

## Using the Gifts

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

1 Corinthians 12:6

The wise men who brought gifts to the Christ child spawned a tradition shared at Christmas time for centuries. Giving and sharing gifts to show the love of Christ plays a large part in celebrating Christmas. Toys, clothes, books, tools, and money are some of the common gifts that are given. Whatever the gift, the recipient anxiously looks for an opportunity to use the gift. Kids boisterously playing with a new toy is a familiar memory of Christmases past. A gathering after Christmas is usually filled with people wearing some new clothing item they received as a gift. Stores become crowded after Christmas with people who will spend a cash gift or gift card for something they desire. There certainly is greater satisfaction in using the gift than just having it as a possession.

Our Lord has endowed to his children, spiritual gifts that are to be used in His service. Because people have such diversities, God equips the body of Christ with various gifts to advance His kingdom while helping to edify others. We don't get to pick and choose what gifts we would like to have, rather God in His infinite wisdom distributes the gifts to everyone severally as He wills. We must recognize and utilize the gifts given to us so we might best serve Him. By allowing God to order our steps, we can expect opportunities to arise to demonstrate God's love by applying our particular gift. Each experience should contribute to refining that gift so the Lord is truly glorified. Believers should also be aware of the devil's plan of diminishing the effectiveness of the gift. If we hide behind the shadow of the cross, we can avoid the pitfall of pride, which makes our efforts a work of the flesh, nullifying the true work of God through His Spirit. There also should be no jealousy concerning what gifts God chooses to bestow on others. God has made each individual for His purpose, and it is best for believers not to compare themselves with others. God is fair and equitable in His distribution of gifts to His children. He expects each to do their best with what they have been given.

Every day of this New Year will present situations in which we are to fulfill the purpose for which we were made. God gives us a realm of ministry so that we may expand the influence of the Gospel. Each person, as a member of the body, works in unison to glorify our Maker. No gift is more significant than another, but each is meant for the individual to accomplish God's will for their life.

J. Ekis