The Greater Spiritual Gifts

“Earnestly Desire The Greater Gifts”

Book 1 of 3 in The Complete Advanced Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts to Cause Spiritual Growth, by Rick David, an Evangelist and Author of FreeBibleStudy.org
Spiritual Gifts Are for Causing Spiritual Growth, Not Sensual

One of the biggest challenges we all face in life is discovering or finding the things at which we are good or exceptional, or as some say, “Our God-given talents”. Then, when we do find or discover those things, the second biggest challenge is whether or not we will use them for what God had intended.

Spiritual gifts are for spiritual use, not sensual. This is true concerning all of our God-given talents and abilities. They are for spiritual purposes. Are you using your God-given talents for spiritual or sensual purposes? Do you know all of your God-given abilities? When you complete this Bible Study on The Greater Spiritual Gifts (as well as the Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Spiritual Gifts, and the Bible Study on the Situational Spiritual Gifts), by faith, you will know the answer to these questions and a whole lot more. For example, God will help you to understand the exact meaning and multi-faceted purpose of every disciple’s life and calling, especially yours.
The Complete Advanced Bible Study on Spiritual Gifts to Cause Spiritual Growth, A Three Book Series

1. The Bible Study on the Greater Spiritual Gifts, “Earnestly Desire the Greater Gifts” (1 Cor 12:31).

2. The Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Spiritual Gifts, “We Have Gifts That Differ” (Ro 12:6).

Benefits, Goals and Objectives of This Study

1. Discover the spiritual gifts which God gave to you.
2. Understand how special and distinct your gifts are and how they make you necessary and valuable to other disciples, even to your own family.
3. Learn what God is trying to accomplish with your spiritual gifts, the goal in using them.
4. Gain a great sense of spirituality in everything that you do in life, especially in what you do for disciples and the churches, and in what you want them to do for you.
5. Learn to avoid causing sensual growth with your talents and abilities.
6. Consider if you can increase your abilities to cause even more spiritual growth in others.
7. Consider becoming a teacher, in some fitting way or context.
8. Examine your effectiveness in using your talents.
9. Stop or reverse the spiritual decline in the Christian church, its decline into the sensuality of the world, by properly using your gifts.
10. Learn the difference between the gift, gifts, baptism, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
11. Discover the three kinds or categories of gifts, the key differences between them, and the range of gifts available within each category.
12. Test yourself to see if you have a greater spiritual gift or could receive one, and more.

Cover Explanation

Spiritual talents are like gifts wrapped up in a box. They are given to us by someone else. Therefore, they are free. They cannot be earned. They cannot be bought. They are gifts. They must be opened or unwrapped by the recipient in order to discover what is inside. They must be accepted by the recipient and be put to good use in a fitting way. This is the nature of spiritual gifts.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

Thanks be to God, the giver of every good gift. I dedicate it to all of us who love the truth about spiritual gifts and the holy purpose which they serve.

About the Author

Greetings. My name is Pat “Rick” David Yanello. By God’s grace and power, He has called me to be an evangelist, a husband of one wife, a father of nine children (all from that same wife!), a publisher, a home schooling father, and more. I have authored several Bible studies that have been used by tens of thousands of people worldwide. I am truly blessed by God to establish FreeBibleStudy.org and FreeBibleSchool.org, and the core curriculum used therein. These websites have had millions of page hits. I was born and raised in Pennsylvania, but I have also lived in Texas and North Carolina. I have personally served in the spreading of the gospel in many communities throughout the United States, and in Kenya, Tanzania, and Mexico.

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What is the meaning of life?

What is the meaning and purpose of your own life? The answer to this question is somehow related to your own talents and abilities. One of the biggest challenges we all face in life is discovering or finding the things at which we are good or exceptional, or as some say, “Our God-given talents”. Then, when we do find or discover them, the second biggest challenge we face is whether or not we will use them for what God had intended.

As you ought to see in this lesson, Spiritual gifts are for spiritual use, not sensual. This is true concerning all of our God-given talents and abilities. They are for spiritual purposes. Are you using your God-given talents for spiritual or sensual purposes? Do you know the difference between the two? Do you know all of your God-given abilities?

As you carefully study the gifts of the Holy Spirit, God Himself will help you to understand, by faith, the exact meaning and multi-faceted purpose of every gift, and therefore each disciple’s life, especially your own life. Therefore, you will have a much better chance to more perfectly fulfill the whole will of God in your life. Your life will have more meaning and purpose. Yet, you will have more good work to do.

On the Purpose of the Gifts

“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.” (Now this expression, “He ascended,” what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk... they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (Ephesians 4:7-17, 19).
1. Every disciple can cause spiritual growth in others

For example, “To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (Eph 4:7). This means that Christ measured out to each disciple a favor from God in the form of a certain kind or amount of gift, a spiritual gift. So then, since every disciple has been graced with a holy talent from God, then, with his gift, every disciple can cause some kind or measure of spiritual growth in other disciples.

When you find it, don’t bury it!

When you discover one you gifts from God, you may not want it. Like the story of the unrighteous servant (Mt 25:14-30), you may be tempted to bury it. He did not use or develop his talent for the benefit of God or other disciples. You might be just as selfish about your own talents as well.

Now, there are many reasons why you may not want to use your gifts. Perhaps you are not yet skilled in using them or have not yet found an opportunity to do so. Perhaps you are afraid, lazy, or do not like the gift that you have received from God or the person or people whom you have to serve with it. The man who buried his talent had an unrighteous fear of God and also was lazy (Mt 25:24, 25). For this, God held him accountable and condemned him, since it kept him from using and causing growth with the one and only talent which God gave to him.

The Gifts Are For Spiritual Church Growth, Not Sensual

There are several passages in the New Covenant which relate to spiritual gifts (with spiritual meaning of God’s Spirit, His holy nature). However, there is one passage which reveals their overall meaning, purpose, and goal (Eph 4:7-19). Therefore, let us begin with this passage to help us to understand the big picture of what God is aiming to do with them. Then, when we do study a specific gift, we will not get as easily lost in the details of it or take it out of its overall context, use, or ultimate purpose in life.

Consider the context

Now, the subject or context of this passage is how God gave us spiritual gifts to cause spiritual, not sensual church growth. For example, as a result of using the “gifts” (Eph 4:8) of God to cause “the growth of the body” (Eph 4:16), we then are to “walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk... they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness” (Eph 4:7-17, 19). Therefore, spiritual gifts are designed to teach us how not to live in sensuality, which the Gentiles crave. For the opposite of spirituality is sensuality. And, as Jesus said, “sensuality” (Mk 7:22) is “evil” (Mk 7:23) and “defiles the man” (Mk 7:23). Are you beginning to understand and recognize who is spiritual or not? For many inaccurately define what it means to be a spiritual person. Next, consider three points from this context.

Note: In regards to one’s life and worship of God, to grow in spirituality, not in sensuality, I highly recommend two studies. The Bible Study on New Life, “Walk in Newness of Life” (Ro 6:3), and The Bible Study on “True Worshippers... For Such People the Father Seeks to Be His Worshippers” (Jn 4:23). These studies will help you to carefully examine the different parts of your life and worship to see if they are indeed spiritual or sensual.
Perhaps you are afraid of man. Maybe you do not like the gift that he gave to you. Perhaps you do not like the solemn responsibility which comes with it or the idea of being held accountable for something. You might just be rebellious at heart. But, whatever the sinful excuse, you must overcome all personal obstacles to become a good steward of the spiritual gifts which God gave to you. So examine yourself. Regarding your talents, do some self-analysis and act accordingly.

Consider the range of gifts

When I consider the three categories or kinds of gifts (the greater gifts, meaning the teaching gifts, the non-teaching gifts, and the situational gifts), when I consider the whole range of talents which God gives, I can see how men will be tempted to bury their talents.

For example, at one time, Jonah refused to use his preaching and teaching gift (a greater gift) to help people repent and be saved from God’s judgment. Both the priest and the Levite refused to exercise the gift of mercy (meaning compassion, a non-teaching gift) on the man who was robbed and left beaten and bleeding. Consider the son who decided to “cash out” of his father’s house, somehow taking an early inheritance, for his father was not yet dead. Then he went out from his father and wasted it on loose living, including sexual immorality (Lk 15:13, 30). And so we can see that even with one of the situational gifts, such as the gift of being a son, it can be buried for some sinful reason. What about parents, husbands, wives, daughters, mothers or fathers?

Be a good steward of it

Since God gave you a certain gift, not man, He Himself will hold you accountable for using it, not man. So, in the sight of God (not man, woman, or child), you must be a good steward of your gifts and talents and put them to good use in serving others. For example, “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pe 4:10). So, Peter confirmed that each disciple has a “special gift,” but also that each disciple must “employ it”. It does not work on its own. One must put it to work, as a good steward would do, whether he is paid for his work or not.

Your gift is “special” and unique

Among men, your gift is special and unique. Therefore, among men, including your own family, you yourself are special and unique. How many fathers does a son or daughter have? Does a country have more than one king? How many mothers does one child have? Can a mother be a father? Can a father be a mother? How many sons or daughters does a parent have? Can a son be his own father? Can a disciple be his own teacher? How many people would be willing to show compassion on you in your time of need? How many people have taught you the word of God, and that very accurately and thoroughly? How many evangelists have taught you about the three kinds or categories of gifts? Are you beginning to see how special are the gifts of God? I can see it. And when I remind myself of this, in the midst of my own challenging callings and giftings, such as in my own family and among my own relatives, and in my own church, or worldwide ministry, it gives me renewed and refreshed purpose.
Now, since Peter said, “Each one has received a special gift” (1 Pe 4:10), this means that it is unique or different from what most other disciples have received, especially in one’s own family. Each family member is so very special and unique to his family. This “special” nature of the “special gift” you have makes you more needed, valuable, and respectable to other disciples or family members, though they may not even honor you much for it.

But, what if you were not there with them? You see, you can contribute to their lives in a way in which they themselves cannot even contribute. Can a son be his own father? No one else can be you. This is the unique nature of your gift and valuable nature of your own life. Contrary to what some think, or what your family thinks of you, or what your church thinks of you, no one else can replace you; no one. This is by God’s good design. For example, “Each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor 12:7). So, God gave you a talent, not for your individual good, but for the “common good” of other disciples, especially your own family.

Remember, every disciple is called to attend church with a purpose to serve others, not only themselves (SEE He 10:24, 25). For he is to consider how to use his talent in such a way as to increase the love and good work of every disciple, including the love and good work of his own family, and if possible, even the love and good work of mankind. Therefore, we need to consider how to use our talents for the benefit of others. This is providing. This is providential.

2. Some disciples can cause a lot of spiritual growth in others

Even though every disciple can cause spiritual growth in others, since all disciples have spiritual gifts, some gifts can cause more spiritual growth than others. So, the edification power of the gifts, if you will, is not exactly the same.

For example, the teaching gifts have the potential to cause a lot of spiritual growth in disciples. The reason for this is that the teaching gifts were designed by God and given to men to specifically impart the will and word of God to men. It is their specialty. It is what makes them unique and different from all of the other gifts. For example, below, consider the five teaching gifts.

The five teaching gifts

“When He ascended on high... He gave gifts to men... And He gave some as apostles [a gift], and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers for... speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ” (Eph 4:8, 11, 15).
So, in the context of the gifts which God gave to men, he singled out and listed five of them which are for helping people “to grow up” spiritually through “speaking the truth,” meaning through teaching. Now, the five teaching gifts can also be called “the greater gifts” (1 Cor 12:31). The reason for this is that they have the greatest or largest potential to edify and grow up all disciples. This is why God said, “Earnestly desire the greater gifts” (1 Cor 12:31). They are greater in their ability edify disciples. This is why I myself call the teaching gifts the greater gifts. This is why I wrote this Bible study book about them, to inform you of them and to educate you on them. Then you can evaluate whether or not you yourself should: “Earnestly desire the greater gifts” (1 Cor 12:31), meaning one of the teaching gifts.

Consider their unique specialties

Now, God only “gave some” members these kinds of teaching gifts “for... speaking the truth”. So, only some disciples will be able to have or receive these special gifts. Indeed, as you should see in the self-test for the gift of apostle, some gifts are very, very exclusive in nature. For example, there was only one Moses. Likewise, there were only a certain amount of true apostles of Christ.

Now, the five teaching gifts (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher) are all different gifts with different responsibilities. Yet, they all have one thing in common. They all teach. For example, the apostles were teachers. Yet, like Moses and Jesus, they were also covenant bearers. So, in addition to teaching, their rare specialty was to be covenant bearers. The apostles have caused the most growth, and still do today since their words are written down in the New Testament for us to read and to learn, and thereby grow spiritually.

The prophets of Christ received direct revelation from God, audibly, for they heard God’s voice. They were forth telling to the disciples the direct revelation and will of God from heaven, like John did, as written down in the book of Revelation. In this way, they taught the disciples. So, the apostles were also prophets of Christ, as well as evangelists, and teachers. Yet, several of the books of the New Covenant were written by prophets who were just that, prophets, not apostles. So, today, these prophets are still causing a lot of growth.

Evangelists are teachers who go around from person to person, city to city, church to church, family to family, proclaiming the Christ and His teachings to them, to all, if possible. Timothy was called to do the work or exercise the gift of “evangelist” (2 Tim 4:5). And so Paul sent him around to the different churches to spread the teachings of Christ, and he also accompanied Paul on certain journeys or was with him in certain locations. So, the unique and valuable specialty or strength of the gift of evangelist is his ability to spread the will of God all around, in the world and also in and among many groups of disciples or churches. It is the work which God sent them out to do. It is the work which the Father sent Christ to do and His apostles, for they were evangelistic, going from town to town, preaching.

Pastors are called by God to teach one flock of disciples, meaning one church. The word pastor means shep-
And so, a shepherd cares for one church like a shepherd cares for one flock of sheep. They are like fathers to the whole family of a church. Indeed, as you will see in the pastor gift self-test, there are a lot of qualifications in the Scriptures one must satisfy to be called by God to pastor a church, even the requirement to be a father with believing children. And Peter was also a pastor, a shepherd among the disciples in Jerusalem (SEE 1 Pe 5:1-5). Finally, there are teachers who do not have any of the aforementioned sub-specialties, if you will. They simply teach, without the responsibility to be covenant bearers, without the responsibility to receive direct revelation of the will of God, without the responsibility to spread Christ’s truths in other churches or cities or families, and without the responsibility to rule over a flock. Yet, they are still teachers, but not pastors, not evangelists, not apostles, and not prophets.

Earnestly desire the ability to teach others

Now, since God said to: “Earnestly desire the greater gifts” (1 Cor 12:31), one has to start evaluating his teaching ability. You must consider your desire to teach. Is it great? If not, what should you do? How should you do it? Good news! This is why I wrote this Bible study book about the teaching gifts, to inform you about them. You can use it to carefully evaluate yourself and your desire and ability to teach the gospel. So that you can take a serious, extensive, and detailed look into this matter, I have included in this study self evaluation tests for each of the five teaching gifts.

For what mother should not teach her children about the gospel of Jesus Christ? What father should bury or neglect his calling and gift from God to personally teach his own children about Jesus (SEE Eph 6:4)? Do you wish to bear witness to your newest acquaintance about the good news which is found only in the name of Jesus Christ? If you have the ability to speak at all, if you are not mute, do you wish you could gain the courageous ability and confidence to speak the words and commandments of Christ to others? How will others know what Christ expects of men, all men, both kings and servants, rich men and poor men, young men and old men, saved men and unsaved men, good men and evil men?

It is a matter of becoming a mature Christian

Indeed, the Scriptures say that at some point in our Christian walk, and in some fitting way, we should all become teachers (SEE He 5:12). It is a matter of maturity or maturing in Christ. Yet, on the other hand, it is written that not many disciples should become teachers (Ja 3:1, 2), since it says we all stumble in what we say. And that if we do teach among disciples, in the church, in the assemblies, at the judgment, God will be very strict with us as compared to disciples who do not have this gift or use it among disciples.

Now, this stumbling of speech, which James talks about, does not at all mean a kind of mumbling or being slow of speech, like Moses was. For Moses was a great teacher of the words of the Lord. This is talking about making mistakes, knowingly or ignorantly sinning in what we are telling
others about the word of the Lord Jesus Christ. It means bearing false witness about Him in some key and essential aspect or written commandment. Yet, a teaching gift can cause the most spiritual growth in others. Will you risk it? Can you risk it? Should you risk it? It all depends on how entirely truthful you are towards the name and words of Jesus Christ. Do you want to cause the most spiritual growth in others? Only some gifts can do this.

