

# Concerning Spiritual Gifts: Unwrapping the Gifts

by Warren Wiersbe

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*Warren Wiersbe's sermon emphasizes the importance of identifying and classifying spiritual gifts within the church, all rooted in love and service to others.*

**Duration:** 45:12

**Scripture:** Hebrews 2:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Gifts"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of love as the most excellent way. He starts by discussing Romans 12:1-3, which highlights dedication, transformation, and evaluation of one's spiritual gifts. The speaker then references Hebrews 2, emphasizing the need to pay close attention to the word of God and not neglect the salvation it offers. He also emphasizes the role of pastors as teachers who explain and apply the word of God, balancing doctrine and duty. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the importance of showing mercy and the overarching theme of love throughout the scriptures.

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## Transcript

I invite you to open the Word of God to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. We're going to read from verse 4 to verse 11, and then from verse 27 to verse 31. 1 Corinthians 12, beginning at verse 4. 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 who worketh all in all.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit, and the basic meaning of that verse is for the profit of the whole church. 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 various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the very same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Now over to verse 27. Now ye are the body of Christ, speaking about the church, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third 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 I show unto you a more excellent way. That way, of course, is the way of love that is outlined in chapter 13.

Now we look at Romans chapter 12. We all know verses 1 and 2, which have to do with dedication, presenting our bodies to the Lord. But in verse 3 he brings up another matter.

Romans 12 3. For I say through the grace given unto me to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. I think he's saying here God has given to every man a spiritual gift, and he gives to each person the faith to be able to exercise the gift. So in verse 1 you have dedication, in verse 2 you have transformation, and in verse 3 you have evaluation.

What is it God has given to me, and what am I supposed to use for him? Now you move into ministration. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we being many, we Christians, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another. Not only are we members of the body, we're members of each other.

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 in our ministering, or he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation, he that giveth let him do it with liberality, he that ruleth with diligence, he that showeth mercy with cheerfulness, and notice how he does the same thing here that he did in Corinthians, he moves into love. Let love be without hypocrisy. Now if it's your birthday, and some friends and relatives stop by to celebrate with you, although the older we get, the less we have to celebrate, and they bring you gifts, and here are the gifts on the table before you.

Before you can use these gifts and benefit from them, you have two responsibilities. Number one, you have to identify the gifts. What are they? Number two, you have to classify the gifts.

Where do they belong? Now this is true of spiritual gifts. When you were born into God's family, God gave to you at least one spiritual gift. He may have given you more.

Our responsibility is to identify these gifts and to classify them to illustrate. Let's suppose that you open one package and it's a pipe wrench. I know you've always wanted a pipe wrench for your birthday.

All right, you identify it. This is a pipe wrench. Then you classify it.

This doesn't go in the drawer in the kitchen. It goes down in the basement over the workbench. You open the next package, aftershave lotion.

Now this you don't put in the basement over the bench. You say, now this goes into the bedroom right in front of the mirror where I shave. You see, you identify the gift and then you classify it.

You put it where it belongs. Much of the confusion in the church today about spiritual gifts comes from one of these two areas. Either the gifts are not identified properly or they are not classified properly.

And so we have two responsibilities tonight. We want to take these gifts and identify them and then try to classify them. Since there are 19 or 20 of these gifts, if I spend two minutes on each one, we have used up

the evening.

So we'll go along as rapidly as we can. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. I'm going to follow the list over in verse 28 and then switch back over to verse 8. So 1 Corinthians 12 28.

God hath set some in the church first apostles. The word apostle means one who is sent with authority. An apostle is much more than a messenger.

Your doorbell rings and there stands a messenger with a telegram. Now all he can do is hand you the telegram. He has no authority to do anything more than that.

He's just a messenger. An apostle was much more than a messenger. The word apostle means one who is sent with authority.

And in the New Testament church we had apostles. Now turn if you will please to Luke chapter 6 and we'll see where the first apostles started. The Lord Jesus had many followers who were called disciples.

