

You are Gifted!
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I loved Christmas when I was growing up. We would open our gifts on Christmas Eve, and all five of us kids would pester our parents all day – “Can we open our gifts now?” My parents gave different gifts to us, yet they loved us all the same.

Imagine if we received the gifts, said “Thank You” and then set them aside, never opened them and never played with them. How would our parents feel? Or if we pouted because we wanted what someone else got?

That’s how God must feel when He gives gifts to His children, yet they set them aside, never use them and excuse themselves from serving in the church. Or they pout because they don’t have a gift that someone else has.

That’s not what God wants. What God wants is to give each of us the power to live a life that touches heaven and changes earth.

We’re preaching a series called Miracles – When Heaven Touches Earth. Today I’m preaching a message entitled You are Gifted!

God is a giver and the Bible says He loves to give gifts to His children. That means you are gifted!

Have you ever known someone who was really gifted? By that we usually mean they are very talented. Where do talents come from? God. But spiritual gifts are not talents. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given by God to minister to the needs of the church and to declare God’s love and power to the world. They are supernatural abilities given by the Holy Spirit to every Christian – including you! That means you are gifted! How do I know that? 1 Cor. 12 lists the gifts of the Spirit. Then it says in verse 11:

All these gifts are inspired and brought to pass by the same Holy Spirit, Who apportions to each person individually [exactly] as He chooses.

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to every believer according to His will. That means you have at least one ability that is beyond your natural ability. It is supernatural, which means you are supernaturally gifted! But have you opened your gift and put it to use?

You may think, “Pastor Joe, I have no clue what you are talking about. I have no knowledge about spiritual gifts.” The Bible addresses that in 1 Corinthians 12:1 when it says:

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

God wants us to understand spiritual gifts. They are important to the life of the church. Why? Because it is through spiritual gifts that God manifests His presence in the church. And it is through spiritual gifts that God shows His compassion and His power to the world.

One of the main biblical words for gift is charisma, which literally means “a gift of grace - a free gift.” In modern usage, a “charismatic” signifies one believes in spiritual gifts and has one or more of them operating in their life.

The Bible says that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit each have a distinct role in giving gifts to us.

THE GIFTS OF THE FATHER

Romans 12:4-8 lists 7 gifts that are given by God the Father. They are called motivational gifts because they motivate our behavior.

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

Every single person is born with one of these motivational gifts. These gifts form our basic motivation in life.

- People with the motivational gift of prophecy see things in black and white and are not afraid to speak out about what is right or wrong.
- People with a servant motivation see needs and meet those needs.
- Teaching is the ability to explain and apply the truth.
- People with the gift of encouragement build people up.
- People with a giving motivation love to share their resources with others.
- People with a leadership motivation have vision and want to see things get done.
- People with a mercy motivation are sympathetic and desire to remove the hurts of others.

You have one of these seven motivational gifts. If you aren't motivated in life, you probably haven't discovered your gift or you're operating outside of your gifting. It's important to understand this because it explains why each of us responds differently to situations.

For example – let's suppose a group of people were eating a meal together and a young child knocked a glass of water over.

Everyone would react differently. Why? Everyone has a different motivational gift that motivates them to act in a specific way.

The prophetic person will say, “I warned you. I told you to move that glass back or you would knock it over. Why don’t you listen to me?”

The mercy motivated will hug the child and say “It’s okay.”

The servant will run to the kitchen to get a towel to clean the mess.

The giver will get them another glass of water.

The teacher will show them where to set their glass so it won’t happen again.

The encourager will say, “I know you can do it. I believe in you.”

The leader will take over and tell everyone else what to do.

You get it? This is why each of us responds differently to situations. We have different motivational gifts that motivate us to respond a certain way. When it all works together, it’s great. When we expect everyone else to respond like us, it is wrong. We each have different motivational gifts and that what makes the body of Christ work!

THE GIFTS OF THE SON

Ephesians 4:11-13 mentions the gifts of Jesus – THE MINISTRY GIFTS

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up 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.

These ministry gifts are actually gifted ministers. They minister in what is called the 5-fold Ministry. Their job is to prepare God’s people for ministry – not to do all the ministry themselves.

Apostles are sent out to start churches and lay the foundation.

Prophets speak forth the word of God.

Evangelists proclaim the good news.

Pastors shepherd the flock

Teachers teach and explain God’s truth.

These ministry gifts are given to equip the Body of the Church. Our job as pastors is not to do all the ministry ourselves. It is to equip you to minister. Another thing that equips you to minister is:

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

1 Cor. 12-14 teaches about the gifts of the Spirit. These are called manifestation gifts because they manifest –show forth the power of God. Their purpose is specific—to manifest God in a way that “profits” the church and extends His

kingdom. These gifts are available to every believer as the Holy Spirit distributes them. They are not to be merely acknowledged in a passive way, but they should be actively sought after and cultivated. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 says

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines.

These verses reveal the following truths about spiritual gifts:

1. The Holy Spirit gives the gifts as He wills, not as we will
2. The Holy Spirit gives a gift to each believer
3. The gifts are given for the good of everyone – not just for yourself

Most people operate in one gift predominately, but I want to expand your vision for spiritual gifts today. I want you to understand that the gifts of the Spirit are not just for church services; they are for everyday life.

Do a study of the New Testament. Miracles did not just happen in church services; they also happened in the marketplace. Matthew 21:14 says

The blind and the lame came to Him at the temple, and He healed them.

