

God's Toolbox

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Ruling (Leadership). Too many want to be boss, but God does not give this gift of ruling the local flock of believers to everyone. With this gift, a leader can lead and encourage the work of God to grow and accomplish much. He also has wisdom in the administration of the church and other ministries.

Mercy. In this angry world, this unique tool can soothe and aid those in hard times. With this gift of kindness and understanding, many are given second chances and encouraged to keep serving and obeying the Lord, no matter what has happened. It is because of this gift that many lives have been changed.

God loves His people and wants to help us and wants us to help others. With the tools He has given all believers, the body of believers can be strengthened, encouraged, and able to accomplish much for God's glory.

Unfortunately, too many have never recognized their gift or even taken it out of the "box" and used it. The church is weaker than it should be because too many believers are not utilizing what God has given them.

Today, pray and study the gifts found in Romans 12:6-8. Ask the Lord to help you realize what gift or gifts are yours. When He shows you, use that special tool. We are saved not just to sit but to serve. We be-

lievers would be much stronger and able to accomplish more if we would all use our spiritual gifts.

The full-length version of this lesson is found at: <http://www.openthoumineeyes.com/lessons/toolbox.html>.

God Uses the Faithful

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for the Lord in Jerusalem, he must next be a witness the same way in Rome.

For Paul's faithful, non-teetering service, the Lord rewarded Paul with more opportunities to serve Him. Paul had shown himself faithful in the tasks he was given, and God was going to use him further.

Many need to understand that God will usually use a person for more incredible things if one had first done all one was previously required to do. Some are sitting around waiting for the Lord to call them to minister in a faraway land, but refuse to do anything for the Lord while they are waiting.

God wants to use us. The small tasks He speaks to our hearts to do or the daily opportunities He allows have to be a testimony for the Saviour are the training and testing God wants us to go through.

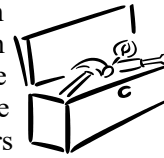
The next time the Lord needs something done for His cause in your area, will He think of you, as you have always done what He has asked you to do?



God's Toolbox

Bill Brinkworth

Every handyman has a toolbox in which his tools are stored. Since maintenance repairs are varied, so are his tools.



The box usually does not contain just hammers or screwdrivers. It is filled with different tools to help fix whatever may be broken. Most likely, there are wrenches, saws, screwdrivers, hammers, sockets, and many others. There is much to be maintained.

Just as a person maintains what one has, or at least should, God also has tasks around His creation that also need attention. He has angels and other heavenly creatures who do His bidding. On Earth, He often uses people to meet the needs of mankind.

To accomplish what the Master requires, God gives His workers specific tools to get His job done. No, the tools are not hammers, wrenches, or saws. The tools provided to each of His born-again family members are

special, spiritual gifts. When God meets the needs of a person or a group, He often selects one to complete the task utilizing the gift God has given the person to accomplish what needs to be done.

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God Uses the Faithful

Bill Brinkworth

Despite previous warnings (Acts 23) not to go to Jerusalem, where it was prophesied he would face trials and tribulations, Paul went. The fearless evangelist was burdened to give out the message that had transformed his life. He endured beatings, near assassinations, and cruel treatment. He was determined not to quit or turn back.

After a day when Paul was beaten, accused by hypocrites, and almost pulled to pieces (vs. 10) by an angry mob, the Lord verbally encouraged the preacher (vs. 11). In the encouraging remarks, the Lord told the evangelist that as he had testified.

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The tools to meet man's everyday needs, both spiritual and physical, have changed as church ages have progressed. Before God had man compile the complete Word of God, He handled mankind's needs differently.

Since the early church did not have His written guidelines, He presented people with other abilities; many of them are referred to as sign gifts. They were "signs" that God was with His people.

Those nine spiritual gifts included words of wisdom and knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12: 8-10). Many of these gifts stopped or changed when "that which is perfect is come" (1 Corinthians 13:10: the Bible).

When the Bible was made available to people, they were to live by faith (II Corinthians 5:7, Galatians 3:1) and no longer needed to live by sight. Christians no longer needed the "proof" by miracles.

God is not done with mankind yet. He still has big plans for those willing to turn to and heed Him. Although God still does miracles, the believer no longer needs the sign gifts of the early church because they have

God's written instructions. Instead of "sign gifts" to accomplish the tasks God desires, He equips the child of God with at least one of seven gifts (Romans 12:6-8) that He has provided for this church age. These gifts are the tools God knows will be necessary to do the tasks He requires. These "tools" include:

Prophecy. This gift of prophecy is not the same as the early church had. They were able to foretell the future. We no longer need to foretell the future, as God has recorded all He desires us to know about it in His preserved Word. That ability to predict the future has stopped (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Prophecy also can mean, as Webster's 1828 dictionary defines it, "to preach; to instruct in religious doctrines; to interpret or explain Scripture or religious subjects ..." This is an essential gift still needed amongst today's believers. This gift from God enables certain believers who have read and studied the Word of God to help other believers by sharing its meaning. These people can shed light on a dark situation in a person's life and can tell a troubled person God's solution to the problem, according to God's Word.

Ministry. Another essential tool needed to support the needs of God's people is the gift of

meeting the needs of and ministering to others. The service to others often does not get the spotlight it should, but the body of Christ suffers when the possessor of this gift does not exercise it.

The gift of ministry has no limits as to what it can encompass. When a need is seen, service can be rendered by feeding those who cannot feed themselves, bringing children to church who cannot get there themselves, pushing an invalid in a wheelchair, helping a sick person recover, helping the deaf "hear" the Gospel by signing for them, cleaning the church's restrooms, and on and on. People's needs are so many.

Teaching. Just as a student in school needs guidance to understand required subjects, so does the child of God need a teacher who has the gift of teaching the truths of the Bible. God has given some the gift to teach the principles, doctrines, and facts found in His Word. As the eunuch told Philip when he could not understand the scriptures, "... How can I, except some man should guide me? ..." (Acts 8:31).

Exhorting. Exhorting is an essential tool that God has given certain believers. This gift is used to encourage and comfort fellow believers. Many more would be encouraged and still be fruitful in the ministry if more spiritual cheerleaders were urging Christian soldiers onward.

Giving. Anyone can get and take, but with the tool of giving,

God has for some, many have the desire to give and give. They give of themselves, their time, and often their finances. Most churches physically would not exist if givers had not provided for their existence. Many are encouraged to serve and live for God because someone thought them important enough to give time and energy to help them.

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Do What You Can

Author Unknown

*We cannot all be heroes,
And thrill a hemisphere,
With some great daring venture
Some deed that mocks at fear;
But we can fill a life time
With kindly acts and true;
There's always noble service
For noble hearts to do.*

*We cannot all be preachers,
And sway with voice and pen,
As strong winds sway the forest,
The mind and hearts of men;
But we can be evangelists
To souls within our reach;
There's always Love's own
gospel
For loving hearts to preach.*

*We cannot all be martyrs,
And win a deathless name
By some Divine baptism,
Some ministry of flame;
But we can live for truth's sake,
Can do for Christ and dare;
There's always faithful witness
For faithful hearts to bear.*

"Service is the rent we pay for the space we occupy."