

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.**

As we have developed this particular teaching on the area of spiritual gifts, there are several key areas that we have seen. One important area was that the spiritual gift(s) that God has given to us are never for us, but they are always for the edification of other people, and especially believers in the body of Christ. As Peter states here in v10, we are to minister the gifts that God has given us to us **“to one another”**. He goes on to say that our spiritual gifts are a stewardship (**“as good stewards”**) that when taken seriously opens us up to what he calls **“the manifold grace of God”**. Think of it this way. The more that you are effectively using the spiritual gifts that God has both spiritually implanted and developed in you, the more of His grace you will mostly likely experience on your life. We have seen that 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 and compelling spiritual force in their life.

We have seen that every believer has at least one spiritual gift ([1 Peter 4:10](#) and [1 Corinthians 7:7](#)). We have seen that spiritual gifts are permanent, but that their effectiveness and usefulness can be withdrawn based on how the believer is actually living. We have seen that the spiritual gifts of [Romans 12:6-8](#) and the manifestations listed in [1 Corinthians 12](#) are not spiritual endowments that the believer can just summon whenever desired. Character and integrity are what drive their usefulness. We have seen that a spiritual gift is not a talent or skill, but is a unique spiritual endowment designed to help build up the body of Christ and bring glory to God. Next, we identified the four distinct outworkings of the Holy Spirit in [1 Corinthians 12](#) – **“gifts, ministries, activities”** (or effects), and **“manifestations”** and examined the differences between each one of those biblical categories.

Now, this morning, I want to mention just a few additional overarching comments as we begin. It is important to understand that the spiritual gift(s) that God has given to us have been provided for a specific purpose. Once again, they are not for us personally. A believer does not have the gift of mercy so that he or she can be merciful to themselves, but so that they can be merciful to others. However, I want us to consider how this purpose actually works itself out within the local body of Christ. When another brother or sister sees us, they will normally tend to evaluate us on the basis of their strong points and judge on the basis of their weak points. One of their strong points will be the primary and motivational gift(s) that God has given to them and that is operating in their life. For instance, if someone has the gift of exhortation, then they are going to be sensitive to whether you do or do not encourage people. Based on what they see, they will be concerned about helping you develop becoming more of an encourager than maybe you are now. If they have the gift of mercy, they will be concerned about helping you to be

more sensitive to other people's needs that you may be ignoring. If their spiritual gift is functioning properly, they will have a strong desire to help you achieve spiritually in areas in which they are strong.

Now, where this helps us is in the area of our personal blindspots – which we all have. If you knew that you were not competent in a particular spiritual area of your life and that you experienced different levels of frustration with people (which we all do at times), then you would want to go and talk with someone who you knew was strong in that area of their life, who was gifted in that area of their life. They have wisdom that you need. It is very interesting to me that prior to Paul providing the listing of spiritual gifts in [Romans 12:6-8](#) that he first tells his readers this in [Romans 12:3-5](#),

Ro 12:3 (NKJV) **For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ⁴ For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.**

I simply am not to think more highly of myself than I should. The Greek word for not “**to think more highly**” is “*hyperphroneo*” and it means to not be vain or arrogant concerning ourselves.¹ It refers to not thinking ourselves to be of great importance.² I am personally convinced that God does not need me, nor does He need any ministry in which I may be involved, or for me to use any gifting that He may have given to me. If I drop off of the spiritual planet, His work will continue and not be stopped. Contextually, it is the idea that we all need to have a level of humility in allowing others to help strengthen us in areas in which we are personally weak. It helps us personally and the other person receives great joy in being able to do so. Everyone benefits.

As a believer, we cannot escape the spiritual responsibilities that God has given to us within the body of Christ, and one area where that reality is concerned is that we will always be the most effective when we are functioning in the body of Christ the way that God designed us to function. That proper functioning is directly related to our spiritual giftings that the Holy Spirit has supernaturally given to us, as well as those gifts that He has been developing within us. Listen to how [Colossians 3:23](#) says all of this,

Col 3:23 (NKJV) **And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,**

I.e., whatever we do, God wants us to put our whole heart and soul into it. One way of doing that is by visualizing how meaningful the spiritual gifts that God has given to us can be in someone else's life. We literally are to become a spiritual channel through which God can express His love and His grace to other people – whether believers or unbelievers. What an amazing privilege. I have been saying it for the last four weeks that if you do not even know what your spiritual giftings are, then in all likelihood you are not being used for God's glory as you could be. He gave you supernatural spiritual endowments that He wants to use in your life.

One thing that Paul clearly tells us in [Romans 12:6-8](#) is that we need to concentrate on whatever our gift or gifts may be. If you are spiritually gifted in one or more areas of your life (and you should be), then that will be the place where you can make the greatest contributions and have the greatest impacts on

¹ Strong, *hyperphroneo*, #5252, ep.

