

Grace works:

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit  
Through the Life of the Believer

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## Grace Works: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

### In the Life of the Believer

#### Introduction

One of the greatest joys in the life of the Christian comes as the Lord uses the believer to touch the life of another. The Apostle John understood this when he wrote, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete” (I John 1:3-4). Fulfillment in the Christian walk comes as people discover the thrill of leading someone to Christ, the wonder of praying a prayer of faith resulting in God healing another person, or the pleasure of discipling a fellow believer and helping them to mature in their faith.

Unfortunately, there are those who think that such things are, *What we pay the preacher for....* Others have the idea that *God could never use me*. Both of these ideas are wrong and those who believe such things are missing the true, complete joy of which John wrote. Some might ask, *How can God use me?* or *I am not good enough* or *I have sinned*, or *I haven't been to Bible College*. Christians often offer many reasons why God would not use them. However, there is one reason why God will use you. That reason is *grace*. God's grace opens the door of opportunity for the Holy Spirit to reach through a believer in order to serve another. Consider the following: if God had to wait for perfect

people to accomplish His work, He would never accomplish His purpose because the Bible states, "there is none righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:10).

A common understanding of grace is God's unmerited favor. This is a proper understanding, for certainly, grace is favor and it is certainly unmerited. However, the definition has become so common it has lost its potency. Paul provides a biblical equation for grace noting, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4-5). Notice *great love* plus *rich mercy* equals *grace*. What is grace? Grace is the combination of God's great love and rich mercy.

Another important passage for understanding grace is Romans 11:6, "And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace."

These two passages are very important for helping God's people to understand this amazing grace of God. First, *works*, which is what we do on our own, subtracts from *grace*. In other words, if one must earn it, then it cannot be grace. No one can do anything to be *good enough*, so stop trying! Allow God's grace to flow through you in spite of your shortcomings. Next, God loves you with a *great love* and He has an abundance of mercy (*rich mercy*) to reach out through imperfect people to accomplish His purpose in accordance with His will and for His glory. That is grace!

The Apostle Paul recognized his ministry was a work of God's grace in his life. Remember, Paul persecuted the church prior to coming to Christ and through his writings, he indicates that the work of the Holy Spirit in and through him was the result of God's *great love* and *rich mercy* displayed as *grace*. The following passages point this out.

For 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 measure of faith God has given you (Romans 12:3).

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace, to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me (I Corinthians 15:10).

The Apostle Paul recognized his ministry was totally the work of God's grace in and through his life. The same is true of every believer. God does not use people because of who they are, because of what they have accomplished, or because of how good they are. God uses imperfect people to accomplish His perfect will through grace. It is grace at work, the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the life of the believer, which brings salvation and healing to the world.

### Spiritual Gifts at Work

#### I Corinthians 12:1-11

Spiritual Gifts Defined (I Corinthians 12:1-7)

In order to gain a biblical understanding of spiritual gifts it is important to build a biblical definition. To do this, it is important to understand a few Greek words. The first word is the Greek word *pneumatikos* found in I Corinthians 12:1. Most popular English Bibles translate the word *spiritual gifts*. The context implies the idea of these *spirituals* as gifts. A more literal translation of the word would be *spiritual matters* or *spiritual things*. What is important here is to understand that Paul is describing the nature of these gifts, that they are spiritual in nature.

The second word is the Greek word *diarsis* found in I Corinthians 12:4 translated *different* in many of the popular English translations. It can also be translated *various* or *variety*. However, for the purposes of establishing a biblical definition of spiritual gifts, the important aspect of this word is the concept of the *variations* or *varieties* of the gifts.

The third word to understand is *charismata* found in I Corinthians 12:4. This is probably the most easily recognizable word most often translated *gifts*. The important aspect of this word is the root word *charis* most often translated *grace*. The importance of this word to the study is the understanding that these spiritual gifts originate or have as their source, the grace of God. Notice the combination of the word *pneumatikos* and *charismata* together in this context that enables the translators to understand that Paul is talking about spiritual gifts. In a later epistle to the Romans, Paul used the two words

*charisma* and *pneumatikos* informing those in Rome of his desire to visit them and to impart to them a spiritual gift (Romans 1:11).

Fourth, the word *diakonia* found in I Corinthians 12:4. This word is the word from which the English word *deacon* comes. Many English Bibles translate this word *service*. The idea is that of *ministry* or *service* to others.

The fifth word is *energemata* found in I Corinthians 12:6. The English word *energy* comes from this word. Many popular English translations use the word *workings* to translate this word. Notice in this verse there are different kinds of workings. Here, Paul is equating the workings with the *charismata*, the gifts of verse 4. Through these various workings, "it is the same God who works all of these things in all men" (I Corinthians 12:6 author's translation). In light of this, it is evident that spiritual gifts require some type of action. On the part of humanity, it requires a response of faith and on the part of God, it requires a release of grace in the form of wisdom, knowledge, healing, or whatever the need may require. Therefore, in developing a biblical definition, it is important to understand the idea of *God at work through the believer*.

The sixth word in the study is *phanerosis* found in I Corinthians 12:7 translated *manifestation* in many English translations. The verb form of this word is *phaneroo* and carries the idea of *shining forth*. This is a revealing, a shining forth, thus a manifestation.

Notice also, it is a manifestation of the *Spirit*. Thus, the operation of a spiritual gift is a shining forth or revealing of the Holy Spirit in and through the life of the believer. It is as though a momentary flash of the Spirit occurs. The infinite God is flashing into the finite present. God's grace is manifest in a particular moment or situation.

The seventh word in the study is *sumphero* translated *common good* in the NIV. This word is the combination of a preposition, *sun*, which carries the idea of *with* or *together with* and the word *phero*, often translated *carry, endure, support* or *sustain*. Therefore, the idea Paul is conveying is that of a *common support* or *enduing with*. The NIV and NASB translate the word *common good*, thus, the outcome of the manifestations of the Spirit is the common good of the Body of Christ.

The eighth and ninth words are interchangeable in I Corinthians 12:9-11. These words are *allos* and *eteros*, which mean *another* and *another of a different kind*. There is a two-fold importance to the use of these words in these verses as they relate to spiritual gifts. First, the gifts of the Spirit are manifest through human hands. The Holy Spirit uses believers, imperfect believers, to release God's grace to others. Second, the gifts are given to *one* and then to *another* in terms of distribution. God intends for all of His people to be vessels through which the Holy Spirit flows.

Reviewing, note once more the nine words under consideration in building a biblical definition of spiritual gifts, including:

- *Pneumatikos* (12:1) – meaning *spirituals* and showing the *nature of the gifts*
- *Diaresis* (12:4) – meaning *different* or *various* showing *variety*,
- *Charismata* (12:4) – meaning *grace gifts* showing the origin or source of spiritual gifts as the *grace* of God,
- *Diakonia* (12:4) – meaning *ministry*,
- *Energemata* (12:6) – meaning *workings of God through the believer*,
- *Phanerosis* (12:7) – meaning a *shining forth* or *manifestation*,
- *Sumphero* (12:7) – meaning the *common good* or *benefit*, and
- *Allos* and *Eteros* (12:9-11) – meaning *one* and *another* and pointing to the human element i.e. *human hands*.

