

Basic Training

Spiritual Gifts – Understanding and Identification – Part 5

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Introduction:

Over the last several weeks, we have intentionally focused our attention on Biblical Servanthood. We now understand that spiritual gift identification and biblical servanthood work tighter for the sole purpose of bringing honor to God and effective service to the kingdom.

Spiritual Gift versus Fruit of Spirit:

Let's break it down first by identifying what the Word of God means by "gifts" versus "fruit." **James 1:17** and **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**, both refer to Spiritual Gifts just as people are all different, the gifts are different for each person, but they are all given to us by the same Spirit.

- The "fruit" of the Spirit, on the other hand, is the expression of our renewed nature as it is seen by others. **Galatians 5:22-23** tells us what this "fruit" is "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness, self-control. Against such there is not law.
- Christ is coming back for His body, which is the Church. He's coming for those who possess His nature. It doesn't matter on that day, how many spiritual gifts you may have. Jesus is coming back to connect with those who possess His own nature; and that goes far beyond merely exercising spiritual gifts. **Matthew 7:22-23**.

Gifts are services to be performed for others; "fruit" speaks of the graces or character traits of a person indwelt by the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit of God takes up residence in a man, He not only enables him to serve, but He also begins to cultivate holiness, the evidence of which is a deep-seated "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

Both the fruit and the gifts are essential. Both are manifestations of the indwelling Spirit. But the two are not the same. We should be careful not to confuse the gifts of the Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit.

From Scripture, we learn the following key information about Spiritual Gifts:

Biblical Summary about Spiritual Gifts:

1. Every Christian has at least **one** Spiritual Gift (1 Peter 4:10)
2. No Christian has **all** the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28-30)
3. We cannot **choose** our gifts; God does that job (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)
4. There is no gift that every Christian possesses (with the exception of Faith to a varying degree) (1 Corinthians 12:29-30)

5. Believers will **account** to the Lord for how they use their gifts (1 Peter 4:10)
6. Spiritual Gifts indicate God's call and purpose for a Christian's life (Romans 12:2-8)
7. Gifts used without love do not accomplish God's intended purposes (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
8. Spiritual Gifts are for the common good to **build up** the Body (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Biblical Guidelines for using Spiritual Gifts

1. Usage of the gift(s) conforms to Biblical teaching (2 Timothy 3:16 ; Romans 12 ; 1 Corinthians 12-14 ; Ephesians 4 ; 1 Peter 4)
2. There is affirmation and positive feedback within the Body of Christ for the expression of the gift (1 Corinthians 12:7 ; Ephesians 4:16)
3. There is agreement within the Body of Christ that the Holy Spirit is at work (1 John 4:1 ; 1 Thessalonians 5:21)
4. The Holy Spirit provides peace in our spirits as we offer our gift(s) to the Body of Christ (John 15:26 ; Romans 8:16)
5. There is evidence of godly fruit in the life of the Body (John 15:8 ; Matthew 7:16-20)
6. Believers offer their gifts for the common good as others have need (Acts 2:44-45 ; 1 Corinthians 12:7)
7. Unless gifts are offered in love, they have no worth (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
8. We should strive to live a life worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1)

How Many Different Spiritual Gifts Are There?

There is some disagreement among Christians as to exactly how many different Spiritual Gifts there are.

- Some people look at the key Bible passages on Spiritual Gifts and limit the Gifts to the ones listed there:
 - **Romans 12** - Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Encouragement, Giving, Leadership, and Mercy
 - **1 Corinthians 12** - Message of Wisdom, Message of Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miraculous Powers, Prophecy, Distinguishing between spirits, Speaking in Tongues, and Interpreting Tongues
 - **Ephesians 4** - Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher
- Some say that the Gifts of Administration and Leadership are the same Gift.
- Some say the Gifts of Service and Helps are the same Gift.
- Some add the Gifts of Craftsmanship and Music because of the skills that God gave to people to help with the Old Testament Tabernacle.
- Some see Craftsmanship as a vehicle to exercise the Gift of Service.
- Some stick to the gifts listed in the New Testament.
- Some believe that certain Spiritual Gifts were only given to people by the direct laying on of hands of the original Apostles and that these Gifts ceased to exist after the first century.
- Some add the possibility of other gifts:
 - 1 Corinthians 7:1-9 - Celibacy
 - 1 Peter 4:9-10 - Hospitality
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 - Martyrdom (not included in this test!)
 - Ephesians 3:6-8 - Missionary

- 1 Corinthians. 13:1-3 - Voluntary Poverty
- Ephesians 6:18 - Intercession / Prayer
- Luke 1:1-3 - Writing
- Some see Prayer and Intercession as a vehicle through which the Gifts of Faith, Healing, and Miracles operate.

Some of these "gifts" are obviously Spiritual Gifts. Others are debatable. However, it is not particularly important whether a certain ability is a Spiritual Gift, a blessing from God, a God given talent, an inherited trait, a natural human ability, or something learned. The thing that is important is that we discover what Gifts are more pronounced in us and to learn how to use them to serve God.