MINISTÈRE DU PASTEUR CLÉMENT SALOMON · BIBLE STUDY #18

Gifted to Serve: Your Place in the Body of Christ

You may think you have nothing to give. Heaven sees it differently.

"Pastor, I have no gift."

Sister Lisette said it with a little laugh, but her eyes did not laugh. She was sixty-four. She sat in the same back pew of a small Haitian church in Brooklyn every Sabbath, close to the door, her purse on her knees.

The pastor had just preached on spiritual gifts. People were talking on the way out. "I think I'm a teacher." "My gift is music." Lisette shook her head. "I cannot sing. I read slowly. When I stand up in front of people, my hands shake. God gave gifts to everybody else, Pastor. Me, I just come."

The pastor did not argue. He only said, "Sister Lisette, let's see."

Two weeks later, Lisette flew to Montreal to help her daughter with a new baby. She was gone for six weeks. And in those six weeks, something happened at that little church that nobody expected. What was it? Hold on to that question. First, let's open the Book.

Every single one

Peter wrote a letter to ordinary believers — fishermen, servants, mothers, workers. Listen to what he told them:

> *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*
>
> **1 Peter 4:10 (KJV)**

Look at the first words: *"As **every** man hath received the gift."* Not "every pastor." Not "every singer." Every one. If you belong to Jesus, you have received a gift. That is not a maybe. It is a promise.

And notice what the gift is for: *"minister the same one to another."* A gift from God is not a trophy to put on a shelf. It is a tool to put in someone's hand.

Different gifts, the same Spirit

Where do these gifts come from? Paul answers:

> *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."*
>
> **1 Corinthians 12:4-7 (KJV)**

Do you see it? The same **Spirit**. The same **Lord** Jesus. The same **God** the Father. The whole God is behind your gift. (We met the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in our last study, *"One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit."*)

And who chooses which gift you get? Not you. Not the pastor. *"That one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will"* (1 Corinthians 12:11). Your gift was hand-picked for you by the Holy Spirit Himself.

> You did not choose your gift, so you cannot be proud of it. And you did not choose your gift, so you never need to be ashamed of it. **It came from God's hand — that is enough.**

One body, many parts

Then Paul paints a picture we can all understand. Look at your own body:

> *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."*

> **1 Corinthians 12:12 (KJV)**

Imagine a body that is only one giant eye. It could see everything — but how would it hear? How would it walk to the market? Paul asks the same funny question: *"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?"* (1 Corinthians 12:17).

Your eye cannot say to your hand, "I don't need you." Your head cannot say to your feet, "Go away" (1 Corinthians 12:21). And here is the part that surprised the Corinthians: *"those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary"* (1 Corinthians 12:22).

The quiet parts. The hidden parts. The ones nobody claps for. **Necessary.** That is God's word, not ours.

And because we are one body, *"whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it"* (1 Corinthians 12:26). In God's family, nobody hurts alone and nobody celebrates alone.

Gifts you may not have noticed

When we hear "spiritual gifts," many of us think only of preaching or singing. But read Paul's list in Romans:

> *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us..."*
>
> **Romans 12:4-6 (KJV)**

And then he names them (Romans 12:6-8): prophecy... **ministry** — that is, serving... teaching... **exhorting** — that is, encouraging... **giving**, "with simplicity"... leading, "with diligence"... and **showing mercy**, "with cheerfulness."

Serving. Encouraging. Giving. Showing mercy with a smile. These are spiritual gifts too — right there in the Bible, side by side with teaching and leading. Maybe you have been carrying a gift for years and calling it "nothing."

Why God gives gifts

God never gives gifts just for show. Paul explains the purpose:

> *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."*
>
> **Ephesians 4:11-13 (KJV)**

Read it slowly. Pastors and teachers are given *"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry."* In other words, the pastor's job is to help **you** do the ministry. The work belongs to the whole church.

And the goal? Unity. Growing up. Becoming more and more like Jesus — *"the fulness of Christ."* Gifts are not given so that one person can shine. They are given so that the whole family can grow.

