

## ECCLESIOLOGY: Lesson 6—The Gifts of the Spirit to the Church

### I. The Background of Spiritual Gifts

#### A. Need for maturity

**1 Corinthians 14:20** Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.

#### B. Need for discernment

**1 Corinthians 12:1-3a** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore I want you to understand ...

**1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

**2 Corinthians 11:3-4** But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere [singleness, oneness] and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

#### C. Testing the spirits

1. The only way to be sure if something is spiritual is to be sure it is scriptural. We should always compare a teaching or a practice with God's Word—That is the test of its being of the Holy Spirit.

**John 16:13-15** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

2. What a person truly believes about Jesus Christ is the test of whether or not what he teaches and does is by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always leads men to ascribe Lordship to Jesus Christ as one indivisible and divine Person, to be obeyed completely.

**John 15:26** "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

**1 Corinthians 12:3** 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.

## II. General Definition of Spiritual Gifts

- A. *Charisma* means essentially “gift of grace” or “free gift”
- B. “Spiritual gifts are divine enablements for ministry, characteristics of Jesus Christ that are to be manifested through the body corporate just as they were manifested through the body incarnate.” (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 283.)
- C. “A spiritual gift is any ability that is empowered by the Holy Spirit and used in any ministry of the church.” (Grudem, 1016).
- D. A spiritual gift is a capacity for spiritual ministry. It is the unique single enablement for us by God’s design and grace, so that we are unique in our service for Christ.
- E. Spiritual gifts are not talents that are commonly shared among believers and unbelievers alike. Spiritual gifts are only given to believers, and every believer has been endowed with a spiritual gift upon salvation.

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

**1 Corinthians 12:11** All these [gifts] are empowered [energized] by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

**1 Peter 4:10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

- F. Spiritual gifts are not to be personally sought after – they are gifts of grace, and the intention of Paul’s writing to the Corinthians is to help them recognize that all believers have gifts that are different.
  - 1. Paul’s repeated point in 1 Corinthians 12 is that we do not choose or seek the gifts. Thus, 1 Cor 12:31 is best understood negatively... giving the meaning of “But you earnestly desire the greater gifts [showier gifts such as tongues]”

2. Believers cannot earn, pray for, or in any manner generate spiritual gifts.

**Acts 8:18-20** Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"

3. Spiritual gifts are to be earnestly desired by the body on behalf of the corporate body – that God might be manifest in His church.

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

G. All spiritual gifts are temporary; none have a purpose or place in heaven.

**1 Corinthians 13:8** Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

1. Yet within the impermanence of all spiritual gifts, there are some which will “pass away”, and others which will “cease”.

- a. Prophecy and knowledge will “pass away.”

**1 Corinthians 13:9-10** For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

- b. Tongues will “cease.”

### III. The United Source of Spiritual Gifts

A. The Triune God is the source of all spiritual gifts.

**1 Corinthians 12:4** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;  
**1 Corinthians 12:5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;  
**1 Corinthians 12:6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

B. Spiritual gifts are for us to use and steward, but they are loaned to us; they belong to God. Spiritual gifts are for us to use, but by its power in His service and to His glory.

**1 Peter 4:10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied [multi-faceted] grace:

- C. God's grace to His children expresses itself in the spiritual gifts.

**Romans 12:6a** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: ...

- D. Just as spiritual gifts are given supernaturally, so they are energized supernaturally. Christians, no matter how well trained and experienced or how unselfishly motivated, cannot exercise their gifts in their own power. ... Only the Giver of spiritual gifts can empower them and make them effective.

**1 Corinthians 12:11** All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

**1 Corinthians 12:18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

- E. God not only provides the power of spiritual gifts, but He sovereignly places and distributes them among the specific members of the body for His greatest good.

**1 Corinthians 12:18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

**1 Corinthians 12:28** And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

- F. The only right motivation for the every spiritual ministry and the proper use of every spiritual gift is love.

**1 Corinthians 14:1** Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

#### IV. The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts

- A. To fulfill the desire of God

**1 Corinthians 12:18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

1. God does not intend for everyone to have the same gift, and He does not intend for everyone to have gifts that are out front and noticed. He distributes the offices and the gifts according to His sovereign purpose, "just as He wills" (12:11). The responsibility of believers is to accept the ministries they are given with

gratitude and to use them with faithfulness. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 325.)

