

The Spiritual Gift of Philanthropy

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DEFINE

Romans 12:4-8 "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same OFFICE, HAVING then GIFTS differing according to the GRACE that is given to us... prophecy... ministry... teaching... exhortation... giving... ruling... mercy."

Seven GIFTS or OFFICES are mentioned here. Often these seven gifts are referred to as MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS or BODY GIFTS. The Bible says here that every believer HAS ("having") at least one of these gifts or functions in the body of Christ. We call them motivation gifts because the popular teaching is that the gift or gifts you have are the particular ones by which you are motivated. But we must be cautious. We tagged these gifts "MOTIVATION" GIFTS for the purpose of explanation and because it helps us differentiate them from the MINISTRY GIFTS listed in Ephesians 4:8-12 and the MANIFESTATION GIFTS listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. Actually, the proof of what gift or gifts you have is whether or not God has given you "GRACE" or potential in that area. Some believers are "motivated" to teach, but have no grace to do it. When they teach, there is little or no anointing. Some believers have the grace of abundant material resources, but don't feel motivated to give. So "motivation" is clearly not the credential. One can't just take a "motivation gift test" and score it to see which gift he has (although this tool does have worth). Teaching tapes and written tests may be tools that help us begin to discover our gifts, but the bottom line is GRACE or GOD-POTENTIAL. GRACE OR GOD-GIVEN ABILITY IS THE CREDENTIAL. As one person put it "the proof of the puddin' is in the eatin'". So exactly what is the GIFT OF GIVING? We know that the Bible is copiously replete with commands for every believer to tithe and give offerings. Does this mean that every believer has this GIFT OF GIVING? Absolutely not. Let me show you some examples. According to numerous scriptures, every believer has FAITH. But 1 Corinthians 12 says that there is a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit called the GIFT OF FAITH. The Bible commands all Christians to PREACH and share the gospel, but not all are CALLED to the PREACHING MINISTRY. Mark 16 commands all believers to HEAL THE SICK by the laying on of hands, yet there is an additional special gift and anointing on some believers called GIFTS OF HEALING in I Corinthians 12. The GIFT OF GIVING is the same. All Christians must live in God's economy of giving and receiving. But God anoints some Christians to be SUPERNATURAL GIVERS, over and above the average. These GIFTED GIVERS are what the dictionary calls PHILANTHROPISTS and what one preacher has termed being a 'PAYMASTER' IN THE ARMY OF GOD. The bottom line credential of this gift is the EVIDENCE of God's financial blessing being funneled into one's life, the development of a generous heart, and then obedience to PASS IT ON to the church.

REFINE

Those believers whom God has trusted with resources must answer to God for their ministry just as a pastor must give an account for the progress of his flock. The ministry of giving is just as supernatural as a ministry of preaching. A gift of philanthropy is just as important as a gift to teach or prophesy. Personally the greatest joy of my own life is to funnel revelational resources from God's Word into the church by teaching and to give believers personal prophecies straight from the throne of God. Likewise, the greatest joy of a God-called philanthropist becomes funneling financial and material resources into the body of Christ. The paymaster must get into God's presence and get direction for his ministry just like a preacher or teacher. The philanthropist must empty himself of selfishness, opinions, and personal preferences in exchange for the mind of Christ. He must refine his ministry. The ministry of philanthropy is a holy calling and a most sacred responsibility. In the Master's own teachings, Jesus told more stories using the subject of money and material resources than any other topic. This can only mean that from God's perspective, money is the single most influential tool to either advance the gospel or to hinder the cause of Christ.

EXAMPLES

Some friends of Dr. Mike Murdock, my favorite Christian author, asked God to give them a Holy Ghost business idea. They birthed the famous Beanie Babies. The rest is history. This couple has been responsible for funneling untold amounts of money, tithes, offerings, relief, and help into not only their church but also many other ministries and causes.

I had a friend once who was a single Christian and a successful engineer. Since he was single and made some good money, he lived a life of very simple means and viewed his ministry as one of a paymaster to his local church. He made a typical engineer's salary but his giving to his local church was 60-80% of his total income, not the typical 10%.

I have a friend who is a very successful businessman. Almost any business he launches automatically succeeds. He has the mind, creativity, and brilliance from God to see in advance a business idea that will prosper. First, he owned his own auto mechanic shop and made a small fortune, then he bought the entire city block that his business was on, then he sold that block for a huge amount of money, and then he started a small engine repair business that has made a small fortune. The man and his wife have literally pumped thousands upon thousands into several local churches over the years and as a result, have made an eternal impact on thousands of people.

Another friend of mine who is a realtor specializes in selling houses for preachers, then he turns around and tithes off his commission right back into their ministries. Today he and his wife are some of the top realtors in their regional area and are very prosperous indeed.

My brother-in-law was a Methodist pastor in Clarksville, TN. One day, a business man who was a member of his church came into his office and said, "I sold my business. Here is my tithe of \$100,000 that you may apply to the building fund." (That means he sold his business for one million! Glory!)

