

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Experiencing the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not the pinnacle of the Christian life. As important as the fullness of the Spirit is, it is not an end in itself, but a powerful beginning. The Holy Spirit gives the Christian the ability to minister supernaturally to the needs of others. Every Christian who receives the fullness of God's Spirit is a candidate for one or more gifts of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of these gifts is to bless and encourage other Christians and to strengthen the church.



The Bible lists nine specific gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. These are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the gift of faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues and the ability to interpret messages in tongues.

To fully appreciate the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we must first understand the reason for these gifts:

- The gifts of the Spirit exalt the Lordship of Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:3).
- The gifts help Christians reach others who need Jesus (Acts 1:8).
- The gifts bring people closer to God (1 Corinthians 14:12).
- The gifts, although diverse, are all given by God (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- The gifts confirm the truth of the gospel (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4).



Jesus is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). The Holy Spirit is the One who provides the gifts, the power, and the confidence to use His gifts. These gifts can be summarized in three categories:

- Gifts of Revelation:** Discernment, Knowledge, Wisdom;
- Gifts of Power:** Healing, Miracles, Faith;
- Gifts of Speaking:** Tongues, Interpretation, Prophecy.

Spiritual gifts are intended for public ministry, but in some cases they may have a devotional element for the believer. Tongues, for example, has value in the corporate worship service when accompanied by the gift of interpretation, but it also benefits the individual (1 Corinthians 14:4).

DECLARATION OF FAITH

"We believe that the Holy Spirit has the following gifts to bestow upon the believing church of the Lord Jesus Christ; that according to the degree of grace and faith possessed by the recipient, these gifts are divided to every man severally as He, the Holy Spirit will; that they are to be most earnestly desired and coveted, in the order and proportion wherein they prove most edifying and beneficial to the church."

-- Aimee Semple McPherson,
Founder ICFG



Discerning of Spirits

This gift provides insight about what power is motivating an individual. Discerning of spirits is not judging people; rather, it is the power to detect the realm of spiritual influence. This gift answers the question, "Is the motivation from the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit, or the human spirit?"

Word of Wisdom

The person with this gift knows how to handle a situation appropriately, as Christ would. This is especially important in managing the affairs of the church and in dealing with problems and new challenges. It is not natural wisdom, but supernatural. The word of wisdom is one method God uses to tell the church how to accomplish His will.

Word of Knowledge

The word of knowledge reveals to the church a strategy or plan of direction the Lord wants us to take. On a personal level, the word of knowledge might address moral issues or right relationships. God never intends this or any gift to condemn someone (Romans 8:1). Rather, the word of knowledge is intended to bring personal and corporate maturity to the church.

Gifts of Healing

This gift is the supernatural ability to minister healing and health to those who need it. Notice that "gifts" is plural which would seemingly indicate that one believer might have the gift to see God heal a certain kind of disease and another believer might have a gift to see God heal a different kind of sickness. This gift tends to attract people and influence them to believe the gospel (see Acts 8:6-7).

We accept spiritual gifts as being for the church today for the same reason we accept the baptism with the Holy Spirit as being for today. We believe that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). There is no shred of evidence in the Bible that God intended that the supernatural should have ceased with the death of the apostles.

Working of Miracles

The working of miracles is the unique power of the Holy Spirit at work to counteract evil forces. The literal meaning is "operations of powerful works." This gift goes beyond natural abilities and is often accompanied by the gifts of faith and healing.

Faith

This gift is the supernatural ability to believe God without a doubt. This is faith beyond our natural understanding and ability (Hebrews 11:1). Faith makes its greatest impact when a situation seems hopeless, but we know that God is going to work (Matthew 9:23-29).

Tongues

The devotional nature of tongues has been previously discussed. Some are gifted with a public ministry of tongues; when interpreted, a message in tongues has equal weight with the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:5).

Interpretation

The Greek words used in the New Testament for "interpretation" suggest the idea of explanation rather than a specific word-for-word translation. It is generally true that people moving in the gift of interpretation do not naturally understand the tongue they are interpreting. The interpretation of tongues is a Spirit-controlled phenomenon.