3. All disciples must work properly to cause spiritual growth in each other

Just because every disciple has a spiritual gift, and therefore can cause spiritual church growth, this does not mean that every disciple is properly working to do so. Spiritual growth requires work. Now, usually, people will not grow in the spirit, unless someone, with his spiritual gift, is in some way, knowingly or not, trying to cause them to grow. For God has designed it to be this way.

For example, “the proper working of each individual part [a disciple and his gift], causes the growth of the body” (Eph 4:16), not the parts which are improperly working or failing to work at all. Broken, disjointed, or missing parts (disciples and their gifts) can stop or significantly slow the movement of any body toward good growth. Even more, not all growth is good growth. For example, some disciples are using their gifts to cause growth which is sensual in nature. This is not healthy, because it is not holy, meaning sacred, or spiritual.

Therefore, Examine your ability to work properly (effectively)

Are you working? Is your part working? Are you playing your part? How are you causing spiritual growth in disciples with your gift? Are you purposely and intentionally looking to cause holy growth in certain disciples with your talent? What kind of growth are you causing among disciples, or even among your own family or relatives? Is it sensual or spiritual, holy or unholy, sacred or secular?

We must encourage proper participation to cause spiritual growth, because only “the proper [i.e. effective/successful] working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body” (Eph 4:16). Obviously, broken or missing parts or members can stop or significantly slow the movement of any body toward good growth. Therefore, each disciple must understand the difference between how to work properly and improperly, effectively and ineffectively, successfully and unsuccessfully with his gift in order to cause the church to grow vs. decline in some spiritual or sensual way.
Encourage member participation so we can grow

Unless we get members to properly use their gifts, we will decline into sensuality, the opposite of God’s goal for us (spirituality). We will stay like or become more and more like the world, which craves all kinds of sensuality (Eph 4:19). We need spiritual gifts, and members who use them, to make us grow in spirit, not in flesh!

So, let us focus on and encourage member participation to help us increase spiritual growth. Yet, we know that there are a variety of member participation challenges that we must face in order to more perfectly grow in the spirit as a church.

Below, consider an excerpt from the Appendix on Encouraging Healthy Participation and Growth. Let us wholeheartedly face these challenges so that we can encourage the kind of participation among disciples that will cause the most and the best growth.

1. Evaluate Your Attendance

Your attendance affects a church’s spiritual growth. So, are you in the habit of missing church? Why are you in the habit of missing assemblies? Instead of attending church, what are you in the habit of doing? Do you know that it is a sin to be missing church (SEE He 10:24, 25)? Do you know that disciples are commanded to be in the habit of attending church with a purpose? Do you know what those two purposes are? Do you know that you are to seek first the kingdom (the assembly), not financial gain (Mt 6:25-34)? Is your job getting in the way of worshiping and serving God?

In the Appendix, there are more questions and encouragement on attendance and other challenges to our growth.

2. Evaluate Your Diligence

Your diligence affects a church’s spiritual growth. So, are you working very hard with your gift. Are you exhausting yourself with it? On the other hand, are you taking it easy with your talent. Do you rarely become weary in using it? Do you know that the precious possession of a man is diligence (Pr 12:27)? Do you know that it is a woeful sin to be at ease in God’s house (Amos 6:1), meaning lazy or leisurely? Are you taking it easy? Are you at your leisure among us?

3. Evaluate Your Maturity

Your maturity affects the spiritual growth of a church. So, are you taking the necessary steps to become mature? Are you an infant, a child, or a new convert? When is the right time for you to begin learning about your spiritual gifts and to start using them? Do you know that the seed sown on thorny ground represents disciples who continue to go to church, and have some good attendance and participation records, but are too worried about their lives and their own pleasure to the point that they can bring no fruit to maturity (Lk 8:14)? Are you at all worried about your life? Are you at all seeking pleasure? Today, what are you first seeking? Will it help you to grow spiritually?
4. Evaluate Your Sins

Our sins will affect our spiritual growth. So, what kinds of sin are you still in the habit of committing? Are they logs or specks (Mt 7:3-5)? Do you understand the key difference between the two? Do you know that if you are carrying around a log of sin, you should not be teaching or judging disciples (Ro 2), or in attendance in church, especially during the Lord’s supper, when we eat together (1 Cor 5:11-13)?

Do you know that carrying around a log of sin among disciples causes bad, sensual, and evil growth (1 Cor 5:6)? Do you know that a disciple with a log of sin is a hypocrite? What are the logs of sin which we must immediately remove from our lives and church (Re 21:8; 1 Cor 5:11-13)? Do you know that these sins are not a matter of maturity, but of salvation?

To know what are logs of sin, and how to repent of them, I highly recommend the lesson on repentance in The Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testament.

5. Evaluate Your Position (Gift)

Your God-given position, location, or place (gifting) in the body affects our spiritual growth. Are you located or dislocated? Are you in joint or out of joint? Do you realize that God disciplines us so that we would not be out of joint, but healed (He 12:10-13)? Do you have selfish ambition (Ja 3:14)? Are you ignorant of the Scriptural requirements and the exact meaning and purpose of certain gifts, even the ones you want to exercise?

After completing this Bible Study on the Greater Gifts, you will know more perfectly if you are out of joint in a big or greater way or gift. Likewise, when you complete the Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Gifts and Situational Gifts, you will know if you are out of joint in any of those callings as well.

6. Evaluate Your Partiality

What you favor will affect our growth, for better or for worse. So, evaluate your affections. Do you know that favoritism is a sin (Ja 2:9). To what are you partial? Is it to what God is partial? Do you know that God’s favoritism (called grace) is not the sin of partiality? Do you know the difference between the partiality (favoritism) of men and the grace (favoritism) of God? Do you know what God favors (graces) and what He wraths (does not favor)?

Do you realize how many ways disciples show partiality, ways in which are not from or commanded by God? For example, do you favor your gift over every other gift? Do you know that even leading men (and whole parties or brotherhoods) have been found to sin in some form of partiality, even Peter, an apostle of Christ, and Barnabas and the “party” of the circumcision (Ga 2:11, 12)?

To what are you favorable? Have you created a “party” out of it, a brotherhood composed of disciples who are favorable to your form of partiality? Do you know how to repent of a show of partiality? Do you know that God will have no part in partiality (2 Chron 19:7)? Do you realize that church names or affiliations can be partial not impartial (1 Cor 1:12)? Do you understand that this form of favoritism is divisive and “not... spiritual” (1 Cor 1:13; 3:1)?
A Warning about Church Names and Affiliations

Church names and affiliations can be at the root of the partiality problem among disciples. So, to understand how to overcome it, I wholeheartedly recommend the lesson on Five Ways Worshipers Show Partiality Towards Church Names, in the Bible Study on True Worshipers... For Such People the Father Seeks to Be His Worshipers” (Jn 4:23). For as you will see in that lesson, most all disciples, and therefore churches, have shown partiality in how they name or affiliate themselves. As one disciple said after completing that lesson, and study:

“I can see how names have divided the church without us knowing it. There is so much division in the church without our realizing it. I thought there was nothing wrong in the names of denominations, but I have realized that it is the root cause of the division in the church. I wonder where the church is heading to? May God help us.” Joseph, Nigeria

This is why I have begun to point this out to you, from the start, because as one disciple realized, church names (the partiality in them) are at the root of the problem of divisiveness. So, all disciples must start there to address the problem. Do you know how to divide (that is, name) disciples without being divisive, without showing partiality to something when God has not commanded so? Are you The Partial Church? Are you the Church of Partiality?

Conclusion

When Jesus returned to heaven, He then gave (and still gives) spiritual gifts to all of His disciples to continue the work which He started. So, each disciple of Christ has received a special and unique gift from God to cause spiritual growth.

Yet, some gifts can cause more growth than others, such as the teaching gifts. Jesus wants His disciples to cause a lot of growth. This is why He wants us to earnestly desire the ability to teach someone.

But, there are a lot of disciples who are not yet working properly to cause spiritual growth in others. Therefore, all disciples must strive to learn how to use their gifts in a fitting way. For not all growth is good growth, but sensual in nature, meaning not holy, like God. Indeed, not all disciples are spiritual, but sensual.

Yet, we know that we are no longer to live like the Gentiles, who enjoy and therefore crave the sensual nature, not the spiritual nature of God. Do you enjoy the holy nature of God? In your own life and in your worship of God, are you strongly desiring the character of the Spirit, or the flesh? Do you know the differences between the two?
Do Not Confuse the Things of the Spirit

There are many different aspects of the Holy Spirit. Disciples are confused by this. So, I want you to understand the key differences between certain subjects related to the Spirit of God. For example, when we study spiritual gifts, that is the gift of the Holy Spirit not the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it seems necessary and fitting to make known the key difference between the two. For these, along with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, can be very confusing subjects for disciples, especially the world. And how many of us have come out of the world and so did not understand these things?

There are important differences between the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. For even though they are all referred to as being of the Holy Spirit, related to Him, they are all different subjects or things, with different meanings and purposes. Next, briefly consider the differences.

1. The Gift of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the indwelling Person of)

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20). Have you been crucified with Christ? If so, then you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Holy Spirit is Christ living in you, not yourself! So, first and foremost, the
“gift” of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling Person of God, while the ‘gifts’ of the Holy Spirit are the kind of indwelling person God wants one to be in the kingdom of God, in the sense of talent, skill, or calling.

Second, everyone who dies with Christ, by faithfully obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ, receives the same Person (that is the gift of the Holy Spirit), but not necessarily the same kind of talent or ability (the gifts of Holy Spirit).

Third, below are some verses which describe and define the gift of the Holy Spirit. “The Spirit of God dwells in you” (Ro 8:9). “You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is given as a pledge of our inheritance” (Eph 1:13, 14). “God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our heart, crying, “Abba! Father!” (Ga 4:6). “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test (2 Cor 13:5)?

From these verses we can see two things. One, that God Himself, in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, is the gift of the Holy Spirit. “Christ in you” (Col 1:27). Two, that receiving Him comes with a lot of great blessings. Amen. Among other things, the indwelling spirit of Christ helps us to overcome the anti-Christian world, especially the many false teaching spirits in it (SEE 1 Jn 4:4).

Do you know how to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?

As Paul said, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test (2 Cor 13:5)? Have you passed or failed the test? Are you still living inside of yourself? Or, is Jesus Christ in you? Is He living in you? Do you know how to receive Him? How does one become, as Paul said of himself: “crucified with Christ” (Gal 2:20) and “no longer... live, but Christ lives in me”?

Examine Your Conversion

Compare it to the ones recorded in the book of Acts. The reason you ought to do this is that it was only after Christ rose from the dead that His disciples new how to preach the complete gospel. For Paul said that the gospel essentially is the DBR of Christ (1 Cor 15:1, 3, 4). Therefore, before Christ rose from the dead, no one yet knew how to preach it and lead others in response to it. So, this is why the book of Acts is so great. It begins the time of complete conversions to Christ and His blood started covenant (SEE Lk 22:20).

However, the thief on the cross was saved. Yet, he did not have to hear the whole gospel (the DBR of Christ), and then respond to it in obedient faith to be saved, because Christ was not yet d.b.r’d, and so could not be preached as such. Do you understand this? So, do not base or compare your conversion on the thief on the cross. Compare it the complete ones in Acts.
Remember, you are testing and examining yourself to see if you are in the faith (2 Cor 13:5), if Christ is in you or some other spirit, like your own spirit or the spirit of another man, but not Christ.

Look at the first complete conversions to Christ

Compare your conversion to the first complete conversions led by the apostles. At the beginning, when they all preached the gospel to those in the crowd at Jerusalem, Peter summarized it to them, and said, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Ac 2:36-38). “So then, those who had received his word were baptized” (Ac 2:41).

How did Peter to lead them to receive the forgiveness of their sins (even their sin of crucifying Christ), and to “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” meaning the indwelling spirit of Christ? He led them in repentance and water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Ac 2:36-38). “So then, those who had received his word were baptized” (Ac 2:41).

Did you call the name of the Lord to be saved in prayer or water baptism?

In addition to repentance and water baptism, there are other very important aspects of your conversion you ought to test or examine. For example, how were you led to call on the name of the Lord, to be saved (Ro 10:13), in personal prayer or in water baptism? Do you understand that Jesus said you must do it in water baptism, not in your own prayer? Actually, the baptizer is to call on the name for you, saying, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit”. For this shows honor and regard and awareness of the three distinct and separate persons of God. For example, after Jesus rose from the dead, and just before he ascended to heaven, He said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19), not “prayer in the name of”. Likewise, if you examine Paul’s complete conversion to Jesus Christ, he was specifically told to call on the name of the Lord in water baptism, not in prayer. Ananias said to him, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name’ (Ac 22:16). How was Paul told to call to the name to be saved? It was in water baptism. So, when you go back to the beginning of the preaching of Christ crucified, you will better know what Peter meant, when he told them to: “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (Ac 2:38). As Peter said, “We are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Ac 5:32). To be “given” “the Holy Spirit” you must “obey Him,” not what man has deceptively made up for you to do to be saved. So, I say to you, that if you did not do any of these things according to “Him,” I encourage you to do it again, in the right way. The promises are obtained by faith in what Christ and His apostles said, not by what man has concocted or fabricated. I highly recommend that you read my Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible, and The Bible Study on New Life. For in them are the keys to these things.
2. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit \textit{(i.e. the talent of)}

When someone accepts Christ, his life starts to change in significant ways. For example, his skills can change, even dramatically.

Consider Rahab. When she believed in God, she escaped her way of life, and no longer worked as a harlot, because you could see that she began to fear the judgment of God. Likewise, if when we believe in Christ, we find ourselves in some unholy business, or with some sensual skill, or wanton work, we must change for the better. We must give up our unholy talents, or we must consider if we can somehow use them in a better way, a holy way, not in a sensual way.

Even the good talents and skills we might have, when we first believe in Christ, need to change. For we are no longer to have as our end goal in our use of them to only help ourselves or our family or others. Instead, we are to use them to cause spiritual, not sensual growth in our family and Christian friends. Therefore, our goal in using our gifts is not only to help one another, but to somehow consider how this would help one another spiritually.

So, we can see that when we receive Christ, we must start to examine our existing talents and abilities, and begin to think differently about them. We need to consider how God could use what we have to help His cause. We need to consider the whole range and spectrum of the talents we already have, and also the ones which God wants to give us or seek after. This would include the three kinds or categories of Gifts, namely the greater gifts, the non-teaching gifts, and the situational gifts.

Do you know what these things mean? You will, by faith, if you complete all three books in my series on the gifts.

Now, since I already explained to you what are the gifts (in the first lesson, The Meaning and Purpose of the Gifts), I will not re-explain them here. Yet, below are some more verses which describe and define the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts... each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Co 12:1, 7). "It [the message of salvation] was at the first spoken through the Lord [Jesus], it was confirmed to us by those who heard [the apostles], God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will" (He 2:3, 4).

Conclusion

When Jesus ascended back into heaven to be with the Father, He gave gifts to men to continue the work of the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:7, 8). This is why you must evaluate your own life, including all of you talents, so that you can see if you are using them in spiritual, not sensual ways. You must follow the spirit of God, not the spirit of the flesh, the sensual nature. The world is led by and desires the sensual nature (Eph 4:19). "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim 2:21). Rahab, a harlot, cleansed herself and became useful to the Master, and fit for every good work. Likewise, God can use any other kind of sinner, if he repents.
3. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the special empowerment of)

There are **seven** key points I want you to consider regarding the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This will help frame or define its exact meaning and purpose, clearly differentiate it from other baptisms, and clear up the confusion over it.

**One: It Is 1 of 5 Baptisms in the N.T.**

As I pointed out to you in the Advanced Chronological Study of the Holy Bible, John Prepared the Way for the Messiah, there are five different baptisms mentioned in the New Covenant. They are all unique, and they all have key differences which must be understood by all. Otherwise, disciples will remain confused about them and misapply them, through the deception of ignorance.

And so, it seems fitting to me, that when we discuss any one of the five baptisms in the gospel, that we somehow show the distinctive nature of that baptism as compared to one or more of the other four. In this way we will not be confused.

**John’s, Jesus’, Life, Holy Spirit, Fire**

The first baptism to appear in the gospel, is John’s baptism. John said, “I came baptizing in water” (Jn 1:31). So, John’s baptism was a water baptism. It was not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said it himself of Jesus, saying, “This is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit” (Jn 1:33). And so, along with John’s water baptism, one is alerted by him to the second baptism mentioned in the New Testament, the baptism of the Holy Spirit by Jesus. Now, John’s water baptism of repentance is no longer valid or required, since repentance and water baptism in Jesus’ name replaced it (SEE Ac 18:24-26; 19:1-5).

