

**FULL-SPECTRUM MINISTRY**  
**1 Peter 4:10**

Well last week we finished our study in the book of Titus and that means it's time to start a new study. But before we pick a whole new book to study, I and the board have been thinking for a while now about taking some time to do a short topical series on the subject of spiritual gifts. But we won't get too far into the gifts stuff today because I want to explain why we are heading this direction in the first place. And to do that I want to take you re-explain a bit the overall vision or direction for us that I introduced when we were beginning Titus. If you were here, you should remember this fruit tree analogy.

**I. DEFINING THE VISION.**

Last year we spent most of the year in the book of Galatians. And in Galatians the emphasis was highly internal. It was on believing in and resting in Christ. The basic message of Galatians said, "It's not by works." Salvation is not by works. So we were really **rooted** in the gospel and saw the need to be grounded in the truth of God's Word. And that's a biblical principle for us. Unless we're rooted in the gospel and ground firmly in Him, we are swayed by every wind of doctrine and blown all over the place and won't bear good fruit. Roots ground the tree and grow the rest of the tree. But once a tree puts down roots, we should eventually bear fruit.

And so that's why we turned to the book of Titus. It was highly external and emphasized doing works – doing good deeds and being fruitful now that we are grounded in Christ. Our **theme verse** for Titus was 3:14 – "Our people must learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful." We want to be fruitful through doing good deeds and meeting pressing needs and that's the fruit of Titus.

The tree analogy reminds me of Colossians 2:6, "There as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted, and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with thankfulness." So because you have received Him and have been rooted in Him, you can now be built up and in your overflowing with thankfulness, your life will change.

This vision we are holding to right now with roots and fruit brings **balance**. To talk the talk and walk the walk. To be a hearer and a doer. The temptation for churches is to emphasize one or the other and be unbalanced. We can learn that from Jesus' critique of the churches of Revelation. One church was super sound in doctrine but He had to tell them to repent and do the deeds they did at first. They lost the heart behind the doctrine and the love for Jesus. Another church was super active and their works were greater and greater, but then they didn't pay close attention to their teaching so they were rebuked for that too. And we should know that Jesus is still very much aware of our church and we want to be balanced. I always think, "What if He critiqued our church like that?" My prayer is that He would examine us and say "Well done." To stay balanced like this requires us to examine ourselves and to be intentional about how we do things.

And so since we put so much time last year on the roots element, I want to spend more time on the fruit element this year. I want to continue on with that theme or bearing fruit through our good deeds. But some of you are probably sitting there, having finished Titus, and you've got this

question in your mind: **“What good deeds does God have for me to do?” Where do I go from here? What’s God’s will for me?”** And that’s a good question. And I want to help you answer that. So for the next few weeks I want to answer these questions as we are studying the subject of spiritual gifts. But before we do, let’s define what good deeds are.

## II. **DEFINING GOOD DEEDS.**

Paul used this term “good deeds” several times in Titus but he never really laid down a tight definition to what the deeds are. It’s been interesting to me the way he used the words “good deeds.” Sometimes the way Paul used the term was just to refer to our moral or ethical **behavior** – living righteously rather than living according to those sinful desires. But last week, we saw that a good deed for Titus was more than modeling purity in behavior – it was a **task**. He was to support Zenas and Apollos by making sure nothing was lacking for them. Meeting the pressing needs of Zenas and Apollos were a good deed for him and others who helped support them. And the definition I want to pursue is **a more task-oriented definition** of it. I was looking at a bunch of the different ways this word deed was used elsewhere and most of the time when you see it used in Scripture it usually pertains to a certain **work or duty or task**. I think a simple definition of the word “deed” would be **an assignment given to a servant by his master**.

❖ **Good deed – An assignment given to a servant by his master.**

God is our Master and when you know His love for you, you should get to this point where you want to serve Him out of love for Him.

