***Spiritual Gifts, No. 1

RV21-02***

We're continuing our study of the book of Revelation and the letter to the church of Thyatira via Ephesians 4:12. The child of God today is at a point in human history near the end of the angelic warfare. The angelic warfare was begun back out here in eternity past when Satan struck against the throne of God in rebellion. So this period that you are in is the roughest period in which believers have ever had to live in terms of the angelic warfare. The Christian soldier today finds himself battling Satan and his demons in what is, for the demonic hosts, a last ditch, desperate stand preceding their inevitable defeat. When a military force faces a last ditch stand where they must stand or fall, and there is no tomorrow, then they throw everything into the battle that they can. They throw all of the capacity they have. They pull out all the stops, and there are no holds barred. That is the period of time (that is the condition) in which you and I live today relative to spiritual combat.

Blasphemy against the Lord Jesus Christ and contempt for the Word of God, the Bible, as the true revelation from God have consequently multiplied enormously. You must be prepared for the fact that blasphemy against God, and particularly against the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is going to become more and more public, and is going to crop up in the communication media in a more and more unabashed form. It is going to cause the hair to stand up on the back of your neck, and goose bumps to break out, as you yourself are struck with fear by some of the things that are going to be said, and they're going to be done against the person of Jesus Christ.

Demonic activity will, of course, intensify in this period. More and more people will be sucked into the demonic world, and will be sucked into it in a very subtle way as it is presented, particularly to young people, as a source of accomplishment – a means for power. I guarantee you there is great power in the demonic world. If you get into it, you will find that Satan will do things for you. But one thing that he does not have is immutability. Satan cannot keep from changing. That's why you can't trust him. He will turn against you sooner or later, and he will destroy you for the favors he has given you.

But blasphemy against the person of Jesus Christ has to mount as Satan, in frustration and in final agony, seeks to strike out at the person he's been trying to get all these ages from the time he rebelled against God in heaven. It is indeed apparently in the program of God that the United States should become a third-rate nation. Particularly, in the last two-and-a-half years with the current administration in Washington, quantum leaps have been made toward making the United States a third-rate nation. We will sink into oblivion and we may have one more chance for a new birth of freedom in this country at the coming election. But it's going to be our last shot, I expect. After that, if this is indeed the program of God, the election will go in the direction to confirm and to solidify this national decline as the center of power moves to Western Europe.

So we are living in a tough period of the angelic warfare. If you don't understand that, then you're going to go AWOL. You're going to be Absent WithOut Leave from service. You're going to desert your post of ministry. You're going to desert your combat team and this church. You're going to wander off to some rinky-tink operation that is making no impact and no distress to Satan and you yourself are going to waste your life and squander it, and lose unbelievable rewards in heaven.

The intensified stage of the angelic warfare, therefore, requires intensive training of God's people for spiritual combat. This program requires training in the techniques of Christian living. It requires provision of the items of combat equipment. It requires a knowledge of the tactic of prayer and its use. It requires an understanding of the nature of the enemy and his vast ability to destroy. Any Christian who does not see himself as the Lord's soldier in combat with the demon forces of evil is simply out of touch with reality. You don't know what's going on. You don't have the faintest, foggiest glimmer of what the Christian life is all about if you do not think of it in terms of a military operation. Most Christians don't begin to think of it in those terms.

**For the Equipping of the Saints**

The purpose of the local church organization, with its pastor-teacher leadership, is to train God's people for this spiritual combat battle with Satan and his evil world. We have found that Ephesians 4:12 has told us that the first objective of the pastor-teacher ministry is to equip the soldiers of God for battle: "For the equipping of the saints." That word "for," we found, was this Greek word "pros." That word in the Greek language indicated to us purpose, or objective number one. Then we have the word "for" coming up again. First, "For the equipping of the saints," then again, "For the work of the ministry." But in the Greek language, this second "for" is a different preposition. It is the preposition "eis." But it is also indicating purpose. But the reason God the Holy Spirit changed the second preposition, which means "unto," is to indicate to us the reason for the first preposition "pros." The first purpose was to accomplish the second purpose. In other words, if the first purpose is not accomplished, there is no way you're going to accomplish the second purpose. In time we will see that that verse gives us a third purpose, which also, in addition, is indicating a secondary purpose which is achieved as a result of the first purpose.

