

## QUESTIONS WE WANT ANSWERED

### 25.1 What Are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

#### Part I

*Scripture: Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:4-11, 28-31; Ephesians 4:7-12;  
I Peter 4:10-11*

#### INTRODUCTION

We speak today of the mighty and eternal Holy Spirit, who at first brooded over the face of the deep at creation, and since has expressed the Divine will among the inhabitants of earth. Belief in the Holy Spirit is a very important part of the Christian faith. Christians are people who confess that the one true and living God exists as a tri-unity of persons who are of coequal rank and eternity. Three centers of consciousness are known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
(Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14)

The Holy Spirit and the Church are inseparable. Wherever the true Church has been present in the world, at that place we will find the Holy Spirit at work. Even this morning we do not gather as a civic organization, a political party, as a club of some sort, or even as those who would put on a performance much as is done in the theater. Rather, the Church is God's. It is of His making and His indwelling. It is that group of people bound by a common beliefism and empowered by the same Spirit, so that the Church is more than the sum total of its parts. God is there! Even though the first love may sometimes be lost, even though the Church may become lukewarm, half hearted and unconcerned, yet it is God's Church even still.

Christians agree with one another concerning much of the Holy Spirit's work among them and in the world. Without the work of the Holy Spirit it is not possible to view Christ in a believing way. (Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 12:3) It is the Holy Spirit who brings assurance and confidence to our lives. (Romans 8:16) The Holy Spirit indwells the believer (I Corinthians 3:16), leads the believer into a holy life (Romans 8:14), seals the believer (Ephesians 4:30), and produces fruit in the believer's life (Galatians 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit inspires worship among believers (Philippians 3:3), reveals the deep things of God (I Corinthians 2:9,14) and enables the believer to communicate the good news about Christ in a

meaningful way (I Corinthians 2:1-5). These are but a few of the functions of the Holy Spirit where there is general agreement among Christians.

However, there is another aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry which has caused considerable disagreement among Evangelical Christians. This has to do with the so called "gifts" of the Holy Spirit, and the emergence of the charismatic movement. It is the purpose of our study to examine carefully from Scripture the subject of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we believe that the Holy Spirit is not only important to our lives, He is imperative. We will never know a personally satisfying and effective Christian life apart from what the Holy Spirit is able to do within us and through us. We would be open to all that the Holy Spirit has for us, at the same time we would not be led to embrace an emphasis which is not Biblical.

It was during the apostolic period that the Holy Spirit of God effected certain manifestations within the life of the Church which were called the gifts of the Spirit. No doubt these were necessary so that the Gospel which was being spoken would be powerfully signified and sealed by God's presence. Let us consider the following matters having to do with these manifestations.

### **I. THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GIFTS:**

There are five words found in I Corinthians 12 which reveal different features of the nature of the Spirit's gifts and taken together give us an insight into the meaning and purpose of the gifts.

#### **1. First:**

There is the word "pneumatika" (spirituals:- 12:1) which describes them as something apart or beyond the natural. It is noted that the word "gifts" is in italics which means it has been inserted for readability. The Corinthian church was beset with carnalities and Paul did not want the believers to be uninformed about spiritual realities. The context makes it clear He does have gifts in mind.

#### **2. Second:**

There is the word "charismata" (gifts -12:4,9) which designates these offerings as being of grace, i.e. freely given, and not as rewards or wages.

**3. Third:**

The word “diakoniai” (services or administrations – 12:5) shows they are the means of serving a useful purpose toward others.

**4. Fourth:**

The word “energemata” (powers or operations - 12:6) indicates the inherent quality of the gift beyond natural ability. The gift of teaching, for example, presupposes the natural ability to think discern, and speak. The method of the Holy Spirit here is to enhance and direct, to effect spiritually through the human or natural ability. Natural ability alone cannot accomplish God’s purposes in this framework of thought.

