

PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

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MINISTRY & MANIFESTATION GIFTS

STUDY GUIDE



MINISTRY AND MANIFESTATION GIFTS

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 12:4-8

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

I Corinthians 12:4-11 & 28-31

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith, by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will...And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Ephesians 4:11-14

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:...

I Peter 4:10-11

As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

THEME

Every born-again believer has a specific ministry in the Body of Christ, but not everyone operates with the same gift. Each gift is important to the Body of Christ; hence, all gifts should be operative. The gifts are given for the benefit of all the Body; therefore, they should be properly used and not abused.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. We must learn to recognize the gifts that have been given to the Body of Christ.
 - 1. The gifts given to the Body can be placed into two categories: ministry and manifestation.
 - 2. The ministry gifts may also be placed into two categories: the equipping ministry (five-fold ministry) and the Body ministry gifts. (Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:28)
 - 3. These nine manifestation gifts are mentioned in I Corinthians 12: the word of wisdom; the word of knowledge; faith; gifts of healings; miracles; prophecy; discerning of spirits; tongues; and interpretation of tongues.
- B. It is vital that we know what the Bible says concerning spiritual gifts.
 - 1. Study of the following scriptures will give us a better understanding of the various gifts: Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12; I Corinthians 14; Ephesians 4:11-16; I Peter 4:10-11.
 - 2. It is important that we do not gauge spiritual gifts by past experiences or by what someone teaches concerning spiritual gifts.

3. The criteria for judging all spiritual gifts are the Word of God and the Spirit of God.
- C. We must develop a sensitivity to the Spirit so that we will know our ministry gift or gifts, and so that we may also be a channel through which the manifestation gifts flow.
 - D. In our study of Ministry and Manifestation Gifts, we must become familiar with the following three Greek words which have been translated as "gift."
 1. *Charisma* is a Greek word which means a gift freely given, with the emphasis on "freely given."
 2. *Doma* is a Greek word which refers to a gifted person given to the Body of Christ.
 3. *Dorea* is a Greek word which means a gift, with the emphasis on the gift.
 - E. In I Corinthians 12:7 the word "manifestation," which is the Greek word *phanerosis*, means to uncover, lay bare, or reveal.
 1. For the sake of study, we will call the nine manifestations mentioned in I Corinthians 12 "manifestation gifts."
 2. The manifestation gifts are unique in that they are manifested only as the Spirit wills.

II. MINISTRY GIFTS

- A. Ministry gifts are gifts given to the Body of Christ to enable its members to do the work of the ministry.
- B. There are two categories of ministry gifts.
 1. The five-fold ministry is given for the perfecting or maturing of the saints. These gifts aid in organizing, establishing order, correcting, warning, providing guidance, and stimulating repentance and restoration. They also provide an element of protection.
 2. The Body ministry gifts are given to do the work of the ministry, which will edify the Body of Christ.

- C. The fivefold ministry gifts will remain with us until “we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,” or more simply stated, until we are mature and complete in Jesus. (Ephesians 4:13)
- D. God is organized, and He expects the Church to be organized; thus, He has given to the Church ministry gifts that enhance organization.
 - 1. We must be organized under the direction of Jesus.
 - 2. Organization is neither unspiritual nor unscriptural.
- E. Church leadership is just as responsible for maturing the saints as it is for evangelizing the world; therefore, all the gifts are needful for the Body.
- F. Maturing believers is just as important as multiplying them; consequently, God has given to the Body of Christ gifts that will assist spiritual growth. (We must feed the Word of God to those who have been converted.)
- G. The Church is a place to train and develop gifts; it is not a place of exhibition. We must use our gifts as God has ordained, but we should not exploit them.
- H. The following are five characteristics of ministry gifts:
 - 1. Ministry gifts are permanent gifts used at the discretion of the individual who possesses the gift(s).
 - 2. Ministry gifts may be related to natural gifts.
 - 3. Ministry gifts, to some degree, determine the position of individuals in the Body. (This fact is certainly apparent with the five-fold ministry.)
 - 4. The ministry gifts are gifted persons; consequently, the person with the gift must be received in order for one to benefit from the gift.
 - 5. Each individual is responsible for identifying and developing his own ministry gift(s).
- I. Ministry gifts provide leadership.

