

HELPS AND GIVING
SPIRITUAL GIFTS PART 7
1206
DR. ROGER BARRIER

A young Christian in Seattle, Washington, saw a man handing out tracts in a busy, downtown area. The distributor had a satchel full of tracts which he gave out rapidly without stopping to engage in conversation. *Why doesn't he talk with someone?* thought the observing Christian. *"His method is so cold and impersonal."*

Finally, unable to stand it any longer, the young Christian approached the distributor from behind. Turning him around by his collar and looking directly into his face, he asked, "Why don't you speak to someone about the Savior?"

The fellow blurted out "Ugh - ugh - ugh!" He couldn't speak. He was a mute. But he was doing what he could.

The gifts can be divided into two major categories; speaking and serving.

READ 1 PETER 4:11: Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister serve, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth." Many believers, who lack speaking gifts, have serving gifts.

REVIEW GIFTS

REACHING PEOPLE: Apostleship-Evangelism-Miracles-Healing-Mercy

MATURING CHRISTIANS: Prophecy-Teaching-Wisdom-Knowledge-Encouragement-Helps-Giving-FUTURE SERMONS: Distinguishing Between Spirits-Faith-Tongues-Interpreting Tongues

ORGANIZING THE CHURCH TO REACH PEOPLE AND TO MATURE CHRISTIANS: Administration-Leadership-Pastoring

HELPS

READ ROMANS 12:7; AND 1 CORINTHIANS 12:28.

Two words in the original text of Scripture refer to the gift of ministering: *diakonia* in Romans 12:7 and *antilempsis* in 1 Corinthians 12:28.

All gifts are service, but out of all of these gifts there is one that is very specialized in terms of service. In Acts 20:35 the same Greek word is translated "support." It is a supporting gift, a helping gift. The word *helps* literally means "to take a burden off of someone else and place it on yourself".

DEFINITION OF THE GIFT OF HELPS

The gift of helps is a special God-given gift for meeting the practical needs of people.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Paul gathered about him a full team of workers without whom he could not possibly have carried on his great ministry. Luke, the beloved physician, must have been a valuable assistant, especially at the time of beatings, stoning, and other privations. Luke often lists others who exercised the gift of helps (Acts 20:4). Like Dorcas. READ ACTS 9:36-43.

In Acts 9:39 the weeping women are referred to as "all the widows", which leads us to conclude that Dorcas had a regular ministry with women, particularly those whose husbands had died. Possibly she cared for older women who were not able to care for themselves. Dorcas had the gift of ministering or helps.

The idea seems to be "Don't talk about it, do it." And perhaps those who possess this gift are marked by a less-talk-more-action style of service to others and, at the same time, to Christ.

POTENTIAL OUTLETS FOR THE EXERCISE OF THE GIFT OF HELPS SEEM UNLIMITED.

Preparing meals for God's servants is certainly a ministry of helps. How many godly women, like Martha, have labored out of love in the kitchen so that the resultant dinner could further the outreach of God's Word?

Office volunteers, stuffing bulletins

In a sense, the ministry of private intercession is a gift of helps.

Paul urged the Corinthians "Ye also helping together by prayer for us" (2 CORINTHIANS 1:11).

Who can ever measure, this side of eternity, how much blessing has anointed the public ministries of pastors and missionaries as a result of the prayer help of the saints - sometimes bedridden, insignificant, uneducated or poor - who stood faithfully in the quiet of their own rooms?

VERY FEW CULTS GROW UP AROUND PEOPLE WHO EXERCISE THE GIFT OF HELPS.

The ultimate end of helps is the edification of others. Christian workers, released from temporal tasks, can concentrate more on their spiritual priorities.

Seems often to be those in the church who don't realize that they have a gift say, "oh I wish that I had a gift."
(The word here is availability)

Don Young died. Marilyn Tolson cleaning up kitchen when I arrived.

Saw her in church office Wednesday. "Do you have the gift of helps?"