SPOILING THE GIFT

One of the greatest temptations to people who have material abundance and who give large amounts is to control the spiritual leadership of the church. Sometimes paymasters get the idea that they have a right to the decision making process because of their "investment" or "stock-holding" into that religious organization. But the church is not a money market or a stock market. Once a gift or contribution is made to a church, it is God's. The paymaster must remember that "A GIFT IS NOT REALLY A GIFT UNTIL THE GIVER RELINQUISHES CONTROL OF THE GIFT." Our giving should be an act of grace. Our contribution should be given freely. Never should a contribution be given with the motive of "buying" a voice in the decision making. Manipulation spoils the beauty and grace of giving. Of course, one may designate his gift for a specific purpose and should expect the organization to handle the money ethically and honest in the sight of God and men. PAYMASTERS must follow the spiritual precedent set for this in Acts 4:34-47 by bringing their gifts of real estate and/or money and "LAYING IT DOWN AT THE APOSTLE'S FEET", trusting the spiritual leaders to distribute it correctly.

COULD IT BE?

If you are a believer who has 4, 5, 6 or 7 figure money in savings, money markets, CD's, trusts, stocks, investments, or extra real estate other than your home; could it be that RIGHT NOW, TODAY God considers you to be a MODERN DAY PAYMASTER whether you have realized it or not, or whether you have exercised that ministry or not. You will have to stand before the judgement seat of Christ and give an account for your stewardship. God will not accept just your tithe and occasional offerings when you have a little extra. "Of whom much is given, much is required." If you are a believer whom God has blessed with outright ownership of your home and personal property without the usual mortgage or debt, THEN GOD HAS ALSO GIVEN YOU THE

MINISTRY OF PHILANTHROPY. God also expects more of you. If you are a believer whom God has caused to inherit a family estate or small fortune, **YOU ARE RIGHT NOW A GIFTED GIVER**. If God has gifted you with a wise business mind and ability to make a substantial profit, **YOU ARE A PHILANTHROPIST**." (Isa 48:17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I [am] the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way [that] thou shouldest go.)

Could it be that if you are a believer whose income is approaching or exceeding six figures that God might be grooming you to be a Paymaster for His end-time harvest?

EXCUSES

"But Brother Dan, by my own shrewdness, financial management, and hard work I have earned this money... it's mine." Deuteronomy 8:17-18 "And thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: It is He that giveth thee **POWER** (mental ability, management ability, health, cleverness, energy, etc.) **TO GET WEALTH**, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers as it is this day." **IN OTHER WORDS, GOD HAS GIVEN YOU SKILL TO OBTAIN WEALTH IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT USE YOU TO SPREAD HIS COVENANT, THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.**

"But Brother Dan, I'm storing up; waiting to give it later for some project I really feel is worthy." Haggai 1:2-5 "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts saying, This people say, the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the Word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; **CONSIDER YOUR WAYS...**"

"But Brother Dan, all my money is tied up in investments!" Well, then, **UNTIE IT** where you can!" I Corinthians 7:29-31 "What I mean, brothers, is that **THE TIME IS SHORT**. From **NOW ON...** those who buy something should live as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world should live as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away." Matthew 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

THE NEEDS

Today there are men of God trained and prepared and prayed up, ready to reap the harvest on foreign soil where the perishing masses are so plenteous. Those men of God and the dying masses only await the obedience of paymasters. Today there are churches needing land, buildings, equipment, or improvements in order to contain the harvest and groom the saints for greatness. They only await the obedience of philanthropists. Today there are men of God who have sacrificed their own financial welfare to obey God and desperately need financial miracles. Satan is hindering their commissions. They need financial freedom and independence in order to do what God says to do and go where God says to go, to write and publish what God says to write, and to say what God says to say without apology or servitude. They only await the obedience of God's paymasters. The needs are great, but the paymasters are few. Pray ye, therefore, to the Lord of the harvest that he send paymasters to the laborers in the harvest.

A paymaster must understand that God will connect him or her with a man or woman of God. A paymaster's destiny is connected to his pastor, to his local church, and perhaps to another evangelist or apostle that God ties his or her heart with.

Today, there are millions of philanthropists who have never received Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Take the founder of the world's largest software giant for example. This is an example of a person born with the

motivation gift of philanthropy but who has never discovered his God-given destiny. As a result all his philanthropy is restricted to education, business entrepreneurial enterprises and charity to the underprivileged. These needs are certainly valid needs but most of them ARE NOT of ETERNAL VALUE. A real Bible Philanthropist underwrites and finances the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the saving of souls for eternity.

BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE

There is a miracle on the other side of obedience!" Partial obedience is still disobedience! Delayed obedience is still disobedience! But ISAIAH 1:19 says, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land..." The essence of living is NOT getting. The essence of living is GIVING! "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That to which you hang on will surely perish, but that which you give to Christ will never perish. UNTIE IT! UNTIE IT! RELEASE! RELEASE! What you make happen for a man of God, God will make happen for you! When you release what is in your hand, God will release what is in His! The only stuff you can take with you to Heaven is the stuff you send ahead of you... your obedience to give!

As Mike Murdock says, The purpose of money is NOT accumulation, but movement. Money is made for Movement! Money is simply a TOOL to accomplish an end. It is also a TESTIMONY of God's faithfulness. And it is a TEST of our obedience and submission to God.

THE TRUTH

God spoke to me once. He said, "Son, all the money needed to preach the gospel is already in the earth. All the money needed to fulfill the great commission is ALREADY in the body of Christ. All the money for every local church to do everything God commands is already in the members of that local body. At all times, My body is complete. My body is self-sufficient. It is simply a matter of obedience. The resources are resident but need to be released!" Paymaster, there is a miracle awaiting you on the other side of your obedience! Don't bury your talent! Don't refuse the call! Rise up, O Paymaster! Come forth, O Mighty Philanthropist!