

Overview of Spiritual Gifts

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[0 : 00] Alright, if you have a Bible, and I hope you do, please join me in 1 Corinthians chapter number 12. Natalie, that was beautiful. Thank you for that. Andrew, you did a pretty good job too as well, and really enjoyed that.

1 Corinthians chapter 12, here's the handout. If you didn't get one, you don't have one now. That's all. You had your chance. Now, if you didn't have one, raise your hand, and we'll try to get you one.

Anybody still looking for one? And I didn't realize I'd have 40 or so minutes here, and this is just a brief overview, and I've been looking forward to sharing this with you tonight.

You can turn in the very back of your Bibles, and the very back of your Bibles, you're going to find a spiritual gifts test that you're supposed to fill out, and you mail it to Jerusalem, and a council of people will fill it, well, they will look at it, and they will send it back to your church, and we will get a copy of it.

And that's been God's plan for 2,000 years. Every copy of the Bible comes with a spiritual gifts test. That's not the case. If you are very looking, and that worries me that you didn't know that I was joking, and I get back to 1 Corinthians.

[1 : 05] I was just kidding about that. And that's not how it is. We would like for it to be like that. I think we are obsessed with taking tests, and I don't know all the different types of ways that you can figure out what type of person you are and what type of letters, but we really like to take tests and let somebody tell us who we are.

That way we can feel good at what we're good at, and we can justify what we're bad at, and we like those types of tests. But God has a wonderful plan, and His plans are always better than the ones that we would imagine.

And I want us to look at some scriptures today that speak about this area of having spiritual gifts. This is an uncomfortable topic for me.

It's due to division among believers. Believing the question you ask yourself, I have a conviction that there are side gifts that the Holy Spirit gave to the church that ended with the death of the apostles, and there's other believers that would not hold that view, and there'd be also people who were not believers that wouldn't hold that view as well.

And then there's probably people that agree with me that aren't believers. I'm going to give you every scenario here possible, right? And so when we're talking about spiritual gifts, it's the passage of scripture in 1 Corinthians chapter number 12 kind of takes a long runway of making sure we understand the background of what's going on.

[2 : 22] It's hard to just jump right into it. So it kind of needs a full service on that. I was helped by the reading by Pastor John MacArthur and some other people that wrote on this matter.

And I was at a conference years ago, and they were teaching, and I was helped by it. And I won't say who was speaking, I don't even remember who it was. But when they were making an argument about spiritual gifts and the ones that are still existent today and then those that have passed, they made a statement like this.

And they said, well, we know that these gifts can't be in existence today because if they did, why don't any of us have them? And everybody laughed and everybody kind of clapped, and I just kind of shook my head because that doesn't give me any kind of weight because that would be the opposite ditch.

To say that something exists out of experience, but it doesn't exist in God's Word would be wrong, right? And to say that something doesn't exist because I didn't experience it, even though it existed in the Bible, would be wrong as well.

And so I have been shaped in my understanding of spiritual gifts by my upbringing. But I really want to look to God's Word tonight to help us understand what it is saying.

[3 : 33] This morning, when we were going through those four different points, one of them that I said, number three, was every Christian has been given gifts by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of the ministry.

And so we want to know, what are they? It said that there's a diversity of gifts, but we've all received one. I encourage you, you should never feel useless because God said He has something for all of us. You shouldn't feel self-sufficient because all of us have different gifts and we need one another.

None of us are a one-man band. That's all that's needed, but we need each other and the work. It's my prayer for our missionaries that when they get to the field and there isn't a church, that they're able to start one quickly, not only because that's what they went there to do, because that's also what they need.

Their kids need to be raised in a church. They need to be in a church. And if there isn't one, then we pray that one will come into existence and that God will place one there among the believers because it's so important to our living out the Great Commission and living out our Christian life.

So spiritual gifts are critical to the ministry. And I jokingly said, you got to come back tonight or you'll wander around aimlessly, all right? And that's not what we want. But look at 1 Corinthians chapter number 12, verse 1.

[4 : 45] We're going to see that spiritual gifts are critical to the ministry of the church. Spiritual gifts are critical to the ministry of the church. It says, now concerning spiritual gifts, Paul's writing to the church at Corinth.

He says, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Since the church has been endowed with the Spirit of God with supernatural gifts for its ministry of edification and evangelism, then it's critical to who we are as a church.

And so we do not want to be ignorant about this matter. That church shouldn't be. We shouldn't be either. But there's some clarifying questions. And we'll cover some of them tonight, but not all of them. But like, what are spiritual gifts?