**1 Corinthians 12:29-30** Are all apostles? [No.] Are all prophets? [No.] Are all teachers? [No.] Do all work miracles? [No.] 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? [No.] Do all speak with tongues? [No.] Do all interpret? [No.]

2. Questioning our spiritual gifts is questioning God, and not using our spiritual gifts is disobeying God. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 315)

**Romans 9:20-21** But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use?

- B. Spiritual gifts make the Holy Spirit known, clear, and evident in the church and in the world. They manifest the Spirit.

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

- C. Spiritual gifts are given for the common good.

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

- D. Spiritual gifts fill two major purposes:

1. The more-permanent gifts are given to edify the church.
2. The temporary gifts are given as signs to confirm the Word of God.

- E. All the gifts are given to the church to build up God's people into the image of Christ its Lord. Spiritual gifts are the Lord's primary channel of making Christians become Christ in the world, His visible and manifest body. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 282-283.)

**Ephesians 4:11-13** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ...

- F. The Spirit gives gifts to believers to express and strengthen the unity they have in their Lord Jesus Christ. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 289.)
- G. Spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the local church – not for self-edification.

## V. The Unique Spectrum of Spiritual Gifts

- A. God has given His church a variety of gifts, to be used in a variety of ministries that have a variety of effects.
  - 1. All gifts are for service, but the types of service are immeasurable.
  - 2. The same gift may be used by the Lord in countless ways, in many “varieties”. Even the same person exercising the same gift will not always see the same kind or extent of result.
  - 3. Not only is every believer gifted, but every believer is perfectly gifted.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-6** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

- B. Diversity is essential to unity in the body of Christ. Unity is not uniformity in expression, but common commitment to a singular source and authority for genuine spirituality.

**Romans 12:4** For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function,

- 1. “The diversity of the church is a God-ordained means of bringing the fellowship to oneness, but unless each diverse member recognizes and accepts his part in the whole body, diversity will divide rather than unite, destroy rather than build up, bring discord rather than harmony, and result in self-serving rather than self-giving.” (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 291)

- C. All spiritual gifts fall into two general categories:

- 1. Speaking or Verbal Gifts (prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, teaching, exhortation, etc.)
- 2. Serving or Nonverbal Gifts (leadership, helps, giving, mercy, faith, discernment, etc.)

**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.

D. Scriptural Lists of Spiritual Gifts (12, 12, 4, 4)

**Romans 12:6-8** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 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.

**1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28** To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 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. .... 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

**Ephesians 4:11** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,

**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.

E. Because the scriptural lists are not identical, it seems clear that God did not intend to give His church either a rigid or a precise and exhaustive compilation, but rather general categories. It is best to see each person's gift as a unique blend of the categories of giftedness, granted to that individual in connection with his or her traits and experiences and the needs of the church. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 291)

## VI. Definitions of Representative Spiritual Gifts

### A. The Gift of Wisdom

**1 Corinthians 12:8a** To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, ...

1. A speaking ability
2. May have been revelatory in the apostolic age.
3. The ability to understand God's will and apply it obediently. The empowerment to make skillful and practical application of the truth to life situations; applying truths discovered. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 298)

### B. The Gift of Knowledge

**1 Corinthians 12:8b** ...and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

**1 Corinthians 13:2a** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, ...

1. The ability to perceive and understand the truths of God's Word. Especially the gift of communicating insight into the mysteries of Gods' revelation—those truths that could not be known apart from God's revelation.
2. Supernaturally enabled not only to discover truths from the facts of Scripture but to explain and interpret those truths in order to help others understand them. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 299)
3. May have been revelatory in the first century.

### C. The Gift of Faith

**1 Corinthians 12:9a** to another faith by the same Spirit, ...

**1 Corinthians 13:2b** ...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

1. Distinct from saving faith or the daily faith by which every believer lives.
2. An intensive ability to trust God in difficult and demanding ways. It is the supernatural ability to trust God in the face of



overwhelming obstacles and human impossibilities. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 299)

3. Primarily expressed through prayer

#### D. The Gifts of Healings

**1 Corinthians 12:9b** ...to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

1. Both words are plural, emphasizing the many different kinds of healings that are needed for many different kinds of affliction.
2. It was never used solely for the purpose of bring physical health.
3. A temporary sign gift that was given to the church for authenticating the message as the Word of God.

