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The Spiritual Gifts

In our Basics class today we will be discussing point 12, Spiritual Gifts. These gifts are given to Church age believers so this is yet another uniqueness of the Church over against Israel. In our statement it is far and away the most lengthy point. The reason it's so long is that spiritual gifts have become controversial in the last 100 years with the rise of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement. Some have termed the 20th century the Century of the Holy Spirit simply because so much of the discussion related to the Spirit and especially the spiritual gifts. The debate was over the cessation or non-cessation of some of the spiritual gifts. Cessationism is the position that certain spiritual gifts have ceased to be given. Non-cessationism is the position that none of the spiritual gifts have ceased to be given. As a church we're on the cessationist side of the debate. We think the Scriptures clearly teach that all the spiritual gifts were given in the early church but after the foundation was laid through the revelatory gifts, and the necessity of signs to authenticate the new revelation was from God, then the canon came to completion and the permanent gifts abide.

So what we will do today is distinguish between a talent and a gift, what's the difference there? Then we'll look at the three categories of gifts. And finally, why we are convinced from Scripture that certain gifts, while critical when given, have now fulfilled their purpose and are no longer being given.

12. We believe that God, for the edification and perpetuation of the Church has, by His Spirit, distributed "spiritual gifts" among men. Every born again believer in Jesus Christ receives at least one (1) spiritual gift, at the point of salvation, that he might do the work of service within the body of Christ, which is the Church. We believe that the spiritual gifts of "Apostle", "Prophecy", "Knowledge", "Wisdom" and "Discerning of Spirits" were given for

the foundation of the Church while in its infancy and they are no longer being given by the Holy Spirit to believers today. We believe also that the gifts of “Healing”, “Miracles”, “Tongues” and “Interpretation of Tongues” were “sign” gifts, given by Christ in the infancy of the Church to authenticate the messenger and His message as from God, and that these gifts are no longer being given by Christ to His Church. We believe that the permanent gifts, revealed in the Bible are “Faith”, “Teaching”, “Helps” (or serving), “Administration”, “Exhortation”, “Giving”, “Mercy”, “Evangelism” and “Pastor-Teacher” (Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:7-13; Heb. 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:27-31a; 14:20-22).

That’s a lot to cover but let’s start with something simple. A spiritual gift is not a talent even though both a talent and a spiritual gift can be used to glorify God. They have similarities and differences. First, a talent is an ability given at your physical birth. You don’t necessarily detect it at physical birth, but it is present from birth, it’s just latent and you may or may not discover it later in life. Maybe you are a talented athlete or musician or artist and those are wonderful. On the other hand, a spiritual gift is given at your spiritual birth, whenever you trust in Jesus Christ as your personal savior the Holy Spirit gives you at least one spiritual gift. There are several listed in the statement you may have been given; faith, teaching, helps, etc... and again, you may not recognize it immediately, you may never recognize it if you don’t grow spiritually, but it’s a latent ministry you do have. They are ministries that you received at the moment of your spiritual birth and you can’t increase these or decrease these, the amount you get is all that you have but you can maximize the potential of your gift by applying yourself to the Christian life. So the first difference is that a talent is an ability given at physical birth but a spiritual gift is a ministry given at spiritual birth.

Secondly, a talent is an ability given by God indirectly through your parents. There’s a parental element in the transmission of talents that comes genetically, through reproduction. That’s why you often find children with the same talents as their parents. Not only are these parents skilled in teaching them but the children already have a natural ability in that area that is due to being the offspring of the parents. On the other hand, a spiritual gift is given by God directly by God the Holy Spirit. There is no parental element that comes genetically through reproduction. You can’t pass on a spiritual gift through reproduction. So the parent can’t expect the child to have the

same spiritual gift(s) he or she has. They may be widely different because they are given directly by God the Holy Spirit. And it will be important to observe and figure out which gift or gifts you've been given. So a second difference is that talents are given by God indirectly through human reproduction while spiritual gifts are given by God directly by the Holy Spirit.

Third, talents are things all people have, believers and unbelievers. It doesn't matter what religion you follow, what your IQ is, everybody has a talent or talents. But spiritual gifts are things only Christians have; only a subset of the human race, only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are a few of the differences you want to keep in mind when you get into this discussion because Christians are notorious for confusing talents with spiritual gifts and they are not to be confused.

