

Ir-D&C-15
Seek Ye Earnestly the Best Gifts
D&C 46 and other Gospel Doctrine Study Guide References
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration).

I. Through the Law of Consecration, the Lord invites His people to be “One.” The Law of Consecration enables that physically, and spiritually as well.

A. **By bestowing diverse Gifts of the Spirit, the Lord sought to make His people “One” on an even higher plane.**

B. He made it clear that is through the separate gifts of the Holy Ghost, given to each and every one, the Church is able to function on that highest of spiritual planes.

II. We should not be surprised, then, but **confirmed in our testimonies, when we find similar teachings in the scriptures in the various dispensations concerning Gifts of the Spirit. For the Lord seeks to bring the essential ways of godliness to His children in every dispensation.**

A. Teachings from The Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants, taken together, present the fullest picture of the truths concerning Spiritual Gifts.

III. How diverse spiritual gifts help make us One is most clearly explained in the Bible. Using the analogy of a human body, **Paul said that different gifts were given to different members so that altogether they would become like One Body [of Christ]. This would also help us recognize our need for each other.** “For as the [human] body is one, and hath many [parts], and all the [parts] of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.... “For the body [of the Church of Christ] is not one [person], but many.

“And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you....

“[Likewise] ye are the body of Christ, and members [each with unique spiritual gifts needing each other]” (1 Corinthians 12:4-27).

IV. Moroni was inspired in the Book of Mormon to teach many of the same truths to his generation. But Moroni ends by stressing other very important concepts --- such as **the importance of remembering the source of our gifts.**

A. “And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ: and they come unto every man severally, according as he wills.

B. And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ” (Moroni 10:17-18).

V. The Doctrine and Covenants combines essential concepts from both other scriptures --- urging the members to seek earnestly the best gifts (D&C 46:8), re-emphasizing that the gifts are given that **all may be profited** thereby, **and re-stressing their ultimate source.**

A. “And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God” (D&C 46:26).

VI. It is marvelous to know that the Lord has given us all different gifts and then accepts the usage of those different gifts in His work. Our works are a gift to Him. And our usages of our unique gifts is like returning to Him a beautiful bouquet of varied flowers. Each varied flower is

valued greatly. Although each gift is extremely different, the essential requirement is that they are truly returned from our heart.

A. Marion D. Hanks explained this truth:

1. “When the Lord was born, each who had followed the star laid at the foot of the manger what he had to give. The kings bestowed costly possessions, the shepherds their obeisance and love; all who were true worshippers gave their hearts. In the scriptures it is recorded that each of us must give “according to that which he hath...” (Mosiah 4:26). The recognition that ‘the least disciples’ among us had much to give, the translation of the instinct of the heart into the act of giving, these are the keys that open the door to meeting the real needs of others. If we have not a penny to offer, can there be any blessing more vital to the afflicted soul than faith and hope and love? To share compassion, dispel doubt, make a timely suggestion, awaken faith, instill hope, strengthen courage, lift over a rough spot, offer forgiveness, suggest a helpful idea, convey kindness, renew confidence, give comfort, speak a word of appreciation, express understanding, restore self-respect --- this is to deal that which cannot be bartered but only given away.

Bestowed in gracious manner, in a timely way, with tender feelings, these gifts effect the giving of the giver with the gift. They are tied with heartstrings, conveying heart strengths; **they come from deep wellsprings of common humanity and a common eternal heritage of brotherhood.**

They can make life bearable, purposeful, beautiful. They are gifts of the mind, the heart, and the spirit. They carry with them comprehension of the admonition of the Lord: “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:25). (Marion D. Hanks, *The Gift of Self*, p. 4). (Emphasis added)

VII. Truly understanding the teachings about the Gifts of the Spirit and practicing them, helps us overcome any spirit of envy or competition.

