

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adult Sunday School

BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

LESSON FIVE: EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Biblical stewardship lies at the heart of the Christian life. From the beginning of creation, man is called not to be an owner but a caretaker of that which belong to God. This foundational truth shapes how believers are to understand the purpose of their lives, and the resources which include time and spiritual gifts how they are to be used for the glory of God.

Closely connected to biblical stewardship is the doctrine of spiritual gifts. Every believer in Christ has been endowed with spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit, not for personal glory, but for service. These spiritual gifts are not possessions to be hoarded but trusts to be exercised. Therefore, to exercise spiritual gifts faithfully is, in essence, an act of stewardship. 1 Peter 4:10, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

II. NATURE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. Why Spiritual Gifts?

Spiritual gifts are divine enablement given by the Holy Spirit to believers for the edification of the church and the advancement of God’s kingdom (see Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4). These spiritual gifts include teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy, prophecy, service, etc. Each spiritual gift is purposeful and intentional, given according to God’s sovereign will.

B. Given by Grace, Not Merit

Gifts are not rewards for spiritual maturity; they are expressions of grace. Romans 12:6, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us...” This eliminates pride and fosters humility. Since gifts are given by grace, they must be exercised in grace humbly, and gratefully.

C. Diversity and Unity

The diversity of spiritual gifts reflects the wisdom of God. No believer possesses all spiritual gifts. This creates interdependence within the body of Christ. Based on 1 Corinthians 12:12, the church is one body with many members. Each member has a role, and every role matters. Thus, stewardship of spiritual gifts is not individualistic but communal.

III. RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. Faithfulness Is Required

1 Corinthians 4:2 states, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” The primary qualification of a steward is not brilliance or success, but faithfulness. To exercise a spiritual gift faithfully means using it regularly, responsibly and consistently according to God’s Word. Neglecting a spiritual gift is a failure of stewardship. Paul exhorts Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:6 to “stir up the gift of God” that is within him. Spiritual gifts must be cultivated, not ignored.

B. Accountability Towards God

Stewards will give an account. Romans 14:12 reminds us, “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” This includes how we have used our spiritual gifts. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14–30) illustrates this vividly. Servants were entrusted with resources, and they were judged based on what they did with what they received. The one who hid his talent was condemned, not for losing it, but for failing to use it.

C. Diligence And Spiritual Growth

Exercising spiritual gifts requires effort. It is not passive. Just as physical abilities must be developed, so must spiritual gifts. This involves the study of Scripture, prayer, practice, seeking feedback, and serving consistently. A teacher must study. A leader must lead with wisdom. One who shows mercy must cultivate compassion. Stewardship demands growth, not stagnation and complacency.

IV. ATTITUDE EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. Humility

Since spiritual gifts are given by grace, there is no room for pride. Romans 12:3 warns believers not to think more highly of themselves than they ought. Humility recognizes the Source of the spiritual gift (God), the purpose of the spiritual gift (towards others), and the limitation of the spiritual gift (we are not sufficient in ourselves). Pride corrupts stewardship, turning service into self-promotion.

B. Christ’s Love As Motivation

“For the love of Christ constraineth us...” (2 Corinthians 5:14). No other motivation is worthy to drive us in exercising our spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 13, placed between chapters on spiritual gifts, teaches that spiritual gifts must be exercised in love. Without love, even the most spectacular spiritual gifts are meaningless. Love ensures that spiritual gifts are used for edification, not destruction. Our service will be sincere, not self-serving. Our utmost desire for ministry is for building up, not destruction. Thus, Christ’s love is the context in which stewardship of spiritual gifts must operate.

C. Dependence On Spirit’s Power And Enablement

Spiritual gifts are not natural talents. While they may align with natural abilities, they are empowered by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, exercising spiritual gifts requires prayerful dependence, sensitivity to the Spirit’s leading and submission to God’s will. Apart from the Spirit, our efforts are empty.

V. PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. Edification Of Believers

1 Corinthians 14:12 states that spiritual gifts are to be used “to the edifying of the church.” The primary purpose is not personal fulfillment but mutual strengthening. Every act of service should aim to build up the faith, encouragement and spiritual unity of the body of Christ. A steward must always ask, “How can this spiritual gift benefit others? Is there any way I can improve this spiritual gift to bless others even more?”

B. Glorifying God

1 Peter 4:11 provides a clear directive, “that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” The ultimate aim of exercising spiritual gifts is for the glory of God. When spiritual gifts are exercised properly, attention is directed not to the individual but to God. This guards against self-glorification, competition with one another, or envy. The ultimate goal is to glorify God.

C. Advancing the Gospel

Spiritual gifts also serve to fulfill the mission of the church. Whether through teaching, service, or leadership, spiritual gifts contribute to the spread of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Faithful stewardship of spiritual gifts results in souls being reached, disciples being made, and the church being strengthened. Thus, spiritual gifts are tools for the advancement of God’s kingdom in these last days.

VI. HINDRANCES TO EXERCISING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. Fear

Fear can prevent believers from exercising their spiritual gifts. Fear of failure, criticism, or inadequacy can lead to withdrawal or inaction. Yet Scripture repeatedly calls believers to be bold and courageous, and continue to look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.

B. Comparison or Competition

Comparing spiritual gifts leads to envy or pride. Some may feel their spiritual gift is insignificant, while others may exalt theirs. Both attitudes distort biblical stewardship. God gave spiritual gifts not for believers to compete with one another for recognition or rewards. Such hindrances will only destroy the love and unity of the body of Christ.

C. Neglect

Some simply neglect their spiritual gifts due to laziness or distraction. God forbids that believers should fail to take their spiritual gifts seriously. Such a hindrance deprives others of the benefits of spiritual gifts. God will surely call them to account for their negligence and failure.

VII. SUMMARY

To exercise spiritual gifts in the area of biblical stewardship is to recognize that every ability given by God is a trust, not a possession. It is to live with the awareness that we are accountable to God for how we use what He has entrusted to us. Faithful stewardship involves recognizing God as the Owner, understanding spiritual gifts as grace, exercising them diligently, serving with humility and love, and aiming for God’s glory and the good of others.

In the end, the question is not how gifted we are, but how faithful we have been with the spiritual gifts God has blessed us. May every believer strive to be a good and faithful steward, using every spiritual gift entrusted to them for the glory of God and the building up of His church. Amen.