

## I. Review

- A. Through this series we are laying foundational teachings and principles from scripture concerning the form and function of church leadership and gifting in order to position ourselves to make appropriate Spirit-led changes within Restoration Fellowship in 2021.
- B. Three Encouragements - We will be making these changes in light of three different aspects of encouragement from the Spirit as Jesus leads us to make these changes.
  - 1. Biblical Encouragement
  - 2. Prophetic Encouragement
  - 3. Preparatory Encouragement
- C. Four Foundational Principles - In our last session we laid out four principles that serve as the bedrock and boundaries which will guide and keep us on track concerning the “why” behind the “what” of the changes we desire to walk in.
  - 1. The Seven Facets of the Church
  - 2. Fellowshiping with God - Centrality of Personal Intimacy with Jesus
  - 3. Fellowship of receiving from the Church
  - 4. Fellowship of supplying the Church

## II. Overview of the Fivefold Ministry

- A. There are five primary ministry giftings that Jesus has given to individuals in the church that build the church up in love for Jesus and for one another. Even though the term five-fold does not appear in the bible, these gifts have been encapsulated in our current church culture as the five-fold ministry. Though there are numerous passages that reference these giftings, the main section of scripture we will be looking at for our overview is found in the book of Ephesians. (Eph. 4:1-16)
- B. Big Picture - When examining the five-fold gifts, as well as all the other mentions of gifts in the scriptures, one major truth constantly emerges. These gifts are the essential and God ordained vehicle through which the church is built up or grows up in love and maturity. In other words, if these gifts are not given by Jesus, encouraged in the church, and received by the church, we cannot walk out the

greatest theme and commandment: to love God and others to it's God-intended fullness. (Rom. 12:1-13; 1 Cor. 12:7, 22, 25-31, 14:1; Eph. 4:16; 1 Pet. 4:7-11)

*“Whenever God is showing more of Himself, there is the possibility of our having more joy and love in Him, being more satisfied in Him, thus glorifying and loving Him more. God has given spiritual gifts as a means of ministry to His people. These gifts are points of supernatural encounter with the living God in which He shows more of Himself to us. That being said, when all other things like obedience and purity are equal, a person who pursues spiritual gifts can experience God's goal of Christian love more fully than a person who doesn't.” - John Piper*

1. Traditional Objections “Cessationism” - A church doctrine that finds its origin in the writings and teaching of the reformers--including Martin Luther and John Calvin--in the mid to late 1500's. This doctrine basically espouses that there are certain gifts or activities of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Scripture that are not available or necessary for the church today. Listed among the unavailable or unnecessary gifts for today are the ministry gifts of the apostle and prophet. This doctrine is still firmly held by our brothers and sisters in the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed, and some Baptist denominations. However, it is of great note that all non-Catholic expressions find their roots in this doctrine up until the early 1900's with the exception of Methodism in the late 1800's.
2. Sola Scriptura (Bible Only) - The most interesting and alarming fact about this popular theological position is that it appears nowhere in scripture. There is no explicit passage that states that any of the spiritual gifts will cease at any point in this age. In fact, every single proponent of cessationism still believes in certain spiritual gifts (evangelist, pastor, teacher, etc.). They simply deny certain ones that are listed together with the ones they affirm. (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11)

*Let's consider an objection to the notion that some of the gifts have ceased. Doesn't scripture teach that the gifts last until Jesus comes again? Certainly there are texts that teach that the gifts could last until Jesus returns. **There's no definitive teaching in the Bible that they've ceased.** We might even expect them to last until the second coming. I conclude, then, that certain texts permit but don't require the gifts to continue until the second coming. - Thomas Schreiner (Dr. Schreiner is one of the leading theologians of the cessationist position in the 20th century.)*

- C. Need for more Understanding - What the 21st century church faces, then, is not a question of whether or not the five-fold ministry is biblical or essential for today, but rather how does it function? Church today as we know it has functioned so long without it that we really don't know how to establish and partner with it.

There is a reality in this journey to which we must venture into the unknown. However, we do it in the confidence that this is God's design, and we believe He will establish us in righteousness as we walk it out in faith.

