

Session 6

Giving – Spiritual Gifts, Serving, and Resources

Spiritual Gifts

It is important to realize that we have been created in the very image of God. Sometimes God intervenes directly in human history (parting the Red Sea) and sometimes God sends angels to speak to us directly (when angels rescued Lot from the destruction of Sodom). But most often, God uses people like you and me to accomplish His purposes on earth.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:7. Does God only gift special people, or have all believers been gifted by God?

Part of our sin nature is pride. We all tend to compare our gifts with the gifts of others. A pastor of a small church might envy the pastor of a large church. Someone working behind the scenes might want to be the pastor. Someone who works in the garden may wish to have the gift of healing. Someone in the kids' ministry may envy the people leading worship on stage. Look at how Scripture corrects these wrong attitudes in Romans 12.

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” Romans 12:4-8

We all have _____ gifts, given according to _____.

This wonderful description points out how all believers are interconnected, and how we are to work together for the benefit of each other. When we do this, we glorify God. No gift stands alone. And no gift is more important than any other.

There are different lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible. The lists are not all-encompassing but simply express some of the ways God empowers us with different abilities. Here are a few of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible. Do you see yourself in any of them?

- ▶ **Service** is the ability to do small or great tasks in working for the overall good of the body of Christ. People with this gift often serve behind the scenes, without glory or attention.
- ▶ **Giving** is the ability to produce wealth and look for ways to donate above and beyond their tithe to their home church for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God (missionaries, mission trips, etc.).
- ▶ **Teaching** is the ability to study and learn from the scriptures primarily to bring understanding and growth to other believers.

- ▶ *Exhortation* is the ability to encourage others through the written or spoken Word and biblical truth.
- ▶ *Mercy* is the ability to feel empathy and care for those who are hurting.
- ▶ *Prophecy* is the ability to boldly speak and bring clarity to scriptural and doctrinal truth, in some cases foretelling God's plan.
- ▶ *Leadership* is the ability to organize multiple tasks and groups of people to accomplish these tasks.

For more examples of spiritual gifts and how they should be utilized, read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and Ephesians 4. If you are not sure what your spiritual gift is (remember, you have at least one), take a spiritual gift assessment online at <https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/>.

Serving

Even more important than which gift we have is our attitude of service, or how we use our gift. Our role model, Jesus, the very Son of God, tells us He came not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45).

What is our motivation for serving? When we serve, are we trying to feel good about ourselves? Are we trying to impress others? Who should we really be trying to please?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and 1 Peter 4:10-11.

Why should we be serving?

Christianity is a 'team sport.' Jesus said people will know us by the love we show for one another. Use an online Bible website, such as Blue Letter Bible or Bible Gateway, and search for "one another." How many times does this show up in the Bible?

Do the same thing with the word "together." Did the number of responses surprise you?

It is important to remember Christians are people just like everyone else. Yes, we are forgiven. Yes, we are striving to be more like Christ each day (or we should be), but we are still imperfect people.

When we serve, we must focus on unity. This takes effort! Satan always wants to divide; God wants us to work together in harmony.

Read Ephesians Chapter 4. Notice the repeated use of the word, "one." See how the passage is calling for unity. Look carefully at verses 11-16. Paul is expressing big thoughts.

Who is to do the work of ministry?

According to this passage, what is our personal goal?

How are we to speak the truth?

Remember these things as you serve in the church. The Church is not a building; we are the Church.

“...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5

Peter calls us “living stones, a holy priesthood, a spiritual house.” Fulfill your purpose by serving in the church, loving God, and loving others.

Resources

Everything we have comes from God. We do not own anything. Our role is to be a good steward with all the blessings God has given us. God does not give us resources to hold onto, only using them for ourselves. In fact, He gives them to us to share with others and impact His Kingdom. When we have a proper perspective of our purpose on earth, it is easier to trust God with our time, gifts, and resources.

The Bible says in James 1:17 that every good gift and every perfect gift comes from God our Father.

Now that we understand where our resources come from, read what God says about giving:

- ▶ *“Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”* (Proverbs 3:9-11)
- ▶ *“One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.”* (Proverbs 11:24)
- ▶ *“And He said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”* (Luke 12:15 ESV)
- ▶ *“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”* (Hebrews 13:16)

Now read Malachi 3:6-12.

Who never changes?

What were the Israelites robbing God of? _____ and _____

God says, “_____ me in this.”

Who will be blessed?

How much of the tithe were they to bring?

Where were they to bring the tithe?

Today, the “storehouse” is the local church where you are fed the Word of God, “my house” is the church, and “tithe” simply means a tenth. For example, if you earn a \$100 this week, you are to give \$10 back to the Lord. Notice, you give ‘back’ to the Lord because he already owns it. God owns everything. He does not need our money. We are to be good managers of all He has given us.

Malachi 3:10 is the only place in the Bible that God says, “Test me in this...” This Scripture is telling us that tithing is a test, a two-way test between us and God, a test of our heart.

You see, He is asking us to have faith in Him and trust Him with our time, gifts, and resources.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5–6

In the New Testament we are no longer under the Old Testament covenant; we are New Testament believers under a new and better covenant (see Hebrews 8:1-13). So how are we to give?

Read what Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8.

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

What are the two principles in this passage?

In what spirit should we give?

How does God bless us?

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9

Notice that Christ did not give just ten percent of His resources to obtain these spiritual treasures for us! He did not even give fifty percent! He gave one hundred percent! A disciple should desire to be like his Master therefore, we should be sacrificial givers too.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19-21

So, what has priority in your life? Is Christ first? Or do you put yourself and your own desires first? You see, if our hearts are set on earthly things, we may be reluctant to give, but if our hearts are to advance God’s Kingdom, we will be more inclined to give freely and joyfully to God.

**Giving is a heart issue
between you and God.**

The matter of your giving is between you and God. The important thing is that we see giving as a 'privilege' and not a burden. We should not give out of a sense of obligation, but rather out of our love for the Lord and a desire to see His Kingdom grow.

Summary Points:

- ▶ A spiritual gift is something God has chosen specifically for you to help advance His Kingdom by serving with your special ability.
- ▶ Jesus is our role model for serving – *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* (Mark 10:45)
- ▶ Everything we have comes from God. Giving reminds us that we do not own anything. We are to be good stewards of everything He gives us.

Next Steps:

- ▶ Take a Spiritual Gifts test.
- ▶ Once you have determined which gift(s) you have, start using them to glorify God. You will be amazed how God will bless you!
- ▶ Spend time in prayer asking God to show you how to use your time, gifts, and resources wisely.
- ▶ Strive to be a good manager of all God gives you.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16