

LESSON ESSENTIALS

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

LESSON 3: THE SERVING GIFTS

Some of the most useful and beautiful ways of strengthening the Church and the community around us are the gifts of service. While some may struggle to lay down their life for others in this way, those who are blessed with service abilities willingly serve their neighbour in sacrificial and practical ways.

In many cultures, the notion of being a servant is undesirable, yet the Bible tells us that to be a servant is a gift! What does it look like to have the serving gifts? What should our attitude towards serving be?

The serving gifts are beautiful and critical to the health of the Church. The way Jesus speaks of them, the service gifts ought to be highly desired!

“But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:43b-45

If you could choose which spiritual gifts you had, which would you choose? Would you choose the serving gifts? Truthfully, many would not. Serving sounds like hard work. Serving sounds like maybe getting taken advantage of. Serving sounds like not very much recognition for your labours.

Who would choose that?

Actually, the serving gifts are beautiful and critical to the health of the Church. The way Jesus speaks of them, the service gifts ought to be highly desired! In Mark 9, we read Jesus saying, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” Similarly, in Mark 10:43b-45, Jesus’ words are recorded as follows: “But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Every believer is called to lay down their life for their brothers and sisters. But for those who have the serving gifts, this call is even stronger.

What are the serving gifts? They can be categorized as gifts of Craftsmanship, of Giving, of Hospitality, of Helps, and of Mercy. By briefly looking at each of these individually, we can discover the importance of the serving gifts in the church, and we can become more grateful for them as they are displayed by others.

Craftsmanship – This gift uses creative building, designing, and decorating skills to create functional and beautiful spaces for the Church to use. This gift could also be used to meet practical household needs in the community where there are repair or construction needs to be met.

Giving – As we all know, ministries cost money. When there are projects to be funded, or financial needs to be met, those with the gift of giving joyfully and sacrificially give to cover those needs. The givers in the church are often also motivated to meet individual financial needs outside of the church. Givers do not always give only money; often, they will purchase or donate resources to help meet needs as they arise.

Hospitality – Hebrews 13:2 speaks beautifully of the gift of hospitality. When we welcome people into our homes we are encouraged to “not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Indeed, hospitality is the practice of welcoming people into your home for a visit, a meal, or even just a brief conversation over coffee. Those

with the gift of hospitality have the ability to make anyone feel welcome in any situation, whether in a private gathering, or in a large group setting.

Helps – The gift of helps sees what needs to be done and does it. It understands the needs of others, sometimes before they even realize what they need themselves! This are administratively gifted people, teachers, ushers, and practically-minded people.

Mercy – Do you have heartache? The gifts of mercy people will come to your aid! The gift of mercy stirs people to visit those who are in the hospital, to visit those in prison, to care for the sick and the widows, and to promote special causes that need support and attention.

Ultimately the serving gifts can be described as being the ‘hands and feet of Jesus.’ When we want to extend the generous, thoughtful, practical love of Jesus to those around us, it is most often the serving gifts that we use. This, of course, builds up the church, but for those who don’t know Jesus, a demonstration of the serving gifts can open a door for the gospel. Theodore Roosevelt, American politician, author, and historian, once said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” To a large extent, this is a good reminder to use the serving gifts before we attempt to use shepherding gifts like teaching or pastoring. By using practical acts of service, both in the body of Christ and in the community, we earn the respect of the listener and receive an opportunity to back up our loving actions with truth-filled, loving words.

Truly, the serving gifts are a picture of how Christ laid down His life for His people. In a similar way, those with the serving gifts lay down their lives by using their unique skills, mercy, generosity, helpfulness, and hospitality for the benefit of the people that the Lord brings into their lives. Surely we can now all agree that it is a privilege to be considered the servant of all.

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IN REVIEW

- The Serving Gifts are Craftsmanship, Giving, Hospitality, Helps, and Mercy. Each of them serve the practical needs of the church and community in a selfless and thoughtful way.
- By using the Serving Gifts in the church, we are imitating Christ who was the Greatest Servant of all.
- By using the Serving Gifts in the community, we demonstrate the generous love of Christ and may win an opportunity to speak the gospel to those who have not yet met Jesus.

