

# SERVING THE LORD BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## **I. Introduction To Spiritual Gifts**

### **I. Introduction**

- A. Every believer has been equipped by the Holy Spirit for Christian service with a supernatural enabling called a spiritual gift, what translates the Greek term *charisma*. (Charles C. Ryrie, The Holy Spirit, 1973, p. 83)
- B. Thus, every believer should use that spiritual gift in serving the Lord in Christian service (1 Peter 4:10-11).
- C. However, many believers are not sure what their gift is nor how to begin to use it effectively, so we view Scripture on the introduction to this subject, viewing the definition, identification, distribution and development of one's spiritual gift for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

### **II. Introduction To Spiritual Gifts. (Charles C. Ryrie, The Holy Spirit, 1973, p. 83-85)**

- A. By **definition**, a spiritual gift is "a God-given ability for service," Ibid. It is **not** a *place* of ministry, nor the *person* to whom it is given by God, nor the *specialty* of ministry like teacher or deacon – it is an **ability**, Ibid.
- B. As for **identifying** one's spiritual gift, Scripture does not tell believers how to identify their gifts, but assumes that they easily discern the gifts. Thus, responses a believer gets from other Christians (1 Corinthians 12:29-30) and what God causes him to want to do in ministry (Philippians 2:13) will identify that believer's gift.
- C. The **distribution** of the gifts is the work of the Holy Spirit, for He is the sole Agent of their distribution:
  1. The spiritual gift that every believer has is **not** something that he receives from God by his own request, but God the Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes it to him at the believer's salvation, 1 Corinthians 12:11.
  2. The apostles were given multiple if not all of the gifts, for Paul spoke in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18) and healed a man, raising him from the dead (Acts 29:9-10), where other believers have one gift, 1 Peter 4:10.
  3. The spiritual gift that a believer has is not limited in its scope as to time nor as to geographical location. "For instance, the gift of apostleship which was given to Saul of Tarsus is a gift to the entire church in all generations," and "(w)e still profit today from that gift given once in the first century," Ibid., p. 84-85. Similarly, the writings of deceased, gifted believers down through the ages of Church History are still profitable to us today, be they from a Charles Haddon Spurgeon or a Lewis Sperry Chafer, etc.
- D. Though a believer's spiritual gift is a supernatural ability given by God, it can be used more effectively if the believer **develops** its use in his study of Scripture and in practicing his gift (as follows):
  1. A believer needs to minister in a way that he can use his gift instead of functioning without its use:
    - a. In 2 Timothy 1:6 ESV, Paul told Timothy to "rekindle" (*anaxopureo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 53) the "spiritual gift" (*charisma*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 731) of God to overcome a spirit of timidity that afflicted Timothy while he served the Lord in the pastorate at Ephesus, for God had given him a spirit of power and love and self-control – not of timidity.
    - b. A similar command occurred in 1 Timothy 4:14 where Paul told Timothy to "stop neglecting" (*amelei* in the present imperative with the *me* negative particle, Ibid., p. 725) the spiritual gift that was given him in conjunction with the laying on hands of the elders, meaning that the elders at Timothy's ordination officially recognized his particular spiritual gift. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 741)
  2. Obviously, this rekindling of a spiritual gift involves not only using it but using it in mental reliance on the Holy Spirit for power. However, in the realm of teaching, rekindling a gift also requires one's study of the Word of God and properly handling it so that the teacher knows how to interpret it correctly, 2 Timothy 2:15. In view of the many false teachers who have risen in Church History, thorough Bible study and training is necessary in today's world to prepare the believer for teaching or preaching the truth.
  3. Other spiritual gifts also involve practice and development, like the gift of "administration" that benefits from experience for gaining practical wisdom before one can function well in leadership. This is not to overlook the need to rely on the Holy Spirit to use one's spiritual gift, but as human beings, we need to gain the factual knowledge and expertise in organizing our thoughts for optimizing what the Holy Spirit can do through us. To illustrate, though David was permanently filled with the Holy Spirit by Samuel's anointing of him in 1 Samuel 16:13, later in 1 Samuel 17:38-40, he refused to wear Saul's armor to fight Goliath since he had not tested it. Instead, David used his shepherd's sling with which he had experience!

**Lesson: Each believer at salvation is given an easily identified supernatural ability for service, and he is to rely on the Holy Spirit to use it with power with the training and experience required to maximize its practical usefulness.**

**Application: May we rekindle our spiritual gift and train and practice it in accord with Scripture for effectiveness.**