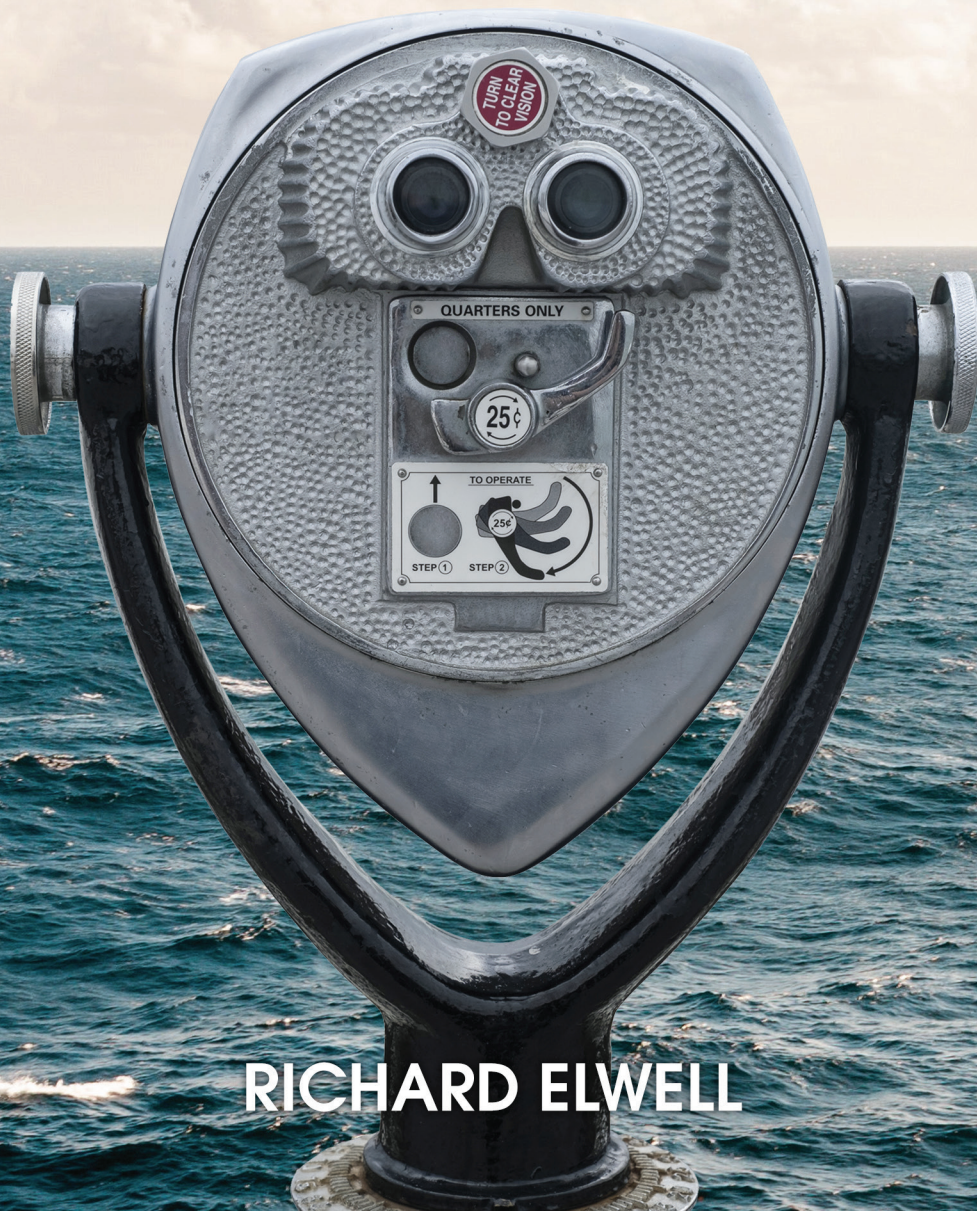


# — WHAT IS MY — CALLING?

DISCOVERING OUR PURPOSE IN THE BODY



RICHARD ELWELL





# WHAT IS MY CALLING?

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WHY IDEAS MATTER.

Ultimate Outcomes is a non-profit organization founded on the fruit of the 30 plus years Pastor Richard Elwell and his wife Marty spent in church ministry, developing studies that would help their congregants discern and apply God's truth. Richard was a firm believer that the outcomes in our lives are a result of what ideas we choose to believe and follow.

