

**Adult Bible Institute
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Topic: Spiritual Gifts, session #4
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“The Goal/Purpose of Spiritual Gifts”

I. UNITY DOES NOT REQUIRE UNIFORMITY.

- A. Paul emphasizes that God has given “different kinds of gifts.” (1 Cor. 12:4).
1. Unity of spirit and purpose can only be maintained through equipping the body for diversity of ministry.
 2. This is similar to a football team. If all were quarterbacks, you would have uniformity, but you would not have a unified functioning team. For a cohesive team to exist, players must play a diversity of roles that contribute to a unified team function.
 3. That is Paul’s point here. God gives a variety of gifts just as players on a team play a variety of positions.

II. WHILE DIVERSITY OF GIFTS MAKES EACH BELIEVER UNIQUE, YET THE PURPOSE OF THOSE GIFTS IS TO CREATE A FUNCTIONING, EFFECTIVE, UNIFIED BODY.

- A. “Now to each the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the “common good.” (1 Cor. 12:7).
- B. It is important to understand that Spiritual Gifts are never given for “self-edification.”
1. A teacher who writes a lesson that only he reads has accomplished nothing.
 2. A preacher who records a message that only he hears has wasted his Spiritual Gift.
 3. A person with the gift of Discernment who keeps his insights to himself is an unfaithful steward.
- C. “Manifestation” is the greek word *phanerosis*. It has the idea of making something “known, clear or evident.” That is the purpose of Spiritual Gifts ---to make known, clear, or evident the Holy Spirit and His working in the church around the world. Thus, a key purpose of Spiritual Gifts is to manifest the Holy Spirit, to put Him on display. When gifts are not used the effect is to keep the Holy Spirit hidden.

- D. Given for “the common good.” This is the greek word *sumpheron*, which literally means “to bring together.” The context here is that Spiritual Gifts are to be used in a way that is mutually beneficial or advantageous for the Body. Spiritual Gifts are to be helpful and edifying to the church, God’s people whom He brings together in His name.
- E. Ministry of our gifts can also strengthen others in developing the ministry of their own Spiritual Gifts.
1. Example: Pastor/Teachers in Ephesians 4:11-12. The ministry of teaching of the Word equips the saints for their own work of ministry in the Body of Christ.
 2. On the other hand, if we fail to minister our gifts, we hinder others in the ministry of theirs.
 3. Consider the analogy of the human body in 1 Cor. 12:12-26. All parts of the body are needed for the whole to function properly.

III. FOUR BLESSINGS THAT RESULT WHEN THE CHURCH MINISTERS SPIRITUAL GIFTS AS IT SHOULD.

- A. Christians themselves receive great blessing, both from exercising their own gifts and from receiving the benefit of the gifts of others.
- B. When every Christian does his/her part in ministry, a dynamic witness for Christ goes forth that would otherwise not be seen.
1. Look at the results in the book of Acts---2:37-41; 2:42-47; 3:6-11, 4:4; 4:31-37; 5:12-16; 5:42-6:1; 6:5-10; etc.
- C. When the church ministers its gifts, God’s leaders become apparent.
1. In a faithfully functioning church spiritual leadership emerges. Note how Stephen’s leadership was shown as he ministered his gifts as one of the first deacons---see Acts 6:5-10.
 2. Spirit-filled leadership appears rapidly when God is freely at work in His body.
- D. A church faithfully ministering Spiritual Gifts experiences joy, power, and love in her midst that no human strategizing and planning can produce.

IV. THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS: PRODUCING CHRISTLIKENESS IN THE SAINTS.

- A. Ephesians 4:11-16.

1. Reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. (4:13).
2. Become mature, attaining to Christlikeness. (4:13).
3. Not susceptible to being easily turned astray by false doctrine (4:14).
4. Instead, speaking the truth in love (4:15).
5. The whole body is built up in love as each ministers his gift. (4:16).