

How to Discover Your Gift

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald teaches that discovering your spiritual gift requires commitment, prayer, and active involvement in Christian service.

Duration: 26:47

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:8

Topics: "Gifting"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of finding and using one's spiritual gift for the Lord. He encourages listeners to observe their own reactions and experiences in different forms of Christian service to discover their gift. The speaker also highlights the significance of being happy and fulfilled in exercising one's gift, as many people are unhappy because they are not in their God-given niche. The sermon emphasizes the need for a continual dedication to the Lord, presenting one's life as a living sacrifice, and seeking His will in every moment. The speaker shares personal experiences and encourages listeners to try different things to discover their gift, reminding them that they will never know their true gift until they start doing certain things.

Transcript

...a gift in the body of Christ. How to discover your gift in the body of Christ? Romans chapter 12. I think we'll just begin at the beginning of the chapter.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 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," superiority complex, "...but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

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 member is 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 ministry, 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 showeth mercy with cheerfulness." Now, it really is true that every member of the body of Christ has a gift or has gifts.

God made us for a purpose, and God saved us for a purpose, and God has given spiritual gifts to every member of the body of Christ, and it's God's intention that we should know.

I'd like to ask a question, not to embarrass, but just as a factual matter. How many here tonight would, by raising their hand, say, I know what my gift is? Anybody? How many? I know what my gift is. Okay, it's very important.

Fulfillment in life is finding out what your gift is, and then carrying out that mission as from the Lord, and there isn't a Christian in the meeting tonight, but God would be very glad to let you know what your gift is, so you know what your function in life, what your main function or functions in life in the spiritual realm really are. And to me, that's the satisfying thing, to think that when you get to the end of the journey, and you look back and say, well, I've been an unprofitable servant, but at least I knew what God wanted me to do, and I did it to the best of my ability. Okay, now how are you going to find out? Key number one.

Key number one. Make a total commitment of your life to the Lord Jesus. Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2. I don't think any of us are ever going to know the guidance of God as long as we hold on to the reins in our lives.

Do you? This is the secret of guidance. It's said it in the second verse that we read. Don't be conformed to the world, be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

How do you do it? By presenting your body a living sacrifice. This is really where we have to begin, and this should not just be a crisis experience, but it should be a crisis followed by a process. This should be true every moment of my life.

Every moment. Renewed dedication. I come to you and turn my life over to you for this next 24 hour period.

I wonder really where we stand in this matter. I wonder if we're really yielded to the Lord. We want his will supremely in our lives.

We're willing to scuttle all our own ambitions and plans and purposes, and we want nothing but to do the thing that pleases the heart of Christ. That's the ideal. It really is.

And I'll tell you, dear friends, when we see that the Lord Jesus gave himself for us on the cross of Calvary, it doesn't seem too much to give our all for him, does it? If Jesus died for me, the least thing I can do is live for him. I like what C.T. Studd said, I can never get away from it. He said, if Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him.

And if I'm going to take this little life of mine and live it the way I want to live it, I'm really a thief and a robber because I'm taking something that doesn't belong to me. The Lord Jesus bought this life of mine on the cross of Calvary, and he wants it for himself, spirit, soul, and body. And I believe with all my heart that God has a master plan for your life and mine in some drawer up there in heaven.

But I believe when we stand before him, he's going to take out the blueprint and compare it with the record of our lives. I really believe that in a very simple, childish way. And the only thing that will really count in that day will be to hear him say, well, it approximates the plan.

It approximates the plan. I'll tell you, nothing will make up should his well done be missed. And if I'm not there at that intersection to speak to that soul, to do what he wants me to do with that propitious moment, I'm really the loser.

You know, I really think there's a stir in the church today. I know a lot of lives are being transformed. Some people connect it with the gift of tongues and all the rest.

But I want to tell you, I want to tell you a lot of people are finding rich blessing today and just coming to the Lord and turning over the controls of their lives to him. And some of us might look down our theological noses at some of these people, but I don't think you can deny quite apart from the gift of tongues. I don't think you can deny that there's been a crisis of commitment in their lives.

Dear friends, that's what I want. That's what I want. I don't want the excesses of the abuses that go with it.

I want fire. I don't want wildfire, but I do want fire for the Lord. Well, that's the first step.

If you really want to know God's will in your life, if you want to know what his gifts or what his gifts for you are, come and just turn over the controls to him. Say, Lord Jesus, I present myself to you. I have no desire but to do your will, whatever the cost may be.

Oh Lord, work out your will in me. It's a great moment in the soul's experience when we first come into that place. Number two, pray that the Lord will reveal his gift to you.

I hope, I hope that as you go from this conference, as you get before the Lord tonight, that you will definitely say, Lord, I want you to show me what your gift, what the gift that you've given to me is. A verse that the Lord's been bringing before me an awful lot lately is this one. You have not because you ask not.

That verse came home to me with new power recently. You have not because you ask not. I think it's a wonderful thing to think that God in heaven is waiting for us to come to him with such petitions as this, waiting to hear and answer.

Incidentally, man never comes closer to omnipotence than in the hour of prayer. We're not omnipotent. We can't do everything, but we never come closer to it than when we come to God and plead something in the name of Jesus.

And I want to tell you, when you come to him and plead for this direction in your life in the name of the Lord Jesus, it's just the same as if the Lord Jesus were asking the Father. Isn't that wonderful? I think it's wonderful. I really do.

Three, first thing, make a commitment of your life to him. Then just come in simple childlike faith and say, Lord, what is it? I'm yielded, whatever it is. Even if my legs turn to India rubber in the process, I'm really willing.

I want to do what you want me to do. Number three, study the lists of gifts as they're given in the New Testament. Good.

We've already studied some of them tonight, haven't we? We can turn over to 1 Corinthians 12. It's so short, I think we can afford to do that. We can read them in 1 Corinthians 12.

1 Corinthians 12, verses 8-10, and verse 28. 1 Corinthians 12, verses 8-10, 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 gift of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another diverse kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. Verse 28.

And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles and then gifts of healing, help, government, diversities of tongues. You say, just a minute, brother, I don't believe all those tongues are active in the church today. Well, frankly, neither do I. But don't worry, if they're not, he won't give them to you.

So, the main thing right here is, study the list of gifts. Know what the gifts are that God has given to the church. Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4 is the other part.

I'd like to talk more on that other subject, but time just doesn't allow. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11. And he gave some apostles and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.

Now, of course, it's obvious that not everybody has one of the gifts listed in Ephesians chapter 4. In fact, I believe these are special service gifts. Special service gifts in connection with the evangelization of the world and the building up of the church. But at least, I want to know God's gifts for me.

Well, I should go to the word of God and find out what the gifts are. And just in a simple, childlike way, go over them, study them, read up about them. All right? Step number four.

Step number four, desire the greater gifts. Desire the greater gifts. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 31.

It says, but covet earnestly the best gifts, or the greater gifts, and yet I show you a more excellent way. Now, here's a very interesting thing. God is the one who gives gifts to people by the Holy Spirit.

And they are a sovereign bestowment of the Spirit of God. He gives them to every man severally as he will. But at the same time, God says, I'm going to give you a choice in the matter.

Desire earnestly the greater gifts. You say, well, that seems to be contradictory. God gives them sovereignly, and I'm to have something.

Well, you have that all through the word of God. You have that through the word. Only God can make a man an elder, and yet a man has to desire the work of overseership before he can ever become an elder.

Isn't that right? You get this curious merging of the divine and the human. And you get it in many aspects of the Christian life. You get it here in connection with gifts.

Desire earnestly the greater gifts. What does that mean? Are some gifts greater than others? Well, I didn't say it. The Lord said it.

And it's really true. For instance, and I believe the emphasis in these chapters is this. Gifts that amaze or excite wonder are not as great as gifts that edify.

And the whole emphasis in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 is, go after the gifts that edify, that help others. Love thinks of others, not of self. And gifts that amuse or amaze really are not as great as gifts that build up people in their most holy faith.

Something to think about. Something for young people to think about as they think of their lives ahead. Desire earnestly the greater gifts.

Number five, engage in as many different types of Christian service as possible. This is the fifth step. You've done all the other four? Okay, now move out for the Lord.

You can only steer a bicycle when it's in motion. Isn't that right? Okay, God wants you to move out, and God wants you to try these things. Oh, you say, I'd be afraid.

Don't be afraid. Try them. You'll never know.

You'll never know just what your gift is until you start doing certain things. I always thought my gift was to develop ulcers over other people's money. And then during those days in the Navy, I started teaching the Word of God, and I thought, I think this is why I was made.

And I've never changed my mind since then. Never have. But I tell you, I don't think I'd know it today if I hadn't tried.

If I hadn't launched out and given it a try. And here, I think it'd be good to say a word to the elders of the assembly. Elders should be moving out with the young people, not telling them to go out, moving out with the young people, and involving them in many different types of Christian service and Christian activity.

