

## 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.**

I want to briefly review what we have seen in our last two studies on spiritual gifts. In the first study, which was really a very foundational study, 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 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 and 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. In the second study, we identified that the spiritual gift(s) that God has given someone are not for them personally. We saw that every believer has at least one spiritual gift, that spiritual gifts are permanent, but their effectiveness can be withdrawn based on how the believer is actually living. We saw that spiritual gifts and the manifestations listed in [1 Corinthians 12](#) are not endowments that the believer can just summon whenever desired. We saw that a spiritual gift is not a talent or skill. Next, we identified the four distinct outworkings of the Holy Spirit in [1 Corinthians 12](#) – “**gifts, ministries, activities**” (or effects), and “**manifestations**”. Then, we looked at the four passages in the New Testament that contain information relative to spiritual gifts.

Now, this morning what we want to do is to begin to take the seven gifts specifically listed in [Romans 12:6-8](#) and see if we can identify them in such a way that it may help each of us here to discern which one or which ones we believe that we may personally have. We will only cover one today. The reason this is so important is very simple. First, if we are going to be effective in the use of our personal gift(s), then we must at least understand what it is. Secondly, if we are going to be able to live and function in harmony with other believers in the Body of Christ, then we must understand their spiritual giftings as well. Remember from our first study that when someone does not understand how God uses the differences that each of us have that it will only create tension, irritation, and frustration in our relationships with them. We will see the differences as more of a threat than a benefit, and the result is that our relationship with that person may develop a high level of tension in it. We also saw how this is so often the case in a marriage where opposites initially attract, but those differences later develop into grave areas of disagreement and frustration often leading to the break-up of a marriage. So, having an understanding of how both we and others see life through our spiritual gifts should give each of us a great appreciation for one another and for the divine differences that God has placed within us.

As we saw previously, the word for “**gift**” is “*charisma*” and it comes from the root word “*char*” which means joy. I.e., a spiritual gift is something that when it is used properly produces great joy in the

believer. It motivates them, it stimulates them, and it serves as a driving force in their life. I have actually heard these seven gifts listed as “motivational” gifts, or gifts that motivate the believer because they bring great joy and enthusiasm in their life when their gift is functioning properly for the benefit of others. The Holy Spirit has many, many ministries and ways in which He supernaturally works in the lives of believers. [John 16:7](#) indicates that He comforts us. [John 16:8-11](#) says that He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. [Romans 8:26-27](#) says that He intercedes for us. [Galatians 5:22-23](#) says that He produces His fruit in and through the believer. However, the passages that we are studying say that He gives us spiritual gifts and then empowers us to use them in such a way that Christ is glorified in our lives. There are so many different teachings on spiritual gifts, and so many ways of categorizing them, that it really confuses me at times. Many of these presentations I personally believe are a little strained, so the goal of what we are doing in this study is to try and understand the simplicity of how the subject of spiritual gifts is actually presented to us in the New Testament.

Now, it must be mentioned that there are many Christians who will have difficulty in discerning their spiritual gift(s). Many simply have unresolved areas of conflict and sin in their life. God may have been working on them for the longest period of time, but they keep refusing to let Him work in their life, and the result is that they will have very little discernment when it comes to identifying their spiritual gift. It should be readily observed that spiritual gifts are not even mentioned until [Romans 12](#) and [1 Corinthians 12](#). Why is that? It is because the moral conflicts had to first be resolved before gifts would even have any benefit in a believer’s life. A second hindrance is that of refusing to become involved in the lives of other people. As was stated in the last study, spiritual gifts are never for the individual, but specifically for ministry to other people. So, if for whatever reason we simply do not want to be involved in helping others, the probability that we will not be able to discern our spiritual gift is very high simply because we do not even have a heart to help others – which is one of the basic purposes of the gifts.

Now, in this study, we want to identify what we consider to be the various spiritual gifts that are listed in the New Testament. One of the conclusions that we came to in the last couple of studies on this subject is that the only actual spiritual gifts that can be legitimately identified are those which are specifically listed in the New Testament. It was seen that there are individual personal gift(s) that each believer has and that God gives individuals to the church as a gift. So, relative to spiritual gifts we have individual gifts and we have individuals with gifts and ministries. Now, [Romans 12:6-8](#) identifies seven specific individual gifts, and [1 Corinthians 12:9](#) identifies at least one more.

**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.**

**1Co 12:9 (NKJV) to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,**

Those eight “gifts” are the only ones identified in the New Testament, and it is my belief that each believer has at least one of those as their primary gift. Both [1 Peter 4:10](#) and [1 Corinthians 7:7](#) speak of each believer being given “a gift” or “his own gift”, and as we identified it, every believer has “at least” one motivational gift.