Using these words as a foundation, a biblical definition of spiritual gifts is as follows:

*Spiritual gifts are the variety of manifestations of the Holy Spirit, flowing from the grace of God, through human hands to release God's grace to others for the benefit of all.*

This biblical definition provides a foundation for understanding the various spiritual gifts and how the Holy Spirit releases these gifts in the life of the believer to serve others. Looking closely at the definition notice first, the gifts are *manifestation of the Holy Spirit*. These gifts have at their very core the Holy Spirit. The nature of these gifts reflects the nature of the Holy Spirit. The most obvious aspect of the nature of the Holy Spirit is that He is holy; therefore, believers should demonstrate a reverent attitude

toward the manifestations of the Spirit. Other descriptive terms regarding the Holy Spirit include *Comforter, Truth, Grace, and Life*. All of these words describe the Holy Spirit, His nature, and lend to the characteristics of His manifestations. That is, the gifts bring comfort, flow from truth, are gracious in manner and content, and bring life.

Second, it is very important to notice that spiritual gifts *flow from the grace of God*. This is very important, as the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is very dependent upon the grace of God. Many believers miss the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to minister to others through them because of feelings of unworthiness, inadequacy, or mistaken ideas about having to reach some fictitious level on a spiritual ladder of maturity. Feelings or thoughts such as these have caused many believers to miss the joy of the Holy Spirit flowing through their life in order to minister to another person through spiritual gifts. God's grace makes up the difference between who we are and the person God is helping us become.

Therefore, knowing the importance of grace it is also important to understand that the manifestation of a spiritual gift does not indicate that a believer has *arrived* or somehow reached some level of *spiritual maturity* or *greatness*. Remember, grace has nothing to do with works or the abilities of the individual; if it did, it would no longer be grace. Remember Paul's words,

For 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 measure of faith God has given you (Romans. 12:3).

Additionally, if the Holy Spirit releases grace through a believer to serve another and then that same believer makes a mistake, remember it is the grace of God that allows any believer to touch another person's life.

Third, these gifts are *supernatural workings*, that is, they do not fit a natural pattern or process. This means the manifestations of the Spirit do not always follow logic or reason. However, that is not to say there is no order, or that the manifestations somehow cause a person to operate in an uncontrolled fashion. Paul made it clear that the manifestations of the Spirit within the Church were to be orderly when he wrote, "everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (I Corinthians 14:40). The gifts of the Spirit might not always make sense to the believer through whom they manifest. However, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit through the life of the believer requires an element of faith. Therefore, although it might not make sense at the time, by faith, the believer allows the gifts to flow and leaves the results to the Lord. Acts 10:8-46 contains a vision the Lord gave to Peter, which illustrates this point.

Something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat (Acts 10:11-13).

Now from Peter's point of view this was not logical, nor was it reasonable. In fact, Peter, true to his nature, argued with the Lord about the command to "kill and eat" because it went against Jewish laws and customs. In fact, Peter's argument was, "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean" (Acts 10:14). The point is the gifts of the Spirit that operate through the life of the believer are supernatural and do not always follow logic or reason.

Fourth, although spiritual gifts are *supernatural workings*, they are manifest through *human hands*. There may be those who think that a manifestation of the Spirit somehow eliminates one's thought process or abilities. For example, what language does God speak? This may seem like a strange question to ask; but seriously, what language does God speak? If the language many use when prophesying or interpreting a tongue determines the answer, the answer would have to be King James Version English. After all, many speak King James English when manifesting those two spiritual gifts. Now as ridiculous as that may seem, the point is that God speaks to us in our own language. If a believer lives in China and speaks Chinese, is God going to speak to them in King James Version English? No, He will speak to them in their own language. God speaks to His people in their own language in a way they can understand. So be who you are; spiritual gifts are supernatural workings through human hands, words, and

thoughts. It is all right if you are not eloquent or flamboyant. The Holy Spirit needs empty and willing vessels. Be yourself.

Finally, God gives spiritual gifts to *minister to others for the common good*. Herein is the key to spiritual gifts, ministry to others. People are hurting. God loves people. God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Believers can do many things in their own ability. They can feed the hungry, visit the sick, or teach a class. All of these things are important and necessary. However, there are some things believers cannot do on their own and that is when the Holy Spirit comes and through God's grace reaches through the believer to touch someone else at their point of need. Believers should not herald the manifestations of the Spirit with great fanfare. In fact, many times spiritual gifts are manifest with no one else around. Two believers may be talking to one another and a word of wisdom is given. One believer may pray for another and release a gift of healing. Grace is the means by which God gives spiritual gifts to His people so that they might manifest supernatural workings to minister to others for the benefit of all.

Spiritual Gifts Discovered (I Corinthians 12:8-11)

The Apostle Paul listed nine different spiritual gifts. All of the gifts are given "for the common good" (I Corinthians 12:7 NIV). The listing of the nine gifts is not a list of greatest to least importance because each of these gifts is important for their intended manifestation at a particular time. Writers often place the spiritual gifts into three

categories of three gifts each. These categories include gifts of revelation, gifts of power, and gifts of utterance. However, the use of these categories could cause interpretive errors by implicating design or use when trying to gain an understanding of the meanings and use of these gifts. For example, to categorize a word of wisdom or word of knowledge as a gift of revelation by implication requires the definition of those gifts to include a revelatory element. However, a close examination of the text does not indicate any type of revelation that is beyond the believer's ability to know or understand. Therefore, the spiritual gifts will be discussed in the order they appear in the text in order to avoid undue interpretive inference.

#### *Word of Wisdom*

*Word of wisdom* is the first spiritual gift listed in I Corinthians 12:8. The Greek word *sophia*, here translated *wisdom* appears in the text in its possessive form meaning the translation could be *wisdom's word*, or put another way, *a word flowing out of wisdom*. What is important here is that the gift is manifest in a word or words and these words flow from Spirit enhanced wisdom. The word *enhanced* is a descriptor in this case so that there is no confusion of this manifestation with *inspiration* as in the inspiration of scripture. Christians should not consider these spiritual gifts as being on the same level of the inspiration of scripture. Therefore, a word of wisdom is a spoken word or words flowing from Spirit enhanced wisdom. A common understanding of wisdom is the

proper application of knowledge. However, in the context of spiritual as flashes or manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the wisdom spoken of here is an elevated or enhanced wisdom manifesting to minister to another person.

### *Word of Knowledge*

The second spiritual gift listed is a *word of knowledge* (I Corinthians 12:8). Note it is a *word flowing from knowledge*. Again, it is a spoken word or words flowing from Spirit enhanced knowledge. Neither word of wisdom nor word of knowledge refers to spiritual mind reading. Nor, is there any indication from the text that these gifts involve any kind of mystical fortune telling.

