

Transcribed from
Stir Up The Gifts
Empowering Believers for Victorious Living and Ministry Tasks
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Chapter Three: Reviving Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual Gifts never really die. They may lay dormant, latent, become unemployed, wrongly employed, go into recession, or like an old soldier, simply fade away, but they do not die. The stir up the Gift analogy of a smoldering fire that needs to be brought to a flame implies that the fire has not really gone out. It has almost gone out, but if it can be stirred or supplied with fresh oxygen, it will be a blazing flame again.

We need a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit to revive our gifts. Our lives are much like a car that will not start on a cold morning. Nothing is wrong with the car. The problem is often with the battery. The battery needs to be recharged, reconnected, or maybe the battery is dry. In order to correct the problem we put water in the battery, remove the corrosion around the cables and tighten the connection, or we simply get a jump-start from a live battery. There are times when we need a jump-start. We are not dead, we are simply dry and disconnected. We pray for a fresh anointing to fill us for the reviving of Spiritual Gifts in the lives of all believers and the Church. We pray with the knowledge that He is able and faithful. We bear witness to the hymn writer's testimony where he wrote, "Morning by morning new mercies I see". Not used mercy, or left over mercy, or refrigerated mercy, but new mercy. Revive us again. Revive us again. Hallelujah, to thee be the glory, revive us again.

REVIVALS ARE FOR THE SAINTS

We have generally agreed that revival is first for God's people to come alive again. *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land* (2 Chr. 7:14).

"My people" suggests that revival is for the people of God. Revival is for the saints rather than the "aints." If the saints catch fire, the "aints" (unbelievers) will be affected. Revival is contagious, but it begins with the believer. To revive the Gifts of God's people, we must pray and humble ourselves. Pray specifically for your gift and the Gifts lying dormant in your church to stand up, be revived, discovered, employed and empowered. If our Spiritual Gifts are to be revived, we must practice humility.

Humility is more about how you behave than how you describe who you are. Humility is not easy. Humility is evasive. As soon as you think or say you are humble, your humility escapes you. It is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than it is for a camel to enter through the needle's eye (Matt. 19:24). One interpretation holds that the needle's eye Jesus is referring to is a gate in the old city of Jerusalem. If this is the case, a camel could enter but he would have to demonstrate an act of humility by getting on his knees and unloading some of the bulky baggage that is being carried. If the Spiritual Gifts of God are to be revived, we must humble ourselves by bowing down and praying and unloading some of the arrogant, self-righteous, self-centered baggage we are carrying. Our gifts and talents come from God and should be given back to God for the purposes of God. We must not become like Naaman, who was too proud to wash in the dirty waters of the Jordan River (2 Kings 5: 10, 11). We must get off our high horse and humble ourselves if we want our Spiritual Gifts to be stirred up and revived.

In our quest for God to revive our gifts, we must seek His face. Seeking His face means to praise Him in the courts until we find ourselves entering between the torn curtain of the Holy of Holies. Oftentimes, what we seek is His hand of help, but not His face as Sovereign. In other words,

we should worship and love Him because He is God. If we want our gifts to be revived, we must worship Him.

If we are to revive our Spiritual Gifts, we must turn from our wicked ways. Sin pours cold water on the flame of Spiritual Gifts. Wickedness puts dirt in the fireplace of Spiritual Gifts. Often there is too much sin in the house for gifts to be stirred up and revived. We must clean house if we want Spiritual Gifts stirred up and revived. *Then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land* (2 Chr. 7:14b).

SAVED OR DELIVERED

I previously mentioned that you only need to be saved once, but you can be delivered more than once and from many things. The call to revive Spiritual Gifts is a call for deliverance. A deliverance from ignorance concerning Spiritual Gifts and a deliverance from the spirit of fear and uselessness. Deliverance means being set free. Being set free to service. Being set free to be fruitful. Being set free to be fulfilled. Being set free to live victoriously. The Spiritual Gifts given to the believer and the Church are in bondage. They have been given but they have not been unwrapped. The paper ribbon and bows of fear and intimidation have the Gifts bound up and useless. It is time to break the shackles of bondage and revive the Gifts of God.

A PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION

Consider what would happen in your church if all the Spiritual Gifts that sit in the pews every Sunday would come alive. Remember, if you are saved you have been given at least one Spiritual Gift. Consider all the believers who are members of the congregation you are affiliated with would come alive. They are not really dead. They simply need to be made alive again. The word “revive” implies that they once lived. They may look dead and act dead, but they are not dead. They need to be “re-lived”.

What would the life of the Church look and feel like if all of her Spiritual Gifts would come alive for the spiritual purposes of God? What would the worship service become? What would happen to the Sunday School? How would it affect the ministry of evangelism and discipleship? What would the fellowship of the Church resemble? What about the family life of the Church? Consider the growth of the Church. Consider the budget of the Church. How would individual lives be affected? Would any addictions be overcome? How many spiritual warfare battles would be won? Would any marriages be saved? Would teenage pregnancies decline? Would the Church grow spiritually and numerically? Would many more be saved?

If you agree in the affirmative and positive with these considerations, then the only question that remains is, “Can these Gifts be re-lived?” Can these Gifts get up and march? Can these Gifts be gainfully employed? Can these Gifts be empowered? Can these Gifts become a mighty army? Can these Spiritual Gifts of the Church get up and walk for God? Can these bones live?

AN OLD TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATION (EZEKIEL 37)

By the hand of the Lord, Ezekiel visualized being set down in a valley full of dry bones. This valley had never been referred to as a valley of dead bones. God came to Ezekiel in a vision in the valley of dry bones, not the valley of dead bones. Make no mistake about it, these bones were very dry. The bones were not only dry, they were separated from their parts. The question was asked, “Can these bones live?”

For the purpose of illustration, these dry bones represent the Spiritual Gifts that are dry and dormant in the lives of believers and the Church. The question being raised is, “Can these Gifts live again?” Verse eleven tells us that the bones represent the whole house of Israel: *Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel* (Eze. 37:11a). They represent the people of God and we are the people of God, the new Israel. So the question is raised, “Can these Gifts live again?” Also in verse eleven, the bones begin to speak: *Behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off from our parts*. If Spiritual Gifts could talk, they would say, “We are dry, not dead but dry and we sit hopeless Sunday after Sunday, week after week, because we are cut off from our task. We are cut off from our purpose. We are cut off from our spiritual calling”. If the Gift of teaching could talk, the Gift would say, “I would like to teach. I am gifted to teach, but I am not given an opportunity to teach.” If the Gift of leadership could talk, the Gift would say, “I am gifted to lead, but at this time I am depressed because I am unemployed”. If gifts could talk they would say, “I am often rejected, I am hardly ever gainfully employed and absolutely never empowered”. If gifts could speak, some would say, “I am undiscovered, unidentified, ignored and suppressed”. The question remains, “Can these Gifts live again”? Can they get up? Can they take on flesh? Can they become a mighty army for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the Body?

God is not going to stir up your gift for you. The Lord asked Ezekiel, *Can these bones live?* to which Ezekiel responded, *O Lord God, thou knowest*. The omniscient God knows that these Gifts can be stirred up. The Lord God knows that Spiritual Gifts can be revived. But do you know? You must stir your own gift. God has done His part. He gave the Gifts. Now we must stir the Gifts. We must prophesy upon these Gifts. *Again he said unto me, prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the Word of the LORD* (verse 4). We must proclaim and claim God’s words that He has given Spiritual Gifts to the believer for the task of ministry. We must breathe the Spirit of God upon these Spiritual Gifts. *Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind. Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live* (verse 9).

Spiritual Gifts cannot be empowered without the work of the Holy Spirit. Notice, when the Gifts were named and claimed by the prophecy of the Word, they took on flesh and came together. But only after receiving a fresh breath of the Holy Spirit did they stand up as an army. It is not enough for us to attend a Spiritual Gifts class and discover our Spiritual Gifts, but we must employ them in the army of God. These Gifts can be revived.

A NEW TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATION (MARK 8:22-25)

In Mark 8:22, Jesus encounters a man who needed not just one touch from the Master, but a second touch. The point of this biblical illustration is simply that many believers need a second touch. As we have alluded to throughout this chapter, the issue is not salvation – the issue is revival. This book is primarily directed toward believers who have been given Spiritual Gifts that need reviving. Therefore, we are in need of a second touch.