1. Jesus has provided the Body of Christ with leadership through the five-fold ministry. (The five-fold ministers are not the only leaders in the Body of Christ.)
2. These leaders are appointed and equipped by God for the purpose of maturing the saints and preparing them for the work of the ministry, so that the Body of Christ may be edified.
3. The "five fold ministry," which consists of God-appointed leaders in the Body, is listed below and briefly defined. (We must remember that God's method for appointment is selection, not election.)

a. Apostle

- (1) Definition - a delegate; an ambassador of the Gospel; officially, a commissioner of Jesus Christ; one Who is sent.
- (2) Ministry - a person with the supernatural ability to give direction, to set order, and to provide sound governmental structure.
- (3) The Bible identifies several apostles; Jesus, the twelve disciples, Paul, and Barnabas are some who are mentioned. (Luke 6:13; Acts 14:14)

b. Prophet

- (1) Definition - a foreteller (or forthteller); an inspired speaker.
- (2) Ministry - a person with the supernatural ability to interpret the Scriptures in light of the present-day situation. The predominant ministry of the prophet is that of warning and correcting rather than seeing visions and predicting the future. (Not everyone who prophesies functions as a prophet.)
- (3) Jesus, John the Baptist, Judas, Silas, and Agabus are a few of the prophets mentioned in the New Testament. (Acts 3:20-26; Mark 11:32; Acts 15:32; Acts 21:10)

c. Evangelist

- (1) Definition - a preacher of the Gospel.
- (2) Ministry - a person with the supernatural ability to present the Gospel in such a way that people respond to Jesus through repentance, which leads to conversion. The evangelist presents Jesus in such a way that the Word is confirmed with signs following.
- (3) Both Jesus and Philip operated as evangelists. (Acts 21:8)
- (4) It has been said that an evangelist is like an obstetrician--he assists in birth.

d. Pastor

- (1) Definition - a shepherd.
- (2) Ministry - a person with the supernatural ability to lead, to feed, and to protect the flock. He is to lead both by word and by example. The pastor is also responsible for the nourishment, health, and development of the flock. (Pastors in the Old Testament were identified as kings rather than preachers. Isaiah 44:28; Jeremiah 23:1-4)
- (3) Jesus is the good pastor or shepherd. (We do not have a New Testament reference to any other individual being identified as a pastor. John 10:11; I Peter 5:4)
- (4) It has been said that a pastor is like a pediatrician--he deals with growth and health.

e. Teacher

- (1) Definition - an instructor.
- (2) Ministry - a person with the supernatural ability to explain clearly and effectively the truth of the Word of God.
- (3) The teaching gift is not the result of education and skill; it is a supernatural gift given by God. (The gift can and should be developed.)

- (4) In II Timothy 1:11, Paul identifies himself as a teacher to the Gentiles.
 - (5) In Acts 13:1, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul are identified as prophets and teachers.
- J. Body ministry gifts are a vital and necessary part of the Church. (Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:12-31)
1. The Body of Christ is one body, but it is made up of many members. The local church is also one body, but it, too, is made up of many members. The church has one purpose but many functions.
 2. Each individual is responsible for discovering his own ministry gift(s). Never seek to duplicate the gift of someone else. Be original and minister by the Spirit rather than the senses.
 3. These ministry gifts are for the purpose of ministering to the Body in such a way that the Body will be edified, rather than some man being glorified.
 4. The following are various Body ministry gifts mentioned in the Bible:
 - a. **Exhortation** is a gift that encourages, strengthens, and gives hope. (Romans 12:8)
 - b. **Helps** is a gift that enables one to serve the Body with skills and abilities that are used in a supporting role. This gift is vital to every body of believers. (I Corinthians 12:28)
 - c. **Giving** is a gift that enables one to give liberally and joyfully. The giving will be with simplicity; the motive will be to minister, not to impress. (Romans 12:8)
 - d. **Ruling** or superintending is a gift that is often overlooked. It is the supernatural ability to lead others in a particular area in order to accomplish the will of God. This gift is responsible for assuring that things are done decently and in order. (Romans 12:8)

