

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 12:1; 4—11

Introduction

- The Holy Spirit brings the plans of the Triune God to fruition by uniting believers to the Father through the Son, thus binding them together.
- This work takes a life-time!
- The “Gifts of the Spirit” emerge from His activity in the life of the believer.
- Fruit and gifts have a common source in love which will remain long after everything else ends (see 1 Cor. 13:8--10)

GIFTS FROM THE SPIRIT

“The Gifts” - Romans 12:6—8

→ charismata

“The Spiritual Gifts” - 1 Corinthians 12:7—11

→ pneumatikon

“The Gifts” - Ephesians 4:11—13

“The Gifts” - 1 Peter 4:10, 11

→ “charisma”

1. Stewards of God's Grace

[a] Gifts and Vocation, 1 Peter 4:10, 11

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If you speak, you should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If you serve, you should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

- Context: gifts are a manifestation of the duty to love one another.
- Love is the source and atmosphere within which gifts become acts of service in the Church.
- The source of love is the Holy Spirit.
- The Fruit of the Spirit and the Gifts of the Spirit cannot be severed; they work hand-in-hand for the benefit of the Church.
- Fruit = primarily benefits the Church
- Gifts = exclusively benefits the Church
- Our vocation: to serve each other as the Spirit enables

[b] Gifts and human abilities, Romans 12:6—8

*We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is **prophesying**, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is **serving**, then serve; if it is **teaching**, then teach; if it is to **encourage**, then give encouragement; if it is **giving**, then give generously; if it is to **lead**, do it diligently; if it is to **show mercy**, do it cheerfully.*

→ Are these gifts natural talents? Divine endowments? A combination of both?

→ We must determine whether we have natural, inborn “talent” or whether we are manifesting a particular gift of the Spirit.

→ There *can be* a relationship between what we were born with and what the Spirit gives us.

→ No human being can realize his full potential without the Holy Spirit; only a Christian can be whole in every way.

→ The gifts and fruit of the Spirit transform believers—*not into someone else*—but into the kind of people God wants them to be.

→ Natural talents can be enhanced by cooperation with the Holy Spirit

[c] Gifts and corporate worship, 1 Corinthians 14:26

What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

- Even the gifts of the Spirit can be abused or misused, and this is why Paul wrote 1 Cor. 14
- The manifestation of the gifts must be regulated during the public worship service
- Careful thought needs to be given to the use of the gift of tongues, especially.

2. Spiritual Gifts

[a] What exactly are the Gifts, 1 Cor. 12:1, 4—
11

To one there is given through the Spirit a *message of wisdom*, to another a *message of knowledge* by means of the same Spirit, to another *faith* by the same Spirit, to another *gifts of healing* by that one Spirit, 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*.

→ Gifts of the Spirit are what emerge when God's activity intersects with human activity.

- There is one Spirit, one Lord (Christ), One God (the Father), and He acts in and through believers differently through different gifts.
- The gifts emerge through **SYNERGY**.
- “Synergy” = learning how to recognize and co-operate with the flow of the Spirit

[b] Naming the gifts

- Corinthian context: Paul names the gifts to stifle “super-spiritual” members in their abuse of both the gifts and of other members.

→ The list is NOT exhaustive. We must also add the list in Romans 12; 1 Cor. 12; 1 Pet. 4.

3. Ministry gifts and callings

[a] Gifts as offices, Eph. 4:8—13

*So Christ himself gave the **apostles**, the **prophets**, the **evangelists**, the **pastors and teachers**, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

- Individuals are also Christ's gifts to the Church.
- These “offices” in the Church are Christ's gifts to the Church.
- The Spirits “gifts” the Church with the leadership it needs.

[b] Gifts and the church, 1 Cor. 12:28—31

*And God has placed in the church first of all **apostles**, second **prophets**, third **teachers**, then **miracles**, then gifts of **healing**, of helping, of **guidance**, and of different kinds of **tongues**. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.*

→ The gifts are as diverse as the membership of the church!