

## “Spiritual Gifts from God: Part Two”

God provides all we need to know Him, and to grow in our relationship with Him, and with each other, as we seek to tell others about Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.

**John 1:12-13**, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

You were conceived in your mother’s womb and biologically born, in order to enter this world; you must then be born-again, spiritually born into God’s family by the Spirit of God, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

This new birth is spiritual, it cannot be seen, but the change in belief and behavior that it causes should be recognized by others.

In **John 3:3**, Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” **6-8**, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

You become a child of God through genuine belief in God’s Son to save you (**1John 3:2**), “Beloved, now we are children of God.”

**2Corinthians 5:17**, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

All true believers and followers of Christ are Christians, members of God’s household; and God gives spiritual gifts to all of His children, so that we might serve together in God’s church.

Last we week we looked at a couple of verses that I want to remind you of today (**1Peter 4:10**), “As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

**1Corinthians 12:1**, “Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.” **7**, “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” **13-14**, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”

**1Corinthians 12:27** says, we “are Christ’s body, and individually members of it,” and (**Colossians 1:18**), “He [Christ] is head of the body, the church.”

Every Christian is a unique gift from God to the body of Christ, the Church, the family of God, in order that we might live in harmony with other believers, as we serve the Lord together, employing the spiritual gifts given to us by God.

The gifts of the Spirit that are active today can be placed in two categories: speaking gifts, and serving gifts (see **Romans 12:6-8**).

## “Spiritual Gifts from God: Part Two”

**Romans 12:6a...** Paul begins by stating the different gifts in the body of believers are provided by the grace of God; for it is God alone Who determines what gifts His children will have and exercise (**1Corinthians 12:7**), “for the common good,” and (**v. 11**) “[God] gives them to each one just as He determines.”

**1Peter 4:10** tells us that God gives us spiritual gifts in order to “serve one another.” John MacArthur says it this way, “God gives His gifts to us for others.”

**Romans 12:6b... prophecy** - Speak forth, proclaim publicly God's Word: prior to the completion of the 66 books of Scripture, Prophets and Apostles declared God's Word; since the completion of the Bible, Pastor-Teachers (through expositional or exegetical preaching/teaching) now proclaim God's Word through reiteration and repetition, re-emphasizing what God has already said, and by exposing and declaring what God means by what He says.

**1Corinthians 14:3** declares that, “One who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation,” i.e., prophecy is meant to bring strengthening, instruction, encouragement, and comfort.

**Romans 12:7a... service** - This is every kind of practical service, [like table waiters and dishwashers], this same Greek word gives us the term “deacon” [lit. minister or servant] i.e., wherever there is a need among the body of believers, this gift moves the believer to fulfill that need.

In **1Corinthians 12:28** it is called the gift of “helps,” i.e., helping in the church (social committee, buildings & grounds, music, slides, janitorial, visiting the sick and shut-ins, giving to the poor, helping those in need, ushering, greeting, arranging flowers, paying the bills, preparing and serving communion, making refreshments, serving in Sunday School, or in the nursery, etc., etc.).

**Romans 12:7b... teaching** – This is the ability to interpret, to systematically proclaim, explain, expose, and exegete [expound upon] God's Word; whether it be in the public proclamation, person to person, or in written explanation.

**Acts 20:20-21**, “I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is a qualification for the Elders who lead the church, for they must be (**1Timothy 3:2**), “able to teach,” not just from the pulpit, but in the classroom, in the home, wherever God's Word is to be taught, proclaiming the Good News, just as Jesus, Peter, James, John, Barnabas, Paul, Timothy, and others did, as is recorded in the New Testament.

## “Spiritual Gifts from God: Part Two”

Every Christian should in fact be equipped, willing, and capable of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, just as we are commanded (**Matthew 28:19-20**), “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

**Romans 12:8a... exhort** – This is the ability to come alongside other believers and to strongly encourage, implore, and persuade them to obey and follow God's Word; strengthening those who are weak, struggling, or injured, in order to bring personal counsel and encouragement from the Word of God, but also warning and reproving wayward believers, concerning sin in their lives.

**1Corinthians 4:14**, “I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish [warn, counsel] you as my beloved children.”

**Galatians 6:1**, “if anyone is caught in any trespass [*sin*], you who are spiritual [*walking rightly with God, feeding on God's Word and praying to God unceasingly*], restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.”

**1Thessalonians 5:11**, “Therefore encourage [*stimulate, motivate*] one another and build up [*instruct, improve*] one another.”

**Hebrews 10:24**, “And let us consider how to stimulate [*stir up, motivate*] one another to love and good deeds.”

**Romans 12:8b... giving** – This is not giving out of your abundance, but sacrificially sharing your resources with those who are in need; openhearted generosity, not looking for recognition, but giving quietly, out of a genuine concern and compassionate response to needs.

**Acts 2:44-45**, “And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.”

**Romans 12:8c... leading** - Literally this means [*to stand before, to steer or pilot*], to guide or govern with steadfastness. This describes leadership in the home and in the church; in fact, this one of the qualifications listed for the men who will shepherd the flock of God.

**1Timothy 3:1, 4-5**, “It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*.” “*He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?).”

## “Spiritual Gifts from God: Part Two”

**Romans 12:8d... showing mercy** - This is expressing sympathy, with sensitivity, to those who are suffering, to help lessen their afflictions or sorrows. **James 2:15-16**, “If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?”

**1John 3:16-18**, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

Showing mercy is expressed when we visit those in the hospital, those confined to their home, those in jail, those who are homeless and perhaps friendless, those who are suffering loss, and those with special needs that aren’t commonly met or fulfilled by others.

**Proverbs 14:31**, “He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors God.”

Showing mercy is most exemplary of Christ Himself, and if it were up to me to pick a gift from God that all believers would have in abundance and would use with great frequency, it would be showing mercy.

What a different world it would be, if Christians would exercise mercy frequently and cheerfully; there would be fewer needy, especially among the Family of God; and perhaps more would come to salvation through the mercy shown them by those who have received God’s mercy.

All spiritual gifts (and natural talents) are given by God, to be used for the edification of the whole Church, by loving, encouraging, and caring for one another.

The Bible does not tell us exactly how to determine our, or anybody else’s, spiritual giftedness; nor does it instruct us to take some type of spiritual gift inventory, or to go to a spiritual gift seminar, or to spend time trying to find out what our giftedness to the church is.

What it tells us to do is to prayerfully study and apply God’s Word to our lives, while also actively participating in fellowship and serving in the local church, for we are many members, in one body, with a diversity of gifts seeking a unity of purpose, caring for one another while sharing the message of Christ with anyone who will listen.

**Romans 10:9-10**, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” **13**, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord [for the forgiveness of sins] will be saved.”

August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (full sermon notes)

## **“Spiritual Gifts from God: Part Two”**

All true believers and followers of Christ are members of God’s Church, God’s Family, the Flock of God.

Next week we’ll study the two offices ordained by God for shepherding and caring for the flock: the office of Elder-Pastor-Overseer, and the office of Deacon.

Paul goes on to tell us (see **Romans 12:9-21**) what the Church of God should exemplify when the spiritual gifts of God are being used as they should.

God’s greatest gift to us is His own Son, Jesus Christ who (**1Corinthians 15:3-5**), “died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to [Peter], then to the twelve.”

Our greatest gift to God is to tell others about Jesus Christ, who is both Lord and Savior, who was crucified for our sins, buried, raised from the dead to demonstrate eternal life, appeared to hundreds of His followers over a 40-day period, then ascended back into heaven to be with the Father, from where He will be coming back, at a time in the future, to take to heaven all those who believe in Him.

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