These manifestations, though enhanced by the Holy Spirit, flow from the Word of God. That is, Christians who desire to be available to the Holy Spirit for a word of wisdom or a word of knowledge should be students of the Word of God. Proverbs 2:6 says, "For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (NIV). Remember the biblical definition of spiritual gifts *is the variety of manifestations of the Holy Spirit, flowing from the grace of God, through human hands*. The Holy Spirit will enhance the Word of God in the believer, and at the right time, in the right situation, the Holy Spirit will take the Word of God with enhanced wisdom or knowledge to minister to others.

### *Faith*

The next manifestation of the Spirit listed by Paul is faith (12:9). This is the Greek word *pistis*, which is translated *faith, trust, or belief* throughout the New Testament. The writer of Hebrews gives a biblical definition of faith as “being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see” (11:1 NIV). In the context of I Corinthians 12, this is a flash or manifestation of faith that the Holy Spirit produces in order to minister to others. Acts 3:5-7 contains an example of this gift in operation. In this passage, Peter and John were going to the temple to pray and they saw a man there who born crippled. This man sat in the same place every day begging for money from those going to the temple. Undoubtedly, Peter and John had seen this man before, since he was there every day. However, on this occasion Peter did something different. He said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6 NIV). What made the difference? Peter's faith was supernaturally *increased*; it was a flash, a revealing, a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's enhancement of Peter's faith, and the result leads to the next gift in the list.

#### *Gifts of Healings*

The fourth spiritual gift listed is *charismata iamaton* translated *gifts of healings* (I Corinthians 12:9). Of course, the word *charismata* is the same word used in Verse 4 translated gifts (grace gifts). The word *iamaton* is translated *healings*. Notice both words are plural, *gifts of healings*, indicating that there are different kinds or types of healings.

There are instantaneous healings and there are progressive healings. There are physical healings and there are mental and emotional healings. People are complex, but no matter what the need the gifts of healings are available to bring newness of life.

What is important to understand is that these are gracious gifts of healings. The Book of Acts contains many examples of the gifts of healings. The previous reference to Acts 3:5-7 not only gives an example of the gift of faith, but also of the gifts of healings at work. When Peter said, "what I have I give you" (Acts 3:6 NIV) he gave the man a gracious gift of healing.

#### *Workings of Power*

The fifth spiritual gift Paul lists is *energemata dunameon*, which translated, literally is *workings of power*. The NIV translates the words *miraculous powers*, the NASB translates the words *effecting of miracles*; and the KJV translates the words *workings of miracles*. Set aside the popular translations and consider for a moment taking the Greek words literally. The word *energemata* is the same word that was used in verse 6, not once, but twice as Paul wrote, "There are different kinds of *working*, but the same God *works* all of them in all men" ( I Corinthians 12:6 NIV). Notice in both instances the concept of "working" or "works." The word *dunamenon* is typically understood as power. Thus, the literal translation is *workings of power*.

It is easy to see how the editors of the various translations cited above could interpret *workings of power* to be *miraculous powers*, or *effecting of miracles*, or *workings of miracles*. However, when viewed in this way there is a limitation placed on this spiritual gift. To explain further, it is important to know that a *miracle* is a supernatural suspension of natural laws. Biblical examples of miracles, according to this definition, would include the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 10:19), the day the sun stood still (Joshua 10:13), or Jesus walking on water (Matthew 14:25). There could be no doubt that these are miracles. Many believers today mistakenly call a *healing* a *miracle*. Praise God for the gifts of healings manifest in the Church today and perhaps this may be *splitting hairs*. However, in the attempt to gain understanding of the gifts of the Spirit, it is important to make the distinction in order to bring clarity.

Removing the limitation, that is using the word *miracle*, placed on the words *energemata dunameon* and allowing the words to speak for themselves, that is, *workings of power* or *powerful works* or *dynamic works*, enables one to see this spiritual gift more readily manifest in the Body of Christ. That is not to say this gift is absent in the Body of Christ today. However, imposing the limitation of *miracles* upon this gift, and if miracles are understood to be a supernatural suspension of natural laws, then one might conclude that this gift is not evident. Therefore, by allowing the text to speak for itself

the gift of *workings of power* opens the door for a new recognition of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in and through the believer.

### *Prophecy*

The sixth gift in the list is *propheteia* translated *prophecy* (I Corinthians 12:10). Paul gave insight concerning the gift of prophecy in I Corinthians 14:1-39 where the Apostle advised believers to seek after spiritual gifts, “especially the gift of prophecy” (v. 1). The reason for Paul’s emphasis on prophecy is found in verse 3 in which he wrote, “everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement, and comfort” whereas, “he who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church” (14:4 NIV). From these verses, it is clear that prophecy is a manifestation of the Spirit spoken in a known language of the speaker for the purpose of strengthening, encouraging, and comforting the Body of Christ.

### *Discerning of Spirits*

The seventh gift in Paul’s list is “distinguishing between spirits” (1 Corinthians 12:10 NIV). The Greek words used here are *diakrisies pneumaton*. The word *diakrisies* is a compound word *dia* meaning *through* and *kriseis* meaning to *judge*. Therefore, the meaning is to *judge through* or the idea of *seeing through* something. In the context, it is a judgment concerning things of the spirit. It is unclear from the context whether Paul is referring to spirits as in evil spirits, or concerning spiritual matters or things or both.

Nevertheless, the concept is to judge spiritual things whether spirits or gifts. This interpretation falls within the whole of the Bible as Paul wrote in I Corinthians 14:29, "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said" (NIV). John also encouraged believers to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (I John 4:1 NIV). Acts 16:16 contains an example of this gift in operation.

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her (NIV).

One might think Paul would have enjoyed the free publicity. However, he saw through the spirit and commanded the spirit to leave the girl. This gift, discerning of spirits, is a most necessary gift in the Body of Christ. Too often believers accept anything and everything that "comes down the pike" without properly judging whether it is of God or not. Remember, Satan is a deceiver and as such, his tactics are to lead the believer away from truth. Even when it might look like "good publicity," as in the case with Paul, if God is not behind it, the Church does not need it.

## *Kinds of Tongues*

The eighth spiritual gift listed is *gena glosson* translated “speaking in different kinds of tongues” (I Corinthians 12:10 NIV). A literal translation is simply *kinds of tongues*. The context of I Corinthians 12 and 14 indicate that this gift is a spoken utterance in a tongue that is unknown to the speaker. Chapter 14 also gives us insight into this gift as described in the following verses. Paul wrote, “...anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God (14:2 NIV). Additionally, he wrote, “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself... (14:4 NIV) and “If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful (14:14 NIV). Also,

If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified (14:16-17 NIV).

