



UNWRAPPING YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS

...AND EMPLOYING THEM TO WIN AND HELP OTHERS!

By Kurt von Schleicher

GIFT OVERVIEW

God has given every real Christian spiritual gifts and He intends for these gifts to be used, not for the glory of the minister who is so endowed, but for the glory of God alone. You, with your gifts, are needed in the body of Christ for Christian to Christian ministry purposes and for witnessing!

INTRO

The apostle Paul talks about these endowments, ***"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant"*** (1 Cor. 12:1). Today many Christians are ignorant when it comes to their spiritual gifts. They are ignorant about which gift they have. They remain ignorant about how to properly exercise their gift. They remain ignorant about what their gift will produce. It's time to learn about how to get into the flow of the Spirit when it comes to using your gift for edifying the church and for winning the lost. Let me tell you, if you want real joy and fulfillment in your Christian life, you need to discover your spiritual gift(s) and use them (or it).

DISCUSSION STUFF

The topic of *"spiritual giftings"* is a much misunderstood controversial topic. Of course there have been a great number of books written on the subject too, and there are even assessment tests you can take to help you determine your spiritual gift(s). But even with all the resources on the market to help Christians determine their gifts today, there is still much bewilderment and teaching that even contradicts what the Bible teaches about gifts and their proper biblical usage. With all due respect to my colleagues, under-equipped ministers who want to excuse their personal lack in this area, continually express *their* strong feelings against today's proper exercise of spiritual gifts and some even spread confusion to new converts (unintentionally, I'm sure) regarding the gifts. This really grieves God, because He never intended for these gifts to be anything but a blessing for His people. They are merely tools to build with, not toys to play with—not weapons to war with. The God of the gifts remains above the fray. He's never been confused, ignorant or all worked up over the gifts that He gives and Has designed for the purpose of blessing and edification. You can be sure

that He is able to clarify and help you, through His flawless Word, so you in turn can help others discover the truth about this matter. It's time to get back to what the Bible says.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GIFTS

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul tells us that there is great diversity in dealing with spiritual gifts. The Greek word for gift literally means "grace." Grace is something completely unearned; undeserved, unattainable apart from the sovereign work of God. Christian, God has given you a grace gift, and I think it is something completely different from a talent. Many non-Christians have talents, but spiritual gifts are a grace from God that He bestows upon you after you are regenerated. They are supernaturally given to Christians for the purpose of service.

Paul tells us ***"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all"*** (1 Cor. 12:7). In other words, spiritual gifts are simply given to edify the entire body. Your spiritual gift isn't meant to be used selfishly or for your own gratification, but to serve others in the body of Christ for their spiritual profiting. They are not for your enjoyment, but for your employment. They are not for your entertainment, but for your attainment. They are to be put to work for the cause of world evangelization.

Paul also reminds us that spiritual gifts are sovereignly given. ***"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills"*** (1 Cor. 12:11). You don't necessarily decide which gift you'll get, any more than you could decide how tall you're going to be or what color your eyes will be. Sure, we are to earnestly desire the best gift (which I believe is the gift that is most needed in that particular situation of lack. See verse 31), but in general and in God's great wisdom, He is the One who chooses the perfect gift to bestow on you. Your responsibility is to put the gift(s) into practice for others.

Yes, a spiritual gift is a sovereignly conferred grace that God gives to you in order for you to better serve. You are not to covet another person's gifting or try to copy their ministry style, for each person is given a unique gift that the Lord has deemed appropriate for them. You are a gifted child, and you are 1.) not to see yourself as worthless, 2.) not be jealous of another member's calling or gift! You may not yet have discovered yours, but you can for you are gifted by God. Just as newborn babies must slowly learn to use their hands before they can learn to play the piano, newborn spiritual babes must slowly learn utilize their gifts to best serve the Lord.

I really appreciate 1 Corinthians 12 verse 17: ***"If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?"*** In other words, everyone has been gifted differently by God, and we should appreciate those differences. The eye needs the ear, which needs the nose, which needs the mouth. He gave us different gifts to make us one whole body. God made us different so that we could compliment the other members. He gave me different gifts than He gave you, so together, we can be interdependent. That's the very thing that makes the Church unique. Yes sir, we have supportive, interdependent giftings, and if you try to exercise your gift apart from your relationship to the body of Christ... it simply won't work right! There are to be no Lone Rangers in the body of Christ. That's why the Bible tells us that when one member suffers, we all suffer. The Lord gave us gifts to support one another. You need the church, and the church needs you.

