

The Way of the Lord

20. Your Relationship With Your Lord Jesus (Part 5)

In our Hebraic Article, *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*, we emphasize an essential biblical truth: When you embrace our Father's stipulations for entering His Covenant, He *seals* you with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of Christ in the Bible. Think of the *love* and *power* He wants to flow out of you to bless other people!

The Spirit of Christ in you convicts you when you sin (John 16:8); guides you with wisdom (Ephesians 1:17); and empowers you in love (2 Timothy 1:7). One of the ways the indwelling Spirit of Christ empowers EACH follower of Jesus is through spiritual gifts He gives each one. The Epistles are full of references to the outworking of the Holy Spirit through these giftings. Here are just three examples from Scripture that speak of gifts of the Spirit:

- *“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant... Now to EACH ONE the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and HE gives them to each one, just as HE determines”* (1 Corinthians 12:1,7,11).
- *“We have DIFFERENT GIFTS, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully”* (Romans 12:6-8).
- *“EACH ONE SHOULD USE whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms”* (1Peter 4:10).

If you don't know your gifting(s), then you won't perceive *how* the Spirit of Christ wants to use you through the outworking of spiritual power in His gifts. And, not knowing the giftings of others in your family or fellowship family keeps you from fully cooperating TOGETHER as His body. So you can see why it's so important that you know your spiritual gifts. The power of our Lord can be released through you *and* the spiritual family you fellowship with.

During our many years of ministry we've seen many married couples and others in close fellowship together become frustrated with each other. Why does this happen? Well, remember that the Holy Spirit within you empowers EACH of you to be His blessing to others. The gifts *differ* from each other. And if you don't understand and appreciate these differences, you may find yourselves getting annoyed with one another. We've written a short book to help you *all* identify how the Spirit has empowered *each* of you for Kingdom work. We recommend you prayerfully go through it and discuss it with your faith family. It's entitled, *God's Instruments for War—Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts* (a free download at our website).

- EVERY follower of Jesus has a gift or gifts apportioned to him or her.
- EVERY follower of Jesus is responsible to EXERCISE those gifts.
- EVERY follower of Jesus has a gift, therefore ALL should be encouraged.

- NO ONE has all the gifts, therefore ALL should be humble.
- All gifts are FOR the one Body, therefore ALL should be harmonious.
- All gifts are FROM our Lord, therefore ALL should be content.
- Followers of Christ are privileged to be gifted, and EACH is accountable to God to exercise that privilege for HIS glory.

You may be wondering why you don't see the collective body of Christ exercising their gifts as the Bible calls for. There's one last hindrance we need to address: the unbiblical position of professional CLERGY. There were NO CLERGY in the earliest Church. The concept of professional clergy was adapted from the pagan Greeks in the second and third centuries. Let's look at the difference between that WORLDLY system and the BIBLICAL pattern. We'd like to paraphrase from our LORD'S perspective HIS purposes for His body of called-out ones, and why HE ALONE is Head of His body.

[Think of Jesus speaking this to you]: *"It was I Who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherds and teachers, to prepare My people for works of service so that My body may be built up until you all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of Me and MY ways and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of My fullness. Then you will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, you will in all things grow up into Me Who is the Head, the Anointed One. From Me, and Me alone, is the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament, growing and building itself up in love, as EACH PART DOES ITS WORK"* (Ephesians 4:11-16).

The giftings of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and shepherd/teachers weren't new innovations. Apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd/teachers were already among the Jewish people when Jesus walked the earth. And we today who follow our Master and yearn to grow in service and maturity in Him need to thoroughly discern HIS motive for these giftings. EACH PERSON being built up in love as they do their spiritual assignment is foundational to restoring spiritual power in our fellowship families.

Maybe you noticed we used the biblically accurate word "shepherd" instead of "pastor" in the Ephesians passage we just read. That's because the Greek word, *poimen*, which means shepherd, describes an *older man of wisdom* who guides a spiritual flock. His role is more like a family elder or spiritual grandfather who's recognized for his wisdom and compassion.

You may also notice in the Ephesians 4 passage what Jesus reveals about HIMSELF among His called-out ones. Jesus ALONE is the King of His Kingdom. He ALONE is the Head from Whom every joint and ligament is held together. He ALONE knows what is needed to build up His body and to extend His Kingdom on earth. JESUS realizes that His called-out ones need that Spirit-empowered "specialization of labor" so His Name and His Gospel may be made known. Our Lord uses the foundation of the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist and the shepherd/teacher to equip all the other spiritual gifts to cooperate TOGETHER for HIS purposes.

Jesus never called for a class of professional clergy to lead His followers. Instead,

He purposes for the *combination* of apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd/teachers to prepare His people to SERVE. Too often a professional clergy class keeps people in spiritual infancy. Everyone relies on one individual to do what God's Word calls for ALL to do according to their spiritual gifting. Don't allow a clergy system to keep *you* from experiencing His Spirit's power at work through you for His praise.

As you edify and bless others with the gifts the Spirit of Christ has given you you'll truly understand the BODY life Paul refers to as you cooperate with others in being used by the Spirit. That's how you collectively LIVE the way of our Lord, and experience His spiritual power through one another.

For Further Study

- Book: *God's Instrument For War—Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts*
- Hebraic Article: *God's Clergy-less Kingdom*
- Hebraic Article: *I Hate Nicolaitanism*

Each is a free download on our website: <restorationministries.org>