How many of them are there? How important are they? How many do I have? How do I get more? How do I know what they are? Can I seek certain gifts? How do I understand the purpose of gifts? What about the miraculous gifts, like speaking another language and healing?

Are they still in operation? What is the baptism? The Holy Spirit, does every Christian possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Are all the gifts still in operation? If not, which ones still are? And how do the others cease and why?

[5 : 50] Can the gifts be counterfeited? And what is the most important gift? These are just some of the questions that you might have when you think about this issue of spiritual gifts. Well, let's go back to 1 Corinthians chapter number 12 and have some background on this church here, this Corinthian church.

Because it's important to know the context of what's going on when we read Paul writing to them, and it will help us. So this church is established in Acts chapter number 18. Paul spends 18 months among them.

At the time, he sees people come to Christ. They're disciplined. The church is built up. They have to fight off some enemies that are there. But he leaves. Other people will come along. But Paul is there as the founding pastor of that church.

But this church has a lot of problems. Three different cases we're told about their problems. Several sources. 1 Corinthians 1.11, it says, For it has been declared unto me of you, brethren, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

Then he goes on to tell us in 1 Corinthians 16.7, For I will not see you now by the way, but I trust the terror while with you, if the Lord will permit. Verse 7.1, Now concerning the things whereof you wrote unto me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.

[7 : 03] And so concerning the issue that you wrote me about. So people from the house of Chloe were talking about contentions. And then there were some other people that wrote a letter. And there's other examples in here.

The saying, snitches get stitches, hadn't come up yet. All right? That's not developed until later on. All right? And so that's what's going on. These people are writing and they're saying, Paul, you've got to get back here because the people in my church, they are acting crazy.

All right? And that's why there's some examples given that we will look at. Many problems. This church has problems. And so we shouldn't be surprised that they have a misapplication of spiritual gifts.

If you were just to walk with me through this book here, you would see the divisions among them that I may mention. They're leaning towards human wisdom, human personality cliques, carnality, sexual perversion, worldliness, chapter 5, matters of lawsuits one to another, chapter 6, rebellion against towards Paul, chapter 4, conflicts in their marriages, chapter 7, conflicts in regards to people living together that weren't married, abuse of their liberty, chapter 8, idolatry, pride, selfishness, demon worship, fighting in the home, abuses of the Lord's Supper, and so on.

And so there was a long list. The whole book is filled with different understanding of wrong understandings of Bible doctrines. So we shouldn't be surprised that they were misapplying this area of spiritual gifts.

[8 : 28] I'm kind of afraid to ask this, but did any of you grow up at a church named Corinth Baptist Church? Anybody in here? It kind of surprises me that that's a thing. All right? But it is.

All right? Corinth Baptist Church. This church that's filled with it. This morning, I said the ministry of reconciliation that God gave. He gave that to every believer, including this church that was dealing with all the problems because it wasn't something that was earned.

It's part of our identity as believers. We're not just a certain group of people, but even a church with all those problems going on still have the responsibility of having that ministry, of preaching the gospel, or of reconciliation.

Then Paul goes on to say, with all your problems going on, and you didn't cease to handle unclean things, but you managed to drag that inside of the church, and it's right here in the middle of us. But in 1 Corinthians 1.7, it says, so that you come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What he's saying is, you didn't lack in having any of the spiritual gifts. Your church did not lack in having the people with the gifts that were needed to do the work. So Paul's recognizing that the gifts were not the problem, but their wrong attitudes and their beliefs and the divisions were the problems here.

[9 : 41] So the Corinthian church was indeed gifted, but they were carnal. This is how Charles Spurgeon said about them. It says, should it not show us that gifts are nothing unless they are laid on the altar of God, that it is nothing to have a gift of oratory, that it is nothing to have the power of eloquence, that it is nothing to have learning, that it is nothing to have influence until they are all to be dedicated to God and consecrated to his service.

None of those things matter until you lay them down at the feet of Jesus and say, I want you to use these in my life. There is nothing.

And so there's confusion here in the church concerning the Holy Spirit. Three times Paul in his letters talks about not wanting the people he was writing to to be ignorant. In Romans 11, he says, I don't want you to be ignorant concerning Israel and God's plan for them.

1 Corinthians 12 that we're looking at, he says, brethren, I don't want you to be ignorant. I don't want you to lack knowledge concerning spiritual gifts. And then in 1 Thessalonians 4, which will be in a few weeks, he says, I don't want you to be ignorant concerning the second coming.

