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## SESSION 3: Spiritual Gifts

# The Holy Spirit at Work Through Us

### I. What Is a Spiritual Gift?

Spiritual Gift – Any ability that is empowered by the Spirit as a display of the Spirit for the good of the church” – Rick Gamache

Do I have them?

1 Peter 4:10-11

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. [1 Cor. 12:7]**

To **each** is given a gift!

- No Christian is unusable or ungifted. God is for his own glory, and chooses to be glorified by bestowing spiritual gifts to Christians. In God's kindness he gives spiritual gifts to ordinary, flawed individuals—allowing His Spirit to manifest his power in specific ways because He loves His church and wants to be glorified and magnified and made much of in it!
- Variety of spiritual gifts empowered by the same Spirit [1 Corinthians 12:4-6]

### **1 Corinthians 12:11-14; 18-20**

- Trust the Holy Spirit's Sovereignty in His giving of gifts [vs. 11]. God is kind to give us gifts to help the church function and be edified. We need teachers, administrators, encouragers, those gifted with prophecy, those gifted with hospitality, etc.
  - Paul's body metaphor helps us grow in appreciation for all of the gifts, and helps us realize the unified nature of the Spirit's working. Apart from each other, we are floating body parts—an arm, toe, eyeball, nose...Isolated members are in need of the other 'body parts', for only together do these body parts properly function as an entire body.
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## II. What Is the Purpose of the Gifts?

What the gifts are NOT for:

- Spiritual ruler/tool to 'measure spirituality'
- Fulfilment of a super-mystical-experience (where God **really** shows up)
- A means to 'add on' to the authoritative revelation of God's word
- An avenue to glorify oneself

### 1 Corinthians 12:1-7

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as he wills.

Paul's corrective terminology switch to the Corinthian church

- Grace is God's undeserved favor resting on his people. Paul shifts language from spiritual gifts to "grace gifts". This is a corrective to the Corinthians thinking in regards to spiritual gifts. A truly spiritual person is aware that it is all a gift. This stops us from being impressed by a particular person who practices these gifts—it makes sure that we are always impressed by God's grace in the the giving of that gift.

Why do we need the gifts when we have the inerrant Word of God?

- The gifts put God on display, help us see Christ as glorious and sufficient, and help the church to be occupied with the things of the Spirit. God loves his Church and wants to continue giving tangible reminders of His grace, love, and care for the body.

For the purpose of building up and encouraging the body—for the good of the **entire** church

- "For the upbuilding and encouragement and consolation" [1 Cor 14:3]
  - "but the one who prophesies **builds up the church**" [1 Cor 14:4b]
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- “so that the church may be **built up**” [1 Cor 14:5b]
- “So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the spirit, **strive to excel in building up the church.**” [ 1 Cor 14:12]
- In correcting people’s use of the gifts, Paul writes “For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is **not being built up**” [1 Cor 14:17]
- In this closing section of this argument, Paul states, “Let **all things be done for the building up**” [1 Cor 14:26]
- “For you can all prophesy one by one, so that **all may learn and all be encouraged** [1 Cor 14:31]

The gifts give us a foretaste of what our final inheritance will be like.

“God is not simply promising us our final inheritance but actually providing us with a foretaste of it, even if it is ‘only a small fraction of the endowment’. In other words, if you want to know in part what life in the age to come will be like, meditate on the glorious, comforting, empowering presence of the Spirit in your heart right now!”  
– Sam Storms

### Romans 12

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.... For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.... Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

These grace-gifts help us to walk in a manner worthy to that which we have been called...as sons and daughters of God. God has kindly chosen to glorify Himself by empowering us to live in this way.

### III. What Is the Greatest Spiritual Gift?

#### 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:3

Any use of the gifts, **without love**, becomes useless. Paul spends an entire section on the necessity of love in the use of spiritual gifts.

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The gifts that we see on display whether it's a Sunday morning, in our community groups, or as we're out serving and caring for one another are empowered by the Spirit and motivated by love. This is a Spirit-given love that reflects the limitless love of our Savior, and the church is built up as a result.

### **Galatians 5:22-25**

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

"If you have the slightest draw to any kind of external service, that is the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in your life..." – Rick Gamache

### **John 13:35**

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

"Love is the infallible measure of the Spirit's presence and work." – Jeff Purswell

We must identify the fruit of the Spirit for what they really are when they show up in us—gifts of grace!

## **IV. Being Filled with the Holy Spirit | Spirit-filled People**

The Holy Spirit dwells within us and is our promised seal for the guarantee of our inheritance [Ephesians 1:13-14]

Paul commands us in Ephesians 5:18, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit"

We are to pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

- To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to have a higher sensitivity to the Spirit's leading, to lean on His power to fight sin, to be bold in proclaiming the gospel, and to serve His church with love. It is to be occupied with the things of the Spirit, which is to glorify Christ [John 16:13-14]

"God pour his Spirit out upon us so completely that we are filled with joy, victorious over sin, and bold to witness. And the ways he brings us to that fullness are probably as varied as people are. It may come in a tumultuous experience of ecstasy and tongues. It may come through a tumultuous experience of ecstasy and no tongues. It may come through a crisis of suffering when you abandon yourself totally to God. Or it may come gradually through a steady diet of God's Word and prayer and fellowship and worship and service. However it comes, our first experience of the fullness of the Spirit is only the beginning of a life-long battle to stay filled with the Spirit." – John Piper