(I Corinthians 2:1-5)

**5. Last:**

The word “thanerosa” (manifestations - 12:7) reveals that each gift is an exposure of the power and glory of the Lord which can be recognized through the senses. From these five words we are able to draft the following definition of spiritual gifts. Gifts are spiritual abilities, beyond the natural, freely given to believers as a means of revealing Christ in a tangible way to others for their salvation and edification.

**II. THE DIVERSITY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS:**

I Corinthians 12:4 informs us that *“there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.”* Christians are in agreement over the clear distinction between the Gift of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The singular use of the word is noted in Acts 2:38, 10:45, 11:17. The gift is the offering of the Holy Spirit to those who trust Christ. This gift was given in fulfillment of the Father's promise (Joel 2:28-29; Isaiah 44:3-4; Proverbs 1:23) and in answer to the prayer of Christ. The gift is for every believer without discrimination. The gifts are bestowed on individual believers as the Spirit sovereignly pleases. The gift is permanent, the gifts may wither through disuse.

The diversity of spiritual gifts is evident by widely differing capabilities of equally devoted people. Just as in an earthly family there are differences among members, so in the spiritual family all do not inherit the same gifts, though all derive life from the same Spirit. Four series of verses in the New Testament list the spiritual gifts. The lists differ suggesting that there is no set or full list, and that all of the lists taken together may still be incomplete. This may be the

significance of the lack of order and the omissions. The emphasis appears to be on the multiplicity and the abundance of the gifts.

Here are the gifts mentioned by Paul and Peter in their epistles. I have arranged them side by side for the purpose of comparison.

<b>Romans 12:6-8</b>	<b>I Corinthians 12:4-11</b>	<b>I Corinthians 12:28-31</b>	<b>Ephesians 4:7-12</b>	<b>I Peter 4:8-11</b>
Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophets	Prophets	Charity
Ministry	Wisdom	Helps	Teachers	Hospitality
Teaching	Knowledge	Teachers	Apostles	Speaking
Exhortation	Faith	Governments	Evangelists	Ministering
Giving	Healing	Healings	Pastors	
Ruling	Miracles	Miracles		
Mercy	Discernment	Tongues		
	Tongues	Apostles		
	Interpretation			

These gifts are added together to form a complete list. The numbers in the brackets indicate the number of times the gift appears in the previous lists:

Prophecy	(4)
Ministry (service, helps)	(2)
Teaching (wisdom, knowledge)	(4)
Exhortation	(1)
Giving	(1)
Ruling	(2)
Showing Mercy	(1)
Faith	(1)
Healing	(2)
Miracles	(2)
Discerning Of Spirits	(1)
Tongues	(2)
Interpretation Of Tongues	(1)
Apostles	(2)
Evangelists	(1)
Pastors	(1)

Scholars often divide these gifts in various ways. Many categories are suggested:

1. Miraculous and Non-Miraculous
2. Practical Ministries and Proclamation Ministries
3. Temporal Gifts and Permanent Gifts
4. Emotional, Intellectual, Practical and Sacrificial Gifts
5. Gifts of Revelation, Power, and Inspiration
6. Gifts of Edification and Gifts of Authentication
7. Natural Gifts (congenital) and Supernatural Gifts

Robert Smith, Associate Pastor of the Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto, California, delineates the gifts in the following way:

1. General Support Gifts – Ephesians 4:7-12
2. Sign Gifts – Mark 16:17-18; I Corinthians 14:21-22
3. Specific Working Gifts – I Corinthians 12:8-10, 28; Romans 12:6-8

### **III. THE USE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS:**

#### **1. The Prophetic Gift:**

In both testaments prophecy is a bold proclamation of a revealed message from God expounded in the light of a contemporary situation. The word means to “forth tell” and may or may not involve foretelling the future. The Bible uses the word in a supernatural way in which the mind of the messenger is illuminated beyond natural skill and understanding. Are there prophets today? Perhaps there are, but in a derived way as the message of the original prophets is meaningfully delivered. The church today is built upon that early message. (Ephesians 2:20)

#### **2. The Wisdom Gift:**

The gift which enables us to relate knowledge to complex, vexing and needy situations is the gift of wisdom. It has to do with spiritual insight into the propriety of courses to follow. It is knowing and applying the purposes of God to our lives. It may be a word of defense (Matthew 10:19-20), a word of reason (I Peter 3:15), a word of mercy and gentleness which does not create confusion or division (James 1:5; 3:15-18). This gift is bestowed uniquely notwithstanding the promise of James 1:5 which can be claimed in times of need.