Third, John not only said that Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit, but also in fire (SEE Mt 3:11). Notice that the context (READ Mt 3:7-12) further indicates that John was talking about the “unquenchable fire,” in which Jesus will “burn up the chaff,” not the “wheat” (Mt 3:7-12). So, the baptism of fire is the lake of fire, namely hell, of which Jesus has the authority and power in which to baptize or throw. Yet, some disciples have not noticed this truth, and taken the baptism of fire out of its context, and said, even to me and others, “I have received the baptism of fire, of which John spoke about concerning Jesus,” and “It came all through my body and burned up my sin”. This is simply not true to the text from which they are speaking. These men need educated on the context of this passage. For they are ignorantly deceiving themselves and confusing others about this.

The fourth baptism mentioned in the gospel, chronologically speaking, is a life experience baptism, a figure of speech. For after Jesus received John’s baptism, He said He had a baptism to undergo, meaning he was going to suffer in life (Lk 12:50).

Fifth, and finally, we see Jesus' baptism. It is a water baptism for the remission of sins (Ac 2:38), in which
we are to cloth ourselves with Christ (Gal 3:27). As Jesus Himself said, it is to be administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). For every disciple ought to call on the name of the Lord in water baptism to be saved, not in personal prayer (Ro 10:13; Ac 22:16).

Two: The Prophecy of Joel Connection

First and foremost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is directly from, related to, or in connection to one of Joel’s prophecies. For example,

“It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28, 29).

In those days, meaning in the days of Christ, when He would arrive on the scene, Jesus would inaugurate or start the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For example, after the apostles themselves were baptized in the Holy Spirit, they testified to this meaning to all of Jerusalem, saying,

“For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams’ " (Ac 2:15-27).

So, the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit originates with Joel, not in any other place or book. And, interestingly enough, Joel was the very last recorded prophet who was sent to Israel. Then, there was about a four hundred year “silent period,” as some call it. For after Joel, no prophet was sent to Israel. Then, after Joel, about four hundred years later, John the Baptist entered the story. Joel also prophesied about him, calling him the Elijah to come. Jesus testified to this (SEE Mt 11:14).

So, Joel’s book of prophecy is a great book. It is a marvelous book, because it speaks of several significant things in connection to Christ, such as the coming of the great (grace) and terrible (wrath) of God, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (which John indicated would start with Christ, not himself), and of course the Elijah to come, namely John the Baptist.

Three: The Meaning and Purpose of it (special empowerment from God to do the job)

In reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told His apostles, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Ac 1:8). So, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is God’s way, from heaven, to instantly empower certain disciples to do their job, what they were called to do. And with the apostles, they needed a lot of power, covenant bringing power. They needed God to bear witness with them with various signs, wonders, and miracles and other abilities, to prove that God was speaking through them regarding the unfolding message about Jesus as the Christ (SEE He 2:3, 4).
So, when the Holy Spirit comes upon a person, as He did to Saul (1 Sam 10:9) and mightily upon David (1 Sam 16:13), in a sense, secretly in their hearts, men and women become empowered to do a work of God. Similarly, with Cornelius, a Gentile soldier. He was baptized in the Holy Spirit (Ac 10:44-46), and so was empowered to begin speaking about the deeds of God, even in different languages (the gift of tongues). After witnessing this, Peter said they still had to be “water” “baptized” (Ac 10: 47, 48).

This example illustrates the distinct differences and purposes of these two kinds of baptisms. One is administered by God, from heaven, in the Spirit and to empower someone to do something, and one is administered by man in water to receive the forgiveness of one’s sins and to receive the indwelling person of the Holy Spirit, Christ (SEE Ac 2:38).

Yet, with the apostles, God openly baptized them in the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire (Ac 2:3). Likewise, Jesus was baptized in the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove coming down from heaven (Mt 3:16). In one instance, after the apostles suffered persecution, and prayed for courage to continue their ministry, “the place... was shaken” and they were again all filled with the Holy Spirit, getting a greater measure of courage to keep on speaking about Jesus (Ac 4:31). However, Cornelius was simply baptized in the Holy Spirit, without a dove or a tongue of fire or without the house shaking to signify it. Therefore, we do not always know how God will empower someone to do the work He wants them to do, at the time He wants them to do it. It may be inwardly, and perhaps sometimes, it may be outwardly. But, nevertheless, one cannot deny the power that a person now demonstrates to actually do the work they are doing for God. But there are false gifts.

Four: Men Cannot Baptize Disciples in the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit can only happen if God administers it from heaven. A man cannot baptize a disciple in the Holy Spirit. For who was it that baptized Jesus in the Holy Spirit, visibly in the form of a dove? Who was it that baptized the apostles in the Holy Spirit, visibly in the form of tongues of fire resting on each one of them (for this was the baptism of the Holy Spirit, not a baptism of fire)? Who baptized Cornelius in the Holy Spirit, without tongues of fire or doves resting on him, but in an invisible way? Was it God or man? So, we should not seek a man to baptize us in the Holy Spirit, or attempt to baptize someone in the Holy Spirit.

Only the apostles could facilitate it

Even great men, such as Stephen, an evangelist to whom God bore witness with miracles and signs (Ac 8:6), could not help people to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Even though they believed and were water baptized in the name of the Lord by him (SEE Ac 8:14-17), they did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Instead, Stephen called for the apostles of Christ to help facilitate it from heaven (Ac 8:14-17). Yet, even though the apostles had laid their hands on them for this, they still “prayed” to God (Ac 8:15) for Him to baptize them in the Holy Spirit. So, the apostles could help disciples be baptized in the Holy Spirit, but they themselves could not do it. Likewise, Paul, another apostle, could facilitate the baptism of the Holy Spirit, through the laying on of his hands (Ac 19:1-7).
Five: It is not essential to salvation

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, Joel’s prophecy, is not essential to a disciple’s salvation. From the examples in the book of Acts, we can see that even though the people were water baptized to receive Christ (remember Stephen in Acts 8), they were not also immediately baptized in the Holy Spirit. The apostles had to come in afterward and try to facilitate it. Likewise, many disciples were not and have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit and therefore need not be, if one knows the exact purpose of it.

So, since it could only be from God or facilitated by the laying on of the apostles’s hands, and since the apostles have passed on to their reward, in the first century, we should not think that another man or calling has been appointed to have the power to facilitate a baptism in the Holy Spirit. Yet, God can empower anyone in any way He chooses. This is for Him to do in someone’s life, if he desires it to be so.

Notes: I myself, in some ways, am empowered to teach, am I not? Do I need Joel’s baptism to do so? I think not. For I myself do not testify that I have been baptized with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I was water baptized in the name of the Lord, and I have a life experience baptism I am undergoing, for Christ. I personally have not witnessed anyone be baptized by God in the Holy Spirit. Yet, I personally have seen how God has empowered many disciples in their talents and callings, without the fanfare or attention getting power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or even miracles for that matter. Do you understand Joel’s prophecy, when it came to fruition, and why it had to come to fruition? Do you understand the difference between the water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit? If you can correctly answer these questions, then you will not be too concerned or confused about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Remember, there are five distinct baptisms mentioned in the gospel. One is no longer valid, another is from God and out of your control, another related to hell, another figurative, and another essential aid in your power to do so.

Six: Pouring or burying for baptism?

Some disciples are confusing two baptisms and how they are administered. For example, in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, God is said to “pour” out His Spirit on men. But in water baptism in the name of the Lord, one is immersed, buried, or dipped below a body of water. So, for water baptism, should we pour or immerse?

In answer to this, these are two different kinds of baptisms, with differing details and contexts or subjects. For example, God does not try to get disciples to find His Spirit laying down somewhere in a pool so that He then can baptize them in it, or bury them beneath it. So, God rightly has poured or sent Him out from heaven upon men. Next, the word pour is only associated to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But the word immerse is associated to water baptism. For example, consider three Greek words: Raino (to sprinkle or rain), Cheo (pour), and baptizo (immerse, dip, or bury). So, we can see the difference is in the contextual details of the two distinctly different baptisms. Therefore, I highly recommend that any of you who are not burying for water baptism to notice these details and make the necessary adjustments to your own baptisms, and to those you will baptize.

Seven: There is Only 1 Baptism

If you have carefully read and digested everything I have taught you up until this point, then I believe you are beginning to know that there is only one baptism that is essential to all disciples. As the Scripture says, there is “one baptism” (Eph 4:5). Is it not the one which helps us to receive the indwelling Christ? Is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27)?

Have you received Jesus Christ, the hope of eternal life? How did you receive Him inside? Once you believed,
how did you “receive the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Ac 2:38)? If you can accept it, this is the one baptism. A water baptism in the name of the Lord.

Yet, many disciples think the “one baptism” (Eph 4:5) is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, not water baptism in the name of the Lord to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. But, as I previously explained to you in this lesson, from the beginning of it, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gift of the Holy Spirit are two different things of the spirit, in two different contexts, with two different results, with two different baptizers, if you will. One results in empowerment, the other results in receiving Christ.

So, let us not confuse the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit (empowerment) with the “indwelling” of the Holy Spirit (the gift of the Holy Spirit) in the heart the one who believes.

4. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit (i.e. the holy nature and character of)

First, the fruit of the Spirit is a figure of speech which denotes or describes the many different aspects of God’s own spiritual nature or character, such as love, joy, peace, kindness, compassion, holiness, righteousness, truthfulness, gentleness, zealousness, and so on and so forth. Indeed, the fruit of the Spirit is the very nature and character of God.

Second, God desires to produce in us this fruit as well. So, God wants to cultivate or develop something in us, some fruit, if you will, which is directly related to His many different character qualities.

Third, since this fruit comes from His Spirit, we then need to seek to receive it from God, not man. He is the source of it. From what tree do we pick apples? From what vine do we gather grapes? From where can we get the fruit of the Holy Spirit? It must be received and gathered from God, not man. So, we need to seek it from Him, not one another. And when we do so, God will not disappoint us. But, we will disappoint one another, since ultimately, we are not able to give it to each other. In your own life and in the lives of others, on whom do you depend for these things: kindness, gentleness, love, patience, and so on and so forth? If you have been looking for them in the wrong places (as I have many times), then let us look there no longer.

Fourth, the following verses describe the fruit of the Spirit.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal 5:22, 23).

“For the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth” (Eph 5:9).

“The fruit of righteousness” (Philip 1:11).

“The peaceful fruit of righteousness” (He 12:11).
Conclusion

There are many different things related to the Spirit of God. There is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Although these all come from God, they are different subjects with different contexts and details, and therefore meanings. There are key differences between them.

For example, the gift of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling person of Christ in a disciple’s heart.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are the kind of talents which God gives to disciples. These are different than just talents and abilities alone, in that they are for spiritual, not sensual work. Therefore, they are different or have a different end purpose than any other worldly talent, for the come from God and are directed by Him for His good purposes.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is when God Himself has empowered disciples to: one, bring to fruition Joel’s prophecy, and two, to empower a disciple to do some sort of talented work.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit are the spiritual character qualities of God which He wants to produce in His disciples.

Knowing all of these things which are related to the Spirit, when you again encounter them, you will not be as confused, but know the truth about them.

Indeed, “God is love” (1 Jn 4:16) So, we must learn and grow in all the facets of this character quality of God (1 Cor 13). Likewise, God is holy. “Be holy for I am holy” (1 Pe 1:16).

So, we must learn and grow in all aspects of His holy nature, for “God.... has saved us and called us to a holy life” (2 Tim 1:9 NIV). This is our duty after personal salvation, to pursue holy living arrangements. This is why I wrote the Bible Study on New Life, “Walk in Newness of Life” (Ro 6:4). It is a Bible study on the fruit of holiness. I recommend that you read it. For without love, and also without holiness, no disciple will be saved (SEE 1 Jn 4:8 and he 12:14).

So, we must intentionally grow in the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Yet, we especially must aim to grow in love and holiness, two of the greatest character traits of God and both essential to our salvation.
All Gifts Are Special and Can Cause Growth

Before you consider the whole range of gifts, be convinced of two things.

1. No matter your gift, it is special

“Each one has received a special gift” (1 Pe 4:10). This means that your talent (in relation to a church body, a family, community, even the world) is uniquely different than most others in that group of people. This is what makes you valuable to your group, especially if it is small. They need you because they are not you. They do not have your gift, your strength.

This is why you must “employ it in serving one another” (1 Pe 4:10) in your family, church, community, and world. This will make you a “good steward of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pe 4:10). For your gift is what you bring to the table, so to speak. But, if you do not come to the table with it, you cannot be a good steward, can you?

In your own family, church, and community, are you coming to the table with your strength? And when you do come to the table, will it be easy to sit there, to endure? No! For there are many reasons why things will not work properly, mainly because many of us at the table are not yet fully or properly working with our God-given abilities, nor do we all show enough honor towards your talent. Many are not even coming to the table. And some at the table are using the Devil’s talents. Are not these things true in all aspects of life?

So, take heart, Encourage yourself

Let your talent motivate you. Consider your specialty, your strength. Believe that your God-given spiritual ability is worthwhile and honorable. So, in this, you yourself are worthy and honorable. Encourage yourself to come to the table with it. Endure the challenges of using it. Help yourself and others grow in spirit. For no one has all of the talents of God, therefore no one person can cause all spiritual growth, not even you! You are special, but not that special! You are not all in all, like God. Likewise, each member of your group is special in some unique way, but not in all ways. So, people groups need you, but you also need them.
2. Your gift can cause spiritual growth

Your gift is worthwhile to your group, not only because it is uniquely different and stronger than what most other people in your group have been given, it also can cause a certain amount of spiritual growth in them, but not all of the growth! You do not know everything! You cannot do everything! Yet, each and every spiritual gift has been designed by God to cause some form of spiritual growth (SEE Eph 4:7, 16).

So, if you think that you cannot cause any spiritual growth in your group, you are wrong! Therefore, your gift is significant, dignified and distinguished, and worthwhile to any willing group, family, or community. Therefore, get in the mix. And stay in the mix. Throw your hat in the ring, and keep it there. You have the God-given right and blessing to do so. You have a specialty. Endure the difficulty of using it. I have great difficulties in using my talents, in my home, the churches, and in the world. Yet, I must encourage myself to continue, out of love for all. Love “endures all things” (1 Cor 13:7). Jesus endured the cross. By faith toward God, not in yourself or in others in your group, you and I can endure our difficulty as well. Encourage yourself.

A metal worker cannot shape metal without some sparks. But do not burn up yourselves! Come to the table. Get in the mix. With your honorable strength, mix it up, the salad bowl of talents called church.

Now, there are three unique categories of gifts, with a variety of gifts in each one, with differing measures of ability to cause spiritual growth.

Category #1 - The Greater Spiritual Gifts (Teachers)

“Since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church” (1 Cor 14:12).

Are you at all interested in spiritual gifts? Should not all disciples be hot after them? If you wish to help a church be edified, meaning to grow in the spirit and attitude of God, you should earnestly seek them, especially a greater gift. For example, Paul said, “Earnestly desire the greater gifts” (1 Cor 12:31).

And so we can see that there are “greater gifts,” and that we should diligently seek them. The reason for this is that they are “greater” in their ability to build up a church in the Spirit of God. What gifts can do this in great measure? Is it not the teaching gifts? Therefore, the greater gifts are the teaching gifts. The teaching gifts are greater in their ability to grow, mature, and build up Christians in the word of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the truth.

Now, “the greater gifts” are simply the gifts which cause church growth specifically by “speaking” [i.e. teaching] the word of God to others. For example: “He gave gifts to men...
And He gave some as [1] apostles, and some as [2] prophets, and some as [3] evangelists, and some as [4] pastors [5] and teachers, for... speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ” (Eph 4:7, 11, 14).

These are the five greater gifts. They all are “speaking” gifts, that is teaching gifts or callings. These are all called by God to speak the word of Jesus Christ to others. But each of them has a different “specialty” or unique facet which goes along with their gift to teach. In the lesson on The Meaning and Purpose of the Gifts, I told you what are those specialties.

There Is an “Appointed” Order or Rank within the Greater Gifts

We can see that God Himself ordained a certain order or rank among “the greater gifts” (and also among some of the other kinds or categories of gifts, such as the non-teaching gifts, and the situational gifts, as you will see later). For example, “And God has appointed in the church, first [1] apostles, second [2] prophets, third [3] teachers” (1 Cor 12:28).

(1) “Apostles” are appointed “first”; they are greater than prophets and teachers (which includes evangelists and pastors). No gift is greater than apostle.

Note: The reason for this is because they are like Moses, they are law or covenant bearers. For example, the apostles of Christ are the teaching foundation on which all Christians must be made and matured; that is, “built on the foundation of the [1] apostles and [2] prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone” (Eph 2:19, 20). The apostles of Christ, along with His prophets, are the “teaching” foundation on which all Christians must be established (saved) and edified or matured. So, now we know why the apostles have the greatest ability to cause spiritual growth in the kingdom of God, and in you and me too.

