

Life in The Spirit

Understanding the Gifts...

Wherever I go, I see Christians who are spiritually hungry and want to live a victorious, overcoming life in Christ. Yet, they remain powerless because they don't understand how to appropriate God's power. It's time for that to change!

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He said, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come. This promise of power comes after the Holy Spirit visits your life, empowering you to witness, strengthening your Christian walk, and equipping you for Christian service to defeat the enemy. As our lives are empowered by the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts or new abilities called the "Gifts of the Holy Spirit" enable you and me to do the Lord's work in new and powerful ways.

Important fundamentals to understand about the gifts...

- **The Father desires that we understand spiritual gifts.** The Apostle Paul wrote, "Now, concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (1 Corinthians 12:1). Remember, the devil's success is dependent upon our ignorance. When you understand how to stir up these spiritual gifts in your life, you will have power and authority over the enemy.
- **The Father has provided these gifts to profit His children.** "But the manifestation of the Spirit," the Apostle wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:7**, "is given to every man to profit withal." It's God's will that we do not lack any spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 1:5-7).
- **Our Father wants us to pursue the gifts that He has provided.** Paul wrote, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31). Paul's words encourage us to seek the gifts, which are available to each of us and necessary for our spiritual success. Now it is up to you and me to understand these gifts and stir them up.

Three Groups of Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 - ⁴There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷But the **manifestation** of the Spirit is given to each one for **the profit of all**: ⁸for to one is given the **word of wisdom** through the Spirit, to another the **word of knowledge** through the same Spirit, ⁹to another **faith by the same Spirit**, to another **gifts of healings** by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to 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**. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually **as He wills**.

The nine gifts can be divided into three groups:

- **Revelation gifts** - the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits
- **Vocal gifts** - tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy
- **Power gifts** - faith, healings, and the working of miracles

Revelation Gifts:

1. Word of Wisdom—the application of knowledge

- We experience the word of wisdom when the Holy Spirit gives us supernatural wisdom or understanding through His Word in certain situations.
- When Jesus was faced with temptation in the wilderness, He ignored what Satan attempted to offer and responded by quoting the Word of God. Eve, on the other hand, failed to confront the devil's lies and was deceived.
- You can use the word of wisdom to defeat the purposes of the enemy by knowing how to apply the Word; at times, it can mean the difference between life and death.
- The word of wisdom is essential in the operation of all the other gifts, so it is important to seek this gift. Pray for this gift. Ask God to saturate your life with it, and as you study Scripture, the Lord will begin to give you the word of wisdom to illuminate your understanding.

2. Word of Knowledge—receiving facts supernaturally by the Spirit

- The word of knowledge is something that couldn't possibly be known without the Holy Spirit's prompting.
- There are numerous examples throughout Scripture where the word of knowledge is given by the Spirit with specific information concerning a need or problem. (An example is in 2 Kings 5, when Elisha the prophet knew that Gehazi had lied to Naaman the leper).
- Ananias and Sapphira pretended to sell their land and give all to God's work, but Peter received a word of knowledge that allowed him to boldly ask, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" (Acts 5:3).
- A word of knowledge can be personal or may be given for you to share with others. When you receive it, you should immediately begin praying for God's wisdom to share or apply this word.

3. Discerning of Spirits—perceiving the source of a manifestation

- The last of the three Revelation gifts helps you perceive whether a spiritual manifestation is from God, man, or the devil.
- It was the discerning of spirits that helped the Apostle Peter understand the vision spoken of in Acts 10, which in turn led to evangelism among the Gentiles, for he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."
- It was the gift of discerning of spirits that led Paul to cast the evil spirit out of a fortune teller who seemingly spoke all the right words saying, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her" (Acts 8:23).
- We're in a battle, and the enemy is cunning. Sometimes, evil masquerades as good. Therefore, we must be watchful with our supernatural senses, exercising the Revelation gift of discernment along with wisdom and knowledge.

Vocal Gifts:

1. Tongues—three supernatural means of communication

There is some confusion about the first of the vocal gifts because there are actually three different kinds of tongues.

The tongues of men - The tongues of angels - The tongues of the Spirit

The tongues of the Holy Spirit have three purposes:

- **Tongues unto God** (“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God”—1 Corinthians 14:2).
- **Tongues as a sign to the unbeliever** (Acts 2 gives the account of people who marveled at hearing their own native tongue).
- **Tongues which edify the body of believers** (“For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying”—1 Corinthians 14:5).

There is a place for each kind. Paul was certainly not dismissing the value of tongues, for he wrote, “I would that ye all spake with tongues” (1 Corinthians 14:5) and “forbid not to speak with tongues” (1 Corinthians 14:39). He even wrote, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all” (1 Corinthians 14:18).

