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Gifts of the Spirit



Opening worship

Read **Psalm 84** together for your opening worship. This psalm expresses the joy of pilgrims who are in God's house and revel in the presence of God.

Explanation of spiritual gifts

In our last lesson we took note of many spiritual gifts that are explicitly identified by name in the Bible. We observed that all these gifts come from the Lord; there is no reason for pride in any of them. Gifts are given to glorify the Lord and for building up his church. Gifts of the Spirit are not the same as fruit of the Spirit, nor are they the same as natural talents; they are special gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to Christians. Some gifts may be more useful or "greater" than other spiritual gifts. Some gifts may be specific to the early Christian church and no longer given today.

Our objective today is to discuss each of the gifts of the Spirit we identified and explain its meaning, how it might appear, and how it might be used in the church.

What does this mean?

Wisdom. Describe the spiritual gift of wisdom.

Knowledge. Describe the spiritual gift of knowledge. Point out differences between wisdom and knowledge.

Faith. We know that it is the Holy Spirit who creates and preserves saving faith in every believer (1 Corinthians 12:3; John 3:5-8; Romans 10:17). How is the spiritual gift of faith distinct from saving faith in every believer?

Healing. Describe this spiritual gift and give examples of its use in the New Testament.

Miracles. Jesus promised this spiritual gift in Mark 16:17, 18. The gift appears several times in the New Testament, especially in the Acts of the Apostles. List any examples you can think of:

What is a miracle? Is this gift still given today? Explain your answer?

Prophecy. What do you normally think of with the word *prophecy*? The Greek word here is *προφητεία* (*prophētia*), from the verb *πρόφημι* (*próphēmi*). It can mean "tell beforehand" or "foretell." It can also mean "speak out" or "proclaim." Where do we see the gift of prophecy given today? What aspects of prophecy may be harder to find today?

Distinguishing between spirits. Read **1 John 4:1-3**. Describe the spiritual gift of "distinguishing between spirits."

Tongues. On Pentecost the apostles miraculously preached the Good News in known languages that they had never studied before (see Acts 2:5-12). In 1 Corinthians 13:1 Paul speaks of the "tongues of men and of angels," indicating that there was communication in language that is out of this world. The spiritual gift of tongues is not merely a natural ability to learn languages quickly.

When we speak of “spiritual gifts” in general, why do we so quickly think of the gift of tongues in particular?

Can you think of some reasons why we might rightly be cautious when someone claims to have this gift?

What other gift of the Spirit must always accompany the gift of tongues? (See **1 Corinthians 14:27, 28**)

Interpretation of tongues. Describe this gift of the Spirit.

Serving. Describe this gift. Where do you see this spiritual gift put to great use in the church today?

Teaching. How is this gift given and used in the church?

Encouraging. Can you think of someone in the New Testament who was known for his gift of encouragement? (See Acts 4:36, 37.) How might this spiritual gift be given and used today?

Contributing to needs. Describe and give examples of this spiritual gift.

Leadership. Describe the difference between *leadership* and *administration*. Where do we see these gifts given and used today?

Showing mercy. Is there ever a time when this gift is not needed? Have you seen this gift in the church today?

Celibacy. The gift to be able to refrain from marriage and abstain from sexual relations can enable a Christian man or woman to focus more on the church’s mission than on personal relationships and desires. It is not forced, as we see for clergy in the Roman Catholic Church.

Apostleship. Jesus designated some to be apostles (Luke 6:13). Others designated apostles include Matthias (Acts 1:26), Barnabas, Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy. The basic meaning of *ἀπόστολος* (*apóstolos*) refers to a person who is “sent out.” More specifically, those who held the apostolic office were men who were eyewitnesses to the resurrected Jesus and could testify firsthand to what they had heard and seen. While the church still sends out missionaries to carry the gospel to new places, the gift of apostleship in this strict sense is no longer pertinent today.

Love. Love is both a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 13). Describe how love shows itself as a special gift of the Spirit.

As we describe and discuss each of these spiritual gifts, can you see evidence of spiritual gifts given to you? How can you “eagerly desire” the gifts of the Spirit?