So here is a chain reaction. You have to go from one to the other. The first one is the one that we've been concentrating on: the work of equipping God's people in the local church for spiritual combat. If that has been faithfully accomplished; if a church understands its business; if the pastor-teacher understands his job; and, if they faithfully perform it, the result will be Christian soldiers who have the opportunity at least for the training and the instruction they need. Whether they will be faithfully performing that combat duty is something else, but they will have the chance to go into combat; to survive; to be victorious; and, to earn rewards. That will be the result then of the first objective being achieved.

**For the Work of the Ministry**

The second objective then describes that victory production: "For the work of the ministry." The word "work" is the word "ergon." This is a noun and it refers to "the product of an activity." We would call this divine good production. Then we have the word "ministry," and that is the word "diakonia." "Diakonia" is the noun for "service," referring here to the Christian soldier's service. So the work of service is the Christian soldier's production of divine good works in the angelic warfare. Why do we have all this training program in the local church? Why do we have the whole structure and organization of the local church? So that the people of God as the soldiers of God can get out there and produce works of divine good service? That is the secondary purpose. Of course, you can see that if the first objective is not reached in the training program, you will certainly not reach the second objective of believers producing divine good works. Divine good works in Christian service is in contrast to human good works under the control of the old sin nature. All divine good works are the product of God the Holy Spirit working in the believer. The equipping of the Christian soldier by the local church pastor-teacher then is for the purpose of enabling the soldier to provide divine goods service.

Divine good works, of course, are a defeat to Satan who promotes the evil of human good production in his battle with God. The devil always wants you to be producing human good. God has ordained that we should not only be productive as his soldiers of divine good works, but He has even laid out a specific pattern of good works for us. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which (which good works) God has before ordained that we should walk in them."

Now there is a little clue to us right off the bat that every good thing is not for you to do. There are certain good things for you to do. There are certain good works that you have no business doing. We're going to see in a little bit some guidelines as to how to determine which good works we should be engaged in. But we have a specific responsibility of divine good production that God has laid on your shoulders. In other words, you have a specific role in the battle. When you go into combat, everybody is assigned a role – a duty in the battle. All you need to do is get enough people who fail to perform their part in the battle, and you can see what the disaster is going to be, and the defeat that will come.

That's our problem in the local church. We've got Christians who don't know they're in the battle to begin with (Christians who aren't trained for combat), and we've got Christians who, when they are, don't stay with the battle. We're forever having to call them back into line. We're forever having to tell them to get back into the line; to get up on the combat line; and, to start performing their particular duty. Did anybody ever have to call you and remind you to get back into the operation of what you're supposed to be doing around Berean Church? That's the problem of spiritual combat. God says, I've got a place for you, and somebody else isn't going to be able to fill it. If you do fall out; if you do retreat; and, if you do desert, I'll guarantee you that God has His replenishments. For a while, the battle may be tougher on those of us who are left, but in time he will be a replacement, and what could have been your rewards will go to someone else, but the job will get done. These divine good works are the basis upon which God is going to reward you someday in heaven.

The quantity of your divine good production will increase. The quantity of divine good production increases according to a certain pattern. When you enter the Christian life, the first thing you learn about is the doctrine of the filling of the Holy Spirit – how to confess your sins and to be a spiritual person so that God can teach you and use you. At that point, you are capable of producing a certain quantity of divine good works. But as you mature in the Christian life, then you move ahead. You expand that through taking Bible doctrine into the human spirit. As you start storing Bible doctrine into your human spirit, you extend your ability to produce divine good works. You become a more effective soldier in battle. Then there is a third step. As the result of storing doctrine in your human spirit, you have built up a spiritual maturity structure in your soul so that you have now maximum capacity for divine good production – maximum capacity for battle effectiveness. The Christian soldier, therefore, may indeed serve tirelessly and sacrificially, but he may produce nothing but worthless human good works if he is not functioning, first of all, on the filling of the Holy Spirit, and you go from there into the intake of doctrine, and into the building of spiritual maturity.