A. Sister Marjorie Hinckley was a person who understood these teachings. She had her own gifts, but was extremely generous in continually pointing out the gifts of others. She was a person who found every other person’s talents a source of wonder and awe. And she would say to one, “I can’t believe how smart you are.” And to another, “I can’t believe how good you are.” And another “I can’t believe you can really do that! Aren’t you something!” She was always completely sincere in what she said. (Virginia Pearce, *Glimpses into the Life and Heart of Marjorie Pay Hinckley*, p. 131).

VIII. When we truly understand the purpose of the Gifts of the Spirit, we will not envy nor feel competitive.

A. Whoever carries the spirit of competitiveness has already lost, in the Lord’s eyes. While we may still “strut our time across the stage” our show is of little worth. The great critic has already judged that His Kingdom will not be made up of the competitive in Spirit.

B. Instead we should quickly recognize, appreciate, and rejoice in others’ gifts, **knowing they come from the Lord and for our benefit.**

C. We will also recognize and be grateful for our own gifts, and acknowledge that except for the Lord, they would not be ours. Thus we are more willing to share them for the sake of the Kingdom of God, and with greater humility. Above all, we are more inspired to use them with an eye single to the glory of our Father in Heaven.

D. **And with all our eyes focused singly upon the glory of our Father, we become “One.”**

IX. One of the great examples of the Gifts of the Spirit was told in the true story of “Chariots of Fire.” In this story of several racers in Great Britain, all competing in the Olympics of 1924, each competed for a different reason. One was competing to bring honor to his family. Another was competing just for the fun of it. Another was competing because he was trying to become accepted in a culture which did not accept Jews. The fourth, Eric Liddle, competed because **he knew his gift came from God, and he felt he brought honor to the Lord by using this gift. In essence he used it to glorify the Lord.**

This **true motivation was verified** when he refused to run a trial heat on Sunday. Instead he gave a sermon on the Sabbath to a local congregation, and was blessed to win a medal in another race for which he was not prepared and with unbelievable speed. He knew the true source of his gift. And he used his gifts for the most righteous reasons. In fact, he later abandoned racing and returned to China, where he was born, to give his life in trying to bring the teachings of Jesus Christ to the people of that land.

X. Gifts of the Spirit can be broken down into smaller segments than the scriptures name.

A. For example, the “Gift of Knowledge” is mentioned. **But many kinds of gifts of knowledge actually exist. And many kinds of people possess different gifts of knowledge.** This is true inside and outside of the Church.

B. Some, for example, can more easily comprehend abstract things, which others have difficulty understanding.

On the other hand, others see the more obvious, while the more abstract thinkers are too absorbed in the abstract to see. Obviously we need people with every kind of gift, and we should not mock or belittle those who possess the other kinds, for each in their turn blesses the whole.

C. **This understanding can heal conflicts,** and can do so even between generations. The younger generations have more elastic minds and can more quickly grasp new languages and new technologies.

The older generation, while usually having to struggle to keep up with things new, has gifts of knowledge which come from years of experience and usually high religious sources.

It would be wise for all generations to recognize their gifts and their limitations, as well as those of the other generations. In doing so, all generations can be blessed as a whole, recognizing “I have need of you!” This is again the Lord’s purpose in bestowing many different gifts.

XI. Patriarchal blessings (and earnest prayer) are essential sources to help us determine our gifts, and how to use them.

There are cases when for one reason or another, members judge and criticize others, feeling that somehow they know best what they should do with their own talents and time. [I am talking about using them in our free time, beyond fulfilling ones callings faithfully]. Sometimes these critics can make one even begin to question oneself. Turning to one’s patriarchal blessing, where the Lord’s counsel is given, is very helpful. He knows us and our gifts best, and only He knows His expectations for us. Patriarchal blessings can bring us guidance, comfort, and the courage to continue when others question how we use out time and gifts.

You are likely to find, later, that your choices were correct, and will see special blessings arise from perseverance.

As long as we are using our gifts for righteous purposes, and seek the Lord’s guidance through our patriarchal blessings and prayer, we should continue in spite of headwinds.