A disciple is a learner, one who is being disciplined. Luke chapter 6 and verse 13. Our Lord has been praying all night and when it was day he called unto him his disciples.

That was a big crowd. And of them he chose 12 whom also he named apostles. Now you'll notice in verse 17 that our Lord was healing people and we're going to find out that the Lord gave to these apostles the special gift of performing miracles and doing healings.

So out of the great band of disciples, followers, he chose 12 who were apostles and to these men he gave authority. Now there were two qualifications in the New Testament church for an apostle. May I say it right clearly? There are no apostles today in the New Testament sense.

Every once in a while as I'm visiting in the city of Chicago I will drive down a certain street in a certain part of the city where there may be a number of churches and I smile to myself occasionally when I'll see out in front of a church pastor so-and-so apostle. I really want to stop and meet this fellow because an apostle in the New Testament had to have two qualifications. First Corinthians chapter 9. I'm sorry, second Corinthians chapter 9. I was right the first time.

First Corinthians chapter 9. I have to wear my glasses up here one of these days talking about birthdays. First Corinthians chapter 9 verse 1. Am I not an apostle says Paul? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Now there's a first qualification. You had to have seen the risen Christ.

Now you have your Bible before you and you enjoy turning the pages so turn to Acts chapter 1. Judas lost his apostleship obviously by the awful deed that he did and they replaced him. And Peter in Acts chapter 1 is telling them how they're going to replace him. Verse 21.

Wherefore of these men who have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us beginning from the baptism of John until that same day he was taken up from him must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. So one of the first qualifications for an apostle was in order to be a witness of the resurrection he had to have seen the risen Lord. Now let me hasten to say this.

You're going to find in the New Testament various people called apostles who are not among the twelve or with the apostle Paul. The word apostle is also used in a different sense. In a sense of one who is

commissioned to carry out a ministry.

The way we send out a missionary for example. In fact our word missionary is the Latin equivalent of apostle. Apostle is a Greek word.

Apostle is one who is sent with a commission. Missionary comes from the Latin word *mito* which means to send. And I suppose in a modern sense a missionary could be considered an apostle but in the strict New Testament sense he had to have seen the risen Christ.

Secondly in the strict New Testament sense he had to perform miracles that accredited his message. If you'll look at Romans chapter 15 please. Romans 15 Paul's talking about his own ministry.

Verse 18. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed through mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God so that from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. In other words Paul is saying my message was accredited by miracles.

Now this same subject is dealt with over in Hebrews chapter 2. Now we're going to look at a lot of scripture tonight so keep your Bibles before you. Hebrews chapter 2. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip or we should drift away from them. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast back in the Old Testament and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

Now there you have two generations. Those who heard the Lord and gave it to the one who is writing now confirmed it. How did they confirm it? Verse 4. God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders with various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will.

The Apostle's credentials were that he had seen the risen Christ and he could perform miracles to attest his message. Now what was his ministry? The ministry of the Apostle was strictly speaking to plant churches and supervise churches and guard the doctrine. You just trace the life of the other Apostles.

But Paul would go into an area, preach the gospel, found a church, establish the church, organize the church. He didn't just leave behind a Bible study group. He organized it into a church and then he supervised its ministry because God gave to the Apostles his truth.

The book I'm preaching from tonight, 1 Corinthians, was written by an Apostle inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. The Apostles were the founders of churches and the guardians of the faith. This is why when the Apostle Paul heard about false doctrine and false teachers, he jumped in with both legs and both arms and he really went to work to try to clean house.

Apostles. It's my conviction we have no Apostles today for the simple reason we have nobody walking the streets of Chicago who has seen the resurrected Christ. We have nobody today who can attest to his message by raising the dead and performing the kind of miracles that the Apostles performed.

Now prophets. First Apostles, then prophets. A prophet is one who speaks forth the word of God.

Now, we usually think of a prophet as one who tells the future, but in the New Testament sense and in the Old Testament sense, the prophet's first responsibility was not to speak about next week. It was to speak to today. He always had a message for today.