- e. **Ministry** is the gift of serving. It is the supernatural ability to serve in various capacities. (Everyone must serve, but not everyone has the gift of ministering. Romans 12:7)
 - f. **Government** is a gift that enables one to steer or direct. This gift gives one the supernatural ability to lead and direct in an orderly and business-like fashion, without quenching the Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:28)
 - g. **Mercy** or benevolence is a gift that gives one the ability to manifest compassionate, practical, and cheerful love towards suffering members of the Body. This gift extends compassion to those who are suffering physical, emotional, or mental distress. (Romans 12:8)
- 5. The human body illustrates the spiritual Body. We must remember Who carefully designed and placed each member in the Body of Christ.
 - 6. The Church must be organized around the ministry gifts. (We have grossly violated this principle by filling "positions" with people, irrespective of the gifts.)
 - 7. The ministry of the Church must be determined by the ministry gifts available. (If a local body has only two gifted teachers, then it should not be structured as though it had ten.)
- K. The harmony of all gifts is vital to the Body of Christ.
- 1. There are three kinds of spiritual gifts.
 - a. Equipping ministry gifts include apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. These gifts are often referred to as the "five-fold ministry."
 - b. Body ministry gifts, such as exhortation, helps, governments, benevolence, giving, etc., aid in the edification of the Body.
 - c. The manifestation gifts are word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gift of healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues, which are manifested only as the Spirit wills.

2. The purpose for the variety of gifts is to meet a variety of needs in a variety of ways. These gifts are intended to stimulate harmony and to bring completeness to the Body; they must not become competitive and bring division. (All gifts must submit to the leadership gifts, and the leadership gifts must recognize and utilize the gifts God has placed in the Body.)
3. The three kinds of spiritual gifts previously mentioned must be in harmony in order for the Church to function properly.
4. Don't try to limit the ministry of the Spirit by thinking your gift is the only one that is needed. (We must be both wise and considerate.)
5. We must learn to respect the ministry gift(s) of others.
6. Problems occur when the leadership of a church does not recognize or is threatened by the ministry gifts of the total Body.
7. Leadership must be mindful to expose the Body to the "five fold ministry." (These ministries should be blended in such a way that there is neither conflict nor confusion.)
8. The equipping ministry gifts are responsible for **helping** the Body ministry gifts find their places.
9. Every member in the Body of Christ is vital to the function of the Body; therefore, every gift is important.

III. MANIFESTATION GIFTS (I Corinthians 12:7-11)

- A. Following are the nine manifestation gifts listed in I Corinthians 12:8-10: the word of wisdom; the word of knowledge; faith; the gift of healing; miracles; prophecy; discerning of spirits; tongues; and interpretation of tongues.
- B. These gifts are spontaneous in operation. The Holy Spirit indwells our spirit; therefore, the potential for being used to operate in one or more of these gifts is always there. (We must develop sensitivity to the Spirit in order to be used.)
- C. There are four characteristics of manifestation gifts.

