

# Spiritual Gifts for the Church

I Corinthians 12:1-14/Romans 12:4-8

Introduction:

- Last week we began to look at How To Be A Good Church Member in 2018, starting with: What Is Church Membership?
- Some ask, "Why should I join the church? I'm saved. I read my Bible. I pray. I don't need to be a member of a church to be a good Christian, do I?"
- These words are all too familiar to pastors. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches that if a person is truly born-again he will want to keep our Lord Jesus Christ's commandments (John 14:15). And what are His commandments concerning church membership?
- First, we must understand that the church is God's program for this age (Matthew 16:18). That program consists of both the body of Christ, which is invisible because it comprises all the born-again believers that have existed down through the church age (Hebrews 12:22-23), and the "Local Church(es)", which are visible, active organizations, working to fulfill the purposes of Christ on earth as His body (Acts 1:8; 2:41-42; 13:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:30, etc.). Every believer is automatically a member of the body of Christ but must find themselves a member of a visible, local church!
- I heard J. Vernon McGee say that the invisible church people are the ones who are invisible on Sunday and Wednesday nights. Unfortunately, many are invisible on Sunday mornings as well.
- There is a sense in which the Bible speaks of the unity of all true born again believers. All true Christians recognize this, though we may differ on our terminology.
- The emphasis in the New Testament is always on the local church.
- Today, we will continue by looking at using our spiritual gifts for the church!
- One of the great blessings of church membership is that it is God's venue/platform for us to exercise the gifts that He has given each and every believer!

- The Bible teaches that the believer is to minister to other believers using the gifts that God has given him. This is not an option...every believer was given at least one spiritual gift for the edification of the body, not for their own glory (1 Corinthians 12-14).
- Illustr- Unfounded childhood fear of sleeping through Christmas

I. **IGNORANCE ISN'T BLISS**- v. 1 (sadly many are ignorant of many teachings in the Bible)

a. What are these gifts?

- These are not talents, or personal skills
- They are not chosen, rather they are **given by the Holy Spirit\*\* There is too much personality in our circles- we must emphasize Spirituality!**
- There are 2 main passages where Paul lists the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor, 12, Romans 12:4-8)
- The fact that there are two different lists may suggest that there are many more gifts. I'd try and stay within the framework of the Bible here.
- There are diversities of gifts: Paul will go on to list some nine spiritual gifts in the following verses, and more in other places. There is indeed a diversity of gifts! Yet there is only one Giver, who works through the diverse gifts.
- The gifts are diverse, the ministries are different, and the activities are diverse. But it is all the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God doing the work through the gifts, the ministries, and the activities.
- V. 20-22- There are no "big shots" in God's church

b. Recognizing the "sign-gifts"

- There are some gifts which were a part of the foundational phase of the Church (i.e. tongues)
- Sign-gifts were to be accompanied by true teaching to authenticate the message (i.e. Christ-Messiah, the Apostles-the Church)

iii. I've never spoken in tongues! But I have had the Holy Spirit use me and lead me in witnessing and preaching!

c. We are cessationists

i. See I Cor. 13:8. The biblical data, and history prove this to be true

ii. No need for sign-gifts, just as there is no more need for Apostles and prophets

iii. Missionaries would love to have the gift of tongues!

d. What is the purpose of these gifts?

i. To show that there is a work for all to do- v. 4-6

ii. Each church member has a gift to be used for the building up of the body (cf. Eph. 4:11, 12) and the perfecting of the other members of the body.

iii. One of the reasons that many churches are not growing the way they should is many of the members are not involved in Christian service.

iv. Romans 12:11 says, "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."

v. V. 7- The purpose of the manifestation of the Spirit is to benefit the whole church family, not just a particular individual.