After Richard died of a rare liver disease in 2018, Ultimate Outcomes has taken on the mission of sharing the Elwells' insights with all who desire to live a better life and are willing to look to God for understanding of the way they are to go. To that end, it makes available for free download on its website: Bible studies, Sunday school curriculum, and sermon podcasts.

Richard earned a Master of Divinity degree from the International School of Theology and was the founding and senior pastor at University Park Church, San Bernardino, CA for over 30 years. His passion was always to make God's truth understandable and applicable to all who hunger for it. Marty holds a Master's Degree in Teaching Processes from Claremont Graduate University. Her passion has been to train women and provide curriculum for parents who want to raise their children up in the ways of the Lord.

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# WHAT IS MY CALLING?

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# PREFACE BY MARTY ELWELL

God gives us gifts to build up one another and the body and it is important to discern his calling and our giftedness. I think when I first realized that I had been given the gift of faith was when I face brain surgery at age 40 and was the mother of five children, one of whom was a newborn. As I contemplated what could happen to me and as a consequence my children, I reflected on Romans 8:28, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” I realized at that moment that God is either who he says he is or he isn’t. I knew then that I didn’t want to live life without God being who he says he is. I cling to God’s promises and haven’t really wavered in my faith since then.

Recognizing that I had been given the gift of faith helped me in my relationships with others. Before I would rather look down on the lack of faith of others and think, “Why can’t they just believe God?”. Once I realized I had been given a gift, I saw that it was my calling to build up and encourage others in their faith and not criticize them for what they hadn’t been given. I certainly didn’t want anyone criticizing me in my areas of weakness.

I could see how God had used my gift of faith to help others. My faith encouraged my husband not to give up in the middle of seminary when we were out of money, but to trust God to provide. My faith helped my husband persevere through the difficulties of planting a church and the struggles of ministry. And at the end of my husband’s life, having the gift of faith helped me go through his illness and death without struggle or fear, which was also an encouragement for others.

Yes, God gives us gifts to bless and build up the body, but the use of them also builds up and blesses us. It is my prayer that as you work through the study, *What is my Calling?*, you would understand the importance of recognizing and using your spiritual gifts to contribute to the body, and in doing so be built up and blessed yourself.





# OUR CALLING IS OUR PURPOSE

## INTRODUCTION

The four fundamental questions of life and how we answer them affects how we live our lives. The answer to the first question will impact the answers to the next three.

1. Where did we come from? (origin)
2. Why are we here? (purpose)
3. What is the right thing to do? (morality)
4. Where are we going? (destiny)

How would you answer the first question?

The first lesson will look at the second fundamental question: Why are we here? It examines what is God calling us to do and how our calling relates to his purpose, the reason for the life God has granted to us in the handful of years we have here on earth.

## LESSON FOCUS

### Isaiah 43:6-7

*<sup>6</sup> I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*

1. Biblically, what is our purpose?
2. How does our calling relate to our purpose?



3. What is the general calling of every Christian?
4. What would be our specific calling?
5. Why is it important to know our specific calling?
6. Why is it difficult to know our calling?
7. How do we discover our calling?

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## GOD'S CALLING OF ABRAHAM

Abraham, whose name was originally Abram, was the father of the Jewish people. When God called him, he and his wife had no children.

### Genesis 12:1-4

*Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.<sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

*<sup>4</sup> So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.*

### Hebrews 11:8-10

*<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.<sup>9</sup> By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.<sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*

1. What are some things you can see in God's calling of Abraham?
2. What was God calling Abraham into?
3. How did God speak to Abraham?
4. How does God speak to us?
5. How is our calling similar to Abraham's calling?

At the time of the following passage, Abraham was around 86 years old. It was a custom at that time that a childless woman would have children through a servant.

### **Genesis 16:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup> Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. <sup>2</sup> And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.*

1. What caused Abraham to fail in his calling?
2. What should Abraham's failure teach us about our calling?

## **JESUS' CALLING OF PETER**

At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus called 12 men to be his special disciples. In the passage he calls Peter and his brother Andrew.

### **Matthew 4:18-20**

*<sup>18</sup> While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."<sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

1. Before Jesus called Peter, did Peter have a calling from God? What was it?
2. How was Peter's calling to follow Jesus similar to Abraham's calling?
3. Are all Christians called to follow Jesus? Does our calling to follow Jesus mean we must quit our job?
4. What does Jesus' calling of us to follow him mean for us?

