

## Life in the Spirit | The Gifts of the Spirit Pt2 | 2 Timothy 1:6-7

August 25, 2024 | Matthew McNutt

[Title slide] We have been spending this summer exploring what it means to live life in the Spirit, God the Holy Spirit. He is the third member of the Triune God, equal in every way, yet distinct in His role. Last week we began a three week exploration of the Gifts of the Spirit and what that means for each of us who calls ourselves Christians.

Pastor Nate gave us seven things to know about spiritual gifts, the gifts of the Spirit:

1. Gifts are not the same as talents and skills.
2. Every Christian has at least one gift.
3. Gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit.
4. The Spirit gives a diversity of Gifts.
5. Every spiritual gift is vital.
6. There are categories of gifts.
7. Gifts are for building up the church.

We are going to build on these ideas today. There are two key ideas that come out of this list, though, that are fundamental to where we're going. The first is this; every Christian has at least one gift.

### YOU HAVE A SPIRITUAL GIFT

You have been given a gift of the Holy Spirit to use in building up the church. Scripture spells it out clearly:

*1 Corinthians 7:7b (NIV) Each of you has your own gift from God.*

Each one of these diverse gifts are vital to this church being what God has called it to be. Gifts like **wisdom, knowledge, faith, preaching, teaching, serving, prayer, discernment, administration, helps, mercy**, and so on. Each are necessary for the church. Paul speaks to those of us who think we might not be as important or our role not as critical directly when he wrote,

*1 Corinthians 12:22 (NIV) On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.*

Do you see that?

### YOU ARE INDISPENSIBLE

Look around, this room full of people, God is looking at you and saying that this church will never live up to all He has called it to be, all He has called it to do, all He desires for this body of believers, without you and the spiritual gift He has equipped you with.

Paul was thinking about all of this when he wrote Timothy two thousand years ago from his prison cell – yup, Paul was in prison for preaching the Word. The danger was very real. Timothy was a disciple of Paul, a student learning from him. Paul had left him in Ephesus to oversee the ministry there. Timothy was facing challenges of his own; there were false teachers taking advantage of Paul’s imprisonment to pull away the believers and discredit the ministries of Paul and Timothy. I love his words to Timothy:

**2 Timothy 1:6-7 (NIV) <sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.**

Some have suggested that this language, “fan into flame,” was used by Paul because Timothy’s faith was wavering, it was cooling off. That isn’t necessarily what’s going on here; in the broader context, it seems more likely that Paul is challenging him to take the fire that is already in him and fan it bigger, to let it become the powerful, consuming fire – to live up to his full potential.<sup>1</sup> Paul is reminding him that even in the face of all that is going on that he has the spiritual gift of ministry, of charisma.

William Mounce writes in his commentary, “**Just because people are encouraged by someone does not mean that they are failing. It can mean that they are being encouraged to continue despite the pressure.**”<sup>2</sup>

The church recognized that when it laid hands on him. What does this mean? Timothy didn’t receive a gift of the Spirit because people put hands on him, that was the official recognition of that gift being present in his life. We did that here the other year when we ordained Tim Santa Barbara, when we formally, as church leadership, recognized God’s calling on his life to ministry by laying hands on him. We do this each year when we pray over our mission teams and invite people around them to place a hand on their shoulder – to recognize as a church that these teens and adults are called to a ministry task.

Paul is reminding Timothy, “hey, God has given you this gift. We see it, we recognize it, so run with it.”

And then Paul clarified the nature of Timothy’s gift, the nature of all of our spiritual gifts, when he wrote “**For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.**”

## **USE POWER & SELF-DISCIPLINE**

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 226.

<sup>2</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), Kindle location 19,475.

These words, “timid,” “power,” “self-discipline,” were all military qualities in the ancient Greek.<sup>3</sup> This word, “timid,” literally translates “cowardice.”<sup>4</sup> Paul isn’t calling Timothy a coward, rather, he is reminding him that he is called to use his gifting with power, with self-discipline, the opposites of cowardice. In God’s intent for the gifts of the Spirit, there isn’t middle ground – we’re either fanning them into raging fires, or we’re cowards, afraid to let the Holy Spirit loose in our lives. These militaristic words are here because they convey strength, weight.

## LOVE LIKE GOD LOVES

There’s still one word I haven’t addressed: love. The Greek used here is agape, a completely selfless love, the love that God has for us.<sup>5</sup> This power and self-discipline, combined with Godly, selfless love, gives the perfect recipe for how we are to use our gifts – Godly love sets us apart from the world, marks our gifting as being from the Holy Spirit. We are called to be bold and loving in how we fan the flames of our gifting!

