

SPIRITUAL GIFTS – PART ONE

The Gifts of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:1

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant...

Key Scriptures:

- 1 Corinthians 12
- Ephesians 4:7-16
- Romans 12:1-8
- 1 Peter 4:7-11

Introduction

Just before Christ left, after spending about 40 days with them, after His resurrection, going through the scriptures, He commissioned them to go out to the whole world and preach the Good News of the Kingdom, baptise and disciple those who believe and then disciple the nations.

However, He asked His disciples not to go immediately, but to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would empower them to fulfil the commission given them by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:4, 8

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me... But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The Role of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit fulfils several roles in the believer’s life, some of which are:

1. The Holy Spirit affirms us as children (Sons) of God – *Galatians 4:6-7; Romans 8:15-17*
2. The Holy Spirit teaches us and guides us into all truth – *John 14:26; John 16:13*
3. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us. . This means He sets us apart for God, cleanses us and puts us in order so that we can more truly show forth the love of God and the nature of Jesus. This process of sanctification occurs mainly in the soul - the mind, the will and the emotions
4. The Holy Spirit, through the work of sanctification, produces the fruit of the Spirit in us – *Galatians 5:22,23*
5. The Holy Spirit empowers us – *1 Corinthians 2:4, 1 Corinthians 4:20*

One major way in which the Holy Spirit empowers us is by bestowing special gifts upon the believer. These are called spiritual gifts

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts, therefore, are the supernatural graces or endowments which individual Believers, as well as the Corporate Church, need to fulfil the mission of the Church. These are gifts from God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, Himself.

- These Gifts are described throughout the New Testament, particularly, Paul's epistles, as well as Peter's.
- 1. The gifts are different and diverse but given but given to the Body of Christ by the Triune God – the same Spirit, Lord and God.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all ”

1 Corinthians 12:28

And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

- 2. The gifts work and operate in different ways but the same God works all of them in all Believers.
- 3. The gifts are given to individual members of the Body of Christ, to the profit of the entire Body. The manifestation of each gift of the Spirit is given for the common good of the entire Body of Christ, the Church.
- 4. The gifts are given as the Spirit of God decides.

Three Categories of Gifts

Everyone of these gifts is spiritual, as the gifts are given and administered by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:11

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

- 1. The Gifts of the Spirit
- 2. The Five-fold Ministry
- 3. The Ministerial Gifts

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

- 1 Corinthians 12 describes nine gifts, given by the Holy Spirit to Believers
- These gifts are exceptionally useful in evangelism and in every part of Christian ministry.
- In neglecting them, the church neglects an important God-ordained means for building God's kingdom on earth.

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

“For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.”

The Gifts

1. Word of Wisdom

The gift of Word of Wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in any particular situation. People with this gift receive insight into how knowledge may best be applied to specific needs and issues arising in the body of Christ.

- A word of wisdom supernaturally discloses the mind, purpose, way and will of God, in a particular situation. It is knowledge, supernaturally and divinely given and applied to produce results that edify and build.
- This Spirit-given wisdom provides the best solution for an issue, a conflict or a problem. It gives the best and most effective answer to a difficult question, the best way to act, or respond, in a problematic situation. It also gives the ability to apply practical knowledge in a very direct way.

Examples:

1. **Read:** Matthew 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11-12
2. James's speech at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:8-21
3. The story of King Solomon and the two women whose babies died (1 Kings 3:16-28).

2. Word of Knowledge

A word of knowledge is a supernatural revelation about a specific thing and often has to do with an immediate need. By the Holy Spirit, people with this gift supernaturally receive information of certain facts that only God could know about a given situation.

- Word of knowledge reveals information about both the past and present. It does not refer to natural knowledge that was gained through learning and experience. It is knowledge that could only be known by divine inspiration.
- These utterances have usually to do with human matters or problems, and are true and factual. The word of knowledge reveals the sovereignty and providence of God in a situation or a person's life.

Examples:

1. Jesus meeting Nathaniel – John 1:45-48

2. Peter displayed this gift in the story of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-4)
3. The story of Elisha and the king of Syria. Whenever he planned to go to war against Israel, Elisha would receive a word of knowledge from the Lord and warn the king of Israel. This frustrated the king of Syria – *2 Kings 6:8-12* (2 Kings 6:8-12)

- **Read: 2 Chronicles 1:10-13; Dan 5:12; Colossians 2:3**

3. Gift of Faith

- The Gift of Faith is different from the normal faith of the believer.