This is a matter in which as a church we don't want to be ignorant towards. It's important. That brings us to chapter 12. I've already read verse number 1, but now I'm going to read down to verse number 3. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

[11 : 04] Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. They were unable to hear. They were inactive.

They could do nothing. The Bible speaks about that. That's what's being said there. And he's speaking here about spiritual gifts or spiritual that are given.

And he's making them recognize that when we say spiritual gifts, we're talking about the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. And what is the purpose of the Holy Spirit? The ministry of the Holy Spirit was not to promote himself or any man, but to glorify and to represent Jesus.

And so we can therefore trust that any ministry of the Holy Spirit or any spiritual gift is going to act in accordance to the work of the Holy Spirit among us. And so we can judge these things.

There's ways in which we can judge what is happening. And so there, there's confusion. This church, they love their philosophers of the day. Remember when it says, I'm of Paul or I'm of Apollos and I'm of Cephas.

[12 : 18] They were just taking a worldly way of thanking. I'm from this teacher. I'm from that person. Or this is who I follow after. This is my guy. And they were applying it now to these different people like Paul.

And then he goes on to say that you, this place lacks order. Let all things be done decently and order. And he says, I declare unto you in 1 Corinthians 11, 17.

Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not that you come together, not for the better, but for the worse. You guys are worse off when you get together than you were before you came in here.

That's horrible, right? I mean, if we leave the night and we'll say, you know, I'll leave better than you came, right? I'm encouraged. I hope that would happen. I'm so glad that I came today. What's saying here is that when you got together, guys together, you made a bigger mess out of the problem.

Not for the better, but for the worse. And so there's confusion here among them. The spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church were not being used in a way that God intended. And instead of unifying the body and saying, I need you and I need to have what I have to give you because we're all one body.

[13 : 22] They were being used in a way that caused division among them. They were, where they were lifting one up over another. So brother, and I have you not be ignorant concerning these gifts.

They're important. But now how he's dealt with it. When he says now concerning, he's saying, I just dealt with this under your misunderstanding about the Lord's supper and you're coming here and not waiting for one another, eating in a way that you shouldn't have.

It was dishonoring to the Lord. Now let me, I've dealt with that issue. Now let me move on. Now concerning spiritual gifts, I want to talk to you for a moment. Things that are characterized.

When it says spiritual gifts, we're speaking of things that are characterized of being controlled by the Spirit. Look at 1 Corinthians 12, verse number 4.

We have a synonym for these spiritual gifts, these spiritual things here. It says, now there are a diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit. We're looking at a diversity of gifts, but given by the same Holy Spirit.

[14 : 24] And so we have two ways here. And if you're in your notes, you'll see this here, is how we can go about testing them. And that's what he said. He said, no man could say that he's having a gift if it's not going to make much of Jesus.

That's verse number 3. If it's going to speak blasphemy of Jesus, you can't say that you're exercising a spiritual gift, but you're doing something that's displeasing to the Lord, because the gift belongs to the Holy Spirit.

So you don't get to say, this is a spiritual gift, but it doesn't exalt Jesus. It exalts me, or it exalts the flesh. And then Paul can say, we can all tell you that that certainly is not a spiritual gift.

And so that's one way in which we can test spiritual gifts. There's a doctrinal test here. If anyone ministers a gift, what does it say about Jesus? No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

I've shared with you the story about how there was a pastor in Florida, and I don't know what happened to him, but he was struggling, all right? And when missionaries would call him, and they would say, I want you to, you remember this, Travis, and he would ask you to read a certain verse.

[15 : 39] And if you said the verse wrong, he would say, you have the spirit of the Antichrist, because you read the verse wrong. And so if you called him, you better make sure that you're wide awake, and you've had your coffee that morning, and you're reading the passage, all right?

And what was being said here is that a person that is controlled by the Spirit will not speak blasphemous things about the Spirit.

And he was taking it literally to say that a person couldn't misread a Bible verse. I thought it was comical. The rest of you are very frightened right now, all right? I didn't say we were friends.

I just said I'd heard about them, and I was fascinated by it, so I made a phone call, all right? If this will help, I was in my early 20s. That's how you start any story that isn't going to make any sense. I was in my early 20s, and I thought it would be fun to call this group and to see what it was about.

