

Basic Christianity – Spiritual Gifts

- **We are called to be a servant**
 - As Christians, we know that God desires for us to grow spiritually, that we are supposed to have a closer and deeper relationship with Him. We also know that God has called us to share our faith with others and to be a witness for Him.
 - **That is not all God has called His Christians to do, He has called ALL of us into the ministry through service.**
 - This ministry (regardless of what it may be) has a purpose, which is to further his kingdom by bringing up the body of Christ.
 - **What are the common acts of service that we can think of?**
 - We can think of things around the church like working with children, bus ministry, and food ministry. It could be feeding the poor and helping the needy. The list is endless.
 - When we look at service to God and our ministry, we might notice something that they all have in common, and that is **service to others**.
 - When we think of the various ways that we serve God, it is always in service to others.
 - **It is never to uplift our selves selfishly.**
 - **So why is it then that service is so important to God? Why is everything focused on others?**
 - Christians are called serve because that is what Jesus Christ came here to do.
 - Matthew 20:28
 - “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to **serve**, and to **give His life a ransom for many.**”
 - Jesus did not come into this world as a king to be served, but as a servant to serve others.
 - **This is why service is part of all ministries. It is not about us. It is about others.**
 - By Jesus's example, we know that He has called us to service.
 - **But at times Christians we miss this, and we instead focus on “what can God do for me?”.**
 - While God does take care of His children and blesses them, we are not to take this that life is only about us.
 - That once we are saved that we don't do anything to help show God's love to others.
 - **Instead, the Christian should say, what can I do for God? What can I do to further His kingdom?**
 - **Why do you think God desires for us to serve others as part of our Christian life, as opposed as opposed to being purely about our relationship with Him?**
 - **Our service to God is the good works that Christians are called too.**
 - Ephesians 2:10
 - “For we are his creation, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared ahead of time so that **we should walk in them.**

God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

- Ephesians 4:11-12 (HCSB)
 - “And he personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, **to build up the body of Christ. ← The purpose of our gifts**
- Romans 12:6-8
 - **Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:** if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”
- 1 Corinthians 12:8-10
 - “For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.”
- **As individual members of the body of Christ, we must embrace the gifts that God has given us regardless of what they are.**
 - They key here is we must **"USE THEM."**
 - If we sit around and waste the spiritual gift that God gave us, we are doing NOTHING to build up the body of Christ.
 - That is our true purpose in life, regardless of our desires or wants might be.
 - **We are called to serve God and build His Kingdom, regardless of which spiritual gift we are given.**
 - **We must realize that GOD CHOOSES our spiritual gifts, not us.**
 - 1 Corinthians 12:18
 - i. “But as it is, **God arranged the members in the body**, each one of them, **as he chose.**”
 - **We are not trying to discover our desired spiritual gift. We are trying to find the ones God has given us.**
 - **We are not trying to discover what WE WANT to do or where WE WANT to serve. We are trying to discover what GOD WANTS for us, where GOD WANTS us to serve.**
 - **Our CHOOSING is whether or not we are going to embrace the gift and obediently use it to further the Kingdom of God.**
- A breakdown of the gifts listed in these passages is as follows:
 - **We must also realize that the spiritual gifts that God give us may not be exactly as those listed in these passages, this is not an all-inclusive list.**
 - Prophecy-The gift of speaking God’s inspired message.
 - Service-All the different ways that we can serve.

- Teaching-the gift to effectively instruct others in spiritual understanding.
- Exhorting-the gift to encourage and cheer others toward godly living.
- Contributes/Giving-the gift to contribute or give generously.
- Leading-the gift of organizing and guiding Christians for service and spiritual growth.
- Showing mercy-the gift of acting with grace and cheerfulness to help people that are suffering or enduring hardships.
 - Feeding the hungry
 - Caring for the sick
 - Tending to the elderly
- Uttering wisdom and knowledge – speaking and interpreting the Word of God.
- Faith – Not saving faith, but one with this gift shows an overabundance of faith in all circumstances.
- Healing – This gift was used in the Scriptures by Christ and the apostles. Today God will provide healing, though He does not bestow this on someone who can then heal at their will. Their purpose was to validate Christ.
- Miracles – Only Jesus Christ has ever performed miracles in of Himself. Christ healed through the Apostles to validate their message. Christ still works miracles today either directly or through others. This is not the gift to walk around touching and healing everyone you come into contact with.
- Tongues – The Scriptures show that when they were used, they were a real spoken language that could be interpreted. The purpose was also to validate Christ. There is much disagreement today on what consists of true tongues and is a lengthy discussion by itself.
- **Does it make a difference knowing that you are finding the gifts that God has GIVEN you as opposed to the ones you WANT to do?**
- **How would you describe what it feels like to USE your spiritual gift for the purposes of God?**
- **Finding our Spiritual Gifts**
 - **We now know the importance of our Spiritual Gifts and their purpose. The question though is how do we find them?**
 - **Our Spiritual Gifts will be revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.**
 - The only way we will know for sure what are Spiritual gifts are is when they are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.
 - Only God knows what they are, and he will reveal them to us at His desired time.
 - We can take human-made tests and read helpful guides, but ultimately only the Spirit can reveal them to us.
 - **Our responsibility is to diligently seek Him, open our hearts and ask that they are revealed to us.**
 - If we willfully neglect serving God and seeking to know His purpose for our lives, we will have a difficult time understanding what those gifts are.
 - But if we seek Him, if we open our hearts, if we cast aside our wants and desire and give ourselves to Him then He will reveal it to us.
 - **Spiritual gifts can be talents and abilities that we are drawn to and enjoy expressing.**
 - We all have different abilities that God has given us, and we tend to find them either through the **jobs we choose in life or skills that we enjoy using perhaps in a hobby.**

