

Gifts, Strengths and Calling

What are they? What are the differences? How do I know I have them? What do I do now?

March 11, 2018

Primary Points

The Bible speaks of God's calling as having more to do with our response to his merciful summons than a specific vocation or function.

Primary Points

The Bible speaks of God's will as having more to do with becoming mature and loving others than specific choices or direction.

Primary Points

The Bible speaks of God's giftings as having more to do with the diversity of his loving expressions than specific gifts, roles or functions.

God's Calling

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

¹ Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, ² To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: ³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 (NIV)

⁴ I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—⁶ God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 (NIV)

⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸ He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 (NIV)

Observations

- God's calling in almost every instance in scripture indicates an invitation or summons by a higher authority – a patron/benefactor relationship.
- Vocational calling into ministry is not a Pauline idea.
 - Paul's calling to be an apostle to the gentiles was a personal urgency not a job title.

¹⁷ Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you. This is my rule for all the churches. ¹⁸ For instance, a man who was circumcised before he became a believer should not try to reverse it. And the man who was uncircumcised when he became a believer should not be circumcised now.

1 Corinthians 7:17-24 (NLT)

¹⁹ For it makes no difference whether or not a man has been circumcised. The important thing is to keep God's commandments. ²⁰ Yes, each of you should remain as you were when God called you. ²¹ Are you a slave? Don't let that worry you—but if you get a chance to be free, take it.

1 Corinthians 7:17-24 (NLT)

²² And remember, if you were a slave when the Lord called you, you are now free in the Lord. And if you were free when the Lord called you, you are now a slave of Christ. ²³ God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world. ²⁴ Each of you, dear brothers and sisters, should remain as you were when God first called you.

1 Corinthians 7:17-24 (NLT)

Observations

- Your calling has nothing to do with what you do, who you are or the situation you are in.
- God's calling on your life sanctifies the situation you are in (holy ground).

Functioning In The Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1-13

Romans 12:1-8

Ephesians 4:

¹ Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us....

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. ⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

1 Corinthians 12:1-13 (NLT)

⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:1-13 (NLT)

Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹ It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. ¹² The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ¹³ Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:1-13 (NLT)

Observations

- Spiritual gifts (charismata) are expressions of God grace (charis).
- The expressions (manifestations) of the Spirit (9 identified) is not an definitive list but a representation of the diversity of expressions that are released by God through the Spirit for the edification of the one body.

Observations

- Spiritual gifts are not given to us as a personal possession. They are God's way of expressing his manifold presence in the diversity of his gifts of grace to others.
- We serve as the mediators (priests) of God's grace that is given to the community and others. The gifts are always for the edification of others.
- The diversity of Spirit expressions will be the most observable reality of God's presence.

¹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:1-8 (NLT)

³ Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. ⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

Romans 12:1-8 (NLT)

⁶ In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷ If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Romans 12:1-8 (NLT)

Observations

- God's will for you life is that you glorify him by giving yourself away to others (love) as a living sacrifice.
- There is no expression that is more important than another – the worst thing you could do is try to be something that you aren't.
- Everyone will give themselves away differently and every expression is a valuable part of the whole.

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

Observations

- The five-fold ministry expressions are not specific vocational callings but functional callings of developing the diversity of expression into maturity and unity in Christ.

Closing Remarks

- Gift assessments affirm what we know and reveal what we don't.
- Functioning in the expressions of the Spirit are more about God's loving faithfulness to others than our capacity to function in the expressions.
- The most powerful way to discover your gifts is to begin giving your life away to others.