

Chapter 16

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING YOUR GIFTS 7

- I. The gifts that God so graciously gives to us, His children, help us to function in the place and purpose that He has for each of us individually and so we could call them “Function gifts.” We are meant to be the Body of Christ and as a body we need to function properly. The gifts we have are tools that will help us to function as we should within the Body of Christ. (Romans 12:3-5; 1 Peter 4:10)
 - A. We can see in scripture that Jesus functioned in all the gifts. We each as part of the Body of Christ, the church that Jesus said He would build have a part; a place to function. As we become more Christ-like in our nature, we may be able to function in more of the gifts. As we are faithful with the gifts we are given, we may be given more. (Matthew 25:21-23)
 - B. We will each be different in how we effectively use the gifts that are give to us. Our differences can lead to more unity rather than disunity because they will cause us to need and depend on each other more. Generally people with differences in how they perceive things will separate. A next step would be to learn to tolerate the other person and their gifts; but God’s best for us is to learn to appreciate the other person and their giftings and abilities.
- II. We need to be careful that we don’t confuse spiritual gifts and Christian roles and even the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is produced through growth. As we grow as Christians the fruits of the Spirit should be more and more evident in our lives. Our role as a Christian involves more being than doing. There are some evidences of the Christian life that should be expected of every Christian. We need to be careful that we do not say, I don’t do those things because they are not my giftings. Some examples of things that we all need to have in our lives as a Christian are:
 - A. Faith. (We all have to exercise faith to even to become a Christian.) (Hebrews 11:6)
 - B. Giving is also expected of every Christian. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
 - C. Serving is something that we are all called to do for one another. (Galatians 5:13)
 - D. Exhorting or encouraging one another in the Body of Christ is important for all of us to do. (Hebrews 10:25)
- III. How long do we keep our spiritual gifts? The gifts that God gives to us fit with who we are, therefore as we grow up more spiritually, we may add to our gifts and, of course, improve and grow in the use of the gifts we have. We may find we will use our gifts in different ways at different times. Because we are stewards of the grace of God (the gifts He has given) in our lives; we must maintain an accountability in the use of them. Are we being faithful to use what God has given us? Those who faithfully use the gifts they are given are wise. It is foolish to want or dream of gifts you don’t have while failing to use the ones you do have. If the gifts we have, have become dormant, we must fan them back into flame. (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6)

- IV. The Gift of Prophecy, perceiving or insight is the ability to “perceive, understand” where people and programs really are. This gift is sometimes called the eyes of the Body. Those with this gift will declare truth and the insights that they receive from God. Those with the gift of prophecy, perceiving, insight will use the Bible, the Word of God as their standard or measuring rod and will then view people, groups, and situations in light of how their life before God and their moral standards measure up to this standard. (Luke 7:26; Acts 15:32, Acts 21:9-11; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; Ephesians 4:11-14)
- A. There are several manifestations of the gift of prophecy. The person with this gift is able to bring people to accountability for their actions or even for the lack of them. The gift of prophecy can also reveal inner heart motivations. It can cause people to see what they really are or where they really are and also to see what they can and should be. This gift brings inner conviction to people. The gift also brings with it an awareness of God’s presence. (Psalm 139:7-10)
- B. We need to also look at some characteristics of the gift of prophecy, perceiving, insight. The person with this gift needs to be able to express their message verbally. They will also be able to discern the character and motives of people; either individually or as a group. Largely, because of their willingness to use the Bible as the measuring rod, they can identify, define and hate evil for what it is and what it can do in a person’s life.
- They will have a willingness to experience brokenness themselves through the things they experience because they see this as a way to prompt brokenness in other people. They will also be willing to experience hard times in order to share with others what they have learned through that experience. They really have a desire for outward evidences of change that demonstrates the inward conviction.
- Those that exercise themselves in the gift of prophecy, perceiving, insight will most likely have a directness, frankness and persuasiveness in speaking about the insights they have. They are also very concerned about how the things that we do affect the reputation and program of God. Finally, they are eager to have their own blind spots pointed out to them. In fact they are as hard or harder on themselves as they might be on others. (Hosea 1-3; Romans 12:9; 1 Corinthians 14:25; 1 Timothy 3:7; Titus 2:8; 2 Peter 2:1-3)
- C. Many times we can have misunderstandings about the gifts until we get clarification on the reasons for the way the gifts are expressed by the people that have them. With the gift of prophecy, perceiving, insight, the frankness of the person can sometimes be viewed as harshness. It is good if the person with this gift also has the gift of intercession. In any case it is always good to seek God and confront only when He says to. Without the time of intercession, those with the gift of prophecy, perceiving, insight can become quite negative and critical of people and the work of God. Interest in groups may be interpreted as disinterest in individuals. Their focus on right and wrong (measuring up to the high standard) may be judged as intolerance of partial good. Their public boldness and own strict standard may hinder close personal relationships. They may even be selective in their choice of friends because of their own high standards.
- D. If you see that you have the gift of prophecy, perceiving, insight, how do you begin to develop it so that you can use it effectively in the Body of Christ? First of all begin by reading and studying God’s Word extensively. Ask God to begin to give you insights about specific situations and concerns. Find a mature Christian who has spiritual insight that can check your insights or revelations. Be prepared to share your insights and to receive

