

Understanding Romans 1:11 in Biblical and Theological Context

Key Verse:

“I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong.”

—Romans 1:11 (NIV)

Question:

What was the “spiritual gift” Apostle Paul promised the believers in Rome, and how was he planning to give it?

1. Singular, Not Plural: A Specific Gift in View

In Romans 1:11, Paul says “a spiritual gift” (singular), not “spiritual gifts” (plural). This distinction is important. He wasn’t promising to distribute various spiritual gifts like prophecy, tongues, or healing as mentioned in **1 Corinthians 12:4-11**, because those gifts come directly from the **Holy Spirit**, not from a human minister.

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.”

—1 Corinthians 12:4 (NIV)

Theologically, Paul understood and taught that **spiritual gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit as He wills** (1 Cor. 12:11). Therefore, Paul could not “give” spiritual gifts in that sense. So what did he mean?

2. Paul Meant to Bless Through His Own Spiritual Gift

What Paul was really saying is that he wanted to **use the gift God had already placed in him** to bless and strengthen the Roman believers. His goal was not to transfer his gift but to *minister through it* for their spiritual benefit.

This understanding aligns with Paul’s broader theology of the **Body of Christ**, where each member has different gifts and is called to use them for mutual edification.

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith.”

—*Romans 12:6 (NIV)*

“To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”

—*1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV)*

So, when Paul said he longed to impart a spiritual gift, he meant he wanted to **minister using his apostolic and teaching gifts**, strengthening their faith and deepening their understanding of the gospel.

3. “Imparting” as Serving Others Through Your Gift

The act of imparting is not mystical. It means allowing the gift within you to benefit others. When someone teaches, encourages, or prays with

healing power, they are “imparting” their spiritual gift.

“If it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement.”

—*Romans 12:7-8 (NIV)*

Paul was practicing what he preached: use your gift to build others up in the faith. This is not a one-time transfer but an ongoing work of ministry.

4. Paul’s Broader Mission: All Peoples, All Nations

Paul’s desire to impart his gift wasn’t limited to the Romans. He had the same passion for Gentiles, Jews, Greeks, and non-Greeks:

“I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you... in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish.”

—*Romans 1:13-14 (NIV)*

This reflects Paul’s theology of **universal mission**—a calling to preach and build up all people through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

5. What About You? Are You Using Your Gift?

Every believer in Christ has received at least one spiritual gift (1 Peter 4:10, Romans 12:6-8). These gifts are not meant to be hidden but used to serve others and bring them closer to Christ.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

—*1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)*

You may not be called like Paul, but your gift matters. Whether it's encouragement, teaching, giving, or showing mercy—*use it*.

Conclusion:

Paul's statement in Romans 1:11 is a beautiful reminder that spiritual gifts are meant to **strengthen others**, not glorify ourselves. Imparting a gift means **serving others through what God has placed in you**.

So ask yourself today:

Am I using my spiritual gift to build others in Christ?

May the Lord bless you as you walk in your calling.

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