#### **3. The Knowledge Gift:**

I believe that the gift of knowledge is the charisma by which a believer has the ability to grasp the truth about a given situation or the ability to search the Scriptures and discover truth not discernable by human reason. Knowledge is information, not the kind which is derived from an encyclopedia. The Biblical use has to do with information available to the renewed mind. We can say that the gift is much needed today in a time of anti-intellectualism which encourages people to seek experience rather than truth. Of course the two belong together. Knowledge should lead, guide and curb zeal.

#### **4. The Faith Gift:**

This is not saving faith without which a person is not a Christian in the first place. This is a special faith. It involves another meaning of the Biblical word

“**pistis**” and has to do with the Spirit given ability to see what God wants done and to have an unshakable confidence that God will do it even in the face of impossible odds. While all of God’s people do not have this special gift all are nonetheless to have a whole soul confidence in God and His ability. Three faiths are mentioned in the New Testament. A secular faith (James 2:19), a saving faith (II Timothy 1:12), and a special faith which is a spiritual, gift (1 Corinthians 12:9). We also have a clue as to what this faith is like in I Corinthians 13:2.

#### **5. The Healing Gift:**

The gift of healing is the supernatural intervention of God through a human instrument in the restoration of health to the body. This gift, it seems, was employed when the need presented itself. It is the plural form, the **gifts of healings** in I Corinthians 12:9 suggesting an intermittent activity rather than a lifetime practice. We understand that all healing is God healing although the means may vary and may be medical, psychological, spiritual, and even satanical. For further thoughts on this gift of healing the reader may refer to an expanded lesson later in this section dealing fully with the subject.

#### **6. The Miracle Gift:**

This gift is the ability to perform signs and wonders. Three words are used in the New Testament to describe miracles. One is the word “**dunamis**.” The word signifies a demonstration of power and is found in I Corinthians 12:10, 28. Another word is “**semeion**” which means a sign. This sign authenticated the speaker and his message. The last word is “**teras**” which is a wonder that is known to the senses. This word is found in Romans 15:19 and II Corinthians 12:12. These words together tell us that a miracle is an event of unnatural power which is discernable to the senses and which indicates that God is working in the midst through His servant. We believe in a miracle working God. It is significant that in our time believers who pioneer the gospel and live out their days in the context of persecution speak of events and deliverances which can only be explained as being miraculous notwithstanding the absence of an actual miracle worker.

#### **7. The Discernment Gift:**

The harsh effect of sin in our world has effected the thinking of people. Proper evaluation in the spiritual realm is not possible and for that reason hostility and disinterest toward the gospel mark the unbelievers attitude.

(I Corinthians 3:14) In regeneration God renews the mind so that truth can be appreciated and understood. Though every believer has some insight into spiritual truth, there is a special ability which is given to distinguish between what is true and false, between pretense and what is genuine. This is the gift to unmask Satan's ploys and to ferret out heretics. This was a necessary gift in the early church as there were forever those present who twisted Scripture. Today the gift may be of no little importance in the face of so many who quote Scripture but fail to rightly divide it. (I Corinthians 12:10; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Matthew 7:15-20)

#### **8. The Tongues Gift And Interpretation:**

The gift of tongues is the ability to speak in another language and the gift of interpretation is the God given ability to understand what is being said so as to convey the meaning to others. We will spend an entire study on the subject of tongues and their interpretation, reserving our comments until then.

