

Chapter 20

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING YOUR GIFTS 11

- I. The gifts (plural) of healings (plural) go beyond praying for sick people. It involves actually being a channel through which God moves in healing people by faith. There are levels of faith and levels of giftedness. We need to remember that the gifts of healings are not the same as caring for the sick or the medical profession (doctors and nurses). These gifts of healings can be a key to church growth when coupled with evangelism. It is not restricted to physical healings but can include mental, emotional, and spiritual illness as well. (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28; Acts 3:1-10, Acts 5:12-16, Acts 9:32-35, Acts 28:7-10)
- A. Different people may have gifts or faith for different types of ailments or sickness. The gifts may also work in different ways for different people. For instance some may work through the Word of Knowledge giving an indication of the type of illness or pain. Others may work through the feeling of a symptom in their own body. In operating in these gifts of healings, some find effectiveness in laying on hands, some in anointing with oil. Whatever the case, it all takes faith.
- B. To become effective in the use of these gifts you will have to begin to step out in faith. Respond to promptings, urges, and leadings and do what God gives you to do. Begin to speak to sickness and declare health. Start with yourself and with your family. Ask to pray for people when they tell you they are unwell.
- C. Paul is a Biblical example to us of the gifts of healings. He became so well known for it that people even wanted a cloth that had touched him to be used in praying for others. He prayed for those that needed spiritual healings as well. Paul also used the gifts of healings to share about God with others. (Acts 14:8-10, Acts 16:16-18, Acts 19:11-12; Acts 28:7-10)
- II. The gift of tongues is the divine ability to speak in unknown languages not learned by the mind. For this gift of tongues we will need to talk about two aspects. First, is what is sometimes referred to as a prayer language. This is a personal language that is given by the Holy Spirit to allow Him to pray and worship God through you. No interpretation is necessary for this gift of tongues. It is many times the initial manifestation of the baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit. (Mark 16:17; 1 Corinthians 12:10,28, 1 Corinthians 14:13-19, 28; Acts 2:1-13, Acts 10:44-46, Acts 19:1-7)

There is also the public gift of tongues which needs to be interpreted for those that are hearing it. If you feel that you have the public gift of tongues it is good to also ask for the gift of interpretation.

- A. The following are some thoughts about the gift of tongues:
- ❖ The gift of tongues gives us the ability to allow our spirit to communicate directly with God beyond what our minds can understand.
 - ❖ The gift of tongues gives us the ability to put the Spirit of God ahead of ourselves.
 - ❖ The gift of tongues gives us the ability to pray, praise and worship God with new depth.

- B. In Acts 2:1-13, we see the gifts of tongues given to each of those that had gathered in the Upper Room to wait as Jesus had instructed them. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. This portion of scripture also tells us that the gift of tongues was used to share the "*wonders of God in our own tongues!*"
- III. The gift of interpretation is the divine ability to make known to the Body of Christ the message of one who is speaking in tongues. Without the gift of interpretation the gift of tongues really has no part in a church service. Like the gift of prophecy, the gift of interpretation should build and edify the church. If you have the gift of tongues, you should ask for the gift of interpretation as well. (1 Corinthians 12:10-15, 30; 1 Corinthians 14:13, 26-28)
- IV. The gift of apostle is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to assume and exercise general leadership over a number of churches with an extraordinary authority in spiritual matters which is spontaneously recognized and appreciated by those churches. Many times the gift of apostle can be confused with the gift of missionary. (1 Corinthians 12:28; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:11-14, 3:1-9; Acts 15:1-2; Galatians 2:7-10)
- A. Those with the gift of apostle are often seen as a pastor to pastors and leaders. This is not always an assigned position. The position does not automatically give you the authority of the position. We see this gift likened to a "father" ministry. The gift of apostle is sometimes also recognized by their ability to start new churches.
- B. We see Paul in the New Testament fulfilling both aspects of the gift of apostle. As Paul went out to share the gospel, he would gather the new believers together in a group, appoint leadership over them, and then continue to stay in touch through visits and letters. Paul also exercised his gift of apostle as a father to Timothy. He referred to him as "my son in the Lord." He encouraged, admonished and gave support to Timothy as he grew in the Lord and his leadership in the Body of Christ. (Acts 16:1-5; Romans 1:5; 1 Corinthians 9:1-2; Galatians 2:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:6-9; 2 Timothy 1:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:1)
- V. The gift of celibacy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to remain single and enjoy it; to be unmarried and not suffer undue sexual temptations. The gift of celibacy should be used as Paul, the apostle used it to be more available and effective in the Kingdom of God. There may be seasons in your life when this gift is yours. Sometimes, singles (or divorced or widows/widowers) can have a space of time when marriage and sexual activity is not important at all to them. If they can use that time for the Lord, they are effectively using the gift of celibacy. (1 Corinthians 7:7-8; Matthew 19:10-12)
- VI. The gift of intercession is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and to see frequent and specific answers to their prayers, to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian. (James 5:14-16; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Colossians 1:9-12, Colossians 4:12-13; Acts 12:12; Luke 22:41-44)
- A. Intimacy with God is very closely linked to the call and gift of intercession. The intercessor is one who is a worshiper and one who prays in a consistent and disciplined way. The intercessor is ready to take up the burden of prayer whenever the need becomes known. This can come in a variety of ways: Prayer requests, news broadcasts, dreams, word of knowledge. When the burden comes, the intercessor is willing to drop everything and pray. They have a special willingness to stand in the gap; or to be a bridge between God

