

**Topical**  
**Understanding Your Spiritual Gifts**  
**1 Peter 4:10-11**  
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Well, I thought because of our ministry fare today and because of a lot of confusion around the country about the issue of spiritual gifts, that I would take a break from our study of Philippians and take a look at this important really crucial topic to the life of the church.

When you think about the body of Christ, it's not amazing that God used the image of a body to picture life in the church because the human body that He created is really an amazing creation. You live in one of God's most amazing creations. For example, your body started out as a single cell. The average adult body is composed of trillions of cells. The body has been given by God, an amazing capacity to rebuild itself. We see that in injuries. You cut your finger, your arm and it replaces those cells with new ones. And as time goes by, it's hard to even tell that there was an injury. You're aware of those kinds of repairs that the body makes. But you may not be as aware that every day that goes by two billion cells in your body die and need to be replaced and are replaced every day! Consider just a few of the truly remarkable parts of your body.

I was doing some reading this week on this issue and it's fascinating to me. Take your skin, for example. Doctors would say that your skin is really your largest organ. The average one-hundred-and-fifty-pound person's skin could be stretched out if it were, to an area of about twenty square feet, about a four by five area rug if you would. For some of you have a little more square footage than others, but nevertheless. And that skin, that outer layer of skin is replaced every fifteen to thirty days, completely replaced. Every time you brush your hands against one another, ten thousand skin cells fall to the floor. I hate to tell you ladies this, but the reason there's a lot of dust in your house that you have to stay after constantly, is primarily due to dead skin cells. Every fifteen to thirty days, the entire outer layer is replaced.

Take another capacity that God has given the body - your lungs. Your lungs have the crucial responsibility of taking spent carbon dioxide, ridding the body of that and converting it back into oxygen. So, these two football sized organs in your chest, God has given them an amazing

capacity. The internal surface area of your lungs is about the size of a tennis court. Because it absorbs that carbon dioxide kicks it out and brings in fresh oxygen to supply the body.

Or take your heart, your heart beats on average a hundred thousand times in a single day. It pumps blood through a system of a network of blood vessels that if you could take them and put them end to end would be sixty thousand miles. Within you, there are sixty thousand miles of blood vessels and your heart one hundred thousand times a day beats blood through that network of blood vessels. If you live an average lifetime, your heart will beat about three billion times and will pump forty-six million gallons of blood through your body. It's not surprising when you think about the amazing systems that are required to make our bodies function, that when God wants to talk about life in the church, He likens it to the human body.

You see, like the members of the human body, each of us in the church has a specific role to fill to make the entire body function properly. Nowhere in scripture is this issue addressed, I think, more directly or succinctly than in Peter's first epistle, 1 Peter 4. And I want us to look at that this morning.

Now, let me give you the background of this letter. In July, interestingly enough in July, 64 AD, Nero burned the city of Rome. I don't know what gave him that bright idea. There's a lot of conjecture that takes place among historians. Of course, you've heard the tradition that he supposedly fiddled as Rome burned. But I don't know if he didn't think about it, or he was having a bad day or whatever, but somehow, he didn't realize that there would be a great deal of unrest and hostility that would result toward him as a result of that act.

Well, when it began to rise, when the unrest and hostility began to surface, Nero decided to redirect that hostility by accusing the Christians who were already sort of unknown and there were questions about what they did in their private meetings. And so, he directed the hostility toward Christians. He accused them of the burning of Rome.

The epistle of 1 Peter was written later in 64 AD or in 65 AD. According to 1 Peter 1:1, it was written to those Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor and these Christians had begun to

feel the intense reaches of persecution. That came from or resulted from Nero's false accusation that Christians were really the ones behind the burning of the city of Rome. His purpose, as Peter writes, His purpose is to prepare them to live in hostile times. Persecution was just a gathering storm at this point, but it was going to later come in full fury, and he wants to prepare them.

The final section of 1 Peter begins in Verse 7 of Chapter 4. He begins it with a reference to Christ's second coming. Notice, he says, the end is near. Christ is going to return. Therefore, Verse 7, he says, there's some things I want you to do. You see, Peter is going to call believers to live obediently and expectantly in light of Christ's soon return. So, in the verses that follow and really through the rest of the chapter, Peter is going to address some very specific practical responsibilities that you and I have as we wait for Christ's return. It's interesting that one of those issues, one of those very practical issues Peter chooses to address, is our role and function within the life of the church, our function within the body. In other words, the issue of spiritual gifts. Let me read to you these two amazing verses that we'll look at together this morning.

