

5. DISCOVERING OUR GIFTS

Like seeds or babies, spiritual gifts start small and grow with proper care. Constant usage coupled with love and dependence on the Holy Spirit gradually develop them into effective instruments. In developing his gifts, the servant of God becomes useful himself. His gifts fit his personality, temperament and background and to some extent shape his future, for the gifts give guidance as to the type of service the Holy Spirit wants each Christian to perform.

--Charles Mylander, How to Discover Your Spiritual Gifts

1. Every Christian is the recipient of one or more spiritual gifts.

** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. (1 Cor. 12:7 NKJV)*

**Distributing to each one individually as He wills. (1 Cor. 12:11) NKJV)*

2. The Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes these gifts as he pleases, not on the basis of any human merit.

** All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Cor. 12:11 NIV)*

** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly. (Rom. 12:6 NASB)*

3. A rich variety of spiritual gifts is mentioned in Scripture in representative rather than exhaustive listings.

** Gifts listed in Scripture: message of wisdom, utterance of knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, discrimination between spirits, tongues, ability to interpret tongues, serving, teaching, encouragement, generosity, leadership, mercy, speaking. (1 Cor 12:4-6, 8-10; Rom. 12:6-8, 1 Pet. 4:11)*

4. The purpose of spiritual gifts is not for selfish gratification but for service for others.

** The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all. (1 Cor. 12:7 NKJV)*

** Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. (1 Pet. 4:10 NIV)*

** Under his direction the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. (Eph. 4:16 NLT)*

5. The result of exercising our spiritual gifts should be that God is glorified through Jesus Christ.

** Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Pet. 4:11 NASB)*

6. Spiritual gifts are misused if they are not exercised with love.

** If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth but didn't love others, I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal. (1 Cor. 13:1 NLT)*

** Let love be your highest goal, but also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives, especially the gift of prophecy. (1 Cor. 14:1 NLT)*

7. It is essential that we actively exercise our spiritual gifts rather than neglect them.

** Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you. (1 Tim. 4:14 NASB)*

** I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. (2 Tim. 1:6 NASB)*

PRAYER

Father, thank you that in your sovereignty you have distributed an orchestra of gifts to your children to be used for ministry to the body of Christ and to advance its witness in the world. Forgive me for times when I have been tempted to shelve my gifts or casually lay them aside. By your grace enable me to develop and deploy each of the gifts you have given me in concert with the gifts you have given others within the church. May your church be mobilized and its members drawn together in fellowship and love as the gifts of your people are exercised in mutual independence. I offer this prayer in the name of the giver of all good and perfect gifts.

PROMISE

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives to each one just as he determines. (1 Cor. 12:11 NIV)