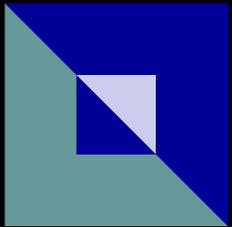


The Road to Rome...

Use Your Spiritual Gifts

Lesson Eight



The Road to Success in Christian Living

The Road To Rome...Use Your Spiritual Gifts Page 2 of 5

COMMITMENT

I believe:

- that God the eternal Father, creator of all things, loved me so much that Jesus came to earth to be my Savior.
- that Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died to pay for my sins, was buried, rose from the dead on the third day, appeared to many people, ascended to Heaven where He sits at the right hand of God, and will one day return to earth taking all believers of all the ages to be with Him in Heaven forever.
- that when I made declaration of this, my belief, to God, I became His adopted child and His Holy Spirit came to be with my spirit forever.
- that my relationship with God is in His hands, and He will never let me go.

The Road to Rome...Use Your Spiritual Gifts

Lesson Goal: To encourage believers to use God's Spiritual Gifts.

Scriptures: Colossians 4:10; II Timothy 4:11; Acts 12:25; 15:36-40; Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:7-11; Ephesians 4:7, 8, 11-13; James 1:17; I Peter 4:11

Memory Verse: "It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up..." Ephesians 4: 11, 12

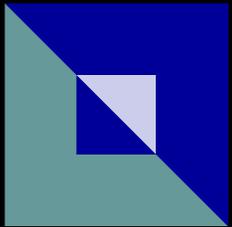
John Mark is not one of the best known Bible characters. However, he is very important. We know him primarily because of the Gospel that bears his name. He wrote that first account of the life and ministry of Jesus from what he learned, it is assumed, from the Apostle Peter and others. Mark was the son of Mary, in whose house the early church met, and who was the sister of Barnabas. Mark was chosen by Barnabas and Paul to take with them on their first missionary journey. Mark, for some reason, left them to go back home...maybe homesick?

Paul saw it as desertion and refused to take Mark along on the second missionary journey. Barnabas must have seen something in John Mark that Paul didn't see. So Barnabas took Mark with him as he went to Cyprus to do mission work. From what we can learn from Scripture, Mark must have greatly improved as a minister, and he began to use the gifts placed in his life by God's Holy Spirit.

We find that he was a companion of the Apostle Peter in his ministry, and Paul later told Timothy to bring Mark to Rome to be with him there because, "he is helpful to me in my ministry." (II Timothy 4:11) So, on his way, part of that way being the road to Rome; Mark, the timid, homesick (?) young man became a powerful helper for both Peter and Paul, as well as being used of God to write the first Gospel.

What are your "Spiritual Gifts?" The Bible tells us that everyone is given these gifts in order to serve God and to bless others. God's gift, to everyone who asks Jesus to be their Savior and Lord, is His Holy Spirit. God's Holy Spirit, as we have seen, connects with our spirit and assures us of our adoption as a child of God. That same Spirit brings abilities into our lives that God can use.

It is important to understand that the gifts of God's Holy Spirit are for a specific purpose. Scripture says that God gives us these gifts for "the common good." (I Corinthians 12:7) The gifts are given for works of service that build up the "body of Christ...until we all reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Eph 4:12, 13 The Message translation says it this way, "...to train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ."



The Road to Success in Christian Living

The Road To Rome...Use Your Spiritual Gifts Page 3 of 5

All gifts are important, and God's Holy Spirit decides who gets the gifts and how many are given to each individual. Since this is true, we should not ask God for certain gifts. That has already been decided by His Holy Spirit. Every Christian is the recipient of a gift or multiple gifts.

The Bible lists several "Gifts of the Holy Spirit." There are general categories of gifts:

Gifts that are offices of the church:

Apostles

Evangelists

Teachers

Prophets

Pastors

Gifts that are basic functions of the church:

Prophecy

Giving/Liberality

Mercy

Service

Exhortation

Leadership

Speaking

Teaching

Gifts that are special abilities for Christians:

Wisdom

Faith

Miraculous Powers

Speaking in different kinds of tongues

Knowledge

Healing

Distinguishing between Spirits

Interpretation of Tongues

Each of the twenty gifts has its own responsibility in the Kingdom of God. (teaching is repeated in the Romans and Ephesians lists) Since there is no cumulative list in Scripture, we assume that this is not an exhaustive list.

