

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Introduction:

In 1896 a Southern Baptist by the name of Richard Spurling declared that the restoration of the first century A.D. gifts — including those of tongues and healing — had occurred at a revival meeting in North Carolina. In 1901, students of Charles Parham at the Bethel Bible College, Topeka, Kansas, announced they had received “the baptism” and had spoken in tongues. In 1907 William Seymour, a black Nazarene preacher, founded what was to become the world famous “Azusa Street Revival” in Los Angeles, California.

Thus began Pentecostalism, rooted in the “Holiness” movement, issuing in a number of disunity denominations, and characterized by Arminian theology, sensationalism, the “gift” of tongues and healing, and nervous breakdowns and suicide. This movement found little acceptance amongst the mailing denomination, and by the 1950’s was in a state of decline.

It was at this time, under the leadership of Demos Shakarian, a wealthy Californian, that the “Full Gospel Business Men’s association” was formed. This movement adopted tactics of infiltration the established mainline denomination, promoting their views on the “gifts,” and financing and editorializing what was, in the 1960’s and 1970’s, to explode into the Charismatic Movement.

Today, every major denomination in Christendom, including the Roman Catholic ‘Church’ is deeply involved in this movement. A number of cults such as the Christadelphians and Mormons along with several non-Christian religions, including Jews, are also involved.

Consequently there is a great focus on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the area of Spiritual Gifts today.

The Book of I Corinthians, chapters 12, 13, and 14 deals with the subject of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In considering this subject it is important to keep in mind the following:

1. The Book of I Corinthians was primarily addressed to “the church of God which is at Corinth.” This was a literal, local, visible, assembly of baptized believers — I Corinthians 1:2.
2. The Book of I Corinthians was also a circular letter, addressed to believers associated with “every place” — i.e. who were in other New Testament churches.
3. The Subject of I Corinthians is ‘divisions’ and unity’ — I Corinthians 1:10. It is not a complimentary letter.
4. The occasion for writing I Corinthians was 55 A.D. — 25 years after the events on the Day of Pentecost.

I. General Facts Concerning Spiritual Gifts

- A. Spiritual Gifts are God-Given Abilities for Service.
Ephesians 4:7, 8

1. Talents.

Talents are certain natural abilities, which need to be enhanced by training and education, and may be used in many ways — for good or bad.

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2. Gifts.

Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities to serve the Lord in the church. They are given by the Holy Spirit — I Corinthians 12:4, 7.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is essential for effective Christian service, and these gifts are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

B. Spiritual Gifts are Sovereignly Bestowed.

I Corinthians 12:11

The bestowing of spiritual gifts is NOT the result of spirituality, but as the Holy Spirit Himself wills.

Since these gifts are given according to the sovereign will of God, there is no purpose in seeking or praying for a certain gift.

(I Corinthians 12:31 is in the church-body context and does not apply to individuals.)

C. Every Church Member has a Spiritual Gift.

I Corinthians 12:7, 11; Ephesians 4:7; I Peter 4:10

No one misses out! However, note the following:

1. Every Believer has already received a Spiritual Gift.

I Corinthians 12:7 is in the complete tense. The gift is received at the moment of receiving the Holy Spirit — at the instant of salvation.

2. Not every member has the Same Gift.

I Corinthians 12:29, 30

3. All Gifts are necessary.

I Corinthians 12:14-26

Some gifts may appear more noticeable, even more desirable — but all gifts are equally necessary.

D. The Sole Purpose of a Spiritual Gift is to Edify a Church.

The big problem in the church at Corinth was the flaunting of spiritual gifts as a matter of pride and 'spirituality.'

The only right motive is "edification," "profit," "enhancing," and "building up" a church.

I Corinthians 12:7; 14:12; Ephesians 4:12-16

E. There are Three Distinct Areas to the Study of Spiritual Gifts.

1. Motivation — Gifts

I Corinthians 12:4

The basic ability which God places within each member to express His love

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Listed in: Romans 12:3-9

2. Ministries — Administrations
I Corinthians 12:5

The opportunities for service in the church which enable the exercise of the motivation.

Listed in" I Corinthinians 12:27-31; Ephesians 4:11

3. Manifestations — Operations
I Corinthians 12:6

The actual fruit in the lives of others to whom we minister.

