

Concerning Spiritual Gifts, Part 3

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11

Code: 1850

We've been discussing 1 Corinthians chapter 12. And I feel like a guy trying to run the 100-yard dash in sand. I can't seem to get going. Usually I take the liberties of preaching, as opposed to teaching. A little more directed at application than information. But as we've done this series I find myself pressed into the mode of wanting to teach you explicitly what the Scripture is saying. And that's very important, I think, for us, in this subject.

Here is a subject where there is a lot of experience going on, a lot of emotion, a lot of variation. And it is my commitment that we have to come back to the Word of God and look closely verse-by-verse, word-by-word, to define this entire dimension of Spiritual gifts. It's a very vital dimension. And so I want you to notice that we'll be looking, this morning, at verses 4 through 7 and then jumping to verse 11. And we'll be discussing the second point in our outline: the source of Spiritual gifts. And that's a very broad term for what will become some very specific things.

Now let me start out in the widest possible circle, so that I can kind of encompass everybody in this. We as Christians believe in the God. We believe that God manifests His personality in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Now those three persons work in total agreement and, yet, God diversifies Himself in that sense. He is one, and yet three. Now of those three persons we want to concentrate, for just a minute, on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, one of the persons of the Godhead.

What is it that the Holy Spirit does? Well basically, looking at it from the New Testament standpoint, the Holy Spirit ministers to two categories of people, the only two categories there are: the saints and the aint's; the people who know God and the people who don't. Now the Holy Spirit ministers to those two categories of people: to the people who do not know Christ, who do not know God, who are not, what we would term, "born again," the Spirit of God is involved in convicting them. John 16, "The Spirit of God convicts them of sin, of righteousness and judgment." His ministry is to bring them to God.

In terms of believers, his ministry becomes much more complex. Once we have come to know Jesus Christ, once we have received Him as Savior, been born into the family of God, the Spirit of God then begins to work, in multiplicities of way, in our lives.

Now let me just draw two categories out of that. In what two categories does the Spirit of God minister to believers? One, individually. Two, collectively. What does the Spirit of God do for you as a single individual? We could go through a list of many things. Let me review some of them. First of all, the Holy Spirit regenerates. It is the Spirit of God that caused you to be saved or brought you into the family. Jesus said in John 3, "You must be born of the Spirit." It is the Spirit of God that works the transformation of salvation, and it is the Spirit of God that, having worked that saving work, then continues to transform you...2 Corinthians 3:18...into the image of Jesus Christ." So His is a regenerating, transforming work on an individual. What else does He do? He assures us.

First John 4:13, John says that it's, "By this we know that we dwell in Him, because He has given us His Spirit." "The Spirit of God witnesses with our Spirit...Romans 8...that we are the children of God." So there is an assuring ministry that the Spirit of God gives us. And when you see someone who doesn't whether they know God, who has no confidence of whether they're redeemed, who has no security about the future, it may be that they are, in fact, not a Christian and that's why they have no testimony, as such, in their heart, from the Holy Spirit.

Third thing, the Spirit of God adopts us as sons. He gives us a sense, not only a reality of sonship, but a sense of it. In Galatians chapter 4 verses 5 and 6, it says, "The Spirit comes in our hearts and causes us to cry...what?...Abba Father," which is a term for daddy or a term of endearment. So the Spirit of God individually gives me a sense of being a son or a child of God.

Fourthly, the Spirit of God seals us. You know when a king sends out a letter or a decree in ancient times he'd pour some wax on it, takes his seal that says king on it, or whatever, and stamps the wax. He stamps the wax and when anybody gets that, they say, "That's official." And you and I have been given a stamp by God the Father and it's the Holy Spirit. And by giving us the Spirit He puts His stamp of authentication on us and says, "This is a bona fide child that belongs to Me." The Spirit of God does that. The Spirit of God also indwells us. First Corinthians 12:13, "We all possess the same Spirit." Romans 8:9, "If any man have not the Holy Spirit, he's none of His." So he indwells and lives in us. He frees us.