Now there are also similarities and these are equally important to observe. First, both talents and spiritual gifts are given by God. Regardless of the means by which they are given, their ultimate source is God. And therefore He is to be given thanks for imparting our talents and gifts.

Second, both talents and spiritual gifts should be used for God's glory. Just because I have a music talent doesn't mean it's irrelevant to the glory of God, just as if I have the talent of woodworking that's not irrelevant to the glory of God at all. I should do all my woodworking to the glory of God. And that doesn't mean making crosses all the time, you may make crosses, but to do woodworking to the glory of God means to take pleasure in the woodworking and build an excellent product that reflects the glory of God.

So there are similarities and differences between talents and spiritual gifts and we'll be focusing on spiritual gifts not talents, as important as talents may be, only believers have spiritual gifts and so that's the focal point. There are eighteen spiritual gifts listed in the NT. Our statement states the purpose of the gifts "for the edification and perpetuation of the Church." For the edification refers to the building up of the Church, building up one another through the use of our spiritual gifts, building up in maturity, in doctrine. And for the perpetuation or continuation of the Church; the continued development and growth in doctrine.

Let's look at 1 Cor 12:7. 1 Cor 12, 13 and 14 is the major passage on spiritual gifts. Chapter 13 right smack dab in the middle is the key chapter. And what is the emphasis of chapter 13? Love. If you don't use the gifts in love then they don't edify and perpetuate the church. The gifts can be used in a loving way or in an unloving way and if they're used in love they build up, but if not they tear down. Certain gifts will cease but love will never cease. I take it chapter 13 is a great passage on the cessation of certain gifts but the non-cessation of love. So in one sense I'm a non-cessationist, in the sense that I hold that love never ceases.

Paul starts off the discussion in 1 Cor 12:1 with the words, "Now concerning spiritual gifts," that's the topical statement. Now Corinth was rich in the spiritual gifts department. They had every gift, their problem was improper use of the gifts; they weren't using them in love to edify, they were using them for self-benefit and accolade, thinking of them as special abilities you flaunt before people to show off. But Paul says in verse 7, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." So the gifts are not for selfish use, they are for the edification of others. In fact they are ministries more than abilities. And one thing you might do is try to start thinking of your spiritual gift as your area of ministry to others instead of thinking of them as some area you're supposed to have some super ability in, what's my super ability? Well if you think of them that way you may never find them because they are not super abilities, they are ministries and if you think more in terms of ministries then I think you'll start thinking more in terms of how can I serve. Just as an example, take teaching, that's one of my spiritual gifts, but it's not so much an ability at all, it's more of a ministry to others, a service. And when I think of it that way it takes away the pressure to measure up to some standard, it allows me to focus on employing the gift in a way that will be beneficial to others. So I'd encourage you to stop thinking in terms of spiritual gifts as super abilities and more in terms of ministries to others.

Verse 8, "For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these

things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.” One of the big points of these verses is that the Spirit is the one through whom the gifts are given and each believer receives at least one spiritual gift. You may receive more than one, but every believer receives at least one and no one believer receives them all. He distributes to each one as He wills. He says Jim, you get the gift of teaching, Sarah, you get the gift of faith and so forth. And this is so one believer doesn’t get arrogant and think he’s the number one Christian and he doesn’t need anybody else, everybody else needs him. Some believers still get that complex. It’s the lone ranger mentality and it has no place in the body of Christ. So God the Holy Spirit has wisdom in limiting us to one or two or three gifts because He knows if He gave us all the gifts we’d make a mess.

Which brings us back to the all important point again, and what is it again that is central to the whole spiritual gifts discussion in 1 Cor 13? Love. All the gifts must be exercised in love. Otherwise they don’t build people up they tear people down. Each of the gifts can be used by the flesh or by the Spirit. And when they are used by the flesh they are an ugly thing; Paul says you’re like a clanging cymbal, a big annoying noise. But if exercised by the Spirit then they are a beautiful thing that builds up and edifies others.

