

# Concerning the Spirituals

by G.W. North

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*The sermon explores the significance of the term 'Spirituals' and the importance of understanding the human element in using spiritual gifts.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12:1

**Topics:** "Body Of Christ", "Spiritual Gifts"

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## Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of what Paul refers to as 'the Spirituals', suggesting that these should be understood not merely as 'gifts' but as 'spiritual ministries' or 'operations'. He highlights the importance of the human element in utilizing these gifts, which are neutral by themselves but intended by God to be instruments for good. North encourages a deeper exploration of the original apostolic thought to grasp the true meaning and purpose behind these spiritual functions within the body of Christ. This understanding shifts the focus from the gifts themselves to the active role of believers in using them according to God's will. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a recognition of the divine design behind these spiritual operations.

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## Transcript

Originally Paul called these 'the Spirituals', a fact which should be of great significance to us. Many other things spoken of in scripture are of equal importance with these, and some of far greater importance both to God and man, but only these are especially called Spirituals. Upon thought it is indeed most curious that Paul should speak of things without life or personality as being Spirituals. That the Holy Spirit should take up an adjective and seemingly turn it into a noun when speaking of things which are abstract is strange indeed, and rightly understood must be of great significance. We ought therefore to seek out the reason for this, that we might the better enter into all truth.

In order to arrive at some understanding of God's design, and come nearer to the meaning of original apostolic thought, it would perhaps be better if instead of the word 'gifts' in verse 1, we allowed the insertion of some other word such as 'ministries' or 'functions' or 'operations', and noted also that the word 'spiritual', although written in singular form here, is numerically plural in its Greek form as above shown.

If this suggestion be allowed, and we substitute one of the above alternative words for the word 'gifts', we could arrive at 'spiritual ministries' or 'spiritual operations'. This would result in the emphasis being shifted from the impersonal ability, referred to by the word 'gift', and placed upon the human element necessary to the use of the gift, which is where it rightly belongs. To do this will in no way impair truth but only enhance

it, as we shall see.

Upon examination, this slightly different emphasis will be found to be entirely in keeping with the spirit of the whole passage, which is more a treatise on the body of Christ than a mere listing of the gifts of the Spirit. Of itself a gift is neutral and inanimate, having no power either to be or to do evil or good. When the gifts were originally bestowed by God they were pure, and intended by Him to be instruments for good. Rightly held and used, any gift of God is a means of applying or implementing the power or word of God according to His will.

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