

SPIRITUAL GIFTS – PART FOUR
Principles For Operating Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant...

Key Scripture:

- 1 Corinthians 12
- 1 Corinthians 13
- Romans 12:9-21
- 1 Peter 4:7-8
- Ephesians 4:1-6

We all have a part and a place in the Body of Christ and are interdependent upon each other functioning in that place in the body where God has chosen to place us.

Principles for Manifesting and Operating Spiritual Gifts

1. Spiritual gifts are exactly that – GIFTS. Therefore, the Holy Spirit reserves and maintains the right and power to choose which gift to bestow on which believer. – *1 Corinthians 12:11*
2. The gifts are given to us individually, for the benefit of the whole Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.”

Romans 12:5-6

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them

2 Peter 4:10

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

- The gifts of the Spirit
- The Fivefold Ministry gifts
- The Ministerial Gifts

- a. All these gifts are the work of grace in the believer. It is only by grace...

Ephesians 4:7

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

- b. All these are for the Body of Christ and must benefit all. No one has individual monopoly or must charge for these gifts. Jesus said in **Matthew 10:7-8**

“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.”

- c. The believer is a steward and has individual responsibility for the spiritual gift(s) which he/she has been given, and must operate in it responsibly,

3. The unity of the Body of Christ is critical.

Ephesians 4:1-6

*“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, **2** with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, **3** endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism; **6** one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”*

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” – NIV

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

*“**16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? **17** For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.”*

- This is not about uniformity but about unity.
- We must do everything in our power to keep the Body united.
- Our use of the gift must not divide, but build and unite the Body.
- The use of the gift does not supersede the unity of the gift.

Ephesians 4:13

“Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

4. We must preserve the integrity of the gift(s).

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy...” – Ephesians 4:1

As believers, we have a responsibility to walk holy and humbly before the Lord, maintaining an intimate fellowship with Him in prayer, worship and the word, and giving Him the glory. This is what preserves the integrity of the gifts we have been endowed with.

5. In manifesting the gifts of the Spirit, the Word of God must be the standard by which we judge all things, including our prophetic utterances. As the saying goes, the best way to judge how crooked a thing is to put it next to a straight line. The Word of God is that 'straight line' in EVERY aspect of our walk with God. To avoid error and deception, stay close to the Word. Judge all things by the Word. The Holy Spirit, our Teacher, will help, lead and guide. Amen!
6. All manifestations of the gifts are subject to evaluation by the body of believers.
7. Follow the way of love

1 Corinthians 12:31

“But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.”

1 Corinthians 14:1 - *“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts...”*

Follow the way of love - let this be a lifestyle. Love and compassion towards others are a catalyst for the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit.

Colossians 3:12-15

*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; **13** bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. **14** But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. **15** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

Love is the bond of perfection – love is the glue that binds the Body of Christ together into a perfect Body. Love is what unites the Body.

- The gifts become ineffective and lose their purpose if not operated in love.
- Without love we will operate the gifts in the flesh
- All our desires and actions must be motivated by love for God and neighbour.
- The gifts will be activated if our desires are motivated by love.
- The gifts will be abused if our actions are not motivated by love

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (ERV)

***4** Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud. **5** Love is not rude, it is not selfish, and it cannot be made angry easily. Love does not remember wrongs done against it. **6** Love is never happy when others do wrong, but it is always happy with the truth. **7** Love never gives up on people. It never stops trusting, never loses hope, and never quits.*

- Love personifies the entire fruit of the Spirit and demonstrates the presence of Jesus in our lives.

Many seek the Gifts of the Spirit without first acquiring the Fruit in their lives. We must have the Fruit of the Spirit at work in us for the Gifts of the Spirit to manifest and operate effectively in our lives.

The Character of God

The fruit of the Spirit is the character of God, which the in-dwelling Holy Spirit, if He is in control of our lives, develops and exhibits in us.

The Holy Spirit works in us, through the word, to form the nature of Christ in us, and as we are continually filled with the Holy Spirit, our nature is changed into His and the character of God is formed in us. When Moses asked God to show him His glory (nature, essence and substance), the Lord passed before him and proclaimed,

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...”
Exodus 34:6-7

The same nature and characteristics were found in Jesus when He lived and walked on the earth. If we have been regenerated and Jesus lives in us, then we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit to form this in us.

A Tree is Known By Its Fruit

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit as “the fruition of God’s work in us.” They are the visible attributes of a true Christian life; the manifestation of the nature and character of Christ in us.

- The fruit of the Spirit is a physical manifestation of a Christian's transformed life. It is essential that we allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in our lives and continue the work of transformation in us and making us more like Christ.
- The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence of our mature as believers.

1 Corinthians 13:11

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

- Unfortunately, nowadays, there is not much emphasis on developing the Fruit of the Holy Spirit and learning to live and walk in Him rather than in the flesh. This is a real tragedy, as scripture clearly states that whatever fruit we bear represents the type of ‘tree’ we are. If we are of Christ, then we must ‘look,’ ‘sound,’ ‘smell’ and be like Him.

Matthew 7:16-23 (AMP)

*“You will fully recognize them by their fruits. Do people pick grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every healthy (sound) tree bears good fruit [worthy of admiration], but the sickly (decaying, worthless) tree bears bad (worthless) fruit. A good (healthy) tree cannot bear bad (worthless) fruit, nor can a bad (diseased) tree bear excellent fruit [worthy of admiration]. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. Therefore, you **will fully know them by their fruits.**”*

Conclusion

The Gifts are a sign of the grace and power of God at work in and through us, however, the Fruit of the Spirit is a manifestation of God indwelling us.

God can use anything – He once even used a donkey, but God will not dwell in just anything, it must be holy and devoted to Him. The Presence of God is revealed through the Fruit of the Spirit displayed in us.