(2) “Prophets” are appointed “second”; they are greater than all teachers (including evangelists and pastors) and are greater that all the rest of the gifts, but not greater than the apostles.

Note: For example, Luke, whom is believed to have written the Gospel According to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, is not an apostle. He would instead be a prophet, since he wrote down the inspired word of God for us. He gave us, by the Holy Spirit, both an account of the life of Christ and the life of the apostles of Christ who succeeded Him.

(3) “Teachers” (which includes Evangelists & Pastors) are appointed “third” and last among the greater gifts, yet they are greater than all the rest of the gifts, but not greater than apostles or prophets.

Note: Teachers, evangelists (including myself), and pastors are not the teaching foundation on which we must be built. These strictly must proclaim what the apostles and prophets already wrote down for us; the Scriptures. It is the teaching foundation on which all disciples must be edified (Eph 2:19, 20).

Now, if you do not have a greater gift, you still have a special talent that even your teachers might not have in great measure, a non-teaching gift.

Category #2 - The Non-Teaching Spiritual Gifts

Obviously, the gifts which do not teach can be called the non-teaching gifts. For we know that there are spiritual gifts which do not teach, speak, or have as their main strength to impart or quote and apply the whole will and word of God to others. For the non-teaching gifts are “rich in” other good things.

Now, since these gifts have been designed by God for some other good purpose than teaching, they do not have as much ability to build others up in the actual words of Jesus Christ. Yet, they are very edifying, as are all of the gifts. We all enjoy the benefits of being encouraged by them. And, if used properly, they most certainly do cause spiritual growth in the kingdom of God, in us. This is true of the whole range of gifts.
Note: If you wish to know the exact meaning, purpose, and use of each of the non-teaching gifts, I recommend that you complete the Bible Study on the Non-Teaching Gifts. For below, I only list some of them to give you an example of them and to show you some of their appointed order and power.

Non-Teaching Gifts Have Differing Edification Powers

Even among the non-teaching gifts, we can see a certain God-ordained order or rank, in relation to their edification power and or responsibility. For example, in the very same verse in which God orders or ranks the greater gifts, we can also see that He ranked several of the non-teaching gifts, noticeably after the teaching gifts.


(4) “Miracles” are appointed fourth; they are greater (in their edification power) than healings, helps, administrations, and tongues, but not greater than the teaching gifts.

Note: For example, recall what Abraham said to his great descendant, who was a rich Israelite, who also, after death, was being tortured in hell, while Abraham and Lazarus were being comforted in heaven. When they saw each other, the rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to his brothers, to save them from ending up where he did. What was Abraham’s response? “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead” (Lk 16:31).

(5) “Healings” are appointed fifth; they are greater than helps, administrations, and tongues, but not greater than miracles or the teaching gifts.

(6) “Helps” are appointed sixth; they are greater than administrations and tongues, but not greater than miracles, healings, or the teaching gifts.

Note: I say, if you cannot receive a miracle or a healing, then helps seems to be the next best thing to receive! Get some help. Find someone with the skill to help you.

(7) “Administrations” is appointed seventh; they are greater than tongues, but not greater than miracles, healings, helps, or the teaching gifts.

Note: As you should see in the Bible Study on the Non-Teaching gifts, this gift is truly unique.

(8) “Tongues” is appointed last among the non-teaching spiritual gifts. Therefore, evidently it is not a greater gift, and among the list of non-teaching gifts, it has the least ability to edify a church.

Note: To find out the specific reason why, see the Bible Study on the Non-Teaching gifts, the lesson on the gift of tongues.

Compare the Gift of Wealth to the Gift of Poverty

To further illustrate this point about rank within the non-teaching gifts, consider what James said about the poor disciple vs. the rich disciple [both are, in a sense, a type of non-teaching gift, and even a type of situational gift]. For example, “But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position [i.e. height, high rank or station]; and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation [i.e. lowness, low estate], because like flowering grass he will pass away” (Ja 1:9, 10). This gives more purpose and meaning to the idea of the poor being rich in faith. “Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in mercy” Eph 2:4

being rich in mercy

Eph 2:4
Category #3 - The Situational Spiritual Gifts

When Christians find themselves in certain “conditions,” as Paul calls them, situations in life, but not sinful conditions or situations, he said it is a type of “gift” or calling. These “conditions” in which we find or place ourselves are a type of non-teaching gift.

For example, in answer to those who were apparently asking questions about being married or unmarried, Paul said, “I wish that all men were even as I myself am [i.e. unmarried]. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that” (1 Cor 7:7). So, marriage, is from God, as well as remaining unmarried. Paul conceded that being married is a “gift from God” just like being unmarried is a “gift from God,” a gift that he himself had received. He had never married. Neither did Jesus. What zeal for God!

Now I want you to notice, in the same passage, how Paul continued to emphasize this concept or idea of situational type gifts and how he gave more examples of them. For example, “Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk [for example, married or unmarried]. And so I direct in all the churches. Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circum-

cised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. Each man must remain in that condition [situation] in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord’s freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ’s slave. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition [situation] in which he was called” (1 Cor 7:17-24).

In what “condition” were you called? In what unsinful situation were you saved? Were you married or single, husband or wife, free or slave, Jew or Gentile?

Note: Now, Christians are commanded “do not become slaves of men”: So, it is a sin for a Christian to be enslaved, but only to God. Yet, it is not a sin to become a Christian while a slave. And as Paul said, do not be concerned about it, but get your freedom if you can. This is a better condition in which to be. Let us not do unto others as we would not do to ourselves, and somehow enslave men. Let us all live as free men.

Consider the Order or Rank of Some Situational Gifts

Evidently, there are other conditions or situations in which we find or place ourselves in life, such as being a parent or a child, a man or a woman, a soldier or a civilian, etc. And obviously, there is some rank among these kinds of gifts.

There is some order to the conditions or situations in which we find or place ourselves in life. For example, a parent is over his child (Eph 6:1). A hus-
band is head of his wife (Eph 5:22). A master is over his slave (1 Pe 2:18). A man is head of a woman (1 Cor 11:1-3). An officer is over his soldier in authority. A king is head of his subjects. A manager is in authority over his workers, and so on and so forth.

Three Sub-Categories

There are three sub-categories or groupings of situational spiritual gifts. Additionally, they are all non-teaching gifts the situational gifts. However, some of these callings must also become teachers, in some sense, such as parents. For they are called by God to raise and to teach their children.

1. Gender (Male or Female)
2. Familial (Son, Daughter, Parent, Husband, Wife, Single, Married, etc.)
3. Societal (Jobs/Work, Soldier, Civilian, Nationality, etc.)

Now, some of these gifts involve teaching or speaking the word of God to others, such as Fathers being commanded to train up their children in Christ (Eph 6:4). But this does not necessarily mean that they have been called or gifted by God to teach or lead a church or others in the kingdom of God. So, there is a significant difference here between the greater gifts and the situational gifts. As you will see in the Test on Pastor gift, every father is not called by God to be a leader of a church. Even more, a father, and certain other people, ought to learn how to teach so that they then can teach the word of the Lord to the people God whom called them to teach. Yet, a father is not necessarily a teacher. He must become one, in a gifted sort of way, from God.

Likewise, a teacher of mathematics (a situational gift) is not a teacher of the word of God. So, the societal gift of teaching a certain subject, is not the same thing as teaching the word of God. Therefore, it is not a greater gift.

Similarly, a king is a great gift. For how he treats his kingdom affects a lot of people, even other kingdoms. Yet, a king is not a leader in the kingdom of God. We have one king. His name is Jesus. Our leaders are His teachers, which includes pastors, evangelists, and teachers of the word of God. These are all ministers of the gospel with different specialties.

So, let us keep the situational spiritual gifts in proper perspective. They are good gifts, but not leading gifts in the kingdom of God. We must be led by the word of God, and those who are called by God to speak it to us. So be it.

Conclusion

There are a lot of spiritual gifts. Each one has a certain quality or tremendous strength associated with it. They can be grouped into three different categories, which also have a special meaning of their own. Some are teachers, some are not teachers. Some are married. Some are not married. For some gifts, it depends on the situation in which you find or place yourself in life. But, every gift, if used properly, can cause spiritual growth, but not in the same measure or power as certain other gifts, within its category or among the categories. However, in consideration of the needs of others, not only one’s own needs, we all must strive for the best gifts. You know the reason why.
The Gift to Lead Souls

Leading Is a Greater Gift

In the kingdom of God, the subject of leadership can be a very complicated and confusing one. There are a number of reasons for this. For example, first, and easiest to notice, it is different than leadership in the world, such as being a national leader, a business leader, and so on and so forth (for these are Situational Gifts). Second, and not always so easy to discern, it is different than the Non-Teaching Spiritual Gifts. Third, there are some mistaken concepts from the world which have crept into the churches, and have become acceptable practices. And since they have become acceptable, then most people in the church cannot or will not discern the issues with them. Perhaps on them the many outgun the few. Yet, whether it is true to the word of Christ on leadership or not, it becomes democratically endorsed or favored.

Pastors Are Called by God to Lead a Church

By common confession and declaration, pastors are specifically called by God to ultimately lead a church, not evangelists, not teachers, not any other gifting, though some of these callings teach a church or lead other aspects of it. There are several things in the Scriptures which testify to this.

Consider the Examples

First, consider the examples which bear witness to the idea that pastors are directly and ultimately called by God to lead a church. For you must see that He gave them the responsibility and authority to do so, and therefore He will hold them accountable for it, that is, how they do in their stewardship of it. For they are acting in the human place of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ (SEE 1 Pet 5:2, 4).
Example #1 - Paul Directed the Pastors at Ephesus to Lead Their Church

For good reason, an apostle directed the pastors at the church in Ephesus to lead that church. For example, when Paul called to himself “the elders” of the church in Ephesus (Ac 20:17), he told them to “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [i.e. BISHOPS, KJV], to shepherd [i.e. PASTOR] the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Ac 20:28). So, Paul told certain elders at the church in Ephesus to pastor the church in Ephesus, since God had made them the overseers of it. So, why must pastors lead a church? It is because God had made them the overseers of it.

For “ overseer” refers to his God-given authority to lead or rule over disciples. “Elder” refers to his age that he has attained in society. For as they say in Swahili, pastors are not to be a “kijana,” [pronounced Key-John-Ahh] meaning a young man, but instead an “mzee,” [pronounced Em-Zay] meaning and old man, and elder. Finally, the word “shepherd” is in the Greek “poimaino,” which translated means pastor. So, poimens are “pastors” (Eph 4:11), for “He gave... some as pastors [poimen]” (Eph 4:11). So, now it is clear to us why He gave some as pastors. They are to lead over a church.

So, certain older men (not only one man) are called by God to pastor one church, to teach it, because God gave them the authority to rule over it, also proving it by calling them overseers. Additionally, we can see that this is one calling or gift, not three separate gifts or positions. In one church, we are not to appoint pastors, and also appoint elders, and also appoint overseers—three different positions. No! Pastors are older men who rule over a church, one position, not three.

Example #2 - Peter Directed the Pastors Among Us to Lead Their Respective Churches

Another apostle, Peter, exhorted the “elders” among us all “to shepherd the flock of God” where they resided and worshiped, “exercising oversight,” meaning leadership, authority to “rule over,” to lead the church (1 Pe 5:1-4).

Note: Now, I caution you. These were not just any older men of a church. But, as you ought to see in the self-test for pastor (also called overseer and elder of the church), there are very specific qualifications given in certain passages of Scripture for being called or eligible to pastor and lead a church.

Example #3 - Titus Was Directed by an Apostle to Appoint Pastors in the Churches to Lead Them

Consider the example of Titus. An apostle told him to “appoint” pastors (older men to rule over/overseers) in every city in Crete (meaning in every church), since they had not yet had them appointed to lead them (SEE Titus 1:5). Likewise, Timothy, who was doing “the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim 4:5), was also taught by an apostle how to appoint pastors (older men to rule over/overseers) in every church to lead them (SEE 1 Tim 3:1).

Consider the Greek Definition of the Leadership Words

Inherent in the word pastor and overseer (bishop, KJV), is the idea or concept of leading, guiding, ruling over others. Likewise, even the meaning of the word “lead” in the gift of “he who leads” (Ro 12:8) means to rule over, to lead not follow. In the Greek “lead” here means to set or place before, to set over, to be over, to superintend, preside over, to be a protector or guardian, to give aid, to care for, give attention to, to be over, to rule, to have charge over, lead, manage, or rule.
Conclusion

Finally, when all is said and done, when we read this verse: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account" (He 13:7), we now know with certainty about whom this is ultimately talking, namely pastors. For they are the “leaders” who “keep watch over your souls,” like a shepherd, meaning a pastor. Whom are you appointing to lead you, to be your leaders?

A Leader Must Be Diligent, Like an Ant

“Since we have gifts that differ... each of us is to exercise them accordingly... he who leads, with diligence” (Ro 12:6-8).

Now, every Christian ought to work hard with his gift (SEE Ro 12:11), but especially those who lead. The key quality which goes along with leading others is working very hard to do so. Therefore, Paul said that in order to properly use the gift of leading, it must be used with diligence. So, it is fitting for leaders to be diligent, not slothful.

The Definition of Diligence

In the Greek “diligence” here means haste, with haste. So he who leads must lead with a sense of urgency, with haste, with great speed and effort; speedily, like Jesus who will “quickly” bring about justice for His elect (Lk 18:8).

Now the opposite of diligence is to be negligent, lagging behind, slow, slothful, or effortless, which is not fitting for a leader of God’s people. Instead of shrinking back, leaders must be forward and hasten to accomplish or follow-through with the work which God gave them the authority to do for Christ Jesus. Our leaders must be like ants. They must not take it easy, but work hard.

1. Ants Are Diligent, But Sloths are Lazy

“Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler, Prepares her food in the summer, And gathers her provision in the harvest. How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? ‘A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest’— Your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man” (Pr 6:6-11).

Now inherent in the meaning of the word “sluggard” is laziness. The opposite of laziness is diligence. So here Solomon admonishes people who lack diligence, sloths, to study the ant because the ant is not a sloth. Instead the ant is diligent. Ants are not lazy. Therefore, diligent people are not lazy. They are not at ease.
2. Ants Are Wise, But Sloths Are Foolish

“observe her ways and be wise”

The point here is that sloths are not wise but foolish. Therefore, diligent people are wise. But, lazy people are very foolish, and outright negligent.

3. Ants Do Not Need Ruled Over, But Sloths Do

“having no chief, Officer or ruler”

Ants are not managed. They are not ruled over. They do not need a chief, a leader, because they are diligent. Therefore, diligent people do not need ruled over. Even more, a diligent person will usually lead. “The hand of the diligent will rule. But the slack hand will be put to forced labor” (Pr 12:24). You have to force the sloth to do his work because he is lazy. You must understand this truth about the relationship between a sloth and his leader. The leader must, at times, rule over him, even forcefully or in an overbearing way to get him to start or to finish his work. This is not a joy to any leader, but a grief. As the saying goes, if you do not know what to do, you will be told what to do. And if you do not do what you know you are to do, you might be forced to do it.

Even more, in verse nine, Solomon wisely questioned the sloth, saying “how long will you” hesitate or wait to get moving and “when will you” get going on it to get it done, so to speak. You have to question lazy people about their responsibilities. This is another indication or bit of evidence that proves that sloths need managed or ruled over like an irresponsible child. But again, you do not need to ask these kinds of motivating questions of a diligent person.

4. Ants Prepare, But Sloths Are Unprepared

“the ant... Prepares”

Diligent people are forward-looking, but not just for the purpose of just thinking about the future. They take the necessary steps to be ready for the future. A Christian leader, first and foremost, must especially be diligent in preparing himself and the flock for the return of Jesus Christ so that he and the flock will be accepted by Him, not rejected (consider the story of the five wise and the five foolish virgins). An ant knows that there will be a time when he cannot work; winter. So he labors all the more while he has an opportunity to work; summer. For some, winter is here and no harvesting can be done. For others, their family will be grown and they will not get a second chance to diligently labor in training them up in the Lord. For others, they know that they could die tomorrow, so they labor diligently today. In contrast, the sluggard does not take advantage of the time which he has been given to do his work. Instead, he wastes his time by sleeping or relaxing or with other distractions which make him unproductive.

