

Distinctions and Misconceptions

1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 13:1-3

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- Three talented friends from College and Seminary days
- The Distinctions between a Spiritual Gift and a Natural Talent
 - Natural talent given at birth—part of our DNA
 - Spiritual gift is a “God-given, special ability for service” given at the new birth.

Distinctions and Misconceptions about Spiritual Gifts

A. Three Distinctions

1. Spiritual gifts to be distinguished from Areas of Service.

- 1 Corinthians 12:4-5-- *“There are diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”*

a. Jesus Christ determines the sphere or ministry in which the gift is used.

b. Illustration: Peter’s assignment by Jesus—John 21:15-17

- John 21:15-17-- *“So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’”*

2. Spiritual gifts to be distinguished from Spiritual Power. 12:6

- 1 Corinthians 12:6-- *“And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”* There are *“diversities of activities.”*

a. God provides the energy to make the gifts effective.

b. Variable results in effectiveness

c. Causes of lack of effectiveness

- 1) “Sin” in your life?
- 2) God’s choice

d. Temptation to rely upon successful formulas and the danger of adopting models of a “successful church” and exporting it.

e. Possibility of using our gifts under fleshly, carnal power

3. Spiritual gifts to be distinguished from Fruit of the Spirit

a. Having a spiritual gift does not make a person “godly”.

b. The “fruit of the Spirit”—Galatians 5:22-23

- Galatians 5:22-23-- *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”*

c. Contrast between the “fruit” and the “gifts” of the Spirit

d. Love and Godliness are essential for effective exercising of gifts. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; John 15

- 1 Corinthians 13:1-3-- *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”*

e. **Three Observations**

- 1) **The consecrated life does not increase effectiveness in areas where a person is not gifted.**
- 2) **The consecrated life does increase effectiveness of gift.**
- 3) **Exercising a gift without the fruit of the Spirit can damage and destroy a church.**

B. Two Misconceptions

1. **The lack of a spiritual gift negates our general responsibilities and roles as Christians.**
2. **The possession of a spiritual gift negates the need for preparation and hard work.**