

Competency: Using Your Spiritual Gifts!

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.” 1 Co.14:1
“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers! Matt. 7:21-23

Important Reminders:

1. Gifts, ministry, or even people should never be more important than our love for God. Love for God is evidenced by a “pray, hear, obey” lifestyle. (Matt. 10:37-39; Jn. 14:15)
2. Ministry in the kingdom of God should occur as a result of an overflow of Life that comes first through Christ Himself, then Christ’s Body, evidenced in character. Divine order is critical! (Jn.15:1-17)
3. All effective ministry in the kingdom, including the use of spiritual gifts, should be evaluated on the basis of real “fruit” – whether it was done through the fruit of the spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, etc) and the actual results. (Gal. 5:22; Matt.7:15-23) As a result of the ministry and gifts, are people actually loving God more, loving people more, and tangibly advancing the kingdom of God?

Spiritual Gifts:

1. Think of spiritual gifts as supernatural abilities given by God to advance His kingdom. Spiritual gifts come from Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit and fire. (Eph. 4:8; Matt. 3:11)
2. Spiritual gifts can be viewed as both “tools” for building the kingdom and “weapons” for doing spiritual warfare, i.e. advancing the kingdom of God. (Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:3-6) The measure of effectiveness in spiritual gifts is always: 1. Love/Covenant – Is love for God and people growing? 2. Is the Kingdom of God growing on the earth? Is there obvious manifestations of divine Life (Christ) flowing through divine order (people connected with one mind, heart, and lifestyle)? Can we see a tangible expression of Christ’s Lordship evidenced in peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)
3. Spiritual gifts are “presents” from God that were not given as rewards. Nor were they given to more “spiritual” people. Gifts are given to everyone who has placed their faith in Christ as King and been baptized by Christ in the Holy Spirit.
4. Spiritual gifts are given to us for others, not for ourselves. God has built us in such a way that when we loose our lives we gain them. (Lk. 17:33; Matt.10:39; Matt.16:25).
5. Gifts are meant to be practiced. We grow through experiential learning, mixed with observation and feedback. Humility and teachability attracts the grace of God. (James 4:6) For example, prophecy is to be evaluated by the Body of Christ. (1 Cor. 14:29-33)
6. Gifts can be imparted through those who have received this delegated authority from God – like apostles, prophets, elders, etc. (2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Tim.4:14; Ro. 1:11-12)
7. Why everyone should practice “praying in tongues” (1 Cor. 14:14-18): Tongues is a unique gift that has several facets. There are different types or kinds of tongues. Here are a couple Bible verses that refer to BOTH praying in tongues AND prophecy in tongues. 1 Cor.12:10 is a reference to "speaking in tongues" which is about prophecy (speaking on God's behalf to people..ie. .the testimony of Jesus) in another language, which requires interpretation. Sometimes the language exists on earth. Sometimes it is a language of heaven/angels (1 Cor. 13). 1 Cor. 14:2- - this reference is to "speaking in tongues" which is about a prayer language in which we talk to God. It is mysteries uttered to God without understanding. It is a prayer language that edifies the spirit of the one praying and is very powerful! Paul wants everyone to pray in tongues, which I believe is available to all Spirit-filled/baptized believers, ie. their prayer language. Paul then shifts over to the "speaking in tongues" that is prophecy

in a public meeting which requires interpretation. His preference, in a public meeting, is for prophecy. He is making a case for corporate edification over personal edification in a public meeting. This does not mean he doesn't value tongues because he tells us that he speaks/prays in tongues more than everybody. (1 Cor. 14:18)

In 1 Cor. 14:13, Paul is dancing back and forth between praying in tongues and prophecy in tongues. You have to follow his reasoning and logic very closely. It is a bit tricky. One refers to speaking in tongues (prophecy) which is done in a public meeting requiring interpretation in order to edify the whole church. The other reference is to praying in tongues in which his mind is unfruitful, i.e. he doesn't have a clue what he is praying. He is praying with his spirit, singing with his spirit. Paul declares his commitment to "speaking in tongues" (in this case praying), but in a public meeting he prefers that when prophecy occurs via tongues it has an interpreter so the church will be edified.

Sometimes Paul argues for the proper use of "speaking in tongues" which is prophecy requiring interpretation in a public meeting so everyone can be edified. Other times he is talking about "speaking in tongues" that is to God...i.e. a prayer language which edifies the one praying...

There are some great books on the gift of tongues: <http://www.amazon.com/70-Reasons-Speaking-Tongues-Spiritual/dp/160273013X>

http://books.google.com/books/about/They_Speak_with_Other_Tongues.html?id=TjsKAAAACAAJ

Check out articles like this:

http://www.rhema.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1053:seven-reasons-why-every-believer-should-speak-in-tongues&catid=53&Itemid=145

I believe that there has been so much controversy around this spiritual gift because it is so powerful. Tongues accompanied the baptism of the Holy Spirit described in the Book of Acts as a reversal of the curse on mankind that came at the tower of Babel. In other words, it is a sign and wonder that God wants to unify His family on earth with the symbol of restored communication and comprehension. Tongues in this case was actual languages people were speaking at the time, and folks were given an ability to speak in a foreign language without previous knowledge - a miracle of unity through language. Prophecy in tongues, with interpretation is powerful. We need to open our hearts to more of this in the Body of Christ.

Praying in tongues can be done by all believers and is truly one of the most powerful "gifts" which edifies the human spirit of the one praying. All types of "tongues" are supernatural and come from the heavenly realm, which should be a naturally supernatural part of our lives as sons of God. We do not originate from earth, but from heaven - our true home. Eph. 2:6

Spiritual Gifts Listed:

1. Administration,
2. Apostle,
3. Celibacy,
4. Craftsmanship,
5. Discernment,
6. Encouragement,
7. Evangelism,
8. Exhortation,
9. Faith,
10. Giving,
11. Healing,
12. Helps/Service,
13. Hospitality,
14. Intercession,
15. Knowledge,
16. Leadership,
17. Mercy/Compassion,
18. Miracles,
19. Missionary,
20. Music,
21. Pastoring/Shepherding,
22. Poverty,
23. Prophecy,
24. Teaching,
25. Tongues,
26. Interpretation of Tongues,
27. Wisdom,
28. Writing.

Questions:

1. What are the important things to keep in mind when discussing ministry and gifts?
2. What are the biblical ways to determine if we are using our gifts properly?
3. What are your spiritual gifts?
4. In what ways are you using your spiritual gifts?
5. What has been the "fruit" from your ministry and gifts?