

Living The Christian Life Series:
Lesson 27: Developing the Biblical Techniques and The Crowns That
Accompany Them – Part 10 The Crown of Joy
(Understanding Your Ministry Through Your Gifting)

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Series Text: Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

Applicational Texts:

I Thessalonians 2:19-20

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our LORD Jesus Christ at his coming?

I Corinthians 12:7

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal...

Introduction:

In our current study, “Living The Christian Life Series,” we have seen that God has a purpose and a design for each of us as Believers. We have seen in our previous studies that God created man and put him here on the earth to resolve the Angelic Conflict (See the Study of the Angelic Conflict in the “studies” on the website spheresofgrace.com). Understanding why we are here enables us to better understand what life is about and we are to be doing.

I Peter 1:1-12 says,

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness

through manifold temptations: ⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: ⁸ Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: ⁹ Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰ Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ¹¹ Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. ¹² Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

The angels are interested to understand all about the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in providing grace for mankind because this is the key issue and focus in the angelic conflict. (1.) Would God provide eternal salvation for one of His creatures who had sinned? (2.) Satan's charge that impugned the character of God was that God could not do that because of His perfect righteousness. (3.) Satan was the covering angel and the custodian of the righteousness of God which is comprised of His perfect truth, perfect justice, and immutability and Satan knows better than most other created beings that the righteousness and justice of God had to be satisfied with judgment and punishment when it comes to sin. (4.) Satan rejected the grace and mercy of God and did not believe that man would accept it. (5.) So, the primary issue in Satan's appeal was whether or not God would, or perhaps more to the point, if God could remain true to His character and provide grace salvation for mankind; and if God did offer it would man accept that offer of grace.

It is deduced, based on the character of God and His provision for humanity, that a previous offer of Grace had been given to Satan and the other fallen angels before God created man. This deduction is based on a harmony of Scripture from Genesis through Revelation along with the righteousness of God which would require that God make the same offer of grace that is given to mankind. This conclusion is supported throughout the Bible as an explanation for the creation of man. The fallen angels rejected God's offer of salvation and were condemned to the lake of fire and brimstone. Satan appealed that sentence. Human history, from the creation of man to the final judgment, serves as the appeal trial of Satan and the fallen angels. Humans are the witnesses for and against Satan in this trial.

Satan and the fallen angels rejected God's offer of grace and said God was unjust. So God created an inferior creature—mankind—to prove that a creature can and will accept God's offer of grace. God became flesh and blood, born of a virgin to bypass the imputed sin of Adam, lived a sinless life incurring no debt of His on, died a sacrificial death, conquered death and the grave with His victorious resurrection, ascended to the right hand of the Father to intercede on our behalf, and is coming again to take us to be with Him eternally. Therefore, every time a person hears the gospel offer of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation, the angels are watching intently, bending down, peering

intently to see what will happen when the offer of grace is given. When a person accepts God's offer, the elect angels all rejoice (Luke 15:10) because it validates the testimony of God that mankind can be saved and would accept God's offer of grace, so God is vindicated and Satan loses his appeal. Based upon the harmony of Scripture, especially in Paul's writing concerning the Triumphant Return of Christ (Colossians 2:15), when the number of Church Age believers equals the number of fallen angels God is vindicated, Satan loses his appeal, and Christ will return. Till then we are appointed as Sojourners, foreigners not living in our own country but living alongside the locals to do the business of the King of kings-Living the Christian Life effectively. That is why man was created and why we are here on the earth. However the more personal question is, What is my role in this conflict? Believers are identified as members of the Body of Christ and serve as His representatives. We each have a specific role, and personal ministry as part of God's plan, and are described as members of the Body of Christ. So, What is my role, and how am I to perform it? This series, "Living The Christian Life," attempts to answer those two questions.

In our study we have learned that there are four biblical techniques designed to enable us to live out our designed ministry and that there is a Stephanos Crown for each of these that will be awarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ following the Rapture of the Church. We have examined acquiring the Crown of Righteousness by developing the Spirit-Controlled life. We have examined acquiring the Crown of Glory by developing Spiritual Maturity. And, we have examined acquiring the Crown of Life by developing the Faith/Rest Life.

We are currently examining acquiring the Crown of Joy by developing the technique of Faithful Stewardship and living out our designed ministry. The degree of our joy is determined by the faithfulness of our stewardship-how well we have lived out our designed ministry. While we look forward to that "Awards Banquet" in the sky, the real value of developing those techniques is the benefit they offer us in this life, the stability they provide us in the midst of this spiritual warfare, and the joy we can experience regardless of the circumstances we encounter.

We have seen why we are here. We are here to make a choice-to accept God's grace or reject it. We are left on the earth after our making our choice to live out a designed ministry as God's representatives. There is only one thing more satisfying than discovering why we are here and that is to discover what we are to be doing.