1 Peter 4:10-11

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen”.

Now Peter's point in these two verses is that for each local body, for each local church to function properly, every Christian must use his or her spiritual gift to fill the role that they have been sovereignly assigned. If you've received it, he says, use it, employ it. But like Peter's first century readers, it's difficult to use what you don't really understand. And so, Peter steps back to give them and to give us an understanding, an effective understanding of what spiritual gifts are and how they work. In these two brief verses, Peter gives us five crucial instructions about spiritual gifts, five crucial instructions about spiritual gifts.

The first one is simply this, recognize your specific assignment. recognize your specific assignment. Notice the beginning of Verse 10, “As each one has received a special gift”. Who receives this assignment? Notice, “as each one”. In the Greek text, that's emphatic. Peter wants to stress the fact that every individual Christian has received a special assignment. Paul wants to make this point throughout his epistles as well.

Turn to 1 Corinthians. We're going to look several times this morning at 1 Corinthians 12 and in Romans 12. Two chapters that deal a lot with the issue of spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12 and notice Verse 7. Paul says, “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good”, to every Christian. Notice Verse 11, “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills”. Paul couldn't pick a more precise way to say that every individual believer receives the special assignment from God.

Paul makes the same point in Romans 12. Turn there for a moment in 12:3, Paul says, “For through the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith”. And then he goes on to say that just as in a human body, Verse 4, there are many members, and all the members don't have the same function. “So, we”, Verse 5, “who are many, are one body in Christ,” and we all have differing functions. His point here is to stress the reality that, like the physical body, so the spiritual body. Just as within your body there is no throwaway parts. You know they used to think that. They used to just sort of take things out willy nilly because they didn't understand how they worked or why they worked. Now they understand that, that parts of your body play important roles. And that's what Paul is saying. Just as it is with the human body, so it is with the church.

There are no throwaway parts. There are no throwaway members. Everybody has a responsibility. And notice what he says in Verse 6. He says, “Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us”. So, every single believer, if you're in Christ this morning, you have received a special assignment, a special capacity, and a special way to carry out that capacity in the church.

Now, from whom have we received this assignment as we talk about recognizing your assignment? Where did we get it? Well notice what Peter says, “has received”. You have received this, passive. He's pointing to the source of the gift, which is God. And Paul makes this crystal-clear. Turn to 1 Corinthians 12 again. Paul makes it very clear that the source of these capacities for service is God Himself.

1 Corinthians Chapter 12:4, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit”. In other words, there may be a lot of differing gifts, but there's only one Spirit, meeting out those gifts. Verse 11, “But the one in the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually, just as He wills”. Where did you receive it? You got it from the Spirit of God as a direct assignment. Notice Verse 18 of 1 Corinthians 12, “But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired”. Just as God decided how the individual parts of your human body would function, He decided sovereignly how the individual parts of every local church would function. He determined what role you would play in the function of this church.

Verse 24 of 1 Corinthians 12:24, Paul makes the same point. He says, “God has so composed the body”. God's the one who did it. God is the one who structured the role and function that each part would have. Now back in 1 Peter 4, when Peter says, “You have received”. The Greek text there, the form of the verb that it uses, the tense, describes an event that happened at one particular point in the past. It's pointing back to the moment of conversion. As a result of that transaction that occurred when you came to faith, when you heard the gospel and responded. At that moment, God through the Holy Spirit gave you a special capacity, a role to fill in the body.

Paul, I think seems to make this very point in 1 Corinthians 12:13 when he's talking about spiritual gifts. And he talks about at the moment of conversion, you and I were baptized into the body of Christ. We were immersed into the body of Christ. The clear implication is when you become a part of the body, you got an assignment. You got a role just as every part of the human body has a role and assignment.

Now, what is the nature of this assignment we receive. Notice how Peter describes it, “as each one has received a special gift”. the Greek word is charisma, literally a grace gift. It indicates the nature of a gift. This gift comes to us as an expression of God's unmerited favor. We didn't deserve it. We didn't earn it. We don't have any right to it, but God has graciously given us this as a gift. Of course, it's referring to spiritual gifts. Let me give you a definition of spiritual gifts before we go any further. This is my favorite definition of spiritual gifts. Simply this, a unique capacity for service that is given to every true Christian and that he did not possess before salvation. Let me read that again, a unique capacity for service that is given to every true Christian and that he did not possess before salvation, a capacity.