Number two, so there's a doctrinal test. Does it make much of Jesus? Yes or no? Second question, it is in accordance with the purpose of the Holy Spirit. Is it something that the Spirit would empower?

[16 : 40] The Holy Spirit ministers to two categories of people, those of us in here who know God and those that don't. It'd be good for us if we're talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit to ask ourselves, what does the Holy Spirit do in this world?

And by seeing that, it will help us better understand what are spiritual gifts. So first of all, you know that the Holy Spirit works in the life of an unbeliever to convict them of sin and righteousness and judgment.

That was your first introduction to the Holy Spirit in your life. I remember hearing the Word of God for the first time, not the first time that it was preached to me, but for the first time that I heard it.

I share with you, I went to Vacation Bible School at a Methodist church because they put more sugar in the Kool-Aid, and I liked it. Then I went to the Presbyterian church, and I heard the gospel for the first time, but they didn't give an invitation.

Then I went to the Baptist church, and I heard the gospel, and I got an invitation, and we had Kool-Aid, all right? And that's why I'm a Baptist today, all right? Very deep. That's good, all right?

[17 : 44] And so I just remember, but I remember being a young boy at the Vacation Bible School at that Presbyterian church and hearing the gospel. The Holy Spirit was convicting me about the gospel.

That's what the Holy Spirit did. It convicted me of sin, and that's what He does in the life of an unbeliever. And that's what we're praying. When we pray to God in the life of unbelievers, we pray that they will respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, it's the believers. The only two groups of people in the world, right? Believers and unbelievers. And so what does He do in the life of believers? And I'm just going to read a few of these to you.

Individually, He's the one who regenerates us when we're saved. He assures us. He adopts us. He seals us. He indwells us. He frees us. He empowers us. He's the one who makes us holy, 1 Thessalonians 4.

He reveals truth, 1 Corinthians 2.9. He guides us. Romans 8 says He makes intercession for us. That's what He does individually in our lives. But collectively, we're told that He indwells us as a church, Ephesians 2.22.

[18 : 47] He creates a fellowship. He assists in our worship. He inspired the Scripture, 2 Peter 1.21, that holy men of God were moved by the Spirit. He guides.

He generates unity among us. And all those things. And so when we think about, when we talk about God and His attributes, we talk about those that are communicable and those that are non-communicable.

Meaning there's things about God that will not be true about me, but there's things in which are true about God that because I've been made in an image that I can have the same in me.

He is holy and He told me that I can be holy. And there's things that happen. I can't seal you when you get saved. You don't get saved and now you come up to me and I'd say, you're now sealed.

Put you in a mason jar, put you in one of those pots on the stove, and now you're permanently sealed and you're not going to lose it. I have no sealing power, but the Holy Spirit does. But I can teach you about that and I can use the gifting that God's given me to help in the work of the Holy Spirit who's taught you what He has done.

[19 : 52] And so we look at the things that the Holy Spirit does in our lives and know there's things that only He can do in our lives. And then there's ways in which that we can be like we are called to do and being holy like unto God.

All right. So now we move on to what is the purpose of these spiritual gifts? A spiritual gift is a God-given capacity through which the Holy Spirit supernaturally ministers to the body.

It's a God-given ability, capacity through which the Holy Spirit supernaturally ministers to the body. And who is the body? We said it today. It is the, we are God's family.

We are made up of it. When we come together, it is important. Most of the time when you read through the Bible, we want to read everything individually. When you read stories about somebody else, you try to make yourself the hero of the story or whatever.

You try to make it very individual. But the Bible, when it writes, it writes about us as a group, as a family, as a body. Remember, not an audience, but as a congregation that is here.

[20 : 54] And then we have passage of 1 Corinthians chapter 12. It talks about the distribution of it. And the Spirit, the word of wisdom, another word of knowledge by the same Spirit. And we're going to look at those.

In verse 28 of the same chapter, it says, God sent some in the church, apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, and diversity of tongues.

And then a similar list in Romans chapter number 12. And we'll get 11 different things that are mentioned in those three portions of Scripture. Then we get back to the Corinthian problem, not church.

And so Paul says, you're not lacking in any of the spiritual gifts that they're there. You're just misusing them. And you're not yielding yourself to the Holy Spirit. And you are using them as a cause of division.

And they took the gift, the one of languages, the ability to speak in a language that's not learned. And they said that this is the highest of gifts. This is the most important gift.

[21 : 49] Michael Green, in his book called, I Believe in the Holy Spirit, says this. I'm going to read it slowly because I need you to read it slowly to understand. It says, The Corinthians would have rated, in ascending order, from smallest to greatest, in order, the value of teachers.

