

Witnessing and Evangelism

Spiritual Gifts for Evangelism and Witnessing

Lesson #3 for April 21, 2012

Scriptures: 1 Peter 4:10; John 16:8,13; 1 Corinthians 12:28-31; Acts 2:40-47; 13:4-5.

1. This lesson deals with the very important question of spiritual gifts and how they might be related to witnessing and evangelism.
2. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? How do you find out? Could we have spiritual gifts that are not being used?
3. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has rightly emphasized the gift of prophecy. However, perhaps we have not emphasized the other gifts enough. We have invested a great deal of time and money in the gift of healing. How can we take the other spiritual gifts more seriously?
4. Do we have regular ways of helping church members and new converts discover their spiritual gifts? How many spiritual gifts are laying unused in your church members?
5. What would happen if you asked the members of your church or even of your Sabbath School class to identify their spiritual gifts? How many of them would be able to? Could you actually be using your spiritual gift for the benefit of the church and not even recognize it?
6. Read 1 Peter 4:10. Are we as church members firmly committed to the idea that everyone is to use his/her spiritual gifts for the benefit of others? Do we believe that each of us has been gifted by the Holy Spirit?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 12:11; Ephesians 2:10; and Acts 1:8. These verses very strongly suggest that every church member has been gifted by the Holy Spirit. These gifts are to be used for the building up of the church, and the Holy Spirit is hoping to use us through those gifts to benefit and evangelize the world.
8. If you are not using your gifts for ministry, is that proof that you are wasting them? Can you identify at least one spiritual gift that you have and that you are using?
9. Read Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; and Ephesians 4:11,12. (Compare COL 328) Does the fact that these lists do not exactly agree suggest that they are incomplete? Are there other gifts that you think should be added to these lists? What is implied by the word *gift*? Does the Holy Spirit not only give these gifts but also guide us in how we should use them? Can spiritual gifts ever be used for secular purposes?
10. Do a person's spiritual gifts define his correct role in the local church?
11. Read Acts 13:1-3. Apparently, there was a lot of fresh talent in the church in Antioch. There were prophets and apostles and probably others with all the different types of spiritual gifts. Somehow, and we do not know exactly how, the Holy Spirit directed that Barnabas and Saul should be set apart and sent out as the first apostles to the Gentiles.
12. Read John 16:8,13; Acts 1:8; 13:4; and Romans 8:11. The Spirit is to reveal to us the truth about God. Is that the prime truth that we need to know before we set out on an evangelistic adventure? How does the Holy Spirit lead us into all truth?
13. When Paul and Barnabas were sent on their first missionary journey, the Holy Spirit guided them as they went. Could we expect the Holy Spirit to guide us by circumstances and, perhaps, even impressions or visions? How can we be sure it is the right spirit?

14. If we are not sure yet what our spiritual gifts are, is it difficult to discover what they are?
15. In some church groups, the process of discovering what one's individual spiritual gifts are has been reduced to a rather simplistic inventory and formula. If we think that is not adequate, how do we get directions from the Holy Spirit as to what our gifts are?
16. Would it be okay to attend a spiritual gifts seminar? Have you ever been invited to attend a spiritual gifts seminar? Is that something that would be useful if it were held at your church? How can we discover for sure what our spiritual gifts are?
17. Read 1 Corinthians 12:28-31. Is love a spiritual gift? (1 Corinthians 13) What was Paul implying when he said we should seek the best spiritual gifts? If we have found one spiritual gift that seems to fit us, should we stop looking? Or, is it appropriate to have more than one spiritual gift? Does God give the same spiritual gifts to everyone? Of course not!
18. Does the guidance of the pastor and even of other church members help us to determine our spiritual gifts?
19. Have you ever been called to minister in a certain area in your church? How did you respond? How do you feel others responded to your ministry?
20. Read Acts 6:1-4. Did those deacons have a gift for that work? What was happening in the Christian church in Jerusalem? If you had been present, what role do you think you would have been asked to play? Do your gifts fit more closely with the role of the apostles? Or, do you feel more comfortable in a quieter role, perhaps as a deacon?
21. Considering the stories of Stephen and Philip and what they did later, were they actually more like apostles than deacons? Do we have any information about their work as deacons? Did they have gifts in both areas?
22. In how many ways did the work of the deacons forward the gospel in and around Jerusalem? Any time there is a large organization, there must be someone or some group functioning as leader(s), maybe even administrators, and others in more supporting roles. How does your church function? Do they work together well as a team? How could we promote that approach?
23. Read Acts 2:40-47. It is pretty clear that the Christian church in Jerusalem was on fire. Last week, we talked about sowers, waterers, and reapers. Who were the sowers, waterers, and reapers in this passage? Were the 3000 that were baptized and joined the church at that time primarily people who were being reaped from the ministry of Jesus?
24. In modern times, Christian churches have reached out to groups of people in poorer areas of the world and offered to help them in many ways: Feeding them, ministering to their health needs, etc. On some occasions after a period of time when persecution or new governments came into place, many of those who had appeared to be good Christians apparently abandoned their faith. This has led to the coining of the term "rice Christians." Do you think any of the people who joined the church in Acts 2 were rice Christians? If you had been there with the disciples in Jerusalem, where do you think you would have fit in?
25. Have you ever felt called by God to do some church activity or witnessing? Or, do you think that only those who are ordained or paid have been called? Read Romans 12:4; 1 Corinthians 12:12; and Ephesians 4:6. These verses make it very clear that we are all supposed to be part of one body. Is God primarily responsible for getting us to work together well as a body? Paul was the only Bible writer who spoke specifically about spiritual gifts. In each case, he wrote about the spiritual gifts in the context of a church

body. It was very clear in his mind that not everyone has the same spiritual gifts, but that God gifts different members in the church in ways to mutually build up the church body.