A Christian soldier may be absent without leave from the Lord's service and from divine good works all together, and a lot of Christians are. The reason for that is that they have no battle morale, and those people waste their lives. That is very sad. One of the saddest moments you and I are going to experience in the Lord's presence, as we stand and have to step up one-by-one before the "bema" (before the Judgment Seat of Christ), is Christians who are going to walk up and discover that their lives have been wasted, and that there is practically no reward for them, if any at all. This indicates that they were lousy soldiers; somebody didn't train them; they were constantly flitting in and out of the battle; or, they were constantly getting sidetracked with something else instead of pushing ahead toward the objectives that God had laid out for them in particular. This is serious business, and it is not stressed enough in the local churches as it should be. The Christian soldier who is engaged in human good production and human good works is almost certain to be defeated in the angelic warfare. He becomes a casualty, and he suffers in time great loss of rewards.

Our record of performance in battle is indeed going to be evaluated. One of the things that everybody who enters the military service realizes is that there is a service record which is kept on him. Everybody has a service record, and in that service record is recorded your performance. In time, particularly, for example, if you're an officer or noncommissioned office coming up for promotion, one of the first things they look at is that service record. If they find that that service record is not compatible when your number comes up for promotion, they pass you over. That's a very serious thing to have happen to you in the military service – to be passed over for promotion. In the American military service, you can be passed over twice, if you're an officer, and then you're dismissed. You're retired from the service. So your performance is kept.

Most of us, as believers, don't realize that God does the same thing, and He has a way of retiring us if he has to pass this over for promotion. In 2 Corinthians 5:10, we read, "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad" (whether it be divine good production, or whether it be bad human good production). Every one of us is going to stand up for the examination of our service record without exception.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15 give us the further details about that evaluation: "Now if any man build upon this foundation (that is, of his salvation) gold, silver, precious stones (that kind of divine good production), or wood, hay, stubble (human good production), every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire (the judgment evaluation of God), and the fire shall test every man's work of what sort it is (divine good or human good). If any man's work abide (because it's divine good) which he had built upon it, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned (because it was human good), he shall suffer loss. But he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire." This will not affect your salvation, but it will certainly affect your rewards. If you persist in living a life that is not only nonproductive in divine good, but a life which is productive of evil, then God will take you out of his service. He'll take your life. He'll take you home to heaven. You'll be saved, but you'll walk in there a pauper relative to rewards.

The whole purpose of the believer's life on earth is the production of divine good works. I am getting very tired of how many people I discover, who should know better, who are trying to evade that point. They confuse Christians on it. They are trying to tell Christians, "Oh, you shouldn't be serving the Lord for reward. You should be serving the Lord because you love Him." Well, indeed we do. You should be serving the Lord because of the salvation of grace which He has given you. Indeed, we do serve out of gratitude. But the Lord does not ask you for service to Him on the basis of returning anything that He has given. That's ignorance of grace to say that you ever do anything because God has done something for you. That is an attempt to repay God. You do it because this is a doctrinal principle. Jesus said, "Store treasures in heaven." Jesus made it very clear that only a fool wastes his life with human good production. You'll have a great time. You may gain fame and fortune for a while on this earth, but boy, where you're going to live forever, that is where it counts – not down here where people with their human viewpoint may exalt you and glorify you and think you're something great, when with God you're exactly nothing.

So the purpose of the believer's life is divine good production, and I hope you'll never be discouraged from the realization that that is the name of the game. Here are a few of the verses that teach that:

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 say, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and hope through grace, comfort your hearts and stablish you in every good word and work." The apostle Paul was praying for these Thessalonians. This is one of the first letters written in a series of letters here to the Thessalonians: "I want you to be established in a high degree of production of divine good works."

1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much that your labor is not in vain, in the Lord." All your divine good will not be forgotten. All of it is worth something. It is not in vain.

Galatians 6:9: "Let us not be weary in well-doing (in divine good production), for in due season we shall reap if we don't faint."