Notice in these passages the Apostle Paul explained that when a believer speaks in a tongue the believer is *speaking to God*. When speaking in a tongue, the believer is *edifying him or herself*. Paul gives further insight into the purpose of tongues in verses 16-17 as he wrote, “If you are *praising God with your spirit* how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say ‘Amen’ to your *thanksgiving*...? You may be *giving thanks* well enough, but the other man is not edified” (NIV). Notice the italicized

words *praising God, thanksgiving, and giving thanks*. This passage provides a paradigm or model for the purpose of tongues; that is, for worship.

This precept is also born out in two of Luke's records of believers receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. On the day of Pentecost people from all over the region who had heard those baptized in the Holy Spirit speak in their own tongue "declaring the wonders of God" (Acts 2:11 NIV). When someone is declaring the wonders of God, that person is worshipping God. When Peter went to Cornelius' household, they "were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God" (Acts 10:45, 46 NIV). The Greek word *kai (kai)* often translated *even*; thus, "they heard them speaking in tongues *even* praising God." Thus, *kinds of tongues* are a gift of the Spirit designed to enhance the worship of the believer. The gift is for personal edification, yet is also for the edification of the church if accompanied by the next spiritual gift known as interpretation of tongues.

#### *Interpretation of Tongues*

The ninth spiritual gift listed found in I Corinthians 12:10 *hermeneia glosson*. The word *hermeneia* is the word from which the English *hermeneutics* comes and of course, the word *glosson* is the same word discussed in the previous section having to do with *kinds of tongues*. The importance of *hermeneia* is that it means *interpretation*. This point is

significant because there is a difference between an interpretation and a translation.

This manifestation of the Spirit is not a literal word for word translation of the tongue; rather it is an interpretation of the tongue. The prescription of the interpretation is to establish the message, but it not necessarily designed to be an exact replication of words.

First Corinthians 14 contains teachings regarding the importance of interpretation of tongues as Paul gives instructions to the church regarding the proper use of tongues within the church. With the emphasis on tongues among the Corinthian believers, Paul told the church that the public exercise of tongues with interpretation of the tongue edifies the entire Church (I Corinthians 14:4, 13). Further, Paul instructs the believers,

If anyone speaks in a tongue, two--or at the most three--should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God (I Corinthians 14:27-28 NIV).

The gifts of the Spirit of God are a wonderful manifestation of God's grace working in and through the life of the believer in order to minister to others for the benefit of all.

Yet, how do believers develop these gifts in their life? Are these gifts available only for those in full-time ministry or for those who serve as elders and deacons?

Spiritual Gifts Developed (I Corinthians 12-14)

It might sound unspiritual to think in terms of the development of spiritual gifts. However, the Lord helps His people to grow and to mature in faith. Therefore, congruent with faith development it would seem there would also be the development of various talents, abilities, and even spiritual gifts in the life of the believer. This section, concerning the development of spiritual gifts in the life of the believer, is the most difficult section because there is little scriptural documentation about the development of the gifts in a believer's life. However, there exists a need of an encouraging guide to those who desire spiritual gifts in their life. Where scriptural evidence is available, the evidence is given. The design of this section (outside of areas in which scriptural evidence is given) is unauthoritative and only based on experience.

#### *Development Begins With Desire*

Paul wrote, "But eagerly desire the greater gifts" (I Corinthians 12:31 NIV) and again "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts" (I Corinthians 14:1 NIV). The Greek word *dzeloō* used in both of these verses means to *be jealous of, to set one's heart on, to have or show a great interest, or to be deeply concerned about*. In addition, in both of these passages Paul used this verb in its present active imperative form, which means Paul was giving believers a command to seek after spiritual gifts. Many churches have allowed the manifestations of the Spirit to become a scarce commodity within the fellowship. However, the words of Paul echo through the centuries calling on the Body

of Christ to continue to desire the manifestations of the Spirit within the Church once again.

The psalmist wrote, “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Psalms 37:4 NIV). Paul encouraged believers to “eagerly desire spiritual gifts” (I Corinthians 14:1 NIV). The Body of Christ needs the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and if believers have a desire for Holy Spirit to flow in their lives in a general way or in a particular gift, it is scriptural to “eagerly desire” that gift. Notice Paul wrote, “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, *especially the gift of prophecy*” (I Corinthians 14:1 NIV). In this passage, Paul pointed out prophecy as a particular gift to desire. Thus, it is biblical for believers to seek the Lord for specific manifestations of the Spirit to flow in their lives.

There may be those who think it is wrong or egotistical to seek after or to desire spiritual gifts in their life. Perhaps this is why Paul wrote the beautiful passage concerning love between these two verses. Remember, the original autographs did not contain verse or chapter divisions. Remember, Paul tells the Corinthians to “eagerly desire the greater gifts” (I Corinthians 12:31 NIV). Then he writes, “Eagerly desire spiritual gifts” (I Corinthians 14:1 NIV). Between these two phrases are the words, “And now I will show you the most excellent way” (I Corinthians 12:31b NIV). Finally

he pens the words of love known as I Corinthians 13, followed by the phrase, “Follow the way of love” (I Corinthians 14:1a). Love must encompass the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### *Developed Through Discipline*

Those who desire the development of spiritual gifts in their life will have to live a life of spiritual discipline. The Apostle Paul provided a course of discipline for those who desire to live in accordance with the Spirit in his letter to the Romans. Paul’s argument is that in order for the uniting of believers with Christ in his resurrection, and for believers to enjoy the fullness of life in the Spirit, they must first unite with Jesus in his death. This death is a death to the sinful nature as Paul wrote, “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (Romans 6:6-7). Paul continued by calling on believers to consider themselves dead to sin.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:11-13)

This discipline leads to obedience, which leads to righteousness (Romans 6:16), which leads to holiness (Romans 6:19). Before Christ, humans were slaves to sin, which

resulted in death. Now, however believers have “been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life” (Romans 6:22).

Second, those who desire to live in accordance with the Spirit must submit their minds to the Spirit. Specifically, Paul wrote, “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires, but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires” (Romans 8:6). The Greek word *phroneo* and its noun form *phronema* translated *mind* in Romans 8:5-7 carries with it the idea of *way of thinking, think, and mind*. The verb form of the word indicates a mind that is continually set on the things of the Spirit.

Paul wrote, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV). Submitting the mind to the Spirit requires discipline in making the thought life obedient to Christ. In order for the believer to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, it is necessary to have the mind of Christ, that is, to submit one’s thinking, one’s mind-set; one has thought process on what the Spirit desires.

Jesus said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (John 7:38 NIV). The Apostle John, after writing these words made sure his audience

understood exactly what Jesus was talking about as he continued, “By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive” (John 7:39 NIV). Thus, it is clear from the Scriptures that the flow of the Holy Spirit is from within the believer. Proverbs 4:23 states, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (NIV).

Those who desire the development of the gifts of the Spirit in their life must discipline their life by submitting their bodies and mind as instruments of righteousness. By allowing the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:16) to pollute the heart, the flow of the Spirit can and will be hindered. However, by living a life of spiritual discipline and establishing a mindset in accordance with the Spirit, believers can do their part to assure the living water flows clearly, unpolluted by the sinful nature and the things of the world.