Listed in: I Corinthians 12:7-11

When we exercise our MOTIVATION (Romans 12) through our MINISTRY, the Holy Spirit determines what MANIFESTATION will benefit those in the church body best.

We are not to seek after manifestations, but to concentrate on our motivations.

- F. The Possession of a Spiritual Gift Does Not Means "Spirituality."
The church at Corinth had within its membership every spiritual gift (I Corinthians 1:7), but was at the same time carnal, schismatic, and full of serious problems. I Corinthians 1:11; 3:1-4.

Notice that while the church had every gift, none of the members had all of the gifts.

- G. The Exercise of All Spiritual Gifts is to be Controlled by the Fruit of the Spirit in the Life of Each Believer.
The fruit of the Spirit is exemplified by the first item — love! and this is the message of I Corinthians 13:1-3.

- H. Spiritual Gifts are to be Discerned.
A spiritual gift may be discerned through:

1. The Word of God.
Studying the Word of God and hearing it preached will enabled a believer to discern his gift. — Romans 1:11; 15:29
2. The Presbytery.
I Timothy 4:14

A pastor often discerns the spiritual gifts within the membership of his church.

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In this case, Timothy's gift came through prophecy — preaching, and was recognized in him by the pastors of his church. The 'laying on of hands' was their symbolic recognition of, and identification with, that gift.

I. Spiritual Gifts are to be "Stirred Up" and Used.

According to I Timothy 4:14, a spiritual gift can be neglected.

God's intent is that it be "stirred up," II Timothy 1:6, through searching the Word of God, giving "thyself wholly" to it, and using it to the glory of God, I Peter 4:11.

According to Romans 12:6-8, God expects us to concentrate on exercising our gifts in the church. This is seen in the words, "let us" and "let him."

J. Joy Comes in Exercising the Spiritual Gift.

The Greek word which is translated "gift" in our English Bible is 'charisma.' This comes from another word, "char," which means JOY. (The word "charis" means "grace.")

Thus we see spiritual gifts in the light of God graciously giving us the desire to do His will — Philippians 2:13.

K. In Studying the Subject of Spiritual Gifts, the Word of God takes Precedence over "Experience."

Isaiah 8:20. If experience is our basis then we logically have to accept all experiences.

II. A Portfolio of Spiritual Gifts

It is not certain whether the Word of God lists all of the spiritual gifts, but a list of those mentioned in the New Testament is compiled from the following Scriptures:

I Corinthians 12; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11; I Timothy 4:14; and I Peter 4:10-11.

A. Bible Listings of Spiritual Gifts.

1. Wisdom — I Corinthians 12:8
2. Knowledge — I Corinthians 12:8
3. Faith — I Corinthians 12:9
4. Healing — I Corinthians 12:9, 28
5. Miracles — I Corinthians 12:10, 28
6. Prophecy — I Corinthians 12:10; Romans 12:6; I Peter 4:11.
7. Discernment — I Corinthians 12:10
8. Tongues — I Corinthians 12:10, 28
9. Interpretation — I Corinthians 12:10
10. Helps — I Corinthians 12:28
11. Governments (Ruling) — I Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:8
12. Ministry — Romans 12:7; I Peter 4:11
13. Teaching — Romans 12:7
14. Exhortation — Romans 12:8
15. Giving — Romans 12:8
16. Mercy — Romanse 12:8

B. Bible Listing of Gifted Men.

Ephesians 4:11

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1. Apostles

The office of “apostle” has ceased.

Although the Greek word ‘apostolos’ means “sent one,” or “missionary,” the Biblical qualifications for the office of apostle were that they must have been:

- a) An Eye-Witness of the Resurrected Christ. — Acts 1:22; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:8.
- b) Audibly called to be an Apostle by the Lord Jesus Christ. — Matthew 10:5; Romans 1:1

For this reason we do not have apostles today. There is no such thing as “Apostolic Succession.”

2. Prophets

The office of “Prophet” was two-fold.

The “fore-telling” aspect of the New Testament prophet ceased with the completion of the New Testament Scriptures.

According to Romans 16:26, the human writers of the New Testament were prophets.

