

Spiritual Gifts & Spiritual Fruits

Defined and Applied

Life Group Study Week of February 21st, 2021

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This week's study supports the message from Elder Mike Tulloch

Part A: Spiritual Gifts:

Spiritual Gifts are gifts given to the believer by the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation. Spiritual gifts are given for the purpose of serving the church. Wayne Grudem in his book 'Bible Doctrine' defines spiritual gifts as "any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church".

In preparation for this discussion, I would encourage you to read 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:1-8 and Ephesians 4:7-13. This will not only lead to a better discussion but will give each of you an opportunity to consider the unique gifts the Holy Spirit has given you.

In the first part of this study we will look at Romans 12:1-8. The text is taken from the NIV translation. Ask someone to read the entire passage then discuss the questions below.

Romans 12 ¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

1. Verses 1-3:

- a. What does it mean to you when you read the phrase, "I urge you"?
 - i. Who are the "brothers and sisters"?
- b. Discuss what it means to "offer our bodies as living sacrifices". Why would we do this?
- c. What does it mean to conform to the pattern of the world?
 - i. How do we renew our mind?
 - ii. How does this bring about transformation?
 - iii. What is the result?
 - iv. How does this relate back to verse 1?

2. Verses 3-8:
 - a. We are all sinners, saved by grace. Considering this, discuss the caution Paul is giving us before he goes on to describe the spiritual gifts in the following verses?
 - b. Discuss how the analogy Paul uses in verse 4 to compare the function of our physical body to the church in verses 5-8.
 - i. What is the importance of verse 5, “*so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others*”?
 1. What does this suggest about how we view the use of our gifts and our relationship with our brothers and sisters?

3. Let's have a look at 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11

1 Corinthians 12:⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. ⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

- a. What is the common source in verses 4 to 7 and 11?
 - b. Why are these spiritual gifts given to believers?
4. In 1 Corinthians 12:7, we saw that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each believer for the common good. In Ephesians 4:11-13, the Apostle Paul talks about specific spiritual gifts and why they are given to the church.

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- a. Discuss what it means to “equip his people for works of service”.
- b. Why are his people being built up?

As we finish Part A of this study, there are some questions that need to be asked:

1. Are you a child of God – have you committed your life to Jesus as Lord and Saviour?
2. If you answered yes, do you know what your spiritual gifts are? If you are unsure, ask those in your Life Group what they think your spiritual gift might be.
3. Are you using your spiritual gift “for the common good” (1 Cor 4:7)?
4. If you have not made that commitment of your life to Jesus, what is stopping you?

Part B: Spiritual Fruit:

What is Spiritual Fruit? The fruit of the Spirit is the result of the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of a believer. The Holy Spirit comes into the life of a person who has accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour to change that life from one that follows our sinful nature to a life that is conformed to the character of Christ.

1. The acts of a sinful nature: *Galatians 5:19-21*, ¹⁹*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*
 - a. Discuss the statement, "the sinful nature is all about me and what I want".
 - i. How is this statement confirmed by Galatians 5:19-21?
 - ii. Is there a sinful act in these verses that does not fit in that definition?
 - iii. Does an act of a sinful nature only impact me? Discuss.
 - b. What is the warning in verse 21?
2. Discuss the comfort the believer can take from the following verses:
 - a. *1 Corinthians 10:13*, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."
 - b. *1 John 4:4* You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.
3. *Galatians 5:22* But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
 - a. Fruit starts from a seed planted (the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer), a seed that grows and matures until it is the image of the parent fruit (Jesus). The fruit of the Spirit are character traits that the Holy Spirit produces in us as we submit to the Lordship of Jesus in our lives. As the character of Jesus grows in us we will be able to fulfill our purpose to love God and love our neighbour.
 - i. Loving our neighbour requires action on our part. If you consider our neighbour to be a brother or sister in Christ, what are some practical ways you can show love, particularly at this Covid time when we can not meet in person?

For Reflection:

In these periods of Covid lock-down and restricted gathering as the Church, we can feel isolated and forgotten. Would you consider this? Jesus took the initiative to save us. When we had no ability to reach out to him, he reached out to us. As I consider Jesus' example, the question is, "who am I reaching out to in my church family"? Am I waiting for someone to reach out to me, or am I reaching out to show the love of Jesus residing in me? You never know what a blessing you could be in someone's life by placing a call or sending a message. When you make that effort you are doing as Jesus did, you are taking the initiative to impact a life. You are saying you are important to me and I care about you. Who can you encourage this week with a show of love?