1. Manifestations are temporary; they are manifested only as the Spirit wills.
 2. There does not appear to be any relationship between manifestation gifts and natural ability.
 3. Manifestation gifts have little-to-no relationship to one's position in the Body. (The gift is emphasized, not the person.)
 4. The Body is to receive the manifestation gifts as if God Himself were there in Person speaking or ministering.
- D. In order to be used in the gifts or manifestations of the Spirit, one must be filled with the Holy Spirit and also be sensitive to His leading.
- E. Manifestation gifts are divided into three groups: revelation; utterance; and power.
1. **Revelation** relates to perceiving or seeing from a spiritual perspective; therefore, anyone operating in this area is **thinking** like God.
 2. **Utterance** relates to speaking or proclaiming; therefore, anyone operating in this area is **talking** like God.
 3. **Power** relates to doing, acting, or performing; therefore, anyone operating in this area is **acting** like God.
 4. The revelation manifestations are: word of wisdom; word of knowledge; and discerning of spirits.
 5. The utterance manifestations are: prophecy; tongues; and interpretation of tongues.
 6. The power manifestations are: faith; gift of healing; and working of miracles.
- F. The manifestation gifts are briefly defined below.
1. **Word of wisdom** - it is a word, not **all** wisdom. It is God's wisdom, not man's. Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge. A word of wisdom is a specific word, given at a specific time, concerning a specific situation.

2. **Word of knowledge** - it is a word, not **all** knowledge. It is God's knowledge, not man's knowledge. Knowledge is a fact about someone, or something, or some situation. This knowledge is information revealed by God to an individual to assist someone or some group of people.
3. **Faith** - the gift of faith is not to be confused with the fruit of faith which we produce and by which we live. The gift of faith is a supernatural gift given for a particular purpose and time. When this gift is manifested, something extraordinary takes place; a healing occurs, or a miracle takes place, or a serious situation is resolved, etc.
4. **Gift of healing** - this is one of the means by which God ministers healing to the physical body. This healing is usually manifested immediately. This manifestation is distinct from the anointing with oil and the laying on of hands.
5. **Miracles** - events which defy natural laws by making the impossible possible. Very often the spectacular is seen when this gift operates.
6. **Prophecy** - a particular message given to the Body in its native language, interpreting the divine will of God. Prophecy must edify, exhort, and comfort. True prophecy will not destroy. (This gift does not make an individual a prophet, nor does it always create joyful exuberance.)
 - a. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "exhortation" as the act or practice of exhorting; or the act of inciting to laudable deeds; or incitement to that which is good or commendable; or advice; or counsel; or admonition; or a plea, sermon. etc.
 - b. The Greek definition of "exhortation" is *imploration*, which is earnest supplication; *hortation*, which is to urge strongly or incite, or *solace*, which is to cheer in grief or under calamity. It also means to relieve in affliction or to console.
 - c. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "edification" as an edifying or being edified; especially moral or spiritual instruction or improvement.

- d. The Greek definition of "edification" is *architecture*, which is the art, profession, or science of designing and constructing buildings or a structure. It may also mean construction; the second definition of "edification" is *structure*, which is the act of building or construction.
- e. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "comfort" as relief from pain, grief, or distress, etc. It is also a state of ease and quiet enjoyment, free from worry, pain, etc. It also means anything that makes life easy and comfortable.
- f. The Greek definition of "comfort" is *consolation*, which is alleviation of misery or distress of mind.

- 7. **Discerning of spirits** - this gift is not discernment in general. It is the ability to detect and distinguish different types of spirits. Discerning of spirits is revelation, not suspicion.
- 8. **Divers kinds of tongues** - various languages not understood by the mass of people. When this gift operates, a message is brought forth in a language that the speaker and congregation do not understand. The message requires an interpretation.
- 9. **Interpretation of tongues** - this gift explains the message given in tongues. This is not a word-for-word translation; therefore, the interpretation may vary in length from the message. The words used in the interpretation will be drawn from the speaker's vocabulary.

G. Manifestation gifts should never interrupt the flow of the Spirit; consequently, authority must be recognized and submission must be exercised. (Manifestations should not override the preaching or teaching of the Word.)

