

SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

CPC Winter/Spring 2020 Adult Sunday Studies Leader's Guide

02/16/20 -- Lesson Five: "FLESHING OUT THE BODY OF CHRIST" (cf. K. Berding's What Are Spiritual Gifts?, Chapters 19-20)

REVIEW:

The thesis for this course: *"Every believer has been assigned by the Holy Spirit to specific positions and activities of service, small and large, short-term and long-term. These ministry assignments have been given by the Holy Spirit to individual believers and, in turn, these individuals in their ministries have been given as gifts to the church. God deeply desires that his glory be declared to the world through the community he has brought together by his grace, a community that Paul often refers to as the body of Christ."* - Kenneth Berding

The aim of this course: To empower each Christian believer in the discovery of their spiritual worth and calling as an essential element of the church's mandate of the gospel on mission. It will be discerned how each member of the body of Christ is participating in the mediatorial presence of Christ through his/her calling(s) in service as a vital member of the body of Christ. So vital is their ministry that it is worthy of the sacred vow of poverty in the privilege of sharing in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of God's glory revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Take-away from last week: Serving out of Weakness - How could you develop the mentality of "I will do whatever needs to be done"? Being on a good sports team always includes the willingness of playing wherever you're needed, regardless of past experience or perceived gifts. - Do you think that's a mentality that our church fosters well? Why or why not? - Is there a ministry or task that God has assigned you, but you are unsure you have the power or ability to accomplish it? Why do you think that? What could it look like for you to step out in faith by the power of God? - How could this mindset start to change your approach to church in general? To evaluating the success of a ministry or church?

TODAY'S "HOOK": If you are familiar with the New Testament, you may remember that the Apostle Paul writes lists of ministries and ministry roles in four different places (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-30; Eph. 4:11-12). Do you think any one of those lists is meant to be comprehensive? Why or why not? Do you think that the four lists, when taken together, are meant to be comprehensive? Why or why not?

*(Refer to K. Berding, p. 177ff for his answer and reasoning: "Paul's list passages are **not meant to be comprehensive, but rather representative...**").*

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TODAY'S "BOOK": Read all four of the "list passages" out loud as a group. As you do so, have members underline, or note to themselves, the key thoughts of each passage:

Romans 12:4-8 *"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness."*

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 *"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."*

1 Corinthians 12:27-31 *"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts."*

Ephesians 4:7-8, 11-12 *"But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, 'When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.'...And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."*

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TODAY'S "LOOK": Berding has several goals for Chapters 19-20:

- He makes a convincing case that Paul's lists of "gifts" in the NT -- even when all his lists are considered together -- are meant to be **representative, not comprehensive**. Review his argument on pp. 177-178 and 184-185 as necessary.
- He compiles, from all of Paul's writings (not just the four "list" passages) a comprehensive list of anything that might reasonably be considered a ministry assignment in the first-century church. It is a quite a list!
- In Chapter 20 he also compiles a comprehensive list of concrete examples of ministries from the rest of the New Testament writings (Peter, James, etc.). This list is quite something as well!

*As Berding suggests, give the members of the class a chance to skim the lists in Chapters 19-20 to become familiar with the types and extent of the various ministries in the first-century church, because **these lists help all of us to think more broadly about the types of ministries that God may be assigning to us!***

- Berding also points out that Paul, by using dozens of metaphors for ministry, encourages believers to **think creatively about opportunities for service in the church**, rather than in truncated and limiting ways.

TODAY'S "TOOK" / TAKE-HOME / SO WHAT? / APPLICATION:

- If one viewed Paul's lists as comprehensive, what problems might that create for particular believers, in our own walk with Christ? What problems might that create for particular congregations, in our corporate life together?
- When one views Paul's lists as representative, how does that encourage you in your walk with Christ? How does that encourage your congregation in your corporate life together?
- How do each of these metaphors for ministry open up new perspectives on what God is doing in, with, and through you in the church?
 - Ministry as AGRICULTURE (planting, watering, etc.; 1 Cor. 3:6-8)
 - Ministry as COMMERCE (management, stewardship, etc.; 1 Cor. 4:1)
 - Ministry as MILITARY SERVICE (1 Cor. 9:7; 2 Tim. 2:3-4)
 - Ministry as FAMILY LIFE (Phil. 2:22)
 - Ministry as ARCHITECTURE (doing the work of a builder; Rom. 15:20)
 - Ministry as A BONDSERVANT IN A HOUSEHOLD (Rom. 1:1; Eph. 6:6)
 - (The full list of metaphors found in footnote #10 on p. 320 is fascinating!)