Therefore, it is essential that we understand our role in God's eternal plan and that begins with knowing what God has designed us for and understanding the abilities He has given us to accomplish His assignment. Your joy depends upon knowing! In our last two lessons we have explored Spiritual Gifts to help you identify yours. Last week we identified the three categories of spiritual gifts outlined in the Bible; Temporary Gifts given until the canon of Scripture was completed and then ceased, Sign Gifts given to reveal God's replacement of Israel as His stewards in this age and their removal from the land which occurred in 70 AD, and the Permanent Gifts that operate throughout the Church Age. We saw that there are nine Permanent Gifts that are in operation today and

you have at least one of those. (Administration, Teaching, Ministry, Exhortation, Helps, Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, Mercy, and Giving).

I. A Practical Approach to Understanding the Gifts:

I had intended to set up a workshop using a Spiritual Gifts Workshop Syllabus that I developed for Channel Islands Bible College and Seminary, but I have since abandoned that and will try to keep it less academic and make it more practical, better suited to the structure of our group. Let's see if we can keep it simple.

There are two basic question we need clear answers to: (1). What are my Spiritual Gifts (2). How am I to use them? Although they appear to be simple questions, they have confused believers through the years. For some of us it is simple enough, our gifts relate to leadership roles in the church and are "somewhat" defined by the positions God established in the church such as Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons. God established these positions in the church and gifted men with gifts such as Administration, Teaching, Exhortation, Ministry, Word of Knowledge, and Word of Wisdom to fill those positions. While there are considerable differences in the interpretation and application of these gifts by the church today, there are some good indications as to what the gifted person is to do.

However, those of us with these leadership gifts and their appointed positions are in the minority. Most believers' gifts and their functions are not as easily defined. So, let's see if we can get a better picture of those gifts and their use in the everyday world and where you fit in.

A. Identifying Characteristics and Tendencies Reflecting Gifting:

Identifying your spiritual gifts is the first step to understanding what you are to be doing as a Believer. In our study last time we identified the nine spiritual gifts that are to function throughout the Church Age. We will attempt to better understand those gifts by identifying the characteristics and tendencies associated with each gift. In our study last time we had a list of characteristics and a list of tendencies associated with each of the nine gifts. We will review them here before identifying the gifting they reflect.

Worksheet To Help Identify Your abilities and Tendencies

Using a scale of 0 to 10 rate yourself on each of these abilities and tendencies. Your first response is generally your most accurate response. Then transfer the scores to each gift.

- () - An ability as a self-starter.
- () - An ability to see and understand needs related to organization.
- () - An ability to assume leadership.
- () - An ability to delegate responsibility.

- () - A tendency to be assertive.
- () - A tendency to be aggressive.
- () - A tendency to lead out if there is no designated leader.

Section 1 total _____
Divide by 7 for score _____

- () - An ability to research.
- () - An ability to present information in a systematic sequence.
- () - An ability to communicate effectively.
- () - A tendency to go into detail when asked simple questions.
- () - A tendency to want to communicate everything learned.

Section 2 total _____
Divide by 5 for score _____

- () - An ability to detect practical needs of others.
- () - An ability to serve in practical ways to provide for others.
- () - A tendency to be alert to the needs of others.
- () - A tendency to take responsibility for helping others.

Section 3 total _____
Divide by 4 for score _____

- () - An ability to motivate.
- () - An ability to encourage.
- () - An ability to inspire.
- () - A tendency to speak out strongly on beliefs.
- () - A tendency to share ideas.
- () - A tendency to avoid anything which does not seem practical.
- () - A tendency to push people to their potential.

Section 4 total _____
Divide by 7 for _____

- () - An ability to follow leadership.
- () - An ability to perform skills necessary in the church.
- () - An ability to perform skills beneficial to others.
- () - A tendency to accept only simple sideline responsibility.
- () - A tendency to follow rather than lead.
- () - A tendency to assist others who are serving.

Section 5 total _____
Divide by 6 for score _____

- () - An ability to comprehend what is read.
- () - An ability to separate various doctrinal truths revealed in the Word,
- () - An alertness to factual detail.
- () - An ability to classify scripture into doctrinal subjects.
- () - A tendency to take a clinical approach to Bible study.
- () - A tendency to identify categories of doctrine in reading the word.

- () - A tendency to avoid non-biblical illustrations.
- () - A tendency to react sharply to error.
- () - A tendency to prove or test all teachings.
- () - A tendency to emphasize the importance and accuracy of words.

Section 6 total _____
 Divide by 10 for score _____

- () - An ability to see a person's circumstances or situation.
- () - An ability to understand the Bible in an applicational sense.
- () - An ability to communicate applicational principles clearly.
- () - A tendency to look for application as the Bible is read or taught.
- () - A tendency to identify certain people you know as Bible passages are examined.
- () - A tendency to think of certain Bible passages upon hearing about a person's circumstance or situation.
- () - A tendency to relate the Word to everything experienced.