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What would have been some good reasons for Abraham to disobey his calling?
2. How was Abraham affected by his obedience?
3. How have we been affected by Abraham's obedience?
4. Why would we resist the call to follow Jesus?
5. How is our future, and the future of others, affected by our obedience?



**Illustration:** All people who live in the United States, including Native Americans, are descended from people who left their homeland to move to a new place. Their actions impacted who we are and what we have become.



# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

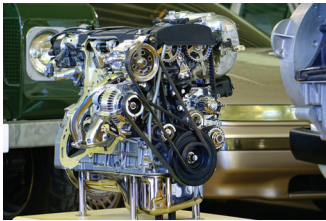
## COMPARING OUR CALLINGS

### Colossians 3:17-20

*<sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

*<sup>18</sup> Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*

1. In what ways are our callings similar to and dissimilar from each other?
2. How do our callings relate to each other?



**Illustration:** A car engine has different parts with different functions. All parts have to be in operational order and work together in unison in order for the engine to function properly. There is no working car engine without the different parts.

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. In what way are you fulfilling God's general calling for you to bring him honor and glory?
2. In what way are you fulfilling his specific calling for you?
3. In what way are you experiencing God's blessing by fulfilling your calling?

## PRAYER

Thank God that he gave you life to fulfill his purposes. Pray that you would want what he wants and hear and fulfill his specific calling for you.





# OUR PRIMARY CALLING

## INTRODUCTION

### REVIEW

1. What are some of the things we learned about God's calling of Abraham?
2. What was Abraham called into?

### LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at our primary calling, which is to enter into God's blessing for us so that we can be a blessing to others.

1. When we think about God's calling for our lives what do we usually focus on?
2. When we focus on what we are called to do, what part of our calling are we in danger of overlooking?
3. Why can't we be a blessing to others if we fail to enter the blessing God has called us into?



# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## THE BLESSING WE ARE CALLED TO RECIEVE

### Matthew 11:27-30

*<sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

1. What are we called to receive from Jesus in the passage?
2. What does Jesus' revelation of his Father prepare us to do?

### John 7:37-39

*<sup>37</sup> On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” <sup>39</sup> Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

1. What are we called to receive in the passage?
2. What is the result of our spiritual thirst being satisfied?
3. How does that relate to Abraham's call?

### 1 Peter 2:9-10

*<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

1. What are the three blessings we are called into in the passage?
2. What do those blessings enable us to do?

## **Romans 9:19-26**

*<sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?”<sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”<sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— <sup>24</sup> even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? <sup>25</sup> As indeed he says in Hosea,*

*“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”*

*<sup>26</sup> “And in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ there they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”*

What does God want to accomplish by calling us to become his beloved people? (vs. 23)

## **1 Peter 3:8-12**

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For*

*“Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; <sup>11</sup> let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. <sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

1. What is our calling in this passage? (vs. 9-11)

2. How does our calling to be a blessing relate to our calling to receive God's blessing?

# THINKING IT THROUGH

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INFLOW AND OUTFLOW

1. What is the result of never entering into God's blessing?
2. What is the result of never being a blessing?



**Illustration:** In Israel, the Jordan River flows into both the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is teeming with life as it has both an inlet and outlet. Nothing can live in the Dead Sea as it only has an inlet. Water can't flow out of it as there is no outlet and the water just stays there until it evaporates and becomes inhospitable to life.

# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

## A CALLING WORTH SUFFERING FOR

### 2 Timothy 1:8-14

<sup>8</sup> Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, <sup>10</sup> and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, <sup>11</sup> for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, <sup>12</sup> which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.

<sup>13</sup> Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

1. What have we been called to? (vs. 8, 12)



## 2. Why is that a worthy calling? (vs. 10)



**Illustration:** Improving your physical fitness entails working out and some suffering. One puts forth the effort because the result is worth the momentary suffering.

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. How are you seeking to find your rest in Christ?
2. How are you seeking to have your thirst quenched by Christ?
3. How are you pursuing the light of Christ that you are called into?
4. How are you experiencing the blessing of being a blessing?

## PRAYER

Thank Jesus for calling you into his blessing. Pray that you would truly find rest and life in him to be able to share him with others even in the face of opposition.