H. The manifestation gifts are subject to the leadership of the local Church.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS (I Corinthians 14)

A. God is not the author of confusion; therefore, anything which brings confusion is not sanctioned by God.

- B. The guidelines for manifestation gifts were given by the Holy Spirit and should, therefore, be followed explicitly. (I Corinthians 14)
- C. Manifestation gifts must edify, or bring spiritual growth to the Church.
- D. A message in tongues requires a proper interpretation.
 - 1. If there is no one to interpret, the one who has the message in tongues is to remain silent. (I Corinthians 14:28)
 - 2. The speaker should pray for the interpretation. (I Corinthians 14:12-13)
 - 3. If there is not a message from God, there can not be an interpretation from God. (Some have such a zeal to be used in manifestations that they violate the Spirit by speaking without divine inspiration.)
 - 4. The Holy Spirit does not force anyone to speak. (The spirit of the speaker is subject to the speaker.)
 - 5. The individual must determine in his heart whether or not the message is to come forth, and he must also determine when it should come forth. (The message may be a personal message that should not be brought forth in the assembly.)
 - 6. To speak very quietly to oneself in tongues is in order, but it must be done in a way that is not disruptive.
 - 7. A message can be given and understood without screaming or yelling. The objective of the message is to enlighten people, not frighten people.
 - 8. Sensitivity is the key to pleasing God in the area of manifestations.
 - 9. The number of people used in the assembly to give messages in tongues is limited to two or three at most within a given meeting. Each must take his turn: tongues, then interpretation; tongues, then interpretation, etc.
 - 10. The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet's control. (I Corinthians 14:32)

11. Tongues and interpretation of tongues are equal to prophecy. (I Corinthians 14:5)
 12. The gifts are not toys; they are tools. They must not take precedence over God's Word.
 13. Manifestation gifts do not indicate the spirituality of a person. (The church at Corinth is a good example of this truth. I Corinthians 1:5-7; I Corinthians 3:1-3)
 14. Timing is extremely important when using the gifts.
 15. Manifestation gifts are to be judged and evaluated. (Judge the message, not the person.)
 16. The gifts of the Spirit are not infallible, since they operate through people.
 17. All spiritual messages must line up to God's Word.
 18. The overseer or leader of the meeting is responsible for correcting the misuse of the gifts. If a message does not line up to God's Word, the overseer should warn the people immediately.
 19. Do not forbid speaking in tongues! (I Corinthians 14:39)
 20. Guidelines are needed to prevent the abuse of the gifts.
 21. We should not reject the preaching and teaching of God's Word by preferring manifestations. Each has its place.
- E. Prophecy carries the same guidelines as tongues and interpretations of tongues.
1. Judge the prophecy, not the person.
 2. The first speaker must be sensitive enough to give place to the second speaker. (I Corinthians 14:29-30)
 3. Do not despise prophesying. (I Thessalonians 5:20)
- F. The following guidelines for judging manifestations should be helpful:

1. The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus; therefore, the message should center around Jesus and His kingdom. (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15)
2. The message must be in line with God's Word. The Bible is complete; therefore, any revelation given by God will not add to the Scripture, but it will reveal what is already written. The Word of God is the final authority in all matters.
3. The Holy Spirit in you must bear witness to the spirit of the message or action.
3. The purpose for the manifestations is not to hurt or destroy but to heal and restore.
4. If manifestation gifts do not pass these tests, then corrective action should be taken by the leader of the meeting.
5. Manifestations can be divine, human, or demonic; therefore, we must try or test the spirits. (I John 4:1)

V. THE PROPER ENVIRONMENT FOR OPERATION OF GIFTS

- A. The fruit of the spirit provides the proper environment for the gifts to operate. (I Corinthians 12:31-13:2; Galatians 5:22-23)
 1. The nine fruit of the spirit are interdependent upon each other.
 2. The fruit is produced by the human spirit through union with Jesus Christ. (John 15:1-8; Romans 7:4)
 3. The fruit produced is to remain. (John 15:16)
 4. Walking in the spirit is the key to producing fruit. (This lifestyle is not an option; it is a command.)
- B. When operating in the gifts, we must not forget the love that prefers the brethren.
 1. The following Greek words should give us a little more insight into love:
 - a. *Eros* refers to a sensual love.