The value of a teacher, that's a person who relies on rationality. Or the prophet, who spoke under divine inspiration intelligibly. Or the man who spoke in tongues, whose inspiration was marked by unintelligibility.

What he was saying there is that this group of people said, We're going to elevate the thing in here that is most unable to determine. We are not going to, we're going to minimize teaching the word that is there.

And we're going to exalt if somebody is going to give us something that seems unintelligible. And that was what was happening. And you see this in this passage, that they were saying, I would rather speak a word in a known tongue that you can understand than thousands of words that people don't understand.

And the reason he's saying that is because this church had it flipped in the other direction. And so what are the spiritual gifts that we see in Scripture? This, I jokingly said that David Dubois is going to do a 75-week series on spiritual gifts.

[23 : 01] And we could look at these longer, but I'm just going to state this for you tonight. Because what I want to get to is the positive of the gifts that I believe that are available and permanent for us here.

There's four sign gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:10 concerning miracles, healing, languages, and interpretation of languages. The Bible record shows that miracles occurred during particular periods and for specific purposes of authenticating a new message.

How many of you are in the book of Exodus in your Bible reading in here? All right. There's a lot of you, right? And so we see Moses was enabled to perform miracles to authenticate his ministry there before Pharaoh.

We see that happening. Then Elijah was given miracles to authenticate his ministry before Ahab. There was water that was put there. Now the apostles are given miracles to authenticate their ministry before Israel.

Acts 14.10.16, 1 Corinthians 14.22. This is wherefore. This is 1 Corinthians 14.22. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them that which believe.

[24 : 10] And so we're calling these, I'm calling these here, these sign gifts. It's not true that miracles are happening for 6,000 years of history, and now in recent history we say that they're gone.

We say that through history that God had used sign gifts at times to authenticate a message. And that's what we're saying here, that during this time, that's what's happening. In this transitional time, that there were sign gifts that were available, that were there, that served a purpose.

People like to use expressions like, have you ever heard this? I am open but cautious. Have you ever heard that? That means I'm open to these.

I believe that they exist, but I'm just cautious about it. Well, I believe in the Holy Spirit. And do you believe in the Holy Spirit? Amen? Amen. And I believe that He is active and alive today.

And I believe that there is no limit in which God could do. He is God and I am not. He can choose to work in any way that He deems possible, or any way that He chooses to.

[25 : 12] There is no possibility about Him, whatever He chooses to do. And I would not limit that. But we, my understanding, according to Scriptures, is that there was these gifts that had a specific purpose that aren't needed at this time, that we now have the revelation from God that is available to us.

And so I'm going to spend our time on the remaining ones, and we can talk more about those if you would like to later. There's five speaking gifts mentioned in Romans 12, 6-8, and 1 Corinthians 12, 8-10.

I'm going to name three of them, and I'm going to tell you why I believe that they should be in this list. The first one here is prophecy. There's a debate. Decision must be made when used this word prophecy.

If the word is to be used to speak publicly, or does it mean to give new revelation? 1 Corinthians 13, 8 says, Charity never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail. Whether there be tongues, they shall cease.

Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. Prophecy, not speaking about new revelation, but about proclaiming the revelation that is already given.

[26 : 20] That's the first one here, is prophecy. Second is the word of knowledge. 1 Corinthians 12, 8. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.

And so this word of knowledge is listed. There's prophecy, and there's a word of knowledge. It is the Spirit-given ability to observe biblical facts and make conclusions. In other words, it's the ability to understand the Bible.

I've been helped by people like this my whole life. I'm studying something, and I go to them, and I'll say, hey, I'm studying this. And they would say, I've studied that before. And I have understanding.

The Holy Spirit gave that to them, and they helped me in Bible knowledge by using what God had given them. So prophecy, word of knowledge, and then a word of wisdom. You might have heard that one used before.

1 Corinthians 12, 8. For it is one to be given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. In that same verse there. This is often misapplied to say we give a new revelation to people.

[27 : 22] That God has given me a word for you. Has anybody ever been given a word from somebody in that nature? Somebody came up to you and said, God has given me a word for you? Anybody in here? All right.

And I have. Certainly, people have had a word for me that wasn't nice. No. People have come to me, and they've said, I had a word. I was with somebody one time, and they went up to a man at a gas station, and they said, God wanted me to tell you that you are a good father, and that I just wanted to encourage you.