Now when you look in the New Testament, there are two basic kinds of gifts. It seems to me. One is what I would call temporary sign gifts. Temporary sign gifts such as miracles, healings, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues. There are two passages that sort of hint of this reality.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 12:12. Paul makes reference to some expressions of the work of the Spirit that are the signs of an apostle. They were sign gifts intended for a particular purpose. Verse 12, “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you, with all perseverance by signs and wonders and miracles”. Now the writer of Hebrews fills this out just a little more. Turn to Hebrews 2:3. The verse begins with the very familiar verse that you've memorized probably, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation”. But notice how the writer of Hebrews continues. He's talking about this salvation. He says, “After it,” that is that salvation “was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard”. Who are those who heard? He's talking to here, about the apostles. Talking about those who heard the Lord teach. The message the Lord delivered to them was confirmed to us through the ministry of the Apostles.

In what way? “God”, Verse 4, “God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders, and by various miracles and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.” In other words, there were some spiritual gifts, some gifts of the Spirit, that were especially to attend and come alongside the apostles to confirm their ministry of the Word. Confirmed the message they

had heard from the Lord and were delivering to us. So, the purpose, as I see it of these temporary sign gifts, is to authenticate the apostles and their message as the true Word of God, until God's written word was completed and became self-authenticating. And if you look at the flow of New Testament history, you'll see that even in the sort of flow of the history of the New Testament, that those signed gifts, those miraculous gifts seem to decline and even disappear before the end of the New Testament. And also, the writings of the early Church Fathers, attest to the same thing. That those miraculous gifts ceased as normative in the church early in church history. So, they're the temporary sign gifts.

The other basic kind of gifts are what I would call permanent edifying gifts, permanent edifying gifts. Peter reduces all of the gifts available today, the permanent edifying gifts into two categories. And I love the way Peter's mind worked because it's the way my mind works. He just reduces it all to two simple categories. There's speaking gifts and there's serving gifts. And everything fits under those two headings. Now before we leave this point of gifts themselves. How many specific gifts are there? Well 1 Corinthians 12:4 says that there are varieties, there are a lot of different kinds of gifts.

Later in Corinthians 12:8-10, Paul gives us a list. Listen to his list: wisdom, knowledge, faith healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, languages or tongues, interpretation of languages and then down in Verse 28 of 1 Corinthians 12, he says helps and administrations. Then, if you go to Romans 12:6-8, you get a slightly different list: prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading and showing mercy. Now, if you put both of those together, 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, you put the list together, you have eighteen total. Probably and we can't be certain about this, but in my mind anyway, there were about four of those that were sign gifts. Two occur in both lists. So that leaves us with about twelve gifts that are permanent edifying gifts. That may not be exhaustive, but it adequately represents this sort of diversity that God has to work with. So, he has twelve permanent edifying gifts that become a sort of divine palate that he paints each person individually.

Let me give you an illustration of that. I've used it before because one of my hobbies is painting, oil painting. At least it used to be one of my hobbies. I haven't done it recently. I need to get it

out again. But when you look at painting, there are three primary colors. Three primary colors: red, yellow and blue. Those three colors cannot be mixed from other colors. They can only be derived from substances in which they are inherent. But once you have those three colors - red, yellow and blue, you can mix the entire range of tone and color that you will ever see in your lifetime. Every color you will ever see in your entire lifetime can be mixed from those three colors. So, God took a palette of three colors, and He made the amazing range and variety of color that we see around us every day.

When it comes to spiritual gifts, God has a palate of at least twelve colors if you will, from which to take on that palette, mix up an individual special unique blend and paint every individual Christian with a unique capacity for serving Him. That's the amazing mind of the God we worship. An infinite variety is possible.

Now before I leave this first point, let me answer a question that always comes up. And that is, well how can I discover my gift? How can I know what my spiritual gift is? Well first of all, you need to know that it's not hidden. God has no vested interest in hiding your gift from you. Let me give you some practical steps you can take to discern where your specific capacity lies.

First of all, and this is pretty simple and straightforward, but study what the Scripture teaches about gifts. I'm just scratching the surface this morning. In fact, I had to breeze past the actual gifts themselves. Get some good resources. We have some in our bookstore. You may have some at home on your shelves. Learn what the Scripture teaches about spiritual gifts.

Number two, pray for God's direction. Pray for God to direct you into a place where you can really serve Him the way you were made to serve Him.

Thirdly, simply take stock or assess your own desires, your own weaknesses and strengths. You know what do you want to do, and what do your gifts seem to point you toward?