Puzzled look: "I don't know . . . But if there is something you need help with, let me know. I will be glad to help you."

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF HELPS

- * An alertness to detect and meet needs
- * An unselfish nature which likes to do tasks which will help others
- * A bent toward enjoying practical service more than theoretical concepts
- * A willingness to do little jobs without any credit just for the joy of doing them and knowing they are a help to someone
- * A motivation to meet needs quickly produces a frustration over long range goals
- * A willingness to use personal funds to avoid delays
- * An over involvement in many activities and an inability to say "no"
- * A disregard for personal needs may extend to family needs
- * A quickness in meeting needs may interfere with spiritual lessons which God is trying to teach
- * A willingness to do jobs (particularly in the church) which will allow the leadership gifts to be enhanced

"**A Martha**," said to have been written by an unknown girl in 1928.

DESCRIBE MARY AND MARTHA

"Lord of all pots and pans and things;
Since I've no time to be
A saint by doing lovely things,
Or watching late with Thee,
Or dreaming in the dawnlight,
Or storming heaven's gates,
Make me a saint by getting meals,
And washing up the plates.

"Although I must have Martha's hands,
I have a Mary mind;
And when I black the boots,
Thy sandals, Lord I find.
I think of how they trod the earth,
What time I scrub the floor;
Accept this meditation, Lord,
I haven't time for more.

"Warm all the kitchen with Thy love,
And light it with Thy peace;
Forgive me all my worrying,
And make all grumbling cease.
Thou who didst love to give men food,
In room, or by the sea,
Accept this service that I do -
I do it unto Thee."

GIVING

A man on a hike came to a steep but short incline. When he lamented that it was too high for him to climb, his companion snatched the protester's wallet from his pocket and tossed it atop the rise. In a flash the man scrambled up the incline to retrieve his wallet.
Money is a touchy subject.

A man was about to be baptized in a river. Suddenly he ran back out of the water explaining that he had forgotten to give his wallet to his wife. The preacher called, "Come on back with the wallet. I've got too many unbaptized pocketbooks in my congregation now".
Money is a touchy subject. Someone said that the most sensitive nerve in the human body is the one that leads to the pocketbook.

Let's talk about the gift of giving.

READ ROMANS 12:8 "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity."

Simplicity, an interesting word, has been translated many ways. Literally, it means *without folds*--as a piece of cloth unfolded--and is rendered *simplicity, singleness of mind, mental honesty, without pretense*.
When one gives from such openness of heart, one donates freely.
No ulterior motive will ruffle the cloth of his mind to make a fold or two in it. The gift of giving permits no alloy of self-seeking in the coin of our gift.

DEFINITION OF THE GIFT OF GIVING

The gift of giving is the ability to give your material goods and financial resources with joy and eagerness, without mixed motives for personal benefit.

Two characteristics of a person who has the gift of giving are: he has resources; he delights in sharing those resources.

ALL ARE CALLED UPON BY THE LORD TO GIVE. WE SHOULDN'T TRY TO SQUEEZE OUT OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY SIMPLY BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE THE GIFT OF GIVING.

Church of 1,000 in Waco did a survey and found out that they had 3 who had the gift of giving
-1 adult and 2 college students.

Preacher to farmer: "If you had \$10,000,000 would you give half of it to the Lord?" "Yes."
"If you had 10,000 acres would you give half of them to the Lord." "Yes."
"If you had two pigs . . ." "Wait a minute, that's not fair; you know I have two pigs."

We hear people all the time remark: "Well, if I had a million dollars then I'd do this and that and the other for God..." Maybe you would and maybe you wouldn't.
The real question is not, what will we do if we have a million dollars. The real question is what are we doing with the ten in our pocket.

A person who does not have the gift of giving is not released from giving. He cannot say, "Great--never again must I put anything on the offering plate, nor give to my church or missionaries".
On the contrary, all--with or without the gift of giving--are to give.

