



# LEARNING TO SERVE

a core course of Life Transformations

**Del Wells**

**INCLUDES STUDY GUIDE**

## Lesson 4: Ministry Gifts – You Have One

### The Big Deal!

The body has been gifted by God to serve.

### Romans 12: 3-8

In the previous lesson, you learned that all Christian believers are part of a spiritual body, called the body of Christ. Just as your physical body is made up of many different parts, so is the body of Christ, and you are one of its parts. Just like no two members of your human body are exactly identical, so every segment of the body is somewhat different. Every part of your own body has a function to perform and you are healthy when they all operate properly. Likewise, in the body of Christ, every single member has a responsibility to be healthy and to function to his full potential in order for the whole body to experience maximum wholeness. Let us look again at Romans 12 to see the connection between you belonging to the body and having a gift for serving others with purpose.

1. What should your attitude be regarding your position and service in the body of Christ? (v.3)
  
2. What is the relationship between you and the other members of the body? (v. 4, 5)
  
3. Why do you think that no one person has all of the gifts for serving, but they are spread throughout the whole body? (v. 6-8)
  
4. Consider the list of the seven *ministry gifts* and think of an example of how each gift could be used to serve in practical ways (v. 6-8):
  - a) The Messenger – “Prophesying”
    - Declaring the purposes of God to both believers and unbelievers.
  
  - b) The Server – “Serving”
    - Helping to accomplish the mission of God in any way needed
  
  - c) The Teacher – “Teaching”
    - Bringing understanding of the Word of God to others.
  
  - d) The Encourager – “Encouraging”
    - Building people up by means of words and presence.

- e) The Giver – “Contributing to the Needs of Others”
  - Giving substantially of resources to further God’s work.
  
- f) The Leader – “Leadership”
  - Influencing others to reach their full potential in Christ.
  
- g) The Comforter – “Showing Mercy”
  - Offering compassion to the suffering.

It is important to remember that ministry gifts are given by God, not earned by anyone. Every Christian has been spiritually gifted and no one has been excluded. The church body has the necessary gifts available to be healthy and effective if used by everyone. Personal and church growth is hindered when even one person fails to recognize and use his gift.

Frustration occurs for a person who is involved in ministry but does not understand his gift. Ministry matched with giftedness has the potential for the greatest results. Once gifts are discovered, they are to be developed through continual use. Regular exercise is beneficial, not just for physical body conditioning, but also for ongoing spiritual development.

No one person has all the gifts, although it is possible to have more than one. However, one gift will usually be dominant with the others more supportive.

The attitude for using your gift is to be worship (Romans 12: 1, 2). The motivation for using your gift is to be love for God and others (Romans 12: 9-21).

Remember to value the gifts God has given to you and be willing and ready to use them to further His Kingdom. You have an important role to play in the body of Christ and are required to do your best. You must learn to work together with the members of the body to continue Jesus’ work on earth. Take encouragement from the fact that you are not serving alone.

## **Your Response**

The purpose of the ministry gifts is serving others (1 Peter 4:10). Take some time now to thank God for the following things:

That through faith in Jesus you have become a part of Christ’s body.

That you are a unique part of the body, with a special part to play.

That God has given you a gift to use to serve others.

That by identifying your gift and putting it to use, you can help the body to be healthy and to impact the world for Christ.

Study the list of ministry gifts again to prepare for a closer look at them in the next lesson.

## Lesson 5: Ministry Gifts – A Closer Look To Find Yours

### The Big Deal!

You can identify your gift and put it to good use.

### Romans 12: 3-8

In the last lesson, you were given an overview of the body ministry gifts. Lesson 3 showed you the body of Christ and how it operates. Hopefully you now have an understanding of the church and how it functions as a body to minister to its members and to the world at large. In order to help you to identify the special ministry gift that God has given to you, you will take a look at the seven ministry gifts in greater detail. In Lesson 6, you will be instructed on how to receive help from the church leadership to put your gift to use where it is best suited for maximum results at any given point. But first, let's study the ministry gifts more closely.