26. There were notable times when individuals did important evangelistic things: Philip with the Ethiopian, (Acts 8) Peter with Cornelius. (Acts 10) But, each of those men also was a part of the larger church body and worked together with others when the opportunity presented itself.
27. In order to be successful in its main task of finishing the gospel and witnessing to the world, the church must operate under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Do we seek first the guidance of the Holy Spirit before we begin a new plan? Or, do we make a plan and then try to seek divine approval? How do we humbly seek the Holy Spirit's guidance?
28. Read Matthew 10:19,20; Acts 13:4,5; 16:6,7. Clearly, the disciples and the apostles were very specifically guided by God. How do you think that actually took place? Did Paul receive a specific vision from God? Did God audibly speak to him or to his friends? Or, did they just receive impressions? Are impressions a reliable source of guidance from the Holy Spirit? Could we receive impressions from a wrong source? Can the Devil give us impressions? In the case of Paul and his friends, it seems likely that Paul received some kind of vision that led to their moving into Europe. (Acts 16:9,10) Does that happen today?
29. How can we be sure that we are being led by the Spirit, especially when we are starting up a new program or a new plan in our church? Surely, the Spirit would not lead individuals in a direction away from the rest of the church. So, how does the Spirit lead a church group? Is it always through the pastor? Did God lead in the split between Paul and Barnabas?
30. In order best to involve people with the right spiritual gifts when it is time to consider starting some new program in the church, should we begin with a training seminar? Have you ever been invited to a spiritual gifts training seminar? Are you aware of a variety of spiritual gifts that have been manifested in your church already? Is there a core group in your church that are dedicated and praying for a greater infilling of the Holy Spirit?
31. Consider a couple of comments from Ellen White:

God has set in the church different gifts. These are precious in their proper places, and all may act a part in the work of preparing a people for Christ's soon coming.—Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 481

All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised.—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 327

32. How should the church respond if some member is convinced that s/he has a gift which other church members do not recognize? Is there a correct way to let people try out their spiritual gifts? Should the church hold a weekend of fasting and prayer for guidance?
33. Would organizing your church to do evangelism by recognizing different spiritual gifts cause a breadbasket upset in the current organization of your church?
34. Considering what we have studied so far, how would you answer the question, "Why does the Holy Spirit give spiritual gifts?" Is the work of the church and its success dependent upon our recognizing and using our spiritual gifts? Is there a difference between natural talents and spiritual gifts?

35. It should be obvious that the Holy Spirit does not give us gifts to be wasted. And He does not give us spiritual gifts primarily to be used for our own benefit. Do you know anyone who has a spiritual gift who does not seem to want to share it? Or even use it?
36. When Jesus was born, the Magi brought Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were kingly gifts brought by wise men. (Matthew 2:11) They were not Jews, but God called them. For two millennia since then, people have been called from ordinary lives and even from paganism to become part of God's royal priesthood. (1 Peter 2:9) But, we are not called just to blindly follow. As God's royal priest-kings, we are to bring a new kind of gift to the service of the church. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh change in value or may even lose their value completely. But, spiritual gifts—gifts of mercy, healing, teaching, prophecy, and leadership—when used correctly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit not only grow and become more effective but also may be added to by additional spiritual gifts. How are you doing with your royal priesthood role? When you became a Christian, were you invited to discover your spiritual gifts and to use them for the benefit of the larger church body?
37. 1 Peter 4:10,11 urges us to identify our gifts and use them well to serve others. Is this just as much a part of being a Christian as baptism? How does the Devil respond to gifts?
38. In our church body, do we value diversity? Do we appreciate the fact that different members have different gifts and welcome them into the team to use those gifts?
39. 1 Corinthians 12—which focuses on spiritual gifts—is followed by the “love chapter” in 1 Corinthians 13. In turn, that is followed by 1 Corinthians 14, the story of how so-called spiritual gifts could be misleading and misused. Why do you think Paul wrote in that sequence?
40. Read Acts 6:1-7. When the church was first starting, members came together not only to share their spiritual gifts and vigorously and actively evangelize, but also they shared their material goods, actually living and eating together. As a way to serve Him, would God ever call us into some kind of communal living?
41. Are our outreach activities such as fellowship dinners and church potlucks a modern manifestation of this idea? What are we supposed to learn from that early experience of the church?
42. Now that we have discussed how to discover your spiritual gifts and how spiritual gifts can be used to build up the church, is it clear to you what the differences are between spiritual gifts and natural abilities? Does it sometimes seem like some individuals have many natural abilities and perhaps many spiritual gifts while others have few? How can we prevent this from becoming an area of contention?
43. Have you wished that you could become more involved in some exciting church program that actually produced results? Have you thought about ways that you could cooperate with others to make it happen? What are we waiting for? God promised us those gifts.

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