The Greek word for deeds is the word **ergon**. It comes up incredibly often. 1 Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work (deeds) of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” We are to persevere and be continually about serving the Lord. Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works (ergon), and glorify your Father in heaven.” Ephesians 2:8-10 also says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For **we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**” Many times people memorize Ephesians 2:8-9 but not verse 10. Look at verse 10! Verse 10 gives us purpose in our lives not that we’re saved. We are His workmanship – His masterpieces that He is molding and shaping in Christ for a reason and the reason is to live for something new – glorifying Him through good works. And they aren’t just any works – they’re works that our God has prepared for us!

What are these good works? Well, when it comes to our good works, there’s a few responsibilities we need to keep in mind. We know we need to be wise about our **time** because as Ephesians 5 says, the days are evil and we want to make the most of our short time here on this earth. We can also use certain **talents** we have – everyone has natural God-given abilities we were born with and things that are naturally interesting to us and we’re good at them or enjoy them. We can use those interests and talents to develop relationships and make disciples that way. And then we can also use our **treasure**, our earthly wealth, to do good by giving towards things that are actually investments in God’s kingdom.

Time, talent and treasure are important topics. They are things that we are to be responsible with. But the main area we are concerned about, the specific works I want to talk about that God has prepared for us, that is incredibly vital to our fruitfulness is regarding our spiritual gifts.

**Acknowledgement of and exercise of spiritual gifts are critical for a healthy, life-giving church.** Part of understanding God's big will for your life will require a knowledge of your spiritual gifting. And throughout this study I hope to help give us some direction on discovering those gifts. Chances are you may have no idea or have never even heard of what a spiritual gift is. Hopefully by the end of the series you will know what one is and will be pursuing God for Him to reveal to you what yours are.

But if you will, please turn with if you will to our theme verse for this study in **1 Peter 4:10**. "As each one has received a spiritual gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." So, from this we can simply note a few things:

- Everyone who has trusted Christ has at least one spiritual gift.
- Secondly, we should be employing our gifts or putting them to use to serve one another.
- Thirdly, to do that, is to be a good steward of God's manifold grace. A steward is someone who has been put in charge of something or trusted with something by the owner of that something. **A steward is kind of like a manager.** Kind of like a ranch hand is for the ranch owner or an employee entrusted with their employer's stuff. Well, believers are to be good or wise managers of God's gifts and to use them to benefit others and bring Him glory. There's a parable about that in the gospels that we will go over soon – you want to use your talents and not just bury them in the ground until He comes back (Mt. 25:14-30). Wise stewards will please their Master by using that which has been entrusted to them.

Some of you are probably wondering what's with the bright color spectrum on the powerpoint slides and that's something that I'm really excited about. The colors comes from this verse in the word **manifold**. What do you think of when you think of the word manifold? Most of the guys probably think of this: an **exhaust header** and that wouldn't be a bad illustration to use. God's grace is multifaceted like a grace header.

❖ **Manifold = multi-faceted.**

God's grace sort of branches off and He gives us grace for so many things like a manifold. We have grace for salvation in Christ, grace for growing, grace for living, grace for in giftings. We have so many things we say we have by God's grace. God's gracious in many ways.

But the word is also used to refer to something that's **multicolored**. In the Greek translation of the OT (the Septuagint), it was used to describe something of various colors like Joseph's coat of many colors or Laban's goats who were speckled and spotted and striped. One man I trust said it's where we get our word for technicolor, which reminds us of a **rainbow**. And so here's why I think this is neat and decided to run with it. It is because **God has gifted us all in different ways. There is a variety of gifts and combinations of gifts and ministries and effects of those ministries.** We all have our own color that we wear and so when we're exercising our gifts we add our God-given color to the ministry rainbow as a whole in the local church and global Church We all have our colors and our colors make up this giant ministry rainbow. But when we aren't exercising our gifts, the rainbow is diminished because a color is missing. But we want to be a full spectrum rainbow. We want **full-spectrum ministry**.