You’ll notice at the end of verse 11, a very important note, this alone cuts the whole thing down to size, the Spirit distributed the gifts to each one individually just as He wills. You don’t get to decide what spiritual gifts you get. When you come to Christ God doesn’t say, now here’s the menu of spiritual gifts, pick what you want. It’s not about you. It’s about Jesus Christ’s body. And so the Spirit gifts each one as He sees fit for the proper working of Christ’s body. So I’m sorry, but just like a talent, nobody gets to decide which ones they get and therefore nobody can boast about what gifts they’ve got. There’s no room left for boasting.

Let’s notice some more things about our statement. It goes on to break the 18 spiritual gifts down into the three categories. The first category is foundational gifts and these were given in the church’s infancy, then the sign gifts and they were also given during the infancy and then the permanent gifts and those are given all the time. This is the cessation vs non-cessation debate so let’s deal with that right away.

And let me start by building on what we said two weeks ago about the universal church. This is just a fundamental issue that I think is missed right off the bat. And that is that the church is not just the group of people in your backyard, the church is not even all the believers on earth at this time. The church is all believers that have been Spirit baptized whether on earth or in heaven. So you have to think of it like the development of a human being, that human was born on the day of Pentecost, it was a little bitty baby, then it grew through infancy and into young adulthood and finally into adulthood and old age. There are stages to the growth of the Church all down through Church History. And so if you're going to think about the church and spiritual gifts right, you've got to recognize certain gifts are given at certain times for the benefit of the whole church. And what this means then is that a gift given once to the church was given for the benefit of the whole church.

Notice how Paul says it starting in verse 12, "for even as the body is one and yet has the numbers and all the members of the body, though they are many are one body so also is Christ." He's arguing that we're all one body, one organism, and verse 13 shows us how it's possible for us to all be one body, there's one Spirit, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made strength of one Spirit." So we are all in the same body of Christ because we were all baptized into it by the one Spirit. Then in verse 14 he goes on to proclaim that the body is composed of many different members. So now he's moving to diversity inside the one body and his point is that all the parts are necessary. "For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot says, "because I'm not hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body 16 and if the ear says, "because I'm not and eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?" He's arguing that all the gifts are necessary for proper functioning in the body of Christ. And he's linking, he's taking a spiritual gift and linking it to an anatomical part of the body to illustrate, to give us an image to mull around and think about. So, verse 21, "the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 on the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;" And so they are, try taking away one part of your human body and see where that leaves you. You won't be a happy camper.

This is getting into the necessity of each part. In other words, there are no vestigial parts to the body of Christ, no unnecessary parts. That's a thing they argue for in biology class on the university campus. Our bodies have vestigial organs like your appendix or your tonsils and their argument is that they are vestiges of a prior evolution and when we were less evolved we needed those parts but now we've evolved to where we don't need those parts anymore so we can just cut those out. Around 1900 they identified about 180 organs in your body they said were unnecessary. Well, you go cut yours out first so we can see what happens. But I'm not going to cut mine out. In fact, what is now being discovered is that these so-called vestigial organs have functions during different stages of development and then they go dormant, they've done their thing. But don't think that just because they've done their thing they were somehow irrelevant. For example, the appendix, most doctors just say cut it out, you don't need it. But the laboratory science shows that if you get it cut out then you are much more likely to get lymphoma, leukemia and Hodgkin's disease. So I'm trying to illustrate from the necessity of every part in the human body the necessity of every part in the body of Christ, even if they're not all functioning at the same time but at specific times in the maturation.

And that is what I see is missed so often on the spiritual gifts discussion. There were gifts given early on that were critical to the development of the church in its infancy that are not critical to the development today. Now that sets the stage for what our statement is getting at with the foundational and sign gifts necessary for the infancy of the church but not today, the permanent gifts are the ones most pertinent to the present maturity of the church. It's built on the NT imagery of the body.

Let me take you to a couple of passages that shows cessationism, 1 Cor 13:8-9. One of the reasons there are not a lot of passages that show cessationism is simply because most of the NT books were written before AD70 when they were still operational. So it's really no surprise that there are only a few passages that teach or imply cessationism. Yet it was held by almost everyone in church history. There are only a few pockets of people here and there that were non-cessationists and the largest group has been the last 100 years. Now, before we even look at the verses, what's the point of the chapter again? Love. Love will never fail. There's a contrast between some of the gifts

