

#18 THE DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

30 PRACTICAL DOCTRINES YOU NEED TO KNOW | DR. RANDY WHITE

THE TEACHING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS HAS BECOME A HUGE SEGMENT OF THE “EVANGELICAL INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.”

- Almost every believer has been through a study (or two...or ten) on *Discovering Your Spiritual Gift*.
- There are programs that use Spiritual Gift *inventories* to help a person make the discovery.
 - Example: ***Spiritual Gifts: A Practical Guide to How God Works Through You*** is a Bible study that explores how your spiritual gifts can be matched to ministry. Discover a new appreciation for the gifts of others in your church. Suitable for both groups and individuals, this six-week study is designed to help the pastor and church body become what God intends for them to be.
(<https://www.lifeway.com/en/product/spiritual-gifts-P001220730>)
- Many attempts have been made to use these inventories as the basis of volunteer service in the church. These attempts have used the DISC profile, Myers-Briggs, and now the Enneagram – all of which are based in secular psychoanalysis and/or pseudo-science (with a strong dose of mysticism).
- These programs are often based in secular psychology and/or a person’s life experiences, and only have a few pieces of Scripture sprinkled in.

THE TEACHING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS HAS CAUSED MANY PEOPLE TO STRUGGLE IN THEIR FAITH

- People who have not “found their spiritual gift,” even after many attempts, wonder if they are really saved.
- People who are new Christians struggle to know their spiritual gift.
- People who have gone through a Spiritual Gifts inventory can become consumed with the pursuit of a “purpose driven life.”
 - This pursuit often leads to depression, poor health, or other negative side-effects.
 - The “purpose driven life” is built on the assumption that God has called you to a very particular task, and that you must do this task with excellence. Under this premise, If you can’t figure out what this task is, you are not pleasing to God.

THE EVANGELICAL INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX HAS NOT FOUND A UNIFIED TEACHING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- Depending on which spiritual gifts inventory you purchase, your gift could be vastly different.
- The Bible itself never gives a unified list of spiritual gifts.
 - Romans 12:6-8
 - 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
 - 1 Corinthians 12:28
 - Ephesians 4:11 (depending on who you ask, this list is not always included in spiritual gifts).
- If “discovering your spiritual gift” was a Biblical priority, wouldn’t the Bible be clear about what spiritual gifts could be discovered?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE ACTUALLY TEACH ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- The Bible repeatedly affirms the role of the individual in ministry to and through the church.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:4 – **diversities** (plural) of gifts.
 - Romans 12:6 – We have **gifts differing** (and thus do not have a definitive list of gifts).
- There was a time when every believer had a **manifestation of the Spirit**.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:7 (verses 8-10 speak of these manifestations, which were different from the gifts of verses 4-6).
 - A **manifestation** is from the Greek word *phaino*, from which we get *phantom* (a visual sighting of a spirit). The word requires a visible nature.
- 1 Peter 4:10 – every man has received **the gift** (not *a gift*) and there is a **manifold grace** of which we are to be **stewards**.
- There is nothing in the Bible that teaches we should “discover” our spiritual gift.

IN LIGHT OF WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS, HOW SHOULD I SERVE THE LORD?

- Serve with eyes open, and beware that theologians often have the need to systematize that which doesn’t have a system (and publishers have a need to sell that which has been systematized).
- You can find freedom in Christ when you avoid the temptation to fit yourself into a theological system which the Bible does not try to fit you into.
- While there is a commonality among people and their needs in all places and times, every place and time has a unique set of needs. Make it your “spiritual gift” to find the need and meet it!