## II. **CONSIDER SOME GIFTS: FAITH-** v. 9

a. This is more of a topical study so we will not examine every single gift, but just a few key ones that I'd like to emphasize. Again, some of these gifts are clearly sign-gifts that have ceased, and some of them are not very clear; there is some debate (discernment, knowledge, etc.) We'll save that for another time!

b. FAITH: All believers possess faith in some measure because one cannot be saved apart from faith. (Eph. 2:8-9)

c. So the gift of faith is not the same thing as saving faith, all Christians are required to continue walking in faith- Heb 11:6- But without faith it is impossible to please God...

- d. The gift of faith is a gift that God bestows upon some believers to lay hold upon the promises of God. Some have referred to this gift of faith as “mountain-moving faith”
- e. Illustr- For over 60 years George Mueller had an orphanage where he cared for over 10,000 orphans without ever asking for donations or help from anyone but God. When God put it into the heart of George Muller to build these orphanages, he had only two shillings (50 cents) in his pocket. Without making his wants known to any man, but to God alone, over a million, four hundred thousand pounds (\$7,000,000) were sent to him for the building and maintaining of these orphan homes.
- f. One day, he announced to his congregation that henceforth he would receive no regular salary, and would trust wholly in the Lord for his needs. He asked that a box be placed in the chapel where whoever desired to help him might leave his offering. Henceforth he was to ask no one, "not even my beloved brethren and sisters, to help me...For unconsciously I had been led to trust in an arm of flesh, going to man instead of going to the Lord at once."

One morning when their money had been reduced to eight shillings (about \$2.00, a shilling equaling approximately 25c), Muller asked the Lord for money. For four hours the preacher waited but still no reply. Then a lady came to the house.

"Do you want any money?" she asked.

Faith was tested, yet remained triumphant, and the minister replied, "I told the brethren, dear sister, when I gave up my salary, that I would for the future tell the Lord only about my wants." "But," she replied, reaching for her purse, "He told me to give you some money," laying in his hand two guinea

III. **HELPS-** v. 28

- a. A church vitally needs people like this! They give rides to church, give a hand on work days, help shovel snow, etc!
- b. Spurgeon also describes the qualities of someone who is effective in the gift of helps:
  - i. A tender heart to really care.
  - ii. A quick eye to see the need.
  - iii. A quick foot to get to the needy.
  - iv. A loving face to cheer them and bless them.
  - v. A firm foot so you will not fall yourself.
  - vi. A strong hand to grip the needy with.
  - vii. A bent back to reach the man.
- c. This is very similar to Romans 12:7. Not just full time ministry, but all servants in the church (ushers, choir members, SS teachers/nursery/children's church)

IV. **EXHORTATION- ROMANS 12:8**

- a. This means to stir people to action
- b. An encourager! You can't help but serve the Lord cheerfully with people like this!
- c. May also involve correction or building others up by strengthening weak faith or comforting in trials.
- d. V. 8- Similarly, The gift of mercy is obvious in those who are compassionate toward others who are in distress, showing sympathy and sensitivity coupled with a desire and the resources to lessen their suffering in a kind and cheerful manner.

V. **GIVING-** Romans 12:8

- a. All Christians are commanded to give, but some have the ability to do more. God has blessed them with this gift, and they are to be channels uniquely helping the church along
- b. Where would DL Moody's ministry have gone without men like John Farwell helping to finance his revivals, campaigns, and church planting?

## Conclusion:

- Ignorance isn't bliss- have you discovered the joy and the blessing of serving in the local church? There is Joy in Serving Jesus!
  - There is one last gift we need to consider- Eph 4:11-13
  - The true function of our meetings- equipping for disciple-making
- Maybe you're wondering what your gift is? Begin with:
  - Remembering the emphasis is not on you and your personality, but the enabling of the Spirit
  - Prayer and Bible study
  - Finding a place of service in the church (don't wait around!)
  - After some time ask the Pastor and other mature Christians who know you well
- When we are not serving, we are missing out on a tremendous aspect of the Christian life!
- Some used to serve, but now the cares of this world have them too busy! I'm praying God allows us to have a freer schedules that we may be able to use our gifts for His church and His glory!
- Enlist and begin active duty in the Lord's Army today!