



Paul's Bible Notes

Spiritual Gifts

Outline

These notes accompany a message preached as part of a series on the Spiritual Gifts. The goal of the session was to build a platform of understanding and anticipation for how the Holy Spirit wants to move. True spiritual understanding is distinct from intellectual knowledge; it occurs when the alive and active Word of God connects with a believer's spirit through the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 4:12, John 16:13). Rather than being passive, we should prepare on purpose, for purpose, positioning ourselves for what is to come.

Key Points & Scriptures

1. What Are Spiritual Gifts and Who Are They For?

The primary Scripture for the series is 1 Corinthians 12:1–11, 27–28. Scripture presents multiple lists of gifts that vary in order and content, demonstrating that God is a God of immense diversity who uniquely equips individuals.

Definition (Wayne Grudem - Systematic Theology):

"A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church."

- Spiritual gifts are distinct from natural talents. While God can anoint and empower a natural ability (such as business acumen for the gift of giving), natural talent alone cannot produce spiritual fruit. The defining question is: *What is the source of the gift?*

- The Nature of Grace: Spiritual gifts are *Charisma*—freely given grace-gifts distributed entirely as the Holy Spirit determines (1 Corinthians 12:11, Ephesians 4:7), not rewards earned through merit.
- Continuationism: The theological stance of our church is that all gifts of the Spirit and offices of the church remain active and operational until Christ returns. The New Testament confirms that the gifts were operating among everyday believers, not just the original Apostles.
- While God determines the distribution of gifts, 1 Corinthians 12:31 commands believers to "*eagerly desire the greater gifts.*" From a Kingdom perspective, "greater" does not mean higher in status or importance, it means being a greater servant (Matthew 20:25–28). Furthermore, the pursuit of gifts must always be explicitly linked to love (1 Corinthians 13).

2. Preparing on Purpose for Purpose

Preparation comes from expectation. If God has already prepared assignments for us (Ephesians 2:10), we must intentionally prepare ourselves for those assignments.

We can actively prepare ourselves by:

- Prioritizing character over charisma and allowing God to change us from the inside out.
- Practicing in safe environments like Life Groups.
- Taking spiritual risks, remembering that failure is not fatal.
- Seeking mentorship from those further along in their spiritual journey.
- Committing to prayer and deep study of the Word.

3. Identifying Personal Gifting

To discern individual spiritual gifts, look for clues across four specific areas:

- New Passions (desires not previously present)
- Evident Fruit (outcomes in ministry)
- Community Affirmation (what trusted leaders and peers see in you)
- and Prayer Impressions (what you sense during times of intercession).

Conclusion

God has called each one of us to operate in the gifts He has for us, whether we feel qualified or not. In fact, He doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called. Let's start stepping out in everything God has for us, and, like Paul instructed Timothy, let's guard what has been entrusted to us.

Life application questions

1. Look at the areas where you currently serve or excel. Are you relying primarily on your natural talents and intellect, or are you actively relying on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit?
2. "*preparation comes out of expectation.*" If you truly expect God to use you to impact the marketplace or the church, what practical step of preparation do you need to commit to?
3. Growth requires taking risks where "failure doesn't have to be fatal." What is a specific spiritual risk you have been hesitant to take (e.g., sharing a prophetic impression, offering to pray for someone, exploring a new ministry area)? How can you use a small group setting like a Life Group to practice this week?
4. Overcoming Inadequacy: It is easy to opt out of using spiritual gifts because we feel unready or unqualified. How does the truth that "*God qualifies the called, He doesn't call the qualified*" reframe your current insecurities regarding the spiritual assignments God has for you?