

Lesson Six Stewardship of Our Abilities / Talents and Gifts

Objective: To recognize our abilities and talents and to surrender them to God for His use and glory.

Read: 1 Corinthians 12

Introduction

God created us with a great variety of abilities / talents. You may be able to run a marathon, organize a group meeting, teach, or write. Your skill may be typing, photography, or painting. Perhaps you sing or play a musical instrument. Maybe you are a carpenter, landscaper, engineer, mechanic, or bookkeeper. Each of us has a unique function to perform in life and in the Body of Christ.

The Bible refers to the Church as the Body of Christ with Christ as its Head (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 5:23). Just as your body has many specialized parts, each with its own function, so the church is composed of many individuals, each with his own special function to perform—and contribution to make—to the rest of the Body.

Every Christian possesses both natural talents and spiritual gifts. Our natural abilities come to us at physical birth and are developed through life. Our spiritual gifts are imparted by the Holy Spirit, enabling us to minister to others in behalf of Christ.

Bible Study

- What talents and natural abilities do you have? How did you acquire them or improve on them?

- According to 1 Corinthians 4:6–7 and Exodus 4:11, what should your attitude be about them?

- How would you apply Colossians 3:17 to the stewardship of your natural gifts?

- The theme of spiritual gifts is found throughout the Bible:

- Romans 12:3–8
- 1 Corinthians 12:1
- Ephesians 4:4–8, 11–16
- 1 Peter 4:10–11

From these passages make a composite list of spiritual gifts (combine any two that might be identical). Across from each one, give your brief definition of the gift.

- What are some reasons God has given gifted people to the church (Ephesians 4:11–16)?
- Though some spiritual gifts seemed to be of greater value than others (1 Corinthians 12:28–31), what ideas does Paul stress to keep Christians from personal pride (Romans 12:4–5; 1 Corinthians 12:12–26; 1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 4:11–16)?
- According to the apostle Paul, spiritual gifts should be used specifically for what purpose (1 Corinthians 14:3, 12, 26)?

Personal Reflection

- Follow these steps to more fully understand *your part in the Body of Christ*:
 - Realize that you have at least one spiritual gift, probably more (Matthew 25:14–15; 1 Corinthians 12:11).
 - Pray that God will make your gifts known to you.
 - Determine which of your activities the Lord seems to bless.
 - Inquire of other mature Christians who know you well what your spiritual gifts might be.
- List what you believe your spiritual gifts are.
- Seek to develop your gifts in the power and with the help of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- Realize that you may have other gifts of which you are not presently aware, so exercise various gifts. Be aware that you are accountable to God for stewardship of your spiritual gifts.