instruction or correction when necessary.

- E. A Biblical example for the gift of prophecy, perceiving, insight is John the Baptist (Luke 3:3-20) From his life we can see that he was aware of his own unworthiness (v. 16). He was able to discern people's motives (v.7). And, of course, he was very direct and frank when he was talking with the people (v. 7-14). John looked for repentance (v. 8) and placed an emphasis on what was right and what was wrong. He could and did identify evil (v. 10-14). And John had the courage to openly reprove evil (v. 19).

- V. The function of the pastor, shepherding gift is primarily to lead and feed. The ability to feed gives the authority to lead. It is a gift that nurtures; it is as the heart to the Body of Christ. This gift can function with individuals you have relationship with as well as with a group of people. Those with this gift tend to put down roots and stay settled in a place for longer periods of time. Many times people with the gift of pastor, shepherd are not strong leaders. Pastors, shepherds want to comfort the afflicted; while a leader will many times need to afflict the comfortable (encourage them to be more involved, active in the purposes of God). Those with the gift of pastor, shepherd will need to be careful to let people grow up. There can easily be the danger of fostering excessive dependency. (John 10:1-18; Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-3)
 - A. To further understand the gift of pastor, shepherd we need to see and understand the difference between the office of Pastor and the gift of pastor, shepherd.
 - 1. When a person is hired to a staff position there are expectations. Many times they are expected to be almost "Omni-competent;" skilled public speaker, skilled counselor, biblical and theological scholar, public relations expert, administrator, master of ceremony, soul winner, stimulating teacher, funeral director.
 - 2. The function of the gift of pastor, shepherd is to be based on care for the people not on position and/or the title. 1 Peter 5:1-4 tells us that being shepherds of the flock is not to be for money or to rule over others. It is to be done willingly with an eagerness to serve and care for those under their care. Pastors, shepherds have a care for people that will help the people to not be afraid and to have security in the Lord and to learn to grow in the truths of God. (Jeremiah 23:4; John 21:15-17)
 - 3. Are there opportunities and possibilities for lay people to function in the gift of pastor, shepherd? There are many times when cultural needs and demands even will make it necessary and good to have lay people involved in pastoral care. Pastoral care teams with good oversight and accountability can be very beneficial. It is good to be aware of your personal motivation in being involved in pastoral care. Are you looking for position, title, and attention? Do you draw people to yourself rather than unto Christ? It is important to be careful not to create your own little church within the church. Watch out for the Absalom spirit. (2 Samuel 15)
 - B. How can you begin developing the gift of shepherding, pastor? First, recognize the difference between the office or position of a pastor and the gift of pastor, shepherd. Next, look for opportunities to be with and to encourage people. Finally, make yourself available to the leadership of your church. Submit to their authority and leadership. Learn about and commit yourself to the vision of your church.

- C. Biblical examples that we can study are Psalm 23 which shows us the very nature of a true pastor, shepherd. Ezekiel 34:1-16 shows the difference between false shepherds and true shepherds. If the people of God (the flock) are not fed and cared for properly, the flock will be scattered.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

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1. In this lesson we have referred to spiritual gifts as “function gifts.” Give some reasons for calling the spiritual gifts “function” gifts.
2. What new things did you learn about the gift of prophecy (perceiving, insight) from this lesson? List some important things about the gift of prophecy: How is it to be used?; What are its dangers or cautions?; How does it benefit the church?