#### *Developed in Love (I Corinthians 13)*

Paul made it very clear that the person, who manifests the gifts of the Holy Spirit apart from *agape*, translated *love* in I Corinthians 13, is worthless. In the first few verses of the chapter, Paul gave examples of just how important love is in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can

fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing (I Corinthians 13:1-3 NIV).

Notice in these verses, the gift itself is not worthless; rather, the person through whom the gift flows. One can speak in tongues, but if there is no love, it is just a show or just someone making noise. One can prophesy and speak words of wisdom and knowledge, and even have mountain-moving faith. However, if that person does not have love, then that person is nothing. People may give all they have to the poor or even become a martyr for the cause of Christ, but if that person does not have love, they gain nothing for their sacrifice. Love is the key to unlocking the development of spiritual gifts in the life of the believer.

Love is not a feeling, it is an action; it is a decision one makes, it is a behavior one chooses. Paul then listed the actions or behaviors of love. Undoubtedly, this is a high standard and the grace of God must make up the difference in the life of every believer. However, as believers set their hearts on seeking after spiritual gifts, it is imperative that the believer also understands the importance of love as the motivation for spiritual manifestations, as well as the pattern of behavior in the life of one through whom the Holy Spirit manifests Himself.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails (I Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV).

When love motivates the manifestations of the Spirit, then the common good is the outcome.

### *Developed by Faith*

There is an old Christian song containing these words, “Prayer is the key to heaven, but faith unlocks the door.” Anyone who desires the manifestations of the Holy Spirit to flow through their life has to take a step of faith. Paul wrote, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith” (Romans 12:6 NIV). It would be nice, if the Holy Spirit would write everything He wanted us to do down on a piece of paper explaining exactly when, where, why and how. Yet, usually the Holy Spirit does not work in that way. Many times, the Holy Spirit will only give an initial thought or word and He expects the believer to follow based on faith. Faith is required to please God (Hebrews 11:6), faith is required when the believer prays (James 1:6-8), and faith is required to flow in spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6).

The Lord is looking for people who will open their lives to Him, people who have the desire for the Holy Spirit to flow in their lives to minister to others. If you do not have the faith to receive God’s gracious gifts in your life, you will not operate in those gifts. If, on the other hand, you have faith that God’s grace is the only measure through which God distributes His gifts, then you can receive and express His grace in and through the various manifestations of the Spirit. Those who seek the Lord and who earnestly desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit will find

the Lord will begin to teach them and to develop particular gifts in their lives for the glory of God.

### *Developed Through Use*

A professional baseball player becomes a better hitter by hitting. A writer becomes a better writer by writing. A preacher becomes a better preacher by preaching. Believers become more comfortable ministering under the guidance of the Holy Spirit by allowing the manifestation of the Spirit to operate in their life. Why does it have to be more difficult than that? With anything in life, the more familiar one becomes with something, the more comfortable one is with it.

The Holy Spirit works in and with the believer to develop spiritual gifts. Everyone is different and He works in everyone differently. What works for one person may not work for the next person. What is important is that believers learn to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Following are some important keys for following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

First, the Holy Spirit is a Spirit. The Greek word *pneuma* (*pneuma*), translated *Spirit*, also means *breath*. This is very important to keep in mind. Remember after the great victory Elijah participated in on Mt. Carmel (I Kings 18), that he fled from Jezebel to Horeb (I Kings 19). While there, the Lord told Elijah to

Go forth and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a *sound of a gentle blowing*. When Elijah

heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (I Kings 19:8-13 NASB)

Notice, the Lord was in neither the strong wind, nor the earthquake, nor the fire, but the Lord was in *a sound of a gentle blowing*. The leading of the Holy Spirit is like a *gentle nudge*. The believer has to be *sensitive* to the *gentle blowing* of the Spirit's leading. That gentle wind is what the leading of the Holy Spirit is like. It could be a gentle nudge to pray for someone, or a simple word given in order to encourage another, or a nudge to give, or after a message in tongues, it could be the first few words to the interpretation. Be sensitive and watch for the gentle blowing or nudging of the Holy Spirit.

Second, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you how to operate in the gifts of the Spirit. Jesus said, "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things" (John 14:26 NIV). The Holy Spirit is a willing and very good teacher because He knows exactly how to teach you. The Holy Spirit knows exactly how to teach you so that you know exactly what He desires to accomplish. As the Holy Spirit teaches believers, He will expect believers to grow and mature in their walk of faith. Therefore, as the lessons continue, He will expect believers to begin to utilize faith and follow His gentle nudging more readily and more easily. This is the exciting part of following the leading of the Holy Spirit, anticipating the nudge of the Holy Spirit to serve others to bring glory to God.

*Developed in Each One (I Corinthians 12:7-11)*

Read these verses again and notice the use of the words *each one* and *one* and *another*.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines ( I Corinthians 12:7-11).

First, notice Spirit gives manifestations to *each one*. Those are two glorious words in this text. These two words are indiscriminant and non-descriptive. That means the manifestations of the Spirit are given to “whosoever believes” (John 3:16 KJV). Notice that no pedigree is required, nor is a degree required, in fact, there is no requirements except being an *each one*!

Second, remember in the biblical definition of spiritual gifts that the last two words studied were *allos* and *eteros*, which mean *another* and *another of a different kind*. In I Corinthians 12:8-10 Paul uses the words interchangeably in order to make the point that spiritual gifts are distributed to *each one* in the Body of Christ in proportion to their faith (Romans 12:6). The idea that one person has or manifests all of the gifts of the Spirit is foreign to the text. Later in the chapter, Paul compares the various functions of the physical body to the various functions of the different gifts in the Body of Christ. In other words, every member and every gift in the Body of Christ is important and dependent upon one another. Concluding the chapter Paul asked the following questions that demand a negative answer “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?” (I Corinthians 12:30-31 NIV).

God's design is for every member in the Body of Christ to be involved in ministry. He does not wait for perfect people before he distributes spiritual gifts, He looks for empty vessels to fill with His Spirit; vessels that will respond to His grace in their lives by faith allowing the gifts of the Spirit to flow in order to minister to others for the common good.

## Ministry Gifts at Work

### Ephesians 4:7-16

#### Gifts of Grace Given To Each One

God's grace is at the heart of all of the Holy Spirit's workings in the lives of believers. Just as grace is the source of spiritual gifts, God's grace is also the source of the ministry gifts that the Lord gives to the Body of Christ. Paul wrote, "Now to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7 author's translation). Paul emphasized the phrase *to each one of us* in this verse. The Greek text, this is clear as the word for word translations would be *now to one, to each one of us, grace is given*. In the Greek language, repetition creates emphasis; Paul emphasized the relevance of grace in the life of every believer. Not only grace for salvation, but in this context, grace for ministry. Paul saw grace as the source of God's dealings with man as is evident in the following verses. "The promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all" (Romans 4:16 NIV), "Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand" (Romans 5:2 NIV). "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us" (Romans 12:6 NIV).

