

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.** ⁸ **And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."** ⁹ **Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.** ¹⁰ **As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.** ¹¹ **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.**

Before we begin this morning, I want to make a clarification about the various spiritual gifts that we are studying. Once again, this is much more of a topical study that is being developed around this passage as opposed to an exegetical study. We will do the exegetical study as we progress through the study, but looking at the individual spiritual gifts that someone may have is not really the thrust of this passage. The overall purpose of the passage is to encourage us to use what God has gifted us with – “**minister it to one another as good stewards**”(v10) and to do so “**with the ability which God supplies**” (v11). That is the real encouragement to be drawn from v10-11 – and not an actual teaching on the various spiritual gifts that we have identified. Every gift that we will address is absolutely essential and vital to the functioning of the Body of Christ, and specifically a local church. Every gift is important, and it only becomes less important if we choose not to use it or use it in the way that God intended for it to be used.

I do want to make one adjustment in the number of specific gifts that I have identified. So far, I have identified eight (8) specific gifts that come directly from [Romans 12:6-8](#) and [1 Corinthians 12:9](#). However, after examining the listings further, I think that I am inclined to include those items listed in [1 Corinthians 12:28](#) 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.**

It appears that the word “**gifts**” in this verse is not referring to just the “**gifts of healings**”, but is also referring to “**helps, administrations**” and “**varieties of tongues**”. So, that would give us eleven (11) specific individual gifts, not including the individuals that this verse and [Ephesians 4](#) describe as gifts to the church – apostles, prophets, pastor / teachers, and evangelists.

Now, in the way I am approaching this passage, I do not want to lose the actual focus of these verses – which is to encourage us to use our gifts wisely and in such a way that God is glorified. It is critical to appreciate that spiritual gifts are not on auto pilot so that they work whenever we want them to work – not at all. In fact, our personal usefulness in God’s kingdom is never solely a by-product of our spiritual giftings, but it is much more character driven than gift driven. It has always been interesting to me personally that within the qualifications of elders in [1 Timothy 3](#) that of all of the qualifying characteristics listed, only one is skill related – the gift of teaching. Everything else is a character related attribute. The same is true for the spiritual qualifications of a deacon – none of which are gifting related.

Now, one element that I have not yet addressed, but one that is very important to understand, is that every believer has different life factors that will impact how their particular gift of gifts will actually be

administered to others. We all have different personalities, temperaments, aptitudes, backgrounds, ages, genders, and often come from completely different cultures that will have a great impact on how we actually administer our gift to other people. This discussion came up at lunch last Sunday concerning the gift of prophecy that we studied. The gift of prophecy is a gifting that refers specifically to someone speaking forth the mind and counsel of God. The problem with just the title of this gift is that once it is mentioned that people automatically associate it with an actual prophet, a particular kind of person. If and when that happens, it simply eliminates the vast majority of people from having this gifting. However, that should not be the case. Like all of the spiritual gifts listed, this is simply a spiritual motivation, a kind of internal driving force that stimulates and provokes and arouses the person who has this gift. They simply are inclined to be straightforward, frank, and forthright with someone. They will be both very direct and very honest. What they communicate will not be complicated or nebulous.

So, the point is that anyone here can have this gifting, not just a “**prophet**”. It is not a gifting that is limited to someone standing behind a pulpit or standing on the street corner waving their Bible and calling on them to repent. A housewife can have this gift, a banker can have this gift, a school teacher can have this gift – anyone can have this gift, and within that range of people God will use their particular personality and temperament as a unique way of administering and exercising the gift towards others. If you remember, I stated that if you understood this gift to refer to a particular kind of “person”, then it would cause you to misunderstand it. The gift of prophecy is not describing a person, but the supernatural gifting that anyone could have for rightfully and clearly speaking forth the mind of God to other people. Mrs. Florence could have this gifting, but because of her personality and temperament, when she exercises her gift it will most likely be very gentle, very quiet, very gracious – but she will not compromise the truth and she will not be afraid to speak the mind of God on a particular issue that arises. So, please understand that the believer’s personality and temperament and disposition will generally have a major part to play in how any gift will be administered to others.

Now the next gift that we want to study from [Romans 12:6-8](#) is the gift of “**ministry**”. The various translations are pretty equally divided between calling it either “**ministry**” or “**servicing**”. It is the Greek word “*diakonia*” from where we get our English word “**deacon**” and in the context of spiritual gifts it refers specifically to the person who displays compassionate love towards those in need.¹ The basic meaning of the word “*diakonia*” is to wait on tables and refers to someone who willingly wants to help others so that they will be benefited by their efforts, and they want to do it without recognition. [Galatians 5:13](#) expresses some of it this way,

Gal 5:13 (NKJV) For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

This gift refers to often performing what we might consider to be menial and mundane activities that may greatly benefit other people.² The person who has this gifting is someone who sees a need and is willing to go meet that need, but he never wants to receive the credit for what he or she has done. They never want to be in the spotlight. They simply receive great joy and personal blessing by being able to help meet someone else’s need. They actually enjoy doing very manual tasks like cleaning up after the

¹ Zodhiates, 429.

² Precept, *Romans 12:7*, ep.

meal, or cutting the grass, or fixing what needs to be fixed. The actual root of all effective ministry is servanthood, having a servant's heart. A servant is the kind of person that you can put your trust in, someone you can have confidence in.³ The person who has this gift is driven to demonstrate his love for God and his love for others by meeting the very practical needs that others may have, but simply cannot meet. He is more than willing to sacrifice both his time and his energy to complete a particular task, and he wants his service to be something tangible, something he can do, something he can accomplish. He is not someone who is leading or directing or teaching or discussing or even organizing. He simply wants to do what needs to be done, and can become easily frustrated if he gets delayed in helping. He is willing to always be available to help and rarely says no when someone asks him to help.⁴

Some of the other characteristics of this gifting is that this person has the motivation to meet someone's needs as quickly as possible, even if it may impose an inconvenience to them. They have the physical stamina and drive to help meet a need without growing weary in the process. I would say that they enjoy short term goals much more than long term goals simply because they want to get things done and not have to wait to complete things. One of the negative areas associated with this gift is that the person may often neglect his personal needs and family needs to help someone else. For obvious reasons, this is a very necessary gift in any local church simply because there are a lot of various tasks that need to be accomplished all the time. Every church needs an army of people with this gift simply because of the many needs that the local church has. Just the physical maintenance alone of a facility is very time consuming and demands a lot of time.

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³ Precept, *Romans 12:7*, ep.

⁴ Basic, *Serving*, ep.