
Entering In: (Ice breaker question)

What is a lesson that failure has taught you?

The Context:

Continuing in 1 Corinthians 14, we look this week also at additional passages all around the theme of spiritual gifts. Every church is a gifted church because every church is full of gifted people. This is true because every follower of Jesus has been given at least one spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit for the building up of the body of Christ. The tragedy is that many people either do not realize they are gifted or do not know what their gift is. A spiritual gift is any spirit-given ability for the building up (or growing or strengthening or edification) of the church.

Going Deeper

Some background information about spiritual gifts

1. **All gifts come sovereignly from God, from the Holy Spirit.** They are gifts gained by Jesus through his resurrection.
“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.” 1 Corinthians 12:11.

What do spiritual gifts tell us about God’s plan for the community of His people?

2. **All believers have gifts.**

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10.

Unbelievers may have counterfeit gifts. *“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”* (Matthew 7:22-23)

3. **No one has all the gifts and no one gift is sufficient in itself.**

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:27.

Why do you think God has set out the gifts in this way?

4. **All gifts are for building up or edifying the church.** As you bless others, you receive a blessing.

“to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:12-13.

A friend of yours professes faith in Jesus Christ and is a very able teacher but doesn't want to be tied down to any one local church. Instead, he hosts a Bible study in his home each week for anybody who wants to come and often has a good turnout. He says he prefers this because it's not church and it gives him an opportunity to use his spiritual gifts. One day he comes to you and asks you what you think about what he's doing. What would you say to him?

Another friend of yours is a talented marketing director. She enjoys her work, is successful and receives high praise for what she does. In this she feels affirmed that she is using her spiritual gifts for God's glory and often tells people exactly that, whether they are Christians or not. Because of her high commitment to work, she doesn't have time or energy to give to her local church other than worship on Sunday. One day she comes to you and asks you what you think about the balance in her life. What would you say to her?

5. All gifts must be used in love.

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.” 1 Corinthians 14:1.

Love is my wanting for you to be everything you can be in the grace of God without thought of benefit to me. I am willing to sacrifice myself to help you become everything you can possibly be without thought of return to me.

What are ways that you examine your motivation for why you use your gifts?

6. All gifts vary in their proportionment. We are to be faithful with whatever God has given us. He doesn't expect "more" from us, he expects all.

"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it." Ephesians 4:7.

7. All gifts are temporary.

"Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears." 1 Cor. 13:8-10.

To discover your gift:

1. Live up to what you already know, to what you've already attained.
"Only let us live up to what we have already attained." Philippians 3:16

What do you already know? What have you already attained in your life?

2. Seek to know about the Spirit's empowering.
"Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy." 1 Corinthians 14:1

What do the following passages say about the Spirit's empowering?

"I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power." 1 Cor 2: 3-5

"because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit." 1 Thess. 1:5-6

“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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 Lord’s people.” Ephesians 6:17-18

3. **Ask the Lord to show us our gifts.**

“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. 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.” James 1:5-6

Take time together as a group to pray for one another, asking God to give wisdom in discerning your gifts.

4. **Examine yourself and your service.** Know your calling by looking at yourself.

“For in him you have been enriched in every way....” 1 Corinthians 1:5a

What are your desires and the fulfillments/ enrichments you have received?

When have you sensed you were doing the will of God?

5. **Seek the confirmation of others.**

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. Acts 13:2-3

Who do you have in your life who confirms and/or affirms your spiritual gifts?

6. **Put yourself "all in" seeking and accepting opportunity, beginning where you are.**

¹³“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

¹⁰“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.” Luke 16:13, 10

In what ways are you applying your spiritual gifts now for the building up of the body? What would you want to be doing differently?