Conclusion

When we consider the difference between a sluggard and a diligent person, no wonder Solomon could say that: “the precious possession of a man is diligence” (Pr 12:27). Do you have this precious possession? You must have it if you are leading others in the kingdom of God. As the Scriptures say, let him who leads, lead with diligence (Ro 12:8). But, if you are in the habit of lagging behind, are you truly a leader? Let the diligent rule, not a sluggard, for “like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the lazy one to those who send him” (Pr 10:26). Do not appoint lazy people.
Brothers, Jesus Forbids Religious Titles

The world has gone title crazy. Education systems are famous for this. They issue titles, such as [philosophical] doctor, master, etc. Many Christian schools have followed the world’s sensual example. They also grant elevated, honorary, man-made religious titles such as, “master” of divinity? or “doctor” of divinity. Can you really “master” God, Divinity? Or is He supposed to master you? Have you really become a doctor of God? Are you the Great Physician, His great physician?

As you ought to see in the following passage of Scripture, Jesus forbids those who lead in His kingdom to exult or differentiate themselves with religious titles. Likewise, Jesus also forbids those who follow in His kingdom to exult or differentiate their leaders with religious titles. For example, listen to Jesus condemn the religious titles (and callings as titles) used and given to the Jewish leaders of His day. The subject of this passage is “Religious Titles”.

“But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men... They love... respectful greetings... and being called by men, Rabbi [teacher]. But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you will be your servant. And whoever exalts himself [i.e with religious titles] shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Mt 23:5-12).

Note: Yet, the way that religious men title themselves today can be even worse than what the leading religious men did in Jesus’ day.

1. Jesus Said, “Do Not Be Called” by Religious Titles

To those who lead, Jesus said, “do not be called” certain things. Leading Christians must not exult themselves with religious titles or use their calling/gift as a title, such as teacher, leader, pastor, etc. If you lead, do you forbid or do you permit people to exult or honor you with titles? Do you love respectfully titled greetings? When people greet you, what do they say to you? What do you want people to say to you when they greet, address, or introduce you to others? How do you introduce yourself to others?

Note: Now is Jesus here saying in this passage about religious titles that no one should teach the Bible? Is He saying that no one should lead God’s people? Is He saying that we should be disrespectful when we address the servants who perform these vital tasks? Is he saying that no one should study the Bible? Certainly not. Neither is he forbidding you to call your father ‘father’, but He is saying not to call a Bible teacher ‘teacher’, that is religious father, or even a so called “God-father”. But the message is clear. If you’re teaching the Bible, you should not exalt yourself by having others call your calling, such as teacher or Rabbi. If you are leading others in God’s kingdom, you should not exalt yourself by having others call you father or leader. Likewise, you should not study to attain titles. Titles may impress man, but they certainly do not impress God. In fact, He is against them. Instead of studying to obtain a title as your final reward, you should instead study to attain the truth, and actually practice it in this area of great concern. Why pay a lot of money to study for years just to receive as the end result of your study a condemnable title? Do not be a hypocrite.
Some Christians Need to Face the Fact that They Are Sinning in This Area

It could be someone who denounces the title of pope [i.e. papa], yet they are using and have a title such as doctor, master, or reverend. Therefore, they are just as guilty or worse of the sin of elevating themselves in the sight of others with titles; hypocrites! Can you believe that you can get a degree from some religious schools called "Master of Ministry." Why did they engineer this title? What they are really saying by this title is that you've become a "master minister." What does that translate to? Since minister means servant, you've just been titled as the "master servant." Isn't that an oxymoron if you ever heard one, a master servant? Are you really the master servant? If you want to be great in the kingdom of God you are supposed to be the servant of servants. God's kingdom is not some kind of karate belt system, where each wears differing colored belts to show their man made mastery in order to gain respect from all others that see that belt. The only colored belt that a Christian should wear is the blood of Christ, to cover his own sins. Exalt Christ, not yourself!

Watch out for titles. Using them will set you up, especially if you're leading others, for a strict judgment in the area of arrogantly exalting yourself in the sight of others. What these titling companies, many religious schools, are setting you up for is to disobey the command of Jesus. Make up your mind not to let the world, nor the Christian world squeeze you, the so called leading person, into its mold. This is going to be difficult to do since so many are practicing it without giving it much thought at all, and many churches seem to love it so. Churches want those with the biggest religious titles to join and lead them, even emphasizing these titles when presenting them to others. Beware of the systems of title promotion and promulgation. No such thing is taught, promoted, or permitted in the Scripture. Instead, as we previously read in Matthew 23, Jesus Himself denounced it as hypocrisy (Mt 23:13).

Remember that the Christian religion is about renouncing things that are wrong. This means that if you have been seeking, using, and accepting elevated religious titles to promote yourself (titles like these: reverend, archbishop, pope, cardinal, high priest, father, emeritus, doctor, master, rabbi, etc.), you are to totally remove any trace of them, getting rid of them completely from your life. If you lead others in the kingdom of God, be committed to avoid man-made titles which exalt you. Get them off of your name. Get them off of your walls. Get them off of your business cards and your periodicals. Do not let people call you by these things. As Jesus said, "do not be called" these things. And do not use your calling/gift as a title, such as teacher, leader, pastor, etc.

To those who follow, Jesus said, “do not call” those who lead certain things. Christians must not exalt those who lead them with religious titles or use their calling/gift as a title, such as teacher, leader, pastor, etc. If you follow, do you exult or honor those who lead you with titles? When you greet your religious leaders, what do you say to them? How do you introduce them to others? As said before, churches love to have the ones with the biggest man-made titles come to teach or to lead them. Churches enjoy and take great pride in introducing them with their exulted titles. A church introduces one teacher as “brother” and another teacher as “Dr.,” all depending on whether or not he has obtained that hypocritical religious title or not. One teacher puts “Doctor” on his automobile license plate, but instead he should put brother on it! This behavior reveals that churches and Christians have become outspoken judges with evil motives in regards to titles among the membership. “Have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?” (Ja 2:4). “But if you show partiality, you are committing sin” (Ja 2:9). Partiality (favoritism) is sin, especially in the form religious titles.

Why do Christians even dare to open their mouths to make a man-made title distinction between one teaching member and another teaching member? Why exalt the one and humble the other? Instead Christians ought to humble the one with the exalted title by only calling him brother. This leads to the next point.

3. Jesus Said, Address Yourselves As Brethren, “Brother”

This is the solution to the title craze! Listen carefully. While pointing out the haughtiness of titles, Jesus gave us insight on what we should call each other, even if we are in a leading ministry. He simply concluded about these high-minded religious titles by saying, “you are all brothers”. This was the reasoning that He gave to us in opposition to elevating one member over another with religious titles. [The most important point/attitude here is that “I am no different than you,” brother.] Therefore, calling or addressing someone as “brother” is an accurate and humble greeting. It does not elevate or exalt one over another. It’s a common term, and even a family term, which is to be applied to all Christian men. Why would you seek an uncommon one? Why would you seek to differentiate
yourself? Are you greedy for something? Are we not all God’s children? If you’re in a leading ministry, you should simply desire a humble greeting, such as brother. Or, just ask to be called by your name alone, without any affixed title which would elevate you over another. For example, I respond to Christians who want to exalt me with titles, such as “Pastor Pat” or “Reverend Rick”, to “Just call me Pat” or “Just call me brother”. Behaving like you are simply one of the people of God is a great way to conduct yourself. But if you are sinful enough to use it, the people of God, and even the world, are doubly sinful enough to give you or call you by a religious title. Are you elevating yourself or another with titles? Just call me Pat or brother.

Conclusion

Jesus Christ forbids His disciples from exulting themselves or their brethren with elevated titles, even forbidding the use one’s calling or gift as a title, such as Pastor Bob, or Teacher [Rabbi] Bill. The reason is that we are all equally brethren, brothers and sisters. There is no partiality in this. Call yourselves brethren. Address one another as brother, sister, friend.

Note: Now because we are all brothers and sisters we must not call ourselves “The Brethren Church,” as some have done. If we did this then we would be sinning in how we divide ourselves from other churches. It would be divisive. For example, the brethren were not crucified for you were they? You were not baptized into the brethren, were you? I have written extensively on this issue of divisive church names and affiliations in the Bible Study on True vs. False Worshipers, specifically on Five Ways Churches Show Partiality Towards Church Names, and thus cause Christ or Christians to be divided into parties, partisanship, instead of impartially united.

Notes on Religious Titles and Degrees

From FreeBibleSchool.org

FAQ: What Degrees Do You Offer?

1. I [Rick David] believe that Christianity must be kept from the world’s pattern of awarding “degrees” of mystery. The kingdom of God is not like a karate belt system, where a person wears his colored belt of mystery around his waist so that everyone can see to what he attained and to get respect for it. This would be contrary to the humility that Christianity requires of its members, for it also leads to a religious titling problem that I briefly repudiate later.

2. I believe it is best to offer “Certificates of Completion” which attest to and honor your work and experience with this ministry, without granting you “degrees” and “titles”. I believe that Christianity has callings, not “degrees” and “titles”.

3. I believe that each Christian needs to make a choice about his advancement in the kingdom of God. Will it be sought after through the worldly religious educational “degree” and “title” system or will it be according to God’s word? You must decide. It is my earnest desire that this ministry help you in great measure with the latter.

FAQ: What Kind of Honorary Title Will I Receive after Completing Your Course of Study?

1. I believe that it would be hypocritical for this ministry to cap its student’s education with man-made religious titles, such as Reverend (Rev.), Doctor (Ph.D.), Master (MA), Father, Mother, etc. Likewise, I believe that it makes a person a hypocrite to receive these kinds of religious titles. Jesus said, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God” (Lk 16:15). Religious titles are highly esteemed by men, but God thinks that they are an abomination, for that is what detestable means. God specifically said that nothing abominable will be permitted to enter heaven (Re 21:8). This is a serious and weighty issue with God. Do not underestimate it like the Pharisees evidently did. Jesus told His disciples not to use religious titles (Mt 23:6-12), comparing people who do so to the hypocritical Pharisees. Instead He said that we are all brethren, meaning we are to be simply brother and sister, not mother and father, priest and layman, doctor and disciple, master and mediocrity, leader and layman, etc. I am an evangelist, no doubt about it. And that is the correct characterization of my work, as well as it being pastoral. But, when my fellow Christians or the world starts to call me “Pastor,” “Reverend,” “Evangelist,” “Leader,” or other titles, I simply tell them, “Call me brother” or “Call me Pat”. We are all brethren. I take this very seriously.

2. I believe that the main goal of this ministry is to help you to grow in the Christian faith and for some to be equipped and enabled to help others do the same, not to grant or award any titles or degrees.

3. I believe it is best to offer “Certificates of Completion” which attest to and honor your work and experience with this ministry, without granting you any “degrees” or “titles”. I believe that Christianity has callings, not “degrees” and “titles”. Many religious men and women misuse and abuse titles. It is a form of pretense, hypocrisy.

Now Complete the TEST On Greater Gifts
Self-Tests for the 5 Greater Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How to Test Yourself for the Greater Gifts

When it comes to the subject of spiritual growth, every Christian should want to cause a lot of it in himself and in other disciples. For example, “Since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church” (1 Cor 14:12). Now, the best way I know of how to do this is to “Earnestly desire the greater gifts” (1 Cor 12:31). The greater gifts are the teaching gifts, and so they are greatest in their ability to speak the words and commandments of Christ to others, and thereby grow them up in Him and His principles (Eph 4:11, 15).

Therefore, to see which greater gift you have or should seek to have, I highly recommend that you complete all five self-tests in this lesson. This will prove to be most instructive to you, and also reveal to you, by faith toward God, which of the five teaching gifts that you yourself might seek and abound in for the edification of the church.

But, how should you be tested for them? Should you be tested for them? What are the legitimate ways to determine or to prove whether or not you could have or receive a greater gift?

1. Satisfy Any God-Given Eligibility Requirements

First and foremost, as you will see in the self-tests which follow, you must meet and satisfy any God-given eligibility requirements found in the New Covenant. Thus, God, through the word of God, must in certain ways way, qualify, attest to, differentiate, and corroborate or certify you as having a greater gift.

2. Be Free of Any Limitations

Second, you must not have any limitations placed on you or allowed by God that would prevent, restrict, or forbid you from performing what is expected of a greater gift and its specialty. For example, if you have a physical limitation or disability which prevents you from traveling, this would evidently prevent you from being an evangelist. For in the New Testament, evangelists traveled from town to town to speak to individual after individual,
church after church, and group after group of people. But, this does not necessarily prevent you from being a teacher, since a teacher can be devoted to one church alone, not many churches, like would be the evangelist.

Likewise, so that those who hear can easily and readily understand what is being said, every greater gift requires “clear” speech (SEE 1 Cor 14:9). So, certain speaking limitations or disabilities would prevent a person from fulfilling the duties of a teaching gift. For “speaking” the truth about Christ is teaching (SEE Eph 4:15). You must be able to speak clearly.

Note: Additionally, if you have a mental limitation or disability, it is customarily understood that this would prevent you from fulfilling certain weighty responsibilities, not only for yourself, but also in regards to others; not only in the culture, or in your home, but also in the Christian church. This would include the greater gifts because they are the weightiest callings in the kingdom. Yet, anyone who has a mental limitation or disability has other gifts which are needed and necessary to cause the Christian church to grow. Even more, there are a lot of disciples without a mental limitation who will still not be eligible for a greater gift. As you ought to see in the self-tests for the greater gifts, God may have excluded a lot of disciples from receiving them for other significant reasons.

3. Bear the Specific and Legitimate Fruit of the Gift

Third, by their fruits you shall know them. This is true in determining both good fruit and bad fruit. So, if you have a greater gift from God, you must prove to bear the specific fruit of it. However, both fruit as well as meeting certain eligibility requirements for a greater gift, can be misleading for two reasons.

First, many people, including Satan and his angels, pose as quite eligible ministers of the truth-- as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and even other man-made greater-like gifts (SEE 2 Cor 11:14; 1 John 4:1). Second, some of them, including Satan, can, through de-

On False Greater Gifts

Notice what is absent from the God-breathed list of greater gifts: Reverends, Priests, Cardinals, Arch-Bishops, Fathers (i.e. church fathers), Popes (i.e. church popas or fathers), Mothers (church mothers), Ph.d.’s / Doctors (religious doctors), Mstrs. / Masters (religious masters), Church Directors, Church Board Members/Directors, Church Trustees, and so on and so forth.

Although these have an air of man-made greatness, these are not Christ’s greater gifts or callings. Reverend is not one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God does not call anyone to be Pope [i.e. papa] or Father [i.e. religious father]. God does not give anyone the gift of doctor or master [i.e. a doctor or master of religion]. Indeed, Jesus Himself has condemned this kind of man-made religious titling because it exalts one member over the other (SEE Mt 23:8-12). “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God” (Lk 16:15).

If God Himself did not put these parts into His body, then He does not tolerate them either. These are simply the callings and the traditions of men. Men create them and give them to men as a crowning gift. They cannot cause the true growth of the Christian church because they are not true leadership gifts. These man-made gifts arrogantly carry on and honor the traditions of men and they invalidate, suppress, and dishonor the truth about the authority or the responsibility of the authorized greater gifts which Jesus Christ gave to men when He ascended on high (Eph 4:7, 11).

You must understand these things so that you will not be deceived by them. It is not God’s will for you to have a man-made greater gift. Which is better, a man-made gift or a gift from God? You must only receive or seek after the greater gifts which are clearly revealed by the will of God, not the will of man. Do not be a hypocrite. I am talking about creating leadership titles, greater gifts, and requirements for them which do not exist in the will of God, and therefore arrogantly contend against the truth concerning true leadership.
ception, do false signs and wonders which can deceive many disciples (SEE Mt 24:24; 2 Thess 2:9; Deut 13:1-5).

Next, complete the following five self-tests to see which greater gift you have or could receive. These self-tests have relevant questions that evaluate your qualifications, limitations, and fruit. The questions, and therefore the requirements, originate from verses and contexts in the gospel which specifically relate to each greater gift.

Warning!
Do not fool yourself. The greater gifts require a lot of clear and solid proof that you actually have one or could receive one. You must thoroughly present or demonstrate all of the related evidence to prove that you have or can receive a greater gift. Before anyone or any church acknowledges, accepts, appoints, or receives you in a greater calling, it ought to first carefully validate and prove and legitimize every one of your answers below.

Apostle Self-Test (The Authority)

Are you truly called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ?

The apostles were covenant bearers, like Moses, and are therefore the special and unique authority on all matters of Christ’s doctrines, teachings, and commandments. Indeed, they have even further explained the meaning of and fulfillment of Moses’ Law, along with many prophecies in it, especially regarding Christ. This fact alone makes the apostles greater than Moses, if possible.

So, if you can truthfully answer “Yes” to all of the questions below, and give legitimate proof to validate each of one of them, then you have or can receive the gift of apostleship, and the special authority which comes along with it.