We talk about liberation today, and I think that's a very important subject. I just finished a book...it came out a week ago...You haven't seen it yet, but you will soon...called, Liberated for Life. And it talks about the Book of Galatians. And one of the things Galatians talks about is the freedom that comes in Christ. In 2 Corinthians 3:17 it says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." Freedom from law, freedom from having to please God by self effort, freedom from the works righteousness system that bind us, freedom from sin, and flesh, and Satan, and all of those things. He free us, He empowers us. Acts 1:8 talks about after you receive the Spirit you receive power. He makes us Holy. First Thessalonians 4, "He's given us His Spirit to make us Holy," Paul says, in effect there. He reveals truth to us. "I hath not seen." Right? That's man's looking for truth. "Ear hath not heard," that's empiricism. "Neither has it entered into the heart of man," that's philosophy. "Neither

empirical experience or philosophy." Neither of those things can show us the things that God has prepared for them that love Him. In other words, man, by empiricism and philosophy can't discover God.

But the next verse says, "But he has revealed them unto us by His...what?...Spirit." So the Spirit of God in us teaches us, reveals truth to us. The Spirit of God guides us. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," Romans 8 says. So there is this manifold ministry of the Spirit. It tells us in Romans 8 that the Spirit of God prays for us with intercessions that cannot be uttered humanely. Now all of that the Spirit of God does for you as an individual. Now you realize how important it is to have Him. Don't you? I mean, you'd be limping badly, spiritually, without the Holy Spirit. I'd be impossible. And God give us this fullness of the Spirit.

Now what about the second category? "I see, you say, what the Spirit does for me as an individual. What is he doing for the church collectively? What is the Spirit of God doing in a collective sense, in the midst of His church? Well he indwells His total church. Right? Ephesians 2, it says, "The church is the habitation of the Spirit." So He's moving in His church. Doing what? I'll give you several thoughts quickly. One, He creates fellowship. The Spirit of God is a catalyst that stimulates interaction and fellowship. Second Corinthians 13 talks about the fellowship of the Spirit. The Spirit of God generates fellowship. For example, in Acts 2, "The Spirit of God comes, descends." Right? People begin to speak in amazing languages. "Peter preaches, 3,000 people are saved...the first thing it says...and they continued in the apostles doctrine and...what?...fellowship." Spirit of God came and created fellowship. And that's what we enjoy. That's the love we enjoy.

Second thing, He assists us in worship. I believe that when we come together like this the Spirit of God somehow pulls all the pieces of your life...and everybody's different...and He pulls it all together in a collective expression of worship. For example, when John goes to worship in Revelation 1 and in Revelation 4 he says, "I was in the Spirit." There's a cinch that the Spirit works in the act of worship. When believers come before God the Spirit somehow draws out of us that worship toward God. So He creates fellowship, He assists worship, He inspires Scripture whenever I open the Bible and teach it to you, whenever I teach you the truths that are in the Word of God, whenever we talk about them, whenever you read them. "These things did not come by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by...what?...the Holy Spirit." So he teaches us from Scripture. He guides us. The Holy Spirit, in Acts 13, took the collective body of people at Antioch and he said, "Pick out Paul and Barnabus and send them off as missionaries." And so the Spirit of God directs the corporate life of the church.

One other thing the Spirit of God does is to generate unity in the church. Remember in Ephesians 4:3, it says, "We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit." The Spirit of God generates unity, He works for unity. Now let me say something important, we do not need to create unity in the church. You say, "Well we have to get unity in our church. We have to create...no, you do not need to create

unity; you just need to stop creating division. Unity already is there in the common life.

Take our house, for an example. We have a basic corporate unity in our house. My wife and I and our four kids, we are one. We are one genetically. We're all out of the same basic, common life stem. We share together a common life. My wife and I have become one in our children. Our children are one with us. And so there is a genetic unity. But there's more than that. In our family, for example, there's an intellectual unity. That doesn't mean we're all the same intelligent. It simply means we all talk about the same things, so we all sort of come up together on the same intellectual plane. And you'll find my kids will make value judgments on things based upon what I think. It's terrific. Wouldn't have it any other way. It keeps them, you know, where they ought to be. And your kids will do the same thing. But, you see, there's also an emotional thing. I can watch our family, and all of us pretty well respond emotionally the same way, because we've learned how to work together on those. There is a volitional unity, that is, we would make similar choices.