**JESUS - Matthew 8:16-17** That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

**The Twelve - Matthew 10:1** And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.

**The Seventy - Luke 10:1, 9** After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ... 9 Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

**Associates of the Apostles, Like Philip - Acts 8:5-7** Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7 For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

#### E. The Gift of Miracles

**1 Corinthians 12:10a** to another the working of miracles, ...

**John 2:11** This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

**John 20:30-31** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**Acts 2:22** "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—

1. A miracle is a supernatural intrusion into the natural world and its natural laws, explainable only by divine intervention. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 301)
2. *Dunamis* literally means “power” and is frequently connected with the casting out of demons in the gospels (Luke 4:36; 6:18; 9:42).
3. A temporary sign gift that was given to the church for authenticating the message as the Word of God.
4. Miraculous signs were a mark of apostleship, authenticating the apostle’s message and work as being of the Lord.

**2 Corinthians 12:12** The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

**Acts 14:3** So they [Paul and Barnabas] remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

**Hebrews 2:3-4** ...It [the Gospel] was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard [the apostles], 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

#### F. The Gift of Prophecy

**1 Corinthians 12:10b** ...to another prophecy, ...

**Romans 12:6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;

1. Simply means “to speak forth, to proclaim”; Assumes the speaker is before an audience, and thus could mean “to speak publicly”; forth-telling.

2. The purpose of prophecy is to build up by edification, to encourage through exhortation, and to comfort through consolation. Two-fold purpose of learning and exhortation.

**1 Corinthians 14:3** On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

**1 Corinthians 14:31** For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged,

3. Prophecy is evangelistic, speaking to men's hearts and bringing conviction of sin.

**1 Corinthians 14:24-25** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

4. The connotation of fore-telling (telling predictions for the future, etc.) was added to this word in the Middle Ages.
5. A prophet of God is simply one who speaks forth God's Word, and prophecy is the proclaiming of that Word. The gift of prophecy is the Spirit-given and Spirit-empowered ability to proclaim the Word effectively. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 303.)
6. Prophecy should never deviate from the written Word of God.

**Romans 12:6** Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith [in right relationship to or in agreement with the Gospel];

**1 Corinthians 14:37** If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.

**1 Thessalonians 5:20** Do not despise prophecies,

**Revelation 19:10b** ...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

7. Paul compares this gift favorably to the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14, and teaches that all Christians *collectively* (not

personally) should seek to have a gift of proclamation ministered among them.

**1 Corinthians 14:1** Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

**1 Corinthians 14:39** So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

#### G. The Gift of Discernment

**1 Corinthians 12:10c** ...to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, ...

1. The ability to separate out for examination and judging in order to determine what is genuine and what is spurious. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 304.)

**Acts 17:11** Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

**1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2. Discernment is given to tell if the other gifts are of the Holy Spirit, if they are merely natural imitations, or if they are demonic counterfeits.

**Acts 16:16-17** As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

**1 Corinthians 14:29** Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

3. Discernment also assists the church in settling disputes well.

**1 Corinthians 6:5** I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers,

4. Discernment can easily deteriorate into a critical, proud, and self-righteous spirit. Rightly used it is a great protection to God's

people; but it can be judgmental instead of corrective when it is imitated in the flesh. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 305.)

#### H. The Gift of Tongues & of Interpretation of Tongues

**1 Corinthians 12:10d** ...to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

1. *Glossais* – can mean languages; was commonly used in Paul's day to describe pagan ecstatic speech. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 370.)
2. The purpose of the gift of tongues, like all language, was to communicate. Although it was a miraculous sign gift, it also was a communicative gift. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 375.)
  - a. God did not give two kinds of tongues – one intelligible and the other unintelligible. The Bible speaks of only one gift, whose characteristics and purposes did not change. Every true manifestation of tongues after Pentecost until their cessation, were understandable—either directly or through an interpreter. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 376.)

**Acts 2:6, 8-11** And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ... And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

**1 Corinthians 14:27** If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret.

- b. Although tongues were not given primarily for edification (but for a sign to unbelievers), tongues were nevertheless to be understood by the unbelievers, and not to cause bewilderment. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 384.)