And he said, he got emotional, and he said, well, thank you so much. I haven't seen my kid in 15 years. I feel like I've been absent from their lives. I don't pay child support. And he went on and on, and we walked out, and they said, wasn't that amazing?

I said, yeah, it was amazing. You told a man who doesn't appear to be a very good father that you think he is a good father. They had no under, the word of God did not share that with them.

They just, they gathered something. They had some type of feeling. They went and gave that man a word of wisdom that could not be tested by the scriptures, and that's often how it's used.

[28 : 24] That's not what we're saying here with this word of wisdom. Wisdom being the difference in knowledge is wisdom is the ability to take the facts that the gift of knowledge has brought out and make skillful application of it.

Knowing it, but then making application to you, helping you figure it out. I'm dealing with this situation. I know this is what the Bible says. How do I live it out in this context?

And the wisdom to do that. And God gives people the gift of having wisdom that can help us. So those first three, prophecy, word of knowledge, and word of wisdom. And you could say, I don't want to add those to the list because those are something that mean that you're giving new revelation.

And I'm saying that is not how the word is necessarily used. That is not how the word is always used in scripture here. Let me read this quote to you here by John MacArthur.

He says, We have the word of God.

[29 : 48] And so we can share it with people. We have knowledge from the word of God. So we can teach it to people. We have wisdom from the word of God. And God can, the Holy Spirit can work in our lives to help people in these areas.

The fourth one here. And we're on a list here of five that have to do with speaking gifts. Spiritual gifts in which you are communicating to somebody. The teaching. Romans 12, 7 says, Or ministry.

Let us wait on our ministering, or he that teaches on teaching. The gift of teaching is the ability in the Holy Spirit to pass on truth to someone else.

That is the work of the Holy Spirit. That's why this is a spiritual endeavor. That's why Greg meets in a huddle with Sunday school teachers on Sunday mornings. And they have their lessons.

And they pray. Because they're communicating God's eternal truth to children. So that they can hear it. And they can understand it. And we pray. And we say, God, we want your truth to be communicated in a way that's pleasing to you.

[30 : 47] We want you to empower us and to enable us for this work. And then there's exhortation. Romans 12, 8. Or he that exhorteth on exhortation, he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.

He that ruleth with diligence. He that showeth mercy with cheerfulness. And so exhortation is the gift of strengthening. It's coming along and helping encourage people to live out the word of God that they have been taught.

Now, I'm going to say that this is, you say it's counseling. And I would say that counseling is not the gift. Counseling is a process that requires all the things above, including exhortation.

It's where you're taking the knowledge of God's word. It's where you're taking the wisdom from God's word. It's where you're exhorting somebody. And you're encouraging them in the right direction. You could probably think of somebody in here, I would think right now.

You think of somebody in life that you just said, They have really helped me in this area of life. If I was a young believer and they came alongside me and they taught me the word of God, or I knew the word of God, but I was having hard making application where it was at, and they shared wisdom, or somebody came in and just exhorted me.

[31 : 56] And they said, Hey, you know what you ought to do. Just do it. All right? And that gift of exhorting other people. And that should be seen among us as God's people.

David, the boy, we were praying before the service, and I made mention, we watched the video on the volunteers meeting, and I referred to it as the coffee video. And he said, That wasn't the coffee video. That was a video about a man who was happy to serve in church.

And I told him, Being a troll is not a spiritual gift, David. All right? And many of us think that it is. One another exhorting each other in a way that is pleasing to the Lord.

All right, let's move on to the second group here. And these are serving gifts mentioned in the Scripture. 1 Corinthians 12, 28, and Romans 12. And the first one here has to do with leadership.

Romans 12, 8. Or he that exhorteth on exhortation, he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity, and he that ruleth with diligence, he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness. So it's that on exhortation that giveth with simplicity, and he that ruleth.

[32 : 59] That has to do with leadership. See, leadership is the ability to see an objective, and to formalize it, and to mobilize a group of people, then get them to reach their objective.

Josh has been around long enough now that I can use him as an example. Okay? We've done it twice today. So Josh is starting a franchising Christian Brotherhood. And if you ask him about cars, he likes cars, but he's not going to tell you he's a mechanic.

All right? Which is a smart thing to do if you are a mechanic. You shouldn't tell anybody. All right? Andrew Pearson says amen to that. Right? Is that it's not that he knows about cars, but he knows about people.