When people come to our church, we want them to experience the presence and power of God to save, heal, deliver and restore. But look at Mark 6:56

And wherever He went - into villages, towns or countryside - they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged Him to let them touch even the edge of His cloak, and all who touched Him were healed.

Jesus did not just heal in churches – but wherever He went. You may say, “But that’s Jesus.” That’s true. But, we’re the body of Christ today. 1 John 4:17 says

As He is, so are we in this world.

In the power of the Holy Spirit:

We are the ones who pray for the sick to be healed

We are the ones who set captives free.

The supernatural power of God works in us and through us.

We have the Word and prayer and the Holy Spirit, and we have the gifts of the spirit that empower us as the need arises. What are those gifts?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit can be identified in three categories:
Revelation gifts - Vocal gifts - Power gifts

REVELATION GIFTS

1. WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

This is supernatural revelation of information concerning a specific situation, event, or person. In other words, this is not knowledge gained thorough study or the learning process – it comes directly from God.

The word of knowledge can be seen biblically when Jesus knew the woman at the well had 5 husbands and was living with a man who was not her husband.

2. WORD OF WISDOM

Supernaturally knowing God's will in given situations. This can be seen by:
Getting direction from God when you need to make a decision.
Getting the ability from God to solve a problem.
Being led by the Holy Spirit how to act in certain circumstances.

The word of wisdom works interactively with the word of knowledge.

I was counseling a couple when God gave me a word of knowledge that the wife was lying. What could I do with that? I needed a word of wisdom from God about what to do. He showed me how to confront it and it all worked out.

3. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

This is the power to detect whether someone is speaking by the Holy Spirit or by an evil spirit, or their own spirit. This can be seen in Matthew 16:15-18 when Jesus asked Peter:

"Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

Jesus discerned that the spirit of God was motivating Peter. Now, look just a few verses down in Matthew 16:21-23:

Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Now Jesus discerns that Peter's words are motivated by an evil spirit, not the Holy Spirit. That's what this gift does. You can't always go by the words someone says, you have to discern the spirit they operate in.

VOCAL GIFTS

1. PROPHECY

The supernatural ability to receive and communicate messages from God. "Prophecy" reveals truth in a way that brings edification, exhortation, and comfort to God's people. Sometimes prophets predict future events; more often they simply express the mind of God.

2. SPEAKING IN TONGUES

This is the supernatural ability to speak in a language not known to the speaker. These languages may be existent in the world, revived from some past culture, or a tongue of angels.

This is the most misunderstood gift. Don't let it scare you. The main use is for personal devotions and edification. It is a prayer language where the Holy Spirit prays through you when you don't know what to pray. The Bible gives very specific direction concerning the use of this gift in a church service where it must be one at a time and interpreted.

3. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

"Interpretation of tongues" is the supernatural power to interpret a message in tongues for the benefit of the congregation. This is not a word-for-word translation, but an interpretation of what was said. The gift of speaking in tongues should never occur in church without the gift of interpretation. Otherwise, no one would know what is being said.

POWER GIFTS

1. FAITH

The divine ability to believe God in times of difficulty and to do great exploits for God in response to a command or promise of God. It's the supernatural ability to believe God without doubt.

2. GIFTS OF HEALINGS

"Gifts of Healings" is plural showing that there are many ways to be healed – prayer of faith – medicine - or a miracle that goes beyond natural or human intervention. There is physical healing, emotional healing, spiritual healing. We've seen all of these many times at GFC!

3. WORKING OF MIRACLES

The superseding of natural law and process for the accomplishing of God's purpose in a situation. In other words, miracles are events that do not occur through natural means and which cannot be explained by ordinary reasoning.

God has given you at least one of these spiritual gifts. You are gifted! So how do we tap in to the supernatural power of spiritual gifts? What should we do?

Desire spiritual gifts – Seek the Lord, pray, ask for spiritual gifts.

Discover - Each person has a gift that will benefit the whole body.

Pray – study – get counsel – notice what motivates you.

Develop - Use your gift as God leads.

Our Grace Journey classes will help you discover your gift.

Our Grace Groups will give you the opportunity to develop those gifts.

Don't think these gifts are not important and don't think you aren't gifted. God has strategically placed you right where you are and you have unique gifts that the people around you need.

We need each other because we all have different gifts.

It would not be good if we were all leaders and no followers.

It would not be good if we were all prophets and no one had any mercy.

It would not be good if we all wanted to exhort without learning from the teachers.

We wouldn't be able to turn on the lights without givers.

Nothing would get done without those motivated to serve.

Do you see? We need each other.

We need prophets to tell us the truth when we're getting off track.

We need teachers to teach us the truth of God's Word.

We need people with mercy when we fail.

We need encouragers to lift us up when we're discouraged.

We need each other!

That's why we need to get past just attending church. We need to *BE* the church by becoming a body of believers where everyone discovers their gift and ministers what they have to the others.

Don't just sit on the sidelines. Get in the game! Open your gift and start using it. If you are not using your gifts, something is missing in your life and the life of the church. If you are not using your gifts, you will not grow to your full potential and the church will not grow to its potential. Ephesians 4:16 says

From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Growth on a personal level and a church level happens when everyone knows their part and does their share. When everyone gives. When everyone uses their gifts and talents.

You're either building the church up or holding the church back! Which are you doing? Do you know your gifts? Have you opened your gifts? Are you using your gifts for the glory of God?

If you don't use your gifts, something will be lacking in the world and you will lack fulfillment and purpose in your life.

Don't be like the child who never opened or used their Christmas gift. The church needs your gift. The world needs your gift. So open your gift and begin using the supernatural power of God today.