(1) __Yes __No ___Uncertain [Check One]

Weren't you with Jesus from His baptism until the time that He was taken back up in to the sky? Were you an “eyewitness” of Christ on earth? [READ Ac 1:21, 22]

Note: In objection to this question, someone might say, “Paul was an apostle and he was not at Jesus’ baptism and he did not see Jesus return to heaven.” This is true, but Paul actually did see the Lord in a vision, and therefore was an eyewitness in this sense. He also was personally chosen as an apostle by Jesus Himself, as were all of the apostles. For this is evident: the names of the apostles, and the story of how Christ personally selected them, were all written down in the gospel so that we would know who they all were for all time. Even more, Paul proved to be an apostle by giving sufficient and verifiable evidence in answer to the rest of these test questions on this gift. Now, can you yourself pass the test of an apostle of Christ, a covenant bearer?

(2) __Yes __No ___Uncertain

When you speak for God, does He consistently bear witness with you that He is speaking through you by granting all kinds of legitimate signs, wonders, and miracles for all to see? [READ He 2:2-4 / vs. 4 ‘them’ meaning the apostles]

(3) __Yes __No ___Uncertain

Will you let the whole church test you to see if you have what has been decreed by God to go along with this gift—various signs, miracles, and wonders? [READ Rev 2:2; 2 Co 12:12]

Note: Imposters have been known to pre-arrange certain things to make it appear like only a miracle or a revelation from God could have caused something to happen by them. For example, one false apostle in Philadelphia, PA was secretly finding out information about visitors who would attend his meeting. Then, in a subsequent meeting, when a visitor returned, he would astonish that visitor and all who were in attendance, with some of the personal information which he gathered about him. This was the proof which he gave to his claim of apostleship and people naïvely believed it. Others pre-arrange fake healings with people who would be in attendance at their meetings. So, you or your associates must not be allowed to control or arrange any aspect of the testing, the timing or the kind of testing, so that the results would not be suspicious and invalidated or disqualified from the start. For you must demonstrate covenant bearer power, like Moses, like the apostles.
Are you in the foundation on which all Christians must be built (that is, the teaching foundation)? Are your words written down in the New Testament? [READ Eph 2:20]

Note: Foundation means the doctrinal foundation, the actual New Testament writings of the apostles and prophets which center on the capstone of God’s building, Jesus Christ.

Is your name on one of the twelve apostolic foundation stones of heaven which will someday come down from heaven for all of God’s people to see? [Rev 21:14]

Will the Jews incite a persecution against you and crucify you or something of that sort in or around Jerusalem? [SEE Mk 16:38, 39; Ac 12:2; Lk 13:33]

Did the apostles in the Bible accept you as an apostle? [Paul was accepted as an apostle (Gal 2:9). Paul cut off would be apostles (2 Cor 11:12). John opposed one who behaved equal to or greater than an apostle (3 Jn 9).]

If you answered “Yes” to a test question, then you must also sufficiently demonstrate and present the specific proof for it. Simply answering “Yes” is not proof because the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not “Yes” and “No”. Instead they are the very outward manifestation and power of the Holy Spirit (SEE 1 Co 12:7). In other words, gifts must be demonstrated, confirmed, signified, and proven even in real-time, meaning right now, today; if indeed you have a gift.

Conclusion

Today, evidently no one can have or receive the gift of apostleship. There are many reasons for this.

1. Because none of us were eyewitnesses

None of us were with Jesus from His baptism until the time that He was taken back up into heaven (Ac 1:21, 22). For the existing apostles used this as one of the essential qualifications to become one apostle, just one to replace Judas, to keep the number at twelve. Neither were any of us specially chosen, named, and sent out in the Bible by Jesus as an apostle, like Paul who also was an eyewitness of Jesus. He saw Jesus in a vision, which obviously also marks Paul as a prophet. So, you had to be an eyewitness to be an apostle. This is one of reasons why Jesus chose apostles while He was on the earth, so that they would “be with Him” (Mk 3:14), meaning that they would be eyewitnesses. They were to witness His majesty, His authentication or proving as the Messiah. You have to be a legitimate eyewitness to be an apostle.

2. Because God is not ushering in another covenant

When God brought in the first covenant, He did so by giving Moses great miraculous power, unlike any other man in times past, to prove that He was sent by God Himself to do this (Ex 3). Likewise, God gave the apostles great miraculous power; Moses-like power, power that was greater than what Moses had, power like the Messiah had, in order to prove that they were sent by God Himself to bring to us the new covenant in our Savior, Jesus (He 2:2-4). Since this new covenant has already been established by the apostles in the first century, and since it has “once for all been handed down to the saints” (Jude 3), it is so utterly obvious that God will not bring in or start another covenant, and therefore He will not bear witness to it with miraculous power. In short, God will not give the gift of apostleship or proof of it to anyone else since the need for it has already been fulfilled “once and for all”. There was no one quite like Moses. And there will be no one quite like the apostles.

3. Because we are not the foundation / the founders of the Christian church / faith

We are not the Author or the penmen of the Christian faith. Jesus and the apostles and prophets were the ones who established it.
Therefore, they are the founders of it. God designated two gifts of the Holy Spirit, apostles and prophets, as the foundation of this New Covenant. For example, “You... are God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone” (Eph 2:19, 20). So, all must be built upon these foundational gifts, meaning established in the apostles and prophets inspired writings which corner or center on Jesus Christ. But no one else can be the founders or foundation of the covenant. Your words or your writings are not to be included in the Bible. All subsequent disciples, and gifts, have been ordained by God to stand on top of this apostolic and prophetic foundation which centers on Jesus Christ. We can take our stand on these two gifts [i.e. their inspired writings, the N.T.], but we cannot have or receive these two gifts. They are sealed, with Christ Jesus, in the foundation on which all Christians must be built. No one can be Jesus; likewise no one can be the apostles and prophets. But as the Bible foretells, false Christs, false apostles, and false prophets will arise among the people of God. Beware of the boldness of the Deceiver and the gifts he claims to have!

4. Because most disciples will not be called to drink the cup which Jesus drank

The cup which Jesus drank was a cup that the apostles would drink. The baptism with which Jesus was baptized was something with which the apostles would be baptized. This means that the Jews would instigate their persecution in or around Jerusalem.

5. Because the apostles would not accept us as apostles

Paul rejected the apostolic claims of others and condemned them (2 Cor 11:12). John indicated that others were not a part of their apostolic authoritative gifting and he even spoke against the one who thought he was equal or greater than they (3 Jn 9, 10 / ‘we’ meaning the apostles; 1Jn 4:6 / ‘us’ meaning the apostles).

Note: Now, any Christian who claims to be an apostle in a secondary sense is just being deceptive and misleading. For example, somebody might say, “Apostle means: one sent, a messenger. Therefore, you can be an apostle in that sense.” But, even the one who claims to be an apostle in a secondary or lesser sense is still claiming to be an apostle. This claim is grossly inaccurate in respect to the very essence, meaning, and purpose of the actual gift. The New Testament does not simply introduce this word ‘apostle’ into its text and use it loosely, as the culture of that day may or may not have done or defined. Instead it gives it a very, very sacred and special meaning and importance, more so than any simple messenger boy. In the sense that the word is used and defined by the New Testament, in the sacred text, you cannot feign or sort of have the gift. You either have it or you don’t. And for the reasons given beforehand, you cannot have it. You are not a Moses. You are not an apostle. You are not a covenant bearer.

Prophet Self-Test (Revelation)

Are you called to be a prophet of Christ?

The prophets of Christ received direct revelation from God, namely audibly, and then prophesied it to the disciples. So, their specialty was abounding in revelation of Christ’s will for Christians. The apostles were also prophets, for they received direct revelation from God. So, the ultimate question which you need to answer for this gift is the same as one of the questions about the gift of apostleship.

(1) __Yes __No __Uncertain [Check One]

Along with the apostles, and with Christ, are you in the foundation on which all Christians must be built [i.e. the teaching foundation]? Are your words written down in the New Testament? [READ Eph 2:20]

Notes and Objections

But Someone Might Say, “Even after Moses established the foundation of the first covenant and died, God still sent many prophets to Israel, even prophets whose teachings were not written down in the Old Testament. So God still can send prophets today to God’s people, Jew or Gentile. He can still give people the gift of prophecy.”

Now if this were true we would most likely still need to be writing, by the Holy Spirit, the New Testament to chronicle the history of Christianity, like they did with the history of Israel after Moses died. We would then need to include in that history various amounts of these prophets’ words at various and certain intervals of Christian history, like they did in the Old Testament. We would also likely need to include several individual specialized books from these prophets in the N.T., like they did in the Old Testament. But again, I must take you back to Ephesians 2:20, which says that we are built upon a foundation. The foundation of the Old Testament included both Moses’ Law and the prophets. The foundation of the New Testament includes the prophetic gospels and the prophetic letters in the New Testament. The difference then between the foundation of the O.T. and the foundation of the N.T is that the O.T. took much longer to write than the N.T. So the so called canon [i.e. authentic collection of inspired writings] of the O.T. was open longer than the canon of the N.T. before they both could be prophetically closed. The O.T. was closed sometime before Christ arrived, seemingly four hundred years before Christ. Evidently, the New Testament was closed in and around the time that all
of the apostles died.

Someone Might Say, “You do not believe that God can do miracles today and you do not believe that God can speak to someone today.” In the sense that someone claims to be an apostle, and in the sense that someone claims to be a prophet, yes, you are correct. I do not believe in those kinds of miracles or that kind of revelation because it contends with a previously laid foundation. But I do believe in miracles and I do believe that God can talk to somebody. I would not want to limit God. I have prayed for miracles. I hope that others do the same. So obviously I have the faith to believe in miracles. I have prayed for God to reveal things to me. I hope that others do the same. So obviously I have faith that God can speak to people in various ways. But I also do not want to incorrectly represent the word of God on the subject of apostles and prophets, the two most important gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:28). And, as a minister of the gospel, I do not want other Christians to be naive about these things or else Satan will try to gain the advantage over them in their faith and work in the Christian church. We do not need another foundation; therefore we do not need another apostle or prophet.

Still, Another Would Say, “But the Bible says that we should not despise prophetic utterances.” [1 Thess 5:20] This is true, but it is also says that, “if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away” (1 Cor 13:8). That is a prophetic utterance which I do not want to despise. Likewise, I do not want to despise any other prophetic utterance in the New Testament concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Neither should you. Even the prophecies in the Old Testament seemingly stopped roughly four hundred years before Christ arrived. So prophecy does not have to continue, and continue, and continue until the end of the validity of a covenant. Seemingly, it did not continue until the end of the first covenant. Why is it so hard to believe that it would cease sometime shortly into the new covenant and even way before it ends? Remember and believe in this specific prophecy in the New Testament: “contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Before it could be delivered once for all, it first had to be given to somebody in its entirety over a period of time. Evidently, that time is over.

The prophets were not apostles, yet the apostles were also prophets because they received direct revelation of the word from God.

Any Christian who claims to be a prophet in a secondary sense is just being deceptive and misleading. For example, somebody might say, “The Bible says that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy [Re 19:10]. Therefore, you can be a prophet if you witness to others about Jesus, even without direct revelation from God.” But notice in the preceding sentence it says that we are to hold to the testimony of Jesus, and then the verse you are talking about defines that testimony as the spirit of prophecy. So the testimony that it is talking about here is the actual gospel of Jesus Christ, the New Testament, not prophets or pseudo-prophets. It is the actual testimony of Jesus that is prophetic, not just any testimony of Jesus. It means that the message is prophetic, not anyone else who repeats it is prophetic. I can quote the Bible all day long and I still would not be a prophet. Quoting revealed truth does not make anyone a prophet, but it could help to make someone who can do it well and thoroughly a teacher, evangelist, or pastor. Quoting truth which first comes directly from God, that has not yet been revealed, truly that is prophecy or the spirit of prophecy. So there are two things here, prophets and prophecy. One is a person and the other is the actual testimony or words that witness for the Spirit. Anyway, the person who claims to be a prophet in a secondary or lesser sense is still claiming to be a prophet. This claim is grossly inaccurate in respect to the very essence, meaning, and purpose of the actual gift. The gift of prophecy means direct revelation of the word of God from God, words that have not yet been revealed.

On Pastoring a Flock

Many churches and many leading men, including pastors, do not understand some very important aspects about this gift. So before you test yourself for the gift of pastor, you must first understand some very important concepts about it. This will help you to understand and to accept the passages and verses used in this self-test, the requirements that one must satisfy to be a pastor. For example, do you fully understand the intertwined meaning, purpose, and calling or gifting of pastors, elders, and overseers? For these are one position, not three positions.

One Position, Not Three

As I pointed out to you in the lesson on The Gift to Lead Souls, the Scripture reveals that pastors (“shepherds”) are older men (“elders”) who are to rule over (“overseers” or “overseer,” which all describe one position, not three positions).

Without a doubt, both Paul and Peter, who were both gifted as apostles, the highest calling in the Christian church, the position with the authority, clearly spoke about elders, overseers, and pastors as one gift of the Holy Spirit, not three different gifts. It is a great mistake for a church to have elders, overseers, and pastors or some combination of these three because these terms were meant to further describe the one calling, pastor. For example,
just being an older man, an elder, is not one of the greater gifts (it is a Situational Gift). Gender alone is a Situational Gift. But, a pastor must be an older man, an elder, as you ought to see in this self-test.

So, when you complete this self-test for the gift of pastor, you will see Scriptures listed that, if you looked them up and studied the context in which they were placed, concerning elders and overseers, you should see that these passages specifically and directly relate to the qualifications or eligibility requirements to be a pastor, to have or to receive this gift. You must see or make the connection between the related keywords—pastor, elder, overseer.

Notes: Paul called [1] the “elders” of the church in Ephesus because the Holy Spirit had made them [2] the “overseers” of that church to [3] “pastor” it (Ac 20:17, 28). Elder [or presbyter in the Greek] describes his age (old), his gender (male), and patriarchalness. Overseer [or bishop, as translated in the King James Version] describes his authority that he must exercise over a church, a ruler. Shepherd [or pastor in the Greek] describes his main responsibility to feed and care for the flock by personally teaching it the word of Christ. Likewise, Peter used the exact same terms when he called out to certain older men everywhere to lead their churches by pastoring it (1 Pe 5:1-4).

Two Passages List Qualifications for the Gift of Pastor

In the New Testament, there are two contexts of Scripture which list key eligibility requirements for qualifying disciples for this gift (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Below, they are noted throughout the Pastor Self-Test for you to reference.

Note: A single church is to have several pastors working in among their congregation (Titus 1:5), not just one. Today, this is another common mistake among churches, for many seek to have and appoint only one pastor. Even more, many of them do not meet certain key eligibility requirements below.

Warning!

The list of eligibility requirements for having the gift of pastor are pref-

aced by the Holy Spirit with “must be” (1 Tim 3:2). This means that God Himself had said that they are required versus optional, essential versus non-essential, have to be versus maybe. So, you ought to be strict, but not over exacting, with each of these things, not lenient, loose, or careless with them. Otherwise, Christians will be led by men who are not called or properly equipped or experienced enough to lead them. This will also cause you to set up a false requirements system, based on your own lax or permissive thinking, not God’s holy thinking. Many churches are famous for receiving and appointing people who are not qualified by God to be their pastors.

Pastor Self-Test (In-Reach)

Are you called to be a pastor?

The specialty or strength of a pastor is abundant in-reach to a church family, to care for it, to pray with it, to feed it on the words and commandments of Jesus Christ, to oversee and rule over it, to manage it. Therefore, a pastor must be a good family man, as is evident in the self-test. But, he must not only be a good family man. He must also abound in the gift of teaching.

So, if you can truthfully answer “Yes” to all of the questions below and give legitimate proof to validate and satisfy each one of them, then you have or can receive the gift of pastor and the special power of legitimately exercising abundant in-reach which goes along with it.
Alert!

For this self-test, I highly recommend that you use a direct quote Bible [a strictly literal translation]. For example, many “translations” do not directly quote the ancient copies of the holy Scriptures. Many are paraphrases. Others are suppressions, such as the “Gender Neutral” or “Gender Inclusive” versions. For these are not gender neutral, but feminine favored or pervert preferred translations. For they remove tens of thousands of male terms, with some of them even blurring the strictly masculine Greek terms used in the following passages on qualifying pastors.