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17 NIV),

So that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:21 NIV).

Paul emphasized God's grace as the source and foundation of His dealings with men at every level in many other verses. The crux being, without God's grace, humankind is doomed. Yet with God's grace, through Christ Jesus, humankind has hope and the Lord gives gifts to men in order to establish His kingdom among men.

### Ministry Gifts Given To Some

A second grouping of gifts given by the Lord is ministry gifts. Nowhere in Ephesians 4:11 does the Apostle use the word *ministry* or *service*. However, the word *ministry*, in its popular sense of being gifts that describe those who sense a calling upon their lives into the ministry, having said that, the Bible recognizes every believer as a minister. Those who receive Christ as their Savior have a calling to serve the Lord in some way or another. However, there are five specific gifts Paul singled out in Ephesians 4:11 that seem to indicate specific enabling of grace in the life of individual believers. This does not imply that these ministry gifts are any more important than any other gift of grace within the Body of Christ. Paul made it very clear in I Corinthians 12:12-31 that every member of the Body of Christ is important and no member can say to another "I have no need you" (12:21 NASB). All members of the Body of Christ are important and function together in order to proclaim the gospel of Jesus.

Notice Paul wrote, "It was He who gave *some*..." (Ephesians 4:11a NIV). Paul here singled out *some* as opposed to the *each one* in Ephesians 4:7. Herein is the distinction, "*each one* is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7 author's translation), and from those who have been given that grace, there are *some* who are called to be

involved in another aspect of God's grace. Many identify these grace gifts as *ministry gifts* or as the *five-fold ministry*.

### *Apostles*

The first gift on the list is *apostolos*, which transliterated to the English is *apostle*. Paul also listed this gift in I Corinthians 12:28. The designation *apostle* seems to be a designation given to the original twelve by Jesus Himself as Mark recorded,

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons (3:13-15 NIV).

After Jesus ascended, the remaining eleven determined there needed to be a replacement for Judas. The requirements established by the eleven were that the replacement needed to be someone who had been with Jesus from His baptism to His ascension in order to be a witness to the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:22).

The Greek word *apostolos* means *messenger* or *one sent with a message*. Some conclude that the original twelve considered the group of apostles to be exclusive as indicated by their establishment of requirements in order to fill the office left open by Judas. However, it is obvious from Paul that he had a different idea about the office of apostle. Paul saw himself as an apostle as he indicated in several of his epistles. In his first epistle, Galatians, Paul began the letter, "Paul, an apostle--sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead-- (1:1 NIV). In this letter Paul, as he also did in other epistles, (see 2

Corinthians 10,11) defended his apostleship by contrasting his ministry with that of Peter, who was an “apostle to the Jews,” while he was an “apostle to the Gentiles” (Galatians 2:8).

The office of *apostle* is a very important ministry gift in the Body of Christ. Using Paul as an example, it could be concluded that an apostle is one who carries the message of Christ, who establishes churches in areas where churches are not yet established, and makes sure those churches are founded on the teachings of Jesus. Paul, considered himself to be the last of the apostles as he wrote, “Then he (Jesus) appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born’ (I Corinthians 15:7-8 NIV). Thus, from this sense of the apostleship of the original twelve and Paul, that is, having seen the risen Christ, their apostleship was unique. However, in the sense that an apostle is *one sent with a message*, the modern church would consider those sent out as missionaries to establish churches to be the apostles of the modern church. These do not necessarily have to be missionaries sent to foreign lands, but could also include those sent out by the church to establish new works in any new place.

### *Prophets*

The second gift listed is *prophetes*, which is transliterated/translated *prophet*. The verb form of this word is *propheteuo* and is translated *proclaim God’s message, preach, and prophesy*. In the early church, there was a great reverence for the *prophets of old*, that is, the Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah and Elijah. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, there is recognition of prophets in the church. The following passages in Acts give insight into those recognized by the early church as prophets.

During this time, some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius (Acts 11:27-28 NIV).

This passage recorded a prophet named Agabus who had a predictive element to his ministry.

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:1-3 NIV).

In this passage, the Holy Spirit revealed His will to Barnabas and Saul and the prophets laid hands on them and send them on their mission. "Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers" (Acts 15:32 NIV). In the following passage, these two prophets edified the church and served as *leaders* (Acts 15:22).

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles' " (Acts 21:10-11).

Once again, the Holy Spirit manifest through Agabus in a predictive element. From the following verses it seems as though Agabus' prophetic ministry was acceptable for many tried to talk Paul out of going to Jerusalem. However, notice Agabus did not tell Paul not to go to Jerusalem, only

what would happen to him if he did go. Paul did not follow Agabus' advice, rather following the leading of the Holy Spirit in his life.

First Corinthians 14 contains another important passage to give insight into New Testament prophetic ministry. It is clear from the chapter that Paul made no differentiation between one manifesting the gift of prophecy and a prophet. Throughout the chapter, Paul speaks of orderly worship and his preference for the church to exercise the gift of prophecy that the church might receive strength, encouragement, comfort, and edification (14:3-4). Then in I Corinthians 14:29-33 Paul stated,

Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace (NIV).

Thus, in this context, Paul does not distinguish between those used in the gift of prophecy or a prophet.

To review, the New Testament office of prophet is a ministry gift given to *some* in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11). This ministry is to strengthen, encourage, comfort, and edify the church (I Corinthians 14:3-4) through the leading of the Holy Spirit. While the New Testament prophet might have a predictive element to his or her ministry, it is important to distinguish this office from the Old Testament prophets who spoke *ex cathedra*, that is, *thus says the Lord*. This is evident in Paul's response to Agabus' prediction that he would be bound in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-11). It is true that Paul was bound in Jerusalem as predicted by Agabus

(Acts 21:27ff), however there is no evidence that the New Testament prophet ever gave personal guidance or direction to believers (Stamps, 1992, p. 1693). The New Testament prophet is one who preaches the Word of God and builds up the church. The New Testament believer is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit Himself will guide the believer into all truth (John 16:13).

### *Evangelists*

The third ministry gift Paul lists is *euangelistas*, which is transliterated/translated *evangelist*. The noun form of the word is *euangelion* meaning *good news*, so the evangelist is literally *one who preaches the good news*. The word *evangelist* occurs three times in the New Testament. Acts 21:8 refers to Philip as an evangelist. Other references to Philip in Acts show that he preached the good news in Samaria and saw many converts as well as telling the Ethiopian eunuch about Jesus, after which he preached in towns all the way to Caesarea (Acts 8).

The other references in the New Testament to the *evangelist* are in 2 Timothy 4:5 where Paul tells Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist” (NIV). Finally, the reference in Ephesians 4:11 includes the evangelist as part of the ministry gifts. In light of these references Philip, one of the original deacons in the early church (Acts 6:5) is our only biblical example of an evangelist. Based on his work, an evangelist is one who preaches the good news of Jesus Christ in different areas to unbelievers. Philip preached in Samaria (Acts 8:4-25), to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39), and then he “traveled about preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea” (Acts 8:40 NIV). Undoubtedly, Philip continued to preach the good news throughout the country so that in time he was Philip the Evangelist (Acts 21:8).