2 Corinthians 9:8: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." This particular verse is dealing with financial provision. The New Testament basis of giving is found in 2 Corinthians 8:9 – not in that tithing system of the Old Testament. If you want to know what Christian giving is about, you have to study 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Here, God has said, "I'm going to supply you with the finances so that you may abound to every good work." You thought God was supplying you with those finances so that you could go skiing in Colorado, didn't you? You thought He was providing you that so that you could buy that new wonderful car that you like to drive around in. He has provided you that so that you have the means to be effective in divine good production. That is why He is giving you this capacity for every good work. He doesn't call you to do a job for him in battle and not supply you. That's not the way our God works. Countries often do that to their soldiers. Our God is a God whose grace provides all the logistical elements we need to do the battle. He supplies the stuff we need to fight with. He supplies the material that we need to accomplish the job.

Colossians 1:10: "That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." We are to be growing in divine good production, and growing in doctrine (the knowledge of God) – the "epignosis" of God in your human spirit.

Titus 2:7: "In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity." "In all things showing yourself a pattern of divine good works." You should be such a pattern of divine good works that you get everybody else off their dead centers, and that you get other people moving because they look at you and they see you functioning in divine good. Finally they say, "What am I standing around and waiting for?"

I remember years ago, a lady who was a great help in Berean Christian Academy finally got into the operation of the school, and she jumped in with both feet and all hands. When she did, she said, "I've been waiting for the bubble to burst about this school. Now I've decided to get in and make it go, and not wait for the bubble to burst." Well, the bubble has never burst because God has told us to do that divine good. There are a lot of Christians standing around waiting. When you jump in, you'll be an inspiration to others. That's what Paul is saying to Titus: "Get in there, Titus. You be such a producer of divine good left and right that the other people will look at you, and they will be ashamed of themselves for standing around and not getting into the battle."

Titus 2:14: "Who gave himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a people of His own, zealous of good works." That means being eager to be producers of divine good.

There is one more verse in Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have shown toward His name in that you have ministered and do minister." God will never forget your divine good production.

**Spiritual Gifts**

How do you go about serving in the angelic conflict in divine good production? It is important that you understand that Christian service is structured on what the Bible calls spiritual gifts. These are other abilities that God has given you. These spiritual gifts come to you at point of your spiritual birth when you receive Christ as personal Savior. I think it would be well that we briefly review these, and remind you of the spiritual abilities that God provides. Everybody here has at least one of these, and some of you have more than one of these. And it is incumbent upon you to identify what you have, and to be responsible for using these in the production of divine good – to be using these in the spiritual combat in which you are engaged.

**The Gift of Evangelism**

The first one is the gift of evangelist. This is found in Ephesians 4:11 which lists this as one of the gifts of the Spirit: "And He (the Lord Jesus) gave to the church some apostles and some prophets." We no longer have apostles and prophets. Those communication gifts had been discontinued after the New Testament Scriptures were completed. But we do have these other two gifts mentioned in this verse. The first is evangelist. What is an evangelist? He is not that hotshot revivalist who comes running out on the stage with his deck shoes and his mouthful-of-smiles, and praising the Lord, and yelling, "Hallelujah," and singing loud, and strumming his guitar. That is the hotshot revivalist, and that has nothing to do with the gift of evangelism.

The evangelist is a person who has the ability to explain the gospel, and to lead sinners to the acceptance of salvation in a uniquely dramatic way. When he opens his mouth about the gospel, there is something about his explanation that just rams right into the mentality, and alerts people so that the Spirit of God has the ground for bringing conviction, and for leading that person into eternal life.

This is a special ability beyond the usual witnessing capacity, and beyond the usual duty to witness, that all of us as believers have. In 2 Corinthians 5:20, we read, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we beg you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." All of us are ambassadors. All of us are responsible at every opportunity that crops up to reach out, in tenderness and in loving kindness, to try to lead people into a knowledge of eternal life that Christ has provided, and the Christian lifestyle. I think it is really great. I see some of our young people, in kindness and in tenderness, reaching out to some of the kids they know, and they're bringing them in in one way or another. They're bringing them into touch with spiritual things. These are kids who come from homes where they have parents who don't give a flip about God; who are ignorant of God; and, who have no concern for God.

