



Find Your Place

How Would You Like Your Life to Go Moving Forward?

Way back at around the time of Moses I was asked to tell a doctor what I saw in a picture. It was probably a number. Then he showed me another picture and there was another number in it. However, I did not see anything discernable in the third, fourth or fifth pictures and when we got finished, the doctor told my mom and me that I was partially colorblind. I had trouble with reds and greens and browns. Sometimes non color blind friends ask me what I see. I tell them I see what I see...just not always what they do. I am never sure if my clothes really match sometimes, and I certainly would not be the one to do floral arrangements. I know I should not try to decide what paint to choose for the sanctuary nor be the one to teach little kids colors. It may not be my place to pick out the colors for a birthday cake, but I am certain God has something for me and something for you to do that fits perfectly in His plan and matches our unique characteristics.

There are thousands of different skills you can develop, jobs you could do and abilities you possess so you are not limited by any means to a little realm of accomplishments. Yet, it is amazing to consider that God has certain talents, gifts you could call them, He gives to each of us that are uniquely ours. **Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 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 12:4-8 NIV) Notice the point here. Each of us belongs to the one body which is the Church or the complete collection of all God's people. As such, we each have gifts from God that make the body or the Church complete. What a great declaration!

The list Paul presents is not comprehensive. He was not trying to indicate that there are only eight possible gifts in the Church. It would be like him telling us that there are many parts of the body and only lists four: eyes, ears, legs and heart. Of course there are far more than that! There are many more possible gifts found among God's people just as the body has much more to it than a short list can provide. There are more than enough skills and talents to make us unique and critical to the health and life of the Church. We sometimes wrongly differentiate between "spiritual gifts" and talents or abilities. If it is from God, it is spiritual by definition. Now we may not use our abilities or talents, our gifts, for the bettering of the Church and God's Kingdom but that merely indicates we have drifted from God. We also may take a spiritual talent, such as encouragement, and use it to manipulate people, to swindle church members out of their savings. Someone with the gift for teaching can promote atheism. A spiritual gift is what the Holy Spirit gives us, (talents, abilities, and skills) to make the Church better than it would be without the gift. If you have salvation through Christ, then it is a guarantee you have one or more spiritual gifts and it is wonderful to consider what that does for you.

Daniel, the ancient Jewish prophet had the gift of being able to interpret dreams. When Nebuchadnezzar, the newly crowned king of the Babylonian empire had troubling dreams, he called in his advisors, who were made up of mostly enchanters and sorcerers, to explain the meaning of one of them. However, he did not tell them

what the actual dream was. The advisors were thoroughly flummoxed and complained that it was impossible to interpret the dream without hearing it. The king wanted to be sure they really did know how to interpret the dream and were not just making something up to appease him and his test was to see if they also could tell him the actual dream. They could not, and furious, Nebuchadnezzar threatened to kill all the counselors and advisors of the entire empire. When Daniel found out his life was also in danger as one of the king's counselors, he sent word to the king that he could indeed interpret the dream even without knowing what it was. That of course is what he did. Later he was brought to Nebuchadnezzar about another distressing dream he had. Of Daniel or Beltshazzar as he was known to the Babylonians, Nebuchadnezzar had this to say, **"Beltshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me."** (Daniel 4:9 NIV)

Notice what Nebuchadnezzar recognized. This special skill Daniel had was supernatural. He may not have known the God who gave the ability to Daniel, but he was well aware it was not naturally developed. Now, I want to acknowledge the fact that some gifts are more easily known to be supernatural than others. Daniel's ability to interpret dreams and prophecy clearly was. Yet other gifts, which we may not make note of are also critical to the body of God's people. They may not be eye poppers, but they sure do matter. Consider the sisters, Mary and Martha. At a dinner the two hosted for Jesus, Mary sat at Christ's feet, listening carefully to Him. Martha on the other hand worked feverishly on the dinner, wanting everything to be just right. Martha got fed up with Mary, wanting Jesus to correct her for not helping with the meal. Jesus of course told Martha that Mary had chosen the better task, being with Him. Now, I am not going to argue with Jesus. He is certainly right. But, both Mary and Martha had gifts and the church is better off with both. One had a laser focus on Jesus, the other prepared a great dinner. The problem Martha had was she thought her gift was more important than Mary's and she wanted Mary to be more like her. That is how the blessing of the gifts can become corrupted. We want others to be like us, have what we have, see things the way we do. God though gives spiritual gifts generously and in great varieties, depending on what he wants each person to have.

Consider the case of Bezalel, Oholiab and others among the Israelites during the Exodus. When the Tabernacle and the articles of worship needed to be crafted and built, God knew just who He wanted for the job. Moses gave the orders he received from the LORD. **So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded.** (Exodus 36:1 NIV) Notice God provided these hard workers the skills and abilities they needed to build God's Tabernacle. We do not typically think of construction as a spiritual gift but in fact it is or can be. In the book of Acts is the miraculous story of Dorcas, a widow who was known for her charity work in the church at Joppa. In fact, she is described as "always doing good". What church does not need someone like her? But then she died, and the widows of the church were distraught. Peter the apostle was sent to help. **Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.** (Acts 9:37 NIV) Was that a spiritual gift she had, the ability to make clothing for the good of God's people? Of course it was.

Spiritual gifts are nothing more than those abilities, talents, and skills you have that bring honor to God and bless His people. They are given to you by God so that you will have the joy of being a part of something much bigger than you, having a place in the history and legacy of God's Kingdom. God does not look at tasks we have as important or unimportant like we do. Every responsibility the Lord gives you is critical in some way to the big picture of the Lord spreading His love and salvation to the world and filling you with His Spirit. Pray fervently for the Holy Spirit to fill you with such sensitivity to Him that you see each day as a great opportunity to bring glory to God and bless those He gives you. Future generations may one day find you and thank you for how you impacted their lives and were a part of them having faith in Christ. Do your part in God's Kingdom whatever it might be!