There are those today whom God has called to be evangelists. These men and women travel throughout the country preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the best-known evangelist in our time is Billy Graham. His ministry began in 1949 and since that time Reverend Graham has preached to over 210 million people in more than 185 countries and territories (Billy Graham Evangelistic Association-Biographies, par. 2-3).

The ministry of the evangelist is a vital ministry gift; however, it is a ministry that should be re-evaluated. Many evangelist today have limited their ministries to the Body of Christ and have thus become intenerate pastors and teachers. Traveling from church to church to preach to the church is not the model of the evangelist in Acts. The evolution of the modern evangelist, generally speaking, has come about because of financial pressures placed upon the evangelist. That is, in order to find support, they have had to turn their ministries toward the Body of Christ rather than toward the lost. The Church of Jesus Christ must reassess the ministry of the evangelist and begin to support these men and women, not to come and preach to the Body of Christ, but to support them to go out into the world and preach the good news to those without Christ.

### *Pastors*

The fourth ministry gift is probably the best known today, is *poimen*, which is translated *pastor* or *shepherd*. The only time the word *poimen* is translated *pastor* is in Ephesians 4:11. In other places in the New Testament, it is translated *shepherd* and in most cases, the word describes the ministry of Jesus. Some of these passages follow. Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:10 NIV). Additionally, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— “(John 10:14 NIV). Further,

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28 NIV). In addition, “For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (I Peter 2:25 NIV). Finally, “Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve” (I Peter 5:2 NIV).

There are many other passages in both the Old and New Testaments that describe the work of the shepherd, however, these verses provide a good idea of the ministry of the *pastor* or *shepherd*. Pastors are those who know the Body of Christ whom they serve. They are not itinerating, they are permanent ministries among the people of God who protect, care for, and watch over the people of God. Further, pastors are not to be “greedy for money, but eager to serve” (I Peter 5:2 NIV). Jude also warns against those who would rush into ministry with motives of financial gain calling such people,

Shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted--twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever (Jude 1:12-13 NIV).

In the modern church pastors are called by churches to be all things to all men. This, however, must change. Members of the Body of Christ must step up and fulfill the various ministries God has placed upon their hearts. In doing so, the local pastors will be able to fulfill the call of God in their ministries. Unfortunately, many believers think Christianity is simply church attendance and the pastor receives a salary to do the work of ministry. This is foreign to

the biblical model established in the New Testament. As pointed out in the section concerning spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit gives gracious gifts to each one in the Body of Christ and fulfillment comes in the life of the believer as each one does his or her part.

### *Teachers*

The fifth ministry gift is *didaskolos* translated *teachers*. By reading the Gospels, one will find that Jesus was a teacher and called Teacher by his disciples and by those who came to hear him. Even by those from the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to try to entrap Him called Jesus a teacher. Yet, Jesus' teaching was different from other teachers of His day as Matthew recorded, "he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (7:29 NIV).

For one to be a teacher, one must first have something to teach. Again, Jesus is the great example of how a teacher becomes a good teacher. The teacher must first be a good student. Jesus, even at an early age, was found to be a student for at the age of twelve He was found in the temple "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46 NIV). Paul, another New Testament teacher (2 Timothy 2:11), was also a student stating his educational background; "Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today" (Acts 22:3 NIV).

The New Testament warns, "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly" (James 3:1 NIV). Further, the New Testament warns against those in the church who will gather to themselves teachers who do not teach the full council of God, instead they only teach what the people want to hear in order to suit their own desires (2 Timothy 4:3). Other warnings concerning teachers include "There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive

heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves (2 Peter 2:1 NIV) and “In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping (2 Peter 2:3 NIV).

In the church today, the gift of teacher manifests through the lives of many. Pastors often also fill the role of the teacher, as do apostles, prophets, and evangelists. That is not to suggest that a teacher might not just be fulfilling the role of teacher in the Body of Christ. God has called many men and women who faithfully fulfill the role of teacher. Many of these teachers serve in Bible Colleges, Seminaries, and local churches training others to “interpret correctly the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15 author’s translation).

#### Purpose of Ministry Gifts

There can be little doubt that if each person in the local church were to write a job description for the pastor there would be as many different ideas as there were people in the congregation. Yet, unfortunately, that is exactly how many in the church think when it comes to their idea of what the “preacher” should be doing. Undoubtedly, the pastor could do many things to serve the local church. However, Paul established the primary responsibility of every member of the five-fold ministry when wrote, “To train the saints for work of ministry, to build up the Body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12 author’s translation).

The text is very clear that the responsibility of the members of the five-fold ministry is to equip or train the members of the Body of Christ for works of ministry. Local Churches that allow the five-fold ministry to function and perform their God-given mandate to train the saints, and when those same saints begin to fulfill their God-given mandate to become involved in

“work of ministry” the results are phenomenal. Notice the results that occur when each member fulfills his or her responsibility.

- The Body of Christ is built up (4:12),
- Unity in the faith is attained (4:13),
- Maturity is attained in all aspects (4:13, 15),
- Sound doctrine is established (4:14),
- Every member does their part (4:16), and then
- The Church grows (4:16).

It might appear that those involved in the five-fold ministry have some preeminence within the Church; however, this is an incorrect perception. While those who hold such positions should receive for their service, the Bible is clear that all members of the Church serve an important function and all members of the Church are vital. Paul wrote, “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Romans 12:4-5 NIV). When believers allow God’s grace to manifest in their life and thus fulfill the purpose of God for their life, the Church matures and grows numerically.

### Practical Gifts at Work

Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:28

God’s grace is manifest in believers in many ways such as spiritual gifts and ministry gifts. However, Paul spoke of other manifestations of grace through believers in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. These manifestations do not fall into the groupings previously studied, and on the surface seem to fall into a more practical ministry, hence this grouping is *Practical Gifts*.

Once again, Paul made it very clear that grace is the source of these gifts, just as it is for the other gifts of I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. Paul wrote in Romans 12:6, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (NIV). Further in the same verse Paul gives instruction that although grace is the source of these gifts, the demonstration of the gift in the life of the believer is “in proportion to his faith” (Romans 12:6b NIV). Because many of the gifts listed in Romans 12:7-8 and I Corinthians 12:28 are identical, a discussion of only those new to the study follow.

### *Service*

The first new gift in the list is *diakonia*. Although the NIV translates the word *servicing*, the word actually appears in its noun form twice in the sentence making for a difficult translation into English. A literal translation might be, “if service, in the service” (Romans 12:6 author’s translation). However, context determines meaning and thus the idea Paul presented here and in the following phrases is that believers demonstrate these gifts in proportion to their faith. Therefore, if your gift is service, then serve in proportion to your faith.

