

# Don't Waste Your Gifts

We are blessed people. I can say with confidence that everyone here has received more gifts in their life than they can even remember. Can you remember what you got for Christmas last year? What about your birthday? Valentine's day? Anniversary? Can you remember random gifts that you have received throughout the year?

When I got my birthday presents from kristi and the kids, I put them on the couch and took a picture so I can look back and remember what I got because I won't remember otherwise!

Kids often get so much stuff for Christmas that they don't even have time for all they got. Sometimes a kid will get one phenomenal gift. Something that is very valuable. Maybe something that is in high demand but has a low supply. Lots of people wish they could have it but they can't.

The kid will play with it every day for a couple weeks, then before you know it.....it's at the bottom of the toy box with all the other stuff that's no fun or no good. This awesome gift becomes no big deal, it's no longer exciting so it gets shelved while they look for something "better".

Today I say to you that adults are no better. We treat the gifts of God the exact same way.....they are exciting at first but then they become common, they are no longer fun, someone else may also have it, and you put it on the shelf or throw it in the box and look for something "better".

Only there is a TREMENDOUS difference between a toy you give a kid and a spiritual gift that the Creator of the universe gives to YOU! Toys do go out of style, more exciting ones are made, they are enhanced or improved (at least marketed as such). But the gifts of God are perfect, always exciting, can't get any better, and they change lives for the good.

## **James 1:17 (NKJV)**

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

## **Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

You need to know that God HAS given you spiritual gifts. And He can give you more! But are you even using the ones He has already given you? Maybe you look at me and say "I don't think I have any spiritual gifts" or maybe you don't know what they are.

There are 3 scriptures that layout specific spiritual gifts that God give us. First are what are commonly known as the motivational gifts or the gifts of the Father.

### **Romans 12:3-8 (NKJV)**

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them:

if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

7 or **ministry**, let us use it in our ministering;

he who **teaches**, in teaching;

8 he who **exhorts**, in exhortation;

he who **gives**, with liberality;

he who **leads**, with diligence;

he who shows **mercy**, with cheerfulness.

These gifts are knit into every human being in the womb as a part of their makeup and personality. EVERYONE has at least one of these gifts. They are a fundamental part of a person's desires, impulses, and interests.

You can look at this list and think of people who are not saved but they have these gifts. It's because these are gifts that the Father God put in people at creation. This is why we can say no one is good apart from God. These are the "good things" that some people do but God gave them the giftings!

Don't think of yourself more highly that you ought to.....GOD gave you your giftings and abilities. These giftings are not evidence of salvation, they are evidence of creation.....

And we are to use them together for the Creator's purposes.....being the church, His hands and feet on the earth!

### **Romans 12:4-5 (NKJV)**

4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them:

Now remember, everyone has some of these gifts, but Paul is speaking to the church, what are WE supposed to do with these gifts? We are to use them, these separate gifts, together as one body.

As a body, we are to USE THEM! If you are not using your gifts.....IN THE CHURCH....then you are not using them properly. You are being disobedient toward God.

Again, everybody has some of these gifts. This is why we can boldly say that every single person has something to offer the church. Not because of who you are but because of the gifts that God placed IN YOU!

Look around this morning.....how can you use these gifts to help one another and then how can you use them out there to draw people to Jesus??????

I've set here and seen people over and over put their gifts on the shelf. I know, I know, you're busy.....who isn't? Don't waste your gifts!

if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;

This means to "speak forth", this would be someone who has insight from the Spirit of God and speaks His truths. Again, this is a gift even unbelievers can have. It just operates differently than you think of when you hear prophecy.

They are not going to start with "Thus saith the Lord..." But they still speak God's truths having strong morals and a commitment to worthy values.

This gift is to be used to build up the church.....let us use it by prophesying in proportion to our faith

or **ministry**, let us use it in our ministering;

This is those who have the heart of the servant. Not those who are willing to serve, those who naturally love serving. Everytime you look around there they are doing something that needs done for the church or for others.

They are driven to demonstrate love by meeting practical needs. Able to see a project through to the end and enjoy doing it. This person honors the directions and wishes of authority figures and helps see their plans and vision carried out. Anyone can have this but this gifting is typically present in deacons.

This gift is to be used to build up the church.....let us use it in our ministering

he who **teaches**, in teaching;

This one is those who have the natural ability to teach others. Not necessarily the smartest person in the room. You can be brilliant and not be able to teach others. A person with the gift of teaching has a way about them where they can explain things where others "get it". Elders should have this gifting to explain church doctrine and relay the truths of the Word.