Now, if in giving the message for today, he had to reach into the future, he did it. If he had to reach into the past, he did it. But the word prophet basically means to speak forth.

To speak forth what? To speak forth the message of God. Now, the ministry of the prophet is outlined for us in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 3. We're going to get into this matter of prophecy when we get into this passage, but look at verse 3. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men. He's not talking to God, he's talking to men for three purposes.

Edification, that means building up, so they send you home from church stronger and taller in the Lord. Edification and exhortation, which means encouragement. You go home encouraged.

And comfort, which means consolation. Now, here are the three purposes of prophecy for edification and for encouragement and for comfort. And the prophet spoke forth the word of God to do this.

Would you notice in 14:22 that the person who prophesies is prophesying to those who are believers. Wherefore, tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. But prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them who believe.

So the prophet is preaching to believers. Now, this doesn't mean that he doesn't have a ministry to unbelievers, because in verse 24, for example, he's contrasting here tongues and prophesying. He said, if an unbeliever comes into your church service and you're all speaking confusedly in tongues, he'll go away and say, those people are crazy.

But he says in verse 24, but if all prophesy and there come in one that believeth not or one who's unlearned, he is convicted of all, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest. And so falling down on his face, he'll worship God and report that God is in you of a truth. So the preaching of the word of God to believers also affects the unbeliever and can lead to his conversion.

Now, verse 31 of chapter 14 tells us the basic purpose of prophecy is for learning. Look at it. For ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be comforted.

So the prophet had the responsibility of preaching the word of God to the congregation. But here's the interesting thing about the prophet. He did not stand up and say, would you turn to Romans chapter three? They didn't have Romans chapter three.

The prophet was sitting in the congregation. He was not the stated preacher of the group. And as they met together and were praying, the Holy spirit would speak to the prophet and give him the message.

You see, when I preach the word of God, I preached the word of God immediately. I mean by that through the medium of the Bible, the new Testament prophet preached the word of God immediately. God gave him the message.

Now, the interesting thing is this, even the prophets had to be careful because we're told here verse 29, let the prophets speak two or three and let the others judge. Judge what? Judge whether or not he really is a prophet and whether his message is true. Paul writes to the Thessalonians and he says, despise not

prophesying, grieve not the spirit, prove all things, hold fast that which is good.

So if a prophet stood up and spoke in the congregation, they would judge whether or not what he said was truly from the Lord. Notice what the rest of this says. If anything be revealed to another, you see the prophet got his message by revelation, not by studying and learning from a book.

Now it's my conviction that today we do not need prophets. There's going to be a time when God is going to send some prophets to this world. I believe that during the tribulation period, two prophets are going to come raised up of God.

But today we do not need prophets because we have the word of God. We have the word of prophecy. Today we do not have apostles, but we don't need the apostles.

Look at Ephesians chapter two, if you will, please. Ephesians chapter two, verse 19. Now, therefore, ye Gentiles are no more strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets.

The foundation ministry of the building was done by the apostles and the prophets. Now, once that foundation was laid and we had the apostolic doctrine and the prophetic word given to us in the written book, there's no more need for apostles and prophets. I say it again, there will be prophets again during the tribulation period.

God's going to send two prophets, but the two witnesses, but today we don't need prophets. And so when you see a sign board in front of a church that says, Reverend so-and-so, apostle and prophet, it just isn't so, I'm sorry. Prophets.

Now let's go to teachers. First Corinthians chapter 12, he talks about teachers. God has set some in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.

Now we need very little explanation for this. Ephesians 4.11 says pastors and teachers. Pastor means shepherd.

How does he shepherd the flock? By teaching. That's how he shepherds the flock. Just as the Old Testament shepherd led the sheep out into the green pastures and fed them and protected them, provided for them, so the New Testament pastor leads the people into the green pastures of the word of God.

He feeds them. He protects them through the word. He disciplines them through the word.

He loves them through the word. He cleanses them through the word. The whole thing is through the word.

