



Week 35 - Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Paul wrote, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant” (1 Corinthians 12:1). We should be familiar with the spiritual gifts that God gives us so that we may walk in confidence in our gifts and encourage others in theirs. “As each one has received a spiritual gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). These gifts empower us to perform specific tasks, some of which would be otherwise impossible.

Although God gives spiritual gifts to us, we are His gifts to the church. Spiritual gifts listed in the Bible include:

Apostolic (Ephesians 4:11) – Ability to initiate and oversee new initiatives for God’s kingdom, such as church planting.

Prophecy (Ephesians 4:11, Romans 12:6) – Ability to receive and communicate immediate messages from God

Evangelism (Ephesians 4:11) – Ability to effectively present the gospel and to see people convert to the Christian faith.

Pastoral (Ephesians 4:11) – Ability to oversee the spiritual growth and welfare of Christians or congregations.

Teaching (Ephesians 4:11, Romans 12:7) – Ability to effectively communicate the truths of the Christian faith and other information useful to the church.

Service (Romans 12:7) – Special desire and skill to serve individuals or organizations

Exhortation (Romans 12:7) – Ability to encourage and inspire, particularly in relation to Christian growth and ministry

Giving (Romans 12:7) – Special desire and faith to give one’s possessions to needy individuals or to the work of the church

Leadership (Romans 12:8) – Ability to efficiently and effectively oversee and direct groups of people

Mercy (Romans 12:8) – Special desire and ability to exhibit God’s kindness and generosity towards other people, particularly those suffering

Faith (1 Corinthians 12:9) – Special conviction concerning God’s ability and willingness to supernaturally intervene in specific circumstances.

Word of Wisdom (1 Corinthians 12:8) – Special ability to have insight into situations and to best inform decisions for the future

Word of Knowledge (1 Corinthians 12:8) – Special ability to hear from God specific information about a situation that the person in the natural would not know

Healing (1 Corinthians 12:9) – Ability to pray for and see people supernaturally healed of ailments

Miracles (1 Corinthians 12:10) – Tendency to see God’s supernatural intervention in response to prayer

Discerning of Spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10) – Ability to recognize the presence and nature of supernatural entities

Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10) – Ability to speak in unknown languages (human and non-human) directed by Holy Spirit

Interpretation of Tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10) – Ability to interpret messages spoken through gift of speaking in tongues

Offices of the Church

The first five gifts listed above are the offices in the church described in Ephesians 4:11-12: “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.” God gives these officers a special grace to train other believers for ministry in the church and in the world. Thus, the work of the kingdom involves every member of the church.

Of course, we are all called to walk as Christ walked and obey His commands. The Bible says “serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). Thus, whether we have a “gift of serving” or not, we are called to serve God and one another. Still, people with a gift of service find serving easier to do, are more skilled at it, and more motivated by it. Likewise, we are all called to pray for the sick (Mark 16:18b); those with the gift simply seem to have a greater “success rate.”

As we use our gifts and exhibit the character of Christ, the kingdom of God advances. All spiritual gifts are from the Holy Spirit and one gift should not be esteemed more than another.

The gift of prophecy, a speaking and “up-front” gift, should not be deemed as more significant than a serving gift, which is often operates “behind the scenes.”

Praying in Tongues

For some believers, their “gateway gift” of the Spirit is “speaking” or “praying” in other tongues. (Acts 2:4, 11, 10:44-48, 19:1-6). Benefits of speaking in tongues include encouraging oneself:

For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God ... One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself ... 1 Corinthians 14:14

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit...
Jude 1:20

This is important. Since images and ideas contrary to truth and holiness constantly bombard us, speaking in tongues helps us to stay encouraged and focused on the Lord. The apostle Paul was not ashamed of this gift, claiming that he spoke in tongues more than anyone (1 Corinthians 14:18). His clear desire was for all to speak with tongues (1 Corinthian 14:5).

People can be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit while not praying in tongues. However, this gift is enjoyed by millions of Christians around the world. The Lord Jesus promised us in Mark 16:17: “And these signs will accompany those who have believed; in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues.” Why not agree with the Lord and ask today to speak in new tongues? If it is His will, you will receive it in His timing.

Review

1. Which of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is unnecessary?
2. What are the “offices of the Church” and why are they necessary?
3. What are the benefits of speaking in tongues?