Number four, seek the wisdom and confirmation of others. You know sometimes we're not the best ones to evaluate ourselves. We think we have a certain gift to do a certain thing, and others



might say, maybe not. So, seek the wisdom and confirmation of people you know and respect who are spiritual mature. Have them helped direct you in the right path.

And number five, and perhaps most importantly, just faithfully serve. You see, we tend when we serve, to gravitate to the area of our gifts. Think of the human body, for example, so much of your body and the work that it does happens involuntarily. You don't have to tell it to do it. You know your pancreas didn't have to go to a three-day seminar on finding out its spiritual gifts. It knew what to do. Why? Because God put it in the body to fill that function. And even so, God has given you a special capacity just get busy and serve. And as you do, you'll be directed toward the place of your proper service. It's a lot easier to steer, a moving vehicle than one that stopped. Just decide to get involved. So, if you're a believer at the moment of your conversion, God endowed you with a special spiritual gift, a unique blend of special abilities either to speak or to serve or a combination of the two.

But what are you supposed to do with this special gift? The special assignment you've received. Well, that brings us to the second crucial instruction about spiritual gifts, and that is, understand the exclusive purpose of spiritual gifts. Now. I know you're getting nervous because I'm a point two and it's ten to twelve. The other points won't require as long as the first one did, explaining the issue of what spiritual gifts are. So, stay with me.

Understand the exclusive purpose of spiritual gifts. Notice the second half of Verse 10, "Employ it in serving one another". There's the purpose. As each one is received, use it. Employ it in serving. It's interesting that phrase "Employ it in serving", translates one Greek word, it's the verb form of the noun deacon. It speaks of selfless service. Peter says, listen, take that special capacity you've been given and use it to selflessly serve other people around you in the church in which you attend and the people you know and love. Your gift doesn't belong to you. It belongs to the people around you. God didn't give you your gift to sort of make a name for yourself. God gave you your gift to serve. It is the channel through which your ministry to others and your service to God should flow. 1 Corinthians 12:7 says, your gift is for the common good. 1 Corinthians 14:26 says, let all things be done, speaking of spiritual gifts, for edification. Your gifts are meant to build up the body. Turn to Ephesians 4. Paul in a passage that we've looked at

before when I first came. In fact, I believe the first week I was here, we looked at Ephesians 4. Let me just remind you of what Paul says in this passage. In Verse 7, he introduces the concept of spiritual gifts. He says, but to each one of us, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. And then he has a little aside, and he comes back in Verse 11 to say that in addition to each one of us getting a spiritual gift, God has also given the church gifted men as a gift. And he lists some of the gifted men, including pastor teachers. Notice their function, the function of these gifted men. Verse 12, they are given to the Church for the equipping of the saints for the work of service. Now what's that? What does that mean? Paul is saying, listen, God gave gifted men to the church, in order to help equip the saints. That's you, to do the work of service. What's the work of service? Well, look down in Verse 16, he finally gets there and sort of illustrates it in the form of the body again. Verse 16, "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body". You see what Paul is saying. He's saying my role in the role of my fellow elders is to equip you. So that you can do the work of service and your work of service is to find your role in the body, the function God has given you, the capacities God has given you and to use it. To use it. So, God has given every believer a unique blend of spiritual abilities, and He demands that we use them to serve one another selflessly.

But how should we think about these gifts? You see from the time of Corinth until today, Christians have looked at their unique gifts and either become proud about them or frankly become discouraged and discontent with them. So, Peter lays down our third crucial instruction.

Number three. Have the proper attitude toward spiritual gifts. Look at the end of Verse 10, "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God". You see there are always, there were in Corinth, and today, there are always two wrong attitudes about spiritual gifts. Turn back to 1 Corinthians. Let me show them to you. Two wrong attitudes 1 Corinthians 12 again. First, there is the attitude that considers my gifts as insignificant, my giftedness as insignificance compared to that of others and to become discontent with it. Noticed 1 Corinthians 12:15, he begins Verse 14 by reminding us that there are a lot of members in the body. Verse 15, "If the foot says, 'Because I'm not the hand, I'm not a part of the body'. You know kind of the Eeyore approach to Christian service. I don't like the role I've been given. He says, "Is it not for this reason any less a part of

the body?”. Verse 16, “if the ear says oh, because I'm not the eye, I'm not a part of the body.” I don't really have an important role to play here. Is it not, for this reason, any less a part of the body if the whole body or an eye where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing where would the sense of smell be? But now, God has placed the members, each one of them in the body, just as He desired. Get over it, in other words. Don't see your position as insignificant. Every member of the body is important. Verse 19, “if they were all one member where would the body be?” Imagine your whole body, a big thumb or a liver. Your neighbors wouldn't want to live next to you.

