12:15)

That is, live a balanced life by being open to joy as well as to pain, to success as well as to failure, and to affluence as well as poverty.

POINT: A person with the gift of mercy must balance his life with a cheerful heart and a rejoicing spirit or his life will degenerate into a "Poor Me" complex. The Christian is the bearer of good news and our feelings and spirit must reflect that good news.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Keys to discovering our spirituals gifts/ ministries

1. We must **earnestly** seek God for our giftings/ ministries: **1 Corinthians 14:1**: Follow the way of love and EAGERLY desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

This scripture exhorts us to EAGERLY or EARNESTLY seek God for spiritual gifts.

- a) **Matthew 7:7** : "... exhorts us to ASK."

One of the reasons that we do not have is because we do not ASK.

James 4:2-3 : *"You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."*

We must ask believing and not doubt:

James 1:6-7 : *"But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord, he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."*

This asking, seeking and knocking in Matthew 7:7-8 indicates a persistency. We should not stop but continually ask , seek and knock upon the doors of heaven.

- b) **Matthew 9-11** : Gives us the assurance that God is more than willing to give us gifts.

v9 : bread for stone?

v10 : fish for snake?

V11 : If man who is evil by nature can give good gifts to their children, how much more will our Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

2. Start **serving** the Lord in whatever capacity: Matthew 25:16-17

The man with the 5 and the one with the 2 talents discovered their potential by occupying themselves and starting to use what was given to them.

Ephesians 5:15-16: *"Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil."*

B. Keys to developing our spiritual gifts/ ministries

2 Corinthians 8:7, 2 Timothy 1:6-7

1. Firstly, seek to **excel** in your gifts/ ministries.

God wants us to develop and excel in our giftings:

2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you EXCEL in everything

Excellence does not come about overnight. It must be pursued. It must be developed.

2 Timothy 1:6: *"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands."*

Probably FEAR has hindered Timothy from exercising his spiritual gift. That is why 2 Timothy 1:7 was given to him. Many Christians who have potential and gifts but are hindered due to fear.

The first step towards excellence is to start operating in the area of the gifting. Anything left to itself will soon deteriorate.

2. The second step towards developing our giftings is to receive **correction:**

Proverbs 12: 1: *"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid."*

Proverbs 29: 1: *"A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will be suddenly destroyed without remedy."*

Proverbs 1:5: *"Let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance."*

3. The third way is to learn it from the **success** of others.

Proverbs 27:17: *"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens
another."*

4. The fourth step towards developing our giftings is to learn from the **mistakes** of others:

Proverbs 1:5: *"Let the wise listen and add to their learning....."*

5. The fifth key is not to allow our own mistakes **hinder** us.

Philippians 3:13: *"Brother, I do not consider myself yet to have
taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is
behind and straining towards what is ahead."*

6. The sixth key is **perseverance**.

Philippians 3:14: *"I PRESS ON toward the goal to win the prize
for which God has called me heavenward in Christ
Jesus."*

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