

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. In his message, Pastor Mike pointed out that the word translated as spiritual gifts in 1st Corinthians 12 is the Greek word '*charisma*.' This is a combination of the word for grace, and the word for working, and thus could literally be translated as '*grace working*.' How does understanding spiritual gifts as God's '*grace working*' impact your understanding of what spiritual gifts are?
2. God's work of grace in our lives isn't only that he saves us from our sins, but it's also that he saves us for a life of ministry of eternal significance. In Ephesians 2:8-10, Paul teaches that we have been saved by grace through faith, and that the effect of that grace is that "*we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*"
 - a. In your experience and opinion, how common is it for Christians to see God's work of grace in our lives as primarily his saving us from our sins and from hell, and not as an ongoing work of saving us for ministry and a life of significance? If this is common, why do we focus primarily only on this one aspect of God's grace?
 - b. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul teaches us that we are God's masterpiece. Do you tend to view yourself more as God's project, or as his masterpiece? Why is this hard to believe?
 - c. If you really saw yourself as God's masterpiece, how would that impact your life? How can you claim that identity?
3. In his message Pastor Mike said that when we understand spiritual gifts as God's '*grace working*,' we will also understand that our qualification for God using us in ministry is the same as our qualifications for God saving us. What does he mean by this? What is your response to this statement?
4. God gives us gifts and uses us not because we are good people who have earned the right to be used by him, but because of his grace –his unmerited favor.
 - a. In his message Pastor Mike said that when people claim that God can't use them, they often do so in an expression of humility, but in reality, this is always a statement of pride. What did he mean by that? Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - b. Respond to the following statement; "*For the Christian, when we speak lowly of ourselves, we are not making a statement about our low view of ourselves, but we are making a statement about our low view of God and his grace.*"
5. In his message, Pastor Mike looked at Matthew 14 and Jesus' feeding the 5000
 - a. In verse 16, Jesus told his disciples that they needed to give the people food to eat, knowing they lacked the resources and ability to do so. Why did Jesus do this?
 - b. Does God ever call us to do something that we lack the resources and ability to accomplish? If so, when has he done this in your life? Why does he do this?
 - c. Jesus could have just created food for the people to eat, but instead he took and multiplied the lunch of five loaves of bread and two fish the disciples brought to him. What do you think the disciples were thinking when they brought the 5 loaves and 2 fish to Jesus? What do you think they thought when Jesus told them to distribute the food to the people?
 - d. Jesus took the small insufficient lunch they had, and had them do what they were able to do, and then by his power he did what only he could do. What is the small seemingly insufficient offering you have to bring to Jesus? What is Jesus calling you to do to that you know how to do? What would it look like for you to believe that Jesus can multiply what you bring him to do what only he can do?