The Gift of Faith is the grace God gives to an individual to exercise extraordinary confidence in His word, will and purposes. It is the ability to act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief in His ability to fulfil them. People with this gift, in a given situation, display a strong, supernatural belief, conviction or certainty, not reached by human reasoning or feelings. This type of faith causes things to happen and God is glorified.

- This gift is a special release of supernatural faith for a miracle or for the impossible to be made possible. Those who possess it believe God is such a way that God honours their word as His own and miraculously brings it to pass.
- This kind of faith knows that with God all things are possible and that everything is possible for him that believes. This faith knows no doubt that the thing that is declared or prophesied, will be manifested.
- There are many instances in the Bible in which we see the gift of faith in operation. The gift of faith is often accompanied by the gifts of healings and the working of miracles.

Examples:

1. Mary exercised this gift when she responded "*Be it done unto me according to your word.*" – Luke 1:26-38
2. Examples of people with the gift of faith are listed in Hebrews 11
3. Read: 1 Kings 17:1-7 (Elijah declared that there would be no rain); 1 Kings 17:7-16 (Elijah and the widow of Zarephath); Acts 3

4. Gifts of Healings

This is the supernatural ability to supernaturally heal diverse kinds of diseases and infirmities without natural means of any sort. They are healings that God performs supernaturally through the believer who possesses the gift. People who operate the gifts of healings have the supernatural ability to perform diverse kinds of healings.

- The gift of healings operate in diverse ways including the blind seeing, deaf hearing, lame walking, mute speaking and new limbs and organs growing.

Examples:

1. Jesus healed the sick - John 9:1-7; Luke 5:17-26

2. Peter healed many, and even his shadow healed the sick - Acts 5:14-16; Acts 3:1-16
3. Paul - Acts 19:11-12; Acts 28:7-9

5. Gift of Discernment of Spirits

This is the ability to detect the true spirit – divine, demonic or human – behind the acts and manifestations taking place around us. It is an ability, given by the Holy Spirit, to discern the hidden source of spiritual power through which a person is thinking, speaking or/and acting. This gift exposes or reveals if a person is either acting out off his own spirit or through a demonic/evil spirit or through the Spirit of God.

- People with the gift of discernment of spirits are given supernatural insight into the spirit realm by the Holy Spirit. By the operation of this gift, we know the true source and nature of any supernatural manifestation, whether divine, human or satanic.
- The gift of discerning of spirits can also help us to deepen our perception of the workings of the true Spirit of God. We need this gift now, more than ever, as deception is rife, especially in the area of the prophetic.

Examples:

1. Peter and Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-4
2. Paul's encounter with the slave woman with the spirit of divination in Acts 16:16-19. She had been following them crying out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." Paul discerned the spirit in operation and cast it out.
 - **1 John 4:1-3** – *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that[a] Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world."*

6. Working of Miracles

The working of miracles is a manifestation of divine power to perform something that could not be done naturally. It operates by the dynamic force of the Holy Spirit against natural laws.

- A miracle is a sovereign act of the Spirit of God that works, irrespective of and against natural laws or orders. It is a supernatural intervention in the course of nature.
- People with the gift of miracles manifest exceptional powers, and in the Name of Jesus, perform things that cannot be ascribed to human power, strength, wisdom, intelligence, ability or performance.
- The purpose of this gift is to intervene in a natural process or condition, in order to show the supernatural power and might of God. The bible is packed with records and stories of miracles, which demonstrate the power and mercy of God. Jesus Himself worked many, many miracles.

Example:

- **Read:** Luke 5:1-11 – “Throw your net into the deep.” John 2:1-11 – Turning water into wine.
- Peter raises Dorcas from the dead – Acts 9:36-42
- Paul - Acts 19:11; Acts 28:3-6

7. Gift of Prophecy

To prophesy is to 'communicate a divine revelation or truth,' or 'communicate something that is hidden', or 'predict some future event.' The Hebrew word for prophesy - 'Naba' – originally means 'to bubble up' or 'let words flow in abundance,' or 'singing and speaking under divine inspiration,' and 'speaking as a madman.'