DIVERSITY OF THE GIFTS

Verse 4 tells us there are diversities of gifts, and verse 8 begins to describe them. We are told, ***"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom."*** Like with the *word of knowledge*, the *word of wisdom* comes to you in a moment of time at any location (you don't have to be "clergy" in a pulpit ministering). It's God-given wisdom beyond what you've already gained and it helps you rightly apply the knowledge God has given you. I'm not talking about common sense here, but a supernatural ability that can aid you in counseling others.

"For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit"(1 Cor. 12:8). Having the word of knowledge doesn't mean you know everything or are loved more, but rather that you have received extra revelatory knowledge from God, of things that you would not have known about people (or situations relevant to the Kingdom) otherwise. For example, Peter was able to tell that Ananias and Sapphira were lying to the church about the sale of their property in Acts 5. He was quickened by the Spirit with a special knowledge that allowed him to know for certain what had occurred, even though he had not been present at the sale of the property. The *word of wisdom* will often come simultaneously with the *word of knowledge* (or another gift) and like I said, the former, will show you what to do with the latter. God's gifts often work together to meet multiple needs.

Verse 9 tells us there is a gift of faith: ***"to another faith by the same Spirit."*** There is saving faith and there is the measure of faith that we are to exercise to develop and make grow. All Christians have a measure of faith in the general sense, but there is a special gift of faith that, according to 13:2, can remove mountains. I believe that George Müller had the gift of faith. He could believe God for special things, and the Lord would supernaturally provide for his many orphan children in England.

Once, while on a ship locked in a fog bank, Müller prayed with the captain of the ship for the Lord to lift the fog. His prayer, according to the captain, was like the prayer of a child. When the captain began to pray, Müller stopped him, saying, ***"In the first place, you don't believe God will do it, and in the second place, He has already done it."*** The captain hurried to the window, and the fog was already gone. It was certainly a miracle, but miracles like these are really not uncommon to a person with the gift of faith, because they regularly see God work in miraculous ways as a witness of His boundless grace.

"To another gifts of healings by the same Spirit"(v. 9). Notice the word "gifts," it's plural like "healings," because there are all sorts of healing: physical healing, mental healing, even spiritual healing.

I don't know if it is true, but I heard one doctor say that there were actually 39 main categories of diseases in the world. The Bible says, ***"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed"***(Isa. 53:5). It wasn't for nothing. No part of Christ's earthly experience was purposeless. Jesus Christ suffered 39 lashings on His back so you, by faith, could appropriate His healing. And even though God can heal through medicines and surgery today, this does not mean doctors have the gift of healing. He can even heal miraculously due to the gifts of healings and the prayers of His people. In our life time, we have seen several in the body of Christ who have the gift of being able to heal others.

The reason that Jesus heals someone physically today is because He wants to heal someone spiritually. Converting the unsaved is the greatest miracle Christ has ever done and we need to recognize this.

Verse 10 tells us God gives ***"to another the working of miracles."*** There are those today who have a valid gift of miracles. Many ministers on the radio try to discount this gift, but God's Word says there are some who have this gift. I'm convinced that the Lord through this gift, is making a significant difference in the church all around the world today.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). The things that Christ did when He walk on this terra-firma, He is still doing today. Why? Because He loves people and people still have need of His works. Like countless others, there have been times when I needed healing before and sure enough, when I cried out to Jesus, He healed me. There have been times when I've needed a miracle before and when I cried out to Jesus, He worked one for me. But some, like Smith Wigglesworth, have the gift of miracles and they can raise the dead as easy as we can brush our teeth.

Jesus performed all sorts of miracles when He was walking on this earth, but the people still rejected Him and many today will reject Christ in you, even if they see you work a valid miracle with this gift. A careful study of Scripture will reveal that miracles usually come in bunches. There were a bunch at creation, a bunch during the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, a bunch during Christ's ministry on earth, and a bunch more during the ministry of the apostles at the founding of the church. They came in connection with some person of faith who had the gift and if you are a person of faith, then you can ask God for the gift and then expect miracles, as well. God is no respecter of persons, so what he did for others He can do for you. Christ's gifts are resident in Him and you just need to let Him live big on the inside of you. Press in, tap in and take hold, for there will be times when this is the best gift.

There is also the gift of prophecy, the ability to foretell and forthtell. Foretelling is being able to tell the future, and like in Bible times of old, there still are some prophets (in at least secondary sense of the term) that are able to do that today with varying degrees of specificity and anointing. Forthtelling is being able to give an inspired Message from the Spirit. This is when the Spirit quickens a word to you and you tell this truth to others in order to edify, exhort and console those in the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 14:3 reads, ***"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."*** That's what someone with the gift of prophecy does. He edifies, which is to build people up. He exhorts, which is to fire people up. And he comforts, which is to shore people up. And like with the other gifts, this gift can intertwine with and flow in and out with another one or overlap with other gifts. This can happen in the middle of preaching, but then again, many times it doesn't. It just depends on the minister's vertical relationship.

