

A Living Sacrifice
Part IV
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by C Benjamin Dill

Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

As of last week, we have come to the point of recognizing and using our God-given spiritual gifts as a part of the presenting of our bodies as a living sacrifice to the Lord.

We have learned some things thus far about our spiritual gifts. For example:

1. Some spiritual gifts are better than others.

1 Corinthians 12:31 But **covet earnestly the best gifts**: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

2. Some spiritual gifts are to be sought above others.

1 Corinthians 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may **excel to the edifying of the church**.

3. Miraculous spiritual gifts such as tongues, healings and divers miracles which exalt the individual more so than to edify the Church would cease within the Body.

1 Corinthians 13:8 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

One of the most important facts concerning spiritual gifts is their **actual purpose**.

We just read that we are to use whatever extraordinary talents or abilities we may have **for the edifying or the building up of the Church**.

They are for the profit, the well-being and the building up of the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

But not necessarily or specifically for the profit of the believer.

Spiritual gifts are not given to make you look special or powerful or talented, although they may well do that.

God gives us the gift(s) and then He places us in the Church to use those gifts **for His glory**.

1 Corinthians 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Ephesians 4:11-12

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Every Christian ought to be in and a member of a real New Testament Church (**God set the members every one of them in the body**)...

A Christian who is not in Church is like some Doctor flipping burgers instead of healing people: you are being wasted on something far less than what you were created to do.

In the Church is not the only place you will use your spiritual gifts.

But...you will use them for God's glory for which you will give Him credit in all things... and...you will do so as a representative of your Church, of which you are "a member in particular".

Now, back to the spiritual gifts themselves.

I. Our Spiritual Gifts.

A. There are seven spiritual gifts from the Lord that give us everything we need (Literally, a perfect system) with which to prosper and succeed as a new Testament Church.

1. Romans 12:6-8

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

2. They are:

1. Prophecy. (preaching).
2. Ministry. Diakonia = serving.
3. Teaching. Teaching (duh).
4. Exhortation. Encouragement, building up.
5. Giving. Giving (duh).
6. Rule. Presiding over (leading).
7. Mercy. Compassion.

B. We are told to desire spiritual gifts.

1. **1 Corinthians 14:1** Follow after charity, and **desire spiritual gifts**, but rather that ye may prophesy. [preach]

2. Can we all have one or more spiritual gifts?

3. Of course, why would God tell us to desire spiritual gifts if they were not available?

3. If you desire a spiritual gift, you should perhaps ask yourself if you will be faithful to use that gift to build up your Church.

4. And guess Who knows if you will be faithful to do that or not?

II. Now let's review what these gifts actually are. (God-given extraordinary abilities).

A. Prophecy.

1. This is preaching.

2. Today the ones who possess this gift are commanded;

a. **To preach the Word.**

2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

b. **2 Timothy 2:15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

B. Ministry.

1. This is **diakonia**, this is where we get the word *deacon*.

2. This is **the extraordinary ability to serve the body**.

3. This is those folks who have the heart, the willingness and the resolve to faithfully place the work of the Lord above their own needs, requirements and convenience.

C. Teaching.

1. **Teaching is one of the most, if not “the most”, necessary and profitable** gifts the Lord has given to His Churches.

2. Teachers must know their Bibles.

3. This is one of those gifts that require at least something of several other gifts to go along with it:

- a. You will need **ministry**; we must serve those we teach.
- b. You will need **exhortation**; we must encourage those we teach.
- c. You will need **ruling** to keep your class under control.
- d. You will need **diligence** to be prepared for your class each week.
- e. You will need **mercy** to show no favoritism and be no respecter of persons.

4. Not every gifted teacher has a classroom: where would you be without that one who shared Basic Bible Truths with you?

D. Exhortation.

1. Do you remember when we began to study what it means to **be a living sacrifice**; how that it is not a command, but rather an invitation from the Lord?

2. “[I beseech you therefore, brethren...](#)”

Well, this word “**beseech**” is to invite, to implore, to encourage. Gr. [parakaleō](#).

3. Well, this word “**exhortation**” is Gr. [parakaleō](#), it is the same word!

4. The gift of exhortation is **the extraordinary ability to inspire others**.

III. Spiritual gifts are different than the common responsibilities of every believer.

A. All of these areas are required to some degree of every believer.

1. Every believer is responsible to accurately share the Word with others.

- a. You must study to **show yourself approved unto God**.

- b. You are responsible to **rightly divide the Word of truth**.
2. Every believer is responsible to minister, to step up and serve in the Church.
 - a. There is always work to do and projects that need your help.
 - b. "Be ye a doer of the word"...
3. Every believer is responsible to teach someone:
 - a. Your children.
 - b. Your grandchildren.
 - c. Your co-workers; pretty much anyone who will listen.
4. Every believer is responsible to encourage and inspire others.
5. Every believer is responsible to tithe and to give.
6. Every believer is responsible to preside over, to properly manage and oversee what God gives him/her:
 - a. Your finances.
 - b. Your possessions.
 - c. Your time.
 - d. Your Family.
7. Every believer is responsible to love and to show compassion to others.