(1) __Yes __No __Uncertain [Check One]

Are you a man, not a woman, not a child? [READ 1 Tim 3:1]

[“If any man”: Pastor is a gender specific gift or term. It’s masculine and means shepherd, not shepherdess, not pastorette. Masculine emasculated Bibles, cunningly called “Gender-Neutral” Bibles for sinfully suppressive reasons, aim to remove most all male terms from the Bible like man, elder, husband, son, etc. Some do not like to be limited by what God has specifically said, especially regarding men. Therefore, depending on the Bible you use to validate this test, the translators may have suppressed the truth about males with non-masculine terms, such as person, spouse, etc. You will find much more about these misleading and inaccurate translations in The Bible Study on “True Worshipers... For Such People the Father Seeks to Be His Worshipers” (Jn 4:23). But from the beginning, you must understand that the gift of pastor is a masculine calling, a gender specific calling. In this way, it is an exclusive gift. It does not include females. This is God’s specifically stated will, not man’s.]

(2) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you an elder [i.e. an older man], not a younger man, not a young woman, not an older woman? [Titus 1:5]

[In the Bible, the term “elder” always means older man.]

(3) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you the husband of one wife, not more than one wife, not single, not divorced, not the wife of one husband, not the husband of one husband, etc.? [1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6]

[The term “husband” used here is in the Greek ‘aner,’ which is a masculine word and always means a man or a husband, not a woman.]

(4) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you free from carrying around any log of sin? [1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6]

[“Above reproach,” essentially means not open to the charge of any condemnable log vs. speck of sin, for we all sin in some ways. Even his children’s walk, in certain ways, must not bring a log of reproach on him to disqualify him / below see question 5, 6, 7 & 8.]

(5) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Do you keep your children under control and in a dignified vs. undignified way? [1 Tim 3:4, 5]

[“One who manages his household well,” meaning in the specific stated sense of “keeping his children under control,” not uncontrolled or out of control or disorderly.]

(6) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Do you have children who believe? [Titus 1:6]

[You must not only have children, some of them must believe in Jesus as Christ. If you have no children, or if they are all unbelievers, then this means you do not yet have the right kind of experience for which God is looking in a pastor.]

(7) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are your children free from the charge of getting intoxicated? [Titus 1:6]

[“Not accused of dissipation,” meaning intoxication, getting drunk and the like.]

(8) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are your children free from the charge of rebellion? [Titus 1:6]

[“Rebellion” means being unruly, disorderly against his authority.]

(9) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you free from the charge of being habitually selfish? [Titus 1:7]

[“Self-willed” means selfish, covetous, self-centered like Diotrephes who just wanted to be first in his church. Do you just want to be first? Are you just looking out for yourself?]

(10) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you slow to wrath? [1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7, 8]

[“Temperate,” “not quick-tempered,” “self-controlled,” in the sense of being slow to wrath. Peter, an apostle, who also claimed to be a pastor (1 Pe 5:1), was a quick-minded man, especially in answering the question about who was Jesus or in severely rebuking and judging Simon for wanting to buy the gift of apostleship. But he was not quick to wrath. There is a difference here. At one time James and John wanted to be wrathful (Lk 9:54). Do you get the point?]
(11) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you prudent? [1 Tim 3:2]

[Prudent means careful, not foolish or naïve, but wise; a wise man. Was Jonathan “prudent” when he attacked the garrison? What is the difference between demonstrating great or abundant faith toward God and being imprudent?]

(12) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you worthy of respect and involved with outsiders in a reputable vs. disreputable way? [1 Tim 3:2, 3:7]

[Respect means admiration, in this case of things that are of “good reputation” or repute outside of the church, things which would not bring reproach from God, a rebuke.]

(13) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you in the habit of inviting people into your home, especially Christians? [1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8]

[“Hospitality” meaning habitually inviting people into your home to provide them with food and/or covering, lodging.]

(14) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Have you received the gift of teaching? [1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:9-14]

[“Able to teach,” meaning power to impart the will of God by speaking Christ’s words and commandments, especially in the stated sense of publicly exhorting and refuting those who contradict the word of truth, even rebuking evil and rebellious members with severity when necessary. Complete the self-test on the gift of teaching to see if you have or can receive the gift of Christian teaching.]}

(15) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you free from the habit or practice of using intoxicating substances? [1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7]

[“Not addicted to wine”: An addiction is simply a habit or a regular practice of reliance or dependence on something vs. remaining independent from it.]

(16) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you free from the charge of being physically combative and instead gentle and peaceable? [1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7]

[“Not pugnacious,” meaning a fighter in the physical sense, like a barroom brawler, boxer, warrior, etc.]}

(17) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you free from the charge of serving money first and God second? [1 Tim 3:3]

[“Free from the love of money,” meaning not like the rich young ruler; you cannot serve God and mammon, etc. For example, how devoted are you to the Christian church and its work as compared to your job or other activities in the world? Which comes first in your life? How so?]}

(18) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you free from the charge of obtaining, receiving, or earning money in a sinful way? [Titus 1:7]

[“Sordid gain,” meaning ill-gotten gain, filthy or unclean, sinful, like bribes, pilfering, kickbacks, stealing, extortion, coveting, and the like, or even making money off of people’s sins or vices.]

(19) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you a seasoned Christian? [1 Tim 3:6]

[“Not a new convert,” meaning an inexperienced and untested disciple, a babe in Christ, not yet mature.]

(20) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you in the habit of being loving towards what is good? [Titus 1:8]

[As opposed to abhorring, hating, despising, criticizing, being critical of, reviling, slandering it, etc. For some men, for certain personal problematic reasons, are poor judges of what is good. Therefore, they are not “just,” meaning righteous or able to judge rightly.]

(21) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you of a stable and sound mind? [Titus 1:8]

[“Sensible” means coherent, rational, sane vs. incoherent, irrational, insane, or mentally disabled.]

(22) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Are you a good judge who renders just verdicts? [Titus 1:8]

[To be ‘just’ mainly means to be right vs. wrong, righteous.]

(23) __Yes __No __Uncertain

Do you have strict religious habits? [Titus 1:8]

[To be ‘devoted’ means to be committed, careful, strict versus uncommitted, careless, loose, and lax with the principles of Christianity.]
Conclusion

The gift of pastor is a great gift. But in order to be one, a disciple must satisfy a great amount of requirements for it, as listed in certain Scriptures, even ones over which he has no control, only God. It is an exclusive, not inclusive gift. Not all disciples can have it, especially young disciples. In my country, many young disciples, male or female, are appointed as pastors of churches, of youth groups, and so on and so forth. Why is this so? Is this God’s will for the gift of pastor?

Now, you may have noticed that the God breathed requirements and qualifications for pastor do not include any kind of school degree or title, or any amount of formal religious schooling. Therefore, these man-made things should not be given any weight in deciding who can or cannot be a pastor in the Christian church, otherwise these things end up arrogantly contending against revealed truth. Churches and their ministers will become arrogant in respect to these things and so lie and compete against the truth, not obey it. Now, in summary of this self-test, consider the exclusiveness of the gift of pastor.

1. It is a gender specific gift

Only men are called to be pastors, specifically qualified older men (1 Tim 3:1; Titus 5:1), elders. This excludes disciples who are children, or young men, and all female members.

Notes: Female disciples are explicitly commanded not to exercise leadership or a speaking gift [specifically the teaching gift], in the assembly, the church, during worship, or be in charge of a church or teach and lead men (1 Tim 2:11, 12; 1 Tim 3:15; 1 Cor 14:34). Therefore God forbids all women from teaching the Christian church and from ruling over it, though they may teach their children or teach women or speak to men and encourage them in the truth outside of church (When you finish the Teaching Self-Test, you will see that women can teach, are called teach, but only in certain ways or with certain groups of disciples). As it is written, when it comes to speaking in an assembly, they are to remain silent (1 Cor 14:34). They are not to teach or lead men in the church (1 Tim 2:11, 12). Therefore, they cannot be a church speaker or a pastor of a church. In other words, they should not be given the microphone. But it is understood that female disciples have or can receive other gifts which build up the Christian church and cause it to grow, spiritually.

Now, some women have been most instrumental in causing church growth, even though they did it without exercising a greater gift over or in the church, but through other good and worthy gifts of the Holy Spirit. Yet, as you ought to see in the Teacher Self-Test, God has called and authorized certain women to teach certain disciples, in certain approved circumstances. So, I highly recommend that all females complete that test, and to seek ways to teach the words of Christ to the disciples whom God wants them to encourage with it.

2. It is for speck versus log carrying members

A man cannot be anymore in the habit of practicing any one of the sins that lead to death in the Lake of Fire [1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6].

3. It is only for husbands who are monogamous

He must be a husband to one wife (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6). This is called monogamy. This excludes men who are married to more than one wife (polygamy), men who never married (the gift of being unmarried), the separated, or the divorced.

4. It is only for fathers who have had believing children

He must be a father who has children who have believed in Jesus as Christ (Titus 1:6). This excludes the childless husband and the husband with all unbelieving children.

5. It is not for fathers of rebellious children, who do not control their children, or whose children get intoxicated

(a) His children must not be rebellious (Titus 1:6). This excludes the father who has a child who is in the habit of not listening to him, obeying him, or not being and they must keep his children under control. This excludes the permissive or lazy father who is not in the habit of properly controlling his children. (b) His children must not get intoxicated. This excludes the father who has children who get drunk, high, etc. For the church cannot have a man leading it who
does not require it of his own children. How will he require it of a church?

6. It is not for selfish men

Only men who put God first can be pastors (Titus 1:7). This excludes men who are known to be in the habit of putting themselves and their interests and desires first, like a self-centered child. It is not for selfishly ambitious men. Selfish ambition is not a gift, but is sure acts like one.

7. It is not for physically combative men

Only men who are peaceable men can be pastors (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7, 8). This excludes men who are in the habit of physically fighting or combating others.

8. It is not for foolish men

Only men who are wise can be pastors (1 Tim 3:2). This excludes men who are in the habit of playing the fool, foolish men, silly men.

9. It is only for admirable men

Only men who are worthy of admiration can be pastors (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7). This excludes men with a bad reputation, meaning they are engaged in some form of evil conduct in or outside the church in the world.

10. It is only for hospitable men

Only men who are in the regular habit of offering hospitality to others can be pastors (1 Tim 3:2. Titus 1:8). This excludes men who are not in the habit of inviting Christians into their home to refresh them.

11. It is only for men who have the gift of teaching

This excludes men who do not or cannot teach the essentials of the faith, the basic commandments of Christianity, and even advanced topics (1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:9-14). In the Teacher Self-Test, you will see what I mean.

12. It is only for sober men

Only men who are not addicted to intoxicating substances can be pastors (1 Tim 3:3, Titus 1:7). This excludes men who are in the regular habit using intoxicating substances. An addiction is simply a habit.

13. It is only for men who have their priorities in the right order

Only men who put God first can be pastors (1 Tim 3:3, Titus 1:7). This excludes men who are in the regular habit of first doing their work, hobbies, entertainment, or recreation, etc., before doing the work of the Lord, such as attending regular church meetings, and so on and so forth.

14. It is only for men who make a respectful living

Only men who earn or want to earn money in a legitimate way can be pastors (Titus 1:7). This excludes men who steal, extort, covet, and the like or make money off of people’s sins or vices, or men who want to be pastor just for the money, the living; leeches.

15. It is only for men who are experienced with Christianity

Only men who have been Christians for some time can be pastors, seasoned men (1 Tim 3:6). This excludes men who are new converts.

16. It is not for men who are critical of things which are good

Only men who love what is good can be pastors (Titus 1:8). This excludes men who are in the habit of speaking against, criticizing, being judgmental of, or reviling things that are essentially good. Men who cannot judge properly cannot be pastors, for it requires righteous judging.

17. It is only for men who have a sound mind

Only men who are mentally stable can be pastors (Titus 1:8). This excludes men who are mentally unsound, unstable, or mentally disabled.
18. It is only for men who are good judges

Only men who can decide between right and wrong can be pastors (Titus 1:8). This excludes men who cannot make just decisions.

19. It is only for devoted men

Only men who have strict religious habits can be pastors (Titus 1:8). This excludes men who are uncommitted, or not careful, or loose and lax with the requirements of the faith.

Notes: But someone has said, “We do not have anybody in our church who can meet all of these requirements. But, we still need to have a pastor. So, somebody will have to be our pastor even though this person will not meet some of the requirements.” Now, in answer to this, there are two problems with this way of thinking. First, what you need is a disciple who has the gift of teaching, a member who is qualified to teach the Christian church. So, you do not need a pastor who is unqualified. You do not need an unqualified authority. You simply need a teacher (an evangelist or a teacher who does not have the additional specialty of abundant outreach, in and outside of your church). Yet, the gift of teaching (including evangelism) does not mean that one also is a pastor. A teacher is not a pastor, but a pastor must be a teacher. Do you understand these things? Second, you must not select or appoint a disciple to a position he is not qualified to have or receive from God. This will cause him to be out of his true place in the body of Christ, making him a disjointed member in ways that are harmful to both. So, you need someone to teach you the words of Christ. This could be a pastor. It could be a teacher. It could be an evangelist. At least your church, and my church, and all churches, have the teachings of the apostles and prophets of Christ written down for us in the New Testament. So, even if we do not have a pastor, a teacher, an evangelist, we are not without great teachers. Amen? Even an ungifted man can read the Scriptures out loud to us during church, and we will be taught by great men.

On Teaching and Evangelizing (Outreach)

The reason I combined these two gifts (evangelism and teaching) into one test is because their basic requirements, qualifications, and fruit are the same. But the gift of evangelism brings with it a specialty which further distinguishes it from the basic gift of Christian teaching.

So, both the evangelist and the teacher have the gift to teach. But the evangelist has an additional facet or fruit to his gift of abundant outreach with the words and commandments of Christ, specifically in making new disciples all over the place (Ro 15:20), and in organizing and maturing churches all over the place (such as, helping churches appoint qualified pastors and deacons).

Timothy was specifically commanded to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim 4:5), which obviously included the work to “set in order what remains” or what was lacking in the churches by selecting, qualifying, and appointing qualified pastors and deacons (SEE Titus 1:5; 1 Tim 3:1). For churches need pastors and deacons to serve it in a qualified, formally appointed way. We need true leadership. We need true servantship. We need guided (pastors). We need cared for (deacons).

A Teacher of Christian Content

The gift of teaching means the ability to teach Christ (Christian teachings, principles, doctrines, and commandments), not simply an ability to teach. For example, many people teach public or private school children, and some parents teach home schooled children. But, as you ought to see in this self-test on Christian teaching, this kind of teaching ability or experience in no major way qualifies a person for the Christian gift of teaching. For Christian teaching ability is all about Christian subject matter, basic and advanced, and mastery of it in mind and in practice, and also the ability to articulate it verbally through speaking.
So, just being some kind of teacher in the world does not qualify one to be a Christian teacher. One must master Christian content, basic and advanced. Yet, speaking ability is an essential characteristic of being a Christian teacher. To be a Christian teacher, one must be a speaker, a clear speaking person, a proclaimer. One must have the courage, ability, and boldness to speak to others, even in difficult circumstances. For it is through the foolishness of the message preached that God has decided to save men (see 1 Cor 1:22), and even to mature men (Eph 4:15).

Therefore, in order to be a teacher of Christ, aiming to be a good example is not enough. One must also be a speaker of Christ’s teachings. So, if you truly desire this gift, must learn to speak for Christ. You have to sometime, somewhere, somehow start speaking about Him and His commandments to others, and increase in your ability to do so.

Teaching Christ and His commandments is quite a learning experience, and builder of conviction, and may be one of the best ways to grow spiritually and maintain your own spirituality. For how can a pencil remain sharp or expend itself in a useful way if it is not constantly sharpened? Teaching requires intentional and constant sharpening of ones ability and message to be more and more precisely in conformity to what Christ actual said and taught and requires.

Three Essential Qualifications of a Christian Teacher

In this Teacher Self-Test, there are three broad and essential eligibility requirements which you must meet or satisfy to have this gift. These requirements have been taken from Romans 2:17-19. This passage of Scripture speaks about “a teacher” (vs. 20) and what he ought to (1) know and (2) be in order to qualify him as a teacher, or else he will bring reproach and judgment upon himself from God. So the main subject of this context is teaching, not the nationality of the one teaching, Jew or Gentile. These essential requirements apply to all teachers of Christianity because this passage is New Covenant teaching or doctrine. Notice the three things a Christian teacher must be.

1. He must know and approve of the first and elementary teachings about Christ (eg. He 5:12; 6:1-2). For example, “If you... know... and approve the things that are essential” (Ro 2:18). Do you know the things which Christ and His apostles and prophets said are essential?

2. He must be able to mature disciples beyond the basics, beyond making them into disciples of Christ. For example, “If you... are a teacher of the immature” (Ro 2:20). What do new Christians need to learn? In what ways do more seasoned Christians need to grow?

