**Outline:**

* Intro
* Some Reasons Why People Don’t Continue in the Gifts
* How Do We Continue in Them?
  + Character and purity
  + Attention and the Word
  + Neglect and Impartation
  + Care, Absorption, and Progress
* Keep it Fresh
* Gifts are given as He wills, grown as You do
* Nearly Exhaustive List of Contributing Factors to Growth and Maturity
* Closing

**Pt.5**

**Continuation and Maturation**

*There’s been an empirical study done, worldwide, over six continents.*

*They did it in hundreds and hundreds of churches. They did it in multiple languages. They did it in every kind of church – a sociological study. This was not an opinion poll. It was an empirical study to find out what caused churches – what were the core elements of churches, whether they were charismatic or non-charismatic, whether they were denominational or nondenominational, whether they were state run, small, large, or mega.*

*And they came back with about eight characteristics, biblical characteristics, that were common in all churches that were growing, both qualitatively and quantitatively. One of those eight characteristics – in fact, one of the most important – was a gift-oriented ministry, churches that trained people in their giftedness, and then allowed them to serve in their giftedness.*

*Christian Schwarz, in his book, Natural Church Growth, as a result of this study, writes, “When Christians serve in their area of giftedness, they generally function less in their own strength, and more in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, ordinary people can accomplish the extraordinary.”*

*And then he writes, as a researcher, “The interesting corollary result of our research was the discovery that probably no factor influences the contentedness of Christians more than where they’re utilizing their gift. Our data demonstrated a highly significant relationship between gift*

*orientation, my personal ministry involvement matching my gifts, and people’s joy in living. None of the eight characteristics showed nearly as much influence on both the personal life of the believer, or the impact of the church, than gift-oriented ministry.”*

<https://livingontheedge.org/broadcast/how-to-develop-your-spiritual-gift-for-kingdom-impact/>

* This is from a cessationist :)

***Why do people who have tasted the gifts not continue in them?***

* Witness abuse
* Distraction
* Novelty wears off
* Disappointment or failure
* Pain
* Compromise

***How do we continue in these gifts?***

*12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example [e]of those who believe. 13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. 14* ***Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you****, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance* ***with the laying on of hands*** *by the [f]presbytery. 15* ***Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them****, so that your* ***progress will be evident to all****. 16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching;* ***persevere in these things****, for as you do this you will [g]ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.* ***1 Timothy 4:12-16***

*Let's go verse by verse:*

12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example [e]of those who believe.

*In charismatic space, unfortunately, we have too many believers who want the gifts of the Spirit with far too little emphasis on the fruits of the Spirit and the character He wants to produce in you*

* Power and purity matter
* That means biblical morality has to matter to me

**Speech**

* James 3:1-12
* Most of these gifts have a speech element
* 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for **edification according to the need of the moment**, so that it will **give grace** to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption - **Ephesians 4:29-30**

**Conduct**

**Love**

* Refer to motivation and edification class

**Faith**

* Rom 12:6 NASB95 - 6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, [each of us is to exercise them accordingly:] if prophecy, according to **the proportion of his faith;**
  + Relative amount
  + Grow and continue? Increase faith: seeing, hearing, exposure
    - Romans 10:17 - So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

**Purity**

* Motivations, reasoning, exposure
* Keep heart, eye-gate, and ear-gate clean as possible
* Thought life, catching things quickly - keeps you sharp
  + Psalm 5:3 TPT
  + The inner court, prayer life
  + Surrender

**OF those who believe, not *to***

* Not a special person thing, believer thing

**On the flip side, don’t use character as a scapegoat for not pursuing these things full steam ahead**

* Common cessationist argument
* Things are not at war with each other, they are meant to both be there
* *Just because fruit takes precedent over gifts doesn’t mean gifts don’t matter* 
  + In the context of a church already clearly zealous v.12, he told them to zealously go after more
* Corinth didn’t have an absence of power but an absence of maturity
* The answer is not to stop the use of gifts, but to use them properly

13 Until I come, **give attention** to the public reading of **Scripture**, to exhortation and teaching.

**Give Attention**

* Y’all care about this - you’re here
* NASB 1995 He who gives attention to the word will find good - pro 16:20

**Scripture**, to exhortation and teaching

* The Word can’t go to the wayside
  + Sword of the Spirit is held up by the belt of truth

**1 Corinthians 1:4-7**

*TPT Made Wonderfully Rich*

*4I am always thanking my God for you because he has given you such free and open access to his grace through your union with Jesus, the Messiah. 5In him you have been made extravagantly rich in every way. You have been endowed with a wealth of inspired utterance and the riches that come from your intimate knowledge of him. 6For the reality of the truth of Christ is seen among you and strengthened through your experience of him. 7So now you aren’t lacking any spiritual gift as you eagerly await the unveiling of the Lord Jesus, the Anointed One*

14 **Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you**, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with **the laying on of hands by the [f]presbytery.**

**Do not neglect**

* Why say it if it wasn’t a possibility? A temptation even?
* *Negligent, careless, make light of*

Romans 12:6 New American Standard Bible

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, ***each of us is to exercise them accordingly***

1 Peter 4:10 New American Standard Bible

As each one has received a special gift, **employ it** in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

**“the laying on of hands…” - Impartation**

* Romans 1:11New American Standard Bible (NASB)
* 11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be [a]established;
  + taught, wrote - but there was something that could only be transferred by laying on of hands
  + There can actually be a transfer in the Spirit through laying on of hands
* Pneumatikos charisma
* Can help to receive the gift AND grow it

15 **Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them**, so that your **progress will be evident to all**.