**Acts 2:11** ...both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

**1 Corinthians 14:23** If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?

3. A temporary sign gift that was given to the church for authenticating the message as the Word of God.
4. The gift of tongues and interpretation were to be exercised properly in a systematic and orderly manner.
5. Tongues were an inferior means of edification, as opposed to prophecy.

**1 Corinthians 14:19** Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

- a. Tongues were inferior means of communication (1 Cor 14:1-12)

- 1) Prophecy edifies the entire congregation

**1 Corinthians 14:1-5** Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 5 Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

- 2) True tongues must be interpreted in order to be understood. They cannot possibly edify anyone, including the person speaking, without such interpretation. Thus they cannot be intended by God for private devotional use, as many Pentecostals and charismatics claim. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 372.)

**1 Corinthians 14:2** For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.

- 3) Paul sarcastically points out the self-satisfaction of pride-induced emotion in comparing tongues to prophecy.

**1 Corinthians 14:4** The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

- 4) Technically, the gift of translation (a distinct gift from speaking in tongues—1 Cor 12:10, 30) was the edifying gift.

**1 Corinthians 14:5** Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

b. Tongues were inferior means of praise

**1 Corinthians 14:13-19** Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. 15 What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. 16 Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? 17 For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. 18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

- 1) The effects of tongues are emotional rather than rational.
- 2) The Holy Spirit does not pray through a person while bypassing his mind. Praying and singing with the spirit must be accompanied by praying and

singing with the mind also. True spirituality involves more than the mind, but it never excludes the mind.

**1 Corinthians 14:14-15** For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. 15 What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

- 3) True spirituality involves more than the mind, but it never excludes the mind.

**Romans 12:1-2** 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. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Ephesians 4:23** and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

- 4) True spirituality surrenders and submits the will to God's Word, but it never suggests loss of self-control. The Holy Spirit does not work through persons who are out of self-control or "slain in the spirit."

**Galatians 5:16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

**Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

- c. Tongues were inferior means of evangelism

**1 Corinthians 14:20-25** Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. 21 In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the



Lord." 22 Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. 23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

6. The gift of tongues and interpretation ceased when the office of the apostle was fulfilled as the New Testament was completed.

a. Tongues were specifically given as a judicial sign to unbelieving Israel.

**1 Corinthians 14:21-22a** In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, ...

b. The gift of tongues was a sign that God would no longer work through one nation, and favor one people.

**Isaiah 28:11-12** For by people of strange lips and with a foreign tongue the Lord will speak to this people, 12 to whom he has said, "This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose"; yet they would not hear.

**Acts 10:44-46** While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared,

c. Tongues were a validating sign of God's authority upon the apostles' message. As a sign, they now have no further purpose, because that to which they pointed has been reached and passed.

**1 Corinthians 14:18** I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

1) Tongues' purpose was not to teach, but to point, not to reveal God's truth but to validate the truth of His appointed spokesmen. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 383.)

d. Tongues are nowhere alluded to or found in any writings of the Church Fathers.

#### I. The Gift of Helps/Serving

**1 Corinthians 12:28f** And God has appointed in the church ...helping, ...

**Romans 12:7a** if service, in our serving; ...

1. "To take the burden off someone else and place it on oneself." (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 324.)
2. An ability for service in the broadest sense of helping and supporting others in day-by-day, often unnoticed ways. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 324.)
3. A simple, straight forward gift that is broad in its application – manifested in every sort of practical help that Christians can give one another in Jesus' name. (*Romans 9-16*, TMNTC, 172.)

#### J. The Gift of Administrations

**1 Corinthians 12:28g** And God has appointed in the church ...  
administrating, ...

**Romans 12:8c** ...the one who leads, with zeal;

1. *Kubernesis* – literally meaning "to steer or pilot" a ship; or *proistemi* – literally meaning "to stand before others"
2. This is the spiritual gift of leadership. The ability to make wise decisions and to mobilize, motivate, and direct others toward an objective. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 325.)

#### K. The Gift of Teaching

**Romans 12:7**...the one who teaches, in his teaching;

1. One who is divinely gifted with special ability to interpret and present God's truth understandably.
2. The primary difference in *teaching* and *prophesying* is not in content but in the distinction between the ability *to proclaim* and

the ability to give systematic and regular instruction in God's Word. (*Romans 9-16*, TMNTC, 172.)