This gift is critical for intercession and spiritual warfare. It’s a powerful entranceway to deep, intimate fellowship with the Savior. *Without tongues, you overlook one of the most special of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.*

2. Interpretation of Tongues—the translation of divine utterances into recognizable language

To understand the interpretation of tongues, we must go back and revisit the fact that there are three different kinds of tongues

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- Tongues as a sign to the unbeliever (Acts 2 gives the account of people who marveled at hearing their own native tongue).
- Tongues which edify the body of believers (“For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying”—1 Corinthians 14:5).

Only the third type, edifying the body of believers, requires interpretation. With this type of tongues, the interpretation of tongues is crucial.

- The Word shows that interpretation becomes equal to prophecy.
- It is very important, as we begin to use this gift, that we understand 1 Corinthians 14:13, which states, “Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.”
- This gift requires spiritual maturity and is received only through diligent prayer, study of the Scriptures, and precious time with the Holy Spirit.

3. Prophecy—revelation for edification

1 Corinthians 14:3 - But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

- The gift of prophecy builds up and encourages us. It stirs us up. It comforts us. It is not condemning. It always exhorts and encourages. It brings life and vision and light, not doom and gloom and death.
- And it’s important to remember that anything spoken out of the gift of prophecy must always be completely consistent with the Scriptures and will never contradict God’s Word in any way.

Power Gifts:

1. Faith—the God-given ability to believe Him for the impossible

- The gift of faith is the greatest of the power gifts. It’s the exceptional ability to trust God to work, even in unusual ways or in particularly challenging situations. Again, there is some confusion about the gift of faith.

- **There are actually three revelations of faith in the Bible:**
 - **Romans 5:1 speaks of saving faith, which is that measure of faith given to every person.**
 - **Galatians 5:22 - There is also the fruit of faith** - an important part of the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of faith is within each of us, as planted by the Holy Spirit, but the gift of faith, in 1 Corinthians 12, comes for a moment, for a season, and for a reason.
 - **The gift of faith** is the instantaneous assurance of God's ability to act in a specific situation.
 - It does not deny fact...it changes it!

How do we move into this gift and the three revelations of this gift?

Romans 10:17 - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The gift of faith can only happen when God's promises become more real to us than our circumstances. Therefore, this gift can work through us when we act through the revelation of Scripture and the direction of the Holy Spirit. *What begins as hope through prayer becomes faith.*

2. Healings—the restoration of health

The “gifts of healing” (1 Corinthians 12:9) are plural, not singular, for they apply to both physical and emotional areas of life, and the gifts also come in two ways, immediate and gradual.

Healing restores what is broken. The Holy Spirit can use a multitude of acts of faith to heal.

- The spoken word is used most often, but the woman with an issue of blood was also healed as she touched the hem of Jesus' garment and by faith was made whole.
- We read of the laying on of hands and the anointing with oil, but even the Apostle Peter's shadow brought healing. – James 5

God desires that we be healed and be used as instruments of healing. The secret is obedience to the Holy Spirit's guidance.

3. Working of Miracles—the divine creative acts

The working of miracles is a supernatural occurrence against the law of nature...

- It was against the natural order of things for God to turn back the Red Sea so the children of Israel could walk on dry land (Exodus 14:26-28).
- It was a miraculous act for the walls of Jericho to fall down as Israel obeyed the Lord's command (Joshua 6:20).
- It was supernatural for God to suspend the rotation of the earth in response to Joshua's prayer when he fought against the Amorites (Joshua 10:12-13).

When arthritis no longer afflicts a body or blind eyes see again, we sometimes call them miracles, but they are actually healings. **Healing is a work of restoration, while miracles are creative acts that go against the laws of nature.**

I believe we are coming into a new dimension of creative miracles, when we will see supernatural moves of the Holy Spirit's power in ways that we've only dreamed about. Readiness can only come through the Word. Psalm 33:6 points to this: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.” True miracles are the product of His Word. The more we understand and act on His Word, the more we will be able to move into the powerful dimension of all nine of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including the working of miracles.

Conclusion:

- God gives us the nine gifts that we've discussed in these two teachings to build up His Church, the body of Jesus Christ. These gifts have been given as a means to spread the Gospel and establish His kingdom.
- None of the gifts are to be forbidden, yet everything must be done in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14:39-40).
- By heeding these two commands, as empowered by the Holy Spirit and guided by the Scriptures, we can move, now more than ever, toward the unity of the believers and a dimension of power and authority in the realm of the Spirit of which the prophets of old spoke!

The greatest days are here! Are you ready to be empowered for service? God's great desire is that each of us seeks a closer, more intimate walk with Him. That is my prayer for you today.