

Habits of Fully Devoted Disciples

THE FOURTH HABIT - GIFTS

Matthew 25:14-30

A. A spiritual gift is a trust from God

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength that God provides so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 4:10-11)

B. Spiritual gifts are divine enablements the Holy Spirit gives so we can glorify God and build up Christ’s Church

The Grace to GIVE

A. There are some basic facts about gifts

1. Every believer is gifted by God with a spiritual gift(s) (1 Peter 4:10-11)
2. God called some - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers-- to equip believers to use their gifts in ministry (cf. Eph. 4:11)
3. Every believer is responsible to use his/her God-given gift(s) to build up and serve the rest of the body (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12-31)

B. There is no such thing as a disciple who does not serve

“It’s a sin--not just a bad habit--a sin to benefit from a ministry to which you do not contribute. It is a crime to come Sunday after Sunday and receive and say, ‘Preach to me. Sing to me. Serve me. Put out the coffee for me. Print the bulletins for me. If I’m sick visit me. If I’m hurting, comfort me. If I need encouragement, encourage me. But don’t you dare expect me to give any of my time or ability to you.’ That’s a sin.”
“Everyone who claims to be a member but doesn’t use their time and talent to serve the family of God insults the Father who invited you into his home in the first place. Don’t think you’re here because you chose to be. You are here by grace! ‘By grace are you saved through faith--that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.’ He adopted you into his family when you didn’t have a family and let you into his glorious home, and you don’t even want to clean your room. That is an affront to God.” (Tony Evans)

C. No one will force you to use your spiritual gift

1. But “gift-users” are rewarded; “gift-hiders” are punished
2. You are God’s (only) plan for the building of his church and kingdom

The Grace to INITIATE

A. The understanding is the gift-holder takes the initiative

1. Some believers sit around waiting to be asked to use their gift
2. Some church members tend to bury their gifts - keep them hidden

3. Some followers think they’re limited to one ministry at a time...

B. Disciples offer themselves and their gifts to the fellowship/church

The Grace to FOCUS

A. A disciple is not called to be everything to everyone!

B. We need to discover, develop, and deploy our spiritual gift(s)

C. All Spiritual gifts are valuable. One gift is not greater than another

D. Everyone’s gifts are urgently needed

“The head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts/gifts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.” (1 Corinthians 12:22)

The Grace to DEVELOP

A. Development takes time. Proficiency takes time

B. Proficiency requires persistence and perseverance. It takes discipleship

C. We can be gracious because we know Christ was gracious to us

The Grace of SYNERGY

A. Synergy means “*the whole is greater than the sum of the parts*”

1. When we serve together, our impact is more than the sum of our contributions

2. Do you know how many people it takes to destroy synergy? One

B. If we all ministered together, we could turn this community right side up

1. God didn’t call the 20% to serve the 80%; he calls every disciple to serve Him, each other and the world

2. God didn’t call his disciples to give 10% or even 90%...but full devotion

MEMORY VERSE:

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10-11)

SOME QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON:

What are your spiritual gifts?

How are you developing these gifts to use in Christ’s church and kingdom?

What excites you the most about serving Jesus?

Where are you currently serving in the church? In His Kingdom? Are there areas where you would prefer to serve?

How can you encourage others to discover, develop, and deploy their gifts?

How have you been encouraged by others in your service?