Every pastor is supposed to be a teacher. When Paul laid down, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the qualifications for the pastor, the bishop, the elder, he said, apt to teach so that the word of God lays it down very clearly. The pastor-teacher goes together.

Now I believe there's a separate gift of teaching. Not every teacher is supposed to be a pastor, but every pastor is supposed to be a teacher. He's talking here about the gift of teaching.

This needs very little illustration or explanation because we know what it is. A teacher is one who explains and applies the word of God. Not just explains, explains and applies.

A teacher is one who lays hold of two things, doctrine and duty. Now friends, if you have all doctrine and no duty, you get a big head and a cold heart. And I've been to Bible conferences and I've been to churches where there's not much duty.

It's all doctrine. I remember Red Harper talking to me one day. You know, he'd been in a Bible conference with a great man whose shoes I am not worthy to carry.

He's home in glory now. And Red said to me, my, that was great preaching. He said he taught Ephesians and we were up in the heavenlies all week and never did come down.

Now that's all doctrine and no duty. Now if you preach duty and no doctrine, you wear people out. Wouldn't you hate to come to church and always be told, do this, do this, don't do that, don't do that.

It'll wear you out. See, when Paul taught the word of God, he said, now here is a doctrine and here's the duty that comes from the doctrine. And so a teacher's responsibility is to take doctrine and duty.

Now this is one of the greatest responsibilities in the church. That's why James says in James chapter three, my brethren, don't many of you try to be teachers. We teachers are going to have the greater judgment.

Let's suppose that I teach the doctrine, but don't live up to the duty. Let's suppose I teach false doctrine. Let's suppose I misapply the doctrine.

You know, I find people in churches who want to rush into being teachers, rush into being preachers. You better cool it, my friend, because those of us who handle this book day after day are going to have a much greater judgment because we could lead you astray. That's why you must pray for teachers and pastors.

Now he moves in Ephesians four, verse 11, to evangelists. In Ephesians four, he mentions apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, and evangelists. There's no need to explain that.

An evangelist is one with a gift for winning souls. Paul wrote to Timothy and said, do the work of an evangelist. Everybody is supposed to do the work of an evangelist, which is what? Spreading the evangel, spreading the good news.

But there are some people who have a great gift for evangelism. This is why I think it's very dangerous to compare churches and compare preachers, because every man has his own gift. I have preached in some churches where souls were being saved by the scores, but the church was made up of babies.

They just weren't being taught the word of God. They weren't being fed. I've been in other churches where everybody was so overfed and under-exercised they were dying of spiritual dyspepsia.

Now both are wrong. Evangelists. I believe that God gives to local churches people who are gifted soul winners, and that's their job.

I don't mean they're on the staff necessarily. I mean among the membership, people who can just go out and win people to Christ. God bless them.

We have people like that here at Moody Church. Now he mentions miracles. I've already mentioned the fact that the apostles had this special gift of miracles to confirm the word of God.

When Peter healed this man at the beautiful gate of the temple, this miracle opened the way to preach the gospel. When the apostle Paul performed miracles among Jewish people, it attested the message of the gospel. But notice two things.

Number one, oftentimes Paul performed miracles among the Gentiles and they misinterpreted it. They wanted to make him God one day when he performed a miracle in Lystra. Then they turned around and stoned him.

Number two, the miracles did not change the hearts of people. Even the Jewish people, the Jews require a sign, says 1 Corinthians 1. Even the Jewish people saw the miracles performed and rejected the gospel. If you ever had the idea, oh, if only Pastor Worsby was performing miracles at Moody Church, Chicago would be saved.

Don't you believe it one minute? God said to that rich man who died, if they won't believe the word of God, they won't believe if somebody comes back from the dead. It's the word of God that changes the heart. The gift of miracles.

It's my conviction that God can give miracles where people need them. Where there are those whose faith is so small, whose understanding is so weak, it has to be attested. God could do it.

God's sovereign. But you know, God has given to us a miracle book. This is the greatest miracle of God right here.

