

Elephant in the Church: Spiritual Gifts

Wisdom

1 Corinthians 12:8

Defined: The ability to have insight into people and situations that are not obvious to the average person, combined with an understanding of what to do and how to do it. It is the ability to not only see, but also apply the principles of God's Word to the practical matters of life by the "Spirit of wisdom" (Ephesians 1:17).

Knowledge

1 Corinthians 12:8

Defined: The ability to research, remember, and make effective use of a variety of information on a number of diverse subjects.

Faith

1 Corinthians 12:9

Defined: The ability to envision what needs to be done and to trust God to accomplish it even though it seems impossible to most people.

Healing

1 Corinthians 12:9

Defined: The ability to call on God to heal the sick through supernatural means for the purpose of revealing God.

Miracles

1 Corinthians 12:9

Defined: The ability to call on God to do supernatural acts that reveal His power.

Discernment

1 Corinthians 12:10

Defined: The ability to quickly perceive whether such things as people, events, or beliefs are from God or from Satan.

Apostles

1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11

Defined: There is much confusion regarding the spiritual gift of apostleship because there is sometimes a failure to distinguish between the office of apostle and the gift of apostle. The office of apostle refers to the twelve chosen by Jesus (Matt. 10:1; 19:28; 20:17; Mark 3:13-19; 6:7; 9:35; 10:32; Luke 6:12-16; 8:1; 9:1; 22:19-30; John 6:70-71; Revelation 21:14). The requirements for the office of apostle include being an eyewitness to the life and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:21-26). Another requirement is miraculous power (Acts 2:43; 5:12; 8:18; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4). The role and office is also used in a secondary sense to such people as Barnabas (Acts 14:3-4, 14), Apollos and Sosthenes (1 Corinthians 4:6-9), Andronicus and Junias (Romans 16:7), James (Galatians 1:19), and Silas and Timothy (1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6). They, like apostles today, were gifted individuals sent out to move from place to place in order to begin and establish local churches (Acts 13:3-4). This gift also includes the capacity to minister cross-culturally (Acts 10:34-35; Ephesians 3:7-8). Today, church planters and missionaries are operating out of their gift of apostleship as well as those Christian leaders God raises up to lead and influence multiple churches and pastors.

Teaching

Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28

Defined: The gift of teaching is the God-given ability to understand and communicate biblical truth in a clear and relevant manner so that there is understanding and application.

Helps/Service

Romans 12:7; 1 Corinthians 12:28

Defined: The ability to joyfully work alongside another and help that person complete the task God has given them. People with this gift generally prefer to work behind the scenes. They also tend to find joy in helping alleviate the burdens and responsibilities of others. This gift is usually accompanied with an attitude of humility and sacrifice, as well as an ability to perceive the needs of others.

Administration

1 Corinthians 12:28

Defined: The gift of administration is the God-given ability to give direction and make decisions on behalf of others that result in efficient operation and accomplishment of goals. Administration includes the ability to organize people, things, information, finances, etc. Often the mark of an administrator is the ability to accomplish things in a "fitting and orderly way" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

Evangelism

Ephesians 4:11

Defined: The ability and desire to boldly and clearly communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ so that non-Christians can become Christians.

Pastor/Biblical Counseling

Ephesians 4:11

Defined: In one sense, pastoring is the office reserved for those men who meet the Biblical criteria (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). In another sense, there is a pastoral gift also commonly known as shepherding or biblical counseling that God gives to people in the church beyond the pastors/elders. These people protect, guide, counsel, and disciple other people.

Encouragement

Romans 12:8

Defined: (also called the fit of exhortation) involves motivating, encouraging, and consoling others so they mature in their walk with Jesus.

Giving

Romans 12:8

Defined: The ability to give money and other forms of wealth joyfully, wisely, and generously to meet the needs of others and help support ministries. Those with this gift often give more than those around them would ever consider giving as they see their job in life to make resources to turn around and give to others and ministries.

Leadership

Romans 12:8

Defined: This gift is found in people who have a clear, significant vision from God and are able to communicate it publicly or privately in such a way that they influence others to pursue that vision.

Mercy

Romans 12:8

Defined: The capacity to feel and express unusual compassion and sympathy for those in difficult or crisis situations and provide them with the necessary help and support to see them through tough times.

Hospitality

Romans 12:13

Defined: The ability to welcome strangers and entertain guests, often in your home, with great joy and kindness so that they become friends. Hospitality is supposed to include one's family (1 Tim. 5:8),

friends (Prov. 27:10), Christians (Gal. 6:10), and strangers who may not be Christians (Lev. 19:34).

Tongues

Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10-11, 29-30

Defined: The word "tongues" is best translated "languages" from the Greek. The confusion regarding tongues is that at least three different uses of the gift are mentioned in Scripture.

- There is a private prayer language. Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 14:14 saying, "I pray in a tongue."
- There is a missionary gift that enables someone to speak the gospel of Jesus to foreigners in their native language that the speaker does not know. Acts 2:1-13 records just such an occasion when 3,000 people were saved in a day as the gospel was preached through the early Christians.
- There is a revelatory language whereby a message of God is spoken in a language unknown to the speaker that must be translated into the native language of the people in the church so that they can understand what is being said. This use of tongues, therefore, also requires the assistance of someone with the gift of interpretation. (1 Corinthians 12:10).

Prophecy

1 Corinthians 12:10, 28; Ephesians 4:11

Defined: There is a great abuse of and confusion about the gift of prophecy. Much like the gifts of apostleship and pastor, there is both an office that is limited to a few people and a gifting and ministry that is open to many who receive the spiritual gift of prophecy. Like tongues, prophecy is also spoken of in a various ways throughout Scripture. Importantly, the

New Testament does not elevate prophecy to the highest level of authority as the Old Testament does. Each potential prophecy is supposed to be tested and approved by the church leaders such as the elders (1 Corinthians 14:29-32; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22).

- In the broadest sense, prophecy is sometimes the teaching ministry of preaching the bible as God's Word in the church. Examples include 1 Corinthians 14:4 where prophecy "edifies the church," 14:6-7 where Paul links prophecy and teaching, saying, "prophecy or word of instruction," and 14:24-25 where he explains that through the Spirit-enabled preaching of the bible, non-Christians will be convicted of their sin and give their lives to Jesus.
- Prophecy is sometimes a revelation about a future event that God intends to reveal to the entire church; a revelation that is authenticated by coming true as predicted. Roughly 25 percent of the Bible was prophetic in this regard in that it foretold future events. This is what Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 14:6 where he links "revelation or knowledge or prophecy." A clear example of this is Acts 11:28-29, where the prophet Agabus predicted a famine, thereby preparing the early Christians to better help people.
- Prophecy is sometimes a word from God to be given to an individual. An example of this is the prophet Agabus who told Paul how he would die in Acts 21:10-11.

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