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# How to shift up the gears of your spiritual life

ost of the time we have a gearbox in a car that consists of 4 or 5 forward gears, one reverse gear and a neutral gear.

#### Reverse gear

What I called "reactionism" in another chapter, I now describe as living according to the system of "the little child within us who wants to please his parents." It is about living according to the patterns that were implanted in us in childhood, such as fears, especially the fear of being rejected.

We are taught from childhood that people who have more things are less

likely to be rejected. Therefore, owning a house, a car, a gold watch, etc. seems to make you less likely to be rejected. In short, this type of life is not the result of planning, but is born of fears and unconscious traumas. This leads to the person not being able to see the real reason for their actions.

Those who live to please others do not live, but are "lived"

#### Neutral gear

Achieving healing from trauma and fear and bringing it into awareness means "taking the gear out of reverse and into neutral." It is part of the process, but it is still not complete healing. Healing is about "moving forward" and putting it into first gear.

## The "four gears" of spiritual progress

The 1st gear – your talents

What can I do to advance in the spiritual life? Everyone in the world has talents and you do too. Talents are skills that do not require faith or the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. When we use talents, we use natural resources such as common sense and manual or intellectual skills. Don't wait, start now!

The 2nd course – spiritual gifts

Unfortunately, many are stuck in first gear for the rest of their lives because they don't know the difference between talents and gifts, because they think that gift and talent are synonyms. But that's not the case: they are opposite terms. It is imperative that you understand the difference so that

you can "shift up" and move to the next spiritual level.

Of course, "talent" is a kind of "gift", a present. Our natural talents were given by God and are therefore gifts. That is why we say that "talents" are <u>natural gifts</u> and "gifts" are <u>spiritual gifts</u>.

A sentence I usually use to explain this difficult problem is:

<u>Talent</u> is what I do for God. <u>Gift</u> is what God does through me.

I have listed the characteristics of these skills in a table for you to observe closely. Compare them and clearly understand that they are opposites so you can "shift up."

Talents are not bad, but they are like the first step on a ladder. They are a space for obedience training, but all training is aimed at something that comes later.

Talent	Gift and vocation
Is a <u>natural</u> gift	Is a <u>spiritual</u> gift
You receive it at birth	You didn't have it at first, but it is given to us at a certain point in our adult life.
All people in the world have them	Only born-again Christians receive
Works through hu- man power	Works through the power of the Holy Spirit
Ability to complete tasks using common sense and manual skills	Ability to accomplish tasks through the power of God

### How do I receive a gift?

Pray and ask God what He wants you to do.

Notice that God will never say to you, "I give you gift x," for example, "I give you the gift of evangelization." No. He doesn't say it like that, but He says something like, "I want you to do (this and that)." God doesn't give you the gift first so you can do the task, but He gives you the task first, and later, when you obey and do the task, He empowers you with the gift. You learn to walk as you walk. In other words, the gift is the empowerment you receive by doing the task He has given you.

Please realize that one must obey in order to receive the spiritual gift.

When God tells you to do something, you may respond, "Lord, but 1 don't

know how to do that because I don't have the talent." He wants to give you a gift and asks you to do something for which you have no talent. The right answer is to pray, "Lord, I have no talent for this, but because you have commanded me, I will obey." And when you obey, you will realize what it means to be used by God, to be His instrument. He will empower you. He will guide your hand and put words in your mouth:

Simon said, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." (Luke 5:5)

Some people, when confronted with the topic of gifts, say, "I have the <u>feel-ing</u> God wants me to do (this and that) because I have talent for it." Please pay attention: You should use your talents, that's great! If the church or someone needs the help of your talents, do it! But stop confusing talents and spiritual gifts!

When you receive a divine command, you don't think, "I have the feeling..." or, "It seems to me...". On the contrary, you receive absolute certainty in your heart about what God wants after many hours of praying and pleading: "Use me, Lord!"

I can testify that it is wonderful to be a tool of God, an instrument of miracles. But there is also a "dangerous" side to this: when you pray: "God, use me!" you give Him the authority to intervene in your life. From this moment unexpected, new, challenging and difficult things will happen.

Obeying is not easy. God tests your obedience by asking you to do things you are not used to and are not sure you are capable of. At this point, many take a step back, retreating in fear because they do not understand how this process works, how to receive gifts.

Let's imagine that someone is learning to drive a car and the instructor asks him to put the car in second gear. The car is going much faster and the person gets scared, brakes, stops and says: "I'm giving up on getting a driving license, it's very dangerous. I'll walk instead." This person in the example gives up the means of transport available to those with a driving license because of a small fright. What a bummer! If something unexpected happens in your life, don't be afraid. You can say to the instructor: "Dear master, I was a

little scared. Let me breathe, we'll continue tomorrow. Please be patient with me." Don't give up!

### A gift is always a task

Be courageous and take on the responsibility that comes with receiving the gifts, and you will grow spiritually.

Although a gift is a God-given responsibility, having a gift does not give you the right to be disrespectful to church leaders. Pray, and the Lord Himself will open doors for you to find spaces where you can exercise your gifts, inside or outside the four walls of the church.

Don't expect other people to understand or approve of your gift, but go! Obey God.

The 3rd gear - a calling, a vocation

"Vocation" is the word I use to talk about the spiritual gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 (calling to be a missionary, an evangelist, a counselor, and a church-Bible-teacher). These spiritual gifts follow the same principle as the spiritual gifts of the second gear, with the difference, roughly speaking, that spiritual gifts are more sporadic, whereas a calling to ministry is permanent and long-term.

The 4th gear – A post or an office (deacon, elder or pastor/church leader)

When church leaders recognize that someone has a calling, they often invite the person to take on one of three types of positions in the church. Note that 4th gear is usually shifted after 3rd gear. This means that one usually

gets a position only <u>after</u> exercising their spiritual calling.

In the following table I compare gifts and posts with objects:

Gift and calling	Post / office
Painting	Frame
Muscles	Skeleton
Money	Wallet
Water	Pipe
Flower	Vase

Please recognize that they are pairs that complement each other. Gifts and callings bring spiritual life to the church, while posts are the tools through which the spiritual gifts are "channeled" for edification. An example of this is in the church at Corinth, where everyone wanted to use their gifts, but they were stepping on each

other's toes. Therefore, there was a need to organize interactions so that all could be edified.

The positions in the church that the Bible teaches about 'are like a skeleton that allows the muscles to work, or like a vase that holds a plant, or a frame around a painting.

Which is more important: a gift or a post? Both sides of the table are important. However, if we look more closely, we see that the "gift and calling" side is the "living" part of the table. It is problematic to aspire to a post without having a vocation, because that would be like a vase without a flower, a frame without a picture.

Without posts the church would be chaos.

<sup>1</sup> Deacons, elders and pastors (Greek, bishops)

# Without gifts and callings it is dead.

To think that one could do without gifts and callings and rely solely on talents and positions would be like a skeleton without muscles.

Exercising the talents is tiring. Exercising a post is tiring. Without the power of gift and calling, talents and posts become a burden over time.

Finding your gifts and calling is like looking at the blueprint of your life. It means receiving revelation about the blueprint of your existence. It means being an instrument of God and experiencing His miracles daily.

Which of the "gears" are you in now?

This article is a chapter of a book I will be publishing soon. If you liked it, pass it on!

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