# OUR SPECIFIC CALLING

## INTRODUCTION

### REVIEW

1. What is our first and primary calling?
2. Why is it important to embrace our primary calling?

### LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at our specific calling. Our specific calling is the way God has purposed and equipped us as individuals to become a blessing to other people.

1. How do we know the ways we are used by God to bless other people?
2. Does God ever want us to do what we have no desire to do? Explain.
3. When we benefit other people, who receives the greater blessing, us or them?

4. What are some wrong thoughts we can have that would make us not want to be a blessing to others?

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## THE COMMON GOOD

### 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

<sup>1</sup> Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

<sup>8</sup> For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

1. What are the three areas in which we are empowered by God in a variety of ways? (vs. 4-6)
2. What is the purpose for each person to be gifted and empowered by God? (vs. 7)
3. Why is it important to recognize that God is the one who determines who receives each kind of gift? (vs. 11)
4. How does our use of the gifts God has given us relate to our purpose in life?



## CALLED INTO ONE BODY

### Ephesians 4:1-16

*<sup>4</sup> I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup> But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. <sup>8</sup> Therefore it says,*

*“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”*

*<sup>9</sup> (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? <sup>10</sup> He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

1. According to the passage what characterizes our calling?
2. How do the gifts God gives us enable us to fulfill our call to unity?
3. What does the coordinated use of our gifts lead to? (vs. 13-15)
4. What happens when the body isn't mature? (vs. 14)
5. What happens to the body when each part is working properly?

# THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What are areas of giftedness God has given to you?
2. If you don't know your areas of giftedness, what are some ideas that would help you discover them?
3. What will happen if we don't know or function in our areas of giftedness?

# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

## A CALLING WORTH SUFFERING FOR

### Matthew 25:14-30

<sup>14</sup> "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup> He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup> So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup> But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup> Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'

<sup>21</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

<sup>22</sup> And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.'

<sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

<sup>24</sup> He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

<sup>26</sup> But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

<sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'









# DISCOVERING OUR CALLING- MANIFESTATION GIFTS

## INTRODUCTION

### REVIEW

1. What is the relationship between our purpose and our life's calling?
2. What is our primary calling, out of which flows our specific calling?
3. What is the purpose of God that is fulfilled when we are properly functioning in our specific calling?

### LESSON FOCUS

In this lesson and the following two lessons, we will be seeking to discover the areas where God has uniquely gifted each of us. We want to know the part we each have been given to contribute to the common good, for the unified functioning of the body of Christ.

1. How does each individual part of the physical body fulfill its functional purpose?
2. What would keep a person from being part of a larger whole?
3. How can we be confident we know what our part in the body is?



# THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

## Romans 12:3-8

<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup> Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Thinking about the variety of gifts God has given within the body, in what two ways can those gifts be categorized?

In terms of each of the spiritual gifts, there is a level of service that is the duty of each believer to fulfill. We will examine what God calls each believer to do and a biblical example of the spiritual gift in use. It is important to remember that the spiritual gifts are heightened forms of the calling every believer has been given.

The list of gifts we will be examining is taken mostly from Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 and Ephesians 4:11-12 and is divided into three categories: supernatural manifestation gifts, leadership gifts and action gifts.

This lesson examines the manifestation gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10: knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, spiritual discernment, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## THE MANIFESTATION GIFTS

Under each spiritual gift, summarize what the scripture says is the calling of every Christian. Write a description of how the spiritual gift was exemplified in the scripture and what was the result of that gift being exercised.

### 1. Healing – effectively praying for and performing acts of healing

#### a. The calling of every Christian – James 5:16

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

The calling of every Christian:

**b. The gift exemplified – Acts 14:8-10**

*<sup>8</sup>In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. <sup>9</sup>He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed <sup>10</sup>and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

**2. Miracles – performing an act not explained by natural forces, praying effectively for God's divine intervention**

**a. The calling of every Christian – John 10:37-38**

*<sup>37</sup>Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. <sup>38</sup>But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."*

The calling of every Christian:

**b. The gift exemplified – Acts 20:7-12**

*<sup>7</sup>On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. <sup>8</sup>There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. <sup>9</sup>Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. <sup>10</sup>Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" <sup>11</sup>Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. <sup>12</sup>The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