L. The Gift of Exhortation

**Romans 12:8a** the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; ...

1. Parakaleo - Literal meaning of "calling someone to one's side"
2. To exhort means to "pastorally apply the gospel to a particular congregation – as a whole, and also to its members severally." (Cranfield, *Romans*, 624.)
3. Exhortation encompasses the ideas of advising, pleading, encouraging, warning, strengthening, and comforting. (*Romans 9-16*, TMNTC, 174.)
4. Helping someone carry a burden that is too heavy to bear alone. (*Romans 9-16*, TMNTC, 174.)

M. The Gift of Giving

**Romans 12:8b** ...the one who contributes, in generosity; ...

1. A person who is given grace to sacrificially share and impart that which is one's own; a God-given inclination to give with generosity and personal sacrifice.

**2 Corinthians 8:2-5** for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

N. The Gift of Mercy

**Romans 12:8d** ...the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

1. Carries a joint idea of actively demonstrating sympathy for someone else and of having the necessary resources to successfully comfort and strengthen that person.
2. Divinely endowed with special sensitivity to suffering and sorrow, with ability to notice misery and distress that may go

unnoticed by others, and with the desire and means to help alleviate such afflictions. (*Romans 9-16*, TMNTC, 177.)

## VII. The Proper Procedure for Tongues and Interpretation, and Prophecy

- A. Because Paul knew that the gift of tongues would cease in a few years, he was not giving instructions for governing tongues in the church today. He was not even giving such instructions to the Corinthians, because he was speaking of counterfeit tongues, which were based in self-centered emotionalism and did not originate with the Holy Spirit. He was giving them, as well as Christians of all ages, warning against using self-serving, worldly, carnal, ineffective, and God-dishonoring substitutes for the true spiritual gifts God has ordained to be ministered in the power and in the fruit of the Spirit and for the blessing and edification of His church. (*1 Corinthians*, TMNTC, 378.)
- B. 1 Corinthians 14:20-28 is a key section of Scripture, because it gives a clear picture of what the gift of languages was designed to do and therefore gives another basic criterion for judging whether or not that gift is operative today.
- C. The biblical procedure for the use of languages is to be systematic and orderly (in turn, one at a time).

**1 Corinthians 14:33a** For God is not a God of confusion but of peace....

**1 Corinthians 14:26-28** What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

### 1. Four regulations for the gift of tongues

- a. Only two or three persons should speak

**1 Corinthians 14:27a** If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, ...

- b. They should speak in turn

**1 Corinthians 14:27b** ...and each in turn, ...

- c. What they say should be interpreted.

**1 Corinthians 14:27c** ...and let someone interpret.

- d. If no one is present to interpret, they should not speak.

**1 Corinthians 14:28** But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

“An interpreter *could not* exercise his gift unless there were speaking, and a speaker *should not* exercise his gift unless there were interpretation.” (1 Corinthians, TMNTC, 386.)

## 2. Four regulations for the gift of prophecy

**1 Corinthians 14:29-33a** Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

- a. Only two or three prophets were to speak

**1 Corinthians 14:29a** Let two or three prophets speak,...

- b. The other prophets were to judge what was said

**1 Corinthians 14:29b** ...and let the others weigh what is said.

- c. If someone else had a revelation, the first speaker was to yield to him

**1 Corinthians 14:30** If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.

- d. Each prophet was to speak in turn

**1 Corinthians 14:31-33a** For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. 33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

- 1) Each prophet is to have control of his own spirit. The Bible does not teach to pursue out-of-spirit or out-of-mind revelations.