Now that's true in the church, as it is in the family. We were at the family camp and Pastor Swendall, who really does a lot of teaching on the family, and everything...and you've got to watch those kinds of people, because as soon as you get around they start analyzing you. See, we were having dinner with him last night, he's checking out my kids, you know? And I'm saying, "Lord, help the kids to, you know...got to have a two hour pre-dinner session, you know, we're gonna do this right kids. Don't throw the potatoes and all that." He's analyzing, you know, and asking these loaded questions to Mark. And it was a good time, but he came up with an interesting comment, he said, "You know, of all the families I've ever met I think your family looks more alike than any I've ever seen." We look alike. Well, you know, that...people say as they live together they begin to look like each other. Maybe it's because they've made faces back and forth so long that they begin to adapt each other's features. I don't know.

But, anyway, there is a commonness. Well it's just there...it's just there. And the Spirit of God has created that commonness in the church. It isn't up to us to create it. It's up to us to stop interrupting. So you don't need to run around and create unity, you just need to stop creating division. You understand? And the unity will take care of itself. That's a lot easier.

Now how does the Holy Spirit get at this? Well the way the Holy Spirit stimulates that unity, the way He generates that unity, is by giving everybody a mutual ministry to everybody else, so that we begin to talk, so that we begin to think together, so that we begin to feel together, so that we begin to choose together, so that we go out and actually have recreation together, so that we begin to socialize together. All of these dimensions of interaction, you see, create a basic unity generated from our common eternal life. Now it's critical, Beloved, it is critical...and I want you to pay attention to me, and think about this as I talk to you now...it's critical that we minister to each other because that is the guarding of unity. As soon as somebody closes up and doesn't interact or share or minister, then it becomes an isolation point and there's a gap, you see, between here and here. But

when the flow is going there's going to be that unity. There's going to be the keeping of that unity of the Spirit.

Now listen, the way in which we minister to each other is via our spiritual gifts. Okay? The way in which we minister is through our spiritual gift. You say, "What is a spiritual gift?" A spiritual gift is a God given capacity through which the Holy Spirit supernaturally ministers to the body. For example, I have a spiritual gift of teaching or preaching. I get up here and I minister to you as the Spirit of God energizes me. This is something I can't do humanely. This is something the Spirit of God must do through me. Your spiritual gift is not cooking. It's terrific, but there are good cooks who don't even know God. That's a human ability. Your spiritual gift is not being a violin virtuoso. That's terrific, but that is not a spiritual gift. That is not something energized by the Holy Spirit. That's something that people can whether they have the Holy Spirit or not. Your spiritual gift is a unique capacity to minister to the body of Christ through a vehicle or a channel, by which the Spirit of God supernaturally touches the lives of other people. Now that is critical.

The Spirit of God has created corporate unity. To keep that unity we have to mutually minister. And there is the interchange of thoughts, and feelings, and choices, and all of those dimensions of life. That's necessary. Now that's why people...that's why Paul is so upset in 1 Corinthians 12. And in verse 1 he says, "Concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." Why? Because if they don't function then there is not going to be that beautiful unity that is necessary, as we saw a few weeks ago, so that the church would be a corporate manifestation of whom?...Christ. It's got to happen. There's got to be that ministry of spiritual gifts going on. There has to be that mutuality. And he says...look at verse 8...and we're not going to study this section till next time...we'll begin it...but he says, "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith; to another gifts of healing; to another working of miracles; to another prophecy; another discerning of spirits; another various kinds of languages; to another interpreting languages." And you go over to verse 28, "And he set some apostles and prophets, third teacher, and after that miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of languages." You can go to Romans 12; you'll find another list of them.