### 3. Prophecy – communicating or interpreting messages inspired by God himself

#### a. The calling of every Christian – 2 Timothy 2:15-16

*<sup>15</sup>Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. <sup>16</sup>Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.*

The calling of every Christian:

#### b. The gift exemplified – Acts 21:10-14

*<sup>10</sup>After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup>Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.' "*

*<sup>12</sup>When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."*

*<sup>14</sup>When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The outcome of the gift being exercised:

### 4. Knowledge – having supernatural insight and understanding above the ordinary, being able to see what is really going on

#### a. The calling of every Christian – 2 Timothy 3:14-17

*<sup>14</sup>But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup>and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The calling of every Christian:

#### b. The gift exemplified – Acts 17:1-4

*<sup>1</sup>When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. <sup>2</sup>As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup>explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming*

to you is the Christ," he said. <sup>4</sup>Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

**5. Discernment – distinguishing between true and false prophets, being able to tell what is of God and what is not, accurately evaluating what is true about something or someone**

**a. The calling of every Christian – 1 John 4:1**

*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

The calling of every Christian:

**b. The gift exemplified – Acts 13:4-12**

*<sup>4</sup>The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. <sup>5</sup>When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.*

*<sup>6</sup>They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, <sup>7</sup>who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. <sup>8</sup>But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. <sup>9</sup>Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, <sup>10</sup>"You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? <sup>11</sup>Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun."*

*Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. <sup>12</sup>When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

**6. Tongues (speaking) – speaking in an unlearned foreign language or making ecstatic utterances unrelated to any human language**

**Tongues (interpretation) – understanding the tongues of another**

**a. The calling of every Christian – 1 Corinthians 14:26-28, 39-40**

*<sup>26</sup>What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. <sup>27</sup>If anyone speaks in a tongue, two--or at the most three--should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. <sup>28</sup>If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.*

*<sup>39</sup>Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. <sup>40</sup>But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*

The calling of every Christian:

**b. The gift exemplified – Acts 2:1-12**

*<sup>1</sup>When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

*<sup>5</sup>Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup>When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7</sup>Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup>Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? <sup>9</sup>Parthians, Medes and Elamites... <sup>11</sup>(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" <sup>12</sup>Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:



## 7. Faith – having a supernaturally strong trust in God’s intervention or reliance on God

### a. The calling of every Christian – Hebrews 11:1-3

*<sup>1</sup>Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. <sup>2</sup>This is what the ancients were commended for.*

*<sup>3</sup>By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

The calling of every Christian:

### b. The gift exemplified – Acts 20:17-24

*<sup>17</sup>From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. <sup>18</sup>When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. <sup>19</sup>I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. <sup>20</sup>You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. <sup>21</sup>I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.*

*<sup>22</sup>"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. <sup>23</sup>I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. <sup>24</sup>However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

## THINKING IT THROUGH

On the chart that follows, rate yourself on how well you have been fulfilling your Christian responsibilities, whether or not you demonstrate giftedness, and what you would ask God to work in you in terms of each of the listed gifts.

Scale: 1-not at all, 2-very little, 3-some, 4-a lot, 5-to a great degree

SPIRITUAL GIFT EVALUATION – MANIFESTATION GIFTS								
Gift	Fulfilling Christian responsibility					Demonstrate Giftedness		Work that needs to be done in you.
	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	
Discernment								
Faith								
Healing								
Knowledge								
Miracles								
Prophet								
Tongues-Speaking								
Tongues-interpretation								

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. How well are you fulfilling your Christian responsibilities in terms of the manifestation gifts?
2. How can you do better in fulfilling your Christian responsibilities?
3. In what area or areas do you demonstrate giftedness?
4. How are you applying that gift in your family, church and community?
5. How can you apply that gift more fully?

## PRAYER

Ask God for his insight into how he has gifted you to serve and contribute to the body and community. Pray that he would show you areas of service, however small, where you can be of benefit to others.



# DISCOVERING OUR CALLING- LEADERSHIP GIFTS

## INTRODUCTION

### REVIEW

1. What happens if believers don't function together as a body?
2. What keeps a body of believers from functioning as it should?

### LESSON FOCUS

Remember that In terms of each of the spiritual gifts, there is a level of service that is the responsibility of each believer to fulfill and that the spiritual gifts are heightened forms of the calling of every believer.

