

The Overlooked But Powerful Charismatic Gift Nobody Wants

The Bible is replete with gifts God gives His people in various seasons and for myriad reasons.

Most are familiar with Paul's catalog in Corinthians. "Now concerning spiritual gifts," Paul begins. "I do not want you to be ignorant" (1 Cor. 12:1). He continues with the instruction that though God has assigned these differently to different people, they are all from Him and for the common good of His people (1 Cor. 12:1–7).

Then he lists them: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, various kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues (vv. 8–10).

Collectively, these nine gifts are known as the "charismatic gifts" (named because the word "gift" in Greek is *charisma*). And in the case of these, they are most often attributed with supernatural power, which is why many desire and pursue them.

The Purpose of God's Gifts

Undoubtedly, these presents of power have aided some mighty moves of God. The early church depended upon them for its explosive growth. Even today, these charismatic gifts remain vital to help believers fulfill tasks they couldn't otherwise do on their own.

And we must not forget that's really the purpose. God's gifts aren't merely for our enjoyment but so that we may achieve something at a certain time or place that would be impossible without them.

The Overlooked Charismatic Gift

With all the hubbub surrounding prophecy, tongues or healing, there's another charismatic gift Paul mentions that's often overlooked, even though it's equally powerful. Are you ready for this?

It's the gift of singleness.

Don't tune out just yet; follow me here. To the Corinthians, Paul concedes, "For I would that all men were even as myself" (by this he means unmarried). Then he continues, "But every man has his proper gift from God" (1 Cor. 7:6–7). And here again, the word he uses is *charisma*.

For most evangelicals, the idea of singleness as a charismatic gift is revolutionary. The modern church has all but idolized marriage so many subconsciously believe a single person is incomplete, undisciplined, immature or even has something wrong with them. Accordingly, whether singleness for a season or for a lifetime, it's rarely celebrated for the blessing it is.

Correcting Some Misconceptions

Perhaps you can't understand how being single could be desirable. To get the idea, we first must correct a few misconceptions. This first: "Doesn't the Bible instruct that it's not good for man to be alone?" Not really. While I'm a Bible-promise guy, I'm not in favor of twisting Scripture to get it to say something that it doesn't. God's actual words are, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). The definite article ("the") in front of "man" clues us in that this isn't a promise for the rest of humanity, but is a statement regarding the first man, Adam. Obviously, it wasn't good for Adam to be alone if God wanted to populate the world.

Second: "What about the proverb, 'Whoever finds a wife finds a good thing'" (Prov. 18:22)? Of course, this is absolutely true. A spouse is a tremendous gift; and the institution of

marriage is a great blessing. Certainly, I don't mean for this article to be disparaging toward marriage. But the verse doesn't say, "Whoever finds a wife finds the only good thing." No, a spouse is one of many gifts and blessings the Lord gives, which also include singleness.

How Is Singleness a Gift?

Like the other charismatic gifts, singleness is also a gift of supernatural power given by God for great feats. Any married person must admit there are things they simply can't do after marriage. A married woman can't make a last-minute decision to be a missionary overseas. A married man can't devote too much time to ministry projects—because family must be first. And rightly so. When two become one, decisions should be made together, which can sometimes seem limiting. All of these are "worries" unmarried people doesn't have, which allows them to focus solely on accomplishing God's will for the moment.

What I just said is crucial to understand. The gift of singleness comes in two forms: seasonal and lifelong. Just because you're single now doesn't mean you'll always be. And at whatever age, it doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. But it just might mean there's something right with you. Yes, God might have you right here, right now to do something you couldn't do in any other situation. And that's precisely why He gives charismatic gifts in the first place.

How to Know If You Have the Gift

The other charismatic gifts are fairly obvious to know if you are blessed with them. But what about the gift of singleness? How do you know if that's God's will for you right now? Here are a few "tests."

1. You are content with your relationship status. I remember times when bewildered people asked me, "Are you OK being single right now?" To this I'd reply, "I'm as content as people will let me be." Perhaps that sounds snarky, but it was

true. There were seasons in my life when I was happier out of a relationship than I was within one, and the only pressure I felt came from those who consistently badgered me about when I'd take the next step in adulthood.

If you're at a point of contentedness in your singleness, then praise God. This is a good sign that God has given you this season as a gift. Your satisfaction in this might not remain forever, so make the most of it while it lasts. Ask God what you can do for Him to maximize the moment, and then get to it while you have no strings attached.

2. You are involved in something that requires your undivided attention. God might have you in a season where you need to devote your energy and focus on a task at hand rather than on someone else. This was the case for much of my mid-to-late twenties. Initially, God called me to help rebuild a struggling ministry, and then I went to seminary and later began to build my own ministry from the ground up. In these years, there wasn't much opportunity to put in the time necessary for relationship-building. Even when I tried, those relationships never lasted long. And now I know why: God had a different plan for me in that season.

The same might be true for you. These days, more people put off relationships until they are finished with education or are more established in their careers. And that's OK. If or when you decide to be married, then your priorities must shift to God first, spouse second, family third and then vocation. If you aren't ready for those priorities, then stay the course until God changes your desires.

3. You haven't yet found someone suitable. This one's a bit by default. Speaking about eunuchs (people who can't produce children), Jesus instructed, "there are some eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men" (Matt. 19:12). Many take this to mean these people are physically mutilated in a way that makes them unable to produce children. But I don't believe this is

the exclusive meaning—especially for today. No, I believe it also means that some are single because of their social circumstances. And most often, that's because there isn't yet a suitable candidate for marriage.

Of course, this is tricky. In today's world, media has created a physical standard that hardly exists beyond a digital image. And though I believe physical attraction is necessary, if your mind is too warped by the world, you'll wait forever for something that is only a figment of your imagination.

Still, I've seen far too many compromise their destinies to be with someone I question if God really chose for them. If you're looking for a spouse, take time to ensure they complement your call, not complicate it! And until you find that suitable someone, enjoy the gift of a season of singleness. As it's often said, "Worse than never marrying is marrying the wrong person!" So shake off the societal pressure to get hitched so quickly. It's never a mistake to be cautious, but it might actually save you a lot of heartache in the end.

A Promise to Single People

With each of God's gifts, there's always a promise. And the gift of singleness comes with some incredible blessings, depending upon your situation.

For those in a season of singleness, remember this: time devoted to God is never wasted, but will be returned with a reward uniquely prepared for you (see Heb. 11:6). Who knows—when you're ready, your reward might be a full and satisfied marriage.

For those with a lifelong call to the single life, God offers something that's hard to beat: "I will give [you] ... a name better than that of sons and daughters" (Isa. 56:5). Yes, legacy isn't limited to offspring, but includes the spiritual sons and daughters produced from your obedience to God and

devotion to His kingdom.

Whatever your situation, don't waste this season by wishing for another. The notion that you can't be happy or whole until you are married only robs you of appreciating what God has given and called you to today. {eoa}

Kyle Winkler equips people to live in victory. His mobile app, Shut Up, Devil!, is the No. 1 spiritual warfare app; and his recent book, Silence Satan, has helped thousands shut down the enemy's attacks, threats, lies and accusations. Kyle holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University. Get daily encouragement from Kyle on Facebook and Twitter.