

## Stir Up The Gift Of God

*"... For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands ..."* (2 Tim. 1:6).

Timothy had a gift from God. What that gift was we are not expressly told, but Paul had urged him in his earlier letter, *"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery"* (1 Tim. 4:14). Combining these two passages we learn that 1) Timothy had twice had hands laid on him; once by the presbytery, once by Paul; 2) that the gift Timothy possessed was one of prophecy; and, 3) that the actual gift came to Timothy by the laying on of Paul's hands. It is fruitless and profitless to argue the exact nature of Timothy's gift. It ever remains in the realm of speculation, not revelation. But, equally true is the fact that we should not dispute the truth that the gift, whatever it was, came through the laying on of Paul's hands.

It was also true that the gift Timothy possessed was something he had power to exercise or suppress. He was not to neglect it; he was to stir it up. This agrees perfectly with the truth that men controlled the Spirit's work in them. *"The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets"* (1 Cor. 14:32). It is also true that Timothy's gift was miraculous. It came to him by the laying on of the apostles' hands. Our gifts today may be by nature or inheritance or by development. Some people just naturally can sing; they may improve their singing by training, but if one has the voice of a frog it is not likely he can develop it into the voice of a bird! But sometimes our gifts are the result of practice, development, and study. An orator may have a gift of speaking well, but training and the combination of significant facts, will develop him into a statesman.

We are to use the gifts we have. While the comparison to the various members of a body in 1 Corinthians 12 is first and foremost an analogy of the various spiritual gifts the Spirit conveyed on members in the ancient church; it is an undisputed truth that the different members in the physical body differ in function but each contribute something of value to the well-being of the whole body.

So it is in the body of Christ. We can't all be an eye. Suppose every member was an eye. How could the body survive without a mouth, hand, or foot? We can't all sing, teach, or preach, but each can do something and whatever gift it is we have, we must not neglect it; we must stir it up. Paul's instructions to Timothy related to a supernatural gift the young disciple possessed. It is

still appropriate, however, to apply those same words to us that we use what natural gifts we have to advance the cause of our Lord.

Jim McDonald