*B. Spiritual gifts are extraordinary abilities in these areas that are given by the Lord to those who will and do use **them to build up His Church**.*

Now we are ready to look at the final three gifts.

I. The gift of Giving.

A. We have already established the fact that every believer is responsible to the Lord to tithe and to give.

1. **Leviticus 27:30** And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD'S: *it is* holy unto the LORD.

2. **1 Corinthians 16:2** Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him...

B. In our Church, everybody tithes and gives.

1. Some faithfully bring it to the Lord's storehouse every week...with others, God comes and collects it.

2. Last week, Brother Kennedy pointed out how that the Israelites were not allowing the land to lie fallow every seven years as God had commanded: a Sabbath of rest for the land.

3. So in response, God placed them in Babylonian captivity for 70 years so the land could reclaim those lost Sabbath years of rest.

4. When believers are not faithful to honor God by tithing and giving, I believe God takes those blessings they otherwise would have received and gives them to those who are faithful to tithe and give.

C. The evidence for this is pretty clear.

1. In our Church, our annual budget has been for the last several years, something over \$300,000.

2. This year it is higher because of State money coming from the sale of 9' of our frontage the State is taking for the Freeway expansion, which has to go back into restoring the property.

3. Roughly 50%; about \$150,000 of our regular budget comes from approximately 5% of our givers and the other 50% comes from the remaining 95% of our givers.

4. These statistics are similar in virtually every true New Testament Church across our land.

D. Those with the gift of giving have several things in common.

1. They give faithfully; God gets the first cut of **everything they receive**, whether large or small.

2. They give systematically and proportionately.

1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him...

3. They give generously. "*he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity*".

4. This word translated **simplicity** is defined by the words: “**generosity**”, “**bountifulness**”, “**liberality**”.

5. The proportion they choose to give to the Lord tends to get bigger year after year.

6. It means that every time a dollar comes in, the first piece of it goes happily, cheerfully and joyfully right back out to the Lord; no matter if it's \$50 or \$5,000.

7. If you want to watch God work in tangible ways that you can actually see and touch; ways I guarantee you will get excited about, just be one of those people who God can trust with the gift of giving!

II. The gift of Rule.

“he that ruleth, with diligence;”

A. *These are the **pastors, administrators, bookkeepers, and treasurers** to name a few; **especially the pastors**.*

1. **proistēmi**

pro-is'-tay-mee

From **G4253** and **G2476**; to *stand before*, that is, (in rank) to *preside*, or (by implication) to *practise*: - maintain, be over, rule.

2. **Hebrews 13:7** Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation.

3. **Hebrews 13:17** Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

4. This is God's gift to the Church that is going to keep the Church alive and flourishing in the years to come.

B. *Not everyone who has the gift of prophecy (preaching) also has the gift of rule.*

1. A pastor must preside over the flock with “**diligence**”. Gr. **spoudē**

spoo-day'

From **G4692**; speed , that is, (by implication) *despatch, eagerness, earnestness*: - business, (earnest) care (-fulness), diligence forwardness, haste.

2. It means taking care of business, being on time, paying bills on time, guarding our resources; planning, preparation, hiring the right people, ensuring productivity and much more.

3. **Romans 12:11** Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

4. Pastors must have several spiritual gifts; best if all of them...but never without this one.

5. Lots of men are called to preach and that is extremely important; but none will succeed in the pastorate without this gift of rule.

C. This gift includes many things by which it can be recognized; just a few are:

1. **Honesty and integrity.** He must be trustworthy with money; sometimes large money.

2. **Vision;** He must see where we are going and be able to stay focused on what it takes to get there without becoming distracted.

3. He keeps **the gospel** at the forefront always.

I Corinthians 15: 3-4

...how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried and rose the third day according to the Scriptures:

4. He must have a **servant's heart.**

5. He is **not a cowboy**...cattle are driven, sheep must be led.

1 Peter 5:2-3

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

III. The gift of Mercy. This is the gift of extraordinary compassion.

A. This includes compassion for the lost.

1. Sinners do terrible things; many would think they are beyond saving.

2. Those with the gift of mercy are able to look past their deeds and past all that evil baggage and see what they can be in Christ instead of what they are.

3. They exercise their gift with gladness!

4. Their happiness is just as genuine to receive an ex-con without a cent to his name as the most well to do family in the community; as it should be!

B. This gift is often developed through suffering.

1. I know a lady who lost her son...and through that tragedy God has given her the biggest heart to help others as you've ever seen.
2. Some of you went through some sad and rough stuff growing up and now you have extraordinary compassion for others who likewise suffer.
3. This might not be the most popular gift being asked for from the Lord, but I would hate to think what our Church would be like without it.

Conclusion:

Each of these spiritual gifts are, in and of themselves, a priceless treasure.

Where did you see yourself in this list?

Romans 12:6-8

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether **prophecy**, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or **ministry**, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on **teaching**;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on **exhortation**: he that **giveth**, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that **ruleth**, with diligence; he that sheweth **mercy**, with cheerfulness.

What is your gift (s)? What are you going to do with it?