

Earnestly Desire Spiritual Gifts

2. How Do I Receive And Share Spiritual Gifts?

1 Corinthians 12-14

Introduction

A story from my grandfather's life.

Why are spiritual gifts so important? (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

It's because we are called to do good for others, and spiritual gifts are one way to do this.

Here's an example from church history — Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in 200 AD.

Christ's true disciples, having received grace from him, use it in his name for the benefit of the rest of men ... For some drive out demons with certainty and truth, so that often those who have themselves been cleansed from the evil spirits believe and are in the church, and some have foreknowledge of things to be, and visions and prophetic speech, and others cure the sick by the laying on of hands ... And why should I say more? It is not possible to tell the number of the gifts which the church throughout the whole world ... uses each day for the benefit of unbelievers. (edited for brevity and clarity, Ronald Kydd, Charismatic Gifts In The Early Church, p.44)

And here's another example from Acts 13:1-3.

How do I receive spiritual gifts? (1 Corinthians 14:1,13)

Some people believe you receive one or two gifts when you are first saved, that you will know what these gifts are by seeing what you enjoy and what bears fruit, and that you should focus on these gifts the rest of your life.

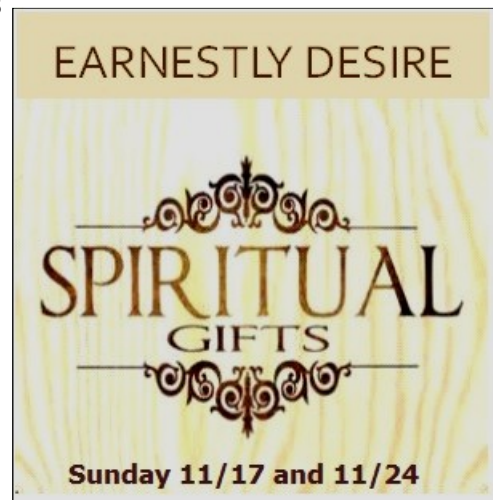
But that does not fit what Paul says in 1 Cor 14:1 and 13.

It's like God has given you an empty tool bag, and promises that as you desire and pray for tools, he will always put in your tool bag whatever tools you need for the ministry situation you are in.

How should we share spiritual gifts with each other? (1 Corinthians 12:7; Romans 12:6)

Gifts are for the benefit of other people, so share them in the way that brings most benefit (1 Cor 12:7).

Gifts come with varying levels of faith, so share them in a way that fits what faith you have (Rom 12:6).



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What questions did Sunday's teaching raise in your mind?

Many of us have been taught that God has given us 2 or 3 spiritual gifts, and that we should be content using what he's already given. But why then would Paul urge us to desire spiritual gifts (1 Cor 14:1) and to pray for spiritual gifts (1 Cor 14:13)? Do you agree that God gives believers different gifts in different situations to bless those around us?

Does it make sense that God gives you an empty tool bag, and promises that as you earnestly desire and pray he will put in that tool bag whatever tools you need to build the people around you at that time? Why or why not?

What holds you back from earnestly desiring spiritual gifts, or praying for spiritual gifts? Has the teaching from these two weeks stirred your interest in spiritual gifts, or lessened your interest? Why?

What have you experienced as you earnestly desired and prayed for spiritual gifts? What further questions were raised?

Maybe take time to pray for spiritual gifts for this coming Sunday, for work tomorrow, or even for right now in your group.