and love. And so the whole tenor of the chapter is that some things will cease but other things will never cease, prophecy, tongues, knowledge will cease, but faith, hope and love will never cease. So I don't see what the big deal is. If the chapter is not teaching that I don't know what it's teaching. But hey, you decide. Verse 4, "Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of prophecy*, they will be done away; if *there are tongues*, they will cease; if *there is knowledge*, it will be done away." Now you tell me, is there not a contrast between love and these three gifts; prophecy, tongues and knowledge? Prophecy will be done away, tongues will cease of themselves, and knowledge will be done away. But as you can see from verse 8 "love never fails" and verse 13, "love abides." Now the reason this is so is because these three gifts are revelatory gifts, they relate to new revelation being given. And that was an issue with the arrival of Christ, there was a NT being written, they didn't have it all yet, it was coming little by little, piece by piece. That's why he says verse 9, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part;" they didn't have the whole NT yet, they only had part. Verse 10, "but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." And everyone argues over the "perfect" what's the perfect? Well, it contrasts with the part. They only had part of it so when all of it comes, that's the perfect. It's just a Greek word that means complete or full. When the fullness comes. What fullness? The fullness of the NT revelation. Then these three revelatory gifts will no longer be needed and so they'll either be done away or cease of themselves. Verse 11, "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." He recognizes that the church was in its infancy, he recognizes an immaturity, he recognizes that it was not clear who or what the church was at the time, but as the NT canon came to a close then we could see exactly who we were because we'd have all the revelation explaining to us who we were. But, verse 13, "But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love." I can't see how this is not teaching that these three remain while the other three will not remain. A clear cessationist passage.

Let me take you to another one, Hebrews 2:3-4. Turn to Hebrews 2:3-4. Hebrews was written late in the NT period, AD67 and by this time the nation of Israel had been witnessed to, witnessed to, witnessed to and witnessed to until they were almost at the time of judgment, AD70. And here in the book of Hebrews, whoever wrote it, the epistle of Hebrews is addressed to the second generation group of Jews. If a Jew was say 30 years old in 30 AD then how old would he be now? He'd be almost 70 and so by that time there would be newer, younger people that had become Christians. So the epistle to the Hebrews was written for that second generation of Jewish believers. Now notice what the author of Hebrews says in vv 3-4, "how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, ⁴God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will." The main verb is there in verse 3, "it was confirmed" and that's an aorist tense, that's a past completed action, it's not being confirmed, "it was confirmed." And notice that the author of Hebrews is not including himself in there as a recipient of the confirmation. It was confirmed by them, "those who heard," not us. He deliberately excludes himself from the generation that had it confirmed to them because that was happening before his time, that was happening in the first generation of believers but he was a second generation believer. Well what did God do for that first generation of believers that He didn't do for the second generation? Verse 4, "God also testifying with them both by signs and wonders and by various miracles..." Signs, wonders and miracles. That was going on heavy early on and then by the second generation they were fading out. The author of Hebrews did not see them, he did not witness them but they were confirmed to him by those who saw them. This shows cessationism, these sign gifts were on the way out, healing, miracles, etc... If you want to know who did those signs and miracles then there are two passages, Mark 16:14ff and 2 Cor 12:12 and you can study those out. But the main point here is the author of Hebrews says he didn't see these things so we gather they were already passing off the scene.

So we have the foundational gifts and sign gifts and these we hold have ceased. The foundational gifts listed are "Apostle", "Prophecy", "Knowledge", "Wisdom" and "Discerning of Spirits." Five gifts. What are these gifts? Well, first of all "apostle," means "a messenger who comes in the authority of the sender." He's a delegate. He's been delegated authority. Since the sender is

Christ who is the authority then the authority the apostles come with is the authority of Christ. If you turn to Eph 2:20 you will see that indeed they were given for the foundation of the church. “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*.” There we see that apostle was a foundational gift and now that the foundation has been laid there is no necessity to keep on laying the foundation, the necessity now is to keep build upon the foundation that has once for all been laid. It’s the imagery of the construction of a building as we’ve seen in prior weeks. So an apostle is one who is sent in the authority of Jesus Christ. He was instrumental in laying the foundation.

