

Spiritual Gifts: Why the Church is Losing the Spiritual War

By J.P. Timmons

© 2008 All Rights Reserved

October 18, 2008 Web Article

“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.” -- I Cor. 12:1 NIV

If the Lord did not want the church at Corinth to be ignorant about spiritual gifts then He doesn't want you or your church to be ignorant either. Yet this is an area of total neglect in most churches today. Quite frankly, the situation is dire; it is much worse now than it was even twenty years ago.

As we've traveled around the USA, Canada and abroad we've come to realize just how bad this has become because we rarely see any churches where the Spirit of God is in manifestation. There are many reasons for this but the main one is the lack of *true* Five-fold ministry, especially apostles and prophets.

Too many who call themselves apostles are spending their time selling church growth seminars and many other things because that's what "sells" but it's not the way the Lord Jesus Christ builds His true Church. You may be able to build a large megachurch with these marketing techniques but it will not be a *healthy* church. I don't know about your Bible but none of mine has any scriptures for church growth seminars nor can I find where Peter, James, John, Paul, etc., ever held church growth seminars.

I've known and understood this problem for almost 30 years. The Lord has led me to write two books – *The High Calling of God* and *The Prophetic Voice* – that deal with the five offices Jesus has established to build the true Church. Every Christian needs to understand this concept and how to recognize *true* apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists.

I wrote on the back cover of *The High Calling*:

“Most Christians have not been taught about these ministry offices given by Jesus ‘for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying (or building up) of the body of Christ.’ All five should work together to bring maturity through the full ministry of Jesus to His Body.

“Because most Five-fold ministers have not understood this biblical mandate the Church is weak and can only be restored to the power and glory of the early church through the effective ministry of all Five Offices working together.

“God never changes – He doesn’t change the way He deals with us just because we don’t understand these Five Offices – He still uses them to declare His Word and Will to the human race by preaching and teaching.”

This last paragraph is a principle of God I’ve learned – God doesn’t change what He’s doing simply because we don’t understand it or choose to ignore it. That’s always been one of the great problems of the human race – we try to come to God our own way. But if we can come to an understanding of what the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul has tried to teach us from Ephesians 4, then we will learn that if we do things God’s way church growth will occur automatically just like it did in the Book of Acts and, like in the Book of Acts, it will be healthy growth because it will be producing mature Christians who understand their spiritual gifts and callings from true Five-fold ministry and not church growth seminars.

The Bible says, “The gifts and callings of God are irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). Every Christian is given spiritual gifts and it’s up to you to learn and develop your gifts. If you don’t, the Church will remain weak.

If you’re a pastor or other Five-fold minister then you need to act like it – you need to obey Ephesians 4. The average church and ministry today doesn’t operate this way. They have a church service where the “pastor” gives a message which may or may not really be from God (many are purchased from the internet in order to save time; what might this say about the importance of truly hearing from God?) and although it may be a “good” message if there’s no “equipping and training of the saints for the work of the ministry” then that church will not be healthy.

Let me put this in military terms so you’ll understand it better. What is occurring in the average church in America today is like the commanding general of an army of 3 million calling a meeting once a week and giving a pep talk while providing no basic military training on weaponry, field combat strategies, hand-to-hand combat, recon, etc. An army is composed of individuals it’s true but they’re not all radio operators or tank commanders. They all receive Basic Training but then they also receive specific training according to their function in the army to make it healthy and able to fulfill its purpose. Without *any* training, I think you can see how weak such an army would truly be and why the Church is weak today.

I would urge you to learn about Five-fold ministry and spiritual gifting; develop your own spiritual gifts, remember, the Lord is going to hold you accountable for their development on the Judgment Day. Encourage ministers and others in your church to do the same. Then we can

begin to see the Church rise up in the Glory and Power seen in the Book of Acts when *true* Five-fold ministers obeyed this principle of “training and equipping the saints” found in Ephesians 4 and allowed the Holy Spirit His rightful place as the X.O. to the Lord Jesus Christ by giving direction to the church. Ω