Of course, the word *diakonia* is the word designated and used for the office of *deacon* in the Church. While the context of Romans 12 is not speaking of the office of deacon, looking at the work of the first deacons in Acts 6, one can determine that service, in a general sense, is speaking of practical ministry to others. In Acts 6 it involved the daily distribution of food, however, even this work required those involved to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3).

In the modern church this gift is manifest in countless ways including: serving the Lord as ushers, greeters, musicians, singers, hospitality ministries, altar worker ministries, audio/video

tape ministry, building ministry, newsletter/bulletin ministry, children's ministry, parking lot ministry, shut-in ministry, clothing ministry, food pantry ministry, bus ministry, visitation ministry, motorcycle ministry, communion ministry, counseling ministry, decorations ministry, jail ministry, bookstore ministry, men's ministry, women's ministry, home Bible study ministry, website ministry and as many other service ministries as could be imagined. Someone once said, "If you see the need you've heard the call." There is a ministry for each member of the Body of Christ. Find something you like to do and "do it as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22 KJV).

### *Encouraging*

The second of the gifts in this grouping is *encouraging* translated from the Greek word *parakaleo*. This word closely relates to the Greek word *parakletos*, which Jesus used to refer to the Holy Spirit as a *Comforter* (John 14:16 KJV). In this light, the believer offers words that bring comfort and encouragement.

On the surface, it might seem as though this would be an obvious gift for every member in the Body of Christ. However, it seems that it is always easier to say something negative or hurtful than it is to say something helpful or encouraging. Thus, the gift of encouragement is a gift in demand in the modern Church. The world is full of criticism and cutting words. How beneficial to have the gift of encouragement flowing by the grace of God in the Church.

### *Giving*

The Greek phrase Paul used was *ho metadidous en haplotnti*, which literally translated is *the one who gives with generosity or liberality*. Undoubtedly, Paul is conveying the idea of being a liberal giver. Keep in mind Paul is talking about the work of grace in the life of the believer.

Giving should be second nature to the child of God, because their Heavenly Father established the example of giving when He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

Paul taught believers to be channels of God's grace of giving when he wrote, Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God (2 Corinthians 9:10-11).

Some have said that you cannot out-give God. To which someone replied that it is fun to try!

### *Leadership*

The next grace gift listed is *proistemi*, which carries the idea of *being a leader, having authority over, manage, care for, or give help*. With this wide variety of meaning, the concept Paul is establishing is one of *servant leadership*. Jesus taught his followers “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:26 NIV). Such leaders are to lead with *spoude*, translated *earnestness, diligence, eagerness, or zeal*.

Just as businesses require sound leadership, so also God gives grace in the lives of His people to provide sound leadership within His Church. Many times this gift of leadership is evident among those who serve on modern church boards who, along with those who serve in the five-fold ministry provide guidance for the local church regarding business, financial, legal and other such matters faced by the Body of Christ.

### *Showing Mercy*

Just as with *encouragement*, which Paul listed previously, one might think showing mercy would be an obvious manifestation of grace in the life of every believer, as it should be.

Once again, remember Paul is discussing grace gifts in the life of the believer. The word *eleao* here in the text is in its present active participle form and thus translated *the one who shows mercy* or *the one who is merciful*. The Bible is relevant today because although situations and circumstances change, people do not change. Today, just as in Paul's day, the gracious mercy of God must be manifest in and through believers to reach out to minister to others.

Notice the demonstration of this gift of mercy requires *hilarotes* translated *cheerfulness*. The English hilarious or hilarity comes from this word. Showing mercy is not always easy because it usually means you have to go out of your way to do it. That is why Paul adds that such ministry must be carried out with an attitude of cheerfulness for showing mercy with a begrudging attitude eliminates the mercy those to whom you are ministering to so desperately need to see. It is interesting that this is the same attitude the believer is to have when giving (2 Corinthians 9:7). Helping someone with a vehicle is broken down on the side of the road, providing food for a neighbor who has lost a job, serving meals at a homeless shelter, or visiting those in nursing or convalescent centers. All of these things and so many more are demonstrations of God's gracious mercy reaching through the Body of Christ.

### *Helps*

First Corinthians 12:28 contains the final two grace gifts. The first is *antilempsis*, translated *ability to help* or *helper*. The word is a compound word made up from the preposition *anti* meaning *in behalf of* or *for* (among a wide variety of meanings). The second word is *lempsis* meaning *receiving* which is the noun form of *lambano* meaning to *receive* or *take*. Thus, the concept of the word is *someone who does something on someone else's behalf* or literally *someone who receives something on someone else's behalf*.

Paul admonished the Corinthians regarding the importance of all the parts of the body.

He wrote,

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it (I Corinthians 12:21-26 NIV)

Those who allow the grace of helps to manifest in and through their life are due special honor. These are indeed the indispensable members of the Body of Christ. These those serve *behind the scenes* without public recognition for their ministry to the Body of Christ. Every pastor in the modern church prays for the Lord to equip believers in the Body with this gift and every pastor that has members of the Body who demonstrate this gift is very grateful.

The church often recognizes those who participate in the five-fold ministry for their work; however, just as important to the overall work of the Kingdom of God are those who minister in the gracious gift of helps. These are those who are first to sign up on work day at the church, those who always stay to clean up after a social event, those who clean up a mess without being asked, or who step into any area of ministry that happens to be short handed on a

particular day. These are those that are to receive the *greater honor* of which Paul spoke (I Corinthians 12:24).

### *Administration*

The final gift Paul lists is *kubernesis* translated in most modern English Bibles as *administrations*. The word relates to *kubernetes* meaning *captain* or *navigator*. Thus, this grace gift is manifest in those who are able to guide the Body of Christ through the maze of daily activities and yet *keep everything straight*.

There are some in the Body of Christ that have the ability to get the job done, however, in doing so there is usually some *tidying up to do* once the job is complete, these believers do not manifest this gracious gift of administration. On the other hand, God has graciously allowed the gift of administration to be manifest within the Church because there must be those who are able to keep the Church on course.

In the modern Church, there are those who serve the Lord manifesting this gift of administration by serving as the treasurer or secretary on a board or other such administrative functions. Like all gifts, this is grace at work in the life of a believer and is a necessary function in the Body of Christ today.

### Conclusion

Grace Works. Grace worked in the early church and grace continues to work in the church today. Yet, today's Church needs to re-examine the working of grace in her midst. Many Churches are content with "church as usual." Many Churches are content with rehearsing the stories of days gone by, stories of the former glory. However, God has not changed and the

ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, of which the Apostle Paul wrote, remains necessary today just as it was necessary in the early Church.

Today the Church has become complacent in regards to the various manifestations of God's grace and the only way to overcome this complacency is for believers to desire once again the things of the Spirit of God. The world needs to witness the grace of God at work in and through the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church will accomplish this as spiritual gifts, ministry gifts, and practical gifts of grace once again flow through the lives of God's people to minister to those around them.

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