

The Light - Junior Series
Lesson 63

The Giver of Spiritual Gifts...the Holy Spirit
Doctrine of Spiritual Gifts
Varieties and Characteristics



2012

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If YOU have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have the opportunity to do so right NOW. Simply tell God the Father that you believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, who loved us so much that He came down from heaven and became a man to take our place and pay for the penalty for all the sin of all mankind. Jesus, the Savior died on the Cross for your sins and the sins of the whole world. Then Jesus was buried but He rose again and He is alive today seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. When you make the decision to believe in Jesus in simple faith based on His work on the Cross, you are now a believer and will always be a child of God. When you die, you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. ***(Acts 16:31) "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (John 3:16) "God loved the world so much that He gave is One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."***



Lesson

Now that we are on the subject of spiritual gifts in the Bible, we are going to look at spiritual gifts point by point. You already know from past lessons that if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have a spiritual gift but most likely you haven't started using it yet. Some of you may have tried a few things to discover what your gift is and that's a good thing to do. Remember too, that the spiritual gift that you possess is not a sign that you are better or worse than any other believer because of that spiritual gift. It was designed by God for you to use as a member of the Body of Christ, which we discussed a lot in our last lesson.



Again, God the Holy Spirit decides who gets what spiritual gift. It is His sovereign decision...that means it's written in stone...and it's perfect for you. ***1 Cor 12:11 "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills."***

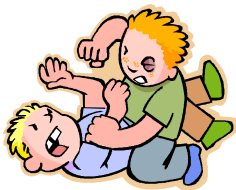


So now let's get going and really see what these gifts can do, okay? Let's learn the...

Doctrine of Spiritual Gifts

- I. The doctrine of spiritual gifts is one of the mystery doctrines of the Church Age. Spiritual gifts are for the Church Age only. The New Testament teaches about these gifts in ***1 Corinthians, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Pet 4:9-11.*** But ***1 Corinthians chapters 12-14*** are where it is taught in great detail.

The first Corinthian letter was written by Paul because the team of believers in Corinth was behaving very badly. In fact, they were not acting like a team at all. They were NOT united when using their spiritual gifts while serving Jesus. They weren't even in fellowship most of the time!!! Their situation was all fouled up. Paul had to really get on their case! He was doing this because he was getting some really bad reports about these believers and Paul was concerned because this church in Corinth was being torn apart. There was fighting and arguing and just plain trouble among the members. This church was divided not united at all and that's the exact opposite of how the Body of Christ in a local church should act. So Paul writes to them and tries to explain things to them about their spiritual gifts and how they should behave as a



team...united NOT divided.



He wrote to them in first ***Corinthians*** and taught them (and it applies to us today) that they were given the spiritual gifts as tools of the Spirit to demonstrate God's divine nature while using these gifts. There is POWER in the spiritual gifts when we work together as a team...the Body of Christ. We can use the phrase, "for the common good" of the entire body that unites us and brings us together.

When we discover this supernatural gift inside us, it is very exciting. It makes you want to lay down your life to nourish it and use it for the benefit of others. It makes you happy! That's what the Spirit does for us when we use it for the team...the Body of Christ in fellowship of course!

- II. The Giver of the Gifts is the Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit. In order to appreciate the gift, you have to know the Giver. I believe you know Him pretty well by now, right? We've been study about His ministries in the lives of believers for a long time now. The gift of the Holy Spirit is THE big deal, and because we have received the Spirit we get the blessing of also receiving a spiritual gift from Him.
- III. What is a "Spiritual Gift"? It's a lot of things. So let's get into it. We've been looking forward to learning about spiritual gifts for awhile now, and I bet you have some idea what they are, but now that we are here it is time to zero in and learn exactly what a spiritual gift is and what it is not. And to do that we are going to see the bible verses and let them describe spiritual gifts for us.



So why don't we begin once again in the book that has the most amount of information on the subject, and that is first Corinthians. 1 Cor 12:1-7 "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant. (2) You know that when you were pagans (unbelievers), you were led astray to the silent idols, however you were led. (3) Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed'; and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit. (4) Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. (5) And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord (Jesus). (6) There are varieties of effects, but the same God (the Father) who works all things in all persons (believers). (7) But to each one is given the demonstration of the Spirit for the common good (of the Body of Christ)." Did you notice something about this passage? You can't miss the fact that the TRINIY is on the scene here!! All three members of the Trinity are involved in the spiritual gifts from start to finish: giving

the divine gifts, creating the opportunities to serve others with our gifts, providing the miraculous power and ability to use our gifts, and producing the supernatural results of our gifts.

This passage also tells us something else. From start to finish, the spiritual gifts are divine, miraculous, and supernatural. The giving, the ministering, and effects are all associated with our Living God! So we can say that the gifts of the spirit are:

- Divine, this means of course, that they come from God the Holy Spirit (same Spirit).
- Miraculous in demonstration, (same Lord Jesus).
- Supernatural in action (same God the Father).

Spiritual gifts are divinely given abilities to perform useful things for God (divine good); they are miraculous in nature, supernatural through the power given from God especially in this area of service to others.

In this lesson we're going to learn some characteristics of spiritual gifts...