Second we have “prophet,” and we mean this in the sense of “a person to whom God has verbally revealed Himself.” It doesn’t always have to do with the future, though it may, but often relates to the present. It is a gift that was necessary to the formation of the NT canon. So if this gift is ongoing then the NT is ongoing and we ought to have some new Scripture being written. Every prophetic revelation was not written down but some was so we would expect more Scripture if this gift was still being given. And Paul includes this gift in Eph 2:20 along with the apostles as being foundational. And every builder knows, once you lay the foundation, as long as it’s good, there’s no need to lay it again, move on to the building. Further, this one is stated in 1 Cor 13:8-9 as something that “will be done away” in contrast to love which is forever and we will be looking at that passage in a moment.

Third we have listed “knowledge” and this is similar to “prophet.” This is a comprehension or grasp of something never studied before. It’s not knowledge based on studying the text, but a special gift enabling a first century believer to know and instruct early believers in truth that is now captured in the NT. This one we saw in 1 Cor 13:8-9 as one of the two gifts that “will be done away” and since it is related to the writing of the NT canon then it makes sense that it has ceased.

Fourth we have “wisdom” and this seems to be access to the deep things of God, things that are far beyond human comprehension. It is a revelatory gift but we don’t know much about this gift. My guess is it has to do with skill in living, skill in applying these NT truths early on as a demonstration to other believers. Early on this was necessary to point believers in the right direction so far as application was concerned. As the NT was completed and the church

matured it no longer needed this gift but could simply apply the principles that were not in the canon.

Lastly, discerning of spirits and this was detecting false prophets, false teaching and the like, with the NT in formation there was the need to have people who could readily identify the error and distinguish it from the truth. Once the NT was complete then any believer can do this by simply placing the idea up against the Scripture. So this too was a foundational gift.

Then we mention the sign gifts, four in particular; “Healing”, “Miracles”, “Tongues” and “Interpretation of Tongues” were “sign” gifts, given by Christ in the infancy of the Church to authenticate the messenger and His message as from God, and that these gifts are no longer being given by Christ to His Church. In other words, these gifts would authenticate the new revelation as from God.

You’ve got healing and this was what Peter and Paul and others did, they would heal people by using words, by handkerchiefs, there was no clear pattern, it was always different because if it was always the same pattern then people get in their head it’s the pattern that’s doing something, that some kind of magic is going on. But it wasn’t magic, there was no clear pattern, it was all jumbled up so people realize it’s God doing this through these men. Now what’s interesting is that there is one pattern in the book of Acts and that is that the miracles are fading out. Early in the Book of Acts while the apostles were running around they were doing miracle after miracle after miracle after miracle but as the Book of Acts goes on these miracles thin out and become less and less, so that whereas earlier they could walk by with handkerchiefs, they can’t do that anymore, whereas earlier they could say a few words and fix the problem but Timothy’s stomach problem they can’t fix, so they say, go drink some wine. And that’s why we say there’s a cessation; you see these kinds of miracles fading out. So by cessation we don’t mean that God can’t do miracles today or heal people, we’re just saying God doesn’t do that through men so as to authenticate them. The reason God did these miracles through men was to authenticate them as true messengers of God. And that we believe God is not doing today and if He were then we would have to listen to those people as the very authority of God for they would be speaking the very voice of God. And since the canon is closed I don’t

think God is doing that anymore. On the other hand, if these gifts are really functioning today then let's look around for Revelation 23, we ought to start looking for it, somebody should be writing it if we have prophets and apostles and miracles and healing. If these gifts are continuing where is the Scripture?

We have tongues in there too. Tongues were specific - for unbelieving Israel they were a warning that judgment was coming upon that generation of Jews if they did not repent. Since the judgment came in AD 70 then this gift has passed away, 1 Cor 13:8, of its own accord. Its purpose was met, its goal was accomplished and it simply passed off the scene. Satan has drawn attention to this gift and produced psychologically induced counterfeits because it's such an interesting idea; the idea that I never study a language and can speak it fluently, what a marvelous idea! But it's not occurring today, not in the genuine sense. Something is happening, I'm not denying the phenomenon, I'm just denying that its source is God. I think it's psychologically induced, I think it's demonically inspired, I think it's jibber, jabber and not real languages. There are other explanations for the modern phenomena. Am I saying the Holy Spirit can't do this? No, that's not the point; I'm saying the Scriptures say they'll pass away along with prophecy and knowledge in contrast to faith, hope and love which remain

