

Center Grove Presbyterian Church
Spiritual Gifts Class – “Discover Your Gifts and Learn How to Use Them”
Rev. Don Hulsey
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*Resource: “Discover Your Gifts and Learn How to Use Them” by Alvin. J. Vander Griend through *Faith Alive Christian Resources* (CRC) © 1996.

SESSION 4: GUARDING THE GIFTS

In this session we will examine:

- the problems with misusing or neglecting Spiritual Gifts as presented in 1 Cor. 12-14
- what hinders the introduction of gift-consciousness into the church
- the Spiritual Gifts of Wisdom, Knowledge, and Discernment

Truth principles about Spiritual Gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12: 7-11:

- 1) Every believer has at least one Spiritual Gift (v. 7)
- 2) Spiritual Gifts are given to believers for the COMMON GOOD of the Church (v. 7)
- 3) There is a wide variety of Spiritual Gifts given to each church community (vv. 8-10)
- 4) The Holy Spirit controls the gifts – giving each church the exact gifts it needs to minister to each other AND to its community (v. 11)

Some problems with Spiritual Gifts that we need to guard against by looking at SIX different passages within 1 Corinthians 12-14.

PASSAGE 1: 1 Corinthians 12:1

Problem: Ignorance about Spiritual Gifts

The author of the curriculum has identified three major HISTORICAL factors that have NEGATIVELY affected the church’s thinking about Spiritual Gifts:

- 1) Institutionalism. (prior to 1500)
- 2) Rationalism. (in the 1700’s)
- 3) Emotionalism. (in the late 1700’s as reaction to rationalism)

PASSAGE 2: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-26

Problem: We must guard against downplaying any gift as being unimportant or unnecessary.

In vv. 14-20 we see the problem of gift projection – seeing your gift as the most important and downplaying the gifts of others.

In vv. 21-26 we must guard against saying to others with different gifts “I don’t need you!”

PASSAGE 3: 1 Corinthians 12: 27-30

Problem: Some gifted members may depreciate their own value to the Church.

We must remember that every true follower of Christ is part of the Body of Christ AND we all have different gifts that are necessary for the building up of the Church. These must be exercised in the COMMUNITY of Christ.

PASSAGE 4: 1 Corinthians 12:31b – 13:3

Problem: Spiritual Gifts must NOT be used without LOVE.

- 1 Cor. 13: 4-7 tell us HOW we are to exercise our Spiritual Gifts in love: with patience, kindness, without envy, humbly, respectfully, selflessly, mercifully, calmly, compassionately, AND with the energy and the strength that comes from the Lord.

PASSAGE 5: 1 Corinthians 14: 1-5

Problem: We must GUARD against exercising ANY gift that doesn't edify OR build up the Church.

Speaking in tongues builds up the individual only, but prophecy (proclaiming a message from the Word of God) builds up the whole Church.

Tongue-speaking does not lend itself to being used in love since it only builds up oneself.

PASSAGE 6: 1 Corinthians 14: 22-31, 40

Problem: We must GUARD against using gifts in a disruptive, disorderly way.

Example: a gifted musician going through halls performing while lessons are being taught.

1 Cor. 12-14 show us HOW to use Spiritual Gifts AND WARN us what we should GUARD against so that Spiritual Gifts will NOT be misused or neglected. The bottom line is, IF the gift is being exercised in LOVE for the building up of Christ's Church, it is more than likely being used appropriately.

FOUR barriers, offered by the author of the curriculum, which must be removed in order to raise a Church's gift-consciousness.

1) Confusion and suspicion.

Over-reacting to charismatic groups; fear or misunderstanding about Spiritual Gifts

2) An institutionalized model.

Depending on organizational structures, natural abilities, rules and regulations to do ministries instead of relying on the Holy Spirit to order and use the Spiritual Gifts of the Church.

3) A consumer mentality.

People are content to simply attend church events in order to receive something.

4) Lack of community.

The Church is merely a collection of individuals and not a true community.

THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF WISDOM (1 Corinthians 12:8)

The special Spirit-given ability to see situations and issues from God's perspective and to apply God-given insights to specific areas of need. This gift is useful in directing the Body in what to do next; in making God's will known.

JESUS especially modeled this gift: people were impressed by the wisdom with which He spoke (Mark 6:2); His perspective was clearly given to Him by the Father in heaven (Matt. 11: 25-27); His words of wisdom shone through in the perceptive answers He gave to those who tried to trap Him (Matt 21: 23-27; 22: 23-33; Luke 20: 20-26); we see His wisdom most clearly in the cross (1 Cor. 1: 18-25) – in Christ crucified we see “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor. 1: 24).

Peter writes in 2 Peter 3: 15-16 that Paul wrote letters with God-given wisdom.

*The SOURCE of ALL wisdom is God Himself, as Scripture reminds us in Proverbs 2:6, “The Lord gives wisdom,” AND in 1 Cor. 2:13, “We speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit.”