That's his point. You see what happens is, people look at their gifts and they sort of misunderstand the whole point of service. They misunderstand service, and they think that for it matter to God, it has to be grand, or it has to be important. And so, they look at what they're doing, and they just absolutely think it's nothing. That isn't how God thinks. I love what Christ says in Matthew 10:42. He says, “Whoever, in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones”, that is one who believes in me, “even a cup of cold water to drink. Truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward”. See what Christ said, if you simply will do the simple service and act of giving a cup of cold water to someone in the name of Christ, then that is something God notices and that is something God will reward. You know when I read that passage, I couldn't help but think about those ladies who so faithfully prepare food for our events. It's talking about you, and it's all of us whatever capacity we serve in. God sees and it matters. And he'll reward us for it.

But there's a second incorrect attitude that we tend to get about spiritual gifts. Not only considering ours is insignificant, but the other extreme. Considering our giftedness is superior to others. Same problem in Corinth, look at Verse 20, “But now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don't need you’ or again the head of the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’” On the contrary, it's much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.” Listen, you can live without your lips, but you can't live without a liver. That's what he's saying. He's saying listen, the parts that don't seem as important are really more important than the parts that have the more obvious visible roles or you can live without those.

Verse 24, “whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked”.

Don't think of your gifts as superior. The body can usually do without a mouth, which I guess would be the closest thing to me. But it can't do without a pancreas. We tend to think of our gift as a superior in kind. For example, in Corinth, they looked down on all the gifts that weren't what? Speaking in tongues. That was the one and if you didn't have that one then you really weren't somebody. Well in a teaching church like ours, it's real easy to think whole teaching up at this level and all the speaking gifts and to think of the serving gifts is somehow second class. We can't think that way. God has placed every member in the body as He wills, and every member is crucial to the function of the body. You ever find yourself discounting what others do in the church? Well, you know, they only do this. You fill in the blank. But I on the other hand. Or do you find yourself depreciating your own gift? Well, all I do is such and such. I never get to do what so and so does. You know so and so gets all the attention, no one ever seems to notice what I do. If you hear yourself in those comments, then you don't have a proper attitude toward spiritual gifts. What is the biblical attitude? 1 Peter 4 says, there in Verse 10 “as good stewards”. The word steward is an interesting Greek word. It literally means house manager. It was the sort of leading slave, who was assigned the responsibilities to meet out all the resources of the household. He actually meted out the food, distributed the wages et cetera. He managed his master's property. Peter says, listen. Here's the attitude to have, you're not the owner of that gift, you're merely a manager. You are a manager, he says, of the manifold grace of God. The word manifold literally means multicolored. Speaks of the variety of gifts. You see corporately, there are a lot of different gifts here, but individually each of us is made up of a mix, a multicolored, back to our palette illustration, a multicolored blend of gifts. And he says we are merely managers of that manifold grace of God. You see the attitude Peter's encouraging is humility. We are slaves using our master's resources to accomplish our master's business. How can you cultivate such an attitude? We'll look back in 1 Corinthians 12. As Paul begins to talk about spiritual gifts, he's going to get to the issue of the abuse of tongues, but before he does that, he lays down a foundational understanding, how you should think about gifts and look at what he says in Verse 4, “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit”.

He says, listen, you want to have humility about gifts? Well, here's where it starts. God sovereignly determined the character of your gift. The Spirit decided. Verse 5, "There are varieties of ministries", that is ways to use those gifts, "and the same Lord." In other words, not only did God decide what the character of your gift would be, but God decided where you would use that gift, in what context you would use that gift. And then finally Verse 6, he said there are varieties of effects or literally results, but the same God who works all things in all persons. So, God determined what gifts you would have. He determined where you would use that gift and what context in the church and God has determined what the results will be. That'll encourage humility. None of us can take credit. God has done it all. The proper attitude toward our spiritual gift is one of humility. You and I are the managers of resources. God sovereignly chose to give us in the ministry He placed us. And the results will be because of his working.