Now these things are given to the individual believer as capacities through which the Spirit of God can minister to His church. They are very, very important. Now I don't want to ask you how many of you know where your spiritual gifts are or what they are. I want you to think about that. And I don't want to ask you publicly to respond by telling me whether you're using them or not. I just want you to think about that. Because that's not something between you and me, that's something between you and whom? And God. You're a steward. Do you know what a steward is? You don't own your spiritual gift, you manage it for Him, and it's either a case of good management or mismanagement. But if there's going to be that unity maintained, there's going to be that ministry of gift that's absolutely necessary.

But in Corinth, what have we learned? They had corrupted the whole system. They were not content with the gifts that God had given them. They wanted different ones, and they were perverting the ones they had. It became points of pride. "Well what gift do you have?" "Well I only have the gift of helps." "Sorry, too bad. I have the gift of prophecy." See? And the eye was lording it over the foot and the foot was saying, "I want to be an eye." See? "I don't like being a foot. I want to be one of the more cumlee parts." And it was becoming problematic. Now they were a richly endowed church, but they had perverted everything.

Now notice this, they lived as art...I'm going to review for just a moment...they lived in a society that was engulfed in the mystery religions. Remember? And the society expressed the highest level of religion as ecstasy. In other words, the more frenzied you were, the more you were in contact with the Gods. I think when you really flipped out you were really cranking it on a religious level. You had connected up with God when you had gotten hysterical. Now that came into the church. And so they took the gift of languages, the ability to speak in the language you had not learned, and they made that the best gift. In the Greek culture this kind of ecstatic confusion was a sign of their religion. When they got together in their festivals they went into a frenzy, orgies resulted and wild, bizarre things, demonic possession, as we studied in some detail the last couple of weeks.

But take, for example, a great intellectual like Plato. Now Plato is known as an intellectual. Listen to what he said, and I quote...Plato in the Phaedrus...this is what he said. "It is through mania, which is ecstasy due to divine possession, that the greatest blessings come to us," end quote. Plato, the intellectual, says, "It is through mania that the greatest blessings come to us." That's incredible. The more hysterical you are, the more spiritual blessing you're going to get." Now if you think that was an isolated statement, I'll draw you to another.

In Timaeus, Plato also said this, quote, "No one...listen to this...no one in possession of his rational mind...that's the Greek word nous...no one in possession of his rational mind has reached divine and true exaltation. You can't ever touch deity until you're out of your mind." That's Plato. The more non rational, the more it was a mark of divine inspiration. You might put it this way: the more pneuma, the less nous. The more you are out of the Spirit, the more you are really flying, the less of your mind was in it, the more you were touching God.

Michael Green puts it this way, and this is helpful, the Corinthians would have rated in ascending order of value: the teacher, the prophet, and the man who spoke in languages. That's how the Corinthians would have rated it. Why? Number one, they would have put the teacher on the bottom level because he speaks relying on the rational. The next in the ascending scale would have been the prophet because he speaks under divine inspiration intelligibly. But the highest level would have been the one with ecstatic speech because he spoke inspiration unintelligibly. And that was the farthest out, and so he was connecting up with the divine mind. Well that's exactly what was going on

in Corinth.

Let me read you a further statement by Michael Green that'll help you to see this. Michael Green says, "To suppose that the more a man loses self possession, the more inspired by God he must be, is to deny God His place in the rational. To suppose the non-personal eruptions of ruock, or spirit, are the mark of inspiration, is to forget that it is the Spirit of Jesus with whom we are dealing." Implied there is that Jesus is not irrational. "Any such depersonalization of the Spirit is also disparagement of the ethical, as if it doesn't matter how you behave, so long as you have this mark of divine inspiration on you." If I may interject something, that's why somebody could get up, and in a wild frenzy, say, "Jesus is accursed," and they would say, "Oh, it's of the Holy Spirit." Why? Because they equated the experience with the Holy Spirit rather than the content. And that's what Paul corrects in verses 2 and 3, as we saw last week. "Further, he says, if this particular gift is prized above all others, it easily leads to a cult of experience, to excessive individualism, jealousy in those who have not the gift, pride in those who have it, and in the midst of all of this, Christian love can disappear," end quote. And may I add, so will Christian unity.