We need to be extremely cautious when we hear a personal prophecy though, especially if it comes from someone we don't know. Like with every message we hear, we need to check it out against scripture. Remember, the results of both giving a message in tongues along with giving an interpretation of the tongue, will equal the manifestation of the gift of prophecy. And this is a gift greatly needed today.

"To another discerning of spirits" (v. 10). This verse also speaks of the gift of discernment, a very important gift. We live in an environment filled with malevolent and perverse demonic spirits that fill our world with lies and deceit. People with the gift of discernment can

determine what is holy and good, and what is false and of Satan. They can spot a wolf in sheep's clothing quickly. The gift of tongues is also mentioned in this verse, and even though this is one of the most debated gifts of our day, one of the reasons for such debate is due to Satan's hatred of it. Such perfect prayer can greatly help and edify you.

Praying in tongues is the supernatural ability to praise God in a language you have never learned. And as God sees fit, He with precise timing, can transform this unknown language into a known language for the purpose of horizontal proclamation. What a witnessing tool this can be, but let's be very careful about the timing, because sinners already have a hard enough time figuring us out. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples praised God in different languages, and pilgrims visiting Jerusalem from all over the known world heard them speak in their own tongue.

Many churches don't allow the utterance gifts or the revelation gifts (let alone the power gifts) expression in their Sunday or midweek services, because they don't want to scare away sinners. And it is possible to scare them away with the extreme gift-misuse. I've seen Christians rudely stand up to deliver a message in tongues while the Pastor was trying to preach the Word or give an altar call. This is so wrong, for God never interrupts Himself. And yet the Bible says tongues are not a sign to God's people, but to unbelievers, as a way of convincing them to come to Christ. The use of this gift sure helped me come to a saving knowledge of Christ. Being a good witness with the gifts is all a matter of faith, application and timing.

A related gift is the interpretation of tongues, which is the ability to translate tongue-messages from God. If I were given the ability to speak a supernatural, horizontal message in tongues, our church wouldn't understand what I was saying. But a person with this gift would be able to supernaturally understand my words and then translate them for the rest of the church to its benefit.

Romans 12:7 mentions another spiritual gift, that of ministry, which we often refer to as the gift of service. This is a greatly needed gift, for it includes all those who can assist in the work of the church. Romans 12 also mentions the gift of teaching, which is the ability to help others learn truth, and the gift of exhortation, which is the ability to fire others up, spiritually motivate or inspire others toward godly action. The church in America today is revelation rich and application poor. We need exhorters to spur us on in doing what we've already been taught.

That same passage mentions the gift of giving, which is the ability to earn and sacrificially give to support the spreading of the gospel around the world; and the gift of ruling, which is the ability to authoritatively delegate, organize, lead and administrate complex tasks. Finally, Romans 12 mentions the gift of mercy, which is the ability to share the love and concern of Jesus Christ with others. Many people involved with visitation, counseling, and care centers have this wonderful gift.

DISCOVERING YOUR PERSONAL GIFT

There are three principles to keep in mind if you want to discover your gift. First, remember the principle of Lordship. Many Christians who have Jesus as their Savior, have Him as their Lord in theory, but not as their Lord in practice. Paul reminded the Roman Christians to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God in Romans 12:2. And then he says, ***"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you***

may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. If you really want to discover the perfect place for you and your gifts in the church so you can better serve God, then wholeheartedly present yourself to Him. Turn your life over to the Lord and spend lots of time alone with Him, listening to Him.

Second, remember the principle of stewardship. God has given you a gift, and you are to be a good steward of it. As you start putting a gift into practice, do it in faith. Depending on your level of faith and the gift, you might want to experiment a bit in service to others to realize your potential. Trust the Lord as you exercise the gifts and walk with Jesus, for He will guide you. Many discover their own ministry and giftings as they try out a wide variety of ministries under those who are already fruitful.

Third, remember the principle of fellowship. ***“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them”*** (Rom. 12:4-6). Every Christian is gifted in different ways and intelligent in different areas, but when we come together we form one body in Christ. We are all gifted, and we are all needed.

In talking about gifts, I've heard some say, ***“Use em or lose em, and don't be a slob on the job!”*** and I do think that you can lose many of your gifts through neglect, but some will just lie dormant in you for years. Here's what Paul commanded his son in the faith, ***“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands”*** (2 Tim. 1:6).