From serving in the military, that there's a leadership and there's a management of people. And God says that there's a spiritual gifting here of being able to formalize and to make a plan and to lead a group.

And that that is given by the Holy Spirit. So leadership. Secondly, is one of support. Some people call it serving, but I found that one to be confusing under a list about serving gifts. But I'm going to call it support.

[34 : 00] But the word here is helps. A helps ministry. 1 Corinthians 12, 28. It says, Then gifts of healing, helps, governments, and diversity of tongues. The word help literally means to take the burden off of someone else and to place it on yourself.

And this is one that we should pray that is common among us. That ought to be found in us. That every one of us ought to desire to be. I can work with somebody and I can help somebody even when I'm leading, not leading, and even when I'm not the one that's making decisions.

I can support and come along and help somebody. And we've been blessed by people like that in our lives. The next one under serving is giving. Romans 12, 8. He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.

This gift of giving is not a public gift. Giving with pretension and public display, that would be hypocrisy. But it's the spiritual gifting of giving. And there's no reason to believe that the gift of giving even relates to how much someone has.

I can think of many people that are just giving people. They're always thinking of other people and they're giving small gifts. And when they look at stuff, they don't see stuff in this world and say, I want that.

[35 : 12] They say, that is something that my friend needs. Or if I was to get that and give it to them, it would be a real encouragement. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. And I've been blessed many times by people with that gifting.

Number four is mercy. Romans 12, 8. And the same passage here showeth mercy with cheerfulness. The gift of mercy is this enablement to sympathize with a suffering person, to come alongside the poor, the sick, the destitute, the orphan, the widowed, and those in prison and minister.

I should have said this earlier because some of you are saying, nah, that's me, that's not me. By every one of us becoming more like Jesus, we should want every one of these in our lives. I can't say, I fell asleep one time visiting when Bob Preston first started coming to church 18 years ago.

I went and made a hospital visit and I fell asleep in the hospital visit while I was sitting there and he gave me such a hard time. He said, did you come and visit me and fall asleep? And I'm like, brother Bob, it's so warm in here and you have that baritone voice and I just fell asleep.

And I can't be like, well, I don't have the gift of being sympathizing with people so I'll leave that to somebody else. That's not the case. But we can recognize that some people really seem to be gifted in that area.

[36 : 26] It's almost as if they're not having to think about it. That's just what God has done as a gift. Dr. Criswell told a story of a young girl who came home from school and she said, Mom, my best friend came to school today and said that her mother died.

The mother said to her little child, well, what did you say to her, dear? And the child replied, oh, I didn't say anything, mother. I just went over to her desk, sat beside her, and cried with her.

And see, that's the gift of mercy. It includes sympathy. We are blessed by all these things. Number five, faith. To another faith, 1 Corinthians 12, 9, to another faith by the same spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit.

The supernatural capacity for believing God. If you have the gift of faith, use it. Spend time on your knees. Spend time believing God and encouraging others by allowing them to see what God does in response.

To believe that God is big and that God can, He can do and we should believe in Him. And there's people in our lives that have a big view of God and they are people of great faith and that is a blessing.

[37 : 30] And then discernment here. 1 Corinthians 12, 10. To another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, and to another the discerning of spirits. Discerning spirits is simply to evaluate the spirit, whether it is of God or of spirit or other than the Holy Spirit.

That discernment, when you know this is just not right, where you can sense what is happening. And sadly, the Corinthian church had people with all kinds of gifts that were being used, but apparently those that had the gifts of discernment sat there quietly and they did not use their gift to help the church and say, what we're doing is not pleasing to the Lord.

We really need to get things in order here. And so, with the seven minutes here, I'm going to try to be quick. I thought I had so much time and now I feel like I'm running out. This is what I'm going to get to here in your handout.

So how do I define my spiritual gift? There's so many varieties and ways in which gifts function that I don't believe that you could catalog them and put them there. It says in 1 Corinthians 12, 4, there's a diversity of gifts, but the same spirit.

In all the varieties, there's different manifestations of power. 1 Corinthians 12, 6. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. That the Holy Spirit has to do a greater work in life during different times in life and opportunities.

[38 : 50] And so that there's a gift and there's also the operation in which He would give and that we will grow and that He would come from Him. That God is able to help you meet the challenge that is in front of you and give you all that you need.

And so I'd say this, you're a unique mix of gifts. And I'd ask that you pray this with me as we'll close here a little bit. Would you pray this, that God would equip and enable me to do what is needed among this church family and at this time and among your family.