### The Ministry Gifts – Romans 12: 3-8

#### A. The Messenger – “Prophesying”

The ability to speak forth the purposes of God into a situation for both the present and future.

The audience for the messenger can consist of both Christians and unbelievers. The message is repentance, which means the turning around from going your way to following God's way. Repentance is necessary for both salvation and ongoing correction in spiritual growth. The challenge from the messenger is for people to daily obey God's Word to enjoy a blessed life.

Messengers are often involved in outreach ministries, leading small groups for unbelievers, discipling people one on one, and building relationships with those who have yet to come to faith in Christ.

#### B. The Server – “Serving”

The ability to sense needs in the lives of others and find fulfillment in meeting those needs.

This member loves to assist leaders, volunteer for projects, host events, and offer a willing hand. The server has a unique ability given by God to do somewhat ordinary tasks to assist others to accomplish extraordinary results. This person usually prefers to remain behind the scenes, is able to detect what needs to be done and is willing to do it. He finds a deep sense of joy in doing the task that is given to him. Sometimes the server will become frustrated when not asked to help because of his passion to serve. You will find servers as ushers, assistants, team members, and helpers everywhere tasks are undertaken.

#### C. The Teacher – “Teaching”

The ability to teach God's Word to clarify God's character, will and ways.

The teacher has the extraordinary ability to expound and make clear God's Word. This member is able to illuminate, clarify, simplify and illustrate God's plan of redemption. A teacher delights in reading the Bible to discover relevant messages for today and memorizing scripture in order to grow in its understanding and application. He pursues learning in order to teach and is himself taught through the training process.

You will find teachers used in preaching, one-on-one discipling, leading small groups and communicating to larger groups.

#### **D. The Encourager – “Encouraging”**

The ability to build up others with presence, words, influence, encouragement and motivating instruction.

Actions of encouraging include standing by, sitting with, guiding, strengthening, inspiring, giving instruction, consoling, aiding and cheerleading others.

The encourager reminds people of the reality of the truth of God’s Word to bring strength to undergo challenges and remain true to God. Sometimes an encourager is referred to as a cheerleader or affirmer. He loves to spur people on to Christian growth and maturity (Hebrews 10: 24) and identifies with Barnabas of the New Testament (Acts 11: 22-24). The encourager enjoys building others up and particularly focuses in on those who need a pat on the back. He is more concerned about the person or the group he is inspiring than the project or event involved. He is person-oriented and feelings-centered. Unlike the teacher, the encourager’s message comes from personal experience of deep feelings rather than careful research to teach. He sees value in sufferings and problems as ways of learning and maturing and will often jump into situations to offer advice. The encourager prefers short-term involvement to continuing over the long-term. You will see encouragers involved in ministries like pastoral care, greeting and leading a group of people to inspire them.

#### **E. The Giver – “Contributing to the Needs of Others”**

The ability to recognize needs and do something to meet them by acquiring and increasing resources for the purpose of giving.

The giver has a generosity that transcends himself to bless others. He believes that he has in order to give and has an intense desire and motivation to give generously. The giver cheerfully acts as a channel of God to provide for others and does not generally look for recognition, but is rewarded by evidence that his giving has made a real difference. When needs are not presented to him, he will look for ways to give anyway. He maintains a positive attitude toward the church’s needs for financial help and sometimes feels he has not given enough, even though he may have given above and beyond to the point of sacrifice.

The giver is not necessarily a wealthy person, but is someone who is the first to respond to a need whenever possible. You will not often see the giver functioning comfortably in a traditional ministry role, preferring flexibility.

#### **F. The Leader – “Leadership”**

The ability to set goals and reach them for the well-being of everyone involved.

The leader motivates the members of the body to accomplish objectives with harmony. A leader likes to create and cast vision, rarely being satisfied with the status quo. He believes that people active in the vision personally benefit through their involvement. The leader is often visible to promote the plan. He can also influence others behind the scenes to get on board. Leaders live more by faith than by sight and ask why not more than they ask why.

