

Sermon Series: ***From Willingness to Giftedness***

Sermon title: **The Purpose of the Gifts**

Scripture: **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**

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**Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church**

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Let's pray.

As we come to the second part on Spiritual Gifts, I want to begin by reminding us of the context of 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14.

We know the context especially from 1 Corinthians 14:12 which says, **“Since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.”**

Corinth was a church that was not only eager but seems to have been gifted especially in what we would call the extraordinary gifts.

As we saw last week in chapter 12:14-20, there were some who...because they didn't have these extraordinary gifts...felt they didn't belong or have a part to play.

And in verses 21-30 we saw this group which seemed to have an attitude of “If you’re not like me or have my gifts, then you are not needed.”

“My gifts are better than yours.”

Paul makes it very clear in chapters 12-14 that God gives each one in the church a gift and that all gifts are needed.

None are greater than the others.

Today, we will address a simple question:

**What is the purpose of the spiritual gifts?**

I’ll start off with a definition of spiritual gifts and then show you where the scripture shows us their purpose and how we can actually live it out.

**Spiritual Gifts:** *Gifts of grace granted by the Holy Spirit which are designed for the building up of the church.*

## **I. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS?**

**1 Corinthians 12:7** tells us that **“to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”**

This phrase ‘common good’ means to bring together or to collect in a way that is beneficial or helpful.

It’s a similar word to the word ‘symphony’.

God has brought each instrument or person together and uniquely gifted them so that together they sound much better than they would alone.

Look in **chapter 12:25**. It says, God so composed the body (that word *composed* means to mix together or pour together)

**“that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”**

Paul expresses the purpose another way here.

He said in verse 7 it was for the common good and here he says that God mixed or poured us together like wine and water so that...there be no division.

Unity.

That’s virtually the same as saying the gifts are for the common good.

When he says, “that the members may have the same care for one another” this literally means so that we will be anxious for one another.

It’s mostly used negatively, like “don’t be anxious” but here it is positive.

God gave us different gifts so that we can be anxious for one another not about one another.

For the common good. For symphonic harmony. For unifying. For building up.

In chapter 14, the scripture says 7 times that the gifts are for BUILDING UP.

14:3- “prophecy is for people’s upbuilding.”

14:4- “when one prophesies, he builds up the church.”

14:5- again...that the church may be built up.

14:6- the aim is to ‘benefit’ another.

14:12- “strive to excel in building up the church.”

14:17- “built up!”

14:26- “Let all things be done for building up.”

Corinthians is clear what the purpose of spiritual gifts;  
the purpose of the grace gifts are: to build up the  
church.

Turn in your Bible to **Ephesians 4.**

As Paul explains again about the spiritual gifts, we will see a little more specifically what ‘build up’ means.

### **Ephesians 4:11-16**

**11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we**

are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Let's break this down and see what building up means. Or, we are building *toward* what?

- Equip the saints for ministry.
- For building up the body.
- To attain the unity of faith.
- To attain the knowledge of the Son of God.
- To attain mature manhood, literally...to be full grown.
- To attain to Christ's stature.
- To not be shaky doctrinally but firm in the truth.
- To grow up to look like Christ.

We will talk about 1 Corinthians chapter 13 next week but I think there's one little piece in **13:12** that can help us bring all of this together.

**8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror**

**dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.**

You see what he's doing here?

He says the gifts are helping us "know in part".  
The gifts are helping us to see something, though in a mirror dimly!

Helping us to see what?

**Christ!**

Someday, we will see Jesus face to face.  
Seems to imply we won't need the gifts then.

We will know him fully then.

Now, knowing him in part, we need the gifts that each has to offer.

**God has given you and me gifts that we might help others know him.**

We BELONG to the body by building up others with our gifts.

And BELONGING is part of BEHOLDING...because God has composed & designed that we know him best through one another.

**Spiritual Gifts** are gifts of grace granted by the Holy Spirit which are designed for the building up of the church.

Or we could say....**Gifts of grace granted by the Holy Spirit which are designed for helping others KNOW GOD.**

## **II. HOW DO WE BUILD UP THE CHURCH?**

What does it look like?

Easy to say, 'build up' but how do I do this?

How do I strive to excel in building up the body?

How do I use my spiritual gifts?

- 1. Seek to please others, not ourselves.** I didn't make this up. I get this from **Romans 15:1-3** which says, **We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup> Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. <sup>3</sup> For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me."**

and **1 Corinthians 10:23-24** says, **<sup>23</sup> "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. <sup>24</sup> Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor.**

We are to follow in the footsteps of our Lord, Jesus Christ..who was selfless.

Is this not the key to seeing our church thrive, grow, mature, be like Christ???

## **Selflessness.**

Tom Schreiner in his book titled *‘Spiritual Gifts; what they are and why they matter’* says, **"the gifts weren't given so that we could realize our self-potential. The gifts were given so that we would equip and strengthen other believers, and thus the gifts are others-centered, not self-centered."**

- 2. Spend time with others, not by ourselves.** How in the world can we build up the church, how can we help others know God...if we don't spend any time with the church? In order to 'one another... one another' we must BE with one another.

Stir up one another.

Encourage one another.

Pray for one another.

Confess your sins to one another.

Be anxious to care for one another.

Be hospitable to one another.

### **TIME!**

How much time do you spend with the body?

- 3. Come prepared.** 6 times in 1 Corinthians Paul says, "When you come together". Take a look at **1 Corinthians 14:26.** It says, **"What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or**



**an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.**

**WHEN**, you come together....not **IF**.

**Each one**....meaning everyone....has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.

Do you think about what you can bring to church?  
Did you consider this morning of a way to build others up?  
Did you pray anything like "God, use me today to build up your church?"  
Or do you just come?  
When you get together with your small group, do you come with a verse to share?

Tom Schreiner again says, "**We ought not to be thinking when we join together as a congregation, Are people here loving me this way? Are my needs being met? We should be thinking instead, Am I loving people like that? Am I reaching out to the hurting? Am I rejoicing with those who rejoice? Spiritual gifts are exercised when we sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others, when we love others for Christ's sake.**"

I don't know where you are today with the spiritual gifts. As we close, let me give you **3 prayers** that any one of us might pray.

- **Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, by your grace... will you transform me and make me new. I am a sinner and need forgiveness. I believe Jesus Christ died in my place to take away my sin. I believe what the Bible says about him that he is alive. God give me the Holy Spirit and change me from the inside.**
- **Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, by your grace... give me the gifts that you want me to have so that I can build up this church. Grant me a willingness to serve wherever you need me while revealing to me your giftedness.**
- **Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, by your grace...fan into flame the gifts you've given me. Breath on me in such a way that I will never be lacking in zeal but fervently and continually filled with the Spirit that I might do my part in equipping the church to reach the stature of Christ.**