

# Determining Giftedness

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**Series:** Nehemiah

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**Introduction:** Open your Bible to the book of **Nehemiah 7**. Chapters 1-6 of Nehemiah talk about building the walls. Nehemiah 7 and following talk about delegating and building the people in their responsibilities before God.

In Nehemiah 7, there are 50,000 names in 69 verses. This is like preaching the Jerusalem phone book, plus it's in Hebrew. These are the people that inhabit the city.

Jerusalem laid in ruins like New Orleans after Katrina, or modern day Haiti, but it lay that way for 141 years. The people were either in exile or in captivity—this continued for 141 years until God spoke to Nehemiah and burdened him. And through that burden, he was able, by the grace of God to raise money, and raise up leaders, and policies and procedures, and during this time he was praying, he was fasting at times, he was administrating, and he himself was getting into the work with sword and trowel.

During all this time, almost from day 1, he faced hardship, difficulty, death threats, and harassment. Yet in 52 short days he did the unthinkable. He finished the building of the walls, the installation of the gates, and the fortification of the city.

Chapter 7 of Nehemiah is a list of the 50,000 people who moved into the city. In this group of people you have three groups of leadership abilities.

**Nehemiah 7:5a**, "And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy."

- I. We need to know where we **FIT** in the body of Christ.
  - A. How do we know WHERE we fit in the Body of Christ?
    1. Knowing where we fit in the Body begins with **God's gifting of you**. A hand fits on an arm. A foot fits on a leg. God gives us different gifts. Our gifts inform us of our calling.

God's got to be in it for all of us. Nehemiah is about to delegate many, many people in many places and functions. But it all really has to be led by God. **Nehemiah 7:5**, "my God put into mine heart..."

At salvation, God gifts us with spiritual giftedness. He equips us to do the work of building up the faith of others.

2. There are **four passages** that inform us about spiritual gifts.

- (1) Spiritual gifts are **Sovereignly** given. **Romans 12:6** says we have: "gifts differing according to the **grace that is given to us**". The spiritual gifting you have is a supernatural ability resulting from God's grace. It may differ from others.
- (2) Every saint of God is given a gift, i.e. a place to function in God's local church. We see in **Ephesians 4:7**, that every one who is born again has a function in the Body of Christ, a spiritual gift, "...unto every one of us is given **grace** according to the **measure of the gift of Christ**". Our spiritual gifts are a stewardship of God's grace.
- (3) We all have a **Responsibility** to exercise our gift. **1 Peter 4:10** says, "As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good **stewards of the manifold grace of God**". So spiritual gifts are stewardships of God's grace. They are sovereignly given by God. I cannot choose my gift. God gives it to me.
- (4) The **Purpose** of your Spiritual gift is to build up the faith of other believers—to draw them closer to God.

Then in **1 Corinthians 12:5-7**, we are told what the **purpose** of spiritual gifts are, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But **the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.**" It is our responsibility to make sure that every brother is profiting and being edified in the faith. Every one of us has gifts, and every gift mutually benefits Christ's Body.

Look over at **1 Corinthians 12:12**, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ." He goes on to say in **verse 14**, "For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body: is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body: is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? 20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary".

**Transition:** It's important to know where we fit. Nehemiah knew what he was supposed to do, and he had an idea as a leader what the other 50,000 people were to do. But it's not enough to know where to fit.

You may know where you fit, but are you functioning? **Nehemiah 7:5a**, "And my **God put into mine heart** to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy."

- A. Our place of functioning is **DESIGNED** by God. **Nehemiah 7:5**, "And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles". Now Nehemiah's highest desire is to be used of God! God put something in his heart to do. Nehemiah had come to a place of maturity in his life where his desires matched God's desires. **Psalm 37:4**, "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (ESV). If you read God's Word, and seek God in prayer, and delight in God, God will put deep desires in your heart to follow Him.
- B. We are all called to **DO SOMETHING** with our spiritual gifts. **Nehemiah 7:5a**, "And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles," Nehemiah's desire is to build a whole city that honors God. He wants to plant a church of sorts, to preach the Word of God, a city among the heathen cities—a place where lives would be transformed.

Nehemiah looks at the crowd of people, and he begins to organize them into a functioning unit. **Nehemiah 7:5a**, "And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy." He takes attendance, he finds out who's there, what their giftedness is, and assigns them roles. There is a responsibility. There is an accounting. We all must live in accountability to one another. We cannot live a "secret" Christian life.

We cannot be idle with our gifts. Paul said to Timothy...

- **1 Timothy 4:14**, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."
- **2 Timothy 1:6**, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

- C. You can know where you fit by your **DESIRE**? Nehemiah's **desire** was to build the city; they built the people of God so the people could COME IN among God's people and OUT OF THE WORLD. Now we see that there is a purpose in all this. Nehemiah built a city where people would come out of Babylon into the "city of God".

**Verses 5b-6**, "...And I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it: 6 These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town."

We come to a third very important point in this passage. It is not enough to know where you fit and to actually function in the Body of Christ.

- II. We must all learn how to **FOLLOW** in the Body of Christ. The first thing that Nehemiah does is appoint the leaders. Nehemiah is going to be organizing the people, but first he begins by naming the leaders. The leaders lay the foundation, they set the example. **Verse 7**, "They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah [NOT THE SAME AS THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK], Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah".

- A. Now this is implied, but if you are NOT **teachable**, then you will not be used of God. You have to have a tender, broken, childlike spirit. God "resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble" (**1 Peter 5:5**).

**2 Timothy 2:2**, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Do you want to mentor someone? Do you want to teach the Word as we are all called to do to every creature? Then you must first be consistent yourself. If you are not consistent, then you are not mature in Christ. Knowledge does not measure your maturity; commitment does.

