

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. Most Christians have longingly thought about what it would have been like to be alive during Jesus' earthly ministry. However, in John 16:7 Jesus taught that it was for our benefit that He went away. He said, *"I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."*
 - a. What do you think that Jesus meant by this?
 - b. Jesus taught that it is to our advantage that he left. In what ways are we better off after Jesus' ascension and after the coming of the Holy Spirit?
 - c. Do you think our longing to be present during Jesus' ministry reflects an undervaluing of the Holy Spirit's ministry in our lives? Why or why not?
2. The Bible is clear in its teaching that every true follower of Jesus Christ has the Holy Spirit of God living inside of him, and each has been given by the Holy Spirit a 'spiritual gift' or a 'grace gift.' As Paul says in 1st Corinthians 12:7, *"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."*
 - a. What is your initial reaction to this idea? Do you know what your Spiritual gifts are?
 - b. How is the Holy Spirit manifesting his power through you for the common good?
 - c. How important is it to know your spiritual gift? Why is it important?
3. Many teachings about spiritual gifts begin by trying to give a comprehensive list of the gifts, with a description of the specific traits and expressions of each gift. But Pastor Mike pointed out that the Bible does not seek to give us a comprehensive list of gifts with descriptions of each gift, but instead it gives us several lists of the various types of gifts.
 - a. What is the difference between seeing the Bible's teaching as giving us a comprehensive list of defined gifts, as opposed to seeing it giving us several lists of the various types or categories of gifts? Practically, why is this difference important?
 - b. If you know what your spiritual gift is, or what it might be, how does seeing your gift as a type of gift within that category change the way you understand your spiritual gift?
4. Pastor Mike taught that a key concept at the core of understanding our spiritual gifts is the idea that we are each part of the body of Christ, and are called and equipped to teach Jesus to others in the area of our giftedness.
 - a. Can you think of times when you have felt that you have experienced this aspect of the body of Christ? How have you felt people in the church being Jesus in the area of their giftedness?
 - b. Where has God called you to be Jesus to others?
5. Pastor Mike ended his message by giving several practical steps to start with in discovering and using your spiritual gifts. What practical steps can you take in the next few weeks to apply God's Word to your life?