1Pe 4:10 (NKJV) **As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

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.**

## **PROPHECY**

The first gift identified is that of “**prophecy**” and it refers specifically to speaking forth the mind and counsel of God.<sup>1</sup> It is a noun and not a verb. What that means is that it is not a word of acting, or in simple terms, this gift does not refer to someone who is always prophesying and speaking forth the mind of God. The problem associated with understanding this particular gift is that so very often the commentaries seem to always associate it with the actual person, with the office of the “**prophet**” who is mentioned in [1 Corinthians 12](#), or in other places in the New Testament. Obviously, the New Testament prophet would have this particular gift, but there is no reason to assume that to be the case with this gift. It could be anyone – a housewife, a factory worker, a football player, a computer guru, or a doctor. These seven gifts are not listed as gifts that only “fit” certain types of individuals, but are divine endowments that create particular drives and motivations and yearnings within a believer. What drives the person with this gift is the honor of God, the honor of God’s Word, the honor of God’s name. It is imperative to them that His name be lifted up and not treated lightly. If you were with a person with this gifting in their life and you casually made a joke about “*the Man upstairs*”, they would most likely rebuke or correct you in some way.

What makes this particular gift so interesting is that we are all encouraged to desire this particular gift. [1 Corinthians 14:1](#) says,

1Co 14:1 (NKJV) **Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.**

I.e., each one of us should have or at least develop in our life a deep seated desire to speak forth the mind and counsel of God, and not be ashamed to do so. We should never be afraid to be bold with the truth. It is the truth that sets people free, and yet way too often we become timid and apprehensive about declaring the truth to other people. People with this gift are deeply needed in every portion of the body of Christ, in every local church. Why? It is because they are driven and motivated to speak the truth, and they become a great encouragement to others to do so as well. The stronger any believer genuinely exercises any gift or gifts they may have, the greater will always be the encouragement to other believers.

This gift drives the individual to proclaim the truth of God’s Word to other people in a very direct and outspoken way – not necessarily an offensive way, but simply a direct way. To the person living in sin, the person speaking directly to them will most likely seem offensive. The person with this gift will often times make people uncomfortable simply because they are very absolute and straightforward. Even though there are similarities with the Old Testament term “**prophet**”, this gift does not possess the idea of foretelling the future, but simply that of forthtelling, of speaking the truth of God in a persuasive way. The motivation that the individual has is to present God’s truth in such a way that other people are deeply convicted of unrighteous actions, speech, and attitudes that they may have in their life, and then driven by that conviction to be godly. The person with this gift feels compelled to express their gift verbally,

<sup>1</sup> Vine, *prophecy*, ep.

and sometimes it may come across as being somewhat confrontational. Even though the person with this gift may pray for you, their primary function in your life will be to speak directly to you about something that they believe is out of balance.

After sixteen years of travelling with Eddie, I personally believe that this is his primary motivational gift – among the many others that he evidently has. I will never forget one time in Zimbabwe when we were at this souvenir market place in Victoria Falls buying some souvenirs to bring home. One of them men that were with me and was serving as the dean of the extension there had told me to “bargain” with the sellers to get them down. He said “You should never pay more than half of what they ask you for the souvenir”. Like an idiot, being the real judicious American that I was, I set out to get the best deals possible. The crazy part about it all was that the souvenirs were already so ridiculously underpriced for the effort that went into making them that I felt bad for trying to bargain. However, I bargained with the vendors to get them down from an \$8 gift to \$5. Eddie saw what I was doing and came and simply looked at me and said, “These people are so poor, their families are starving, and they work their fingers to the bone to carve most of these things, so when they ask for \$8, I double it and give them \$16.” Then he just walked away and said no more. I was so convicted by my utter greed and selfishness, as if getting a good deal was a big deal. I went back and gave every one that I had bargained with more than they had originally asked for – and felt like it was the right thing to do. I was blessed by Eddie’s rebuke. That is just one example of how the person with this gift may address an issue that they believe is not honoring to Christ. Here I was witnessing to people to get saved, then teaching them to live out the Christian life, but my own life was consumed with thinking about money and how much I could save. I would have been better off to have been thinking about how much I could have given away. At that time, Zimbabwe had the highest inflation rate every recorded in human history.

What drives this person is that they simply hate that which is evil, and they feel spiritually bound to identify and address things that are wrong in other people’s lives. One of the ways to identify someone who truly has this gift is that they will always be dependent on Scriptural truth to validate what they are saying. What they are always looking for is for the individual to demonstrate a sincere level of meaningful inward conviction and contrition as evidence that they are truly receiving the truth into their lives. So, this person will always be very direct, very frank, and generally very persuasive in what and how they are communicating, and honestly, they will make someone who is living in sin to be quite uncomfortable. At the very pinnacle of what drives and motivates this individual is his concern for the name of God and for the reputation of God to never be demeaned in any way.

The problem that other believer’s will have with this individual is that they will see their directness and his frankness as being harsh. Someone like me who has the gift of mercy is always wanting this individual to just back off a little, to not appear to be abrasive in his relationship with other believers. The person with this gift is often seen as being judgmental and intolerant, and for that reason, it seems that many people do not want to have much of a personal relationship with the person with this gift. Because this individual feels so deeply about his convictions related to the reputation of God, it seems to others that he has absolutely no interest whatsoever in someone else’s opinion, and therefore they have no interest in having a conversation with him. However, if you may be really struggling with some area of sin in your life, this is probably the very person that you want to spend some time with simply because he will not pull any punches with you. He is driven to see God work deeply in your life, and so

he will be as open and upfront with you and let you know exactly what you need to do in order to truly repent of your sin(s). In a church setting, this is the individual who is always willing to expose sin, proclaim that which is righteous, and warn of judgement to come. If a pastor has this gift, it may be difficult for people to sit under his teaching ministry.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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