D. New Apostolic Reformation Conspiracy - There is a growing campaign to warn people concerning what has been dubbed the N.A.R. Peter Wagner published a book in 1998 entitled, "The New Apostolic Churches", in which he spoke of a rise in churches worldwide that were recognizing that the five-fold ministry was for today and were pursuing it. He later formed an organization called, "New Apostolic Reformation". They issued a statement of beliefs and required annual membership costs and meetings. The organization lasted a few years and then disbanded as a result of Wagner's declining health and eventual death in 2016.

1. I remember reading through this organization's statement of beliefs and membership requirements when I was in bible school, and I can tell you that if the N.A.R. still existed, Restoration Fellowship would not agree with it. I can also tell you that there is a great disparity between the statement of beliefs and values of the disbanded organization and that of what is being presented today by its antagonists.
2. The N.A.R. now exists only on the websites of individuals who warn you not to join it, and for the most part have lumped anyone who adheres any type of charismatic theology or expression into it's secret club. According to them, the N.A.R. has no official website, membership list, recruiting strategy, or statement of beliefs. Somehow, this fact only fuels the conspiracy rather than causes it to be seen as false.

E. Critical Observations - There are a few absolutely critical truths concerning the five-fold ministry gifts we must understand in order to move forward rightly as we seek to see them more established and experienced in our midst. (Rom. 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; Eph. 4:7-11)

1. Jesus is All - Jesus is THE apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. Each gift is meant to uniquely declare who He is and what He is like, resulting in His glory, exaltation, and adoration. We are desirous of the gifts because we are desirous of more of Him. (Rom. 11:36)
2. We have access to all gifts through His Spirit in us - The diversity of gifts comes from the same Spirit who dwells in us all. This enables us to have access and ability to operate and experience every gift. Gifts are given in diverse measures of Christ not in diverse aspects of Christ. This is why

we are all called to represent Christ in all the various aspects of who He is. We simply have diversity according to grace as to the measure of the aspects we walk in.

3. There are Gifts that Primarily Equip the Body - The five-fold gifts equip the church for ministry. For example, individuals who operate in the gift of evangelism are not primarily meant to do the work of evangelism themselves (although they most certainly do). They are meant to equip the entire church in evangelism.
4. Spiritual Gifts are Given According to Grace, not Merit - Jesus, in His perfect leadership, knows our propensity for pride, boasting, and division. Therefore, He gives gifts to individuals who have not earned them. This principle is absolutely essential for us to understand and uphold in our hearts. Without this understanding we see people through a lens of superior or inferior to us in relational maturity to God. This then causes us to give misplaced authority to the individual themselves in our lives.
5. Leadership Authority is Given by Merit not Grace - Contrary to what's popular in our culture, the individuals who are to have governmental authority in the church are given that authority based upon Godly character, not gifting. We are never to submit ourselves to someone's authority in our life based upon a gifting, call, or title. Someone's ministry impact, success, or experience level in their gifting is never a basis to assign authority. Those who are the most consistently like Christ in heart among us are to be the people we submit ourselves to. (Mt. 5-7; 1 Tim. 3:1-13)
6. They only Function Rightly in Relational Unity and Trust - The spiritual gifts are meant to be recognized, encouraged, matured in, and expressed in a healthy loving relational context. Biblically, upholding a loving relational context must remain a higher priority than actually promoting and expressing the spiritual gifts. (Rom. 12:6-18; 1 Cor. 12-13; 1 Pet. 4:7-11)
7. Diverse and Equal - In general, the diversity of gifts causes us to view them through the lens of diversity of importance or priority. This is even more compounded based upon the measure of grace that has been given to us. For example, individuals who carry a prophetic gift tend to prioritize the prophetic over the other gifts, to surround themselves with other prophetic people, and expose themselves mostly to prophetic ministry.

The diversity of the gifts has been given to us in order to produce humility, dependency, and intentionality in love. Each gift is diverse in function within the church but equal in priority, necessity, and sacredness.