This is the kind of witnessing that all of us are responsible to do: that we give concern to the human being we're looking at. Remember that when you look into a person's eyes, you're looking into the windows of the soul. Behind those eyes, you see a life. Behind those eyes, you see an intelligent response. Behind those eyes, you know what you're looking at. You're looking at a person who is going to live forever. You're looking into the soul. Those eyes will become glazed at death because the person inside is gone, and the person inside is no longer looking out through that body back at you. Remember that that person you're looking at is going to live forever – they're going to last forever. What a kindness. Your heart should go out and say, "I'd like to introduce you to the great eternity you could have – the great eternity that God, by His grace, brought to me, and I'd like to see you have it." That's a very easy thing to do. I don't have to berate you to do it. I don't have to tell you to go out and promise God that you're going to talk to five people every day of your life about the Lord. That's bunko nonsense. The Lord may want you to keep your mouth shut for some reason, until you get something maybe straightened out in your life.

But I'll tell you that when the opportunity comes to speak, and God says, "I want you to talk to this person about the gospel," your soul will reach out. It'll be so easy. The door will open, and you will extend a hand, and the hand will extend to grasp what you have to say, because God has prepared that life. That's Christian witnessing that we're all engaged in.

But there is among us an ability for somebody to act as the recruiting sergeant in the Lord's work. The gift of evangelism is the recruiting officer of the local church. He has the capacity to reach out there and to explain the gospel in such a way that a person is saved and brought into the local combat team where he is now ready to be trained by the pastor-teacher gift. So this is reaching the lost on an extensive scale. The gift of recruiting people into God's army is the gift of evangelist. If you have this gift, it will become evident to you, and it is a gift that is very important. It is not the business of the pastor-teacher to be going out and bringing people into salvation and bringing people into the local church congregation. He is told on occasion, indeed, to do that. He is on occasion responsible for doing the work of an evangelist as God opens that door and that responsibility and requirement upon him. But it is this gift of evangelism that is that particular member of our combat team who is the recruiting officer who brings the people out of the world of darkness into the world of eternal life and into the local church ministry.

**The Gift of Pastor-Teacher**

The second gift in this same verse, Ephesians 4:11, is the gift of pastor-teacher. The pastor-teacher gift is the ability to lead and to train the believers of the Word of God in the local church assembly. The pastor is the elder in the local church. There is only one elder per local church, and he must have a unique ability to teach Bible doctrine in the training of his troops. That is the primary fundamental business of the pastor-teacher. This is a unique ability to be able stand up and to explain Bible doctrine so that people can grasp it, and they can use it. I don't care how long you go to school, if you don't have this ability, you will not be able to do it. I've seen men who were trying to get into the pastorate (into the vocational ministry), that after a little while it became very evident to me that they did not have the gift of pastor-teacher. But they're going to grind their teeth. They're going to be determined. They're going to keep going, and they're going to do it. If they do follow through, some poor church is going to get stuck with this person who is trying to do some job that he does not have the spiritual gift to do, and they're going to pay for it for all eternity with the loss of training that incapacitates them in the angelic conflict, and with the loss of rewards that they can earn.

One of the most devastating things that can happen to a local church is for an evangelist to become pastor of that local church. Brother, you can't think of anything more horrendous; more devastating; or, more destructive. There are always evangelists that are the hot-shots who are going to build up huge congregations, and they can do it. But they have no capacity for delivering the goods. They have no capacity for being a drill instructor, or being a training officer of the local congregation.

The pastor-teacher ability is discussed for us, for example, in 1 Timothy 3:2, where Paul says, "A bishop (bishop is another word for pastor-teacher) then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, and (here's the punch line) apt to teach" – that has ability to teach. That's what that means. That means ability to teach. The gift of being able to teach. You cannot be a pastor if you cannot teach.