² Zodhiates, 1417.

the Body of Christ. Because we should know what our strengths and weakness are, it should make it much easier for us to delegate responsibilities to other people who are spiritually and better equipped for completing a certain kind of task or ministry. For instance, if you are not good in organizing and you know it, then give that responsibility to someone else who is actually gifted for that with the gift of leading. We dealt with all of this in our first study, but when we can see life from someone else's spiritual gifting, it will greatly help us to both anticipate and understand how and why they may respond to something in a certain way.

Now, the third gift listed in [Romans 12:6-8](#) is that of “**teaching**”. Once again, we do not want to confuse this motivational personal gift with the individual whom God has specifically given the “ministry” of teaching in the local church. The believer's personal gift(s) and the gifted individuals given to the church (“**apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors / teachers**”) are two distinctly different categories of gifts. Any believer can have the gift of teaching, so it is not specifically limited to someone who teaches behind a pulpit. If you want to know if you actually have this gift, then the best question that you can ask yourself is whether or not you enjoy studying, enjoy doing research. If you do not really have much desire to study, then you can be assured that you do not have this gift – either as a personal gift or as a ministry gift. The Greek word for “**teaching**” is “*didasko*” and it refers to someone who specifically is gifted to provide instruction to others to help provide benefit for their life, but it is NOT limited to just pastor/teachers or elders. “*Didasko*” means to provide instruction in either a formal or an informal setting with the aim of providing understanding for others.³ For someone like me as a pastor, it refers specifically to the idea of systematically teaching and instructing, but that particular kind of systematic teaching would be considered more as the “ministry of teaching” rather than the gift of teaching. It is important to make that distinction because if that distinction is not made, then people will think that unless they have some kind of position in a church or seminary and stand behind a podium every week that they could not have this gift. Once again, as with all of the gifts, anyone can have this gift – a housewife, a mechanic, a grocery clerk - anyone.

At the heart of this gift is the individual's deep rooted desire to know the truth, to understand the details of a text, and then the desire to be able to communicate its purpose and significance to others so they can grow spiritually. For instance, in [Titus 2:3-5](#) it says this about “**older women**” (plural) in the church,

Tit 2:3 (NKJV) the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- ⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

I just loved when Mrs. Florence taught the women in Sunday School. Why? It was because her life had so much to offer the younger women. Her very life was teaching them, encouraging them, and serving as a benchmark for godliness whereby they could measure their own life. She was modelling Christlikeness to every woman she taught.

³ Precept, *Romans 12:7*, ep.

The primary need for the personal gift and the ministry of teaching as it occurs within the local church is for “the **equipping of the saints for the work of ministry**”, and secondly “**for the edifying of the body of Christ**” – “**equipping**” and “**edifying**”. [Ephesians 4:11-14](#) says,

Eph 4:11 (NKJV) **And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,**

One of the greatest benefits of learning under a good Bible teacher is that it should help the believer to not be “**tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting**”. There is probably more bad teaching today than there is solid biblical teaching. Many pastors have been completely distracted by “ministry”, and in the process have actually forsaken their primary ministry of “**equipping**” and “**edifying**”. It is only my opinion, but I do not personally believe that anyone can grow spiritually apart from strong biblical teaching in their life – whether it be learned individually in their private life and/or corporately in the local church. At a personal level, I do not know anyone, not one person, who I consider to be a strong Christian that does not have a hunger for God’s Word. I have a great friend who lives out of town and who was in Aiken this past week and asked me to have lunch with him. He goes to a solid church in Charlotte and sits under an excellent Bible teacher named David Chadwick. David is a strong evangelical, conservative, reformed pastor who is an excellent Bible teacher, and my friend has grown immensely under David’s ministry. It is my opinion that I doubt that his spiritual growth would have been as great as it has been if in fact he had not been able to sit weekly under this man’s teaching ministry for him.

Because this is a spiritual gift, and not the natural gift of teaching that anyone could have, whenever this gift is used, it is to be used for the benefit of others and specifically for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. You could be a Sunday School teacher, an AWANA teacher, someone who teaches a lady’s Bible study, or even someone who does counselling. Anyone involved in a venue of teaching in the local church could possibly have this gift. However, it is important to understand that anyone who may teach in the local assembly in one of their various programs may not actually have this gift, but that does not disqualify them from actually teaching any more than not having the gift of mercy would disqualify them from being merciful to people. What would disqualify them from teaching would be not studying and not being prepared. That is what ultimately disqualifies the individual. This is one of the unique differences between the gift of prophecy that we studied and the gift of teaching. The teacher is fixed on research, but the prophet does not have that same drive. He is more concerned about how the truth is defended and how it is delivered. He wants it to be direct and straightforward. Because teaching is a specific spiritual gift, it should **not** be associated with a desire to teach something else – like math, piano, or how to weld. That is certainly not a bad thing, but it is not the same as this gift. Once again, all of the spiritual gifts that are listed are never for the individual, but for the edification of other people, for the building up of God’s church, and are always to be used for His glory.

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