Now, most of the time the need is the call. If a child stepped off into the street next to you and a speeding truck was barreling toward that child, you wouldn't have to stop and pray about whether or not you had a gift or call to children's ministry would you? Of course not, you'd just act. But if you were in India just surrounded by thousands of acute, desperate needs you would need specific guidance from the Lord. And that's how it should be in ministries today when people are looking to express their gift. Both *initiative in service* and *directed service* can effectively building the Kingdom today.

FRUITS, BELLS & BALANCE!

GIFTS TO THE BODY Read: 1Cor. 12-14, Rom. 12:3-8, Eph. 4:4-13, 1 Pet. 4:9-11, Gal. 5:22-23

- A. God originally gave His Church these ministry gifts (Christian people who served) for the establishing and equipping of the saints. Are there apostles and prophets active in the church today, though many prideful and ambitious people still give themselves these titles? Maybe there are in a secondary sense. Apostle means one who is sent forth and that's what happens with missionaries. But that is a very controversial issue. My question is this: Even if there are, what does it hurt to ***not*** call yourself by these terms? Why hinder the unity of the body by being bullheaded? Are you so insecure that you need everything you can get to make people believe that you are big? Who even cares about the title? Simply be what you are and do what God calls you to do! Don't be like a puffed up religious pharisee! Let another man praise you or describe you, but not your own mouth. Brag on the Lord—exalt Him alone! Worship Jesus, win souls and prepare others to do the same!

- 1.) APOSTELS
- 2.) PROPHETS
- 3.) EVANGELISTS
- 4.) PASTORS
- 5.) TEACHERS

If you are God called, and faithful to use the gifts you already have to glorify Him and to win souls, then your gifts will develop. They'll make room for you and God will give you more. He might even make you a gift to the body.

MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

B. These have a strong relationship to your natural giftings.

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| 1.) SERVING | Rom. 12:7 |
| 2.) TEACHING | Rom. 12:7 |
| 3.) EXHORTING, ENCOURAGING | Rom. 12:8 |
| 4.) GIVING, SUPPORTING | Rom. 12:8 |
| 5.) LEADING, RULING, ADMINISTRATING | 1 Cor. 12:28 |
| 6.) SHOWING OF MERCY | Rom. 12:8 |
| 7.) HOSPITALITY | 1 Pet. 4:9 |

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT AND THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

C. All these fruit are bestowed and developed after your second birth. The gifts are supernatural and given at the time of, or sometime after, your Spirit baptism. In a Christian assembly, timing with the gifts is of the utmost importance! Remember, God never interrupts Himself.

<u>I. THE UTTERANCE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT</u>	<u>THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT</u>
1. TONGUES	1. LOVE
2. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES	2. JOY
3. PROPHECY	3. PEACE
<u>II. THE REVELATION GIFTS</u>	
4. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS	4. PATIENCE
5. WORD OF KNOWLEDGE	5. GENTLENESS, KINDNESS
6. WORD OF WISDOM	6. GOODNESS
<u>III. THE POWER GIFTS</u>	
7. GIFT OF FAITH (Not the measure of faith)	7. FAITHFULNESS
8. WORKING OF MIRACLES	8. MEEKNESS
9. GIFTS OF HEALING	9. TEMPERANCE, SELF-CONTROL

NO SLOPPY AGAPE

Even as a prism breaks up light and reveals it's spectrum of colors in like number to it's components, so do the nine gifts of the Spirit correspond to God's nine ingredients of divine love – the fruit. Christians need to minister their gifts as stewards of the manifold grace of God, (this would also mean many colored, or variegated grace. See 1 Pet. 4:8-11).

The apparel that Aaron the priest in the Old Testament wore, represented a perfect balance

in that it had bells and pomegranates placed all around the bottom. And they were in a perfect sequence and in a lovely, alternating harmony. Though I can't prove it, I believe the bells on his robe represented the gifts of the Spirit that were to be in his ministry, and the pomegranates represented the fruit of the Spirit that were to balance them in his ministry (Ex. 39:24-26).

Why do I believe this? Because the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ excelled with this combination. Christ always ministered with this powerful balance and that's why His witness for the Father was so winsome. And so should your earthly priesthood also present such a balance, where your ministry is excelling in both the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit! Today we see high profile ministers who have powerful healing gifts, but they lack the fruit of the Spirit. And we see even more high profile ministers who have an abundance of fruit, but they totally lack in utterance, revelation, and power gifts.