You will see leaders as directors, managers, ministry team leaders and project guides. They can sometimes appear to be more visionary than practical and more futuristic than contemporary as they continue to look beyond the present.

### **G. The Comforter – “Showing Mercy”**

The ability to feel genuine empathy for others and to translate that sensitivity into joyful ministry on behalf of the other people.

The comforter almost experiences the pain of the other person. This is more than sympathizing; it is feeling what others feel. He identifies so closely with the needy person that he looks for ways to bring relief to the sufferer and can't rest until he does. When successful, he experiences satisfaction at a deep level.

You can see the comforter in such roles as counselor and social worker. He tends to be more interested in unhealthy and distressed people than healthy ones. He constantly sees needs and is drawn to them cheerfully, taking the time necessary to come alongside the distressed. You will find comforters involved in ministries like pastoral care and intercession.

1. Which of these gifts do you see in yourself?
  
2. In what practical ways have you seen this gift being used in other people? Give examples.
  
3. What needs could be met as you use this gift in some of the ways described in the lesson?
  
4. Has anyone else ever recognized this gift in you? When and how?
  
5. Have you discussed your ministry potential with your pastors?  
If so, what did they say?  
  
If not, what is your next step?
  
6. How do you think you will benefit by putting your gift to use?

## **Your Response**

Thank God for providing the body with such a variety of gifts.

Thank God that He has given you a gift to use to serve others.

Ask God to help you find opportunities to develop your gift.

Pray that you will be effective in your ministry so that Jesus will be praised.



# LEARNING TO SERVE

## STUDY GUIDE



## Lesson 4: Ministry Gifts – You Have One

### The Big Deal!

Emphasize that the body has been gifted by God with enough gifts to accomplish His mission.

**Question 1** – Humility is a healthy balance between not being prideful of your abilities and using your gifts with confidence in God.

**Question 2** – You are one part of a body made up of many parts that belong to each other. You can work together in unity to produce good works.

**Question 3** – There is richness in diversity as different members with the same gifts or other gifts work in harmony to accomplish the same goal.

**Question 4** – Ask for the group’s ideas before giving your examples.

**Your Response** – The response time can be used to reinforce the big deal and how each group member can be used by God.

### Discussion Group Questions – Lesson 4

1. What is a gift in the everyday sense?
2. Why would someone give a gift to a person?
3. Who benefits from gift-giving? How?
4. What do you need to do with a gift in order to enjoy it?
5. What things has God given to you?
6. What should your attitude be towards God for giving so much to you? How do you show it?
7. What do you need to do with God’s gifts in order to enjoy them?
8. In what ways can you serve others with what God has given you?
9. What effect will it have on people as you thank God for His gifts and use them to bless others?
10. What is the limit of God’s ability to give good gifts to those who love Him?

## Lesson 5: Ministry Gifts – A Closer Look To Find Yours

### The Big Deal!

Emphasize that you can identify what your gift is and use it to serve.

**Question 1** – Help the group members to express ideas about their possible gifts. This will be easier if you know the members and have seen them in action.

**Question 2** – These examples are first impressions of group members and not conclusive validation.

**Question 3** – Think of some ways this gift can be used to serve others.

**Question 4** – Don't prolong this if no one responds. Follow up by describing how gift recognition happens.

**Question 5** – Encourage the group members to meet with a pastor to talk about matching their gifts with ministry.

**Question 6** – Answers should include personal spiritual growth and a sense of joy in serving others.

### Discussion Group Questions – Lesson 5

1. How does someone find his place of effective service in the body of Christ?
2. How helpful is it to recognize how God has gifted you to serve? Why?
3. In what ways will you benefit by using God's gifts to serve others?
4. What will it do for others when you take your gifts and use them in ministry?
5. What are telltale signs that members of the body are not putting their gifts to good use?
6. How will the community at large benefit as body members use their gifts?
7. What would you advise someone to do that doesn't know what his gift is?
8. What is your plan to make sure that your gift does not go to waste, but is put to good use?