That's how they're going to know. That's how they're going to know. Neglect not the gift that is in thee.

You have to really move out to find out. Now oftentimes, there's a feeling of reluctance at first. Oftentimes, Jeremiah had that feeling of reluctance.

That poor man, I've just been reading his book recently, and all the abuse that he took, and he was just ready to throw in the towel, you know. And he said, I couldn't. He said, the fire burned within me, and I had to go on.

And oftentimes, there's a feeling of terrible inadequacy. Moses said, not me, Lord. You don't mean me, do you? And the Lord said, yes, I really do.

I mean you. And my will will never take you, or my grace won't sustain you. My commands are my enablement, Moses.

You just do what I tell you to do, and I'll give you the strength to do it. And Isaiah said, you don't mean me, Lord. And the Lord said, yes, I do.

But he said, I'm a man of unclean, unclean lips. The Lord said, you go, and you preach to a people, and they won't hear you. And Isaiah said, how long do I have to? You just keep on doing it, Isaiah.

I'll tell you when to stop. And Jeremiah, too. Jeremiah had the same thing as we said before.

Feeling of inadequacy. If you have a feeling of inadequacy, when you think of various forms of Christian service, join the club. We all have had them.

We've all had them. But I'll tell you, if you don't step out and start doing, you know, I believe there are some senior sisters in this meeting that at this very moment, they could be having people coming into their home from the neighborhood studying the word of God. Bible teachers.

Bible teachers. I believe that with all my heart. You'll never know until you launch out and try.

And just remember this, the spiritual gifts may not be at all related to natural talent. God likes to take nobody and make something out of them so that all the glory will be God. Isn't that way? That's just God's method, isn't it? I mean, if you're just naturally gifted, if you kiss the blinding stone and you have the gift of death, well, that's one thing to get up and pour it out.

One thing to get up and pour it out. But if you're naturally timid and retiring, and if your butterflies have butterflies, and God can take you and use you, well, then the glory, they'll say, well, it sure isn't McDonald. It must be the Lord.

You know, that's the way God wants it. So don't go by your natural talent. If you're yielded to the Lord, the Lord can do surprising things with you in the process.

But a gift needs to be stirred up. It really needs to be stirred up. So that's the next thing.

Then, as you engage in these various forms of Christian service, observe the area, or areas, in which the Lord seems to especially bless your service. You know? Observe the area, or areas, in which the Lord seems to especially bless your service. Well, just let me take an illustration.

I was in Ireland not so long ago when a young German came over, and he was on a firebrand in evangelism. He couldn't speak English, so he'd get up and preach in German down in Dunmeri in Ireland, and one of my young friends would interpret for him. And you know, there are people standing in the audience, the word was getting through to them with such power, they couldn't tell who was speaking in German and who was speaking in English.

A man said to me, which one is speaking in English? You know, but the word was getting through. The word was getting through. I was next after the young German fellow.

I got up and the crowd just withered away. You know? It's a very humbling experience. What did it tell me? Told me I can't preach the gospel for sour apples, that's what it told me.

It told me I'm not an evangelist, though I knew it long before. I still try to do the work of an evangelist, but I know I'm not an evangelist. But I rejoice when I see that young German fellow out there, and see the crowd gather.

Really, it's marvelous when you see a gift of God in operation. Observe the area in which God seems to especially bless your efforts. Maybe you're launching out in some new Sunday school work.

The children come in. Some profess, it's a good sign, isn't it? God is working with you. Then, weigh, this is number seven, weigh the comments and opinions of spiritual elder brethren and sisters.

Weigh the comments and opinions of older spiritual Christians. You're seeking to know your gift. Okay, no man is a judge of his own gift.

The scripture says, in the multitude of counselors, there's safety. You know? We had a lot of fellows come to a mass, and they just knew that they were Billy Graham, too. You know? But it didn't take us long to realize that they weren't.

That there was only one Billy Graham, and when God made him, he threw away the pattern. And there never will be another. But sometimes you need an older brother to help you along in this way.

The young fellow started out all ablaze for the Lord, and one day he was walking down the street, and he saw two big letters up in a cloud formation, just as clear as can be, GP. And he just knew for a certainty that meant go preach. So he told, he told his elders, he said, I've been called, and it really is good, and it's as important.

No man is a judge of his own gift. And we have very perverted judges, but other people can see things in us that we can't see in ourselves. And don't worry, elders are sympathetic.