Well, that brings us to Peter's next instruction. Number four. Learn the legitimate exercise of spiritual gifts. Learn the legitimate exercise of spiritual gifts. First part of Verse 11, whoever speaks is to speak a certain way. Whoever serves is to serve a certain way. You see, Peter condenses all the possible gifts of two categories, speaking and serving. And then he explains how to exercise them. Let's look at speaking gifts first. He says, if you have a speaking gift, now that word speaks can be used for public preaching like I'm doing this morning or can be used even in private conversation. It can be used to describe private exhortation. So, if you have a gift that has anything to do with speaking, here's how your exercise that he says, as one who is speaking the utterances of God. What does that mean? Well, the word utterances is an awkward word. That's why the New American Standard kept a word that's a little awkward in English as well. It was used in classical Greek to speak of the words of the deities of the Pantheon of Greek gods. It was used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament to describe the Word of the Lord. You know how often in the Old Testament you've come across that phrase. Now the Word of the Lord came to so, and so. This word is used that way. In the New Testament, it's used to describe the Old Testament Scripture. For example, in Acts 7:38, Stephen uses it with a reference to the Ten Commandments. In Romans 3:2, the same word is used when it says the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God, or, in other words, the revelation of God. So, what's he saying? What's Peter saying? He's saying if you have a speaking gift, speak as one who is speaking the very words of God. Wow. You know what that does, is.

it limits your content because it's impossible to speak with that kind of authority unless your message is truly built on this. I heard a message recently from an area pastor who spoke for twenty or twenty-five minutes, made four references to Scripture in that whole time and the rest of the time he was just talking off the top of his head. I'm thinking, how can you speak with authority? How can you speak as one who speaks, as the very utterances of God, if all you're doing is making it up as you go? It has to be based on what God says. It also defines your authority. If you speak you speak as the utterances of God that means that your message is coming from God. If it's an exposition of God's Word, you are simply God's mouthpiece. Be conscious that you're delivering God's Word.

You may not, you don't know this, but most Sundays as I sit down here before I come up to preach to you, I rehearse this passage in my mind. I'm reminded that when I come up here, I'm not on trial. However, poor a public speaker I may be, that is not on trial. You are on trial before the Word of God. I am merely delivering to you what God has said.

2 Chronicles 18:13 Micaiah, one of my favorite men. You remember they came to him, and they said, listen now all the other prophets are together on this deal. So, could you just this one time get in line? You remember what Micaiah said. He says, "As the Lord lives, what my God says that will I speak". If you have a speaking gift that should be your theme verse.

Now what about serving gifts? Let's look at them briefly. Serving gifts. Says "he who serves", this is again a verb form of the word deacon. It's referring to every gift that isn't a speaking gift. If you don't have a speaking gift, then you have a serving gift. So here it is. Here's how you're to exercise it. Serve as one who serves by the strength which God supplies.

You see if you have a serving gift, it's really easy to rely on your own experience, creativity ingenuity, resources and Peter says, don't even think about that. He says, if you have a serving gift serve as the one who serves by the strength, which God supplies. Makes sure that you're recognizing your need of God's strength to serve effectively. You have received a special spiritual ability that allows you to fill your role in this body. You're responsible to use that gift in

serving your fellow believers. If you speak, speaking as the utterances of God. If you serve, serving in God's strength and all the time having the attitude of a steward of a house manager, of a slave.

But there's one crucial final instruction. Number Five. Pursue the ultimate goal of spiritual gifts. The end of Verse 11, “so that for the goal or the purpose that in all things”, that is in the functioning of the body as each uses their gift, “God may be glorified”. You see when you and I use our gifts in the way God intended, we glorify God. Other people see the church functioning as it ought to function, and just as the human body is an amazing thing that brings glory to God. The church, if it functions like this, brings glory to God. Verse 11 says that our God and our Christ is worthy of being glorified. It says to whom belongs the glory and the dominion forever and ever Amen. Listen, I've tried as I've gone along this morning to apply this message to you but let me give you a real simple application. Get involved, serve in the church, find your role and fill it. There are no absentee members allowed. The body needs everyone to function to operate properly.

Let me encourage you to visit the ministry fair in a moment. Find a place, whether it's speaking or serving where you can use your giftedness in this place. But God doesn't take it lightly to give us capacities, to give us assignments and then for us, for whatever reason, not to fill it.

Let's pray together. Father thank you for your truth. Thank you for Peter. Thank you for the clarity with which you spoke through him. Lord I pray that you would help us to get involved. Forgive us for sometimes being complacent, for sitting on the sidelines, watching others work, because we're too busy, we're distracted. We have activities with which we need to be involved. Lord help us to realize that we are members of the body and that you have assigned each of us a role, and if we don't fill our role then not only does the body not function as you intend it, but we disappoint our sovereign Lord. We displease you. Lord may that never be true of us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen