

## 1 Peter 4:7-11

1Pe 4:7 (NKJV) **But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.** <sup>8</sup> **And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."** <sup>9</sup> **Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.** <sup>10</sup> **As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.** <sup>11</sup> **If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

In our last study, we provided an introduction into what is called “spiritual gifts” and we looked at how the differences that people have, whether it be their personality, their temperament, their spiritual gifts, their skills, or their aptitudes, each of those differences have great potential for creating conflict in our relationships with one another. So, we worked through that, looked at how seven people each with one of the seven gifts listed in [Romans 12:6-8](#) would have reacted / responded to a potentially embarrassing moment for someone else. We dealt with the problem created by the fact that “opposites attract”, about why God does not want us to always be trying to change other people, especially our spouse, and finally how God allows people to get under our skin and irritate us and why.

Now, this morning, it is important to both understand and appreciate that the spiritual gift(s) that God has given to someone are not for them personally. In fact, if they are not careful, they can easily become a point of pride in their life and actually negate their very purpose in the believer’s life. Every spiritual gift is to be utilized for the benefit of other people, not for the benefit of the actual believer who has it. Just as an example, if someone has the gift of exhortation, it is not so that they can exhort themselves, but rather that they may exhort others, encourage others, and build someone else up in their faith. The way that Peter expresses this is that he says “**As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another...**” He does not say “minister it to yourself”. So, every gift that a believer may have has been given to them for the building up of other believers. If you have the gift of helps, it is to help other people. If you have the gift of teaching, it is so that you can teach other people. If you have the gift of mercy, it is so that you can show mercy to people who are hurting and struggling in their life. If you have the gift of leading, it is so that you can help bring order into other people’s lives that seem to be somewhat out of control. So, a spiritual gift is always to be used for the benefit of someone else. It is never for us personally, even though we gain great benefit when it is used properly.

One of the things that this verse says is that every believer has at least one spiritual gift, but that should not be construed to mean that they can only have one. Another verse, [1 Corinthians 7:7](#) says something very similar.

1Co 7:7 (NKJV) **For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.**

It is my opinion that Christ had all of the spiritual gifts listed in Scripture, and if we are to become conformed to His image, then as we grow in our faith and commitment to Him, in all likelihood we should be given more spiritual gifts than just one so that we can have a greater capacity to minister to others where they are. It also seems self-evident that whatever spiritual gifts that we may have been given will be consistent with any calling that God may place on our life. Paul obviously had many

spiritual gifts operating in his life in order to achieve what God wanted him to accomplish. Once again, there is nothing in Scripture that eliminates a believer to only having one spiritual gift, even though some commentators have read that into this verse. I think the better way to say it is that “*each believer has at least one spiritual gift*”.

Another question that arises is whether a spiritual gift is permanent. I.e., if God gives someone a divine endowment of some kind, can that person lose that gift. [Romans 11:29](#) says,

**Ro 11:29 (NKJV) For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.**

That verse is obviously provided in the context of God’s sovereign dealings with Israel as a nation, but the governing principle is still the same. The AMP Bible says of this verse that “**He never withdraws them when once they are given...**” The NLT says,

**Ro 11:29 (NLT) For God’s gifts and his call can never be withdrawn.**

It is my personal opinion that when God gives someone a gift(s) that those gifts will not be withdrawn from that believer. However, I also believe that if that believer fails to use their gift that in all likelihood the Holy Spirit is not going to anoint their efforts if they are not what is called in v10 as “**good stewards**” of those gifts. It would be similar to a really skilled football player who is incredibly gifted in his football skills. However, he simply does not practice hard, is not disciplined, and even breaks some of the team rules. In all likelihood, he will not be called on to play much, if any at all. He still has the same skills, right. He has to choose to put in the effort to actually train and discipline his natural physical skills in accordance with how the coach wants him to practice. Spiritual gifts are similar in that each believer has to be willing to exercise the spiritual endowments that God has given them.

A spiritual gift simply is not a kind of supernatural endowment that someone can just summon up whenever he desires – not at all. Some of these fake healers seem to think that it is, so they schedule healing services as if they can just automatically at any time say a few words and someone be healed. Whatever that is, it certainly is not biblical. I love the sign that I saw once that said “Healing service cancelled due to illness.” I.e., however a believer uses a gift that has been given to him must always be in accordance with how God wants that gift to be used and administered to other people. It is the idea that we must faithfully use the gifts that God has given to us or those gifts may be “placed on the shelf” as they were intended to be used in our personal life.

Another important point to make is that a spiritual gift is not a talent. People have all kinds of talents. Someone may be a wonderful artist. Someone may be a great athlete. Someone may be an excellent musician. However, talents are not the same thing as spiritual gifts. That would be comparing apples to oranges. Someone like Wayne Grudem in his book [Systematic Theology](#) equates physical talents with spiritual gifts. Once that happens, someone’s ability to throw a football or shoot a basketball can be categorized as a spiritual gift – which they are not. Can they use those talents for God’s glory? Absolutely, but still that does not make them a spiritual gift, but simply a physical or mental skill that they possess and are using to glorify God in their life. Think of it this way. Spiritual gifts are only given to genuine believers, but many, many lost people have incredible skills and talents that are never used for God’s glory. In fact, they have incredible skills that most believers do not have. Every spiritual gift has been given to a believer to be used specifically for three purposes – (1) for glorifying God, (2) for

the edification of the body of Christ and individual believers in the body, and (3) as a means of ministering to unbelievers so that they may come to Christ. So, as we go through this, please do not equate spiritual gifts with physical talents and skills which anyone may have.

Now, what we want to do at this point is to list the various spiritual gifts that Scripture identifies in several listings and see if we can determine any differences or similarities in these listings. The first listing is in [Romans 12:6-8](#) which identifies seven (7) specific gifts.