Mark’s gospel recalls Jesus having a blind man brought to Him to be touched. Jesus took the man by the hand and led him to the outskirts of the town, spit on his eyes and touched him. Then Jesus asked the blind man what he saw. He said he saw trees walking as men. Jesus immediately knew this man needed a second touch, so Jesus touched him again and the blind man began to see as he should.

Many believers and churches today are not seeing as they should see. Many see the Church simply as a religious institution rather than as the Body of Christ. Many see the Church as a social organization rather than as a spiritual organism. Many see themselves as church members rather than as ministry ambassadors for Christ. Many see the pastor as the only one who has been gifted for the task of ministry, rather than realizing that all believers have been gifted for the task of ministry. Many see themselves as powerless rather than empowered to live victoriously. Many see themselves as Christians void of any real spiritual abilities rather than knowing that they have been spiritually gifted for spiritual purposes. We need a second touch. We need to clean the cobwebs from our “seeing” minds so we can see and minister as we should. We need a second touch for the revival of Spiritual Gifts. We need the spirit of the living God to fall afresh on us so that our Spiritual Gifts can be discovered, developed and employed to the end that the believer be sanctified (set apart for ministry), the Church be edified (built up) and God be glorified (lifted up).

I HAVE A DREAM

Ezekiel had a vision, but in the repetitive words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I have a dream. I, too, have a dream that one day the Spiritual Gifts of God will be stirred up and revived for the task of ministry. I have a dream that churches will eradicate their ignorance concerning Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Gifts will become the commonplace, where ministry tasks are fulfilled. I have a dream that all God’s people will come to the spiritual discernment that we are all called to minister. We are not all called to preach or pastor, but we are all called to minister and we have all been gifted for the task of ministry. I have a dream that all believers will discover their gifts and find their place in the Body of Christ.

I have a dream that believers will truly be more than conquerors. I have a dream that yokes will be broken by the discovery of Spiritual Gifts. I have a dream that the fireplace of gifts will not go out. How long will they burn low? Not long. Long enough for the people of God to stoke the fire. How long? Not long. Long enough for the Church to add kindling and a fresh supply of the spirit of the living God to breathe on us. How long? Not long. Long enough for us to stir up the fire-stir up the Gifts.

I have a dream that the Spiritual Gifts given by God will rise up from the pews and seek to find gainful employment. I have a dream that Spiritual Gift will no longer be cut off from themselves. Rather, the Gift of leadership will embrace the Gift of teaching and the Gift of teaching will hug the Gift of evangelism and all the Spiritual Gifts will kiss the supreme Gift of Love. From denomination to denomination, from Baptists to Pentecostals, from Protestants to Catholics, from California to Maine, Spiritual Gifts will not be neglected, but stirred up, employed and empowered to the furtherance and glory of God’s kingdom. I have a dream!

Checkpoint

Q1. What happens to spiritual gifts unused?

A1. They may lay dormant, latent, become unemployed, wrongly employed, go into recession, or like an old soldier, simply fade away, but they do not die.

Q2. What is the purpose of revival in the church?

A2. To bring the people of God to life again.

Q3. How does the Ezekiel 37 illustration relate to spiritual gifts?

A3. The bones represent the spiritual gifts that are dry and dormant in the lives of believers in the Church. With the Holy Spirit's help, these gifts can be revived and made alive again.

Fill In the Blanks

1. If our Spiritual Gifts are to be revived, we must first practice _____.(humility)

2. If we want our gifts to be revived we must _____ Him.(worship)

3. God is _____ going to stir your Gifts up for you.(not)

Helpful Dialogue

1. Do you want to be delivered from a Spirit of Fear and use-lessness in the Church?

2. Do you know what it means to humble yourself before God? He humbled himself with prayer and fasting. It is much better to humble yourself before God than to wait in pride for Him to humble you. We are to humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God.

3. How close do you walk with the Holy Spirit? Spiritual Gifts can not be revived without the work of the Holy Spirit. Are you willing to subject yourself to the leading voice and loving embrace of the Holy Spirit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week? Are you allowing Him to do a painful job of pruning you so that you can produce a more excellent fruit for God? What will be pruned in your life?

What If I Don't Believe

If I don't believe...

- ◆ If I don't believe in the Holy Spirit's ability to breathe life into the dry bones of my personal Spiritual Gifts, I will never know the work God had intended to accomplish in this world through me.

A Challenge

2 Chronicles 7:14

Matthew 19:24

Ezekiel 37

Mark 8:22-25