Section 7 total _____
 Divide by 7 for score _____

- () - An ability to see joy or distress in others.
- () - An ability to console or comfort.
- () - A tendency to have compassion for others.
- () - A tendency to experience the emotions others are experiencing.
- () - A tendency to offer comfort and consolation.

Section 8 total _____
 Divide by 5 for score _____

- () - An ability to acquire assets.
- () - An ability to multiply material assets.
- () - An ability to understand financial needs.
- () - A tendency to look for the material needs in a situation.
- () - A tendency to assume personal responsibility for financial assistance to others.
- () - A tendency to have confidence in meeting financial needs.

Section 9 total _____
 Divide by 6 for score _____

B. Identifying Spiritual Gifts By Abilities and Characteristics:

The Gift of Administration (Romans 12:7; I Corinthians 12:28) is the unique ability to assume leadership roles effectively; an ability to function in administrative capacities; to provide leadership and direction in decision making situations, from running a household to running a corporation. In everyday life the sign on your door may simply say, mother, father, wife, or husband. On the other hand it could say “Chief Executive Officer,” More often than not there is no sign on the door, just a lot of questions and demands for direction or leadership. This is a decision making and assignment assigning position. In the Church it is

a place of leadership, in everyday life, it is a position of responsibility, and the gifting comes in varying degrees of ability. (Score: _____)

The Gift of Teaching (Romans 12:7; I Corinthians 12:28) is the unique ability to understand and effectively communicate information. It includes both the ability to understand information accurately (comprehension) and then to communicate that information in an understandable manner. The role of the teacher involves a wide range of applications and opportunities from one-on-one instruction to rooms full of listeners, from simple instruction to formal teaching, from the home to the classroom or from the job on the construction site to the Pulpit in the church. The Holy Spirit crafts our gift to align with the designed assignment. (Score _____)

The Gift of Ministry (Romans 12:7) is better understood as the gift of service. The Greek word is “diakonian” Yes! That is our word deacon, but the position is not in view here, service is in view. It’s not the title but the unique awareness of material needs and the ability to address those needs in ministering to others that is identified here And, while there is the position of the deacon established in the organization of the church, this unique ability is given as a spiritual gift to other believers enabling them to effectively assist others. (Score: _____)

The Gift of Exhortation (Romans 12:8) is the unique ability to encourage people and spur them on to action. The Greek word used here is “parakalohn” which means to call others to come along beside you. This gift provides for motivation that encourages others to come to your position. This gift of encouragement and motivation comes in a variety of settings, in everyday life, wherever encouragement is needed. From the evangelist to the consoler this gift is always in demand with a plethora of applications. In the home or on the job there are those seeking encouragement and what an amazing find it is to find some one who has kept one of the appointments God made for them to encourage us. (Score: _____)

The Gift of Helps (I Corinthians 12:8) is the unique ability to see a need and provide assistance. From physical to spiritual, from psychological to material this gift abounds in the design of God. Most Christians quickly opt for this gift believing they don’t have any unique abilities so they will just be available. But it can be far more involved than just being there to pick up the other end of a load. As a spiritual gift it is the gifting that God gave you in His designed ministry for you. Assisting others who are ministering is a part of the role, but there is no limit for the opportunities associated with this gift and one needs to be alert for the appointments for helping that God establishes. The word “Helps” speaks volumes concerning the gift. (Score: _____)

The Gift of the Word of Knowledge (I Corinthian 12:8) is the unique ability to comprehend what is read. This gift could be applicable in various settings but is specifically designated as comprehension of the Word of God. It is the ability to

put Bible content into categories of Bible doctrine. The ability to read a passage of Scripture and sense the subject matter found there and organize it in categorical order. However it can have a broader application with the emphasis on comprehension. This gift is not to be confused with the Gift of Knowledge which was a temporary gift by which doctrine was revealed until the completion of the canon of Scripture in 95AD. (I Corinthians 13:8-13). (Score: _____)

The Gift of The Word of Wisdom (I Corinthians 12:8) is the ability to understand the proper application of knowledge to experience. It is the unique ability to communicate truth to circumstances. In the church setting it is the ability to explain how a biblical passage applies to a person's circumstances. Notice, it is the Word of Wisdom, meaning that it is based on the Bible. While the Word of Knowledge is the unique ability to understand what the Bible says, the Word of Wisdom is the unique ability to understand how what it says applies. Although those gifts in the context of our study relate to the Bible itself, the principle is applicable to understanding truth in any form and communicating the application. (This is a Spiritual gift not to be confused with the instruction given to all believers to ask for wisdom in James 1:5 that promises the ability to understand the application of fact to experience to all who ask for it. This gift is specifically related to the application of God's Word.) (Score: _____)