D. All the gifts should be employed for edification in the church.

**1 Corinthians 14:26b** ...Let all things be done for building up.

**Romans 14:19** So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

**Romans 15:2-3a** Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For Christ did not please himself, ...

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

VIII. The Result of the Spirit of God ruling and energizing the membership of a church through Spiritual Gifts:

- A. The spirit-controlled church is unified in its diversity of individuality.
- B. The spirit-controlled church is characterized by deep, honest, intimate, and inclusive fellowship.
- C. The spirit-controlled church is worshipful.
- D. The spirit-controlled church is evangelistic, winning souls spontaneously and joyfully.
- E. The spirit-controlled church is obedient, walking in the path that God prescribes, and only in that path.
- F. The spirit-controlled church is submissive, because it loves its Lord and seeks to please only Him.
- G. The spirit-controlled church is active in ministry, fulfilling its call to serve, rather than to be served.
- H. Christians themselves receive great blessings.
- I. The church lives out a dynamic and supernatural witness, with power and effectiveness.
- J. God's leaders become apparent.
- K. The church experiences the joy of great unity, love, and fellowship.

IX. So why might some Christians actually resist becoming involved in the ministry of the church?

A. Some believe they have no gifts or abilities that are worthwhile.

1. This is the proud individualism of supposed inferiority.

**1 Corinthians 12:15-17** If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

B. Some believe they are so highly qualified that they do not really need the help of others to perform their ministry.

1. This is the proud individualism of supposed independence.

**1 Corinthians 12:21-27** The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. 27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

**Romans 12:3** 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.

2. Five wrong attitudes related to spiritual gifts

- a. Using prominent gift boastfully (1 Cor 12:21)
- b. Depreciating ourselves and gifts in false humility (1 Cor 12:11-12, 19)
- c. Claiming impressive gifts which we do not possess (1 Cor 12:29-30)
- d. Failing to use an inconspicuous gift out of jealousy, resentment, or shame. (1 Cor 12:15-16)

2. Failing to use one's gifts at all (Rom 12:6-8)

X. So how should we then live?

- A. In light of the Gospel, each is to have a right view of himself in relation to his fellow believers, and give himself wholeheartedly to the particular service which he has been given by the grace of God.

**Romans 12:3-8** 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. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 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.

1. “These verses indicate the unselfconscious, businesslike, sober way in which Christians who do measure themselves by the standard which God has given them in their faith will give themselves to the fulfillment of the tasks apportioned to them by the *grace* they have received, using their particular *grace* to the full in the service of God and of one another, undistracted by futile calculations of precedence.” (Cranfield, *Romans*, 618-619.)

- B. Each member of the body is commanded to minister in many of the gifted areas, whether he possesses that particular gift or not. For example, all Christians are to function in the following areas:

1. Faith

**2 Corinthians 5:7** for we walk by faith, not by sight.

2. Wisdom

**James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

3. Knowledge

**2 Timothy 2:15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.



4. Exhortation

**Hebrews 10:24-25** And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

5. Giving

**2 Corinthians 9:7** Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

6. Care for one another (helps/service)

**1 Corinthians 12:25** that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.

C. The Bible does not explicitly explain how to determine one's spiritual giftedness.

1. Begin by being obedient to the areas mentioned above in the previous section.
2. Pray for opportunities to serve, and wisdom to know how the Lord chooses to get the most glory from your own life.
3. Seek the counsel of other believers; they may be more aware of your gifts than you are.
4. Look for open doors to begin serving.
5. Don't be afraid to try different areas and see how God decides to use you!

## **Appendix**

### **Continuing Revelation, Sufficiency of Scripture, and the Miraculous**

All Christians today believe that the general revelation of God continues to witness of the Creator's power and man's culpability through creation and man's conscience. However, when Christians speak of God's continuing revelation today, they usually mean that God is still revealing Himself to men using special words, visits, or miraculous signs outside of the spiritual illumination of the canon of Scripture. This extra-biblical revelation of God seems attractive when contrasted with the revelation of Scripture since it is fresh, dynamic, and intimately personal.

However it is important that this belief and its implications be carefully examined. First continuing revelation is contrary to the sufficiency of Scripture as a closed canon. If God, through the inspiration of Scripture, has already *"given us everything pertaining to life and godliness,"*<sup>1</sup> then what need do believers have for more extra-biblical revelation from God? Now that the canon is closed, the need for extra-biblical revelation undermines the very quality and practice of the Biblical record itself. According to the prophet Isaiah, the law and testimony of God is all that people should seek after when they desire to hear from God.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, if God is still revealing profitable truth about Himself and how to live for Him, what hinders this extra-biblical revelation from being added to the Holy Scriptures? Interestingly, most Christians who believe in the need for continuing special revelation today do agree that the canon of Scripture is closed<sup>3</sup> and do not advocate adding personal dreams, visions, or words to the Bible. So this inconsistency practically reveals the diminished authority of objective truth and the inflated authority practically given to feelings and experience. Rather than trusting in all "the things freely given to us by God"<sup>4</sup> in His Word, experiences and (often) highly emotional encounters with the Holy Spirit are given a higher authority to formulate the basis of Christianity and become the standard for spiritual achievement. However "the work of the Holy Spirit in personal experience cannot be disengaged from Scripture. The Spirit does not speak in ways that are independent of Scripture. Apart from Scripture we

