

Spiritual Gifts: *Overview*

Daniel Borchers

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Unity in Diversity

God has certainly blessed us today. The new robes for the Voices of Praise are beautiful, but I've always thought their singing was inspired. Thank you, Sonny, Linda and Mike for your special music.

Today I am speaking to *you* – not the person next to you, or your spouse or your neighbor – *you!* I have two important questions to ask you:

1. Do you want to know God better and love Him more?
2. Do you want to know your brothers and sisters in Christ better and love them more?

Last year, we were all given a spiritual gift analysis to complete in order to discover which spiritual gifts God has given to us. If you have completed your analysis you have a good idea of what your spiritual gift mix is – that is, you will know the areas in which you have been gifted by God.

Over the coming weeks and months the Spiritual Gifts Committee – Jon, Ginnie, Paul and myself – will discuss the subject of spiritual gifts. As the weeks go by, the Spiritual Gifts Committee will talk with you about each of these 18 spiritual gifts. Next week, Jon will discuss the spiritual gift analysis itself, collect any results which haven't been turned in, and answer any questions you might have. Today, I am providing an overview of this subject.

The body of Christ is one body with many parts. We are given one Spirit with many gifts. You have heard it all before, but, did you know, you ain't heard nothing yet!

Completeness in Him

As members of Christ's New Life Community Fellowship, let me begin with Jesus Christ. You and I find our *completeness* in Him.

Colossians 2:9-10 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power.

Point One. We are complete in Jesus Christ because Jesus is the great I AM. Jesus is whatever we need Him to be whenever and wherever we need Him. Which is all the time and in every place. Jesus is our loving Brother, our divine Healer, our righteous Intercessor, our best Friend. Jesus gives us "every good and perfect gift." Jesus gives us His peace, His joy, His love. Jesus asks us to come to Him and He will give us His rest in all situations and in every circumstance. Jesus *is* the great I AM and *in Him* we lack for nothing.

But Jesus has also called *us* to be *like* Him, to "put on the mind of Christ," to emulate Him. Jesus calls us the light of the world and the salt of the earth. He is *our* Peace, yet *we* are peacemakers.

Jesus lives in us so that the light of Jesus may shine in us and through us to others. And Jesus has given each of us a primary spiritual gift which reflects a divine characteristic of our Creator. Some of these spiritual gifts are listed in Romans 12 and 1st Corinthians 12. *Each* of these gifts expresses a *part* of the divine character of Jesus Christ who perfectly embodies them in their fullness

Point Two. By exercising our spiritual gifts collectively we bring completeness to the body of Christ. *We* are complete in Jesus and the *Church* is complete in His gifts expressed through us. God has given us gifts – but our fellowship needs *all* the gifts – for *completeness*. All the gifts *combined* in our fellowship enable us to experience God in His entirety.

(Overhead One) Picture a wheel with Jesus Christ at the hub. The spokes of the wheel are the spiritual gifts Jesus gives us. Notice – *all* the spokes of the wheel lead *from* Jesus Christ *to* us. All the gifts come from Jesus. Picture yourself on the rim of the wheel located at one of those gifts. You see Jesus from the perspective of your gift. *That* is how you relate to Jesus. You may not even see any of the other spokes of the wheel, you may not notice the other gifts in the church. If you do see the other spokes or recognize the other gifts, you may not think they are as important as your spoke, your gift. But Jesus has given each of those gifts to your brothers and sisters. They are all equally important to the body of Christ. And they are all an expression of the character of Jesus Christ.

Prophecy	– 1 st Corinthians 14:1
Service	– Galatians 5:13
Teaching	– Colossians 1:28
Exhortation	– Hebrews 3:13
Giving	– Luke 6:38
Leadership	– 1 st Timothy 3:4
Mercy	– Colossians 3:12

You Have a Gift – Use It

Point Three. Every person here has a set of spiritual gifts. God wants you to use them.

Each of us has a spiritual gift and *knowing* our gift can *liberate* us and *empower* us to *become* the chosen vessel God desires of us. We have the opportunity to see God and to see each other with *new* eyes. Each of us has a chance to *share* in the ministry of this fellowship.

1st Peter 4:10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. [Everyone has a gift. Employ it. Serve one another.]

If you have a gift – and you *do* – use it. Employ it. Help someone with your gift. You will be perfected and you will be fulfilled. Yes, I'm talking to *you*!

God gave you a gift. *Who? God!* Why? He loves you and He wants you to share in His ministry. Will you use the gifts God has given you? Do not be ashamed of the gifts He gave you. Do not despise those gifts. Rather, *thank* Him! You have been truly blessed.

Point Four. We all connect with God in a different way. Our own *personal relationship* with God is just that – a *personal* relationship: intimate, individual and unique.

1st Corinthians 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Point Five. Denying certain gifts limits God's involvement in our lives and in His church. If we do not employ the gifts God has given us, then the body of Christ is incomplete and the wheel does not move as well as it could because some of its spokes are missing. The ride becomes bumpy instead of smooth.

Romans 12:6-8 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Point Six. Love is the foundation and the wellspring of our gifts.