Finally, the things which remain, the permanent gifts. We believe that the permanent gifts, revealed in the Bible are "Faith", "Teaching", "Helps" (or serving), "Administration", "Exhortation", "Giving", "Mercy", "Evangelism" and "Pastor-Teacher" (Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:7-13; Heb. 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:27-31a; 14:20-22). There are plenty of gifts here you may have, isn't it odd that so many people run around saying I have the gift of tongues and yet nobody runs around claiming to have the gift of giving. I always found that interesting. Let's take a brief look at some of these. The gift of faith, a terrific gift, a tremendous capacity to walk by faith, the whole world falls down around these people and they just naturally trust the Lord. It's not saving faith, it's the gift of walking by faith. These believers just have a remarkable confidence in God's ability to supply all their needs.

Secondly we have teaching, a way of explaining the truth; it may be eloquent like Apollos or not so impressive like Paul. They have an excellent Scriptural knowledge and a high desire to explain truth to others, wants people to know

the truth, speaks openly and frankly about the truth, refutes false doctrine, that kind of thing.

Third, the gift of helps. Everybody to some degree helps but some have the gift of helps or service. Phoebe is one good example (Rom 16:1-2). Deserve commendation, serves at a local church (not itinerant ministry), to be received in a worthy manner. Helpers also need help too. Those who have a large measure of the gift may be the best organizers. They are kind of like gap-fillers. They get done what has to be done and free up others to minister in their areas. Mark also had the gift of "helps" (2 Tim. 4:11). He may have been instrumental in recording manuscripts (e.g. modern day typing, etc...). Fetching things or people. Those who hold the office of deacon often have this gift (Acts 6:1-7).

Fourth the gift of administration or rule. There is very little about this gift given in the NT. Two Greek words describe this gift, *kubernesis* which means "to steer a ship" and *proistemi* which means "to protect, to manage, to care for". These are the people who are gifted to lead others and others willingly follow. They guide the people in a certain direction. People need leaders and not all people are leaders. But these people are and they may be aptly fit to hold the office of elder or deacon. But by leading they help others in the church be fruitful as Christians (Tit. 3:8, 14).

Fifth, the gift of exhortation and these people come alongside of you in a hard time and either encourage you or admonish you. If you're positive to the word they encourage you, if you are negative to the word they admonish you to get with the program. They might encourage you by telling you the results in life of applying Bible doct

Sixth, the gift of giving, these people tend to recognize needs and share without thought of return.

Seventh, the gift of mercy. Don't you like these people? When you don't deserve it they still shower you! All Christians are to be merciful because they have received the mercy of God but certain Christians have this gift. Be careful, I know we have to judge issues and be discerning, this is not pitted against that, it's just that your judgment ought to be tempered by mercy.

Some people are very abrasive, hold off, give people a chance to grow, you too were a blubbering idiot once.

Eighth, the gift of evangelism, people respond when you give the gospel message. They're typically travelers, they go to new areas and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their gift is primarily toward the unsaved, like tongues.

Ninth, the gift of pastor-teacher. Teacher can be a stand alone gift but most likely Eph 4:11 is pointing out a two dimensional gift when it mentions pastors and teachers. Pastor is the word referring to caring for sheep, leading, guiding, protecting and caring. Teaching is communicating the text with authority, meaning that the teachers are not just communicating content, but are responsible to go to the sheep that are not following the teaching and correct them. The gift carries authority Walvoord says, "the first duty of a pastor is to feed his flock on the Word of God." The secondary duty is to care for and protect the flock. The gift of pastor does not mean he is a great social promoter or leader. A true pastor gives himself to teaching the word of God.

In concluding, let me just say, I don't think you find these out by taking a personality test. A personality test may confirm something about your personality, whether your gregarious or shy and quiet, but personality tests don't help find your spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts aren't your personality and when you get one at the moment of faith in Christ your personality doesn't suddenly change. The way to find your gifts is simply to grow in the word and learn to serve, to minister to others. It's important to know that the Holy Spirit has given you at least one spiritual gift and that you and your gift are necessary to the proper function of the body of Christ. So no matter how unimportant you may think you are, you are a spiritually gifted individual who should minister to others. And let me conclude on that note. I encourage you to think of these more in terms of ministries to others, rather than super abilities, just be humble and minister to others in some way, always in love. Love is the important thing, otherwise it's not building anyone up, and it's just tearing down and being a nuisance.

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