That is why Paul warns us not to think of ourselves *"more highly than he ought to think"* (Romans 12:3), and why, right after his teaching on gifts, he writes the great love chapter: even with the greatest gifts, *"and have not charity, I am nothing"* (1 Corinthians 13:2). **A gift without love is just noise.**

Jesus, the Servant

If you want to know what a gift looks like when it is used well, look at Jesus. The King of heaven knelt down and washed dirty feet (John 13:5). He said:

> *"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*
>
> **Mark 10:45 (KJV)**

Every spiritual gift is a small piece of Jesus' own heart, placed in us by His Spirit, so that He can keep serving people — through our hands, our words, our kitchens, our phone calls. When you use your gift, people get to see a little bit of Jesus.

Don't bury it

Jesus told a story about a master who gave money — "talents" — to his servants. One servant was afraid. He said, *"I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth"* (Matthew 25:25). Fear made him bury what he had been given.

But to the servants who used what they had, the master said:

> *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."*
>
> **Matthew 25:21 (KJV)**

Notice: *"faithful over a **few** things."* God is not asking you to be famous. He is asking you to be faithful. A small gift, used with love, brings joy to the heart of God.

What happened while Lisette was gone

So what happened at that little church in Brooklyn?

The first Sabbath, nobody noticed. The second Sabbath, a young couple visited for the first time — and nobody greeted them at the door by name, because Lisette was the one who always did that. They did not come back.

The third week, old Brother Jérôme, who lived alone, missed church. Nobody called. Lisette used to call him every Friday evening. By the fourth week, the deacons discovered that the white baptism robes had not been washed and pressed — Lisette always did it quietly, at home, with her own soap. A baptism had to wait.

When Lisette came home, the pastor asked her to stand at the front. Her hands shook. Then he held up one of the white baptism robes, ironed by her hands so many times, and read: *"those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary."*

It made the older members think of Dorcas in the book of Acts, a woman *"full of good works,"* whose friends wept as they showed *"the coats and garments which Dorcas made"* (Acts 9:36, 39). Her gift was a needle and a kind heart. Heaven wrote it down.

Lisette had the gift of **serving**, the gift of **encouraging**, the gift of **showing mercy with cheerfulness**. She had them all along. She just had never called them gifts.

In the body of Christ, there is no such thing as a member with nothing to give.

Before you close this — one question

Have you ever sat in the back and thought, "God gave gifts to everybody else — but not to me"? Or maybe you know your gift, but fear or old hurts have made you bury it?

The Holy Spirit has placed something in you that the body of Christ needs. We would be honored to pray with you, open the Bible with you, and help you discover your place in God's family — starting right where you are.

Would you like to know more about Jesus, study the Bible, or go deeper on this topic? Reach us today:

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Viewer Handout

Gifted to Serve: Your Place in the Body of Christ — pocket version

5 truths to remember

1. Every believer has received at least one spiritual gift — not only pastors or singers (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:7).
2. The gifts are different, but they all come from the same Spirit, the same Lord and the same God, who gives them as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 11).
3. We are one body with many parts, and even the parts that seem weakest are necessary (1 Corinthians 12:12, 21-22, 26; Romans 12:4-5).
4. Quiet gifts count: serving, encouraging, giving and showing mercy are named beside teaching and leading (Romans 12:6-8).
5. Gifts are given for service, unity and growth into the fullness of Christ — always with love, never for pride (Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 13:2; Mark 10:45).

Memory verse

> *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*
>
> **1 Peter 4:10 (KJV)**

Think & pray about it

- What do I do that blesses others, that I have never called a "gift"? Who could I ask, "Where have you seen God use me?"
- Is there a gift I have "buried" because of fear, shame or an old hurt? What would one small step of faithfulness look like this week?
- Who in my church family seems "unnecessary" or invisible — and how can I honor them this Sabbath?

