



*I wish it was just that simple as plug and play. The reason I did not have you do the test and send you on your way is this.*

### **With great power, comes great responsibility**

I know, it's a cheesy cliché'. Yet, in the kingdom of God, it's the truth. We describe God as powerful and clothed in majesty.

Proverbs 3:7 *"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil."*

Luke 24:49 *"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."*

Can you see it? The Bible knows what we gain through the power of God. It grieves me to no end when a Christian tries to wield his or her gifts as if they are something to be brandished like a weapon.

Ephesians 6:10 *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."*

Yes, the gifts you now know about yourself are powerful. Over and over the news asks the question *"how can we achieve peace in our lifetime?"* The answer is found within the power of God. To know exactly how God made you is powerful, illuminating, and calming. To look in the mirror and be affirmed as the person you thought you where is amazing. People say that through Jesus we can find peace, joy, and contentment. Yet, life is not easy at times. Where is the joy in failure or death? Yet, the Christian can find peace in knowing. Yes, knowing how God made you.

With that said it's time to take a step back. Years ago, I graduated from university as a pastor. Yet, I was not a pastor. To know your gift takes time just as it took me time to know what a pastor really is. It's so easy to just stand up and speak in tongues. So easy to try and heal people. Yet, your gift is a tool that God will use. Is there a proper way to use tools? How much power is needed to swing a hammer? For me, I learned three valuable lessons as a pastor. I

thought I could solve people's problems. Just pick up the phone and talk using all the new found wisdom I had attained. I made some terrible mistakes while trying to figure out my gift as a pastor. I spoke to the wrong person. I tried to give advice where none was required. In the end, I sat back with my gifts in my hand. All that was left was a smoldering mess of frustration. How do I use these tools properly? Where are the instructions?

**My first lesson** challenged me that I am not God. I have godly gifts but I can't use them properly without the Lord's help. They are divine tools, not human tools like a hammer. How can someone give divine prophecy or the miracle of healing without the Spirit? Some of the trouble we get into is trying to use the power of God without his guidance and leading. The blessing within all this is your gifts. They complement who God made you to be. We should not lose sight of this. We chose God because he first chose us.

John 15:16 *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit--fruit that will last--and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you."*

I mentioned last week to ask God to pour His Spirit out upon your gifts. Give them fuel to work. What makes you happy? Is it using your gift or the smile on another person's face that received your blessing? What if God empowered you to make cake? What if other people loved your baking? Would you bake to be thanked or because of the affect it had on others? Your gifts will affect others. Jesus talked at length about pouring new wine into new skins. He also mentioned new wine bursting old wine skins. It's two-fold for me. One is that our bodies can't contain the power of God. It must burst forth. Secondly, asking for the Spirit just might enlarge your capacity to hold more wine (Spirit). What if your desire was to be a blessing to more people in the name of God?

Be grateful God has invested in you. That Jesus took the time to place you within his church body. Further to this, you have purpose to further the kingdom of God in this world. Your gift is a really big deal. How many lives could be changed if you're willing to use your gifts for good? Yet, in the back of all this is the gift giver. They are His gifts and Jesus gave them to you. The word Saint literally means to be set apart for the service of God. The utensils in the Old Testament temple were holy, in so much as, they were set aside for the service unto the Holy

God. You and your gifts are holy utensils set aside for the service of God. Just be mindful of the power given you through your gifts. God is God and you are not him.

**The second lesson** is to use your gifts only where God tells you to. Years ago, I was approached by a man who was having an issue with his girlfriend. He wanted to be a Christian but she did not. He was stressed out because their relationship was deteriorating right before his eyes. In my twisted logic I believed that I was a pastor to help people wherever “I” deemed fit. I thought gave me new wisdom to know what to do and what to say. So, I phoned her. I will freely admit I helped kill that relationship. I made it far worse. In the fall out I lost that man as a friend too. God gave me the opportunity to sooth his heart. To calm his mind. Yet, I went after the big prize. Why not save them both? In the end I saved neither.

God gives you gifts to use. You are his holy utensil. Use them wisely. How do we do that? I will mention two things. The first is to only talk to who God places in front of you. Put on your Godly horse blinders. Those blinders keep the horse walking straight and undistracted. To what? To the path you are on. You won’t turn right and talk to someone else. You won’t veer left and take your gifts down a bad path. No, just keep straight on the path God has paved for you.

Job 23:11 *“My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside.”*

What if God put a person in your path? What if God had designed you in such a way that your gifts could specifically help that one person. In that moment you have a choice. Do it God’s way on his path, or take what was given and make it your own path. Believe it or not but it’s your choice what to do with what God has given you. With that said, be mindful. That gift was destined to be used for God’s glory. That is no small task. Yet, it’s an easy task. Just take what’s given and be in the moment. Work within your gifts. Work with the people God has placed directly in your path. Why? Because, in reality, you’re on God’s path paved for the one right in front of you. Tread lightly on holy ground.

**The third lesson** is found within Balaam and the talking donkey in Numbers 22. If you don’t know this funny story, give it a try. Many commentaries have been written on Balaam. Was he a good or a bad man? In many ways we just don’t have all the information. Balaam had the gift of prophesy. He probably has some other similar gifts. Yet, the Bible is clear in 2 Peter 2:15 and Revelation 2:14 that Balaam had issues with his gifts. He used them for his own gain.

In Numbers 22 we find Balaam using “Gods” gifts to gain payment from his prophesy and interpretation. He was a gun for hire by whichever God looked good in the eyes of the people.

There is a confusing piece in Numbers 22: 20-22 that I want to highlight. It states that God told Balaam to go, yet earlier the Bible it says God told Balaam not to go. Then in verse 22 it says God was angry with him. What’s up with that? You see Balaam knew that he had gifts. He knew that “Gods” spoke to him. I am not convinced that he knew our God was speaking to him. He was using his gifts for his own purposes. If you notice, in this story, Balaam kept working with the King, Balak. In a way, he was trying to negotiate between the Lord God and the Bad King. Balaam was not listening or following the one true God only. This man was using his gifts the wrong way. Are you and your gifts a gun for hire?

*1 Peter 4:10-11 “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

This is a lot to take in. Ponder these things in your heart. Check your pride meter. How special do you need to be? Let’s wrap up this series next week.