There is a book written by a Dallas Seminary professor about the measure of a man that seeks to avoid the gift of pastor-teacher. Well, this gentleman at the seminary is so distressed over this verse. He wants to say that there is no special gift of pastor-teacher leadership; there is no special ability to teach the word; and, these are all characteristics of all Christians. So he tries to make this word "apt to teach" mean "teachable." When I read that, I said, "Now that's interesting." I looked in my Greek Bible, and I looked up the word "teachable." As I looked at the word, for the moment, I was puzzled, because sure enough, the Greek lexicon had the word, and it said "teachable." Then I realized that there was one letter difference in the Greek between the word "teachable" and the word "able to teach." The word "apt to teach" is the one letter difference that is here. And he slithered around there in that paragraph. And anybody who doesn't know Greek is going to be conned by what he said in that book – that some people actually believe that this word here means "teachable."

In other words, he's saying a spiritual leader should be a person that you can teach. You can tell him something. Well, that may be true, but that doesn't happen to be the word that's used here. That is a conniving skulduggery. It's a one-letter different word, but it's an altogether different word. When you run into that, I want to prepare you for it, because all the Body Life people love to champion this cause. When you come to this word here in 1 Timothy 3:2, at the end of that verse, the word in the Greek means "having the ability to teach." That's exactly what it means.

In Titus 1:9, we have this principle again laid out: "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to confute the opposers." Here is a job description of the pastor-teacher (the elder who is responsible for the local church training program): that he himself holds fast the faithful Word as he has been taught; that he is sound in doctrine; and, that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort the believers and to cut down the opposers within the congregation. The pastor-teacher feeds his troops as 1 Peter 5:1-2 instruct him to do, and as Acts 20:28 directs him to do. He feeds his troops the living and powerful Word of God via the HICEE technique. That is what the ministry of the pastor-teacher is all about.

1 Peter 5:1-2: "The elders who are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." If God calls you to be in the pastorate of a local church (to be the drill instructor), Peter says, "Take the job." It is a dirty, sick job, and it is a burdensome job, and many times you would prefer to avoid it. Nobody knows that better than me. When I was in Dallas Seminary, I had determined long before I graduated that one thing I would never do was be in the pastorate. But if you are called to that, then do it without somebody having to force you. Do it willingly, but don't do it for filthy lucre. Do you know what filthy lucre is? That's the old dramatic old English word for money. Don't do it for dirty money. This is a very appropriate title. The people who work in the bank and have to handle money all day long find that they have to wash their hands. Their hands get dirty. They literally get dirty from handling money. It's filthy. He says you are not to do that because there's not something in it of a material nature for you. But God has called you to it in order to give you an eternal reward in heaven.

So the pastor-teacher is to perform this work as unto the Lord for the training of the troops in accordance with this particular capacity. We may add Acts 20:28 to that, in Paul's farewell address to the pastors of the various churches from Ephesus who met him: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (another word for pastor-teachers), to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood." What are you going to feed them with? Your challenge; your inspiration; or, your latest interesting story that you can make them all laugh with, and think you're a wonderful speaker? That's chaff, and they'll die on that. The thing that they need to be fed upon is the living and powerful Word of God. And that's the pastor-teacher's role. The pastor-teacher has been commissioned by God the Holy Spirit to his particular local church, and thereafter he is responsible for the combat status of that congregation.

**The Gift of Exhortation**

There is then a third spiritual gift. This third spiritual gift is the gift of exhortation. You do Christian service according to the gift of exhortation. We have this one in Romans 12:8. This is the ability to rally people to achieve a goal which has been designated by God the Holy Spirit. This is a unique ability that some Christians have to make a pertinent application of Bible doctrine principles so the Christian soldiers are moved to maximum effort in a certain direction that the Spirit of God has designated. It enables Christians to see the objectives of the local church effort. This gift is exercised through encouragement; through appeals; through rebukes; and, through clarification. This gift, of course, is highly resented by negative believers who are embarrassed by the exposés of their own unwillingness to join in the battle.

