

Spiritual Gifts

What Are Yours?

Ephesians 4:11-16

August 05, 2023

Today we are talking about Spiritual Gifts.

Clear back in the book of Exodus, God told Moses that He was going to gift certain men in Israel with the gift of craftsmanship for the construction of the Tabernacle:

- **Exodus 31:1-5** - Then the LORD said to Moses, ² "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, ³ and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts -- ⁴ to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, ⁵ to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.

In the New Testament, Paul reminded the church in Corinth that it is God who bestows Spiritual Gifts on the church, **"for the common good."**

- **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** - There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

Spiritual Gifts is also a Fundamental Belief of the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

- **Fundamental Belief #17 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church states:** *"God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions."* (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:9-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)

Spiritual Gifts are a biblical concept and a Fundamental Belief of our church, and yet most of us don't know what our Spiritual Gifts are – to the peril of the body.

So, why has this absolutely vital area of the Christian experience been neglected?

2 reasons:

We are not quite sure what Spiritual Gifts are.

- **Are they the Fruit of the Spirit?**

No.

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

The **Fruit of the Spirit** are the by-product of a daily – transformational walk with Jesus. They represent what every Christian **BECOMES**.

Spiritual Gifts are the things Christians **DO**. They are special abilities that God has gifted to every believer specifically for the building up of the body of Christ.

Both **"the Fruit of the Spirit"** and **"Spiritual Gifts"** are vital in a Christian life, but they are not the same.

- **Are they Natural Talents?**

No.

Every person on planet earth has been gifted with Natural Talents and abilities – playing an instrument, athletics, etc. – regardless of if they know or even acknowledge God.

Spiritual Gifts are **ONLY** given to believers at conversion.

A Natural Talent may be used to bless the church body, but Natural Talent and Spiritual Gifts are not the same.

- **Are they positions in the church, i.e., Elder, Deacon, Church Secretary, Greeter, etc.?**

No.

Church Positions are generally determined by a church nominating committee, who are tasked with asking, cajoling or guiltning members into filling positions for a set period of time – usually 1-2 years. The only criteria to fill a church position is often just, ***“Is he/she a member in good standing?”*** Rarely does the Nominating Committee spend time determining if the person would actually be a good fit for the position they are being asked to fill.

A **Spiritual Gifts** based model places people where they will serve best. When that happens, they thrive, ministries thrive and the church body thrives.

Don't mistake ***“Positions”*** for ***“Spiritual Gifts”*** – they are not the same.

We have bought into the dangerous idea that a pastor should do it all, “because that's what he gets paid to do.”

I say dangerous because no pastor – I mean **NO PASTOR** – has been gifted with all the Spiritual Gifts.

Having unrealistic expectations regarding your pastor, his ministry and his time will eventually lead to pastoral burn out.

The ***“Let the Pastor do it all”*** model simply does not work and it creates a lazy, self-indulgent and self-centered congregation. The church becomes filled with ***“Consumer”*** Christians, whose biggest concern is ***“Are my needs being met?”*** rather than ***“How can I be of service?”***

Romans 12:4-6 - For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:

This word picture helps us understand how Spiritual Gifts fit within the body of Christ.

Just like every part of a human body is important, so it is with Spiritual Gifts.

The church body was designed and instituted by God.

Jesus is the head of the body and as a member of God's body you have something to contribute.

God has uniquely gifted you to fulfill a role for the building up of His people.

When each member uses his/her Spiritual Gifts, the body functions as it should.

Every Spiritual Gift is indispensable to the success and growth – the building up – of a healthy church.

1 Peter 2:9 - But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

This verse applies to **ALL** who call themselves Christ followers.

Therefore, we must live lives worthy of that calling and part of that calling is to work within the body of Christ, serve within the body of Christ and use whatever gift(s) we have received to build up the body of Christ.

When every person within the body, fulfills their role, the body is healthy. It grows and flourishes and fulfills its God given mandate to, ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*** – Matthew 28: 19-20