



Agents of Change

Text: 1 Timothy 4: 11-16

Young Adults Pastor Adam McIntire

Do you feel desperate for the power of the Holy Spirit today? If not, you may have a misunderstanding of who you are or who the Holy Spirit is. Every aspect of our salvation is dependent on Him. Without the Spirit, we can't know God, understand Scripture, overcome sin, or transform the people around us. We are spiritually impotent without the Spirit, so it is vital that we have a right understanding of who He is and what He does. Let's look at the role of the Holy Spirit and our partnership.

1. Read Ezekiel 36:25–27; Acts 2:1-41.
 - a. What references to Old Testament truths and promises do you see in the passage and sermon in Acts 2?
 - b. What does the passage in Act 2 say about the Holy Spirit?
 - c. How do you see the Holy Spirit working at this significant moment in history?
2. Read Romans 8:1-17.
 - a. This passage describes how the law of sin brought about our spiritual death. What has God done to free us from the law of sin and death?
 - b. What does Paul's comparison of these two ways of living say about the role of the Holy Spirit and our need for Him?
3. Though only God can change us, we have a role in partnering with the Holy Spirit and submitting our lives to God as He is changing us. Our sanctification, growing in Christ-likeness, is a response to the outpouring of grace we have received. Read Romans 12:2 and Colossians 3:1-4.
 - a. What do these verses say about sanctification?
 - b. How is this different from salvation?
4. Adam mentioned a few practical ways to partner with the Holy Spirit in the transformation of our character: Immersing ourselves in scripture, prayer, caring for the marginalized/poor and development of spiritual gifts.

- a. Which of these have you seen be instrumental in your transformation? How?
- b. Which of these do you feel the most unfamiliar with or apprehensive towards?
- c. What are other things that have fostered change in you? Share with your group the things God has most used to change you.

Challenge: If you have not already, take a spiritual gifts test. See Study Deeper.

- Has anyone ever identified these in you before?
- Have you noticed any of these gifts in others?
- How can you recognize and encourage someone this week?

Prayer Points for Sanctification:

ADORATION:

- Praise God for His gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Praise God for His ability to make sinful people holy.
- Praise God for His faithfulness.

CONFESSION:

- Forgive us for turning back to our sinful lives.
- Forgive us for not trusting in your sanctifying work.
- Forgive us for not thanking you for sanctifying us.

THANKSGIVING:

- Thank God for making us holy as God is holy.
- Thank God for faithfully working in our hearts and lives until the end.
- Thank God for knowing perfection and being perfect.

SUPPLICATION:

- Help us to forsake our selfish desires.
- Help us to stand confident in your power to sanctify us.
- Help us to surrender all of our lives to your will.

http://www.ctabmedia.com/_media/thejourney/2013/big-words/11_Sanctification_Prayer-Points.pdf

STUDY DEEPER

Two tests to help determine spiritual gifts.

<http://giftstest.com/>

http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_PDF_DSC_Spiritual_Growth_Assessment.pdf

How to Use Your Spiritual Gifts in Business

Most working Christians spend the majority of their waking hours in a for-profit business setting. Yet many marketplace Christians are unaware that the Holy Spirit has given them spiritual gifts to be used primarily in the marketplace—not only in the context of a local church or charity.

Sadly, many marketplace Christians are unaware of the spiritual gifts entrusted to them for fulfilling the disciple-making and world-transforming mission of the church. In local churches that help marketplace Christians to identify their spiritual gifts, the typical "spiritual gifts assessment" is being used almost entirely for the purpose of assigning these believers as volunteers to serve in their various in-house programs.

For example, those who score high in the spiritual gift of "hospitality" often are appointed as greeters at the front door of the church Sunday morning. Those who score high in the gifts of "service" or "helps" often are expected to use their gift primarily to help with duties such as setup and cleanup around the church campus.

Shouldn't marketplace Christians also be equipped to use their spiritual gifts in the marketplace where they spend most of their time and have the most influence?

Often, Christian teaching about "marketplace ministry" primarily emphasizes the application of timeless principles in business (e.g., Proverbs) and the need to provide generous financial support for Christian-themed charities.

Yes, these things are important, but what do we mean when we say, "Christians working in business should view their work as ministry"? What does it look like to engage in ministry in a business setting?

Equipped for the Marketplace

A significant part of ministering in the marketplace involves exercising our spiritual gifts, the tools God has given to marketplace Christians for spreading the awareness of His glory throughout our workplaces and beyond.

