



MARKS

O F A D I S C I P L E

7 MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

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Bell Shoals Baptist Church
2102 Bell Shoals Road
Brandon, Florida 33511

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV).

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MARK # 5

A DISCIPLE...EXERCISES SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO SERVE

Optional Resource:

"How to Make Your Life Matter"

Available online at bellshoals.com/7marks

or on the **Stephen Rummage app** on your mobile device.

INTRODUCTION

In the hours immediately prior to His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus promised to send the disciples a Helper Who would be with them when He was no longer physically with them. "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:16-17). One of the many benefits of having the Holy Spirit living inside of us is that He bestows spiritual gifts on every believer. That means that the Holy Spirit has given you a gift, and perhaps more than one, to use to serve the church. Every disciple is a gifted disciple.

SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Spiritual gifts are not the same as natural talents. We are physically born with different talents. Although God can use our talents when they are surrendered to Him, spiritual gifts are given by God to every follower of Jesus for the specific purpose of serving God and His church.

Match the verses below with what the Bible teaches about spiritual gifts.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| __ 1 Corinthians 12:1 | a. Gifts are compared to different parts of the same body. |
| __ 1 Corinthians 12:4 | b. The Spirit chooses who gets which gift(s). |
| __ 1 Corinthians 12:7 | c. God wants us to understand spiritual gifts. |
| __ 1 Corinthians 12:11, 18 | d. Every Christian receives at least one gift for the benefit of all. |
| __ 1 Corinthians 12:14-17 | e. We are accountable to God for how we use our gifts. |
| __ 1 Corinthians 12:25 | f. The Spirit gives many different gifts |
| __ 1 Peter 4:10 | g. Gifts shouldn't divide us but cause us to care for others. |

Which of these truths is most meaningful to you at this time in your spiritual growth? Why?

The Bible does not contain an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts in any one passage. Instead, spiritual gifts are listed in two primary passages: Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.

List the seven gifts found in Romans 12:6-8.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11. Some Bible scholars believe that the gifts of speaking and serving are actually broad categories in which we can classify all spiritual gifts. Consider how the gifts listed above fit into those two categories and mark **Speak** or **Serve** next to each gift.

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

Paul concludes his teaching about spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 with, "And I will show you a still more excellent way." 1 Corinthians 13 is often referred to as the "love chapter," and is quoted at many weddings. However, Paul is still talking about spiritual gifts in this chapter. He warns us that if the gifts of tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith, and giving are not motivated by love, then they are worthless. Gifts not motivated by love can be the cause of pride and division within the church.

Read John 13:34.

What new commandment did Jesus give?

One of the reasons it was a new command was that Jesus provided a new standard for love – “as I have loved you.”

There are thirty-five “one another” verses in the New Testament. Jesus’ command to “love one another” is the over-arching “one another” command. The other thirty-four commands regarding “one anothers” show what it means to love one another.

List the “one another” commands found in these verses.

1. Galatians 5:13

2. Colossians 3:16 (name two)

Notice that serving, teaching, and admonishing (similar to exhorting) are three of the seven spiritual gifts Paul lists in Romans 12. All Christians are expected to love one another. That will sometimes include serving, teaching, and admonishing another brother or sister in Christ. However, those with a spiritual gift in one of those three categories will be especially and supernaturally equipped in that area. As an example, all are expected to serve, but for some, serving will be a God-given passion and joy, because God has given them the spiritual gift of service.

Jesus commands us to love one another as He has loved us. There are many ways to express your love for other believers, but one of the greatest opportunities you have is to develop and employ the spiritual gift(s) God has given you.

LEGACY OF SERVICE

We mentioned earlier that love is the over-arching “one another” command. It has to be since love summarizes the two greatest commandments (Mark 12:30-31). However, the subordinate command that best captures the concept of using one’s spiritual gifts is probably “serve one another.” After all, the purpose of all spiritual gifts is to use them to serve other members in the Body of Christ in specific ways. “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another” (1 Peter 4:10a).

Read Matthew 20:25-28.

The mother of James and John had just asked Jesus if her sons could have prominent positions in His kingdom. The other disciples heard the conversation and were indignant. Jesus took this opportunity (relational discipleship) to teach an important spiritual truth. How would you summarize His teaching in verses 26-27?

How did Jesus summarize His life’s mission in verse 28?

Jesus' life was defined by service. He served multitudes in His life and He served everyone in His death. He asks us to do the same. The best and most joyous way to serve is by identifying and using your spiritual gifts.

Read 1 Chronicles 4:10.

In the midst of a rather dry genealogical record, the Holy Spirit moved the writer of this passage to highlight Jabez's spiritual legacy. Here is a summary of what Jabez asked of God in his prayer.

- Bless me: I want my blessing to come from God, not the world or others.
- Enlarge my border: I want to have more influence in this world for God.
- Your hand be with me: I want to see Your power operating in and through my life.
- Keep me from harm: Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil.

Do any of these requests strike a chord in your heart? Which one(s) and why?

When was the last time you read an obituary? The content of most obituaries today deals with a list of relatives, much like 1 Chronicles. It is refreshing to occasionally see an obituary that lists the person's accomplishments, especially when they are spiritual in nature.

What spiritual legacy do you hope to leave? God has gifted you to fulfill a certain function in the Body of Christ.

Are you seeking to identify and develop those gifts?

APPLICATION

There are several excellent resources available which provide assessment tools to help you discover your spiritual gifts. Find out which resources your church uses and enroll in a small group to better discover your spiritual gifts and how to use them.

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSE:

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

1 Peter 4:10