

“DON’T BE IGNORANT” (Part 2)

About Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 12:1)

INTRO: Begin with this question: “What are you doing, who are you helping when you are at your best and enjoying it the most?” Answer includes our spiritual gifts. God doesn’t want us to be ignorant about spiritual gifts. Parable of Animals... We need to be informed about God’s gifts. Many Christians live unnecessarily in spiritual poverty, unaware of the tremendous treasure God has given to each one by His grace. Understanding and using your giftedness will minimize two problems that plague every church: *unemployment* (unused potential - spectators only) and *unfulfillment* (wasted energy - doing things God never gifted them to do). *J. MacArthur* rightly says, “No local congregation will be what it could be, what Jesus prayed it should be, what the Holy Spirit gifted and empowered it to be, until it understands spiritual gifts.” Some scary stats . . .

I. UNDERSTANDING GOD’S GIFTS TO YOU

A. DEFINITION: “What are spiritual gifts?”

1. They are *NOT* the same as the fruit of the Spirit, or natural talents, or a ministry where gifts are used.
2. They are *sovereignly given abilities graciously bestowed upon every believer at salvation to enable them to serve with ease, effectiveness, and excitement within the church, the body of Christ*. They are supernatural endowments that enable us to carry out God’s work in God’s way. They give us the ability to glorify God by serving.

B. PRINCIPLES in understanding gifts (4 passages):

1. *Every Christian is gifted* (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:7, 11; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10) - given by God to each believer when receive H.S. at salvation; not all get the same, but all receive something; no Christian is overlooked; irrevocable (Rom. 11:29 - can leave unused or misuse, but can’t lose). Two categories: speaking and serving (1 Pet. 4:11).
2. *Gifts are for service to others* (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:12; 1 Pet. 4:10) - never for personal glory, but common good; to bring us together, not divide; my gifts serve you and yours me. They build up the body (1 Cor. 12).
3. *Every believer has a ministry* (Eph. 4:16). Gifts are for service. Christians are to serve. No exceptions or excuses. Every Christian has some job to do. Every believer is *in* the ministry.
4. *Each ministry is dependent upon other ministries* (Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 12:15-20) - We must work together, each doing their part to promote maximum health and effectiveness.
5. *Every ministry is important, but some more than others* (1 Cor. 12:20-25). Every function in the body is important, but some parts are more valuable. All are needed. No part is too small.

6. *Every believer is accountable to God to know and use his gifts* (Rom. 12:6; 1 Pet. 4:10; Matt. 25:14ff) - We are expected to USE our gifts. We’ll be rewarded on our faithfulness in this area. My primary gifts are teaching, leading, and exhortation.
7. *Using my gifts glorifies God, blesses others, and fulfills me* (1 Pet. 4:10-11).

II. UNWRAPPING GOD’S GIFTS TO YOU

- A. **DEDICATION** of your life to God (Rom. 12:3-8). Rom. 12:1-2 on dedication of life to God. The prerequisite for service of gifts is surrender to the Lordship of Christ. Always, it is surrender then service.
- B. **REALIZATION** that God has uniquely gifted you as a Christian (1 Cor. 12:7, 11). As a believer, **KNOW** God has gifted you to serve Him.
- C. **SUPPLICATION** of God in prayer to show you your giftedness (Matt. 7:7-11; Ph. 4:6-7; Jam. 1:5). This prayer is not to seek certain ones, but for Him to reveal what He already bestowed. Always remember the Giver is more important than the gift! Venn diagram . . .
- D. **INFORMATION** on the gifts is helpful, too (1 Cor. 12:1) - Study the gifts list and the gifts themselves. Talk to those who know & understand their gifts.
- E. **EXAMINATION** of your own personal interests and heart’s desire (Ps. 37:4) - Ask: What do you like to do? fulfills you? motivates you? gives you sense of accomplishment? What do you do that God blesses? find easy to do? Venn Diagram (PPT)
- F. **EXPERIMENTATION** of various opportunities and ministries - Be open and available to try other areas; investigate don’t refuse to move, even though element of risk exists. Expose yourself!
- G. **CONFIRMATION** by others (1 Tim. 4:15; 1 Cor. 14:29) What do others say you do well? Any converging?

RESOURCES: JimmyKnott.com/assessments

CONC: Spiritual gifts are important. So, don’t be ignorant - understand and unwrap and use yours. Others are depending on you. I’ll close with some counsel Paul gives to Timothy, “Do not neglect the gift you have...rekindle the gift of God that is within you (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). Imagine you have a friend . . . Don’t ignore it, ignite it! At birthday or Christmas, who leaves a gift unopened, esp. if from God! So, I ask again, “What are you doing . . .?”