Pray that God would equip and enable you to do what is needed among your church family and at this time. This combination of gifts and services that God has given you is unlike anything that He's given to somebody else.

1 Corinthians 12, 7, The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. The gift manifests the work of God in this world. Manifestation, this simply means to make clear, to make visible, to make known, to make manifest.

That's what God does when that story that I said by Dr. Criswell and a person had the gift of mercy, a young girl sat down, she saw the love of God demonstrated through a person who sat down and helped them.

[40 : 02] That the work of the Holy Spirit is being seen by us yielding ourselves for Him to use our lives to do His work in this world and that's what makes it a spiritual gift.

So I gave 11 gifts and you could say it like this, these are primary colors and the Holy Spirit uses these 11 primary colors in the combinations so that by the time that they're given to you they are different than they would be to anyone else.

I asked Greg to help me come up with an idea this week. I said, what is something that has a wide variety of places you could go and we thought about combinations at a buffet because we're always thinking about food because usually lunchtime we get together or whatever.

I thought about a Coke freestyle, you know, you go through and they have one of those machines and you get like 125 different choices and somebody just walks up and they get Coca-Cola Classic and I'm like, come on man, you got all these options.

How are you going to do that? You know, and you have all these different options but the picture, I want to show you this picture here and I really hope this doesn't create confusion and that it helps. Show that picture the different shades of green, if you will.

[41 : 04] And if you're color blind in here, you just see one big block of green probably, right? And so we have different shades of green and if you've ever tried to paint a house before and your wife says, go get gray paint and you go to the store and you come back and say, dear, they have 300 versions of gray.

Which one? Do you want gray that has blue under it or do you want gray that's like yellow underneath it? What version of gray do you want? And you can make all these little changes and if you change any one of these numbers in one of these letters, you get different shades of gray or green that are there because it's mixed there.

And so God, it isn't, God has made each one of you uniquely with the giftings that he has given you and he's growing you and as you yield yourself and the Holy Spirit can make himself known through you and can use you, these areas in your life, they will grow.

But it isn't like, hey, here's 11, let's all divide up into our 11 categories and those that have mercy, you're going to be picked on by the ones who have discernment and those that have discernment, we're all going to think you're really rude but we're glad that you're here.

It doesn't work like that, right? That God wants us to grow in being like Jesus but we have a mixture of the gifts that are there. And so, how do we decide what they are?

[42 : 15] So let me give you some summary thoughts here. The source is the Holy Spirit. They're gifts of God's grace to us. The purpose is providing service to others in a way that exalts Jesus.

They're enabled by God for action in the believer's life. And they're given to publicly declare the work of the Spirit. And so, what are we to do? How are we to know what is our gifting?

First of all, we need to walk in the Spirit. It doesn't matter if you can define your gift. Ask the Spirit to dominate and to control your life. And as you yield to Him, the Spirit of God operates through you and that will help you in your area of ministry.

As you begin serving, God will lead and direct you into those areas. And so, someday you'll look back and you'll say, so, that's what I do, I guess, right? As you yield yourself to the Holy Spirit and He leads you in these opportunities, you'll just look back and you'll say, so apparently, that is some of the things that I am to do.

And then secondly here, besides walking the Spirit, I would encourage you, let's appreciate the diversity of gifts. This means appreciating the unique people God has placed in your life.

[43 : 24] Some of the best friendships I've had in life are from people who were nothing like me, all right? That they were people that saw things differently, that were gifted in different ways, that they encouraged me.

And when God brings somebody into your life, you shouldn't say, I only want to find people that are the exact same shade of green that I am. You ought to be saying, I am grateful for the diversity among the church.

I'm going to trust the Lord. If He brought another believer into my life, I may not recognize it now, but I'm going to trust that I need that person in my life, and that I would not despise their gifting.

I wouldn't despise them and say, I don't need that person in my life. Because if you're saying, I don't need that person in my life, you're saying, I don't need the gifting of the Holy Spirit that He has given to their life in my life.

But we are a body. And so remember when you try to define the gift, you'll run into some problems because there's so much overlapping of the gifts. And we should not try to magnify our gifts above another, knowing we're all one body being enabled by the same Holy Spirit.

[44 : 22] I'm going to read to you 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 10 and 11, and then somebody can come to the piano because I'm going to pray and we'll be dismissed here tonight. And I want to encourage you to look to the Holy Spirit and let Him lead and guide you into ministry.

[45 : 43]

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