**Ro 12:6 (NKJV) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;* <sup>7</sup> *or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching;* <sup>8</sup> *he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.***

In this listing, we have prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, and mercy. The word for “**gifts**” in v6 is the word we examined in our last study – “*charisma*”. The second listing is found in [1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#), but it is important to notice in this passage that not everything listed is called a “*charisma*”. Before we look at the listing, it is necessary to look at v1 which says,

**1Co 12:1 (NKJV) Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:**

In the phrase “spiritual gifts”, please notice that in most translations the word “gifts” is italicized meaning that the translators have added that word. I.e., it is not in the actual Greek text. The word for “**spiritual**” is the Greek word “*pneumatikos*” and simply means “of the Spirit”. The KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, AMP, NOVE, ASV, ISV, and RSV all have “**spiritual gifts**”. The HCSB says “**concerning what comes from the Spirit**”, and YLT says “**concerning the spiritual things**”. Personally, I think that the interpreters have done harm to the Greek simply because the word “*charisma*” is not included in this verse. The reason I personally believe this is wrong is because the description of the listing in 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 identifies four (4) distinct outworkings “of the Spirit”. In v4, there are “**diversities of gifts**” (“*charisma*”). In v5, there are “**differences of ministries**” (“*diakonia*”). In v6, there are “**diversities of activities**” (“*energema*”), and in v7, there is the “**manifestation**” (“*phanerosis*”) **of the Spirit**. So, we have four distinct operations of the Holy Spirit, and only one of those is called a “**gift(s)**”.

Now, first what we want you to do is to think of a “**gift**” as a unique spiritual endowment that God has given to you as a means of expressing His love to other people. I.e., God uses your gift to manifest Himself through you in a very specific way. When you use your gift, you are deeply motivated to do so and you are deeply fulfilled when you do.

Secondly, think of “**ministry**” as a divinely appointed calling where God has chosen to work in a more pronounced and prolonged way through you. For instance, Eddie Ildefonso is a missionary involved in church planting and training pastors. God has enabled me to train pastors and be an encouragement to them.

Then thirdly, think of “**activities**” not as a specific kind of ministry, but as the very different and diverse ways in which God can actually impact someone through your gifts. The Greek word “*energema*” comes from “*energeo*” which simply means to effect, to effect someone or something. However, when the suffix “*ma*” is added to it (“*energema*”), the suffix “*ma*” specifically makes it the result or the actual

effect that is produced in someone's life.<sup>1</sup> Maybe you helped someone sacrificially, and it deeply impacted their life, or maybe you encouraged someone who was deeply depressed and they came to know Christ through that act. These are the incredibly different ways that God may choose to use you. In the Greek text this word is translated as "**operations**". The KJV actually calls it "**diversities of operations**". The NASB calls it "**varieties of effects**". The AMP class it "**varieties of operation [of working to accomplish something]**". The NIV says "**different kinds of working**". In reality, all of these seem to actually miss the real meaning which is not so much that God uses someone, but rather the effect that is produced in someone's life when He does use them. I.e., if I can express it another way, there is no limit as to how the Holy Spirit may choose to use our gifts to glorify God in the lives of other people. This makes even more sense when we consider that our gifts are not for us, but for others.

Then lastly, we have "**the manifestation of the Spirit**". The word "manifestation" means to exhibit, to disclose, to make something visible and observable.<sup>2</sup> The reference is specifically to God using someone in such a way that the work of the Holy Spirit becomes undeniable in someone else's life. I.e., the work of the Holy Spirit is being supernaturally manifested and observable.<sup>3</sup>

Think of His "**manifestations**" as the various and very different ways that God may choose to use someone when needed. For this specific outworking and operation of the Holy Spirit, notice in v8-10 the various ways He may choose to work through someone's gift or your ministry.

1Co 12:8 (NKJV) **for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.**

We have "**the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts (*charisma*) of healings, the working (*energema*) of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues**". That is quite a listing of how the Holy Spirit makes himself known to others. Please notice that none of these are called "**gifts**" (plural) except that of "**healings**" which is in the plural indicating many different kinds of healing and not just physical healing. So, when these four very varied and different operations of the Holy Spirit are put together, it is virtually unlimited as to how He may choose to work in someone's life. He has no limits, no boundaries.

Now, the next listing is found in [\*\*1 Corinthians 12:28-31\*\*](#) which says,

1Co 12:28 (NKJV) **And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. <sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.**

<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, 589

<sup>2</sup> Zodhiates, 1436.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, *phanerosis*, ep.

We must notice that every one of this listing appear to be talking specifically about “individuals” in the church – “**apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healings, helps, administration, varieties of tongues**”. Based on v29-30, it seems clear that each of these are talking about specific individuals within the church. However, notice that they are not specifically called “**gifts**”, except in v31 which says,

1Co 12:31 (NKJV) **But earnestly desire the best gifts (*charisma*). And yet I show you a more excellent way.**

Then the fourth and last listing is found in [Ephesians 4:11-12](#),

Eph 4:11 (NKJV) **And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,<sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,**

In this listing, there are only four individuals listed – “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers”. They are identical to the listing in [1 Corinthians 12:28-29](#), except that this listing includes “**evangelists**”. So, since we believe these individuals are previously called “**gifts**”, we will consider them “**gifts**” appointed by God to the church in order to equip the body of Christ for the work of ministry.

Now, what it is important to understand is that these are the only “gifts” listed in Scripture, and not everything we read should be considered as a gift. We have gifts for individuals in the church, and we have individuals that are gifts to the church. We will begin to look at all of these things in more depth in our next study.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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