But I do want to make this statement: if you feel like you're not adding to the rainbow right now, don't beat yourself up and feel like you're under some pressure now or condemned or something. The whole reason we're doing this study is to help you understand what gifts are and how to go about discovering them. What you need to do, now that you're aware, is just

pray about it. Pray and God will reveal your gifts to you in time. It took me years of growing in the Lord before I ever discovered my gift for preaching and teaching and that's because a believer usually has to have time to grow before God asks them to teach. So be patient with God and yourself. But pursue God and trust God with it, knowing He who began a good work in you will also complete it and He works in you both to will and work for His good pleasure. **Trust God and His timing but be pursuing.** If you're praying about it, He will reveal your gifts to you in time. Your job is to walk with Him and take advantage of the opportunities you think He would have you get involved in and when you do that, you will discover it. Don't expect to know your gift before you have an assignment too. It's through the assignments we're given that we begin to realize what we're gifted in.

Now let's get into the part about defining a spiritual gift.

### III. **DEFINING SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**

Now let's begin defining what a spiritual gift is. If you have no idea what I'm talking about when I use the word spiritual gifts, know that God has given us different things like spiritual wisdom, knowledge, faith, teaching, giving, mercy, and administration. And what I did in preparation for this short series is I just read through all of the major texts on spiritual gifts and began to write down several **observations** and arranged them in a somewhat logical order.

#### 1. **Spiritual gifts are the manifested power of the Holy Spirit working through a believer for the purpose of carrying out a divine assignment. (1 Cor. 12:7)**

The key word for defining a spiritual gift is the word **manifestation** and the key verse for where I got that definition is found in 1 Corinthians 12:7, which says, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." A spiritual gift is the **manifestation** of the Spirit of God, the third member of the Trinity who lives and dwells in us. A manifestation is like saying it's a **disclosure** or **revealing** of God. So when someone is exercising their gift, this is really neat to think about, **you're seeing God at work through them. God is being revealed through them.** And sometimes it's quite obvious. You know it's God at work in them because it's a total change from who they used to be or do. Someone who used to be a hateful and selfish and a lone-wolf person in town, might have the gift of mercy or giving and become this people-loving person who is so generous. A person who previously couldn't stand reading and the last place they wanted to ever be was standing up in front of people talking is now a pastor or teacher in church who loves reading God's Word. I say that because I've experienced it.

When a believer exercises their spiritual gift, it is not just that the believer is doing something *for* God by the aid of the Holy Spirit or by his own natural gifting, but the Holy Spirit is manifesting Himself through the believer – actually working through the believer.<sup>1</sup> It is the Spirit of God doing something through the believer that the believer cannot do on his own. It was the same way with the inward fruit of the Spirit – like love, joy, peace, patience, etc – those are the Spirit's fruit, not our fruit. Spiritual gifts are the same way – they are His gifts, but seen mainly through outward service rather than inward character.

Notice though, the following verses of 1 Peter 4:11-12 – "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Gifts are something we exercise in His strength. We serve in His strength, and a lot of times He comes through in our natural weaknesses. God gets the glory that way. So when seeking to know your spiritual gifts,

**don't write off something that you are afraid of doing because you feel weak in that area. That might be exactly where God has gifted you and will give Him the most glory.**

In the Christian life, if you think you can do something on your own, you won't do much good. But it's **when you know you can't do something on your own, and you depend on God, that's when you do it because it is Him doing it through you.** God gets all the glory there and that's an amazing thing to experience. That is experiencing God. That's why spiritual gifts are so amazing – because you get to see God do something through you that you know you could never do on your own. Apart from Him, Jesus said, we can do nothing (John 15:5). We must depend on Him.

When we typically think of a servant, we think of someone who gets order from their master and then they leave their master and go do the task on their own. But with a Christian servant, it is not just the servant doing something for the Master – especially if spiritual gifts – the Master goes with them because He indwells them and He does His work through them according to His will. It is not just them doing something on their own in their own power. It's the Master doing His will through the willing servant. If you want to know your spiritual gift, you've got to be a willing and surrendered (obedient and available). You give up your will in exchange for His and you're open to what His will is. And you can do that because He is someone you can trust with your life. The cross explains His love and care for you. You know whatever His will is, it will be good and perfect for you.