The Gift of Mercy (Romans 12:8) is the unique and reflexive response of compassion to those in need. It is a unique sensitivity to the needs of others and the ability to provide a sense of comfort. Although the gifting is a reflexive response the believer must be in fellowship with God (controlled by the Holy Spirit) having no unconfessed sin in order for that sensitivity to be activated and the proper response to be generated. This is a prolific gift in that a large number of Christians have the gift of Mercy as their primary gift reflecting the biblical concept of gracing others. We are all to grace each other but some in the church have the unique reflexive response of compassion and the ability to provide comfort to others. (Score: _____)

The Gift of Giving (Romans 12:8) is the unique ability to acquire finances and direct it into the Lord's work. This is a spiritual gift with a unique ability to provide and is not to be confused with the normal "priestly giving" that is to be a part of every believer's stewardship. This is a unique ability to acquire material assets and channel them directly into the Lord's work. (Score: _____)

The subject of spiritual gifts is addressed in the Bible in relation to its function in the church. However, we need to remember that the church is described as the "...body of Christ..." we are described as "*members of that body,*" and our commission and gifting is not limited to "Sunday Morning Functions" but are to dictate our daily activities as we live alongside the locals doing our King's business.

II. A Harmony Between Spiritual Gifting and Vocations:

Yes! There is a harmony overlap between your spiritual Gifting and your vocation. Your workplace is one of your primary mission fields. It is there you work alongside the locals (unbelievers) as Sojourners doing the work of our King.

Your abilities and tendencies are basic in establishing how you make a living and must not be separated from your deigned ministry. Each of us has a different mission field which is defined by the circumstances of our daily lives. We have family (frequently the hardest to minister to – they know us the best), we have a social structure made up of those we socialize with, we have co-workers if we are involved in the workforce, we have associates even if we are self-employed, we have contact with strangers and others as “ships passing in the night.” The “Social Platforms” provide a “bully pulpit” for using our spiritual gifts. It is to these that we have been given a ministry and spiritual gifting. Perhaps it is just modeling the Christian way of life, allowing the Spirit to control our behavior, demonstrating spiritual maturity by gracing others, and exemplifying the Faith/Rest Life in our daily walk. But, don’t neglect you calling.

Modeling the biblical principles and techniques of the Christian life is by far the most effective way of properly representing Christ, and the environment for that representation is most frequently associated with our spiritual gifting. The spiritual “Gift of Administration” provides an effective leadership platform for displaying a commitment to biblical principles. The “Gift of Teaching” does not need to be limited to teaching in the church but certainly has a vital place in the secular society such as schools, in the social platforms, and in industry by modeling through one’s personal practice and reflecting biblical philosophy in one’s approach to subject material. The “Gift of Ministry (Service)” is always in demand by those who have needs to whom we are able to minister, sometimes just with our presence but with assistance in their tasks. The “Gift of Exhortation” is in demand in secular society as well as the church. In family, in your social environment, in the workplace people are searching and are in need of encouragement and direction, they will seek you out when you display the biblical principles of gracing others and resting in Faith. Opportunities for exercising the “Gift of Helps” present themselves every day and our skills and abilities single out those we need to assist. There is a demand for the “Gift of Word of knowledge” in society as well as the church. Understanding and explaining what the Word says concerning the issues we face from day to day is in high demand. This unique gift provides people with the biblical answers to the questions related to the issues of daily life. The “Gift of Word of Wisdom” provides not just what the Word says but how it relates to a person’s personal circumstances. Counseling is the primary expression of this gift and the world is full of those in need of good solid applicational counseling from the Word. Those in society as well as the church need a manifestation of the “Gift of Mercy.” Compassion and comfort are hard to find today, not because of the shortage of the gifting but due to the reluctance of believers to get involved. There is a greater need outside of the structured church than within its walls. The “Gift of Giving” will

always be in demand in both the church and society. It is a unique gifting and you will know if you have it. The gifting is not just an attitude of giving (we should all have that), but it is the ability to acquire the material goods to channel to others.

We should always be alert to the opportunities that are presented to us to use our abilities and act on our tendencies in our day-to-day activities. The Holy Spirit arranges frequent appointments for us, but like those in the parable of the Good Samaritan we are often so absorbed in our own needs that we miss the opportunity to use our gifts of Administration, Teaching, Service, Exhortation, Helps, Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, Mercy, or Giving. If you haven't experienced any opportunities for ministry lately, it is not because there were not any, it because you weren't alert to the need. The Holy Spirit abides in us to guide us and empower us with the Gifting He has given us, He will provide opportunities – that's why we are here living alongside the locals to do the King's business. So, next time we will look at recognizing "Divine Opportunities for Service."

But it all begins at Salvation:

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1