This lesson examines the leadership gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11-12 and elsewhere: administration, apostle, evangelist, exhortation, pastor, teacher, and wisdom.



# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## THE LEADERSHIP GIFTS

Under each spiritual gift, summarize what the scripture says is the calling of every Christian. Write a description of how the spiritual gift was exemplified in the scripture and what was the result of that gift being exercised.

### 1. Apostle – spreading the gospel, planting churches and starting new movements

#### a. The calling of every Christian – Acts 1:8

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

The calling of every Christian:

#### b. The gift exemplified – Acts 2:36-41

<sup>36</sup>*"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

<sup>37</sup>*When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

<sup>38</sup>*Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

<sup>39</sup>*The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

<sup>40</sup>*With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." <sup>41</sup>Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:



## 2. Administration – overseeing or managing people and/or resources

### a. The calling of every Christian

#### **1 Timothy 3:4**

*He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.*

#### **Proverbs 31:27**

*She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

The calling of every Christian:

### b. The gift exemplified – Acts 6:1-7

<sup>1</sup>*In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup>So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. <sup>3</sup>Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them <sup>4</sup>and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."*

<sup>5</sup>*This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. <sup>6</sup>They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.*

<sup>7</sup>*So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

### 3. Pastor – leading and taking care of the members of a church, shepherding God’s flock

#### a. The calling of every Christian – Ephesians 5:25-27, 6:4

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup>to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup>and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

<sup>4</sup>Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

The calling of every Christian:

#### b. The gift exemplified – 1 Timothy 4:12-16

<sup>12</sup>Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. <sup>13</sup>Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. <sup>14</sup>Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

<sup>15</sup>Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. <sup>16</sup>Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

**4. Evangelist – sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in an effective way, which causes people to respond**

**a. The calling of every Christian – 1 Peter 3:15-16**

*<sup>15</sup>But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup>keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

The calling of every Christian:

**b. The gift exemplified – Acts 14:1-7**

*<sup>1</sup>At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. <sup>2</sup>But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. <sup>3</sup>So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. <sup>4</sup>The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. <sup>5</sup>There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. <sup>6</sup>But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, <sup>7</sup>where they continued to preach the good news.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

## 5. Exhortation – encouraging and challenging others to act on biblical principles

### a. The calling of every Christian

#### **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

*Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

#### **Ephesians 4:15**

*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

The calling of every Christian:

### b. The gift exemplified – Acts 11:19-26

<sup>19</sup>Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.

<sup>20</sup>Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

<sup>22</sup>News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. <sup>24</sup>He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

<sup>25</sup>Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, <sup>26</sup>and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being utilized:



## 6. Teacher – communicating the gospel in a way that it shapes the values, attitudes and way of life of another

### a. The calling of every Christian – 2 Timothy 2:24-26

*<sup>24</sup>And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. <sup>25</sup>Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup>and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.*

The calling of every Christian:

### b. The gift exemplified – Acts 18:24-28

*<sup>24</sup>Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. <sup>25</sup>He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. <sup>26</sup>He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.*

*<sup>27</sup>When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. <sup>28</sup>For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

**7. Wisdom – guiding people on beneficial paths, aiding others in making correct decisions and good choices, having insights into people and situations not obvious to others**

**a. Calling of every Christian – James 1:5-6**

*<sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup>But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

The calling of every Christian:

**b. The gift exemplified – 2 Peter 3:14-16**

*<sup>14</sup>So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. <sup>15</sup>Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. <sup>16</sup>He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

# THINKING IT THROUGH

On the chart that follows, rate yourself on how well you have been fulfilling your Christian responsibilities, whether or not you demonstrate giftedness, and what you would ask God to work in you in terms of each of the listed gifts.

Scale: 1-not at all, 2-very little, 3-some, 4-a lot, 5-to a great degree

SPIRITUAL GIFT EVALUATION – THE LEADERSHIP GIFTS								
Gift	Fulfilling Christian responsibility					Demonstrate Giftedness		Work that needs to be done in you.
	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	
Administration								
Apostle								
Evangelist								
Exhortation								
Pastor								
Teacher								
Wisdom								

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. How well are you fulfilling your Christian responsibilities in terms of the leadership gifts?
  
2. How can you do better in fulfilling your Christian responsibilities?
  
3. In what area or areas do you demonstrate giftedness?

4. How are you applying that gift in your family, church and community?

5. How can you apply that gift more fully?

## **PRAYER**

Ask God for his insight into how he has gifted you to serve and contribute to the body and community. Pray that he would show you areas of service, however small, where you can be of benefit to others.







