**God’s Gifts: Knowing How God Has Made Us**

**1 Corinthians 12:1-11| Thomas Slager**

**Introduction:** As Pastor Thomas shared two weeks ago, we are called to live on mission for Jesus Christ - to be his witnesses here, near, and far (Acts 1:8). We are “green dots” that God wants to place all over the world! A key to us fulfilling our mission is first to know how God has gifted us. As we more fully understand our spiritual gifting, we will experience joy as we serve Christ wherever he calls us. ***(Prior to small group this week***, *if you have yet to take* [*The Real You*](https://therealyou.org/) *(*[*https://therealyou.org*](https://therealyou.org)*) spiritual gifts assessment, spend 15 minutes and then read through the results. We look forward to sharing with each other later this week on how God has uniquely designed each of us.* *Note: No assessment is 100% accurate, and as you serve Christ others will be able to affirm your gifting. But as a way of offering insights and opportunities, this tool may prove helpful.)*

**Commentary**:

As Christians we have God-given gifts to empower us to serve Christ and the people he puts around us. The Bible identifies a variety of gifts for the building up of the Church (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; 1 Pet. 4).

The Holy Spirit as the Source of Spiritual Gifts

Our spiritual gifts are given and empowered by the Holy Spirit, “who apportions to each one individually as he wills"(1 Corinthians 12:11). These gifts are the outcome of the Spirit’s presence inside us. The manifestation of those gifts appears something like an ability or aptitude, but not *merely* that. Those gifts are also the result of the active work of the Spirit in our lives, empowering us for service in the way the Father designed and intended. The Bible makes clear that each believer has received *at least* one gift from the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 4:10). Our spiritual gifts are grace-supplied, or free, and not earned by anything we do. We are truly his workmanship, designed for good works (Eph. 2:10).

The Use of Spiritual Gifts

The abilities given to us are not primarily *for* us, but rather to bless *others*. They are to help us serve and ultimately build up the Body of Christ (the Church). In Romans 12:6-8 Paul’s focus is always on *using* the gifts – how we should *apply* them. Each gift listed is accompanied by an *action*, or an instruction on what the gift looks like in use. The gifts were never intended to be stored in a box on a shelf and ignored. They are given *by God* because He intends that we use them to bless his children – the Body of Christ – whom He loves.

Gifts Bring Unity and Diversity

Every person in the Body of Christ is given a different spiritual gift, though it is common for people to have more than one (1 Corinthians 12: 4-6). The result of God working this way is that the Body (the Church) will experience unity as we bless each other, and diversity since we all play a unique part. We need to hold both ideas in view with spiritual gifts. The diversity of gifts among individuals is designed to work toward the unity of the greater Body of Christ.

The Highest Aim is Love

Spiritual gifts must be exercised with love or they have no value. The gifts are to be used to build up and edify the Body of Christ – others, not used for one’s own benefit. If someone exercises spiritual gifts with their own interests in mind, they have missed the point. Are we looking to see others strengthened and built up? Do we care about the welfare of others more than our own interests? We always want to do things, and conduct ourselves, in a way that demonstrates our genuine care and love for others. If our use of spiritual gifts is not guided by and done in love, we get no profit from it. Paul gives examples of considerate, loving, others-focused use of gifts in 1 Corinthians 13-14.

**Personal Reflection:**

1. What did you learn from the results of The Real You gift assessment? What results did you connect with, and what parts not so much?
2. What observations/thoughts do you have about the different effects your spiritual gifts tend to bring about? Looking back on your life, can you remember various times you noticed the effects of your primary gift?
3. What were your top capabilities (strengths)? What do you bring to the table that is unique?
4. In terms of finding where to serve, one question might be, “What are the things that break your heart?” In other words, what needs do you tend to care about? What concerns are you usually drawn to? What burdens do you end up carrying?
5. If money, time, resources, and life circumstances were not a concern, and you knew you could not fail, what would you do that would bring great good to others and great glory to God?
6. Finally, what serving opportunities at Highlands afford you the opportunity to use your gifts (https://rock.highlandschurch.org/serveathighlands)?

Enjoy your upcoming group time later this week!