So they had corrupted the gifts. So Paul has to write chapter 12, chapter 13, chapter 14 of this letter, to straighten them out on the proper information and use of gifts.

Now let's go to our second point in the outline...hurriedly, in the time that we have...and recall that we looked last time at point number one, the importance of spiritual gifts. We saw that they are vitally important. And they are not to be confused with the work of demons, or the work of Satan, or the work of some frenzied pagans. Not to be confused with that at all, but that they are divine marks of the Holy Spirit. Lucian, in the Dialogues of the Dead, said...describing their ecstatic activity...a sort of God or demon carries us away, wherever and whenever he wills, and it is impossible to resist him," end quote. Now that was their pagan-kind of religion. But what does Paul say in verse 2, "You used to be carried away." Not anymore. You've got to know the difference between the true and the counterfeit.

Now having discussed the importance, he secondly moves to the source. Let's look at verses 4 to 7, the source of spiritual gifts, and this is very, very important. Stay with me now because we're going to reason through this, and you're going to have to make the application because we don't have time. I just want you to understand the passage. Verse 4, "There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit. There are differences of administrations but the same Lord. There are diversities of operations but it is the same God who works all in all." Stop right there. Now you will see there a contrast. The same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God. But, on the other hand, there are varieties...there are varieties...there are varieties. One God, one Christ, one Spirit, which means He has how many wills? One will. He has built into His church unity. But that unity will only happen, it'll only be maintained, when there is a diversity of ministry. Do you understand now?

I use this illustration in my book on the subject. If a reporter comes to interview a quarterback, and he says to the guy, "You got a big game tomorrow. Are you ready for it?" "Oh yeah, oh yeah, really ready." "Do you really feel there's team unity?" "Oh, we've never had such unity." "That's the most incredible unity. We can't even believe it." "Well what do you mean?" "We are so united that all 44 guys have decided to play quarterback." You don't have unity. You see, the only way unity functions in teamwork is diversity, and that's why the unity of the church is predicated on the fact that we minister to each other with our strengths, to make them strong. See? That's it.

So there is one Spirit, same Spirit, same Lord, same God, working in all of us, but through diversities of ways. The word varieties is interesting. It's just a very broad word. Distribution literally in the Greek. Good is has distributed varieties of operations within His church. There are varieties of gifts. Some might have the gift of teaching, some might have the gift of giving, some might have the gift of help, some might have the gift of administration, the gift of government, the gift of giving, whatever it is. There are multiplicities of gifts within the framework, and some of us...most of us, I'm confident, have more than one. Maybe one is stronger in manifestation than another, but I think we are in combination of gifts. And we'll get into that more in detail as we go. But we have all this variety of gifts.

This list is not necessarily exhaustive. Here's a list. There's a different one in Romans 12, there's a suggestion of one in 1 Peter chapter 4. There's no reason to assume that this is it, and that's all. And I've read a book that said there were only four gifts, I read another one that said there are nine, another one said there are 11, another one 14, another one 17, another one beyond that - 19. How many are there? I don't think that's the point. I don't think we need to write down all the gifts, take a test and say, "Well there are ____." Put it in a computer. I'm a...you know...whatever, according to the computer. There are so many varieties of ways in which they function, I'm not sure we can always catalog them in such an isolated fashion. Some of them overlap so much that you may be a mixture; you may be mongrel gifted person. Might not want to call yourself that. There are combinations, there are different categories. There may be 30 of us in this room who have the gift of teaching, and all 30 of us may be manifesting it in an entirely different way, through an entirely different style, to an entirely different group of people, with entirely different objectives. But that's the beauty of the diversity.

The word variety is in verse 4, in the Greek, the word variety is the word, in verse 5, the word variety, in verse 6, and I conclude that there are varieties. We don't need to put little boxes around everything and over define them. There are even varieties of power, verse 6, operation there is energizing. There are different manifestations of divine power. Some gifts manifested in certain ways demand a different degree of power than others.

