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Spiritual Gifts *

It is very natural for the human heart first to set out in search of Truth because of the "loaves and the fish" ([Matthew_15:36](#)).

Perhaps it is not too much to say that the majority of people first turn to God because of some weakness, some failure, some almost unbearable want in their lives. After having vainly tried in all other ways to overcome or to satisfy the want, they turn in desperation to God.

There is in the heart of even the most depraved human being, though he would not for worlds have others know it, an instinctive feeling that somewhere there is a power that is able to give him just what he wants; that if he could only reach that which to his conception is God, he could prevail on Him to grant the things desired. **This feeling is itself God-given.** It is the divine self, though only a spark at the center of the man's being, suggesting to him the true remedy for all his ills.

Especially have people been led to seek Truth for the reward, "for the sake of the works themselves" ([John.14:11](#)), during the last few years, since they have come to know that God is not only able, but willing, to deliver them from all the burdens of their everyday life. Everyone wants to be free, free, free as the birds of the air—free from sickness, free from suffering, free from bondage, free from poverty, free from all forms of evil; and he has a right to be; **it is a God-given desire, and a God-given right.**

Thus far nearly all teaching has limited the manifestation of infinite love to one form—that of healing. Sickness, seemingly incurable disease, and suffering reigned on every side, and every sufferer wanted to be free. We had not yet known that there was willingness as there was power, that there was intense desire—on the part of our Father to give us something more than sweet, patient submission to suffering.

When first the truth was taught that the divine presence ever lives in man as perfect life and can be drawn on by our recognition and faith to come forth into full and abounding health, it attracted widespread attention, and justly so. Both teachers and students centered their gaze on this one outcome of a spiritual life, losing sight of any larger, fuller, or more complete manifestation of the indwelling Father. Teachers told all their pupils most emphatically that this knowledge of Truth would enable them to heal, and they devoted all their teaching to explanation of the principles and to giving formulas and other instructions for healing the body. Time has shown that there are larger and broader views of the truth about spiritual gifts.

Healing of the body is beautiful and good. Power to heal is a divine gift, and as such you are fully justified in seeking it. But God wants to give you infinitely more.

Why should you and I restrict the limitless One to the giving of a particular gift, unless, indeed, we be so fairly consumed with an inborn desire for it that we are sure that it is God's highest desire for us? In that case we shall not have to try to heal. Healing will flow from us wherever we are. Even in a crowd of people, without any effort of our own, the one who needs healing will receive it from us; that one will "touch" ([Matthew 9:21](#)) us, as did the one woman in all the multitude jostling and crowding against Jesus. Only one touched Him.

Healing is truly a "branch" of "the vine" ([John 15:4](#)), but it is not the only branch. There are many branches, all of which are necessary to the perfect vine, which is seeking through you and me to bear much fruit. What God wants is that we shall grow into such conscious oneness with Him, such realization that He who is the substance of all good really abides in us, that "ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you" ([John 15:7](#)).

If you are faithfully and earnestly living what Truth you know, and still find that your power to heal is not so great as it was at first, recognize it as all good. Be assured, no matter what anyone else says to you or thinks, that the seeming failure does not mean loss of power. It means that you are to let go of the lesser, in order that you may grasp the whole, in which the lesser is included. Do not fear for a moment to let go of just this one little branch of divine power; choose rather to have the highest thoughts of infinite mind, let them be what they may, fulfilled through you. We need to take our eyes off the ends of the branches, the results, and keep them centered in the vine.

You are a vessel for some purpose. If, when the time comes, you let go cheerfully, without humiliation or shame or sense of failure, your tense, rigid mortal grasp on some particular form of manifestation, such as healing, and "earnestly desire the higher gifts" ([1 Corinthians 12:31](#)), whatever they may be in your individual case, you will do "works" in the one specific direction that will be simply marvelous in the eyes of men. These works will be done without effort on your part, because they will be God, omnipotent, omniscient, manifesting Himself through you in His own chosen direction.

Paul said, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith to another gifts of healing to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" ([1 Corinthians 12:1-10](#)).

The same Spirit, always and forever the same, and one God, one Spirit, but in different forms of manifestation. The gift of healing is no more, no greater, than the gift of prophecy; the gift of prophecy is no greater than faith, for faith (when it is really God's faith manifested through us), even as a grain of mustard seed, shall be able to remove mountains; the working of miracles is no greater than the power to discern spirits (or the thoughts and intents of other men's hearts, which are open always to Spirit). And "greatest of these is love" ([1 Corinthians 13:13](#)); for "love never ends" ([1 Corinthians 13:8](#)) to melt down all forms of sin, sorrow, sickness, and trouble. "Love never fails."

"All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit who shares to each one individually as he wills. For just as the body is one, all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.... If the whole body were an eye [or gift of healing], where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose" ([1 Corinthians 12:11-21](#)).

Thus Paul identify some of the free "gifts" of the Spirit to those who will not limit the manifestations of the Holy One, but yield themselves to Spirit's desire within them. Why should we so fear to abandon ourselves to the workings of infinite love and wisdom? Why be so afraid to let Him have His own, way with us, and through us ?

Has not the gift of healing, the only gift we have thus far sought, been a good and blessed one, not only to ourselves, but to all with whom we come in contact?

