

## Discovering Your Ministry Within The Kehilah: Living A Spirit-Filled Life Part 8-C

### Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts<sup>1</sup>

In my last post, we looked at what God wants you to be by addressing seven questions to help us lay a foundation for discovering our spiritual gifts. In this post, I want to outline some danger signs to avoid when exploring your spiritual gifts.

#### What Has Recent Research Taught Us About Spiritual Gifts?

First, George Barna, lauded by many as the foremost researcher of the Christian Church today, found that a remarkable number of Believers who have heard of spiritual gifts do not think that they possess any of those gifts at all. The percentage of Believers who did not think they possessed any gifts rose from 4 percent in 1995 to 21 percent in 2000. Second, Barna found that too many Believers had non-Biblical ideas of what spiritual gifts really were. Many thought that some of the gifts included: a sense of humor, going to church, a good personality, poetry, survival, friendliness and other things that were not listed in my last post.<sup>2</sup> Since you are reading this blog, I assume you have an interest in learning more about spiritual gifts and how to discover what gifts the Ruach has granted to you.

#### Are Spiritual Gifts A Lifetime Possession?

Once a person is given a spiritual gift, I believe it is a lifetime possession. Let's look at what Rabbi Sha'ul says in Romans: ***"For just as there are many parts that compose one body, but the parts don't all have the same function; so there are many of us, and in union with the Messiah we comprise one body, with each of us belonging to the others. But we have gifts that differ and which are meant to be used according to the grace that has been given to us."*** (Romans 12:4-6) Sha'ul draws the analogy of our physical body as the hermeneutical<sup>3</sup> key to understanding spiritual gifts. If spiritual gifts are to the Kehilah what the spinal cord is the physical body, then there is little question that once we know what our gift is we can depend on having it for a lifetime.

God gives our initial gift(s) when we are born again. But later in life we might discover that we have and are using gifts that we never used before. There are two ways to explain this. Either we always had the gift and it just surfaced, or God decided to give us a new gift. For example, my primary gifts are administration, leadership and teaching. About the time I was first learning about spiritual gifts, I had a leadership role in my employment. Shortly thereafter, I was put into an administrative role as well and excelled. However, it wasn't until some years later that I added a teaching role and discovered that gifting. It was there all along, but I had no need to use it at the time.

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the Ruach and the Word of God for my knowledge and understanding of this whole issue of discovering the third Person of the Trinity, His ministry and His gifts. In addition, in my studies, I have also come to appreciate the work of C. Peter Wagner. Most of the material for this and subsequent postings in this series are from his book "Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts." I have also been heavily influenced by the writings of Catherine Marshal, especially her book "The Helper."

<sup>2</sup> See "Awareness of Spiritual Gifts Is Changing." News Release from Barna Research Group, Ltd., (Ventura, CA), February 5, 2001, pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Serving to interpret or explain something.

## Abuse of Spiritual Gifts

We learn in Acts 8 that Simon tried to exploit spiritual gifts for profit. ***"When Simon saw that the Ruach was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power too, so that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Kefa told him, 'May your silver be destroyed with you, because you thought the gift of God could be obtained with money!'"*** (Acts 8:18-20) Too many other similar abuses could be illustrated, but I want to concentrate on two that may be the most common: *gift exaltation* and *gift projection*.

**Gift Exaltation:** In some circles, it is popular to exalt one gift over the others. Having one particular gift seems to imply a spiritual status symbol. That's like saying one sin is worse than another. That's not what the Bible teaches – sin is sin! Glorifying one gift over another can glorify the user rather than glorifying the Giver. That can produce self-indulgence and pride. In all we do with our gifts, God must be given the glory at all times.

**Gift Projection:** People caught up in this seem to want the whole body to have the same gift that they do. It's like saying the whole physical body should be an eye. These folks unwittingly impose guilt and shame on fellow Believers who are not just like them. Remember, that God is the Giver and He gives different gifts to each member so that the Kehilah will be whole and function as a unit.

We need a healthy, Biblical view of spiritual gifts. One way to accomplish that is to not abuse the gifts that He has given us, but use them for the work of the Kehilah to His glory.

In my next posting, I will attempt to clear away any confusion that you might have about this subject of spiritual gifts.

Challenge for the week: [Email me](#) with any questions you would like me to answer regarding the ministry of the Ruach or the Gifts that He gives us.

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