- b. *Phileo* refers to tender or affectionate love; this is the highest kind of love in Classical Greek.
 - c. *Storge* refers to family or kinship love.
 - d. *Philadelphia* refers to fraternal affection or "brotherly love."
 - e. *Philanthropia* refers to love for man, which may be interpreted as humane or kind.
 - f. *Agape* is the Greek word used to express God's love—deep and constant; this word is not the common word used in Classical Greek when expressing love for someone. *Agape* refuses defeat. (I Corinthians 13:4-8)
2. Love can be compared to the mortar that holds or bonds bricks together. (Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 3:14 Amplified)
- C. The works of the flesh must be put to death; otherwise, spiritual gifts or manifestations will be ineffective. (Colossians 3:5)
1. Romans 6:11 tells us to reckon ourselves dead.
 2. The flesh is contrary to the spirit; therefore, we must mortify the deeds of the flesh.
 3. Works of the flesh come from the sense realm; it is, therefore, extremely important to be led by the spirit.
 4. The flesh is overcome by walking in the spirit, which is walking according to the Word of God.
 5. We must present our bodies to God and renew our minds with the Word of God. (Romans 12:1-2)
 6. Reasoning gives place to the works of the flesh; therefore, we must not yield to reasoning. (Romans 8:6-8)
 7. The flesh is the greatest hindrance to spiritual gifts operating properly.
 8. Sensitivity to the Spirit is closely related to death of the flesh.

VI. MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

- A. All ministry and manifestation gifts are for the use of the Church to build Herself up in love.
- B. The following facts give insight into the Church:
 - 1. The Church is people, not a building.
 - 2. The Church is the Body of Christ, the only Jesus many will ever see.
 - 3. The Church is God's instrument for ministering in the earth today.
 - 4. The Church has the responsibility for doing the works of Jesus, which is demonstrating Christ in action.
- C. There are three basic requirements for the Church.
 - 1. God must be the first and foremost priority of the Church.
 - 2. The Church must function in unity and harmony, always preferring the brethren.
 - 3. The Church must realize that its mission is to make disciples of all nations. (The Church must become extrovert in its operation.)
- D. A healthy church is one that has the ministry and manifestation gifts operative and the fruit of the Spirit manifested.

VII. SUMMARY

- A. The purpose of all spiritual gifts is to mature the Body of Christ.
- B. Ministry gifts are to be discovered and developed; manifestation gifts are to be judged and evaluated.
- C. God is not the author of confusion.
- D. The gifts operate through human beings; therefore, they are not flawless.
- E. The gifts must produce harmony in the Body of Christ.

- F. The misuse of the gifts requires correction for the purpose of sparing the flock.
- G. Fruit bearing will make the gifts more effective and meaningful.
- H. Remember that I Corinthians 12 and I Corinthians 14 are divided by I Corinthians 13, "the more excellent way."

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. Ministry and manifestation gifts are extremely important to the Body of Christ.
- B. Abuse and misuse of the gifts bring harm to the Body of Christ.
- C. The gifts and call of God are irrevocable; therefore, we are responsible for developing and operating in the gifts given unto us.

MINISTRY AND MANIFESTATION GIFTS

The Church of Dry Bones

SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 4:14-16

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Body of Christ is made up of born-again believers.

1. The Church is the Body of Christ.
2. The Church is made up of many members.
3. The Body of Christ is diversity in unity.

B. All spiritual gifts operate through the Body of Christ.

1. If the Body does not function, the spiritual gifts cannot operate.
2. The whole Body is fitly joined together, a process that is still going on. (Ephesians 4:16)
3. Every joint has the responsibility of supplying necessary support so that the Body will not be deficient in any area.

II. SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THE BELIEVERS

A. The believers make up the Body of Christ.

B. Spiritual gifts are to be supplied by every believer.

1. The Body can grow only as the joints grow and produce.
2. The joints supply the Body with ministry gifts.
3. The ministry gifts are used according to the initiative of each individual member, as he chooses to give according to his capacity.

III. MINISTERING IN YOUR CALLING

- A. Not all believers have the same calling. (I Corinthians 12:29-31)
- B. God sets the members as it pleases Him. (I Corinthians 12:18)
- C. Pleasing oneself is not pleasing God. Denying self is pleasing God. We must crucify the flesh and walk in the spirit.