We know for sure that if there is one thing the Holy Spirit is telling us about spiritual gifts, it is that they are marked by VARIETY!!! Just like people are not exactly alike, no believer is an exact copy of another when it comes to spiritual gifts. Now you know you can have variety and unity at the same time, right? You can see the unity here because it's the same Holy Spirit, the same Lord Jesus, and the same God the Father united for the cause for the royal family. All gifts are used to serve and to bring unity to the local church. When the gifts are used in the filling of the Spirit, there is harmony and stability in the local church. People look out for the pastor and one another. They rise up and help and do their jobs as to the Lord demonstrating His love for us. So variety in gifts can mean unity in the church.

Suppose a reporter interviews a quarterback and asks if the team is ready for the big game. He says, "Let me tell you we are united like never before." How so? "Well, all 50 of us guys have decided to play quarterback!" Uh oh...that's



NOT going to work, is it? You see you don't all have to play the same position for there to be unity among the team, right? Unity keeps things alive and interesting.

The passages on spiritual gifts in the New Testament are filled with these characteristics of variety. For instance, there are several LISTS of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. What's interesting is that NO TWO LISTS of spiritual gifts in the New Testament are the same! Sometimes they talk about the people who have the gift (apostles, pastors), and sometimes they talk about the gifts themselves (mercy, helps). Actually there is different kinds of service; different ways to teach; different audiences to teach to; different ways to give; and different ways to encourage others.

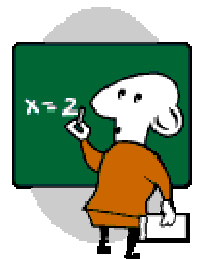
You must remember that no matter what your gift is, you're not better than another Christian because of it. Some would like to brag that they have a better gift than someone else and get arrogant about it. No gift is better than any other gift. They are all needed in the plan of God to serve Christ by serving others. You aren't more spiritual than any other believer because you think your gift is more important. All the gifts are important so don't fall into that trap. You are out of fellowship with that kind of arrogant thinking.

Also, there is a difference between natural abilities or talents and spiritual gifts. A natural talent is not the same thing as a spiritual gift. Natural talents such as musical ability, athletic ability, mechanical skills, IQ, artistic talent, and mathematical genius are gifts from God, but they are not spiritual gifts. You receive these talents for the most part at physical birth as part of the genetic package you get. Talents are given to every human being. But not every human being decides to believe in the Lord Jesus. All people have talents...believer and unbeliever alike.



Since God picked your parents and determined how your genetic pool would line up, He decided to give you your talents. But every member of the human race has certain natural talents, while spiritual gifts are reserved for born again Church Age believers only. Sometimes these talents line up with spiritual gifts but not always. There is nothing wrong with having a talent that matches your spiritual gift. On the other hand, you may have no natural talent in the area where the Holy Spirit has gifted you supernaturally and this could be quite amazing and a demonstration how supernatural these gifts are.

For instance, a person can have a talent for teaching, but did not receive the spiritual gift of teaching. It would be a mistake to force somebody into the prep school who teaches for a living just because that the person may not have been gifted at salvation by the Holy Spirit with the spiritual gift of teaching. Do you see? Maybe they have the gift of encouragement or mercy or helps! BUT on the other hand, there are many examples of a person who has both the natural talent and the spiritual gift say of teaching. And they make great prep school teachers!



Another example is when a person may have a knack for making money out there in the world, but no spiritual gift of giving. Or that person is talented in the work place and makes a fortune AND has the gift of giving and does support many foreign and local missions.

Of course, believers all the time find ways of using their spiritual gift through a natural talent they have. A great example of this is musical talent. A person with natural singing talent decides to use that talent to build up the congregation. Now they have the spiritual gift of encouragement and minister powerfully with their singing to people who need to be built up.

And you have heard it many times, how we are called to give our time, talent, treasure and spiritual gift to serve the Lord and His people. So there is everything right with using your natural talents for the Lord's work, but keep in mind that you have received a supernatural spiritual gift from God the Holy Spirit, and that gift tells you where you must serve.

One more point here: most if not all of the permanent spiritual gifts are great abilities for actions

that all Christians are called to do. Remember they are supernatural and powered by the Spirit.

All Christians are called to give financially, but some have the spiritual gift of giving which is an unusual demonstration of that work. All Christians are called to witness, but some have the spiritual gift of evangelism. All Christians are called to help others and lay down their lives, but some have the spiritual gift of helps. We are all called to give a reason for the hope that is within us, but some have a teaching gift or the gift of pastor/teacher.



Now, whatever natural abilities or talents you may have, they are generally related to physical birth and therefore are also given to you by God. However, spiritual gifts are always related to regeneration (being born again spiritually) and the new birth. Your human body or talents has no role when it comes to spiritual gifts! So having a talent...say for public speaking, as an example...is no guarantee that you will be gifted at salvation in that area, but it doesn't mean that you can't have that particular gift either.

Finally, it is the same God who gives us both our natural talents and our spiritual gift. Clearly, He had good reasons for both. He will weave them all together as we grow spiritually and allow the Spirit to direct our lives to serve others in our divine, miraculous, and supernatural spiritual gifts.

Close in prayer

Prepared from Pastor John Farley's lesson on July 21, 2011
Lighthouse Bible Church

