

UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

“Varieties of Ministries”

Scripture Reading: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7

-) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDE 7**. Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 8**. This is week #4 in this series on Understanding the Spiritual gifts. I have titled today’s message “*Varieties of Ministries*” (v5).
-) I am delivering this series on Spiritual Gifts for two reasons. 1) So we know what the gifts are and their purpose in the church today and 2) so we all can identify what gifts we have been given by the Holy Spirit as He determines and use them to edify the church, serve each other, and ultimately glorify God.
-) **SLIDE 9**. They are not earned. They are not learned. They cannot be bought. They cannot be taught. They are gifts!
-) Last week we learned that there are a variety of gifts. Today we will learn that these gifts give each and every one of us a ministry. Perhaps we never thought of us having a ministry, but that is exactly what Paul is saying. Our gifts are the power behind whatever ministry you and I have been given.
-) **SLIDE 10**. What are the gifts? Again, different Bible translations may use different terms.
-) **SLIDE 11**. We covered these four gifts last week—HELPS, SERVING, EXHORTATION, and GIVING. And we said that the distribution of the gifts is like a funnel. At the top of the funnel where it is the widest, we find many believers with these gifts. We called them corporal gifts because they deal directly with people and serving the church.

-) But now as we begin defining more gifts in our list, we will see that they become more theological and the distribution of these gifts may not be as wide. Less believers will have these gifts. So it's like coming down the funnel.
-) Then after we cover those, we will get to the miraculous gifts which are in a category all their own. That's in a few weeks. Today let's cover 3 more gifts.
-) **SLIDE 12.** – MERCY (ROMANS 12:8)
-) **SLIDE 13.** – MERCY (Webster) – “*compassion or forbearance shown especially to an offender or to one subject to one's power : compassionate treatment of those in distress.*”
-) Justice is when we get what we deserve. Mercy is when we don't get what we deserve. And in our court system, that is this first definition. What? Show compassion to an offender? Is that easy for us to do? But there is a second definition. And distress can cover a lot of ground—anything from a sinful situation to a situation that one has absolutely no control over.
-) Closely linked with the gift of encouragement, 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 that person's suffering in a kind and cheerful manner.
-) **SLIDE 14.** MATTHEW 5:7. Jesus says that mercy follows the Biblical truth of sowing and reaping. Explain. Mercy is what we express when we are led by God to be compassionate in our attitudes, words, and actions towards others. It is more than feeling sympathy toward someone; it is love in action.
-) Mercy desires to answer the immediate needs of others and alleviate suffering, loneliness, and grief. Mercy addresses physical, emotional, financial, or spiritual crises with generous, self-sacrificial service. Mercy is a champion of the lowly, poor, exploited, and forgotten and often acts on their behalf.

-) So how does the gift of mercy edify the body? I believe there are times when a believer can become discouraged with their circumstances either due to their own foolish sinful mistakes or simply through no fault of their own. In certain cases, they do not need to be judged and they do not need to be shunned. They need mercy.
-) And I also believe those with this gift are keen at identifying this in another believer. They bring the mercy needed to that individual which in turn helps them by building them up and strengthening them and edifying their relationship to God and to the church. It is a wonderful reflection of the compassion of Christ. When one has this gift, it edifies those who do not.
-) So I ask. Do you feel comfortable and is it easy for you to show mercy to others who need mercy? If so, perhaps you have the gift of mercy. And it is a ministry.
-) **SLIDE 15.** – ADMINISTRATION (leadership). The gifted leader is one who rules, presides over or has the management of other people in the church. The word means “*to guide*” and carries with it the idea of one who steers a ship. One with the gift of administration rules with wisdom and grace and exhibits the fruit of the Spirit in their life as they lead by example.
-) There are several characteristics of those with the spiritual gift of administration. They understand that they are not absolute rulers but are themselves subject to the One who is over them all, the Lord Jesus who is the Head of the church. Recognizing their place in the hierarchy of the administration of the body of Christ prevents the gifted leader from succumbing to pride or a sense of entitlement. The truly gifted Christian leader recognizes that they are but a slave of Christ and a servant of those they lead.
-) So how does the gift of administration edify the body?

-) There are two sides to every church—there is the spiritual side and there is the business side. The business side is very important in the life of a church. Those with the gift of administration lead the church on this business side.
-) There are always bills to pay, grounds to be maintained, events to be planned, records to keep, and all sorts of other business-related decisions that need to be made. Without good leadership, a church is doomed to failure. When one has this gift, it edifies those who do not.
-) So I ask. Do you feel comfortable and is it easy for you to lead, govern, and make important decisions concerning the business side of the church? If so, perhaps you have the gift of administration. And it is a ministry.
-) **SLIDE 16.** FAITH. There are two kinds of faith. There is the faith that saves us which is called saving faith.
-) **SLIDE 17.** EPHESIANS 2:8-9. Every believer has this faith. This faith saves a person. So saving faith is a gift but it is not a Spiritual gift. So, what is the Spiritual gift of faith?
-) The spiritual gift of faith is exhibited by one with a strong and unshakeable confidence in God, His Word, His promises, and in the power of prayer.
-) Those with this gift show a humble godliness and reliance on God's promises, often so much so that they are known to be quietly fearless and zealous. They are so convinced that all obstacles to the gospel and to God's purposes will be overcome and so confident that God will secure the advancement of His cause, that they will often do far more in the promotion of His kingdom than the many preachers and teachers.
-) **SLIDE 18.** This kind of faith is defined in HEBREWS 11:1. They believe and trust in the promises of God.

-) But let's be extremely careful here. Let me tell you what faith is not. This gift of faith is not that one's faith can believe or create things into existence.
-) There are some who teach something called "*the law of attraction*." Here's how it goes. You attract, by faith, a certain kind of reality to yourself. Your thoughts and your words attract this reality and then literally create this reality.
-) **SLIDE 19**. There are 4 steps to this heresy. 1) Know what you want. 2) Believe you will get it. 3) Visualize the fulfillment of it. 4) Speak it out loud and you will bring it into existence. These are the exact words of Joel Osteen and many others like him.
-) **SLIDE 20**. They omitted one step.
-) Let me show you how this works. Use example of single mom wanting a new car. If it works, you have great faith. If it doesn't, either you didn't send enough seed money, or your faith is substandard.
-) This teaching is supported by health, wealth, and prosperity preachers and those in the Word-faith movement, all which is false preaching taught by false teachers. This name-it-claim-it power-of-positive-thinking (Norman Vincent Peale) mentality has nothing at all to do with Biblical truth and therefore has nothing to do with the spiritual gift of faith.
-) Beware of these charlatans. They are found in great numbers on channels such as TBN, INSP, and DAYSTAR. They are very charismatic and enticing, but they are also very deadly.
-) How does the gift of faith edify the body? Those with the gift of faith are an inspiration to their fellow believers, exhibiting a simple confidence in God that shows in all they say and do. Many believers know the promises of God. But those with this gift have an unwavering stand on God's promises. And that is encouraging (another gift - overlap). When one has this gift, it edifies those who do not.

-) So I ask. Do you feel that you have a contagious faith that can move mountains? If so, perhaps you have the gift of faith. And it is a ministry.
-) **SLIDE 21**. That's all we'll cover today. Those are three more spiritual gifts. Next week we'll look at a few more gifts and these gifts will be less practical and more theological.

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