Some believe that this leaves open the option for listing additional abilities. One such talent, which would fit into the category of gifts that are offices and/or functions of the church, is musical ability.

Some of the gifts are considered more meaningful to the Kingdom than others. Paul spends a considerable amount of space in I Corinthians discussing the importance of prophecy. He says that he would rather speak five words...instructing others (in the truth of the Gospel) than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Paul was emphasizing how important it is to place witnessing first in our lives.

Some believe that the gift of speaking in different kinds of tongues (sometimes called speaking in unknown tongues), the gift of interpretation of tongues and the gift of miraculous powers were only for first century Christians and, thus, no longer exist.

For all of us, we should seek to discover God's gifts in our lives. We should be very careful to use those gifts in Kingdom service. It is our responsibility and privilege.

*Underlined sentences in the Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

The Road to Success in Christian Living

COMMITMENT

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The Road to Rome...Use Your Spiritual Gifts

Memory Verse:

“It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up...” Ephesians 4: 11, 12

Use Your Spiritual Gifts:

>Mark, the timid young man, became a powerful _____ for both Peter and _____, as well as being used of God to write the first _____.

>The Bible tells us that everyone is given spiritual gifts in order to _____ God and to _____ others.

>Spiritual gifts are given “...to train Christians in _____ work, working within Christ’s body, the _____, until we’re all moving rhythmically and easily with _____, efficient and graceful in response to God’s _____, fully mature adults, fully developed within and _____, fully alive like Christ.” (Ephesians 4:12, 13)

>God’s Holy Spirit decides who gets the _____ and how many are _____ to each individual.

>Gifts that are offices of the church: Apostles, _____, Evangelists, _____, Teachers.

>Gifts that are basic functions of the church: Prophecy, Exhortation, Giving/Liberality, _____, Mercy, Speaking, _____, Teaching

>Gifts that are special abilities for Christians: Wisdom, Knowledge, _____, Healing, Miraculous _____, Distinguishing between Spirits, Speaking in different kinds of _____, Interpretation of _____

Use Your Spiritual Gifts

Discovering your spiritual gifts:

Scripture assumes that all of us have spiritual gifts. God's Holy Spirit gives us such gifts. Paul told Timothy, "Do not neglect your gift..." (I Timothy 4:14) So, since we are all recipients of gifts, and God expects us to use those gifts, we should be ready to do so.

It is quite possible that a multi-talented person has more than one spiritual gift. It is also possible that only certain of the abilities are gifts that God wants to use spiritually. We should definitely use all our abilities to live and work for God. However, you must know what gift or gifts, of yours, God is ready to use in His service, building up the body of Christ. What is involved in building up the body of Christ? We should list gifts for helping those in need, encouraging other Christians, growing ourselves in Christ, witnessing to those who should become part of the body of Christ, and other specific tasks as listed in offices of the church and basic functions of the church.

How do you know which of your abilities...talents...are spiritual gifts?

1. Prayer, communion with God, is primary in the discovery of spiritual gifts.
2. The gift(s) will be that which you will enjoy developing.
3. The gift(s) will be obvious to others who know you.
4. The gift(s) will be of value to the body of Christ.
5. The gift(s) will be beneficial (up-building) for all, even the gifted one.
6. The gift(s) will be celebrated by all who want the Kingdom to grow.
7. The gift(s) will be recognized as coming from God. (See James 1:17)
8. The gift(s) will provide the joy of giving to the gifted one. (See Acts 20:35)

There are those who believe that the more you use your gifts, the more gifts God gives you. (Matthew 25:14-30) God rewards faithful service. And, according to the story of the talents in Matthew 25, He reacts very negatively to those who waste their talents.

An Exercise:

List the abilities that you have and ask, "What can God use in His Kingdom?" Get together with some Christian friends. Ask them what they see in you that can be used of God for Kingdom service. Pray for insight as to which of your abilities God can help you develop to benefit His Kingdom.