

Study 0022

Scripture Text: Hebrews 6:2a; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28

We are continuing from where we stopped in our last study on spiritual gifts. So far, we have considered the most popular spiritual gifts, nine in number, which categorised as: revelation gifts, power or demonstration gifts, and, inspiration or vocal gifts. In this study, as we conclude on the matter of spiritual gifts, we now turn to the less known spiritual gifts, which are nonetheless extremely important.

Serving or Ministry Gifts

These are spiritual gifts which enable believers to serve acceptably in the house of God, and to meet the needs of the people of God. This does not mean that other gifts are not useful for serving God; indeed, every gift is for service. However, the serving gifts are specially categorised as they help the believer to serve God's people, and declare His word. These are:

- (a) Ministry. This is a gift that enables the recipients perform services in the church as directed by the Holy Spirit, by serving others as unto the Lord, without feeling despised (**Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-24**). This is what is known as 'serving tables' or deaconship (**Acts 6:1-7**). Some of the activities of 'serving tables' may include ushering/greeting, leading worship, intercession/prayer, evangelism, visitation, etc. (**2 Timothy 4:5; James 1:27**).
- (b) Teaching. This is a gift that enables the recipient to teach the word of God as it should be taught as an oracle of God, and without embellishment. It is a gift that enables the recipient to communicate and expound God's word in a manner that makes the hearers to receive the truth with simplicity. It is a gift that God uses to eliminate ignorance in the church, as well as promote personal growth in the things of God among His people (**Matthew 7:28-29; Mark 4:2; Matthew 13:10-13, 34-36**).
- (c) Exhortation. This is a gift which enables the recipient to speak the word of God in a way that brings encouragement to the hearers. This is where preaching comes in, as clearly distinct from teaching. And even when it is a message of chastisement, it is received by the willing hearer as a message of encouragement (**Acts 2:1-40; 2 Timothy 4:2; Acts 9:17-21**). While teaching clears and warns the heart, exhortation cuddles and warms it! Please note that teaching and exhortation neither contradict, nor undermine each other.

Support or Welfare Gifts

These are gifts that are given to believers with which they can comfort, encourage, and support others. These gifts enable the recipient to give of themselves to others and bring about God's blessing into other peoples lives. They are:

- (a) Helps. This is a gift that enables the recipient to be of help to the needy in the church and even outside the church. The ultimate goal is to bring divine succour to the needy, and get them on their feet again; but not to turn them into spoilt babies (**Psalms 41:1-3; Acts 9:36-39**).
- (b) Giving. This is a gift from God and it enables the recipient to give of himself and of his substance for the benefit of all. This is not the giving that seeks a return, but one that is the extension of God's hands to the needy, including the church as a whole (**2 Corinthians 8:1-7; 2 Corinthians 9:11-14**).
- (c) Mercy. This is a gift that enables the recipient to extend the heart of God to others. This gift makes the recipient to have the heart of compassion without which selfless actions of mercy cannot take place, neither can miracles, signs and wonders (**Luke 10:30-36; Matthew 14:14; 15:32-37; Luke 7:11-15; Matthew 9:13**).

Administration or Organization Gifts

These are gifts that are given to believers to enable them to bring order and excellence into the organization of the church. Examples of these gifts abound in scripture in the ministries and lives of Moses, David, Nehemiah, the Apostles before Saul of Tarsus, Paul, among others. They are:

- (a) **Administration**. This gift enables the recipient to function in an administrative capacity which enables him to put organizational excellence in place in the church without recourse to human management principles. The recipient may indeed know nothing about administration or management, but is gifted by the Holy Spirit to put in place structures that enable growth (both numerically and spiritually) in the church (**Exodus 18:12-26; Acts 6:1-7; Titus 1:5**).
- (b) **Leadership**. This is a gift given to an individual by God that enables him to provide leadership to the people of God. This gift confers on the recipient, the grace to act as father to the people of God, and to lead them as he is himself led by the Holy Spirit. It does not confer authority to oppress the people of God; rather it requires personal sacrifice and humble service from the person so endowed with the gift of leadership (**Matthew 20:20-28; Luke 7:8**).

CONCLUSION

A spiritual gift does not operate in isolation of other spiritual gifts. Usually, spiritual gifts operate interdependently. It is therefore common to have more than one spiritual gift in operation at any given time. For example:

- (a) The gifts of faith and mercy are needed for the gifts of healings or the working of miracles to be effective;
- (b) A word of knowledge should normally be followed by a word of wisdom;
- (c) Prophecy may manifest as a word of wisdom which could aim to set up an administrative structure on how to help people in need in the church, and can be presented to the church as a teaching.

As we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and begin to manifest these gifts, let us remember that spiritual gifts all operate because of the Holy Spirit, and so we must of necessity be surrendered to Him and follow His leading and direction, if spiritual gifts are to be effective in our lives. Furthermore, ‘agape’ love, which is selfless and sacrificial, must be central in our lives while manifesting spiritual gifts (**1 Corinthians 13:1-13**), otherwise, we would be no better than cultists, herbalists, soothsayers, and magicians! Personal gain or fame should not be the basis for manifesting spiritual gifts.

Finally, spiritual gifts are given for employment, which implies that no one in the church is permitted to be there without doing anything. However, such persons must first be baptized in the Holy Spirit if their labours are to be considered good works, and not dead works!

EXERCISE

Answer true or false to the following:

- 1) ‘serving tables’ is a term exclusively reserved for the kitchen ministry.
- 2) A fundamental requirement to lead worship in the church is the gift of a good voice.
- 3) Ushers are people who are born with great inter-personal skills.
- 4) The gift of teaching is useful if you want to make teaching your career in life.
- 5) The gift of teaching makes the recipient able to explain and expound the word of God effectively.

- 6) Teaching is on a higher scale than exhortation, because teaching makes disciples, whereas, exhortation only brings in new believers.
- 7) Exhortation warms the heart; while teaching warns it.
- 8) It is not possible for one person to have the gift of teaching and exhortation.
- 9) People with the gift of giving soon become filthily rich.
- 10) The gift of mercy has nothing to do with the Red Cross or the judiciary.
- 11) Support and Welfare gifts are essentially the extension of God's hands and heart to others, who may not even know Him.
- 12) Administration gifts do not require any formal training whatsoever.
- 13) You are born with the gift of leadership.
- 14) Leadership gift is more for serving than it is for being served.
- 15) It is uncommon for a person to have only one spiritual gift.
- 16) In example (c) of the Conclusion above, there are no more than four spiritual gifts that can be identified.
- 17) Spiritual gifts need the love of God in our hearts to be effective.
- 18) The difference between soothsaying and prophecy is 'agape' love.
- 19) The goal of spiritual gifts is to bring the believer in Christ into great wealth.
- 20) You cannot be baptized in the Holy Spirit and be idle in the church.