This gift is to be used to build up the church.....let us use it in teaching

he who **exhorts**, in exhortation;

This is the person who has the natural gift of encouragement. This is not just telling someone their hair looks nice today...but someone who lifts people up with meaningful encouragements. Things that are more impactful. Encouraging people in areas they NEED encouragement, speaking words of comfort, even instruction.

Maybe they even exhort the entire church! The key for the exhorter is their motivation should be to see others grow in spiritual maturity.

This gift is to be used to build up the church.....let us use it in exhortation

he who **gives**, with liberality;

This is simply one who sacrificially shares and gives of their resources and self to meet the needs of others. One who truly understands biblical stewardship that every dollar is God's and every minute of your day is God's.....so you seek to please Him in what you do with money and time and to bring God glory.

This gift is to be used to build up the church.....let us use it with liberality (generosity)

he who **leads**, with diligence;

If you have the gift of leading, you are to be set over or in front of others. It's a role as a protector or guardian. You lead the charge and others come behind you and alongside you.

I think more people have this gift than we realize. But leading is difficult, so many give up on it...

This gift is to be used to build up the church.....let us use it with diligence (persistence)

he who shows **mercy**, with cheerfulness.

This is one who is sensitive to the emotional and spiritual needs of others. They are drawn to people in need and demonstrate compassion, understanding, and love to them. This gift must be used with kindness and cheerfulness. If you go visit someone in need and complain the whole drive, you probably don't have the gift of mercy...

This gift is to be used to build up the church.....let us use it with cheerfulness (readiness of mind)

--These are the gifts of the Father, the motivational gifts. Everyone has at least one of these gifts.

So YOU have at least one of these gifts, the question is this: “Are you using it?” even better “Are you using it to serve God and His church?”

Most everyone is using their gifts to try and be successful in life but the ultimate reason you have the gifts is to make the church successful.

**Romans 12:4-5 (NKJV)**

4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them:

To be honest this morning, ask yourself today why you come to church.

- Because I have to? Well....I guess at least you are here.....
- I need something from God, from people? This CAN be ok, as long as it's not the only reason.
- To worship Jesus? Great, you worship Him by serving Him!
- To hear the Word of God? You're getting it, but what are you going to do with it?

What about this one, To see what I can do for Jesus and others today! Unfortunately it's not real often that people come to church to serve. Oh, they may serve but it's not why they are here and if it is, it's religious serving.

There is this great saying “ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” How about we start saying this: “ask not what your church can do for you, ask what you can do for your church.”

God has given us sooo much. Beyond the gifts of the Father we have the gifts of the Spirit:

**1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NKJV)**

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the **word of wisdom** through the Spirit, to another the **word of knowledge** through the same Spirit, 9 to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another **gifts of healings** by the same Spirit, 10 to another the **working of miracles**, to another prophecy, to another **discerning of spirits**, to another **different kinds of tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues**.

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

You may have anywhere from 0 on up. He gives to each one individually as He wills. I'm not getting into all of these today, just showing the abundance of gifts from God.

We also have the gifts of the Son -- TO the church

**Ephesians 4:11-13 (NKJV)**

11 And He Himself gave some to be **apostles**, some **prophets**, some **evangelists**, and some **pastors** and **teachers**, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

When are we going to wake up and realize that THIS right here is the bride of Christ. We are a part of THE church. There is nothing that Jesus loves more than the church. He died for the church. He rose again for the church. He ascended to heaven and sent His Spirit for the church. He's coming back for the church!

**Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV)**

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

Yet, we sit and we wait. Are we really using the gifts that He has given us to as one body? There is a reason we don't all have all gifts. He desires for us to function together. This means if you are not using your gift, there may very well be a part of Christ's body that is not functioning.

I've seen people over and over again, step down from things, cut back and do less and less. Church, your primary function as a part of the body, is to use your gifts and BE that part of the body.

**Matthew 20:26-28 (HCSB)**

26 It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.”

Church, we've got to wake up today! Look around, how are we reaching the lost for Jesus? How are we functioning as His body? Why aren't we turning the world upside down like the apostles did?

I don't think the church is motivated to.....I don't think the church is operating to the fullness because members of the body are not operating in their God given giftings.....

There's a song that I love by Vertical Church called "Who Will Rise Up?"

The chorus says:

Who will help the Church

The one that Christ loves

Who will rise up, Who will rise up

How long will we wait, How much will it take

Who will rise up, Who will rise up

The church needs you, don't waste your gifts today.....who will rise up?