FOR TEACHERS & SMALL GROUPS

Presenter Bullet Sheet

- **Open with the story** (an illustrative story: Sister Lisette in a Haitian church in Brooklyn, "Pastor, I have no gift" — then she leaves for six weeks) — ask: "Have you ever felt you had nothing to offer God's church?"
- **Point 1 — Every one:** 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 12:7. Every believer has received a gift, to serve one another.
- **Point 2 — Same Spirit, same Lord, same God:** 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 11. The Spirit chooses the gift — so no pride and no shame.
- **Point 3 — One body:** 1 Corinthians 12:12, 17, 21-22, 26. The "weaker" parts are necessary; we suffer and rejoice together.
- **Point 4 — Quiet gifts count:** Romans 12:4-8 — serving, encouraging, giving, leading, showing mercy with cheerfulness.
- **Point 5 — The purpose:** Ephesians 4:11-13. Leaders equip the saints for ministry; the goal is unity and the fullness of Christ. Guardrails: Romans 12:3 and 1 Corinthians 13:2 — love above all.
- **Point 6 — Jesus the Servant:** Mark 10:45; John 13:5. Every gift is a piece of His serving heart.
- **Point 7 — Don't bury it:** Matthew 25:21, 25. God asks for faithfulness, not fame. Close the story: the robes, Dorcas (Acts 9:36, 39).
- **Appeal:** invite each person to thank God for their gift, to ask Him to show it clearly, and to offer it to Jesus this week in one concrete act of service.
- **Close:** memory verse (1 Peter 4:10) + "In the body of Christ, there is no such thing as a member with nothing to give" + tease the next study ("Christ Our High Priest: Someone Is Praying for You").

EVIDENCE-BASED · FACT-CHECKED

10 Myths vs. Facts

Myth	Fact (with Bible)
1. Only pastors and church leaders have spiritual gifts.	"As every man hath received the gift..." (1 Peter 4:10); "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man" (1 Corinthians 12:7).
2. If I cannot preach or sing, I have no gift.	Serving, encouraging, giving and showing mercy are listed as gifts (Romans 12:7-8), and the parts that seem weaker "are necessary" (1 Corinthians 12:22).
3. Spiritual gifts are a reward for being extra holy.	They are given "according to the grace that is given to us" (Romans 12:6), by the Spirit "as he will" (1 Corinthians 12:11) — gifts, not wages.
4. Some gifts make a person more important than others.	"The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee" (1 Corinthians 12:21); God has "set the members... in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Corinthians 12:18).
5. My gift is for my own reputation or profit.	Gifts are to "minister the same one to another" (1 Peter 4:10) and for "the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12); do not think of yourself "more highly than [you] ought" (Romans 12:3).
6. Having a powerful gift matters more than love.	"Though I have the gift of prophecy... and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2).
7. I can use my gift fine on my own; I don't need the church.	"We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:5); when one member suffers, all suffer (1 Corinthians 12:26).
8. Every real Christian should have the same gift.	"If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?" (1 Corinthians 12:17); "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" (1 Corinthians 12:29).
9. Spiritual gifts ended with the apostles.	The gifts are given "till we all come in the unity of the faith... unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13) — a goal the church has not yet finished

	reaching. Adventist Fundamental Belief #17 teaches that God gives gifts to His church in every age.
10. Using my gift is how I earn my salvation.	"By grace are ye saved through faith… not of works" — and then "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:8-10). We serve because we are saved, not in order to be saved.

Where this comes from (Sources)

This study is built on the Bible and reflects the published beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Verify everything for yourself:

- The Bible — passages on spiritual gifts and service: Matthew 25:14-30 (esp. 21, 25); Mark 10:45; John 13:5; Acts 9:36-39; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Corinthians 13:2; Ephesians 2:8-10; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:10 (King James Version, public domain).
- Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Belief #17, "Spiritual Gifts and Ministries" (see also #12 "The Church" and #14 "Unity in the Body of Christ") — official beliefs: https://adventist.org/beliefs
- 28 Fundamental Beliefs (2020 edition, PDF): https://adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ADV-28Beliefs2020.pdf
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists: https://gc.adventist.org/
- Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, chapter "Talents" (on Matthew 25:14-30), and *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 71 "A Servant of Servants" (on John 13), public domain: https://whiteestate.org/ / https://m.egwwritings.org/
- Related studies in this library: *"The Church: God's Family"*, *"The Holy Spirit: God With Us"* and *"One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit"* — https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/resources.html · Questions? https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/faq.html · Faith Journey: https://pasteurclementsalomon.org/journey.html

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