And this word of God, attested by the spirit of God, is I think all we really need today to do the work of God. Miracles. Now healings.

Of course, these are special miracles. All of the apostles healed. And those who healed in the Bible also raised the dead.

I don't think we find anywhere in scripture healing meetings. I don't think we find anywhere in scripture where those who had the gift of healings, it's plural, by the way, gifts of healings, advertise their meetings that way. I was interested in noticing how the Lord Jesus healed people.

He didn't put up a sign and say, come signs, miracles, wonders. No, wherever he went, he healed people. Believe me, if I had a gift of healing, I'd go to the hospital and start touching the bodies of those little children I see week after week who are suffering in there.

In the New Testament, people didn't have to have special faith to be healed. Jesus walked up to a man who was lying at the pool of Bethesda and said, take up your bed and walk. We have no evidence the man had any special faith.

If anything, he was very discouraged. Been there for many years and hadn't been healed. The gifts of healings.

I believe in healing. I do not believe in divine healers. Now, are there people who may have special gifts? I don't know everybody in the world.

Who am I to go around investigating God's people? All I know is if anybody claims to have a gift of healing, let that person practice it the way it was done in the New Testament. That's all I'm concerned about. God has given to us many wonderful gifts, doctors and medicines.

A person's a fool not to use that which God provides. Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above. We ought to use it for God's glory.

Helps. I like this one. Gifts of healings.

Right next to that, helps. Moody Church would not be functioning were it not for people who had the gift of helps. They'll not be in the platform preaching.

They may not even hold an office, but they have the gifts of helps. Behind the scenes where nobody sees anything going on perhaps, helps are functioning. And it's a great gift.

Somebody came to me recently and said, I wonder what my gift is. And I said, I think your gift is the gift of helps. Just being able to stand with somebody else and help them.

Do the menial task perhaps. The gift of helps. The gift of governments.

That word governments is a Greek word that means the helmsman who pilots a ship. Pilots the ship through the rocks and the dangers to get the ship to port. You know there are many many storms that blow against a local church.

In the history of the Moody Church there have been times when it looked as though the old ship might sink. Many churches have gone through difficult waters. God has given to certain people the gift of governments.

They are organizers and planners and guiders. They have wisdom. Now it's a spiritual gift.

Just because a person knows how to run Marshall Field doesn't mean he can lead a local church. I think of a man I know. He's a good friend of mine.

He's a marvelous manager of an auto supply store. Tremendously gifted. He's forever winning awards and trips to this place and that place because of the work he does in his store.

But I would never have asked him to be in a place of leadership in a church. He had an ability, a talent for running a business to make money. But he did not have a spiritual gift with the discernment necessary to guide a church.

There's a difference between natural ability and spiritual gifts. This is why, and I'm not criticizing anyone, this is why you cannot say well because of his university degree he'd be a good man. Not necessarily.

Because of his business experience, not necessarily. There's a difference between experience, natural ability, and spiritual gifts. Now thank God when natural ability and experience is matched with a spiritual gift then you really have a fine leader in a church.

The gift of governments. Diversities of tongues. Now we'll go into that in later messages so I'll not stop on that now.

Then over to verse 8 if you will please. You're being very patient with me. The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge.

I asked one of the finest bible students I know what was the word of wisdom and what was the word of knowledge and he looked at me very candidly and said I don't know. I appreciate a person like that. We've got to be very cautious with some of these.

It's my conviction that the word of knowledge was spiritual knowledge given to a person by the Holy Spirit. You see today we get our knowledge from the word of God. We get our wisdom from the spirit of God.

The spirit of God gave us the word of God. In the New Testament church you couldn't turn to somebody and say well the answer to that problem is in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 10. They didn't have that.

The Holy Spirit of God gave spiritual knowledge to people. Now spiritual wisdom is the right use of knowledge. All of us know people who have studied themselves stupid.

They're so smart they're dumb. There's a difference between knowledge and wisdom. I know many Christians who have a lot of bible knowledge but who have no spiritual wisdom.