- Some have the ability for skilled workmanship that we use in our profession - teaching, technology, mechanic, managing, leading, designing, medicine, skilled trade, etc.
 - In our hobbies – hunting, fishing, crafts, woodwork, sports, etc.
- **The key is when we use these abilities for God’s work.**
 - When we use these gifts that God has given us for our work or hobbies to build up the Kingdom of God.
 - We take that skill in leadership and use it in the Church
 - We take that skill of being a mechanic and give back to those in need.
 - We take that skill of teaching to help others grow in their understanding of the Scriptures and their walk with Christ.
 - We take the joy and skill we have in our hobby of crafts or fishing to serve God and His Kingdom.
- **Some Spiritual gifts and abilities will not be given or revealed to us until we have been obedient and committed ourselves to serve God.**
 - Some of us perhaps have gone through a seemingly long period in our Christian life, and we feel that perhaps we have not yet discovered what our gifts are.
 - **While the reasons for this are many and likely unique to each of us in some way, I know that one of the reasons has to do with our obedience and commitment to Christ.**
 - Speaking for myself I know that some of the gifts that God gave me did not come until later in life when I had surrendered myself to serving Him. Only then were they revealed and given to where I could utilize them to serve Him.
 - **There are gifts and abilities that God will not allow us to utilize until we are obedient and surrender ourselves to Him.**
- There are helpful guides that have been written to help us examine ourselves to find our gifts.
 - While there is no comparison to using a human-made guide and to listening to the Holy Spirit these guides can be useful.
 - LifeWay – Spiritual Gifts Survey and other tools.
 - <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/women-leadership-spiritual-gifts-growth-service>
 - **Use these as tools to help you, but if you do not seek Christ and open your heart to Him, then your endeavors will be fruitless.**
- **If you have found your Spiritual Gift, what is it and how did God reveal it to you?**
- **Each spiritual gift is valuable, even the ones we might think to be of lesser value or insignificant.**
 - It is common for us to look at a list of spiritual gifts and think that some of these appear to have more value or are more important.
 - **This is because of our humanity. We always put greater worth on things that are seen and look "important."**
 - But this is not the case with God. He sees all of the spiritual gifts (even those unseen) as vitally important.
 - **God made each of us DIFFERENT for a PURPOSE.**
 - 1 Corinthians 12:14
 - “For the body does not consist of one member but of many.”
 - 1 Corinthians 12:17-20
 - “If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God

arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”

- **Just as each body part in the human body serves a unique function, so does each spiritual gift that God bestows on the Christians.**
- Each is important. You cannot have a functioning body if they are all eyes or ears, each part is needed to make the body whole.
- **So, it is with the church. Each Christian has gifts that better the body.**
 - We cannot have a church with just pastors, singers or nursery workers. It takes all of the various functions to make the body work as God intended.
 - This is why it is so important that we embrace our spiritual gift and serve in the church.
 - God intentionally gave us the gifts to build up the body, which is also our church home.
 - We use our gifts and abilities to further the kingdom of God.
- **The spiritual gifts that are seemingly less important or hidden are even more important.**
 - 1 Corinthians 12:22-23
 - “On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty,”
 - As with the human body, our organs are unseen yet serve the greatest function. So, in the church, the “unseen” less glamorous roles can be the most important.
- **God designed all of this so that there would be unity in the body.**
 - 1 Corinthians 12:24b-26
 - “...But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”
 - So, it is with the church. This Godly design will bring great unity among the church as we all need and support one another as we are all here for a common goal of growing the Kingdom of God.
- **What spiritual gifts or “ministries” might we think of as less important?**