

To Profit Withal – Biblical Examples

Recently, we read and discussed the 12th chapter of I Corinthians in our fellowship here. Of course, as a part of that discussion, we read verses 4 – 7.

I Corinthians 12:4 – 7

At that time, we saw that there is a tremendous diversity in the Body of Christ regarding gifts (capacities and abilities), diversity in services (how we use those capacities and abilities to be a blessing to others) and a diversity in the effects our gifts and service produce. At the time we were reviewing that, I said the following: “Whatever your gifts, whatever your way of serving, whatever effects are produced, they will be brought to full fruition when the manifestations of the spirit are in evidence in your life”.

This morning, I would like to look at some examples of that in the Bible. And our objective of course is that we can learn from the examples to see and know that the same God is at work in our lives. The first example I would like to read about is Joseph. We are not going to take the time to read the entire record of Joseph, though that is something I would surely recommend for your private study.

Genesis 37:2 – 4, 27,28,36

Genesis 39:1 – 6, 20 – 23

This is how Joseph came to Egypt before the rest of Israel. We can understand that Joseph had abilities – business sense, leadership skills, people skills, honesty and faithfulness, etc. However, none of those abilities and capacities are manifestations of the spirit. But having spirit upon him and his walking by the spirit allowed those capacities and

abilities to come to full fruition. Then he is unjustly accused and thrown into prison, and we see the same thing repeat itself. His natural abilities along with the spirit of God brought him to the top.

Chapter 40, which we are not going to read, tells of us the Egyptian king's butler and baker. They too end up in prison and meet Joseph, who interprets their dreams for them with the manifestations of the spirit. And the interpretation of those dreams happens just as Joseph had said. Then Pharaoh had a dream.

Genesis 41:9 – 16, 37 – 46

Though nobody else had been able to help Pharaoh with his dream, Joseph did. Joseph excelled because his gifts, his service and the effects produced were brought to full fruition by his walk by the spirit, the manifestations of the spirit in evidence in his life.

Now, let's look at another example in the book of Exodus, Bezaleel.

Exodus 31:1 – 6

To be a master craftsman in metal work, in the carving of stones (gems), to be a master woodworker are not manifestations of the spirit. But to do these things in the way that God wanted them done would take the spirit of God working in Bezaleel. He needed the manifestations of the spirit to allow his gifts and service to really have the impact that God wanted.

Exodus 35:30 – 35

Exodus 36:1 – 7

Bezaleel excelled because his gifts, service and the effects produced were brought to full fruition by the spirit of God at work within him.

Now, let's read of another example, David. David was many things of course: a shepherd, a musician, a songwriter, a king. But he was also a

man of war. He was skilled in the martial arts and fighting and military strategy. We cannot take the time to read everything in the Bible about David, but we can highlight a few things.

I Samuel 17:26, 31 -51

I Samuel 18:14 – 16, 25 – 27

I Samuel 23:1 – 5

II Samuel 5:17 – 25

II Samuel 22:1, 29 – 38 (Psalm 18:28 – 37)

Ability in the martial arts, military strategy, etc. are not manifestations of the spirit. The words of this song are in the context of military actions, fighting and victory. “He teacheth my hands to war”. When you read those words considering our topic, they really take on some meaning. I think we would all agree that the stone that brought down Goliath (for instance) was not just a “lucky shot”. David’s abilities and service and the effects that they produced were all brought to full fruition by the manifestations of the spirit.

So, when we think of the Church, the Body of Christ, in this light, for the Body to be the most effectual requires the effectual working in the measure of every part.

Ephesians 4:16