3. Evangelists

An Evangelist primarily establishes or builds up a church NUMERICALLY through Gospel preaching. (Acts 8:5-12, 26-40; 21:8). He is a “Gospeller” — or a missionary.

4. Pastors and Teachers

A Pastor primarily builds up an established church SPIRITUALLY through preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27-28; I Peter 5:1-3)

According to Ephesians 2:20, the temporary offices of apostles and prophets were FOUNDATIONAL — whereas the permanent offices of evangelists and pastors/teachers are FUNCTIONAL. (These offices are not mutually exclusive — a pastor is to “do the work of an evangelist.” — II Timothy 4:5.)

III. The Permanence of the Spiritual Gifts

At the center of the “Charismatic debate” stands the question of whether all of the Spiritual gifts found in the New Testament are available for today.

The Bible clearly teaches that at least some spiritual gifts were temporary. I Corinthians 13:8-10.

Spiritual gifts may be grouped into 2 categories:

A. “Sign Gifts” — Passing and Passed.

1. The Purpose of Sign Gifts.

According to Mark 16:20 and Hebrews 2:4, “signs” were given for the purpose of accreditation.

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They either accredited God's man, Exodus 4:1-9; John 20:30-31; Acts 2:22; II Corinthians 12:11-12; or God's Message, Mark 16:20; Acts 4:29-30.

2. The Provision of Sign Gifts.

One of the characteristics of the Jewish heart is the need for a sign. — I Corinthians 1:22 "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom"

See also: Exodus 4:30-31; 31:13; Numbers 14:11; Judges 6:17; I Samuel 10:7-9; Isaiah 7:11, 14; Ezekiel 4:3; Matthew 12:38-39; 24:3, 30; Mark 8:11-12; Luke 2:13, 34; I Corinthians 14:22.

A study of the "sign gifts" in the New Testament reveals two things:

- a) Jews were always present.
- b) An Apostle was always present.

3. The Profile of Sign Gifts.

Mark 16:17-18 catalogs four sign gifts.

These are: casting out devils, speaking in tongues, taking up deadly serpents (Miracles), and healing.

- a) The Prophecy of the Lord has been fulfilled.
Each of the signs mentioned here have been fulfilled in the Book of Acts — Acts 16:18; 2:4; 28:3-6; 3:6-8.

There is no warrant for seeking any further fulfillment of this passage.

- b) We may eliminate these gifts from the Portfolio.
The gifts of healing, miracles, tongues (and interpretation,) may be omitted from the listing above on the basis that sign gifts were temporary.

4. The Passing of Sign Gifts

According to I Corinthians 13:8, "tongues shall cease".

The gift of tongues is one the sign gifts — thus we see that sign gifts were temporary.

- a) Signs were specifically for the nation of Israel.
- b) According to Micah 7:15, signs would be seen only when Israel was in its land.
- c) The sign of "tongues" was a specific warning of imminent judgment upon Israel — Deuteronomy 28:49, 64; Isaiah 28:11; 33:19; Jeremiah 5:15; I Corinthians 14:21-22.
- d) In 70 A.D. this judgment came. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and the nation dispersed, no longer in the land. There is no Biblical record of any sign after this date. When the sign was fulfilled, the sign ceased.

5. The Peril with Sign Gifts

There is an extreme danger in seeking after the sign gifts today. This is because Satan is also able to produce "signs and wonders" — Exodus 7:10-12, 22; 8:7,

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18; Mark 13:21-23; II Corinthians 11:13-15; II Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:13-14. Satan is well able to provide what is sought.

B. "Serving Gifts" — Permanent and Profitable

Romans 12 presents 7 spiritual gifts which are available today for service within each church.

1. The Gift of Prophecy — Romans 12:6

a) Definition

Prophecy must be understood as being two-fold in its Biblical concept — fore-telling and forth-telling.

The foretelling aspect of prophecy has ceased, I Corinthians 13:8. It ceased when "that which is perfect is come" — i.e. the "more sure word of prophecy" known as the Word of God, II Peter 1:19-21.

The Spiritual gift of prophecy today is the motivation to proclaim the Word of God, to speak out against sin and error.

