

The Gifts of God

James 1 verse 17-18

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. 18 In the exercise of His will He gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

As we examine the provision that God has made for His people, we will see that the whole Godhead, or as it is known, the Trinity are involved. Let us examine then the gifts of God the Father as laid out in **Romans 12**. There are foundations to be laid in our understanding if we are to effectively receive any gifts from the Lord. Many people struggle to receive the gifts of God simply because they have not understood His instructions and of course this can be a hindrance to coming into an awareness and experience of those gifts.

Romans 12 verse 1-8

Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. 3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4 For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body's parts do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another. 6 However, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to use them properly: if prophecy, in proportion to one's faith; 7 if service, in the act of serving; or the one who teaches, in the act of teaching;

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Teach-In 7 The Gifts of God, The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit and The Gifts of Ministries Given by Jesus. Unsure if this was ever shared with SCF*

8 or the one who exhorts, in the work of exhortation; the one who gives, with generosity; the one who is in leadership, with diligence; the one who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Prophecy is not speaking my own view point or opinion and are described by Paul as one of the greater gifts. Prophecy is both the written and the spoken Word of God.

1 Corinthians 14 verse 1

Pursue love, yet earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

All prophecy will agree with the spirit and the letter of scripture. Prophecy will always edify exhort and comfort the hearer. Prophecy will always exalt the name of Jesus, not the giver or the spokesperson. Prophecy releases people into liberty and never into bondage. Prophecy produces life. Prophecy should always be judged by others.

1 Corinthians 14 verse 31-33

For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; 33 for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

1 Corinthians 14 verse 5

Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but rather that you would prophesy; and greater is the one who prophesies than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edification.

The implication here is that when the gifts of tongues operates followed by interpretation it may be in its total content a word of prophecy from the Lord. This gift of tongues used in the congregation will be explained later as we look at the gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 verse 29. Note also that the word Prophecy or to prophesy is a verb that is, it's a function and the word Prophet is a noun indicating responsibility.

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1 Corinthians 12 verse 29

Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but rather that you would prophesy; and greater is the one who prophesies than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edification.

Paul has already told us that all may prophecy but we will also see that all are not prophets. Again we will see that the prophet is a person called by Jesus to serve the body of Christ.

Service

There are many areas in which we can serve the Lord by presenting ourselves to Him for any act of service to benefit the Kingdom of God. The desire to serve will only come out of a heart of gratitude.

Hebrews 12 verse 28-29

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

And if you want to know how to serve, ask God first then ask your brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Teaching

When we consider what is meant by teaching we have a concept which has usually to do with preaching the Word of God, but teaching has a much wider meaning than preaching.

Titus 2 verse 3-5

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

This of course speaks of teaching by the practical example of a righteous life, often what we are or how we behave teaches more than mere words.

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Jesus himself came to both do and to teach.

Acts 1 verse 1-3

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had given orders by the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen. 3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of things regarding the kingdom of God.

He demonstrated the power and the character of His Father whilst on earth.

We can also teach in a number of different ways.

1. By being faithful and trusting God
2. Being at peace in our lives, especially in trials, where we are able to maintain our joyfulness
3. Being fruitful, displaying the fruits and using the gifts of the Holy Spirit in ordinary situations. Perhaps another way of being a good example is to lead a prophetic lifestyle by bringing into being God's Word in our lives
4. Waiting on tables in our serving one another.

We can be both an example and an encouragement at ordinary levels too.

Exhorting

This is linked with prophecy, part of prophecy is exhorting, to exhort is to admonish or to urge generally and encouraging people into the Word that God has spoken.

Acts 11 verse 19-26

So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.

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22 The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord; 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord. 25 And he left for Tarsus to look for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

How Barnabus encouraged the people to remain true to God, his exhortation caused many to come to the Lord. We need encouragers in the church like him. The gift of exhortation will have the effect of silencing the critics, criticism being the opposite to encouraging, criticism is a tool of the devil. We should gossip the gospel when we meet together. The world has the bad news, we have the good news. I would exhort you to realise that in Christ we have been given the ability to overcome every situation that comes against us.

Giving

Acts 20 verse 34-35

You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. 35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Jesus said that giving is an attitude of serving others. One of the main reasons for the success of the early church was that they had all things in common, they shared the apostles doctrine, which is what Jesus did and taught. They shared in the fellowship one with another, they gave hospitality, they gave everything so that there would be no lack in any member of the body. There isn't one thing that exists in our lives that we have access to that has not been given to us by God.

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The very air we breathe, every function in our body and all the possessions that we have actually belong to Him. We are encouraged to be good stewards of all things, even our children. When we begin to look at the gifts of the Holy Spirit we will see the same principle that these gifts are given freely, not for our own possession but to use to serve God, our brothers and sisters, and the world.

Paul has quite a lot to say about giving in **2 Corinthians 8 and 9**.

Leading

The way that we should lead has been set by Jesus himself. He was the perfect example of obedience to his father. Jesus only ever did that which his Father had him do. Jesus also taught that in order to become first we had to learn that our starting place was to be last.

Luke 22 verse 24-26

And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' 26 But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

Psalms 110 verse 3

Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; in holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew.

God is looking for those that will lead in holiness as well as leading in other ways. We can lead simply by responding to the Word of God. We can lead in any of the aforementioned gifts, we can encourage those that prophesy, we can encourage those that serve, we can encourage those that teach, those that exhort, those that give and those that show mercy. We can lead in any of these gifts.

Mercy

To exercise the gift of mercy is to be especially gifted with the grace of God.

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It's the ability to be able to do the opposite of being critical. Mercy understands the weakness of others, is empathetic and has the grace to lead and encourage a person who may have missed the way, into the right place.

Galatians 6 verse 1

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

The gift of mercy is also linked with the gift of encouragement and can only really come through a forgiving and humble heart. Mercy is the embodiment of love, patience, kindness, goodness and gentleness being shared with others.

Romans 15 verse 1-7

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." 4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

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