3. He must be a speck vs. log carrying member of Christ. For example, “You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal,
do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?” (Ro 2:21-23). Are you an adulteress? Are you an adulterer? Are you greedy? Are you practicing something that Christ has condemned? How big are your sins to God, loggish or speckish?

Note: If you truly wish to teach Christ to some others, then you must be like Ezra (Ezra 7:10). First, he set his heart on studying the word of the Lord. It was his main, number one priority and focus in life. Second, he aimed to practice the word of God. And third, he then aimed to teach it to all Israel. These three principles of being a good teacher of the word of God are applicable today. To make progress in it, like Ezra, one must first be devoted to it. Second, like Ezra, one must study to put the word into practice in one’s own life. Finally, as a teacher, he must share with others what he has learned, the truth of Christ’s words and how to practice it. Amen. Have you set your heart on studying the words of Christ? How will it change your practice of it? Will you teach others what you have learned?

A Warning about Teaching

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment” (James 3:1). So, all who teach will undergo “a stricter judgment” by the Lord on Judgment Day. Now, strict means rigid and hard vs. softer and eased. The context of this warning clearly reveals the specific reason why many disciples should not become teachers (i.e. pastors, evangelists, and teachers). It is because of the imperfections or immaturities among so many of us, specifically and especially with our tongues, that is our speech. “For we all stumble in many ways” (Ja 3:2), meaning in our speech. We can all easily make mistakes in what we say.

If you speak up for God in church, in and among disciples, even informally, watch it! You then will undergo a stricter judgment. For speaking is teaching (SEE Eph 4:15). If you cannot teach, don’t. If you should not teach, don’t. If for whatever reason you should not speak for Christ, don’t. Jesus will require it of you. It will not go easy on you.

Pastors Must Have this Gift

Anyone who wants to be a pastor must also have the gift of teaching. So, pastors must clearly demonstrate that they can pass this test on teaching in order to be a pastor of a Christian church. They must also meet all of the other specific requirements for pastor. But, a teacher or an evangelist does not have to meet the requirements of a pastor because they are not pastors. Yet, all of the clear speaking gifts are ministers of the gospel, including teachers, pastors, and evangelists.

Many more members can have or receive the gift of teaching or evangelism than the more stringent gift of pastor. Pastors are shepherds who have to give an account to the Chief Shepherd regarding the church that they are leading (SEE He 13:17). This is the highest accountability and it will be strict. But as the following warning alerts us, all teachers will undergo a strict accounting to the Lord for their teaching and conduct. Therefore, all teachers ought to greatly revere the Lord and His word.

Teacher Self-Test

(Speaker)

Are you called to be a teacher?

A teacher is someone who is abounding in speaking the words and commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 4:15). An evangelist is a teacher, but has the added special ability to abound it to not just one, but many churches, cities, and to the world (outreach). Yet, even though these are two different greater gifts (because of the specialty of the evangelist), both the teacher and the evangelist have one thing in common. They can both teach (speak the words and commandments of Christ, abundantly).

So, if you can truthfully answer “Yes” to all of the questions below and give legitimate proof to validate each one of them, then you have
or can receive the gift of teacher and the responsibility and duty that comes with it, to speak up for Christ and His teachings and commandments. And if your teaching gift is also given to evangelism to more than one people group or church, then you have the right to legitimately exercise the abundant outreach that attends and attests to it.

Alert! Below are four key questions concerning this gift. Before you answer any of them with “Yes,” I want you to carefully read through all four of them, including the notes and details underneath each question. For in addition to the “Yes, No, Uncertain” questions, below each one of them, there are discussion questions you must answer.

(1) __Yes __No __Uncertain [Check One]
Do you know and approve of the essential teachings about the Christ?

[Ro 2:18 with “essential” meaning the first teachings about the Christ concerning conversion to Him, not the second teachings or teachings which mature a disciple once he is made into a disciple]

For when Jesus returns, He will judge, meaning condemn “those who do not [a] know God” and... those who do not [b] obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction” (2 Thess 1:8, 9). They will not receive eternal life, because they did not essentially know God and essentially obey the gospel. Therefore:

[a] What must one essentially come to “know” about God to be saved?  
What must one know about God to be saved?

[b] How does one essentially “obey the gospel” to be saved?  
What must one do to be saved?

Write your answers on separate sheets of paper.

(2) __Yes __No __Uncertain
Do you know how and what to teach an “immature” Christian? [Ro 2:20]

[Indeed, one must first become a Christian in order to be an immature one. So, an immature Christian already knows and has obeyed what he needs to avoid the penalty of hell for his sins. He has learned the essential elementary teachings about the Christ, the first teachings. But what teachings come next and for the rest of his Christian life?]

What do immature Christians essentially need to know or obey to become mature? What are the second teachings?

Write your answer on separate sheets of paper.

(3) __Yes __No __Uncertain
Are you free from every log of sin? [Ro 2:21-29; Mt 7:1-5]

[For God will judge and condemn all teachers who are, in hypocrisy, practicing some condemnable form of sin. Similarly, one cannot even be a Christian if he himself has not yet overcome certain sins. So, if one is sinning in a certain large way, one cannot be saved, no matter if he is a teacher or not.]

List and define all of the logs of sin.  
What sins must a sinner must mournfully renounce and separate from to be saved, and saints not enter into to remain saved?

Write your answer on separate sheets of paper.
Females Have a Special and “Precious” Gift

The beauty of a female is to be much deeper than her natural, built-in beautiful form or appearance in the sight of a male. What makes her most lovely in the sight of God, and a true male, of which I am one and can attest to, is her true specialty from God. It has something to do with her being true to that nature in a bigger way, for a bigger cause.

For example, when we get to the bottom of this issue of gender, when we understand the cause or reason for it, when we discover the truth about it, this goes deeper than the idea of only being male and female. For the special gifts of being male and female goes beyond gender. For example, we know that woman was made for man (Ge 2:18; 1 Cor 11:9). Yet, the special relationship between a woman and a man, males and females, ultimately represents the relationship between Christ and His church (SEE Eph 5:22-33; Rev 19:7-9). This is a big discovery! So, women are ultimately more important than just being female! Males are ultimately more important than just being male.

Their greater purpose goes beyond their gender, into modeling on earth the relationship between Christ and the church. This leader-follower relationship (between males and females) is God’s will on earth, especially in the churches of God.

The Bride of Christ Is Not The Head of Christ (The Groom)

Likewise, females are not to be the head of males, especially in Christianity (Ge 3:16; 1 Cor 11:3). For God highly favors submissive, gentle, and quiet women, saying that they are “precious in the sight of God” (1 Pe 3:4). So, the key special nature of the gift of being female is her beautiful submissive, quiet, non-leading nature. In the sight of true men, this is precious or highly valued as well. Yet, the
problem with this is that the sensual ungodly world does not know what is valuable in the sight of God.

Therefore, many females are not subjecting themselves to men in the churches by being silent when it comes to leading and teaching the churches. But, we know the ultimate purpose of being male and female. It is to represent, and demonstrate, and model the complete authority that Christ has over His church, thus giving him the glory of being the head.

Note: Since, the subject of male and female gender and its respective specialties is studied more perfectly in the Bible Study on the Situational Gifts, I will not continue to speak about it in this lesson. Yet, I gave you the key to understanding the female gender. As a female, when you discover the heart of the matter of being one, you can see it has some broader and significant meaning than only being female (likewise for being male). Will you pervert or support this mystery which illustrates Christ and His church? It all depends on whether or not you will refrain from representing the groom in church.

**Women Who Are Eligible to Teach Other Women**

An apostle said that certain Christian women can be “teaching... the young women” (Titus 2:3, 4). Therefore, below is the list of eligibility requirements for being a teacher of women. It is from the context authorizing certain women to teach certain principles of Christ to other women, especially how to be a true woman, who demonstrates the deeper meaning of being a female (READ Titus 2:3-5). Remember the bride vs. groom illustration. Which one should a woman be?

1. **Are you an older Christian woman, not a younger woman, or a child? [READ Titus 2:3]**
   [Question her age; God wants "older women," senior members, not junior members, teaching the women how to be true women.]

2. **Is your behavior reverent? [Titus 2:3]**
   [Question her reverence, meaning how she demonstrates and practices proper respect for her calling as a Christian woman in church, in her home, and in the world. How does she highly regard (respect) her husband?]

3. **Are you free from the habit of gosiping about others? [Titus 2:3]**
   [Question her tongue; is it slanderous, spiteful, does it spread spiteful or maligning or slanderous lies about others? Is she catty? Is she just out to destroy and repudiate others with her words and behavior towards them?]

4. **Are you free from the habit or practice of getting intoxicated? [Titus 2:3]**
   [Question her addictions. “enslaved to much wine,” meaning drunkenness. An addiction is simply a habit or a regular practice of reliance or dependence on something vs. remaining independent from it.]

5. **Do you love your husband? [Titus 2:4]**
   [Question her love for her husband. In what essential ways is a Christian wife to love her husband? How has she demonstrated this?]

6. **Do your love your children? [Titus 2:4]**
   [Question her love for her children. In what essential ways is a Christian mother to love her children? How has she demonstrated it?]

7. **Are you mentally stable or free from a mental disability? [Titus 2:5]**
   [Question the soundness of her mind, her senses. Is she "sensible" or nonsensical?]
(8) __Yes __No __Uncertain
Are you free from any sexual or sensual misconduct not befitting an older Christian woman? [Titus 2:5]

[Question her purity, her holiness, her spirituality vs. her sensuality.]

(9) __Yes __No __Uncertain
Is your home your main work and do you spend most of your time there? [Titus 2:5]

[Question the subject of her work and the main location of it. Does she work at home? Does she focus on the home? Is she largely experienced at homemaking? For other Christian women need help from an experienced and proven homemaker. Christian women need matured in homemaking. In various ways in the home, this is how wives are to love their husbands and children.]

(10) __Yes __No __Uncertain
Are you a good-natured woman? [Titus 2:5]

[Question her kindness, meaning is she of good constitution or nature, useful, salutary, good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy towards her husband and children. Is she good natured, mild-mannered or sharp-tongued and severe, full of good favor (grace) towards others or wrathful or ill-natured toward them, or simply unpleasant and disagreeable?]

(11) __Yes __No __Uncertain
Are you subject to your own husband? [Titus 2:5]

[Question her marriage relationship. Is her husband her head, or is she willfully separated, divorced, and out from under the authority of her husband? Does she submit in all ways to him, in speaking roles and leadership roles, in the home, in the community, and so on and so forth? Is she the bride or the groom? Does she yield in all things to him, like the church is to yield in all things to Christ?]

(12) __Yes __No __Uncertain
Is the main content of your teaching centered on the Christian woman’s role in the home, family, church, and world? [Titus 2:3-5]

[Question the content of her teaching. Is it focused on true womanhood? Specifically, how does your teaching relate to the home, how a woman ought to love her husband and children, housekeeping, hospitality, her role toward males, and so on and so forth?]

The Main Subject of Her Teaching Must Be the Home, The Family

Obviously, the subject of her teaching, the specialty of her teaching must be the home, the family. Specifically, she is to be: “teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored” (Titus 2:3, 4, 5).

Now, these things all relate to the home, the family, specifically the role of the Christian woman; true womanhood. So, the ultimate purpose of her teaching is to bring honor and glory to the word of God by training Christian women to be true women, who must be lovingly devoted to and focused on caring for the people in their own homes and families.

But, many nations and cultures are dishonoring the word of God because they do not understand the deep, mysterious, and hidden godly meaning of being female. This is a big distraction and temptation for Christian women. So, this is why we must have older Christian women, who have demonstrated true womanhood, true female-ism, who have and are modeling it, to speak and to and teach the younger Christian women about true womanhood. For this helps God’s higher purpose for the genders, and the relationship between the two, especially the relationship between the church (all Christians) and Christ.
Evaluate Her Credentials

Now if she is called by God to teach on various aspects of the home, then she first must be or have been a satisfactory and good example of each of these aspects. That is why she must first be tested, evaluated, and proven on them before she can teach other women. That is why these things are included in the above test. It is supposed to be the basis or qualifications which truly enable her to teach other women, her example. But she also must be able to articulate her teaching, not just set an example.

However, “there are varieties of ministries” (1 Cor 12:5). So, it is applicable that certain Christian women would serve women in other ways. For example, some women are quite a consolation to women who have been hurt in some way. But, here I am speaking generically vs. specifically for the reason that “there are a variety of ministries” vs. only one women’s ministry. But any teaching woman should not neglect a focus on the home because many hurting women are wives and still have homes, and children, and husbands. Husbands need true love from their wives. Children need true love from their mothers. The church needs true love from females.

There are five teaching gifts (Eph 4:7, 11), which all exhort and give wisdom and instruction to people who are interested in receiving it or benefiting by it. Some are apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and some teachers, and some teachers of women. In certain ways, these all can be very exclusive gifts, not only because many of us cannot meet certain qualifications for them, but especially because many of us do not have the right content in our lives and speech or teaching to make us eligible or profitable to others.

“Big hat. No Cattle.”

As they say in Texas, “Big hat. No cattle.” We may look like a rancher. This is easy. But having the land and cattle and operation to back up that profession, this is not easy. It takes time. It takes hard work. I am speaking figuratively about the greater gifts. Teaching is not easy. Being eligible for it is hard, whether one is male or female.

Conclusion

If we are interested in spiritual gifts (1 Cor 14:12), then we must earnestly aim to teach (1 Cor 12:31). The reason for this is that the teaching gifts can cause the most spiritual growth in others, especially in the one who applies his heart to study and then teach the principles of Christ.
greatest gift.” Pauline, Jamaica

“I’ve learned more about the different gifts and how they work in the church. This will help me change my way of teaching about the different gifts. Your lesson really has helped me in my study in God’s word. Thanks a lot.” Joe, Georgia

“I learned that many denominations and God’s Word does not always line up. What impacted me the most is the gift of Tongues and how this gift is misused today. For years, we have been asked if we had the first sign of being called a Child of God with the evidence of speaking in tongues. We have been told some time ago that one can not be filled with the Holy Ghost until one can speak in an unknown tongue. Thanks to the Living Word and Free Bible Study, our thoughts, our beliefs, our very feelings were confirmed through this study. Thanks!!!!” Milton, South Carolina

“I learned that Jesus condemned religious titles. It is not about doctorates nor masters and titles, it is about God. This has really done a lot for me in my life, it has opened new thing for me and I want to go all the way with this course.” Ferdinand
What People Are Learning

“I have been a Christian for twenty years and have never come across more sound teaching as what I have studied.” Shane, South Africa

“What impacted me the most is the listing of the gifts and how tongues is last on the list. I will be seeking the greater gifts.” Daniel, Pennsylvania

“I can now understand well the meaning Greater Gift and lesser Gift. That impacted me the most, how you separated and ranked all the Gifts, there is the power of Spirit of God up on you. I will lead my ministry in further if God like, without any confusion. I like just to say thank you, may God bless you a lot.” Placide Mboyo, South Africa

“I learned how dependant we are on one another for individual spiritual growth. What impacted me was how easy it is to continue to believe a tradition or a lie until one tests it against the Word of God, like using titles – Wow! This study has caused me to really look into a number of things that I have been apart of, terms that I have used many times, and even some of the “watered down” criteria that has been used for placing well meaning folk for years. Now, the Bible states in Luke 12:48 “But anyone who is not aware that he is doing wrong will be punished only lightly. Much is required from those to whom much is given, for their responsibility is greater.” TLB Thanks Free Bible Study, with the help of Almighty God and these studies, my husband and I are being conformed more and more into the image/likeness of Jesus Christ.” Milton and Trixie, South Carolina

“I learned the categories of the gifts and the rank. What impacted me the most is how we must address people who lead. I will not be addressing the title of any person who leads.” Reshma, Trinidad and Tobago

“The Lessons are delightful, I printed some of the lessons and took them to my Sunday School Class, now everybody in class said they were signing up for the class.” LaVerne, Chicago

“The most important new thing I learned in this lesson is that people need to qualify to even preach. Also I learned that because Prophets are the foundation of the Church there can’t be anymore true prophets today. What impacted me the most was to learn that we are not supposed to use tittles, even religious ones to greet or introduce religious leaders. Now I know which Gifts of the Holy Spirit I can seek and qualify for and which gifts I have and how to use them.” Vuyo, South Africa

“I learned why women must cover their heads and how important it is.” Reshma, Trinidad and Tobago

“The most important thing I learned is about the use of titles. I never looked at it as a sign of making yourself equal to God, above others or to set yourself above others, however now I can see how this would be. I will take a different approach on how others address me.” John

“I was not aware of what the gifts really were and I thought that the gift of tongues was the