

## **Don't Mistake Gifts for Fruit**

### **1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NLT)**

**7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.**

**8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge.**

**9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing.**

**10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.**

**11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.**

### **1 Corinthians 12:31 (AMP)**

**31 But earnestly desire and strive for the greater gifts [if acquiring them is going to be your goal].**

**And yet I will show you a still more excellent way [one of the choicest graces and the highest of them all: unselfish love].**

Have you ever gone to a show where the performer was so outstanding, you couldn't help but be overwhelmed? Or, have you ever heard someone preach and you could just see the pictures, as he/she delivered the message? Maybe you've been in a healing service where the minister laid his/her hands on a blind person and they left seeing.

The truth is, these special feats are astounding and sometimes even unbelievable. Often, because a person is able to operate with such powerful gifts one is lead to believe that is evidence of their close walk with the Holy Spirit. However, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not the fruit of the

Holy Spirit. Gifts are not fruit and fruit is not a gift. If we aren't careful, we will be mistaking an endowment from God with the presence of God. With this in mind, let's examine: **Don't Mistake Gifts For Fruit.**

### **1 Peter 4:10 (AMP)**

**10 Just as each one of you has received a special gift [a spiritual talent, an ability graciously given by God], employ it in serving one another as [is appropriate for] good stewards of God's multi-faceted grace [faithfully using the diverse, varied gifts and abilities granted to Christians by God's unmerited favor].**

The Bible clearly states that God has given us all at least one special, unique ability that can be a blessing to someone else. The problem arises when we haven't grown the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. When this is the case, we can begin to think the gifts we were given we intended to serve us. **GIFTS WITHOUT FRUIT ARE NORMALLY NOT THE BEST COMBINATION.**

- 1. Gifts are given to us. Fruit is grown in us.**

### **Romans 11:29 (AMP)**

**29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable [for He does not withdraw what He has given, nor does He change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call].**

Because people cry and shout every time someone sings, doesn't necessarily mean they're walking with the Holy Spirit. Because someone can speak in tongues, doesn't make them super spiritual. For a long time in certain contexts it was thought that speaking in tongues was the evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit. **HOWEVER, OUR LIVES ARE THE ACTUAL EVIDENCE OF THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

- 2. Gifts are an endowment from the Holy Spirit. Fruit is evidence of the Holy Spirit.**

### **Proverbs 18:16 (NASB)**

**16 A person's gift makes room for him And brings him before great people.**

When a gift is shared or displayed, it causes attention and light to be shined on the gifted individual. The purpose of that light is to point those watching to the giver, God. Fruit, on the other hand was intended to be eaten by both the farmer and the receiver. There's a phrase: **You are what you eat.** It's nearly impossible to share the fruit of the Spirit with others if one has not first eaten that fruit him/herself. **WHEN WE GROW AND EAT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT, WE ARE BETTER EQUIPPED TO OPERATE IN THE GIFTS WE'VE BEEN GIVEN.**

**3. Gifts are to be displayed. Fruit is to be consumed.**

**1 Corinthians 13:1 AMP)**

**13 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not [love [for others growing out of God's love for me], then I have become only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal [just an annoying distraction].**

We should never allow our gifts to take us further than our character can sustain us. In the scripture Paul said, "Even if I can really look spiritual, by speaking in tongues and interpreting what I'm speaking. All that is cool. But if I don't possess any fruit, in this case the fruit of love, I'm useless." **WHEN PEOPLE OPERATE IN THE GIFTS WITHOUT THE FRUIT, THEY BECOME JUST AN ANOYING DISTRACTION. AND IF THEY AREN'T CAREFUL, THEY WILL BECOME AN EMBARRASSMENT, TO GOD, THEMSELVES AND THE KINGDOM.**

**4. Gifts attract some people. Fruit sustains us all.**

**Romans 12:6-9 (NLT)**

**6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.**

**7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well.**

**8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.**

**9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.**

It's amazing how people often rank how spiritual or close to God they think people are. Giftedness is often equated to spirituality. Paul says, "We all have differing gifts from each other, for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God." That's not what makes us spiritual or Christian for that matter. Jesus says, "By this, people will know that you are my disciples." Not how well you shout around the church. Not how many services you attend in a week. Not how many hours you spend praying. **THEY WILL KNOW YOU ARE A DISCIPLE/CHRISTIAN BY THE FRUIT OF LOVE THAT IS ON DISPLAY AND READILY AVAILABLE TO BE CONSUMED BY OTHERS.**

**5. Gifts distinguish us from others. Fruit helps us recognize one another.**

The gifts of the Holy Spirit and fruit of the Holy Spirit are really quite different from one another. Gifts are not fruit. And fruit is not a gift. Let's always be careful, not to mistake an endowment from God with the presence of God. Remember: **Don't Mistake Gifts for Fruit**