

SPIRITUAL GIFTS WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.

There are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For, as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ and, individually, we are members of one another.

Yes, just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And, if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 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 members, yet one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas, our more respectable members do not need this. But, God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members must have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now, you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom; 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, in proportion to faith; to another the discernment of spirits; to another various kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. There are varieties of services, but the same Lord: ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

And, God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. By the grace given to me, however, I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen

Ask God to reveal the particular gift(s) he has given to you. Check off those that he shows you.

- Wisdom in discourse, or the ability to give a word or a message that is full of wisdom. (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- The power to express knowledge, or the ability to give a word or message that is full of knowledge. (1 Corinthians 12:8)
- Faith in particular circumstances to do what seems impossible. (1 Corinthians 12:9)
- The gift of healing, or the power to heal. (1 Corinthians 12:9)
- Miraculous powers, or the power to work miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- The gift of speaking God's message in prophecy; its use should be in proportion to your faith. (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:10)
- The power to distinguish one spirit from another, or the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit of God and those that do not. (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- The gift of tongues, or the ability to speak or to pray in an unknown tongue or language. (1 Corinthians 12:10; 12:28)
- The gift of interpreting the tongues or to explain what is said. (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- The gift of ministry or service; it should be used to serve others. The one who serves is to do it with the strength provided by God. (Romans 12:7; 1 Peter 4:11)
- Teaching; one who is a teacher should use his or her gift for teaching. (Romans 12:7)
- The power to exhort, or the gift of encouraging others. (Romans 12:8)
- Giving money or sharing resources with others; it should be done generously. (Romans 12:8)
- Ruling, or exercising authority; he or she should work hard and exercise authority with care. (Romans 12:8)
- Performing works of mercy or showing kindness to others; it should be done carefully. (Romans 12:8)
- Helpers, or those who have the ability to help others. (1 Corinthians 12:28)
- Administrators, or those who have the ability to direct others. (1 Corinthians 12:28)

___ Hospitality to strangers; for some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)

___ Concern for those in prison, as though in prison with them. (Hebrews 13:3)

___ Concern for those who are badly treated. (Hebrews 13:3)

Salvation is a free gift from God. We humans often can't see the need for a *free* gift. And, those of us who do accept it often do little or nothing to preserve or maintain this free gift. Somehow, hell is not enough penalty that we even concern ourselves with the gift.

Once again, God gift-wraps and hand-delivers the gift to us, only to have us drag our feet and possibly throw it back to him.

If it is a car, we drive it. Imagine watching it rust as it sits in the driveway. Money is spent on what is needed. Even the gift of love is to be consumed now, not put on a shelf just to be admired while gathering dust.

Why do we suppose that these gifts are presented to us? Are we so unlearned, or still in such a baby stage of our Christian growth, as to accept these gifts without ever using them?

Each of you has been in a gathering of believers, or in your private prayer closet, when God has been bestowing His gifts upon you and others. What have you done with it? Is your gift still sitting on your shelf of contentment?