It is a God-given ability to be persuasive in preaching the Word of God, to be able to use the Word of God to bring to light things concealed, to be able to bring a man's conscience to the Light of God's Presence.

b) Disposition. — Romans 12:9

A proclaimer must have love without hypocrisy, devising that which is evil, and loving that which is good.

c) Demonstration.

(1) Peter — Acts 2:14-40; 3:12-26; 5:3-11

(2) Stephen — Acts 7

(3) Philip — Acts 8:5-40; 21:8

(4) Paul — Acts 9:20; I Timothy 2:7

2. Gift of Ministry — Romans 12:7

a) Definition

The gift of ministry is the motivation to demonstrate love by helping and serving others through meeting physical and practical needs.

It is a God-given ability to detect needs within a congregation and to do something positive to meet them.

b) Disposition — Romans 12:10

A servant must have a genuine affection for others, be able to demonstrate brotherly responsibility, and be willing to allow others to take the credit.

c) Demonstration.

(1) The Deacons — Acts 6:1-7

(2) Dorcas — Acts 9:36-39

(3) John Mark — Acts 13:5

(4) Phebe — Romans 16:1-2

(5) Aquilla and Priscilla — Romans 16:3-4

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- (6) Mary — Romans 16:6
- (7) Urbane — Romans 16:9
- (8) Stephanus — I Corinthians 16:15
- (9) Epaphroditus — Philippians 2:25
- (10) Archippus — Colossians 4:17

3. The Gift of Teaching — Romans 12:7

a) Definition

The gift of teaching is the motivation to present the truth of God's Word clearly and precisely.

It is the God-given ability to engage in research and detailed study of the Word of God, and to both accumulate and categorize knowledge.

b) Disposition — Romans 12:11

A teacher must be diligent in study, fervent in spirit, and do his work as unto the Lord rather than men.

c) Demonstration

- (1) Apollos — Acts 18:24-28
- (2) All Pastors — I Timothy 3:2.

4. The Gift of Exhorting — Romans 12:8

a) Definition

The gift of exhortation is the motivation to encourage, stimulate, and prompt others in the church to spiritual growth and experience.

It is the God-given ability to get alongside other Christians with the Word of God and encourage them to pursue spiritual growth and a Scriptural course of conduct.

b) Disposition — Romans 12:12

An exhorter must be able to see hope in and for other, be patient with slow progress, and persistent in praying for others.

c) Demonstration

Barnabas — Acts 11:23

5. The Gift of Giving — Romans 12:8

a) Definition

The gift of giving is the motivation to gain assets and share them with others in and for the work of the Lord.

It is the God-given ability to give, to be able to make quick decisions regarding the immediate needs of others, and to entrust personal assets to others for the furtherance of their spiritual ministry.

b) Disposition — Romans 12:13

A giver must take a genuine interest in the needs of saints and strangers, giving to their necessities.

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- c) Demonstration
Titus — II Corinthians 8:15-24
- 6. The Gift of Ruling — Romans 12:8
 - a) Definition
The gift of ruling is the motivation to coordinate and lead the activities of others in the accomplishment of common goals.

It is the God-given ability to lead, to identify objectives, and to help those involved in a task to accomplish them.
 - b) Disposition — Romans 12:14
A ruler must be able to take criticism, and be able to do what he can to make others happy and spiritually prosperous.
 - c) Demonstration
James — Acts 15:13-21
- 7. The Gift of Mercy — Romans 12:8
 - a) Definition
The gift of mercy is the motivation to identify with and share in the sufferings and joys of others as a comforter.

It is the God-given ability to empathize with the misfortunes and miseries of others, to mentally and emotionally relate to their needs, and be able to bring comfort through the Word of God.
 - b) Disposition — Romans 12:15
The merciful must be cheerful and uplifting, being ready in mind to share the happiness of those who are happy and the grief of those in sorrow, with promptness.

Note: Every church member is expected to perform all the above actives.

- 1. Declaring Truth — Mark 16:15
- 2. Serving — Galatians 5:13; Colossians 3:23-24
- 3. Teaching — Colossians 3:16
- 4. Exhorting — Hebrews 3:13; 10:25
- 5. Giving — Matthew 10:8; Luke 6:38
- 6. Ruling — Proverbs 16:32; 17:2
- 7. Mercy — Luke 10:37; Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:12