#### **9. The Ministering Gift:**

I believe this is the ability to help in the widest use of the word. Sometimes people who think they are helping are not doing so at all. This gift calls for a sense of discernment, timing, and concern. The gift provides a wonderful opportunity for those who have not the ability of utterance. (Romans 12:7; I Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:12; Acts 20:25)

#### **10. The Teaching Gift:**

Teaching is the ability to explain effectively the detail and meaning of God's Word. The teacher does not originate his material but through careful and thorough study and the Holy Spirit's illumination there is the capacity to make God's Word understandable. In primitive times converts came to the faith with no knowledge of the Christian teaching. When Paul wrote Corinthians barely a line of the New Testament had been written. Teachers were resources of truth. Today the ability is closely associated with the gift of pastoring although the ability is otherwise given. (Romans 12:7; I Corinthians 12:28)

#### **11. The Apostolic Gift:**

The word occurs 75 times in the New Testament. In a restricted and special way it applies to the original twelve, to those who had seen the Lord,

received their commission from Him, and who gave the doctrinal foundation to the church. (Mark 3:14; Acts 1:21; John 14:26;16:13) Others came to be called apostles as was Paul. (I Corinthians 9:1-5) This was the primary meaning of the word.

However, the word “apostle” comes from the Latin and translates to our word “mission.” In a secondary and broader way every Christian is sent by Christ and has a mission in this world. The word is alive today in that way. Concerning transcultural ministries, contemporary apostles may function as missionaries. The missionary gift is not so designated in Scripture and, it seems to me, may be included, here. (Ephesians 4:11; I Corinthians 12:28)

### **12. The Evangelistic Gift:**

The gift of evangelism enables one to share the gospel in a meaningful way so that there is a response in terms of repentance and a reception of Christ. People react to an evangelists message in conversion and discipleship. Of course, all believers are to do the work of evangelism as Paul instructed Timothy. We are to inform people about Christ. The informed person has been evangelized. (Ephesians 4:11; II Timothy 4:5; Acts 21)

### **13. The Pastoral Gift:**

The original word is **“Poimen”** meaning shepherd. Three other words help us to understand its meaning. **(1)** There is the word “bishop” (**“Episcopos”**) meaning overseer and having to do with the work of the shepherd. **(2)** The word “elder” (**“Presbuteros”**) meaning elder and having to do with the office and dignity of the shepherd. **(3)** Lastly, there is the word “pastor” (**“Poimen”**) meaning shepherd and having to do with the relationship of the shepherd to the flock. All of these are mentioned in Acts 20:17,28. The gift of the pastor involves the leading, protecting, and feeding of a Christian congregation. He, as it were, guards, guides, and grazes the sheep. The gift is much cherished by a people of God, a worthy pastor is a blessing.

### **14. The Exhorting Gift:**

There are times when people need a lift. It can come through a word of encouragement and comfort. This is a rich gift for the time of human frailty, this endowment of exhortation. It is the ability to get people to act upon truth they can believe. (Romans 12:8; Hebrews 10:25)

**15. The Giving Gift:**

This has to do with the distribution of money toward the needs of others. Some view this as a call to voluntary poverty as they give to missions, evangelism and other needs. All Christians are to support the Lord's work but this charisma has to do with the liberal exercise of contribution. There are promised reward's. (II Corinthians 9:6; Romans 12:8)

**16. The Administrative Gift:**

The word rule in Romans 12:8 is "*Proistemi*." It means to stand over, to preside, to superintend. Another word is found in I Corinthians 12:28 "*Kubernesis*" meaning the master or helmsman of a ship. Paul is saying that the church, as a ship, needs piloting. Therefore God enables some to be leaders, never bosses. It is a God given ability to preside, plan, organize, with productivity, humility, grace, confidence and joy.

**17. The Mercy Gift:**

The original word is "*eleos*" meaning pity. This gift enables one to sympathize beyond the ordinary, with those who hurt. There is a Divine pity which comes in human form and extended with cheerfulness. We can parade our doctrine and leave people cold. The person who has this gift can be much used. (Romans 12:8; I Corinthians 12:28)

We will conclude our study here having considered the meaning, diversity and use of spiritual gifts. Lord willing, we will go on to speak of other gifts, as well as the source possession, importance, history, and discovery of the Spirit's gifts.

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