

“Provisions for the Journey: Presents”

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A. Introduction:

- Illus: Grandmother and her 4-year old granddaughter...
- Story of Punchinello in Max Lucado's children's book *You Are Special* – you don't need the gold stars...just discover and be what God made you to be!!
- Provisions for the Journey → Presents

READ: I Corinthians 12:1-11

B. Spiritual Gifts...The Basics

1. Learn it! It makes a difference!!
 - * I Cor. 12:1 – Don't be ignorant! Be aware! Corinthian church needed this!
2. If you're a believer, you've got one!
 - * I Cor. 12:7, 11...Each believer given at least one gift.
3. It's God deal! It's His plan!
 - a. From God...Gifts of grace (I Cor. 12:7, 11)
 - b. For God...Kingdom purpose (I Cor. 12:7, 11)
 - * I Peter 4:10 (serve, administer God's grace to each other)
 - * Eph. 4:12 (edifying; building each other up)
 - c. Full of God...Spirit-charged
4. It's not the fruit, but it sure goes well with the fruit.
 - * Galatians 5...fruit of the Spirit...character...all fruit for everyone
 - * Gifts are more like tools or instruments...used for specific purposes.
 - * Gifts + Fruit = effective combination. Sprinkle in some Passion = dynamite!
5. What we don't know is part of the answer.
 - Not all of our questions about spiritual gifts are clearly answered in Scripture. What we've been given is enough for us to discover, develop and deploy our gifts. What we don't know is either God's protection so that we don't try to “control” the gifts or because it's not essential for us to know.
 - * Gifts mentioned are not exhaustive, but exemplary.
 - * No clear explanation of why some get one gift and others get several...that's not to be the focus anyway. It's about God's purposes, not about me!
 - * Precise distinction between some of our natural abilities/talents and spiritual gifts is not completely clear. God can infuse our natural abilities and use them as spiritual gifts or He may provide a gift that has very little to do with our natural abilities.

C. Spiritual Gifts – My Benefit...*It's not all about me, but it has to do with me!!!*

1. Points me in the right direction! (vss. 4-6)God doesn't want us to flounder.
 - * If God gives you a hammer, he's not asking you twist a screw or cut a board...
 - * Differences are necessary!! (Rom. 12:6)
 - God knows what He needs and to Him it's all important. No one gift is more important than another. Each is critical.
 - We shouldn't be surprised by disagreement and conflict!! We each approach the church and ministry from different perspectives, in part, because of our giftedness.

“When two people agree on everything, one of them is no longer needed! So, let’s be iron-sharpening-iron rather than worry about agreeing on everything!!”

2. Generates joy! (I Cor. 12:26; Jn. 15:8, 11)...God wants a joy-filled people. We are often most joyful when we see fruit being produced and God will use the gifts to produce fruit.
3. Reveals my worth! (I Cor. 12:27)...God is eager to show us that we matter...believes in us enough to entrust us with something as special and powerful as spiritual gifts.

D. Spiritual Gifts – My Role/My Responsibility

1. Discover! (I Cor. 12:1...don’t be ignorant; I Cor. 14:1...eagerly desire)
Two Recommendations:
 - Examine
 - Experiment
2. Develop! (I Tim. 4:14...don’t neglect; II Tim. 1:6...fan into flame)
 - Learn/follow others; try different ways; read/study; practice make you...better!
 - *“Don’t copy anyone but learn from everyone”*
3. Deploy! (I Pet. 4:10... “use it”; Rom. 12... “If, then let”...just do it!!)

E. Follow the Signs

1. Caution...don’t go here! No comparison, projection, rejection, deception allowed!!
2. Yield...give the right-of-way or merge with these texts (Rom, I Cor., Eph., I Pet.)

F. Closing:

* **GPS System** -- **G**ifts and **P**assion for **S**ervice

* Max Lucado quote from *Cure for the Common Life*:

“Can you be anything you want to be? I don’t think so! But can you be everything that God wants you to be? I do think so. And you do become that by discovering your uniqueness.”