If you read Romans chapter 12 verse 4, you will read about the measure of faith. And then if you read verse 6, you will read again about the measure of faith. God gives you gifts and measures out the exact amount of faith to make that gift operate. Can you imagine, for example, if God gave me the spiritual gift, the spiritual ability, the spiritual capacity, to minister to this church? This is a large church, there's a lot of responsibility. I can understand how a person could crack up in a situation like this. Because you have a lot of anxiety, you have a lot of different people; you have a lot of different problems. It takes a certain kind of Holy Spirit energizing to put somebody into a situation like this.

Now what happens if God gives me the capacity to teach you, and to preach to you, and to lead you, but not the faith to believe Him that it's possible? I'm going to be a wreck. I'm going to be trying to do something I don't believe I can do. So, on the other hand, if God gave me the faith to believe that I could do this, and you keep telling me, "You know something, you can't do this. We need to get somebody else." I would be very frustrated. So when God gives me the spiritual capacity, he measures out the faith to equal it, so that I don't get frustrated. Do you see? And that means that the energizing is equivalent to whatever the gifts might be. So that as the Spirit of God gifts you, He energizes you at that amount, so there is a sense of fulfillment. Now that's really important. In all those varieties and all those different things, there are different manifestations of power.

Now let's look at these terms in verses 4, 5, and 6, very quickly. They have five words in the chapter, telling us five different things, or five different facets of a diamond, about this idea of spiritual ennoblement in the church ministry. The first one is the word spiritual, pneumatika, in verse 1. And we just said that, that means its source is the Holy Spirit. Second word is in verse 4. "There are diversities of gifts." Now you've all heard the word charismatic? We say somebody is charismatic. What we mean by that is he has sort of an electrifying, captivating, charming personality.

The word charismatic is from a Greek word, charis. Charis means grace. Grace means an undeserved gift. When you look at your spiritual capacity, remember this, it is a charisma. It is a gift of God's grace. You didn't deserve it. You can't say, "Well the reason I've gotten to where I am today is because of me." No. If the reason you got where you were today in the church is because of you, then you're somewhere where you ought not to be, and everybody else is paying the consequences. What you have is a gift, purely a grace gift. That word is used 17 times in the New Testament. Eleven times it refers to spiritual gifts and the other times it refers to salvation. Is salvation a free gift? Did you deserve it? Did you earn it? No. And so spiritual gifts are free gifts, undeserved and unearned, granted by God's wonderful, loving, gracious kindness.

So first thing you learn about your capacity is, it's energized by the Holy Spirit...verse 1. Second thing, it's a gift, you didn't earn it, you didn't deserve it, it's purely on God's sovereign grace that it was ever given to you. And I'll tell you, that gives me a sense of responsibility. Does it to you? Somebody gives me a gift and says, "Would you care for this?" I'm going to care for that. I mean, I want to be a steward of that. I want to watch it, make sure it's handled properly. And so there is that

one Spirit giving out graciously those grace gifts to all believers, so that each of us has to say, "What I am...like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 ..."I am by the...what?...by the grace of God." His grace was superabundant to me. Greatest mystery of my life, apart from God saving me, is God calling me into the ministry. Why...why? That's His choice and I thank Him for it.

Verse 5 gives another term. "There are differences of administration the old author I said. But the word administration is diakoneon, diakanas, diakanea, diakeneo, the verb. Do you know what that means? What word do we have like that? Deacon. What does the word deacon mean? Servant. What is it saying? There are different grace gifts, different spirituals, different Holy Spirit energize and ailments, and there are different services. Listen, another word for spiritual gift is services. That's another term for it. It isn't adding a different concept. It's just a different way to say the same thing. But I'll tell you one thing, it tells me the purpose of my gifts. What are my gifts for? Service. The same word exactly. The same word, the diakanas word, in one form or another, appears, for example, in this verse, "For the son of man...Mark 10:45...came not to be ministered unto, but to what?...it's the same word...to serve...to serve." What does it mean? It means to serve, to be a servant.