Like Christ, we need to be prayerful and Word-full and throw out the sectarian baggage. Right now lives hang in the balance. But when we've hastened Christ's return by proactively bringing closure in world evangelization, we won't need our gifts anymore. ***"Love* (expressed through the fruit) *never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come* (not talking about the Bible, rather this is talking about Jesus Christ in His Second Coming), *then that which is in part will be done away"* (1 Cor. 13:8-10). So ***"Pursue love* (aggressively), *and desire spiritual gifts* (earnestly), *but especially that you may prophesy"* (1 Cor. 14:1 emphasis-mine).****

Let's always keep in mind that spiritual gifts are never to be the measuring stick for a Christian's spiritual maturity or for their character. I think about how the Bible speaks of Joseph in the Old Testament declaring, ***"And the Lord was with him."*** But can you find that same statement anywhere for Samson? No way! And he was spiritually gifted to the max! The Word says the Spirit of God was with Joseph, David, Samuel and Jesus. They were all righteous and had holy character – the fruits of God's love. How does that apply to me? Well, just because you've been saved doesn't mean God enjoys hanging out with you.

OK, it's true that God wants to enjoy hanging out with you, and He desires for you to experience His full manifest presents. But you need to stop grieving His Spirit away through your stinking life style and words. So, in light of the *Judgement Seat of Christ*, if you're gifted you must remember you have a greater responsibility to walk in holiness and love! ***"For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more"*** (Lk. 12:48).

It is so sad, but true that some Christians who can manifest the gifts are barren of the fruits. Unlike Aaron's garment, they are out of balance. Before the public they present one image, but in private quite another. And with this last days return of the gifts to the local church, we must emphasize a fierce, ego-dethroning holiness with sterling Godly character! All selfish ambition and the seeking of sensationalism for the praise of man will bring disaster!

THE TEMPERMENT GIFTINGS

Temperments are inborn traits that we should learn to appreciate, understand and view as gifts from God. Temperments subconsciously affect our every day behavior. It's been said that

opposites attract. And if that's true like I think it is, [judging by who I chose as my wife], then it's imperative that these temperments, which we all have, come under the Spirits control. In the secular business world, personal offices do personality assessments all the time to determine where potential employees could fit-in to compliment or lend strength toward fulfilling the corporate mission statement of the organization. They define these temperments in a whole different way compared to us Christians, by using the letters: "D.I.S.C." I'm sure there have been several book written on the subject, but here's my simple comparison of the same God-given temperment giftings.

1. CHOLERIC -	(D - dominant)	Decisive, practical, controlling, active, strong-willed.
2. SANGUINE -	(I - influential)	Lively, talkative, warm, people person, emotional.
3. PLAGMATIC -	(S - steady)	Calm, easy going, unexciteable, enjoys people, diplomatic.
4. MELANCHOLY -	(C - cautious)	Creative, moody, analytical, perfectionistic, introvert type.

It would pay you large dividends to do an indepth study over your family member's temperments and even with your own personality, I garrentee. Personally, I'm an off-the-chart *High-I* or what Tim Lahaye calls, a *Sanguine*. For the most part, a sanguine is out-going, warm and lively. His emotions rather than thoughts tend to be the basis for many of his decisions. He enjoys people and is at his best surrounded by friends, [he's the life of the party with an endless repertoire of great stories which he, of course tells very dramatically]. Mr. Sanguine is never at a loss for words, often speaking before thinking, but his open sincerity has a disarming effect on many of his listeners. His free-wheeling, spontaneous, seemingly exciting, extroverted way of life often makes him the envy of the more timid types. But remember, his noisy, blustering, friendly ways make him appear more confident than he really is.

GIFT WRAPED FRUIT

It all begins here in Proverbs 20:27 which says, "***The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the inner depths of his heart.***" So when a person receives Jesus as Savior, at that precise moment, their spirit is born from above, or born again and becomes alive – having now the light of the Lord residing there. It's truly a spiritual rebirth, so now they can begin producing the charistics of Jesus Christ whose divine Spirit now indwells their human spirit.

Now, let me reiterate,...you must know that every fruit of the reborn human spirit coincides with a gift of the Holy Spirit. And Galations 5:22-23 lists the *Fruit of the Spirit*. The word for "spirit" here is the Greek word "pneuma" and this word does not mean the Holy Spirit. Pneuma actually represents the human spirit. Humans are of course, threefold beings: body, soul and spirit. Your soul is made up of your mind, will and emotions – the components in you that think critically, choose volitionally and is ressurected spiritually [when Christ makes His abode in you].

Your body, or flesh, has the potential of displaying the various evil characteristics which are listed in Galations 5:19-21, as well. You must remain humble, sow to the Spirit diligently and keep your guard up. Only the reborn human spirit can, with Godward partisipation, display the godly characteristics listed in Gal.5:22-23. So, let's pursue Jesus full-throtal and desire His gifts!