

successful operation. The craftsman who plans and constructs the church building, the church secretary, the church custodian, and the administrator all require the gift of the Spirit and are honored alike by God in their service. Barclay notes that we have erected a false spiritual aristocracy which must be abandoned in the light of the fact that "ministry simply means service." Thus any gift that we possess is a gift of the Spirit and should be placed on the altar of service to God.

Thomas R. Edgar (pp. 19-21) writes:

Why did God give gifts to man? Anyone who understands God's ways will know that God has a purpose for giving spiritual gifts to men. They are not given for recreation or to exalt the one who possesses them. Notice the following:

The gifts mentioned in Mark 16:17-20 are signs which accompany preaching of the gospel to the world.

Romans 12:6-8 discusses the gifts as ministries to be exercised.

First Corinthians 12-14 provides much information regarding the purpose for gifts.

Ephesians 4:11ff. states that certain men with their God-given gifts are to minister to the Church in order to build it to maturity.

First Peter 4:10 specifically states that as "each hath received a gift, minister it among yourselves [EIS HEAUTOUS] as good stewards." It is clear in the context that this is a specific plea to use the gift to minister to others. To be good stewards of the gift, it must be used to help others, as God intended when He gave it to each one.

The book of Acts and the entire New Testament describe spiritual gifts as being used to minister to others. There is no instance stated where gifts were used for personal benefit.

The nature of the gifts themselves indicates that they are given to enable the recipient to minister to others. For example, the gift of teacher is to teach others, and the gift of helps is to help others.

A Summary

Spiritual gifts are given by God in order to enable the one who has the gift to minister to others. Some gifts are oriented toward ministry to unbelievers; other gifts are oriented toward ministry to believers. There is no indication in the Bible that God gave any gift for the personal benefit of the one who possesses the gift.