IV. THE ILLUSTRATION OF DRY BONES (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

- A. Ezekiel 37 is a scripture with a double meaning.
 1. Physically, it is speaking of the nation of Israel.
 2. Spiritually, it is speaking to the Church, the Body of Christ.
- B. The Church of Dry Bones must be recognized and revitalized.
 1. The Church of Dry Bones is a church without life. Note that Ezekiel 37 refers to bones and not to a skeleton.
 2. The bones are dry because the moistening is absent.
 3. The marrow moistens the bone structure. (Job 21:24)
 4. Examining the function and operation of the bones and marrow will give us insight into what God is doing.
 - a. Bone and marrow are not the same thing.
 - b. Through medical knowledge and the Word of God, we are able to separate the joints and marrow for a better understanding. (Hebrews 4:12)
 - c. Bones are the structural frame of a human being.

- d. The marrow is an oily tissue inside the cavity of the bones which provides moisture for the bones.
 - e. Red marrow is considered a valuable breeding ground for red corpuscles, which play a vital role in the body.
 - f. Red and white blood cells and fat cells are found in the marrow.
 - g. The marrow suggests life, and it is conducive to the life of the bones.
5. Joints are the areas where bones join each other and articulate.
6. Hearing the Word brings life to the bones. (Ezekiel 37:4; Proverbs 3:8; Proverbs 17:22)
- a. As the Word was coming forth, the bones started moving and coming together. (Ezekiel 37:7)
 - b. As bone came to bone, each one finding its proper location, the skeleton was formed.
 - c. Sinews, flesh, and skin came upon the bones as the Word of God was spoken to them.
 - d. As the Word continued to come forth, the bones stood up on their feet.
 - e. The graves opened. (Ezekiel 37:2-14)
 - (1) People have been in places that rendered their ministries dead.
 - (2) God is calling people out of the dead places into places of life.
 - (3) Why seek the living among the dead? The living remove themselves from the dead.
 - f. Division is abolished when the Spirit of God comes on the scene. (Ezekiel 37:16-22)
 - (1) The tribes of Israel are symbolic of denominations.

- (2) The Body of Christ is coming together in unity.
- (3) The Body of Christ will become one Body, with one purpose and one Lord.

V. THE BODY OF CHRIST

- A. We, as individual members, make up and represent the Body of Christ.
- B. We must continually stay in the Word and subject ourselves to the Word in order to be active in this "exceeding great army."
- C. The spiritual aspect of Ezekiel 37 has already begun.
 1. Some graves have been and are being opened.
 2. Bone is being joined to bone.
 3. The skeleton is in the process of being formed.
 4. When the skeleton is formed, the sinews, flesh, and skin will be manifested. Then the breath of life will be breathed into the "exceeding great army."
- D. We must discover and develop our ministry gifts. It is also vital that we function in our proper places in the Body of Christ.
- E. We are the determining factor in the maturing of the Body of Christ.
- F. When this Body comes into the place where the Word of God instructs it to be, the Church can look with anticipation for the Head to physically join Himself to the Body.

VI. SUMMARY

- A. The complacent and lethargic Church is nothing more than dry bones.
- B. We, as individuals, must adhere to the Word of God and live fruitful lives.
- C. We are responsible for operating in our ministry gift or gifts.

- D. One who does not minister in his proper calling is like a dislocated joint; he brings discomfort to the whole Body.
- E. The time has come to deny self for the sake of pleasing God.

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. Let us lose our life and find His.
- B. Let us awake to righteousness.
- C. Let us obey the Word and come together bone to bone.
- D. Let us supply the Body with the sufficiency of our ministry gift.
- E. Let us see ourselves as one Body united, not divided.
- F. All ministry gifts working together make up the united Body, "the exceeding great army."
- G. Except the Lord build the house, they that build it labor in vain.
- H. It is vital that we submit to God as He sets the gifts in the Body of Christ as it pleases Him.