

GROWING TOWARDS SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Discovering & Using our Spiritual Gifts

One of the first lessons that we must learn as growing Christians is that we are saved to “SERVE”.. Not to “BE SERVED”... This type of thinking is the complete opposite of the way the rest of the world thinks. In this me first, me now generation, we are not saved by our sovereign God to do our own thing but instead to fulfill His plan for the world... What a tremendous privilege that is to partner with God in His work.

Just as a reminder, our God needs nothing from us in order to accomplish His plan for the world. We must remember this is the same God who spoke a word and the world came into existence. He did not need us then and surely does not need us now BUT, “HE CHOSE US!” John 15:16...

If we are not careful, we will focus more on developing our gifts and not on using it to build up, encourage and unify the body of Christ..

What are Spiritual Gifts?

Spiritual gifts are special tools given to believers to help them be more effective in their ministry work in the church and in the world at large. These gifts, at times supernaturally empowered to enable the believer to do amazing things (*like in the days of the Apostles*), and to aid believers in fulfilling the great commission of the church.

When were they and why where they given?

The gifts given on the day of pentecost to help the believer accomplish the work of ministry that was set before them. Ministry gifts are also given to believers in the body to enable them to minister to others in the body and to build up the body of Christ.

When believers allow their gifts to be used in serving each other sacrificially according to their giftedness, the body grows stronger, becomes more unified and becomes more mature.

Spiritual gifts were not given to elevate an individual, these gifts were given by God to empower believers for the great work of kingdom building. This giving of the gifts, is a part of what Jesus was referring to in **John 14:12** “*Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the father.....*

(The When) Acts 1:8 says," But you shall have power (supernatural power) after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth

(The When) Acts 2:1-4 “ (1) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all together with one accord in one place. (2) And Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them cloven (divided) tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (4) And they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and be to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.””

(The Why) Ephesians 4:12-13 “ (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect (mature) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ

Who are the gifts given to?

He gave the gifts to the body of believers! He allows many people to have talents and skills, But only believers in the body get gifts!

1 Corinthians 12-13-18 “⁽¹³⁾ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into^[a] one Spirit. (14) For in fact the body is not one member but many.⁽¹⁵⁾ If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? (16) And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? (17) If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? ⁽¹⁸⁾ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

These supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to build up the universal Church as well as the local churches for the accomplishment of its mission.....

Matthew 28:18-20 “ (18) And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world... AMEN!