

USING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Lesson Two: You've Been Gifted for Ministry

NOTES

Review

What is the key passage for our class? Do you remember the three things we highlighted from the passage as significant for our class? What are they?

Define the Gifts!

Let's be careful of two things as we begin discussing spiritual gifts:

- **Pride – thinking that somehow I am better than others.**
- **Inactivity – simply talking about our gifts rather than using them.**

"Spiritual gifts are used for spiritual purposes (Matt. 25:14-28, given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11), to every believer in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10), according to God's design and grace (1Cor. 12:18), for use within the context of the local assembly of believers (Eph. 4:12)."

Simply put, your spiritual gift is your **God-given, Spirit-empowered capacity for ministry in the local church.**

Notice four passages which discuss ministry gifts: Eph 4:11-12; 1Pet 4:10-11; Rom 12:6-8 and 1Cor 12:1-31. What observations do you have about these?

Three important things regarding the believer's spiritual gifts:

- **They are given by a sovereign God – no room for pride** (Rom 12:6)
- **You have been given a gift – no room for excuse** (1Pet 4:10)
- **You don't have all the gifts – you need others** (1Cor 12:15ff)

Discover Your Gifts!

How does God prescribe for you to discover your spiritual gifts?

The pattern of Scripture is to encourage believers to **use** their gifts but there is not one verse that tells the believer to **discover** his gift!

The implication of these truths being that the believer will come to an understanding of his spiritual gifts as he yields to the Spirit in his life and begins to engage in the normal services and activities of the local church.

As needs arise in the local church and the Spirit-controlled, maturing Christian perceives the opportunities to "get involved" to meet the need, his special abilities and Spiritual Gifts tend to rise to the surface.

God's activity in aiding the believer to know and use his particular gifts can be seen the recognition of one's gifts by the leaders of the church. The leaders' in Timothy's church recognized his gifts (2 Timothy 1:6) and it is entirely appropriate that other spiritually-minded individuals would recognize the giftedness of other church members in the church.

Consider for a moment the following story (adapted from Dr. Bruce McAllister's Summer Bible Conference message in July 2002):

Let's say that following the evening service one Sunday night this summer some of the children are playing in the parking lot – as they had been doing for quite some time due to the longer daylight hours.

This night, though, is different because one of the children got hit by a car. The child's injuries are not life-threatening, but they are serious.

The crowd has begun to gather around the little child and consider for a moment how the giftedness of church members begins to surface:

The person with the gift of service jumps into action to begin sweeping off the broken glass from the pavement. He grabs some orange cones in order to block off the "accident scene" and keep other cars away.

The person with the gift of teaching suggests to the pastor that we begin an EMT training course where he could help to teach others how to provide assistance to people in this condition. He also suggests an elective class on "God's Lessons in Trials."

The person with the gift of exhortation puts his arms around the parents of the child and offers comfort and consolation. He assures them that their child will be OK because the same sort of thing happened to their son about a year ago. He helps them see "God's Four Stabilizing Truths" applied specifically to this trial.

The person with the gift of giving tells the parents not to worry – he's going to help take care of the cost of the ambulance, the doctor and even the Band-Aids. He assures them, "Everything will be taken care of."

The person with the gift of administration begins to figure out why this happened and what sort of steps can be taken to assure that it does not happen again – he may even suggest a new "parking lot" policy.

The person with the gift of mercy runs to the child and begins to hold his hand and sing to him until the ambulance arrives. His heart breaks for the young child and is simply trying to show compassion for his pain.

Do you see yourself in that story? You see, though a situation like that one, prayerfully, may not happen here at Inter-City, as you yield to the Spirit and seek to respond to the needs of others, God seems to bring to the surface your giftedness and the ways in which you can advance His work.

Deploy Your Gifts in Local Church Ministry!

One of the provisions of God for your ministry in the local church is your spiritual gifts. When you understand your gifts, it helps answer the question of "what" a person can do to advance the work of God in the context of this local assembly.

So remember:

- 1. You are to maximize the gifts God has given to you. (1 Tim. 4:14)*
- 2. It is a sin to waste the gifts God gave you. (1 Cor. 4:1-2)*
- 3. Using your gifts glorifies God and helps the church become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph 4:15-16)*