

# ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD, AKURE

## BIBLE STUDY, 19/08/2009

### STUDY 5

## THE DESIGN OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

I Corinthians 12:7

Spiritual gifts bestowed on the church at Corinth are supposed to be used for the edification of the church, however, the Corinthians made them the fuel either of their pride in despising those that were inferior to themselves, or of their envy in malicing those that excelled therein, abused to the maintenance of schism, and faction, and emulation in the church. The undergirding principle in all that we do is the glory of God. Spiritual gifts, though they may and ought to be exercised to the benefit of others, who by the "shining of our light" and the "sight of our good works" may be provoked to glorify God by walking in the same paths. We must exercise our spiritual gifts in order to glorify God aright. Peter teaches this in I Peter 4:11 when, writing of our spiritual gifts, he says that they are to be exercised "that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." Paul had already written this to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 10:31), but here he becomes more specific. Yes, gifts are for the purpose of glorifying God, but there is still another, more immediate purpose. That purpose is the edification of the body of Christ. God is glorified when we use our gifts to build up the church. This is implied in I Corinthians 12:5 where Paul describes the gifts as "administrations" (services). *"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal"*. This term (*"to profit withal"*) in the Greek is interesting. The root word is *sumphero* which literally means *"to lift up together"*. God gave spiritual gifts so that the members of the body of Christ could by them lift up one another, together. The gifts are for building up, not tearing down! Ephesians 4:11-12 teach the same; they were given *"for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry unto the edifying of the body of Christ"*.

Spiritual gifts were not distributed for the mere honour and advantage of those who had them but are designed for the benefit of the church, to edify the body, and spread and advance the gospel. No man has them merely for himself. They are a trust put into his hands, to profit withal; and the more he profits others with them, the more abundantly will they turn to his account in the end, Philippians 4:17. Spiritual gifts are bestowed, that men may with them profit the church and promote Christianity. They are not given for show, but for service; not for pomp and ostentation, but for edification; not to magnify those that have them, but to edify others. Then a strong obligation lies upon every man that has received the Spirit to call his gifts into the common treasury of the Church, to employ his good parts and spiritual graces so as they may some way or other be profitable to his brethren. Spiritual gifts are to promote mutual care and concern within the body (I Corinthians 12:25-26). If it is true that the gifts are for the purpose of helping others, and if it is likewise true that all the gifts are needed, then it is also true that all the gifts are important and there are no insignificant or unneeded members. Now this necessity of employing spiritual gifts to the good and profit of others, arises first from the will and the intent of the Giver; secondly, the nature and quality of the gift calls upon us for employment; and thirdly, our own insufficiency to all offices, and the need we have of other men's gifts, must enforce us to lend them the help and comfort of ours.

### Questions for discussion

1. What is the design of the spiritual gifts? I Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 4:11-12; I Peter 4:10-11
2. Did you ever wonder why you were in the church?
3. When spiritual gifts are imparted, are they impaired and/or lessened by communicating? Is there a place for the allegation of the virgins, "Lest there be not enough for you and for us" in spiritual gifts? Matthew 25:9.
4. The problem at Corinth was that everyone was out for number one, that is, gifts were desired to edify self or even to display self. Does the same problem exist today? I Corinthians 13

5. What are the factors that necessitate the employment of spiritual gifts to the good and profit of others?
6. Discuss this statement of the scriptures: "If the iron be blunt, then he must put to the more strength." Ecclesiastes 10:10.
7. Spiritual gifts are bestowed to promote mutual care and concern within the body. Discuss. I Corinthians 12:25-26.
8. Briefly show that for the whole body to be fully edified, all the gifts are needed. I Corinthians 12:14-31.

### **Conclusion**

Since the end of all gifts is to profit, aim most at those gifts that will profit most, and endeavour so to frame those you have in the exercise of them, as they may be likeliest to bring profit to those that shall partake of them. "Covet earnestly the best gifts." You cannot do more good unto the Church of God, you cannot more profit the people of God by your gifts, than by pressing effectually these two great points, faith, and good works. These are good and profitable unto men. In our preaching we should rather seek to profit our hearers, though perhaps with sharp and unwelcome reproofs, than to please them by flattering them in evil; and that, fifthly, we should more desire to bring profit unto them than to gain applause unto ourselves.