

Spiritual Gifts: *Prophecy & Mercy*

Daniel Borchers

October 13, 2001

Two Sides of the Same Coin of Character

Last month, in my overview of spiritual gifts, I encouraged you to *identify* and *visualize* the spiritual gifts that God has given you – and given to your brothers and sisters.

By the way, how many of you remember what your gifts are based on the spiritual gift analysis you took? Can I see your hands? If you don't remember, please feel free to ask me after services and I'll look it up for you. How many of you haven't done the analysis yet? Please see me after services as well.

But why should *we* learn about *other* people's gifts? Here's just one of many reasons: In order to see our brothers and sisters through God's eyes, and to know God better.

I am indebted to Bruce Henry, who loaned me a series of tapes by Charles Stanley on spiritual gifts. Bruce told me that I have the gift of prophecy. After hearing the tapes, my wife, Eileen, said the same thing. I listened to the tapes, and I agree. Bruce also said that Ed Neil has the gift of mercy – and he is correct.

This truth explains so much. Last year Ed and I had a very heated discussion over some controversial social issues. We left in total disagreement, but we remained loving brothers. I wish that Ed Neal was here today because I'd like him to hear my public profession of love for him. I am confident of his love for me and am sure he knows of my love for him.

As I've learned, the gifts of prophecy and mercy are *opposing* gifts, that is, they view God and situations from *opposite* perspectives. As such, they represent the *yin* and *yang* of Christian experience. Don't we all go through life trying to understand and follow God's will in a particular situation and come up against *competing* principles? *Which* principle do we apply *when* and *how*?

So it is with prophecy and mercy. They are two sides of the same coin. The prophet speaks the truth while mercy extends grace. Often prophecy and mercy see situations from *opposite* perspectives. The prophet recognizes that *truth* is the path to freedom, that truth is essential to *being* free. The gift of mercy sees that love is the "more excellent way" and often wants to *protect* the individual *from* the truth. However, both truth and mercy should be expressed in love.

Which principle do we apply *when* and *how*? Is this the right time to express truth or to exhibit mercy? Scriptures are replete with indications that there is a time and a place for each. For instance ...

Jude 22-23

And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

Both truth and mercy are *essential*. Each has their own time and place. We sing that Jesus is both "the expression of God's love" and "His righteousness revealed." These scriptures speak of truth and mercy walking hand-in-hand.

Proverbs 3:3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Psalm 85:10 Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, full of grace and truth.

We sing the song, “Shine, Jesus, Shine,” asking God to “flood the nations with grace and mercy” AND “set us free by the truth” AND “search me, try me, consume all my darkness.”

Do you, brethren, want to know and understand yourself better? To know your brothers and sisters better? Learning what *your* gift is – and what *their* gift is – can make all the difference!

For instance, Ed prayed at a recent Bible study and everything I heard him say spoke to the truth that Ed has the gift of mercy. Ed spoke of our merciful Father and sought mercy for others and asked for forgiveness for any offenses he had committed. His whole prayer was merciful. If I had never met Ed before, that one prayer alone would have revealed to me his gift of mercy.

Now that I understand my gift and Ed’s gift I can better appreciate who he is as my brother and build a better relationship with him. And I have a greater insight into the character of God.

So, as we present these gifts to you, I hope that you appreciate the tremendous blessing those gifts are – to you, to others, to this congregation, and to the body of Christ.