In fact, the minimal amount each believer should give is taught in the Bible: the tithe (10%) Certainly no one failing to give a tithe to the Lord's work could be considered by any stretch of the imagination to be exercising the gift of giving. In fact, he is really robbing God (Mal. 3:8-10).

Some object to tithing. They claim it is legalistic, comes from Judaism, and was annulled by the cross. Such objectors fall into two categories: those with bad motives and those with good motives. Those with wrong motives oppose tithing because they wish to escape the duty of giving 10% of their income. Free from the law of tithing, they give little or nothing. Their desire to escape the legalism of tithing is just a cover-up for covetousness.

Those who object to tithe-teaching from good motive fear that such instruction may lull people into thinking that when they have given a tenth they have done all God requires in the area of financial stewardship. They are concerned lest emphasis on tithing lead people to selfishly regard the 90% remaining as their own. This undercuts the glorious doctrine of stewardship that views everything we have as God's, not just 10%.

To allay such fears, it should be pointed out that the tithe is a beginning point for giving. If a person under law was required to give 10%, should not those under grace give gladly and gratefully above and beyond the legal tithe?

The claim that tithing is legalistic has its problems, for Abraham and Jacob spoke of the tithe centuries before Moses' law was given. Because the tithe is mentioned from Genesis to Malachi, would not Paul's readers have a pretty good idea of what minimum to give?

We are all to give sacrificially. We are to give as we have prospered.

We must learn to give systematically. We must begin teaching our children right now. If you don't teach them, no one else will. We need to teach them that giving to God's work is important. It's a great work.

In Dallas every October they have a State Fair. Great midway. Everything costs.

Popcorn - 50c

Peanuts - 50c

Merry-Go-Round - 75c

Roller Coaster - \$1.00

If you spend all Saturday evening - the whole midway costs \$15 per child.

Then comes Sunday morning. Time to go to church. The parent pulls out 25c and gives it to the child to put in the offering plate!

That shows the child - big business is at the midway. Little business is at the church. The child looks at the 25c. "The bag of peanuts I bought yesterday cost 25c. Midway is big business - the church is just peanuts!"

Oh, that ought not to be so! We need to know that God's business is eternally more important than any Midway or worldly thing!

"Let every man lay upon the first day of the week as he has prospered."

Church offering envelopes are for everyone in the family. We ought to bring it every week - give once a month - then bring the empty envelope the other 3 weeks and write "tithe" on the outside to remind you that some of this week's salary is supporting God's work.

You need to start young. I hope your child has an envelope every Sunday! Pin it to the baby's bottom! I mean "let everyone of you lay up on the first day of the week as he has prospered."

God's work is the most important in this whole world.

THE GIFT OF GIVING IS NOT CONFINED TO THE RICH.

I don't believe that the gift of giving even relates to how much someone has. Don't in your thinking limit this gift to "rich" people.

Some people who don't have very much have the gift of giving away all they have. Other people who have a lot don't have the gift, whereas others who have a lot have the gift.

(1) Mary

READ JOHN 12:3-5: "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor"?

Now that is the gift of giving--magnanimous, knowing no bounds, with no thought of the absence of that possession once it has been given.

(2) The Macedonians

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 8:2: "Their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." They didn't have much, but they gave everything they had.

(3) The Philippians

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:18.

Some of the Philippians had the gift of giving. Paul tells them that they have given him too much. But that is how the gift works.

How frequently today people with minimal income want to give to every worthy cause the church undertakes! They show zeal in giving sacrificially.

THE GIFT OF GIVING RESULTS IN LIBERALITY.

GIVING IS TO BE SACRIFICIAL (Mark 12:41-44; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:8-10)

READ MARK 12:41-44

"Sat" and "Behold" are imperfect verbs in Greek. Jesus continued to sit there and to behold as people brought their offerings. He saw this widow put in her tiny offering.

A mite = 1/8 of a cent. She put in 1/4 of a penny. That wasn't even enough to buy lunch for a priest! What good was 1/4 of a cent going to do for anybody?