Now listen to me..."Spiritual gifts...Beloved...that verse says...are not designed as special privileges for the one who has them." My spiritual gift isn't for my edification. Now I could pervert that. I could go in my office and study, and learn all the things that I learn, and I can write out all the things, and I can get my little tape recorder there, and I could preach it into a tape, and then I could turn it on and listen to it. And I could say, "Amen, where's the prayer room?" You know, all by myself. But the point is that would prostitute my gift. Right? When anybody comes along and says, "Well I have this gift, which I exercise only in private. It's self edification." I say, "Well then whatever it is, it isn't the gift that the New Testament teaches because the gifts are called services, and services implies there's somebody else that's the objective of what you're doing."

You see, in 1 Peter you have the same thing. In chapter 4 verse 10, "As every man has received the gift, even so serve the same one to another, as good stewards." Whatever your gift would you please serve somebody else with it. Verse 11, "If you speak, speak the oracles of God; if you serve, do it out of the ability which God gives." All the gifts are for somebody else. Serve one another in divine energy. They are building you up. Ephesians 4:12, "For the building of the saints, that they may do the work of the ministry, or the work of diakanas; the work of service, that the body may be built."

Listen, Beloved, your spiritual gifts, whatever they are, are not for you. Somebody says to me the other day, "Well I believe some of the gifts were for self edification." You can't find that. Later on, in 14, when they perverted the gift of languages for self-edification, that would be like me going in my office and teaching myself. It's not its intention. They could do that because they could exercise that gift at will, like any other gift, but that was a perversion of it. And that's why he says in 14:12, "Take your gift and use it for the edifying of the church." That's its intention.

Verse 6...there are not only these other terms: spirituals, gifts, services, but here's another one, there are varieties of energizings, from the Greek verb energes. "Oh, energizings." God empowers differently the believer for functioning. Now don't confuse this with natural talent. This is divine energizing. The Father is involved in energizing us, and there are differences of energizings. It's amazing. The Spirit of God, when we begin to function in that capacity that God has gifted us for, there's a flow of divine energy that's thrilling. And it comes right out, and it energizes the Word as it comes out of me and into you. And one of the things it...it does amaze me sometimes when I have...I'll go, "I can't stand to listen to myself." Once in awhile I'll listen to a tape on something I've taught years back because I can't remember what I thought about it and I want to refresh my mind, and I'll say to myself, "Boy, did I say that? That's really terrific."

And I realize the difference...for example, a fella came to me a few years ago and he said, "I want you to know...I want to help you and I have an observation to make." And I said, "What is it?" He says, "I just want you to know that you do not have the gift of counseling. Having been counseled by you on several occasions, I've come to that conclusion." And, you know, at first I thought, "Yeah, you know?" That natural human reaction. See? And then I sat back and I thought, "You know, something, that's probably true, and that's not what God has called me to do. I don't have an office as a marital counselor." You know, I'd be sitting there listening to somebody's problems week after week, thinking to myself, "Boy, I wish they'd get out of here so I can get back to the Bible, you know?" So I know the difference between when I'm doing what the Spirit of God has gifted me to do and energized me to do, and when I'm doing something else that I need to do sometimes but I don't have that same sense of spiritual energy. You see? It's just different. And there are differences in energizings.

So, you see, the Spirit of God has this fantastic variety, and we're all in there. And, listen, you're a snowflake, there're not two of you, God can't trade you for anybody. If I look at my kids and I say, "Oh, I got four nice kids but I wouldn't mind a change. Maybe I'll give away one of my kids and get somebody else." No. No child in the world would substitute for one of mine. God looks at you and he says, "Hey, if you don't do it, there isn't anybody else. You're a snowflake." The combination of gifts and energizings and services that God has given, He has given nobody else. You know, you're like a California license plate, there're not two of them. It's you. If you don't do it, do you know what happens? It doesn't get done, and you are then dividing where the Spirit is trying to get unity.