In fact I've counseled with people who have a tremendous knowledge of the word of God but they lack spiritual wisdom. Now the Holy Spirit of God gives to people spiritual knowledge. I believe today he gives a spiritual knowledge from the word of God.

I do not hold myself up as an example in any of these gifts but I've had the unusual experience of counseling with people and finding myself saying things I never planned on saying. I don't mean it bypassed my mind. God spoke to my mind and my heart and I said things in such a way that it stuck.

It really hit home. I surprised myself really. This I think can be the equivalent of the gift of knowledge.

Not that God gives you something apart from the bible. No no it's always through the word of God. So the gift of knowledge means spiritual knowledge imparted.

The gift of wisdom means using that spiritual knowledge in the right way. Well the next gift we come to, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, the word of faith. The next gift is faith.

Now we all have to have saving faith. You can't get into God's church apart from saving faith. But I think the faith he's talking about here is a faith over and above.

When I read of the faith of a man like J. Hudson Taylor, my what faith he had. Or the great faith of the missionaries who go out and the people who feed thousands of people. George Mueller in Bristol, England.

My he used to feed these children by faith. Now there are those people who say oh I just don't have much faith. There are other people whose faith could move mountains.

Don't compare your faith with somebody else's faith. All of our faith ought to grow. But I think there are some people to whom God gives a special gift of faith.

And they're able to believe God for great things. And I thank God for them. The gift of faith.

Verse 9, to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit. We've talked about that. To another the working of miracles.

We've talked about that. To another prophecy. To another discerning of spirits.

Aha. Over in 1 John chapter 4 the apostle says now don't believe every spirit. You turn the radio on and hear some preacher.

Just because he quotes from the Bible. Don't believe everything he says. You get some magazine at the front porch or you hear somebody speak in a meeting.

Discerning of spirits. I've had folks here at Moody Church come to me and say you know I was sitting in a meeting and such and such went on and something inside said whoop be careful. We checked into it and we should be careful.

You see not everybody who gets up and talks at a meeting is necessarily being guided by the Holy Spirit. There has to be a discerning of spirits. Satan would love to get into a meeting and start spreading lies.

So God has people with a gift of discerning of spirits. This applies not only to doctrine but to living. There have been times in my ministry not as many as there ought to be I'm sure.

When the Holy Spirit has started to give me discernment about a certain situation. And I've said to my wife watch that. So and so is going to happen.

This is what's going to happen. Sure enough that's what happens. God sort of gives to his people a spiritual radar.

That I think is the discerning of spirits. And we must be very very careful. Now we're going to quickly run back to Romans chapter 12 where he lists three or four more gifts.

And then we'll quickly classify them and be on our way. Romans 12 7 the gift of ministry. It's the word for deacon.

Ministry let's wait on our ministry. Just plain ordinary service. All the many different kinds of service people perform in a local church.

There are some who cook and some who usher and some who sing. All different kinds of service. Somebody says pastor do you believe that Paul names all of the spiritual gifts.

No I don't think he does. Because the three lists are not identical or even in the same order. But I think that what he gives us covers the waterfront.

Any other gift fits into one of these categories. The gift of helps for example can cover many ministries. And here we have the gift of ministry that can cover many kind of services.

Teaching. We've had that. Exhorting.

You know we need exhorters. I think one of the greatest exhorters I've ever heard is Dr. Vance Havner. He is a tremendous exhorter.

When you're through listening to him he has stirred you. He has moved you. We need exhorters.

Not only in the pulpit but in the pew. People who can get up in a meeting and say now here's what the Lord has said to me. Let's get moving on this.

Our tendency is to stand still. When you stand still you slide back. We have to have exhorters who come along and encourage us to keep on moving.

The gift of exhortation. Here's a gift we could use more of. The gift of giving.

He that giveth. There are some people that God has given the gift of making money. You say I wish I had that gift.

No it might ruin you if you had it. I'm not talking about counterfeiters now. I'm talking about people who honestly.