Yet Jesus Christ saw here a beautiful living illustration with which to teach His disciples! He called them together and pointed out that she had given more than anyone else!

The whole point of this is very simple - the real essence of giving is sacrifice. What does this passage teach us about tithing? Does this teach us to tithe? No. It teaches us to sacrifice - perhaps even to giving all that we have.

One night during a Billy Graham crusade in Madison Square Garden, a well-known under-world character walked in with four bodyguards, who sat two on each side of him. At offering time these men looked to their leader to see what to do. He said "This is on me, men". Then he pulled from his wallet a roll of \$100 bills. (Two members of the Billy Graham team sitting in the row behind reported, "The wad was thick enough to choke a cow".) The underworld character went through these \$100 bills till he came to a \$1 bill, which he put in the plate.

If this incident were not so lamentable, it would be laughable. The gift was deficient on two major counts. It didn't come from a regenerate heart, and it was not liberal by any stretch of the imagination. The gesture of bare tipping must not be confused with true generosity. Much so-called giving insults God because of its smallness in proportion to capacity to give.

Most American Christians have heard of R. G. LeTourneau, designer and manufacturer of heavy earth-moving equipment. His machinery transformed 5,000 acres of marshland into New York's Idlewild (now Kennedy) Airport, tore open the wilderness for the Alaskan Highway, made airstrips for the landing of the first Allied fighter planes on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, cleared the debris from bombed-out European cities after World War II. In the early years of his business, Le Tourneau went into partnership with God. "Because I believe that God wants businessmen as well as preachers to be His servants, I believe that a factory can be dedicated to His service as well as a church." In 1935 he irrevocably assigned over 90% of the company's profits to the LeTourneau Foundation, described as a "not-for-profit corporation whose income and capital can be used only for the cause of Christ".

WE MUST NOT GIVE CARELESSLY AND INDISCRIMINATELY, SCATTERING TO EVERY PERSON OR GROUP WHICH BEGS.

Rather, by investigation, we will see to it that legitimate needs are met. Donations will not flow in response to emotional or sentimental appeals, nor be granted foolishly, but will be based on careful inquiry.

Christmas beggar and child with full stomach--\$75.

This is why we have a benevolence committee.

Giving as a gift from the Holy Spirit is not a kind of socialistic use of possessions.

It does not say, "I have much; he has little; so I must create financial equality."

Socialism is not a real solution to economic ills because it is based on the false assumption that all members of society will work their best to give their surplus earnings to those who cannot meet their own needs.

Such a plan is utopian and unworkable.

The God-given talent of giving sees things differently: God has given me possessions in order that I may use them in His service. Spirit-filled giving is based on the needs of the people I know and live with. I do not indiscriminately scatter my possessions.

But they are God's gifts, and like other gifts they are instruments for a task. I am His steward.

THE REWARD TO THE GIVER IS THE ABILITY TO GIVE EVEN MORE.

Here is a deep secret of growth; just as an amoeba multiplies by dividing itself, everything that we share multiplies itself.

They're frugal people who have the ability to make money and use money for the glory of God. For such people, the promise of 2 Cor. 9:6-11 are ideally realized.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFT OF GIVING

- * A conviction that everything belongs to God and a calling to be a channel for God to pass on his resources
- * A capacity which can be used by God to amass financial resources
- * the ability to invest and to purchase wisely for the purpose of manifold giving
- * A quickness to assume the burden for meeting financial needs
- * A carefulness in the handling of personal financial matters
- * Personal frugality may appear to be stinginess
- * A desire to give quietly to effective projects or ministries
- * An enjoyment in meeting needs without the pressure of appeals

THANKS BE TO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT (2 Cor. 9:15)

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 9:15

When God gives grace, He does not reluctantly open a little finger and maintain a clenched fist full of gifts. I would tell you today that God's hands are nail-pierced hands and they are wide open. This fountain of grace is always pouring itself out with no limitation on heaven's side at all.