
SERVICE AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

STUDY NOTES FOR CARE GROUPS – (1 COR. 12:1-11)

The following are resource questions that you can use with your Care Group for discussion. They are based on the sermon preached on Sunday, February 28, 2010, by Pastor Arnold Wong at the Grace Baptist Church, Singapore. The sermon is available online at <http://www.gracebap.org.sg/worship/series.html>.

February 28, 2010

Introduction: One well-known Bible commentator gave the following statement regarding spiritual gifts. *“In the life of the local church there are two major problems related to the subject of spiritual gifts. The first is that far too few Christians are involved in any kind of ministry. They conceive of themselves as spectators rather than participants. A second problem is with those who are actively involved in the ministry of the local church, but who are not functioning in a ministry that corresponds to their spiritual gifts.”*

- ▶ Do you agree with this statement? And if you do agree, how do we solve these two problems?

Spiritual Gifts Are Given To Every Believer vs. 1-3

Paul began this chapter by showing us how the Body of Christ flows out of the unity and diversity of the Trinity itself, the Triune God at work within his body. The Spirit, he said, gives gifts to every member of the body. These are capacities for service, abilities which we did not have before we became Christians.

Spiritual Gifts Are Unique vs. 4-11

Two definitions of a “spiritual gift”:

1. *“A spiritual gift is a God given ability for service.”* – C. Ryrie
2. *“A spiritual gift is the God-given capacity of every Christian to carry out his function in the body of Christ.”*
R. Diffenbaugh

Each gift is a manifestation of the Spirit. In addition to the divine element in spiritual gifts is the human counterpart. Spiritual gifts produce unity through diversity. Most Christians have failed to grasp the great diversity revealed in spiritual gifts. The key text is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 12:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NASB)

Notice the combination of variety with sameness -- that is the mark of God at work. God himself is a Triune God; there is one God, but he exists in three Persons. There is diversity in unity, and wherever you find God at work you will always find that mark. Diversity in unity is one Body, many gifts, many distinctions, many ministries within it -- but only one group, one Body in Christ.

Commonality: These spiritual gifts are given for “the common good.” Spiritual gifts are delightful; they are fulfilling to use, and there is nothing wrong with enjoying the use of a spiritual gift, but its purpose must not be for your enjoyment. It must serve others; that is what it is for. It has no other purpose in being given to you except to build up and edify others. It is for the “common good,” and this whole list is included in that, along with other lists in the Scriptures. You are going to need others' spiritual gifts as they are going to need yours. Discussion question: Why do we need one another's spiritual gifts?

- One Source** The Spirit will give gifts—that is the Holy Spirit's task. He comes to every believer and he gives to everyone without exception a gift or gifts of the Spirit. Paul tells us in Verse 6 that there are varieties of workings that are given by the Father, and here he is speaking of power for service. One of the fundamental declarations of all the Scripture is that power belongs to God.
- One Purpose** The thrust of the first half of Ephesians chapter four is that the effective functioning of the body of Christ is dependent upon the contribution of each individual part of the body. Spiritual gifts enable us to carry out our task within the body of Christ in a way that no one else can.
- One Agent** God has given you a gift or gifts and He intends for you to know your gift, to develop it and to use it for His glory.

Spiritual Gifts Are Described, vs. 8-10

The apostle now goes on to list the variety of "*manifestations of the Spirit*"—the spiritual gifts. He gives us a representative list. It is not complete, as there are only nine gifts listed here. There is another group in Romans 12; there is another brief reference in 1 Peter 4; and there is another brief list in Ephesians 4. Taken altogether, depending upon how you identify certain gifts, there are from 18 to 20 different spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts must be important to the Spirit of God Who inspired the writing of the Word of God and thus they should be important to us.

- **Your Call** Spend some time in discussing these four D's especially looking at the illustration given by Bill Gothard. (see end)

DECIDE TO TRUST CHRIST

There is how you recognize the Spirit of God at work. He came into this world to do one thing: To exalt Jesus Christ. That is all he does. Everything the Spirit does aims at that goal and that point.

DISCOVER YOUR GIFT

Devote yourself to what you do best. When you once begin to meet the needs which you see you will quickly discover that you do some things better than others. When Peter spoke of spiritual gifts in his first epistle, he considered them a matter of personal stewardship: As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1 Peter 4:10). Since every Christian has a particular function in the body of Christ, and since your spiritual gifts equip you to carry out this function, knowing your gifts help you to plug in to the ministry of a local church.

DEVELOP YOUR GIFT

Many Christians insist upon knowing what their spiritual gifts are before they begin to serve God in any capacity. We should learn our spiritual gifts as we serve. If we devote ourselves to the service of others, we will inevitably learn what our gifts are.

DEPLOY YOUR GIFT—USE IT!

In your obedience to the Scriptures, do the things which you see need to be done. It is almost impossible for one with the gift of teaching not to show his hand at a discussion-type Bible study. There is virtually no way you can keep a gifted teacher quiet. He senses a need to teach, and, if given the chance, he meets that need by sharing what he knows to be God's answer.

The one with the gift of giving is the one who is most sensitive to financial needs. He senses needs that go over everyone else's heads. The same is true of the administrator. He will sense the lack of organization and immediately move in to meet that need. Every spiritual gift comes with the complementary ability to discern the need as well as the ability to meet it.

Closing Story

Bill Gothard suggests that individuals react to given situations in the light of their gifts. If a waitress spills someone's meal all over the restaurant floor and a group of Christians are sitting nearby, each individual will react in accordance with this spiritual gift. The *GIFT OF MERCY* responds by concentrating on cleaning up the mess, the *GIFT OF GIVING* offers to pay for another meal, the *GIFT OF EXHORTATION* seeks to cheer up the waitress. The *GIFT OF ADMINISTRATION* delegates and organizes the whole matter to avoid confusion. The *GIFT OF TEACHING* suggests some ways to avoid a recurrence of the problem. Your spiritual gift makes you sensitive to certain needs that others may not perceive. Do what you see needs to be done and use your gift to glorify the One who gave it to you.