

# SPIRITUAL GIFTS study

Dartmouth Bible Church  
N. Dartmouth, MA

Thursday Evening Fellowship  
January 19, 1989

Question: When it comes to the Body (church, fellowship, brethren), what kind of ministry(s) do you enjoy performing?

One of DBC's PLANS for 1989 is to complete a "Spiritual Gifts Survey" involving everyone in the Body. We have dealt at length this past year with the subject of the "sign-gifts" in the New Testament. Although there are Christians who are unsure of this, our general understanding is that "sign-gifts" were given in the early decades of the church for the purpose of CONFIRMING or SIGNIFYING the Apostles' new message: Jesus IS Messiah/His Word is to be trusted. Our conviction is that establishing apostolic authority for the Gospel message is not the task of this age as it was in the first century--we have the Bible to do that. Therefore we view those specific "sign-gifts" (apostle, distinguishing of spirits, healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, prophecy, the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom) as having expended their usefulness. What we have NOT said much about, are the "service-gifts." Before we go further though, let's review a couple of things about "spiritual gifts":

? What IS a spiritual gift?                      ? Who HAS spiritual gifts?

Spiritual gifts are listed in five places in the N.T. They are Romans 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:8-10; I Cor. 12:28; Ephesians 4:11; I Pet.4:11. Let's read Romans 12:6-21...

## MAJOR FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS:

- \* Every Christian has at least one; some have several.
- \* We have gifts for one reason: to use them in building up the Body of Christ, the church.
- \* Scripture's message on gifts is simple. It is this: USE YOURS!
- \* Finding OUT who has what gift is not hard...
  - A. The church finds out, by being built up ("edified") by someone's loving use of their gift(s).
  - B. The individual finds out by using the following procedure:
    - 1 LEARN what the gifts are
    - 2 EXAMINE the kinds of things you enjoy doing in the Body
    - 3 TRY DIFFERENT kinds of ministries
    - 4 GAUGE the response of the Body
    - 5 LOOK TO SEE if your activity bears fruit
- \* Much effort is spent by Christians disputing who has what gift; It would be better if we spent our energy EXERCISING the gifts about which there is NO dispute!
- \* There may be other spiritual gifts in existence that the New Testament does not specifically list (i.e. "hospitality", Rom. 12:13; I Peter 4:9; or "encouragement", etc.)

- \* Christians should be mostly concerned about the *fruits* of the Spirit, and less about the gifts. The overlap is in the "fruits" of LOVE and FAITHFULNESS. Gifts are to be exercised out of concern for the well-being of the assembly (out of love), and faithfully (not only just after the person has found out what his/her gift is, and it is still a novelty).
- \* Spiritual gifts, like the fruits of the Spirit need time to mature. They require refinement and patience.

Now, let's consider what service-gift(s) YOU may have from God...

1. Administration (I Cor.12:28) Being able to give sound advice and wise judgement in directing church affairs. This gift is also called "governments" and involves "ruling" too. Note: things run more smoothly under the hand of someone with this gift. It is possible that the office of elder originated in this gift.
2. Evangelist (Eph.4:11) This is the person who has a special ability to lead people to Christ. Evangelists exercise their ministry in the full realization that the power comes from God, making faddish and manipulative techniques not only unnecessary but wrong. In the New Testament Timothy and Philip were both evangelists.
3. Exhortation (Romans 12:8) This person can bring the truth of Scripture to bear with a more personal approach than just by preaching or teaching. Their exhortations are characterized by love, understanding and sympathy as well as by clarity. You can "feel" this gift's exercise when you feel conviction but not threat.
4. Faith (I Cor.12:8-10) This person can effect mighty things--not by magic, but because he/she has an unusual ability to ask and trust God for things. It was especially useful in keeping believers steadfast during persecution.
5. Giving (or, "contributing") (Rom.12:8) All Christians are to give to the needs of the church, the ministry and the poor, but a special gift enables some to make a joyous sacrifice in this area.
6. Helps (or, "giving aid") (I Cor.12:8-10) This is the person who has a special concern to meet needs, wherever they crop up. They do not feel the need to be "in the spotlight," but enjoy working behind the scenes, helping where the needs shows up. The office of deacon may have originated in this gift.
7. Leading (Rom.12:8) This overlaps with the gift of "administration." The emphasis here though, is the person who has the ability to stand out in front and encourage folks to FOLLOW--they follow this person willingly and don't have to be dragged! One application may be in leading public worship.

8. Acts of Mercy (Romans 12:8) In New Testament times, to render aid was dangerous. Identifying with *other* Christians in need branded one as a Christian as well opening up the possibility for persecution for oneself. This person feels compassion and empathy, and puts those feelings into action by visitation, helps and other acts.
9. Pastor-Teacher (Eph.4:11) This is the person who is able to effectively communicate (teach) and to love (pastor) those who are being instructed. It is mentioned only once in the N.T. but exemplified often...
10. Serving (Rom.12:7; I Pet.4:11) A general term for the person who enjoys helping others in the Body. It can take all kinds of forms and is one of the most *necessary* gifts for a church to see operating.
11. Speaking (I Pet.4:11) This can encompass a lot of different kinds of ministry. Generally it is the ability to communicate clearly and in an edifying manner.
12. Teaching (Rom. 12:7; I Cor. 12:28; Eph.4:11) This person not only communicates well, but also has a special ability to offer systematic instruction about the Word. The exercise of this gift prompts people to UNDERSTAND right doctrine and how to apply it in a balanced way in the Christian life.