**The Gift of Ministry**

Then we have the gift of ministry. This gift is described in Romans 12:7 and 1 Corinthians 12:28. This is the ability to perform practical services which are needed by the body of Christ. These are practical services. I think they must incorporate a variety of natural skills with which we are born, which God the Holy Spirit sanctifies and sets apart to our use under the gift of ministry. I am very strongly inclined to think that every believer is born again with the gift of ministry. This is your ability to produce practical service works that believers need, and that the local church organization needs. This includes all these things that so many of you do around this ministry: the repair work; the improvement work; the maintenance work; and, the sustaining ministries. All of these fall under this gift of the ability to minister. It is supporting believers in various ways to enable them to function in the angelic conflict.

Anybody who knows anything about a military operation knows that for one man up in the air flying an airplane, there has to be a large contingent of men on the ground keeping that equipment functioning in operation, or he'll never get up in the air for combat. For every vehicle that is in operation, out of a motor pool that is in a combat situation, you have to have a large staff of mechanics who are back there in the rear areas keeping those vehicles operational, or everything grinds to a halt. And that is the gift of ministry in the angelic conflict – people who have the ability to come through to give us the supporting services that we need to be able to do the job. The more Satan neutralizes this gift, the less a local church combat team accomplishes in the battle.

**The Gift of Administration**

Number 5 is the gift of administration. The gift of administration is in Romans 12:8 and in 1 Corinthians 12:28. This is the ability to provide leadership in spiritual activities. This is capacity to be an administrator. Now a person who has a natural ability as an administrator is not automatically capable of directing an enterprise in Christian work. Some of the worst administrators in God's work are very much of a genius in secular work. The two don't necessarily go together. But the administrator performs the role of the officer corps in the angelic conflict. He has the divine ability to think and to act objectively under various pressures; to stay on divine viewpoint decisions; and, to lead out the group that he's in charge of. He creates a sense of confidence in his troops as to what God's will for them is. This is leadership which not only talks, but moves out to lead the way into battle. One of the ways you can spot somebody who does not have the gift of administration (this gift of leadership) is that he's a big talker. I have seen that over my times of service in the Lord's army many times. People come in among us, and they're big mouths and they're big talkers. And they've got big ideas, and they've got big ambitions, and they've got all kinds of things that they think are wonderful to do. But when it comes to leading out and to accomplishing, their zeros. They do not have the gift of administration. It takes more than a hotshot with some inspirational idea.

**The Gift of Giving**

Number 6 is the gift of giving. The gift of giving is in Romans 12:8. This is the ability to provide large sums of money for the spiritual warfare. These are the people who provide the logistical supply – the matériel to do the job. This requires both great wealth on the part of the believer, and the capacity to give it away in large quantities as the Holy Spirit directs. This is again more than the duty which each of us has as a Christian soldier to make the sacrifice of substance which Hebrews 13:16 speaks of. All of us are responsible for sustaining and supporting financially the Lord's work. But the gift of giving carries with it not only large material possessions, but the capacity to give in large quantities to meet certain needs. It carries with it the discernment of giving to ministries that make a real impact in the angelic conflict.

One wants to weep when he sees all the money that is poured into the ministries that are supposedly doing the Lord's work, which are not doing the Lord's work at all. They are doing man's work. They are human viewpoint operations. But every dollar that you invest in a divine viewpoint ministry is a dollar that's rewarded in heaven for you someday. Incidentally, God's provisions will be withdrawn from a believer who fails to exercise the gift of giving. If you have the gift of giving, you will have large sums to give. I have more than once seeing people who have found themselves with great material supplies, and all of a sudden those supplies dribbled away. Where they once had great monetary resources, they've lost it all. And when they want to know why, almost inevitably you can point to the fact that they have been unfaithful in exercising the gift of giving. And if you are unfaithful in exercising the gift of giving, I can guarantee you that God will jerk away your material supply right from under you, because He'll give it to somebody else who's going to deliver the goods into His work. He never gave that to you so that you could sit on it. Too little, too late is Satan's way of undermining the local church combat effectiveness. This particular combat service of giving has high vulnerability in the angelic conflict.

Well, we have three other very important strategic gifts to look at as vehicles for Christian service. And we have the question of: how do I know which one of these I have? Since our time has run out, we're going to stop at this point, and we'll pick this up next time to continue what is a very vital area of understanding of what the Lord has for you to do as a soldier in combat.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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