Prophecy

This gift is given to communicate in a known language something that will help believers grow to a mature faith, be encouraged, or be comforted. It is usually exercised in a group of believers so that other mature Christians can evaluate the message and determine whether it is of God or of man.

What exposure have you had to the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Choose one or two gifts listed below and write down how you think the gift blessed the church.



Personal Response

Word of Wisdom _____

Word of Knowledge _____

Faith _____

Gifts of Healing _____

Working of Miracles _____

Prophecy _____

Discerning of Spirits _____

Tongues and Interpretation _____

Discuss the following questions in relation to the experience of the students: 1) How was Jesus glorified in each example? 2) Was use of the gift consistent with the Bible? 3) Was a person brought to Jesus or strengthened in his or her personal faith? 4) Was the church made stronger in unity as a result of the use of this gift?



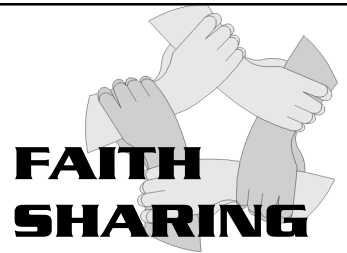
HEART PERSPECTIVE

The gifts of the Holy Spirit really belong to the church more than to the individuals who exercise them; therefore, they must not be used in a selfish, showy or unloving way.

The person who is gifted has control of the gift (1 Corinthians 14:32). Believers must use the gifts of tongues, interpretation, and prophecy according to scriptural guidelines, and for the sole purpose of giving spiritual instruction which benefits the whole church. The gifts of healing, miracles, and faith all continue the ministry of Jesus to those

in need. Many of the gifts consist of information which is supernaturally revealed by God. Because the Holy Spirit always operates to glorify Jesus and to build up the Body of Christ, the gifts of the Spirit will never be used to embarrass or put down another person. The goal is to bring wholeness to the entire church through the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In order to draw people to Christ, special operations of God's power are needed to demonstrate the Lord's nearness to and interest in humanity. Supernatural ministry wrought in the name of the Lord Jesus was the credentials of early Christianity. In building up the church, the Gifts of the Spirit help make the church a powerful place for spiritual seekers so that they might experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.



Lesson 8 Teaching Outline

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit



REFERENCE POINT (15 Minutes)

Ask the students to respond to this question: “What changes has Jesus brought to your life since you became a Christian?”

Probably most people first notice a change in the way they think or act. Salvation benefits the individual. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are equipped to witness effectively to others. The gifts of the Spirit help us supernaturally to benefit the lives of others.

As you discuss the *Reference Point*, ask volunteers to read the Bible verses and briefly discuss the five suggested reasons the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given.

OVERVIEW (10 Minutes)

Try a “time challenge” to emphasize the categories and names of the nine gifts. Write the nine gifts of the Spirit on pieces of poster board with double stick tape on the back of each; write the three categories on the chalkboard.

Divide the group into teams. Take turns having each team’s representative place the nine gifts of the Spirit under the correct heading (three gifts under each) in as little time as possible. Keep track of the time and compare each team’s effort. Talk about the possible reasons the gifts are placed in these categories.

INSIGHT (25 Minutes)

This is the primary time of teaching. Read through the descriptions and suggested Bible verses noting comments or questions that you will address in your teaching. No doubt some of these gifts will be the source of many questions, some discussion and perhaps disagreement within the class. Be careful as you prepare to seek counsel from your Pastor in areas of question. Try to maintain a lecture format for this part of the lesson. There will be time in the “Personal Response” section for interaction and discussion.

TAKING IT HOME

PERSONAL RESPONSE (Conclusion, 10 Minutes)

Encourage the students to think about experiences they have had with the gifts of the Spirit. After they take a few minutes to write down their observations, take time as a group to discuss the observations. Use the suggested questions to focus your discussion.

HEART PERSPECTIVE (Personal Devotions)

As students pray during the week for God to use them with regard to the gifts of the Spirit, tell them to consider the ways they are responsible for using the gifts the Holy Spirit has blessed them with. Remind them, too, that the Holy Spirit is responsible for the results.

FAITH SHARING (Follow-Up)

Encourage students to ask the Holy Spirit to give them gifts. Then urge them to find an opportunity this coming week to use those gifts to help others establish a closer relationship with Jesus.