

PNEUMATOLOGY (139)

Gift #9 - The gift of service. Romans 12:7; I Peter 4:11

The particular Greek word for this gift “service” is diakonos, from which we get our English word deacon. What this means then is that this gift is very serious and very sacred in the mind of God.

As a gift, what this word means is that a person will have a supernatural burden to minister and serve in the local church. One with this gift has a supernatural drive to minister to others and serve others in the context of the local church. The word “serve” does not specify the precise area of service, leaving open the door for one with this gift to serve in a variety of ways. Dr. Paul Enns says that one important way this gift seems to manifest itself is that it ministers to others and serves others who have physical need. He cites as one example the life of Onesimus, who “served” or “ministered” to Paul when he was in prison (Philemon 10-13). Onesiphorus is another one who “served” or “ministered” to Paul when in chains (II Tim. 1:16-18). If this be indicative of the gift, one with it would certainly look for opportunities to minister to those faithful to the Lord in the context of the church (Hebrew 6:10) (Paul Enns, p. 275).

The primary sense of this gift is to serve and minister for God in the context of serving and ministering to others in the church. There are many ways in a local church where this gift can be used to glorify God—cleaning, helping, building, meals, decorating, nursery, mowing, singing, visiting, playing instruments, etc.—ministering for God by serving in His Church. Many times the faithful use of this gift will be less conspicuous than more public gifts, but it is not less significant in the sight of God.

Gift #10 - The gift of helps. I Cor. 12:28

The word translated “helps” is a beautiful Greek word. It is a word which presents the idea of helping someone by helping to take their burden and putting in on one’s self. The burden is not specified, which means the utilization of the gift is not specified, leaving room for a limitless number of ways that this gift may be utilized. The word is similar to “serving,” but not the same. One with this gift will have a supernatural drive to serve in behalf of others. Those with this gift will have a supernatural desire to help lift the burdens of others as they minister and serve together in the context of the local church. They serve God by making life easier for others.

Gift #11 - The gift of faith. I Cor. 12:9

The gift of faith is a supernatural ability to trust God and have confidence in God and His promises in the face of situations and circumstances that are humanly impossible (i.e. I Cor. 13:2). We may conclude that this gift is an abiding gift throughout the entire Church Age and not a temporal gift (I Cor. 13:13).

Every believer has a certain measure of faith. In fact, the very word “believer” indicates this important truth. Without faith it is impossible to please God in any way (Heb. 11:6). Every believer has been saved by faith and continues to develop by faith.

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However, the gift of faith is a special, supernatural spiritual gift that goes beyond the normal level of faith. It is a supernatural ability given by God to that believer which enables that believer to trust God and believe in God and His Word in the face of impossible obstacles. This gift may be given to a man or to a woman and it is one that is certainly needed in God's church.

Those with this gift have an unusual level of trust in God and an unusual level to believe in God. Stephen is one biblical example of one who had this unusual level of faith (Acts 6:5). In history there have been some tremendous examples of those who had this gift:

1) George Mueller, of England, definitely had this gift in the 1800's. He had no money, yet became fully convinced based on his understanding of Scripture that God wanted him to care for orphan children. Before he died, God had given him houses and he had handled more than one million dollars.

2) Hudson Taylor, of China, definitely had this gift in the 1800's. He went to China completely by faith and believed that God would supply everything he needed from housing, to food, to medical supplies. He refused to ask anyone for anything and by faith God did supply everything Hudson Taylor needed.

Those who have this gift are supernaturally empowered visionaries, truly led of God. Those who have this gift are certainly needed in the local church. In fact, those who have this gift are certainly needed in the church by those who don't have this gift. One who has the gift of faith sees possibilities when everyone else sees impossibilities. One who has the gift of faith sees a tunnel through the mountain, while those without it just see the mountain.

People with this gift are exciting to have in the church. They exhilarate the whole body of Christ. They have a supernatural, God-given ability to bring hope to a situation when others in the body are struggling and looking for hope. Those who have this gift are sure needed today.

Gift #12 - The gift of exhortation. Romans 12:8

The Greek word "exhort" is one that presents the idea of helping someone by encouraging, comforting and admonishing. This is a supernatural ability to encourage people in unique times and ways. Dr. Paul Enns says one with this particular gift has an ability to appeal to the will of an individual in such a way that the individual responds and acts in accordance with the exhortation (Enns, p. 276). Naturally the use of this gift will be in accordance with the Word and will of God, so the exhortation will encourage, comfort and admonish in this direction. For example, one with this gift may urge someone to pursue a particular course of conduct or offer comfort to someone under trial or tragedy. This gift is certainly one that is desperately needed in God's church. So many seem to discourage, we need those who can encourage.

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Gift #13 - The gift of discernment . I Cor. 12:10; 14:29; I John 4:1

The gift of “discernment of spirits” or “distinguishing of spirits” is an important gift. There is controversy that surrounds this gift as to whether or not this was a gift needed when the revelatory gifts were operative, but is no longer needed once we have the written Word of God. To understand this gift, we would like to discuss it in question and answer form:

(Question #1) - What is the gift of discernment or distinguishing of spirits?

The word “distinguishing” is a word that expresses an ability to be able to discern something or distinguish something to the level of being able to make a discriminate judgment or decision. It is the ability to make an arbitrary decision or judgment (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 108).

The particular realm in which this gift operates is specifically and explicitly stated to be in the arena of the “spirits.” Clearly, the emphasis of the I Corinthians 12 context is on the work of **one** Holy Spirit and the true work of **one** God as opposed to the false work of **many** demonic spirit beings (I Cor. 12:4, 8, 9, 11). When Paul wrote concerning this gift, there were many religious systems all claiming they could make you right with God, which were false systems fooling many—Judaism, Greek Mythology, Roman Polytheism, Asceticism, Mystics, Cults and many False Prophets. These systems were demonic (I Cor. 10:20) and their leaders were well disguised but were ministers of Satan (II Cor. 11:13-15). Each system sounded good and looked good. That is why this gift was needed.

The gift of discernment of spirits is a supernatural ability that enabled a person to judge the truth of God versus the lies of Satan. It was a supernatural ability which enabled that person to sift through the theological rhetoric and see what was truly from God and what wasn't from God. Obviously as with the other gifts, not everyone had this gift, but it was certainly one that was needed in the church, especially when there were no written Bibles.

(Question #2) - What was the purpose of the gift?

The primary purpose of this gift was to make judgment decisions between truth and error, between God and Satan, between believer and unbeliever. One with this gift is not demonically gullible and is divinely guided. One with this gift could listen to someone and supernaturally detect whether or not he was telling the truth. This particular gift was given by God to His church for **protection** purposes.

(Question #3) -What kind of judgments or discernments are to be made in a N.T. Church?

There are at least five judgments which are to be made in the church:

Judgment #1 - The church is expected to judge false prophets . I Cor. 14:29; I John 4:1-6

False prophets are satanic and their doctrine is demonic and dangerous. False prophets are nice people; they are sincere, very religious and somewhat righteous. But false prophets are satanic.