Look at verse 7; let me give you a further thought, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit." Now here's another word for spiritual gifts, another one, manifestation. Now that is a simple word. And I'll tell, boy, this is a solid point. I want you to listen now. The word manifestation means to make clear, to make visible, to make known, to make manifest. It means the very opposite of to hide or to be private. It means to be public. What are the spiritual gifts then for? They are for the manifestation. They are...listen to this now...to be a visible, clear, manifest, public display. That's the idea. And, again, I say, when somebody says they have a private gift, you ask them how it can

be a private gift, when all those gifts are for the declaration of the working of the Spirit of God. You say, "Yeah, but maybe it's only to be manifest to Him." Oh, watch.

"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Christian for the common good." That's what soomferoin the Greek mean. "It isn't given for His good, but the good of soomfero, all of those who have gathered together." That's what the word means. It's a compound word. It means to gather together. What's your spiritual gif for? It's to manifest the work of the Spirit to everybody that's been gathered together. Maybe there's only one other one, maybe there's two, maybe there's three, maybe there's...like in our Sunday morning...several thousand, whatever it is. See, that's the point. My gifts are not intended for private purposes. My gifts are for the common good. Whatever the gift is, it is to profit everybody. You say, "But what about the gift of languages?" Do you know something, in chapter 14 He says, "Don't ever, ever use the gift of languages unless it's what? Interpreted. Because, even though it was a sign to unbelieving Israel it had to be interpreted because that gives it another edifying element to the church. See? And no gift should be anything other than edifying to the people who are gathered together. That's assumed in all the gifts. So when somebody says they have a private one, that isn't so. It's to profit, literally, the common good, to bring everybody together, and to manifest the Spirit to all those who were brought together. And we'll see more about that as we go.

Lastly, verse 11. We'll skip the gifts in there cause we'll get to them next week. Verse 11, "All these gifts work...same word, energizing. He says, "All these work that one and very same Spirit." Boy, the Spirit's behind all the gifts. And watch this, "Dividing to whom?...to whom?...every man." How many Christians have gifts? All of them. There's not a spiritual elite. You can't say, "Oh, yes, the gifted ones are up on the podium." No, no, you're all gifted. Mine's just different, that's all. Same thing. We're all gifted. Mine's different than yours. You can do what I can't do in His energy.

Now watch...we all have them, but look at this beautiful _____ dividing to all, every man. That's universality, severally, that's individuality. The word severally, interesting word in the Greek, idios, from which we get idiot. Do you know what an idiot is? That's somebody like whom there is nobody else, only one of those kind. _____ would say, "Boy, he's an idiot." That comes from that longo, peculiar. Peculiar originally didn't mean peculiar like we think of it. Peculiar meant, he's the only one. Listen to this, "The Spirit of God gives universally the gifts, but to every individual He gives them...what?...peculiarly." Nobody's got like yours. You're a snowflake. It's not mass production, "All right 43 teachers in that section, 84 givers over here, 49 with faith." No. Like little rubber ducks all quacking together. Everybody is different, and everybody's uniqueness manifests itself in a unique way. "And so the Spirit of God divides to every man severally and as He will."

Remember this people; you can't go seek a gift. That's a gift from God in the first place, and in the second place, He's the one who wills which one He gives. Right? Well have you learned a little about it now? This is only the beginning... only the beginning. It's rich. Let's pray.

Father, we really thank you this morning for the fellowship we've enjoyed. Thank you for our friends who've come to be with us today and to share Your truth out of Your book. How rich we are because of the things that the Holy Spirit has done for us. How rich we are because of the things You've given us, these divine ennoblement.

And, Lord, we want to fulfill the ministry of the Spirit, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the church. And we know to do that we have to minister, and as we minister the church will be one, and as we're one, we'll represent Christ in the world and people will take note of Him and be brought to Him, to His glory.

Help us to be obedient, Father, to seek out in our own time a prayer, and study to know You and to know how You've gifted us, and to respond in obedience. to minister. We'll thank You for what You're going to do when we do it. In Christ name. Amen.

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