Paul gives a list of spiritual gifts in 1st Corinthians chapter 12. He ends that chapter with these words (verse 31): But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way. The more excellent way he reveals is discussed in the next chapter – love.

(Overhead Two) Let's look at this overhead on the flow of spiritual gifts. 1. **Love** is the foundation and motivating force behind all the gifts. 2. God gives spiritual **gifts** to Christians according to His will. 3. Christians become part of, or establish, **ministries** to employ those gifts. 4. The gifts are used in **service** to the body of Christ.

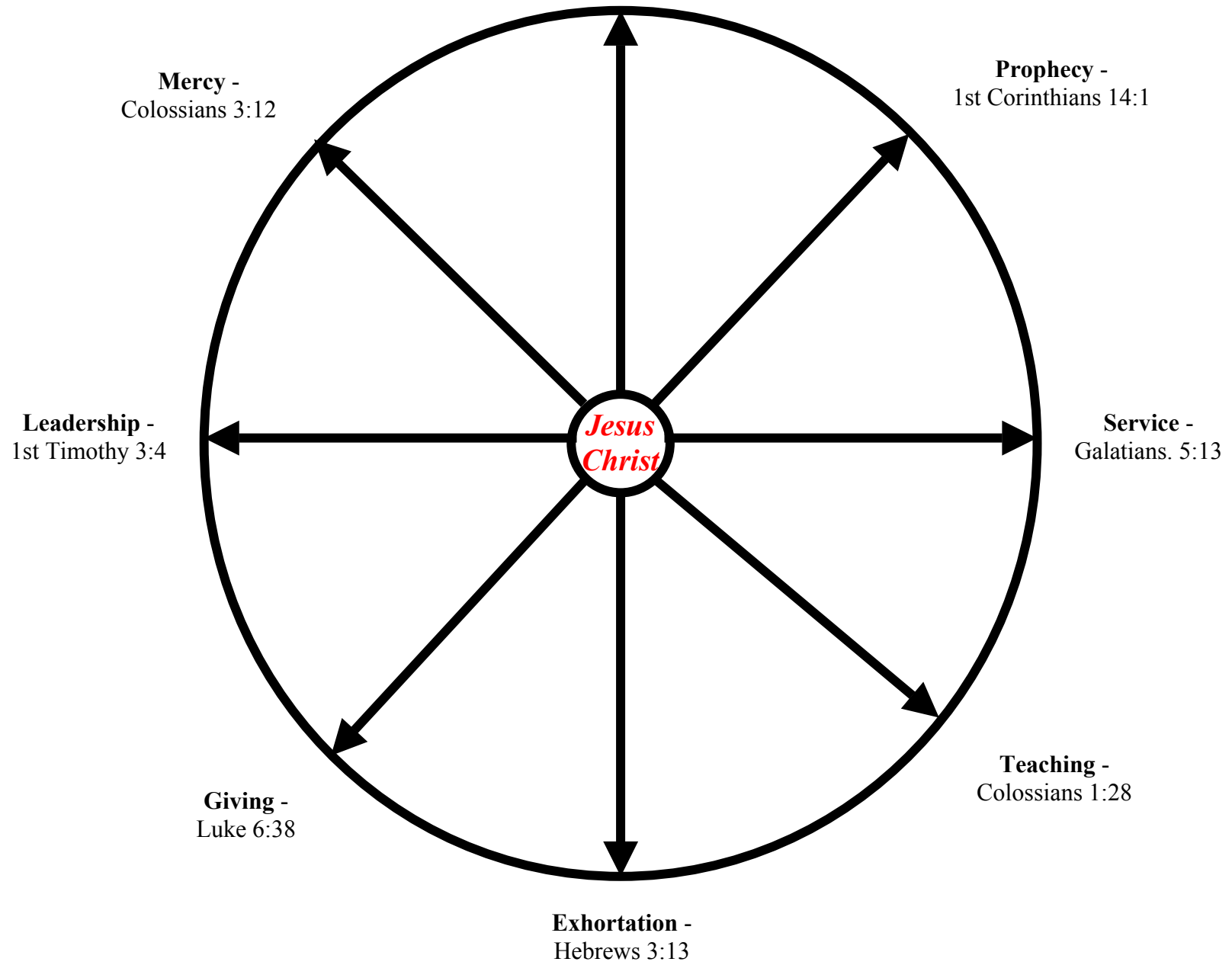
Love should be the motivation for and the foundation of *everything* that we do. When we are *anchored* in Christ, with love as the foundation, *then* we can exercise our gifts. As we *exercise* our gifts in love we establish or become involved in various *ministries*. Those ministries *serve* the body of Christ.

Precious Moments

Brethren, we have a precious opportunity in these coming weeks and months to know God in a more intimate way, and to know and understand ourselves and one another in a special way. By understanding the different gifts God has given us, we *will* see each other with *new eyes* – with *God's eyes*!

May God give us spiritual eyes to see and spiritual ears to hear God's heart and may His heart beat in us.

Overhead One



Flow of Spiritual Gifts