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSON WITH THE GIFT OF WISDOM

- You often give PRACTICAL insights to people which help to solve problems.
- God gives you insights in situations in which you have had no previous knowledge.
- You have great interest AND you are able to apply spiritual knowledge in PRACTICAL ways.
- You often know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it in situations that leave others puzzled.

WAYS TO USE THE GIFT OF WISDOM IN THE CHURCH

- Counsel those who bring problems to you
- Apply Scriptural principles to your own life and with those you counsel
- Help guide the congregation through a troublesome time
- Be available to members of the church who may be facing financial difficulties, family problems, business reversals, and so on.
- Serve as an arbitrator or negotiator between sparring parties or groups
- Serve as an Elder or Deacon (men only)

THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE (1 Corinthians 12:8)

The special Spirit-given ability to receive from God knowledge that is crucial to ministry and that could not have been obtained in other ways. This includes the special ability to discover, organize, relate, and clarify information and ideas from Scripture.

The knowledge that this gift brings is not on the same plane as the special revelation of the Bible. Nor is it intended to add to what Scripture teaches. It is essentially **guidance**: knowledge or information given by the Holy Spirit that relates to a specific situation or moment. It is not valid beyond its own time and place. Its validity relates to a context in which the Spirit desires to guide or minister for the glory of God. This localized “message of knowledge” is always subject to the truth of the Scriptures and will never contradict it.

The way knowledge is communicated to the one gifted in KNOWLEDGE may come in various forms such as feelings, nudges, insights, thoughts, impressions, or a word of Scripture that will intrude into one’s thoughts. The gift is supernatural in that the information received could not have been obtained in any way other than directly from God, who knows all things.

One who is gifted in KNOWLEDGE is one who loves and is engaged in careful and diligent study of God’s Word.

We see the gift of KNOWLEDGE in use all throughout Scripture – both Old and New Testaments: Exodus 18 in Jethro’s counsel to Moses; repeatedly all throughout Jesus’ ministry; and often in the books of Acts such as in chapter 1 in the replacing of Judas.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSON WITH THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

- You know the difference between your own thoughts AND information received from the Lord.
- You sometimes experience God-given, supernatural insights when you are praying
- You are engaged in a regular and passionate study of God’s Word
- When talking with a troubled person, you sometimes discern the previously undetected root hurt without being told.
- You sometimes know things without knowing how you came to know them.

WAYS TO USE THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE CHURCH

- Use Scripture to help a person with a problem whom the Lord “just so happens” (providentially!) to bring into your life just when they need guidance.
- Counsel others who are making long-term decisions
- Be involved in a counseling ministry where you are often able to discern the root hurts and speak a word of comfort and encouragement.
- Serve as a volunteer at New Beginnings Pregnancy Care Center
- Teach in our Christian Education ministry
- Be a team member as part of evangelistic outreach, such as the Good News Club or the Senior High Youth ministry.
- Serve as an elder (men only)

THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF DISCERNMENT (1 Corinthians 12:10)

The special Spirit-given ability to read or hear a teaching, to encounter a problem, or to consider a proposed course of action, and then determine whether the source behind the teaching, problem, or action is divine, merely human, or satanic.

Jesus modeled DISCERNMENT perfectly: To Peter, “Get behind me, Satan!” (Matt 16:23); to the teachers of the law, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?” (Matt 9: 3-4). Peter with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5: 1-11

*The Spiritual Gift of DISCERNMENT is given by the Holy Spirit to help PROTECT the Church from those who operate under Satan’s influence. Without this gift the Church is vulnerable to the attacks of Satan and the poison of false teaching.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSON WITH THE GIFT OF DISCERNMENT

- You have been able to detect phony persons and false teachings when others have not.
- You have developed an ability to perceive people’s true spiritual motives.
- You are deeply concerned when you sense false teachings and when false practices are creeping into the church.
- You tend to look beneath the surface to detect hidden sources of words or actions.

WAYS TO USE THE SPIRITUAL GIFT OF DISCERNMENT IN THE CHURCH

- Alert those in the congregation about false teachings outside the Church by informing the Elders.
- Warn those in the congregation of the dangers of mass media bias against the truth by informing the Elders.
- Evaluate if needy people are truly needy or just playing the system (Deacons)
- Be a member of the Christian Education Committee who helps to evaluate curriculum and Bible study materials.
- Engage in spiritual warfare through prayer – actively participate in the Church’s Wednesday night prayer time.
- Serve as an Elder of Deacon (men only)

Pray for 3 things this week in your daily prayers:

- CONFESS to the Lord any misuse or neglect of Spiritual Gifts that you detect on your part.
- Give THANKS to the Lord for the warnings and guidance of Scripture that helps the Church to GUARD the use of Spiritual Gifts.
- ASK the Lord to help you understand and use the gifts He has given you in a way that glorifies Him.