

It is only through Christ, in Christ, by learning Christ and responding to Christ that anyone is ever edified. Our latter-day secular use of this word is far wider and looser than Paul's; for him, edification is precisely a matter of growing in the depth and fullness of one's understanding of Christ and all else in relation to him and in the quality of one's personal relationship with him, and it is not anything else. So spiritual gifts must be defined in terms of Christ, as actualized powers of expressing, celebrating, displaying and so communicating Christ in one way or another, either by word or by deed. They would not be edifying otherwise.

11. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, in *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p.83, says:

The Greek word for spiritual gift (charisma) is obviously related to grace, for *charis* means "grace"; thus a spiritual gift is due to grace. The usage of the word in the New Testament is quite wide, ranging from the gift of salvation (Rom. 6:23) to the gift of God's providential care (II Cor. 1:11, ASV). Usually it is used of the special gifts or abilities given to men by God, and with the exception of I Peter 4:10 the word is used in the New Testament only by Paul. When referring to a gift for service, it seems to include natural talent given at birth (as in Eph. 4 where the emphasis is on gifted men) as well as supernatural talent given at the time of salvation. Thus a spiritual gift may be defined as a God-given ability for service. its origin is from God; it is an ability, whether natural or supernatural; and it is given for the purpose of service.

In this context, we will employ the following as a working definition:

Spiritual gifts are those natural, spiritual, or supernatural abilities, capabilities, and inclinations that the Holy Spirit bestows on human beings to enable them to accomplish specific functions in the outworking of God's purposes.

II. The Main Scripture Passages Relevant to the Subject

Romans 12:6-8 -- "And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."