

More Than a Gift

Series: Gifts of the Spirit

Date: August 16, 2026

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Key Scriptures

- Genesis 2:24
- Matthew 1:18–19
- John 14:2
- Ephesians 5:25, 32
- Revelation 19:7

Spiritual gifts are about more than what God has placed in us individually. They are given so we can serve, strengthen, and prepare the Church—the Bride of Christ—for the return of Jesus.

Marriage Was God's Idea

- Marriage was not invented by culture. It was established by God from the beginning as a covenant:

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” — Genesis 2:24

- A godly marriage reflects covenant, faithfulness, sacrifice, forgiveness, unity, and love. That is why marriage carries such spiritual significance. It gives the world a visible picture of God's character and His covenant love.
- Satan's opposition to marriage is ultimately opposition to God's design. His strategy is to divide, deceive, accuse, isolate, tempt, and destroy. Covenant says something different: “I choose you. I am committed to you. I will remain faithful.”

Marriage Points to Christ and the Church

- Paul explains that marriage points beyond itself:

*“This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”
— Ephesians 5:32*

- Christ is the Groom, and the Church is His Bride.
- Jesus does not simply tolerate or make use of the Church. He loves her and gave Himself for her. When marriage reflects covenant love, it tells the world something about Jesus.

The Groom Is Preparing a Place

- The message drew from the Jewish wedding customs of the New Testament world. Once the covenant of betrothal was established, the groom would leave to prepare a place for his bride. During that time, the bride would prepare herself for his return.

- Jesus used this same picture when He told His disciples:

“I am going there to prepare a place for you.” — John 14:2

- Jesus has made the covenant. He has gone to prepare a place, and one day He will return for His Bride.

“For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.” — Revelation 19:7

- This means we are living in a season of waiting—but not passive waiting. We are preparing the Bride, serving the Bride, and strengthening the Bride.

Our Gifts Are for the Bride

- The gifts of the Holy Spirit are not given for competition, recognition, or personal advancement. They are entrusted to us for the good of Christ’s Church.
- The question is not simply, “What can my gift do for me?” The better question is, “How can what God has placed in me strengthen the Bride of Christ?”
- Every believer has something to offer. Our gifts, abilities, time, resources, and even the breath in our lungs have been given to us for God’s purposes. Serving the Church is not reserved for a handful of people with visible roles. Jesus has entrusted His Bride to all of us.
- What a privilege. What an honor.

Key Statements

- Your marriage tells the world something about Jesus.
- We're not waiting around doing nothing until Jesus comes. We're preparing the Bride.
- When God gives us a spiritual gift, it isn't for our benefit alone. It is for His Bride.
- The very breath in your lungs is meant to glorify Jesus and tell the world about a Savior.
- Jesus trusted us with His Bride. What a privilege. What an honor.

Reflection and Application

Consider these questions this week:

- Am I approaching the Church mainly as something meant to serve me, or as the Bride Jesus has called me to love and strengthen?
- What gift, ability, resource, or opportunity has God entrusted to me?
- Is there someone in the Church I can encourage, serve, disciple, or help this week?
- Are my priorities showing that I am ready for Christ's return?
- Do I need to step away from a "Martha moment" of constant activity and spend time resting at the feet of Jesus?

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you one practical way to strengthen the Bride this week—and then act on what He shows you.