Older Christians are sympathetic. They're more interested in helping than in holding back. But faithful are the wounds of a friend.

Number eight. Consider your own reactions. As you're engaging in these various forms of Christian service, consider your reactions.

Where does your burden lie? As you're lying in your bed at night, and you can't sleep, what situation are you in? Are you explaining the gospel to somebody on a person-to-person basis? Are you teaching the word to a group there in your university? Where does your burden lie? Do you have a heart for God's people? Do you love to be with God's people when they're in trouble and difficulty and sickness and all the rest, to comfort and sustain? Well, maybe God has given you the gift of pastor, you know, a shepherd's heart. Ask yourself the question, where does my burden lie? Because you'll find that as you seek the will of God in this, that God will start laying the burden on your heart. And when situations develop, you'll think, oh, I was there years ago in spirit.

And also in that connection, in which sphere do you find the greatest fulfillment? I believe when you and I find the gift, whatever it may be, that we think, this is it. I believe there's kind of that relaxation, and you think, this is why God made me. This is why God saved me so many years ago.

He had this purpose in view for me. And then also in that connection, in what sphere do you have the maximum effectiveness with the minimum fatigue? I'm really indebted to Bill Gothard for this, but he said that when a man finds his gift, and I know it's true, he has the maximum effectiveness with the minimum fatigue. Now, don't misunderstand me.

That doesn't mean that you can't get tired when you're carrying out your gift. You can. But it's a different kind of weariness.

There's an exhaustion that goes with trying to be somebody God never intended you to be. You know? There's a terrible exhaustion. It's enough to lead to a nervous breakdown.

Because God doesn't empower you for what he doesn't want you to do. But when you are in the niche of his choosing, you do have maximum effectiveness with minimum fatigue. And so, I would say, observe your own reactions, and what's happening in your own life, and how it's working out as you're trying these various forms of Christian service.

Then, carry out. When you finally find what the gift is, carry it out as a stewardship for the Lord. 1 Peter 4, verse 10.

Now, I'd just like to add a few additional tips in the minutes that are remaining, and that is this. Be happy in the exercise of your gift. I think it's a wonderful thing to see people who know what they can do for the Lord, and they're happy in doing it.

That's a wonderful thing. A lot of unhappiness in the world today is because people are square pegs in round holes. Isn't that right? Yeah, really.

Find out. Effectiveness is working with the Holy Spirit, allowing him to work through you in the thing he wants you to do. Don't envy others.

This is what was happening in Corinth. How do you like me? I can speak in Italian. I never studied a word of Italian in my life.

Everybody wanted to become tongue in the body. What kind of a body would it be if it were all tongue? It wouldn't be a body, it would be a monstrosity. That's what it would be.

Mesh and a tongue walking down the street. The beauty of the body of Christ is many members, one body. And I'll tell you, it really is beautiful too.

And it's a wonderful thing to see in an assembly, people who each have their own task appointed to the Lord, and they're carrying it out, and they're happy in it, and they're not trying to be somebody else. The glory of you as an individual is that you are you. God made you.

You are unique. He's not going to make another like you. You can do things that no other human being in the world can do.

Really, that's the dignity of being a child of God. And don't ever forget it. Don't envy others.

Use your gift for the good of others and not for self-display or exaltation. This is the whole idea. The gifts were given for the good of others, for the edification of the body, for building up the church.

That's what we should use them unselfishly, not trying to attract attention to ourselves. The Holy Spirit never ministers to attract attention to the human agent. The Holy Spirit's whole ministry is to bring the glory and have it shine on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't touch the glory. Don't touch the glory. Use your gift for him so that it will all go to him.

And then, in connection with all of this, remember that personal holiness is far more important than any gift. A man may be a tremendously gifted man. He may be able to hold a crowd right there in his hand, and yet he might be a bear at home.

Hard to live with. It doesn't count. A gift is a sovereign display of a sovereign bestowment of God.

Personal holiness is far more important than that. May the Lord take us away from the conference with a sincere desire to find out what our gift is, that we won't really rest satisfied until we know, and we're willing to go through this, to commit our lives to the Lord, to pray and ask the Lord to reveal it to us, to study the gift, to engage in various forms of presence. Don't be afraid.

If somebody asks you to, jump at the chance of moving out for the Lord in various spheres of activity. Listen to what people say about your ministry. Not in any sense of pride.

Watch where God is blessing you. See where your own burden lies, and when God shows you, develop it as a faithful steward for him. Thank you.

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