# DISCOVERING OUR CALLING— THE ACTION GIFTS

## INTRODUCTION

### REVIEW

1. Why has God given believers spiritual gifts?
2. What happens when believers use their gifts as God designed?
3. What happens when believers don't use their gifts according to God's plan?

### LESSON FOCUS

Remember that in terms of each of the spiritual gifts, there is a level of service that is the responsibility of each believer to fulfill and that the spiritual gifts are heightened forms of the calling of every believer.

This lesson examines the action gifts listed in Romans 2:6-8 and elsewhere: giving, helps, hospitality, intercession, mercy, and service.



# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## THE ACTION GIFTS

Under each spiritual gift, summarize what the scripture says is the calling of every Christian. Write a description of how the spiritual gift was exemplified in the scripture and what was the result of that gift being exercised.

### 1. Giving – contributing to the needs of others, sharing, giving material goods and financial resources beyond the normal tithe without any benefit to self

#### a. The calling of every Christian

##### 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

*<sup>6</sup>Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. <sup>7</sup>Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

**Leviticus 27:30** - *A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.*

The calling of every Christian:

#### b. The gift exemplified – 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

*<sup>1</sup>And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. <sup>2</sup>Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. <sup>3</sup>For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, <sup>4</sup>they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. <sup>5</sup>And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. <sup>6</sup>So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. <sup>7</sup>But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

## 2. Intercession – Prayer for another person, usually to obtain God’s help.

### a. The calling of every Christian – Ephesians 6:18

*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

The calling of every Christian:

### b. The gift exemplified – Colossians 4:12-13

*<sup>12</sup>Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. <sup>13</sup>I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

## 3. Service – meeting practical needs of others without expecting anything in return

### a. The calling of every Christian – James 2:14-17

*<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? <sup>15</sup>Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup>If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.*

The calling of every Christian:

### b. The gift exemplified – 1 Corinthians 16:15-18

*<sup>15</sup>You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, <sup>16</sup>to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it. <sup>17</sup>I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. <sup>18</sup>For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

#### 4. Helps – supporting and assisting others

##### a. The calling of every Christian – 3 John 5-8

*<sup>5</sup>Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. <sup>6</sup>They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. <sup>7</sup>It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. <sup>8</sup>We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.*

The calling of every Christian:

##### b. The gift exemplified – 2 Timothy 1:15-18

*<sup>15</sup>You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.*

*<sup>16</sup>May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. <sup>17</sup>On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. <sup>18</sup>May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

## 5. Hospitality – sharing food, shelter, etc., with those who cannot repay

### a. The calling of every Christian – 1 Peter 4:9

*Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.*

The calling of every Christian:

### b. The gift exemplified – Acts 4:32-35

*<sup>32</sup>All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup>With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup>There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup>and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

## 6. Mercy – responding in compassion, extending forgiveness, helping elevate people who are suffering or in distress

### a. The calling of every Christian – Romans 12:14-18

*<sup>14</sup>Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. <sup>16</sup>Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. <sup>17</sup>Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

The calling of every Christian:



**b. The gift exemplified – Acts 7:54-60**

*<sup>54</sup>When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup>But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup>"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*

*<sup>57</sup>At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup>dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

*<sup>59</sup>While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <sup>60</sup>Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.*

The description of the gift in the passage:

The result of the gift being exercised:

# THINKING IT THROUGH

On the chart that follows, rate yourself on how well you have been fulfilling your Christian responsibilities, whether or not you demonstrate giftedness, and what you would ask God to work in you in terms of each of the listed gifts.

Scale: 1-not at all, 2-very little, 3-some, 4-a lot, 5-to a great degree

SPIRITUAL GIFT EVALUATION – THE DEEDS GIFTS								
Gift	Fulfilling Christian responsibility					Demonstrate Giftedness		Work that needs to be done in you.
	1	2	3	4	5	Yes	No	
Giving								
Helps								
Hospitality								
Intercession								
Mercy								
Service								

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. How well are you fulfilling your Christian responsibilities in terms of the action gifts?
2. How can you do better in fulfilling your Christian responsibilities?
3. In what area or areas do you demonstrate giftedness?
4. How are you applying that gift in your family, church and community?
5. How can you apply that gift more fully?