You heard about the fellow who was passing out 50 cent pieces that said 1979 on them. That's what you call forging ahead. The gift of giving.

Now it doesn't mean you have to be rich to give. Most of the people I have met who have a gift of giving don't give out of abundance. They give out of an ordinary income or less than ordinary.

It's amazing. And you don't even know who they are. We don't advertise it.

You'd be amazed at some of the people in Moody Church who on the income they have what they're doing with it. Supporting missionaries. Sending kids to camp.

It's wonderful people who have the gift of giving. By the way it's also wonderful to have the gift of receiving. It's more blessed however to give than it is to receive.

He that ruleth. This deals again with governments in office leading the church. He that showeth mercy.

I think he's talking here about helping the poor. Helping the needy. Going out with food and shoes.

Now we do this all week long. I was interviewed by a writer some time ago who's doing a book on a certain church. And he had the idea that Moody Church only preached the Bible.

We never did anything good for people in terms of social work. The big deal now is your church has to be socially inclined. Well, this church always has been.

From the very beginning Mr. Moody was concerned about the poor and strangers and we still are. Pastor Craig and our fellowship committee all week long we're helping people. We're buying meals for people and paying bills for people.

Legitimate bills that are necessary. I don't form a line at the left tonight. But I told my friend who was interviewing me I said just don't talk about it.

God knows what's being done. Just simply the gift of showing mercy. And notice in verse 9 he moves again into love.

Now there are so many different gifts. It's magnificent the way God has given gifts to his people. Let me just take a few minutes to classify these and then I want us to close our study.

Why bother to classify the gifts? Well God classifies them. Paul says first apostles and then prophets and then teachers and he classifies them. He's talking about gifts to a body.

Your body is classified. If your doctor doesn't classify your body change doctors. Now this is an arm.

This is a rib. This is an ear. He should know these things.

The same thing is true in the church. You've got to classify the gifts. You can't function if you don't classify.

You don't use a teaspoon where you should use a hammer. And you don't kill a mosquito with a cannon. You classify.

Now this is what has wrought havoc in our churches. Paul classified. He said look I want you to go after the best gifts.

He doesn't say the best gift. He says the best gifts. But he says first, second, third, and then and finally.

And one of the problems in the Corinthian church is they weren't classifying the gifts. They weren't saying well now what are the best gifts for us to have. Well he tells us in chapter 14.

I don't want to anticipate. He tells us in chapter 14 that the sharing of the word of God is one of the best gifts. Any gift that helps you build up the church is the best gift.

Any gift that helps you win the lost is a good gift to have you see. And so he wants us to classify them. I have made a rough classification of the gifts that kind of satisfies me.

You have the speaking gifts. Prophecy and teaching and exhorting and wisdom and knowledge. The speaking gifts.

You have the serving gifts. Helps and governments and giving and mercy and ruling. Those are the serving gifts.

There is some overlapping. In order to rule you have to speak. I know that.

Then there are the sign gifts. Faith and healing and tongues. He says tongues are for a sign.

1422. Interpretations, miracles. You see you have the speaking gifts that involve the word of God.

You have the serving gifts that involve the service of God. Then you have the sign gifts that attest to the word of God. And Paul makes it rather clear I think that the speaking gifts, the gifts that help to edify the church and build the church are the gifts we ought to seek after.

You know my life is so short and time is so brief and strength is so limited. Why should I fool around with ciphers? Why should I waste my time with that which is not really important? I'm very, very fastidious about time. Some of my associates and close friends think I'm almost fanatical about it.

But I am. I just have so much time. There are articles to write and sermons to prepare and people to counsel and there's work to do.

You just have so much time. You can't waste it in that which is inconsequential or trivial. That's all Paul is saying.

He's saying now find out what gifts the Lord has given to you and ask Him to bless that gift and you just use that gift for His glory. But major on the majors, don't major on the minors. Because if you major on the majors then the church will be edified and you'll grow and people will be saved.

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