

The Object of Your Desire

What is the object of your most passionate desire? Is it a person, a goal, a place or a thing your heart intensely wishes to obtain? Paul tells us what the object of our greatest desire should be as believers in Christ. We'll see it in today's Templates of Truth.

Paul gave this simple instruction to the church at Corinth: *desire earnestly spiritual gifts* (I Corinthians 14:1). The Greek word that translates earnest desire in this passage has root meanings of heat, fervency, zeal and envy. Paul has engaged his readers in a discussion of spiritual gifts in this section of his letter, emphasizing several important points: (1) All believers are endowed with spiritual gifts; (2) Spiritual gifts come in a variety of roles, manifestations and functions; and, (3) The purpose for spiritual gifts is the edification of the church, the common good, and the work of Kingdom ministry. In the verse quoted above, Paul motivates an aspiration in the Corinthian believers to passionately, zealously and fervently desire spiritual gifts. What does he mean?

First, he means that identifying & understanding your personal spiritual gift should be a passionate pursuit in your life. It is utterly amazing the number of believers in the church today who have no clue what their spiritual gift is! Some have never even been taught that there are spiritual gifts, much less how to discover their gift and how it is to function. That is like sitting in a brand new, luxurious automobile without ever having been told or realizing that it contains an engine, fuel and can be started & driven. What good is a car if it doesn't transport you anywhere? It is the responsibility of each believer to know how God has gifted & empowered them; and, the responsibility of the church to teach her people the Scriptural truth & ministry function of spiritual gifts.

Second, Paul means that operating & functioning in the role of your spiritual gift should be a purposeful priority in your life. God has a will, plan and purpose for each believer; and, God places a call on the life of each believer to utilize his spiritual gift in some form of ministry service in and through the church. Discovering our gift and merging that resource with our understanding of God's specific call and purpose for our life is rudiment to the Christian faith and serving God. It should be among the highest priorities of our life. Paul equates that role as a member of the body (I Corinthians 12:12-31). A believer in the church not operating & functioning in the role of their spiritual gift is like a leg that cannot walk, an eye that cannot see or an ear that cannot hear. The overall effectiveness of the body is hindered and limited as a result.

These supernatural gifts mobilize and energize the church for spiritual service & ministry. If neglected and abused, however, they create jealousy & division. Believers can remain in a stagnant, useless existence through ignorance and neglect of their spiritual gift. To know how God has gifted you and to refuse to exercise your gift in ministry service through His church is outright sinful rebellion! Such a person makes himself an impairment or handicap to the body of

Christ. Their fellowship with God and other Christians is hindered as a result. They are often critical & judgmental of others who do faithfully serve God, because it justifies their own guilt for not doing so. They will often point out imperfections in faithful believers in an effort to disqualify their obedient service. This too, is just a ploy to justify their own guilt. Spiritual gifts are supernatural endowments given to promote unity and purpose within the church, not jealousy and competition.

We may have aspirations for many things in life: a better job or career, greater success, more money, or to enjoy more recreational activities. We may even aspire to things of greatness, influence and significance. These things may or may not glorify God in our life, but Paul reminds us in this passage that we will never find true joy, happiness and fulfillment in life until we are actively involved doing the ministry work God has gifted and called us to do. What is it you so earnestly desire today? What is it that your mind dwells on almost constantly to do? If that is not serving God with your spiritual gift, God wants to do a work in your heart in order to bring you into compliance with His perfect will for your life.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.

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