- The gift of prophecy, therefore, is the God-given ability to reveal and receive truth, and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner to bring understanding, correction, repentance, or edification. It is a sudden Spirit inspired insight that brings exhortation to the body of Christ.
- Joel prophesied that in the last days, this gift will be available to all believers, as part of the manifestation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Prophecy is divinely inspired utterance in a known tongue, and often operates in conjunction with words of wisdom and/or knowledge. This gift is different from the gift of word of knowledge. However, it can be combined with the gifts of wisdom, knowledge and discernment.

- The purpose of prophecy in the New Testament Church – 1 Corinthians 14:3
 - Edify (build up) the believers
 - Exhort the believers
 - Comfort/encourage the believers
- This is the gift that Paul encourages all believers to desire to have - 1 Corinthians 14:1
- Prophetic utterances must be evaluated and judged by other believers and must be in line with scripture – (1 Corinthians 14:3-4, 29-33)

Examples:

1. Philip had 4 daughters who prophesied - Acts 11:27-30
2. Various examples in the book of Acts

8. Different Kinds of Tongues

This is praying, speaking, uttering or singing in either a supernatural/heavenly language which has a specific message associated with it, or an earthly language that is unfamiliar to the speaker. The gift of different kinds of tongues operates in two ways:

1. As a supernatural utterance by the Holy Spirit in an heavenly language which no human mind can interpret, except by the Spirit. When this gift manifests as a prophetic utterance in a corporate gathering, it must be accompanied by the gift of interpretation of tongues for it to benefit the church.
2. As a supernatural utterance of an earthly language never learned by the speaker and not understood by the mind of the speaker. The hearer, however, understands what is being said because it is in their language, marvels at this and praises God.

Speaking in unknown tongues, combined with the gift of interpretation can be a powerful sign to an unbeliever that God is present and speaking to him – 1 Corinthians 14:22-25

Example: On the day of Pentecost, the disciples spoke in diverse tongues – Acts 2:1-13

9. Interpretation of tongues

This gift is connected to the gift of speaking in tongues. Speaking in unknown tongues is usually not understood by those present, except by the Spirit. However, the interpretation brings understanding.

It is the interpretation of the message of tongues so that a heavenly message may be given and understood by the hearers. People with the gift of interpretation, by the Holy Spirit, can supernaturally give the meaning of an utterance in other tongues. This interpretation is not an operation of the mind of the interpreter but the mind of the Spirit of God

How do I Operate or Manifest the Gifts?

1 Corinthians 14:1 - *“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy”*

1. Follow the way of love - let this be a lifestyle. Love and compassion towards others are a catalyst for the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit. Love personifies the entire fruit of the Spirit and demonstrates the presence of Jesus in our lives. All our desires and actions must be motivated by love for God and neighbour. The gifts will be activated if our desires are motivated by love.
2. Have a desire for the gifts of the Spirit, and just pray and ask God! The bible says, “Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened.” Therefore, ask God to stir up His gifts in you. Trust God to decide which gift to endow you with, but desire especially to prophecy, like Paul instructed.
3. Cultivate a lifestyle of prayer, worship and studying the word and living in obedience to God's word.
4. Since the gifts are for the Church in service, it is important that you actively engage in the assignment Jesus gave us in the Great Commission. Share the Gospel with others, serve in your local church and beyond, pray and intercede for others as instructed in 1 Timothy 2:1-3. The gifts will manifest as you serve the Lord.

5. Trust the Holy Spirit to lead and direct you, and when He does be obedient to Him. Obedience is another important key.
6. Exercise faith. Step out in faith and obedience to the leading and prompting of the Holy Spirit. Without faith we cannot receive anything from God.
7. It takes time to gain confidence, so, keep 'practicing' and stepping out in faith. If you step out and there is no manifestation, praise God, keep praying and wait for the next opportunity. If you make a mistake, take it to the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the right way.
8. Humility - remain humble, especially if you are graced with the power gifts. Remember that it is God who is working in and through you, to bring glory to none other than Himself.
9. Make yourself accountable to others, especially those who have spiritual oversight of you. Accept correction, especially, if given in line with the scriptures.
10. Give honour to the Holy Spirit in all that you do. Do not grieve Him, but honour and revere Him. He is God and He is Holy!
11. Give God ALL the glory. Thank Him! Praise Him.