Hundreds of millions of marketplace Christians must be equipped with an understanding of their spiritual gifts and how to use them for ministry in a business setting. In this way, the saints will be "equipped for

the work of ministry," enabling them to fulfill the disciple-making, world-transforming mission of the church (Eph. 4:12).

Certainly, all Christians should offer their spiritual gifts in a way that helps their local churches create outstanding services and excellent programs. This is an essential part of transforming our communities and discipling nations.

However, marketplace Christians are called to use their spiritual gifts to fulfill the mission of the church primarily in the marketplace. The business world is where the unbelievers are, where approximately 85 percent of Christians spend the majority of their waking hours, where evangelism and discipleship can happen on a daily basis and where the culture is shaped.

Today, marketplace Christians all over the world are using their spiritual gifts for ministry in business. Consider these real-life examples:

- Real-estate developer with the gift of faith
- Business consultant with the gift of intercessory prayer
- Professional athlete with the gift of healing
- Author with the gift of worship
- Department store owner with the gift of hospitality
- Venture capitalist with the gift of cross-cultural ministry
- Manufacturing CEO with the gift of compassion
- Operating With Special Abilities

Most of us would agree that a non-Christian cannot operate with the spiritual gifts of miracle-working and healing, two gifts that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 12.

At the same time, few of us would say a non-Christian cannot operate with the gifts of administration or leadership, which also are listed as gifts in the Bible (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:8). It is true that many Fortune 500 companies are run by non-Christians who possess extraordinary administrative and leadership abilities. So is there even a difference between natural abilities and spiritual gifts? Are Christians supposed to be doing business in the marketplace with natural abilities, with spiritual gifts or with both? Should it be mostly one or the other?

The following are six ways in which natural abilities differ from spiritual gifts:

- Spiritual gifts are only for born-again Christians.
- Spiritual gifts are gifts to the church through individuals.
- Spiritual gifts are fueled by the fruit of the Spirit.
- Spiritual gifts are governed and directed by the Holy Spirit.
- Spiritual gifts enable us to worship God through our work.
- Spiritual gifts can produce eternal results and rewards.

In short, a spiritual gift is a special ability given by the Holy Spirit through a born-again Christian to the people of God for the purpose of spreading the awareness of the glory of God throughout the earth.

Activating 'Varieties of Gifts'

Once we realize spiritual gifts also are needed in the marketplace, we must activate the "varieties of gifts" that have been entrusted to marketplace Christians (1 Cor. 12:4). Although marketplace ministry often is defined through the lens of one particular spiritual gift, the ministry has many different expressions beyond the ones that come most naturally.

For example, one whose primary spiritual gifts are serving as a pastor and exercising compassion likely would view marketplace ministry as a calling to care for the personal needs of his employees and co-workers as a chaplain would. Marketplace chaplaincy organizations such as Corporate Chaplains of America and Marketplace Chaplains USA are doing outstanding work for God's kingdom in this regard. But this is only one expression of marketplace ministry.

One whose primary spiritual gift as a marketplace Christian is apostleship might tend to view ministry in the marketplace as a calling to become like the Old Testament's Joseph, Daniel or Esther, rising to the upper echelons of the "seven mountains of culture" to make a transformational impact for God's kingdom. This popular emphasis of marketplace ministry is yet another unique expression of what God is doing in the business world.

A marketplace Christian whose dominant spiritual gift is evangelism probably would be more inclined than most other marketplace Christians to evangelize in his workplace. We all are called to lead others into the saving knowledge of Jesus, but for some, this is their most prominent spiritual gift.

An individual with the gifts of miracle-working and healing might say that marketplace ministry is about pursuing supernatural signs and wonders in a business setting. Andy Mason leads an organization named Heaven in Business at Bethel Church in Redding, California, which trains marketplace Christians to use these gifts in the marketplace.

A marketplace Christian with the spiritual gift of cross-cultural ministry likely would view marketplace ministry as a calling to reach foreign lands with the gospel. The relatively new phrase, "business as mission," is the tagline for how this spiritual gift operates in the international business world. International businessman and author Ken Eldred emphasizes this aspect of marketplace ministry as he finances and builds multimillion-dollar "kingdom businesses" in India and China to transform these nations with the gospel.

To fulfill Jesus' mandate to "make disciples of all nations," all of the church's spiritual gifts must be activated. Can you imagine the impact that could be made if every marketplace Christian identified his spiritual gifts, understood how to use them for ministry in a business setting and used them every day in the marketplace?

<http://ministrytodaymag.com/life/marketplace/22460-using-spiritual-gifts-in-business>