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter 1:3.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 8:19-20.

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:12.

would never have known of God's grace in Christ. The biblical Word, rather than spiritual experience, is the test of truth."<sup>5</sup>

Certainly God is a God of wonders<sup>6</sup>, and He can do anything He desires in heaven and on earth.<sup>7</sup> Every born-again believer is proof that miracles still happen!<sup>8</sup> However when Christians hold to continuing special revelation they typically assert that the use of miracles and the supernatural sign gifts is still the normative means by which God reveals Himself to man. While not disputing that the miraculous and supernatural can still occur, a Biblical review of these matters negates their employment as a standard mode or authoritative vehicle of revelation.

Historically the spectacular works of God were typically given to authenticate His revelation and revelation bearer,<sup>9</sup> thus diminishing in need after the completion of the canon of the sufficient Scripture.<sup>10</sup> The Scriptures also witness to the following dangers of supernatural signs in the church: possible confusion or misinterpretation of the miracle,<sup>11</sup> the supernatural is not necessarily an indication of God's work or presence,<sup>12</sup> Satan's ability to deceive even believers through counterfeited miraculous gifts,<sup>13</sup> and the deceitful greed of man's heart to covet the power and prestige of an association with the supernatural.<sup>14</sup> While of course none of these dangers unequivocally invalidate God's ability to gloriously employ the miraculous in his present-day church, there are several Biblical truths which must always govern His use of miracles, prophecy, and tongues: (1) Spiritual sign gifts are never to be an indication of salvation, spiritual maturity, or a measure of comparison in the Body of Christ.<sup>15</sup> (2) Christian love is preeminent to sign gifts.<sup>16</sup> (3) Spiritual sign gifts are not intended to be divisive in the Body of Christ.<sup>17</sup> (4) The exercise of spiritual sign gifts is never a goal unto itself; rather the goal is always the

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<sup>5</sup> *The Cambridge Declaration* of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, April 20, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 15:11.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel 4:35.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17.

<sup>9</sup> Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Timothy 5:23.

<sup>11</sup> John 12:27-29; Acts 14:11; 1 Corinthians 14:7-9.

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 13:1-3; Matthew 7:22.

<sup>13</sup> Revelation 13:13-14.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Kings 5:20-27; Acts 8:18-23.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:15-18, 29-30.

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:1-2.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:25-26.

edifying of the Body of Christ.<sup>18</sup> (5) Spiritual prophesy is defined by edification, exhortation, and comfort.<sup>19</sup> (6) The practice of any spiritual gift should always give a certain and clear message.<sup>20</sup> (7) Public speaking in tongues (if done at all) must be done in a limited and orderly manner, and must have interpretation.<sup>21</sup> (8) Prophesying should be done orderly, one by one, in submission to God's Word.<sup>22</sup> (9) God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted.<sup>23</sup> (10) Miracles performed by God will never contradict His character or ways as revealed to man in the Scriptures.<sup>24</sup> Much practice of the 'supernatural' in today's church would have to stop if only they were submitted to these Biblical truths.

Essentially then, because of the sufficiency of the closed canon of Scripture, man no longer needs special miracles or the supernatural sign gifts, and they should not be sought after. If God according to His will determines to bring Himself glory through the miraculous, it will always be in conformance with His clear and authoritative Word. The Scriptures therefore are the sole rule of governing and authenticating the supernatural and miraculous.

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:12.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:3-4, 31.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:6-9, 19, 23-25.

<sup>21</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:13, 27-28.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:29-32.

<sup>23</sup> Luke 18:1-6; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15.

<sup>24</sup> Numbers 23:19; Psalms 102:25-27; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17.