**2. Spiritual gifts are a special privilege of living in the present Church age. (Eph. 4:7, 8, 11)**

Ephesians 4:7 says, "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men. And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.'" So basically, after Christ died for our sins and rose from the grave and eventually ascended back into heaven, He soon sent another member of the Trinity in His place, the Holy Spirit, which occurred on the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2. And this is why Jesus said to the disciples shortly before the cross that, "It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." And it's through the Holy Spirit's coming that they received power from on high and became His great witness. What this is saying is that He gave spiritual gifts to men like the apostles and those men actually became gifts to us men because through their gifting, we've all come to know Christ. These gifted men were and still are gifts to us. We're enjoying their gifts this morning, aren't we? Reading the Spirit inspired scripture of Peter.

So there was a historical point in time we can point back to when this whole spiritual gifts thing for believers actually began. Several times in the Bible, OT and NT, we see that Holy Spirit coming to and resting on certain individuals to help them achieve the purpose God wants to achieve through them – He comes and empowers them to do His will. But the thing about the OT was that the Holy Spirit came and went, but for NT believers, He comes and stays. He never leaves you or forsakes you. He permanently indwells the believers and the gifts are permanent, and are discovered as we grow. Pentecost was the beginning of a new ministry for the Holy Spirit and He began to operate differently in men's lives than He ever had before this. It is a privilege to live when we do.

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God came in a dramatic display with wind and fiery tongues and **the apostles received power to do God's will**. We could say that on that day, the disciples became apostles. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and preached that day and 3,000 people were saved. That never would've happened without the Holy Spirit, even if he had preached the same message one day earlier. The power wasn't Peter's. It was the Spirit of God's. It was the work of God in them and through them that the Church got it's start. That's why some call the book of Acts the Acts of the Holy Spirit. You could even consider the men mentioned here as Christ's gifted men as the gifts to the Church.

So when you discover your spiritual gift and are exercising it, you are partaking of this incredible ministry of the Spirit that hasn't always been made available to everyone. It is an incredible privilege to be living in the Church age in which we do. Like the apostles, God has put His Spirit in us to do His will and His purpose. But we must be open and available. And we must pray that God would give us clarity on what our gifts are. **My application for us this morning is that we just start praying about our gifts** – ask God to reveal His gifts to you and ask for opportunities to discover those gifts through. And for those of you who know what your gifts are, pray that God would rekindle afresh the gift of God within you and ask Him for opportunities to use those gifts.

❖ **Pray for an awareness of your gifts and the opportunities to exercise them.**

That's one of the things the board wants to focus on this year is equipping and helping others to get involved and discover their gifts and begin to find ownership in a ministry here at CBC. We want a full spectrum ministry at Chadron Berean. If there's an area of service that you enjoy or would like to see happening but don't see happening, that you firmly believe God has laid on your heart, come present that to us at one of the board meetings. We want to help. We want to see God work through people exercising their gifts and adding their colors to this multifaceted rainbow. I'll be honest with you. While you're praying would you pray about a couple things? I personally have the desire to see a storehouse ministry start up through our church. I have folks come into my office all the time looking for help and we don't hand out money anymore but I would love to be offering them something in terms of support like a food pantry ministry. We have several areas where you can get involved: on the worship team or media team or teaching. My wife is gearing up to start a hospitality team that focuses on welcoming people to the church. Here's a big one for me that expects great things from God: pray about some of the local towns around here. There's a few around here who are in desperate need of a Bible teaching church. What if God were to raise up Bible study leaders and teachers from this church that God might use to plant another church in a nearby town so they don't have to drive as far and can reach their local community with? Every community needs a Bible church presence. How amazing would that be? Will you pray about that with me consistently?

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology Vol. 6 – Pneumatology: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publication, 1948, 1976), pg. 216.