

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Read *1 Cor 12:1* Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.

-Just as the Corinthian church did not understand spiritual gifts and the functions of the members of the Body of Christ; we are faced with the same challenges among Christians today.

Spiritual Gifts Defined and Listed

The word charisma, or charismata, (which means spiritual gift) is used to denote extraordinary gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon Christians to equip them for the service of the church. Various lists of the charismata are given in scripture, none of which seem to be exhaustive.

The Holy Spirit manifesting Himself through each believer in a unique manner which results in the edification of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 7). The Holy Spirit performs and does the work through the believer - but he uses the believer's body, mind, energy and faculties in the process of accomplishing the work.

Read 1 Cor 12:7-10 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

Message of Knowledge - is an ability to know a fact or truth about a person or situation revealed directly by the Holy Spirit. (ex - John 4:16-18 ; Acts 5:1-3)

Message of Wisdom - is special illumination that enables one in a specific instance to grasp divine insight regarding a fact, situation, or context. This gift is useful in directing the Body in what to do next; in making God's will known. (ex - Acts 6:10 ; 15:13-20)

Faith - as a gift is an extraordinary confidence in God that is unshakable by situations, pain, apparent failure, or ridicule. (ex - Luke 7:9 ; Acts 6:5 ; 27:21-34)

Gifts of Healing - is a gift which enables one to function as an instrument of God's healing grace in the lives of hurting people. The gifts of healings (double plural in the Greek text) include miraculous healing of the body, the mind, the emotions, and relationships. (ex Acts 9:34)

Miraculous Powers - the gifted person is able to cast out demons, show a supernatural sign to unbelievers, or perform a public healing--all to the glory of God. Those with this gift will be humble, broken people, full of the fear of God. (ex - Acts 8:7,13 ; 19:11-12)

Prophecy - is speaking what God wants said with clarity, creativity and power. The primary ministry in this gift is not prediction, but in confronting people with the truth about God and man--with conviction and repentance as the result. (ex - Acts 13:1 ; 15:32 ; 21:10)

Distinguishing Between Spirits - is the heightened ability to determine whether the source behind a teaching, problem or action is divine, merely human, or satanic. (ex - Acts 16:16-18)

Tongues - enable some Christians (1 Cor 12:30) to praise God either in another language not learned (Acts 2) or in ecstatic utterance which is not an earthly language (1 Cor 14). This is separate from one's personal prayer language as it relates to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Interpretation of Tongues - is required if speaking in tongues is exercised publicly in a loud voice. This gift allows one to declare to others the intent or meaning of the public utterance, so that the entire Body is built up. (1 Cor 14)

Questions -

1. What is the difference between a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom?

-knowledge pertains to the revelation of facts, wisdom is the application of knowledge.

2. What is the difference between Prophecy and Tongues with Interpretation.
-none - 1 Cor 14 equates tongues combined with interpretation to prophecy.
3. Have you experienced any of these gifts in action?
-let them share, then you give an example or two.

Purposes of Spiritual Gifts:

1. To Glorify God Read Ps 77:13-14 *Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? 14 You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples.*

2. To Edify (build up) the Body of Christ (the church) Read 1 Cor 14:26 *What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.*

Questions-

1. Do all believers have a spiritual gift(s)?
-Yes, all have at least one gift. We believe however, that while some may be particularly gifted in one area, say prophecy, they are not limited to that one gift.
-We see many in the early church operating in multiple gifts. Spirit-filled Believers can expect **any gift** to be available as the need arises.
2. Give some examples of how the operation of spiritual gifts could strengthen the church.
-for example, Healings will encourage and strengthen everyone's faith.
3. **Evangelism** - to demonstrate the power and reality of God Read 1 Cor 2:4-5 *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

Questions-

1. Why is it important for evangelism to be accompanied by demonstrations of power?

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE NOT:

1. **Natural Abilities** (1 Cor 12:6-7)
-these are the workings of God through the believer - they are of a supernatural origin.
2. **Indicators of Spiritual Maturity**
-In the Corinthian church, every spiritual gift was active (ch1, vs. 7), but Paul still rebukes them for being quarrelsome and divided (1:11), being immature and worldly (3:1-3), and completely defeated (6:7)
-Their immaturity did not stop the gifts from being used. God has often used people, groups or nations that were out of fellowship with Him.
-There have often been among those who operate in these gifts, a sense of spiritual superiority over those who do not. This is pride and sin.
-The better test for spiritual maturity is the Fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22-23(see Fruit of the Spirit study)
3. **Authoritative in Themselves** Read 1 Jn 4:1 *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*
Also 1 Cor 14:29 *Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said*
-the gifts must be tested, can **never contradict scripture!**
4. **Something to be Afraid of or Neglected** Read 1 Thes 5:19-21 *Do not put out the Spirit's fire; 20 do not treat prophecies with contempt. 21 Test everything. Hold on to the good.*
Also 1 Cor 14:1 *Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy*
5. **Uncontrollable "Out-of-Body" Experiences** Read 1 Cor 14:32-33 *The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.*
-There is a common misconception that in order to be used in a spiritual gift, a person must become momentarily incapacitated by a lightning bolt from heaven...
-You are never "out of control"

How Does It Happen? What Does It Feel Like? How Do I Know When God Is Trying To Use Me?

The experience is different for every believer, but here are a few examples of what others have reported when being moved by the Spirit:

- Strong impressions in the heart or mind
- Butterflies in the stomach
- Great confidence and desire to pray for someone. -Unusual compassion toward an individual or group
- Simply being suddenly reminded of something previously read/studied/ or thought

What Do I Do When I Am Unsure?

- 1. Immediately Pray** - "Lord, are You just speaking to me - or is this something for someone else?"
- 2. Seek Counsel from Spiritual Leadership** - If you are unsure, simply find a leader and ask if they believe it is appropriate. They will generally tell you one of 3 things:
 - 1- I don't believe that is appropriate
 - 2- That sounds right, but this is not the right time.
 - 3- That sounds like God - go for it.
- 3. Be Open to Correction.** Listen to your leadership's evaluation of your gift. It is their job to exercise discernment concerning the gifts of the Spirit. Anything less than a completely humble attitude on your part should disqualify you from being used by God.
- 4. Step Out in Faith**