Then why should we fear to wait upon God with a perfect willingness that the Holy Spirit manifest itself through us as it will, knowing that, whatever the manifestation, it will be good—all good to us and to those around us!

Oh, for more men who have the courage to abandon themselves utterly to infinite will— men who dare let go every human being for guidance, and, seeking the Christ within themselves, let the manifestation be what He wills!

Such courage might possibly mean, and probably would mean at first, a seeming failure, a going down from some apparent success that had been in the past. But the going down would only mean a mighty coming up, a most glorious resurrection of God into visibility through you in His own chosen way, right here and now. The failure, for the time, would only mean a grand, glorious success a little later on.

Do not fear failure, but call failure good; for it really is. Did not Jesus stand an utter failure, to all appearances, when He stood dumb before Pilate, all His cherished principles come to naught, unwilling to deliver Himself, or to "demonstrate" over the agonizing circumstances of His position?

But had He not seemed to fail right at that point, there never would have been the infinitely grander demonstration of the Resurrection a little later on. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" ([John 12:24](#)).

If you have clung to one spiritual gift because you were taught that, and you begin to fail, believe me, it is only the seeming death, the seeming disappearance, of one gift, in order that out of it may spring many new gifts—brighter, higher, fuller ones, because they are the ones that God has chosen for you.

Your greatest work will be done in your own God-appointed channel. If you will let Spirit possess you wholly, if you will to have the highest will done in you and through you continually, you will be quickly moved by it out of your present limitations, which a half success always indicates, into a manifestation as much fuller and more perfect and beautiful as is the new grain than the old seed, which had to fall into the ground and die.

Old ways must die. Failure is only the death of the old that there may be the hundredfold following. If there comes to you a time when you do not demonstrate over sickness, as you did at first, do not think that you need lean on others entirely. It is beautiful and good for another to "heal" you bodily by calling forth universal life through you; but right here there is something higher and better for you.

Spirit, the Holy Spirit, which is God in movement, wants to teach you something, to open a bigger, brighter way to you. This apparent failure is His call to you to arrest your attention and turn you to Him.

"Agree with God, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you" ([Job 22:21](#)).

Turn to the divine presence within yourself. Seek Him. Be still before Him. Wait upon God quietly, earnestly, but constantly and trustingly, for days— weeks, if need be! Let Him work in you, and sooner or later you will spring up into a resurrected life of newness and power that you never before dreamed of.

When these transition periods come in which God would lead us higher, should we get frightened or discouraged, we only miss the lesson that He would teach, and so postpone the day of receiving our own fullest, highest gift. In our ignorance and fear, we are thus hanging on to the old grain of wheat that we can see, not daring to let it go into the ground and die, lest there be no resurrection, no newness of life, nothing bigger and grander to come out of it.

Oh, do not let us fear our God, who is all good, and who longs only to make us each one a giant instead of a pygmy!

What we all need to do above everything else is to cultivate the acquaintance or consciousness of Spirit within ourselves. We must take our attention off results, and seek to live the life. Results will be "added unto" us in greater measure when we turn our thoughts less to the "works" and more to embodying the indwelling Christ in our entire being. We have come to a time when there must be less talking about Truth, less treating and being treated merely for the purpose of being delivered from some evil result of wrong living; there must be more living of Truth and teaching others to do so. There must be more incorporating of Truth in our very flesh and bone.

How are you to do this ?

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life" ([John.14:6](#)), says the Christ at the center of your being.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides [consciously] in me, and I in him [in His consciousness], he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me [or severed from me in your consciousness] you can do nothing..

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you" ([John 15:5-7](#)).

I do assure you, as do all teachers, that you can bring good things of whatever kind you desire into your life by holding to them as yours in the invisible until they become manifest.

But, beloved, do you not see that your highest, your first— your continual—thought should be to seek the abiding in Him, to seek the knowing as a living reality, not as a delicate theory that He abides in you ? After that, ask what you will, be it power to heal, to cast out demons, or even the "greater works" ([John 14:12](#)), and "it shall be done for you" ([John 15:7](#)).

There is one Spirit—"One God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace or free gift, given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" ([Ephesians 4:6-7](#)).

"Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you" ([2.Timothy1:6](#)).

Do not be afraid, "for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control" ([2.Timothy1:7](#)).

It is all one and the same Spirit. To be the greatest success, you do not want my gift, nor do I want yours; each wants his own, such as will fit his size and shape, his capacity and desires, such as not the human mind of us, but the highest in us, shall choose. Seek to be filled with Spirit, to have the reality of things incarnated in larger degree **in your consciousness. Spirit will reveal to your understanding your own specific gift, or the manner of God's desired manifestation through you.**

Let us not desert our own work, our own God within us, to gaze or pattern after our neighbor. Let us not seek to make his gift ours; let us not criticize his failure to manifest any specific gift. Whenever he "fails," give thanks to God that He is leading him up into a higher place, where there can be a fuller and more complete manifestation of the divine presence through him.

Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" ([Ephesians 4:1-3](#)).

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"As God's children, we are not to be observers; we're to participate actively in the Lord's work. Spectators sit and watch, but we are called to use our spiritual gifts and serve continually."

~.Charles.Stanley