## YOU ARE VITAL TO GOD’S MISSION FOR BRANDYWINE VALLEY CHURCH

What are the gifts that the Holy Spirit equips us with? Scripture gives us examples; gifts like the gifts of **wisdom, knowledge, faith, preaching, teaching, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, administration, helps, mercy**, and so on. Each a piece of what the church needs to fulfill God’s calling for it. If you have accepted God’s gift of salvation, the Holy Spirit is in you, He has given you a gift vital to Brandywine Valley Church’s mission.

### What does this look like?

It looks like Norma Smith and Maria Ash faithfully overseeing Grief Share, ministering with the gift of mercy to those in pain, in grief. The gift of mercy gives them incredible sensitivity to those who are suffering and a love that provides practical help to people in need.

It looks like Kevin Dombrowski serving with the gifts of leadership and administration as the chair of our finance committee, using his aptitude for finances to bless and serve our church in a critical way.

It looks like Cynthia Brown using her gifts for discernment and wisdom with her training as a therapist to counsel and minister to our church through premarital counseling with so many of our couples.

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<sup>3</sup> Aida Besancon Spencer, *2 Timothy and Titus* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 85.

<sup>4</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Kindle location 19,546.

<sup>5</sup> Spencer, *2 Timothy and Titus*, 85.

It looks like Steve Stiparo using his gifts of prayer, faith, and compassion to lead our prayer team and serve as a deacon. He quietly ministers week after week in our body, encouraging people through prayer.

It looks like Karen Fitchett responding to her gifts of mercy, compassion, and discernment by volunteering at A Door of Hope as a mentor. As she exercised her gifting she then went to school for counseling and developed her gifts further, fanning the flame of her gifts into an even stronger blaze.

It looks like Nan Marcus using her gift of hospitality paired with her skills as a baker to host events for women and even looking to start a baking class in the Women's Prison.

It looks like Willie Mah using his gifts of mercy, prayer, and faith to guide young men through our student ministry year after year, teaching them, praying with them and for them, loving them with laughter and tears. It looks like him quietly praying with Zenia over whichever Pastor is preaching each week.

It looks like Micah Thornton, a college student who has the gift of teaching, going through Pastor Nate's shepherding class and serving as an intern this past summer with the student ministry to develop and practice his gifting.

It looks like Sam and Judy Arthur serving our adult education program for decades.

It looks like each person that serves week after week in our nursery, loving children so that those children will grow up loving God and the church.

It looks like each person giving their time and love to launching and leading our special needs ministry.

It looks like each usher giving their time so that visitors and regular attenders alike can participate in our worship services.

It looks like the volunteers who give countless hours serving our community through ESL. Like our circle of care team loving refugees in our region. Like our worship teams volunteering their time to learn and practice hour after hour so that we can worship with excellence.

Each one of these people is indispensable to God's mission in this region, indispensable to God's vision for our church.

*2 Timothy 1:6-7 (NIV) <sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*

Fan into flame the gift God has given you. There is a place for you to serve in this church. If you're not using your gift to serve, you are missing out. I'm not saying you're

a coward, but that's the kind of language Paul uses – what holds you back? What fears keep you from letting the Holy Spirit use you in power and love in this church?

Are you afraid of failing? Of being inadequate? Of being a hypocrite? Of not having enough time? God knows we're not perfect. We don't need to be spiritual giants to serve; we put the people in scripture on a pedestal, but they were messing up all the time. Bible people aren't any different than us.

Four years ago, on our fall retreat, one of the new sixth grade guys small group leaders was standing there, looking over the camp with tears in his eyes, which caught me off guard. I mean, middle school guys do occasionally make leaders cry, look, the spiritual gift of patience is a real thing. But this leader turned to me, shook his head, and said, "I should have started doing this years ago." The joy and beauty of living out God's calling, of letting the gift be fanned into flames far outweighed any of the fears, the worries, the inadequacies.

I can't tell you how many times leaders have told me something along the lines of, "I thought this would be the thing I did to serve, to check a box, to 'do my time,' and then I would have fun on my time only to find out this was the best thing I did."

You were designed and created for a purpose. God has a role for you here and if you aren't currently serving, it's time to fan that gift into flame. Grab a blue serving card, fill it out. If you don't know where to serve, that's fine – put that on the card and we'll help you find a way to plug in. We'll train you, we'll equip you, we'll give you the tools – pair that with your gifting and God will use you with power, love, and self-discipline.