## PRAYER

Ask God for his insight into how he has gifted you to serve and contribute to the body and community. Pray that he would show you areas of service, however small, where you can be of benefit to others.





# RESPONDING TO OUR CALLING

## INTRODUCTION

### REVIEW

1. What are some criteria which can help us determine our spiritual gifts?
2. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and the calling of every Christian?

### LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will examine our response to the gifts God has given us.

1. What is the necessary precondition we must be in before we can effectively exercise our spiritual gifts?
2. What happens if we try to exercise our gifts when we are disconnected from Christ?



# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## THE VINE AND ITS BRANCHES

### John 15:1-6

*<sup>1</sup>I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup> Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.*

1. How does our relationship with Christ relate to what God has called us to do?
2. Why can't a gifted person truly accomplish anything of value apart from Christ?
3. Why is more important to focus on our relationship with Christ than our accomplishments?

### 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

*<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

Why don't loveless deeds have value and how does that relate to Jesus' illustration of the vine and the branches?



**Remember:** A simple act of help born out of love for Jesus gains more than great deeds without love.



## GOOD WORKS

### Philippians 2:12-13

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

1. How should we view our good works?
2. What is a wrong view of good works that we often have?

### Ephesians 2:4-10

*<sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

What is the relationship between God's grace and our good works?



# THINKING IT THROUGH

1. Why did God call us to himself?
2. What does God want from us?
3. Who deserves the credit for our good works? Why?
4. What are sincere and continuous good deeds evidence of?
5. If we withhold our giftedness from the body, what is that evidence of?

# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

## WHAT IS LOVE?

### 1 John 4:7-12

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

1. What is the essence of God's love to us? (vs.10)
2. How then do we show his love to others?

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Do you serve out of guilt or compulsion or does your service to the body come naturally out of God's love for you and your love for him?
2. How do you know the difference?

## PRAYER

Thank God that he is the source of all that is good and beneficial. Pray that you would maintain a right relationship with him through Christ, so that you are able to do good works for his good purposes.





# THE REWARD OF FULFILLING OUR CALLING

## INTRODUCTION

### REVIEW

1. How does the metaphor of the vine and the branches in John 15 summarize the essence of what has been learned about our purpose and calling in life?
2. In what ways are our individual callings the same, and in what way do they differ?

### LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at the ultimate reward and outcome for living our lives in service to Christ.

1. How does looking at the outcome of a choice affect what we choose to do?
2. What is the difference between short-term and long-term choices and outcomes?
3. Are life's most valuable rewards generally based on short-term or long-term outcomes?



4. What are examples of that?

5. Why is serving Christ always the most beneficial choice?

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## ETERNAL OUTCOMES

### John 3:16-21

*<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”*

1. What does it mean to believe in Jesus?

2. What does it mean to have eternal life?

3. What does it mean to perish?

4. What does coming into the light enable us to see?

### **John 8:31-36**

<sup>31</sup> So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” <sup>33</sup> They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

1. What does the command, “Abide in my word,” mean?

2. What does the truth set us free from?

### **Matthew 25:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

1. What is the reward for faithfully using the gifts we’ve been given?

2. When will our rewards be realized?

## **THINKING IT THROUGH**

1. How do you know if you have your eyes set on life’s ultimate prize or if you are seeking immediate gratification instead?



**Illustration:** The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment was a series of studies on delayed gratification done in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In these studies, a child was offered a choice between one small reward provided immediately or two small rewards (i.e., a larger later reward) if they waited for a short period, approximately 15 minutes, during which the tester left the room and then returned. (The reward was sometimes a marshmallow, but often a cookie or a pretzel.) In follow-up studies, the researchers found that children who were able to wait longer for the preferred rewards tended to have better life outcomes.

2. What can help you set your eyes on what is eternal?

# CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

## LOOKING AHEAD

### Hebrews 11:8-10, 24-26

<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

What did Abraham and Moses have in common?

### 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. <sup>25</sup> Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

How does Paul tell us to live this life?

# PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

## PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Are you living today for today or are you living today for eternity?

What demonstrates that?

2. Do you know the talents God has given you?

How are they being invested for your future reward?

## PRAYER

Ask God for his insight into how he has gifted you to serve and contribute to the body and community. Pray that he would show you areas of service, however small, where you can be of benefit to others.