**Take Pains, Be Absorbed**

*Meletaō*

1. to care for, attend to carefully, **practise**
2. to meditate i.e. to devise, contrive
   1. used of the Greeks of the meditative pondering and the practice of orators and rhetoricians

* Hebrews 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who **because of practice** have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

**Practice when stakes are low**

* While there can be set aside times, can’t only be set-aside times

**Absorbed**

* Freshness, *presentness* to it
* You are too busy when you can't be absorbed

So that your **progress will be evident to all**

* BINGO
  + Evident - made manifest

“These things” is the *whole* list.

**Pt. 6**

2 Timothy 1: 6 For this reason I remind you to **kindle afresh the gift of God** which is in you through the **laying on of my hands**. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of [f]timidity, but of power and love and [g]discipline.

**AD 64 1st Timothy, AD 66 2nd Timothy - Kindle Afresh!**

The biggest gap is seven years; typical dating is two. Either way, advice after years is the same, *kindle afresh!*

**Anazōpyreō:**

to kindle up, inflame one's mind, strength, zeal

a. the remains of a fire, embers;

b. that by which the fire is kindled anew or lighted up, a pair of bellows);

to kindle anew, rekindle, **resuscitate,** [yet on the force of ἀνα- cf. Ellicott on 2 Tim. as below]; generally tropical, to kindle up, **inflame, one's mind,** strength, zeal

**FIRE**

*Get on fire for God and men will come and see you burn.* - John Wesley

**Aspects of fire building:** Tinder, kindling, fuel

* kindling is not only to help start the fire but is meant to be kept with us to keep it going

**Whether kindle or stir up, it’s about working with a fire that’s there**

- do it before it wanes, necessary

- Act like you did when you first received your spiritual gift.

- The appeal is preventative rather than corrective

IT IS AN INTENTIONAL ACT!

*Maturity, and full-on raging fire, come from a life continually kindled before the fire dies down*

OUR TENDENCY

*We tend to inflame for a time, it wanes, and then we wonder if God's "done for now," "remember when?"*

**General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, once sent this message to those under him:**

The tendency of fire is to go out; ***watch the fire on the altar of your heart.***

Anyone who has prepared a campfire for warming or cooking is fully aware that the coals need to be stirred up occasionally. As long as the coals are glowing, they can be stirred up into a full blaze.

The agency of man himself is needful to keep the religion of the heart warm and glowing. However rich the gifts which God has bestowed upon us, they do not grow of their own accord, but need to be cultivated by our own personal care." **(Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible)**

***The point is, the fire is meant to continue, if you continue to kindle, the fire doesn't go out***

**Present Tense - continual - the kindle word**

Constant desire… “these signs shall follow those that (continually) believe. Mark 16

Keep coming, keep drinking - John 7:37

*It’s in the present tense meaning continuous action. Keep kindling the gift afresh or make it your aim to keep it at full flame continually.*

\*\*\*Don’t get the idea that what starts in the Spirit is perfected by the flesh, either

***Gifts are Given as He wills (1 Cor 12:11), Grown as you do***

* Go after it: 1 Corinthians 12:31, 14:1, 14:12, 14:39
* You have biblical permission to run full steam ahead after these gifts - not only that, admonished to

**Nearly Exhaustive List of Contributing Factors**

**Impartation**

**Increase Faith**

* seeing, hearing, exposure
* Testimonies, teacher

**Employ, Exercise**

* Simple obedience
* Gifts grow through stewardship

**Absorb**

**Submit to people who are farther ahead than you**

* Imitating universal principles without emulating personality or methods
* Ask, follow people that are doing it well

**Character without compromise**

* Repent quickly

**Grow in Understanding of Grace**

* you’ll grow in the gifts - remove barriers to operating in them
* *Charis*mata - find the gifts, you find grace nearby
* Law mentality will kill your zeal and desire for the gifts quickly

**Don’t internalize it**

* navel gaze or puff up
* Reflect without getting introspective
* *If it’s really a gift from God, won’t miss* - Lie

**Thankfulness increases everything it touches**

**Surrender**

* Interior prayer life

**Get rid of bad beliefs**

* one way is **to not remain ignorant**
  + 1 Corinthians 12:1 - 12 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.
  + **ignorant**
  + Unaware - Outline of Biblical Usage [?]
  + -**to be ignorant, not to know**
  + -**not to understand, unknown**
  + -to err or sin through mistake, to be wrong
  + Strong’s Definitions [?](Strong’s Definitions Legend)
  + ἀγνοέω agnoéō, ag-no-eh'-o; from G1 (as a negative particle) and G3539; not to know (through lack of information or intelligence); by implication, to ignore (through disinclination - a **reluctance or lack of enthusiasm**.):—(be) ignorant(-ly), not know, not understand, unknown.
  + *the time has passed for ignoring these gifts.*
  + ***You can choose to be dull about this, but I wouldn’t recommend it - or you will become less useful in an increasingly spiritual world***

**Stop seeing it as optional!!**

Last, but certainly not least…

**One way to grow is to ASK**

* People stopped asking through much of church history

**Some Closing Thoughts**

Many have the desire, but not enough to actually pursue

* If all the churches that said they believed in Healing, etc.

**I’ve found the more desire, more absorbed, kindled, more when I employ it grace is given**

*Imagine if we all earnestly desired, absorbed ourselves in, kindled and employed the gifts as stewards of the Grace of God to serve the body?*

People often share their frustration with not yet having identified their spiritual gift. Some are so obsessed with making this discovery that they are virtually paralyzed from participating in ministry and serving others until such time as they can confidently put their finger on precisely what the Holy Spirit has imparted to them. My recommendation is that Christians should stop this persistent, introspective navel gazing and simply step out and begin to love and serve others in concrete acts of ministry. In doing so, I'm confident your gift will find you. - Sam Storms