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"Spirit-filling is also a metaphor describing our continuous, on-going experience and appropriation of the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to come under progressively more intense and intimate influence of the Spirit. Spirit-filling can be forfeited and subsequently experienced yet again, on multiple occasions, throughout the course of the Christian life." – Sam Storms

"The evidence of the Holy Spirit's empowering presence in us touches **all of life**...in fact, He **is** our life...He is our **spiritual life**...what breath and breathing are to physical life...the Holy Spirit is to our spiritual life... Doing good for someone, is manifesting **God** to them." – Rick Gamache

### V. How Do I Pursue the Gifts and Earnestly Desire Them?

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.  
[1 Cor 14:1]

- It is a biblical imperative to pursue the gifts. Paul does not say to be open but very cautious to these gifts, nor does he tell the Corinthians to simply tolerate the gifts. His instruction is not to cancel their use of their gifts, but to correct and earnestly desire them!
- Pursue God. Soak yourself in His Word. We do not pursue these gifts for the sake of the gift, we pursue our glorious God and remain in awe of the beauty of Christ while depending on the Holy Spirit as He empowers us and gives these grace gift.
- We ask, we pray for them, we pray for a desire for them
- Study Romans chapters 8 and 12; 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14; The book of Acts
- Ask questions to people who have an earnestly desire for + actively practice the gifts!
- Read and listen to good teaching on the gifts

"Any public use of the gifts needs to be an overflow of a private pursuit of God" – Mark Prater

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## Additional Resources

### Sermons

- Jeff Purswell – The Pastor and the Spirit
- Mark Prater – The Spirit and the Gifts
- Rick Gamache – Concerning Spiritual Gifts | One Spirit, Many Gifts
- John Piper – Spiritual Gifts

### Books

- Sam Storms – The Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Gifts
- D.A. Carson – Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14
- Wayne Grudem – Systematic Theology [Chapters 52-53]

### Additional Definitions and List of Spiritual Gifts

"Spiritual gifts are nothing less than God himself in us, energizing our souls, imparting revelation to our minds, infusing power in our wills, and working his sovereign and gracious purposes through us." – Sam Storms, *The Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Gifts*, 13.

"In light of this, we may define a spiritual gift as a God-given, and therefore gracious, capacity to serve the body of Christ. It is a divinely empowered or spiritually energized potential to minister to the body of Christ by communicating the knowledge, power, and love of Jesus." – Sam Storms, *The Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Gifts*, 20.

"A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church." – Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1016.

### A chart of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Scripture [not all encompassing]

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Romans 12:6-8	1 Corinthians 7:7	1 Corinthians 12:8-10	1 Corinthians 12:28	Ephesians 4:11	1 Peter 4:11
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prophecy</li> <li>2. Serving</li> <li>3. Teaching</li> <li>4. Encouraging</li> <li>5. Contributing</li> <li>6. Leadership</li> <li>7. Mercy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marriage</li> <li>2. Singleness</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utterance of wisdom</li> <li>2. Utterance of knowledge</li> <li>3. Faith</li> <li>4. Gifts of healing</li> <li>5. Miracles</li> <li>6. Prophecy</li> <li>7. Distinguishing between spirits</li> <li>8. Tongues</li> <li>9. Interpretation of tongues</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apostle</li> <li>2. Prophet</li> <li>3. Teacher</li> <li>4. Miracles</li> <li>5. Gifts of healing</li> <li>6. Helps</li> <li>7. Administration</li> <li>8. Tongues</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apostle</li> <li>2. Prophet</li> <li>3. Evangelist</li> <li>4. Pastor</li> <li>5. Teacher</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Speaking</li> <li>2. Serving</li> </ol>

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(The following definitions are adapted from Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, chapters 52-53 and *The Beginners Guide to Spiritual Gifts* by Sam Storms).

- A. Word of wisdom:** explaining to others a Spirit inspired insight into some aspect of God's redemptive purposes...and perhaps the illumination of others with the saving power of the gospel.
  - B. Word of knowledge:** a Spirit-empowered ability to gain insights into and explain various aspects of the Christian faith and life, resulting in the instruction and edification of others.
  - C. Faith:** the mysterious surge of confidence which gives a person a certainty and assurance that God is about to act through a word or an action.
  - D. Gifts of healing:** perhaps many different gifts or powers of healing, each appropriate to and effective for its related illness, or each occurrence constituting a distinct gift in its own right.
  - E. Miracles:** any kind of activity where God's mighty power is evident.
  - F. Prophecy:**
    - 1. Telling others what God has brought to mind.
    - 2. Declaring the current burden or heart of God to his people for the purpose of edification (build up), exhortation (stir up) and consolation (cheer up).
  - G. Distinguishing of spirits:** a special ability to recognize the influence of the Holy Spirit or of a demonic spirit in a person.
  - H. Tongues:** prayer or praise spoken in syllables not understood by the speaker.
  - I. Teaching:** the ability to explain Scripture and apply it to people's lives.
  - J. Helps/Serving:** the ability to notice the needs of others and the desire and capacity to respond in helpful ways.
  - K. Administration:** the ability to steer, organize, direct and lead people, projects and ministries so that the mission of the church is carried out.
  - L. Exhortation:** the ability to speak to others in a way that magnifies God and results in them experiencing comfort, encouragement, inspiration, and strengthening.
  - M. Leadership:** the ability to guide and direct the church in such a way that God is glorified, the church is unified and the church's mission is accomplished.
  - N. Showing mercy:** the ability to identify with the emotions and feelings of others and to aid those in need or distress.
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