- B. You've got to be **available**. These men it says came from Babylon. They said NO to something in Babylon so they could say YES to something in Jerusalem.
- C. You've got to be **consistent**. If we are going to mentor people, we must mentor them in something we are practicing already. We are to be followers of Christ ourselves first before we can make followers of Christ. So Nehemiah spends a lot of time naming leaders in this chapter. There are twelve of them. We know about two of them.

**Verse 7**, "They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah [NOT THE SAME AS THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK], Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah".

**Zerubbabel** is a prominent civil leader, with politics and business, and the architect of the city's government.

**Jeshua** (or Joshua, i.e. Zechariah 3) is the high priest, and from him will come 14 generations of priests. When we tuck in our children at night, we ought to pray, "Lord give us 14 generations of children who love you and will intercede for others".

- D. You've got to be **holy**.

#### **JOSHUA'S FILTHY RAGS CHANGED!**

**Zechariah 3:1-5**, "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. 5 And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by."

Joshua will have 14 successive generations of high priests. Zechariah and Haggai talk about Joshua and Zerubbabel quite a bit.

E. You've got to be **productive!!** (providers vs. consumers)

The ten other men do not take as public a role, but it is prominent, it is just unmentioned. That brings us to an amazing characteristic of the people God uses in the church. I like to call them "quiet leaders". These are the ones that are dependable and faithful people. I like to call them "providers" as opposed to "consumers".

**Application:** Are you a provider or a consumer? Your mother would be a good example of a consumer. She cooks the meal. It takes a couple hours. Then she sets the table, fills the glasses, changes clothes and greets everyone as they come in. Then IN COME the CONSUMERS. All they have to do is EAT. After about 15 minutes, their job is done. Then, Mom, the consumer, cleans everyone's plate, washes it, puts everything away. Mom's job is about 3 hours of preparation and follow up. She is a producer. That's what we all need to do in the Body of Christ.

- Is it easy for you to come late to activities and then leave early. That's a sure sign you are a consumer.
- Do you think, "It doesn't matter if I come or stay home"? Sure sign you are a consumer, and a baby Christian.
- Do you make excuses for a lot of things? Sure sign that you are a consumer.

A producer doesn't make excuses. If MOM doesn't show up, we all know something is TERRIBLY wrong! She must be DYING! Do people think that about you? If you are not at a service, then there must be something seriously wrong, because you never miss. That's what we are all to be—Leaders—mentoring people. We are all called to go and evangelize and counsel every creature. Bring them to Christ. We are all to be PROVIDERS, and get out of the CONSUMER mode as quickly as possible. A consumer is a baby Christian. A provider has come to maturity in the faith.

III. We must all learn how to **FUNCTION** in the Body of Christ.

- In verses 8-25 we have the families listed.
- In verses 26-38 you have the towns listed.

There were three groups of people: governors (administrators), priests, and prophets.

- In verses 39-42 you have the priests listed.
- Verse 43 specifically lists the Levites.
- Verse 44, the singers
- Verse 45, the Porters—the door keepers!
- Psalms 84:10 For a day in thy courts /s better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
- Verse 46-56 Nethinims—appointed by David to serve in the Temple.

- Verses 57-60 servants of Solomon.
- Verse 61-65—non certified people who could not prove they were Jewish. They were allowed to live there, but not partake in the most holy things.
- The totals of everyone is given in verses 66-69.

Chapter 7 of Nehemiah is a list of the 50,000 people who moved into the city. In this group of people you have three groups of leadership abilities: prophets, priests, and kings. All of these people foreshadow Jesus Christ who is our prophet, priest, and king.

- Jesus is our prophet, our preacher—He speaks truth to our hearts.
- He is our priest—our intercessor, our advocate, and the only mediator between us and God.
- He is our King—King of kings, and Lord of Lords, the sovereign controller of our lives.

Some have said that you can group all the spiritual gifts under these three categories.

- A. **Prophetic** gifts. Some of you are more prophetic in nature—you live in the world of *ideas* and doctrine. You love studying and teaching, and rebuking, you are not afraid of controversy, you are compelled to not only believe the truth but proclaim it. Prophets love to write, teach, and preach—seeing people repent of sin. You are able to apply God’s Word to people’s lives.
- B. **Priestly** (Pastoral) gifts. Others of you are more priestly in your gifts. You live in the world of *people*. People with these gifts tend to be merciful, patient, compassionate. These are the kinds of people, when you are in the hospital, they come and visit you. These are the people when you’re sick, they bring you food. They are praying for you, caring for you.
  1. If you go to a prophet with a sin problem, he will tell you to repent in very stark terms.
  2. If you go to a priest, he’ll listen to you, counsel with you, cry with you and pray with you.
- C. **Kingly** gifts. Kings love systems, policies, procedures. These are the administrative gifts. If you have these gifts, you live in a world of tasks and plans and how to get from point A to point B. You love budgets, and you have great discernment. Kingly gifts are those that have to do with organizing and systematizing to maximize efficiency.

Nehemiah is probably the greatest example in our passage of one with great kingly abilities. He’s architected this great plan to organize upwards of 50,000 people.

In chapter 8, we are going to see Ezra get up, and though he is a priest, he has some prophetic gifting in preaching the Word of God, and it leads to a dramatic revival in Israel.

And here in chapter 7 we have Ezra and Joshua who are priests, who lead another 4000 priests in leading the people to God.

**Conclusion:** Are you in a place where God can use you? Are you consistent, available, teachable, living a holy life, and seeking to be productive? Are you plugged into the Body of Christ?