and the person with a need, a situation, or a condition that needs to change. Those with the gift of intercession will have a boldness before God. The intercessor is willing to pray long and hard about the things God gives him or her to pray about. This can involve personal sacrifice and inconvenience. This may involve keeping a matter active in prayer long after others have forgotten it. Those with the gift of intercession have the ability to identify with the consequences of the sin of their city, nation, and the whole world for whom they earnestly pray. (Numbers 14:11-20; Acts 4:24-31; Hebrews 4:16; Luke 18:1-7; Daniel 9:4-6)

- B. We can see Biblical examples of intercession in the lives of Abraham, Moses, and Daniel.
1. Abraham had a readiness and willingness to meet with God. He showed great boldness in coming to God with his request, and he persevered in asking God for his request. (Genesis 18:17-33)
 2. Moses interceded many times on behalf of the nation of Israel. (Exodus 32:11-13; Exodus 33:12-33; Numbers 11:2; Deuteronomy 9:19, 26)
 3. Daniel had an understanding from God and His Word. He identified with the people and persevered in seeing God respond to His Word for the people. (Jeremiah 29; Daniel 9)
 4. We also see the Church in the New Testament praying for Peter in prison. (Acts 12:5-19)

VII. The gift of martyrdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to undergo suffering for the faith even to the point of death, while consistently displaying a joyous and victorious attitude which brings glory to God. Many times it can be an attitude we might have in particular times and situations. It can even be a willingness to stand for something in the face of severe opposition and to do it with joy and peace. We see this in the life of Stephen in the New Testament when he said as he was dying for his faith *"...Lord, do not hold this sin against them."* (1 Corinthians 13:3; Acts 5:27-41, Acts 7:54-60, Acts 12:1-5, 2 Corinthians 11:21-30, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

VIII. The gift of serving is sometimes seen as the hands of the Body of Christ because those with this gift are able to do many things. Those with the gift of serving will offer practical assistance and help. They show love by doing. They will tend to be more doers than feelers.

Those with this gift will have an ability to recall specific likes and dislikes of people. They will also be able to see or picture what needs to be done, how to do it, when to do it, and what needs to be bought or prepared in order to do the job. They keep doing even when others get weary. Very often they will be more than willing to use their own finances just to get job done. (2 Timothy 1:16-18; Romans 12:7; Acts 6:1-7; Titus 3:14; Galatians 6:2, 10)

- A. As with all the gifts there are some possible misunderstandings about serving. Those with the gift of serving may appear pushy because they know what needs to be done and often will just go ahead and do it. It can be hard for them to involve other people. They may not be effective leaders. They can be critical and negative because they so easily see what needs to be done and don't always understand why others can't see it as well. They will be easily hurt when what they do is not appreciated. Because they serve, they may have a hard time being served themselves.

- B. In developing this gift, you will need to learn to say “no” sometimes and to watch for burn out. Be careful to establish a daily time for Bible reading and prayer. Let God by His Holy Spirit guide you as you function in the gift of serving.
- C. A good Biblical example of the gift of serving is Martha. We see that Martha did things herself; she served those around her. Martha just wanted to serve those she cared about. As with many who have the gift of serving, Martha seemed to be more involved with the task than with the person. (Luke 10:38-42; John 12:2)

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

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1. Do you believe that there are people who have the gift of apostle in the church today? If so, how do they function and how do you see them being effective for the Kingdom of God?
2. The gift of serving (those with the gift of serving) is often abused (over used) in the Body of Christ. How can we help the people with this gift to be effective, but not to become discouraged and burned out? If you have this gift what steps should you take to use but not abuse it?