

Truth and Spirit Ministries

The Gifts of the Spirit

Lesson Text: I Corinthians 12:1-11 (NIV)

¹ Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant. ² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. ³ Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Knowing the Gift Giver

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ~Acts 2:38

Before beginning our lesson on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it's important that we learn about the gift Giver. The Holy Spirit is God's gift to all believers. When we receive Christ as our Savior and Lord we are born again of the Spirit. The Spirit is eternal life and he comes to dwell *within us* and helps empower us personally to live the life of Christ. (*John 3:1-8, John 14:15-26, 16:12-16*) Shortly after conversion most believers then follow the example of Christ and are baptized in water. (*Matthew 3:13-15*) This is not the sum total of all that God wants us to receive from him however.

In order to fulfill the Great Commission given to us by Jesus we must have power come *upon us* as well in order to impact those in the world for the kingdom of God. To accomplish the work that the Lord has given us we need to receive a subsequent baptism called the baptism with the Spirit. (*Acts 1:8, 2:1-4, 19:1-7*) This is also often called being filled with the Spirit.

John the Baptist said that he baptized those in water who repented of their sins. He went on to declare however that One would come after him that is mightier than him and he

would baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire. (*Matthew 3:11*) He was of course referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. This baptism is a subsequent baptism to our being baptized in water. Our first baptism is a literal immersion in water and is symbolic of our death, burial and resurrected life in Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit however is when the Lord Jesus baptizes or immerses us in his *power*.

The indwelling of the Spirit gives us *power inwardly* to live the life of Christ but the baptism of the Spirit is when he comes *upon us* in power to minister to others. Having the Holy Spirit inwardly and outwardly is also called the anointing. (*I John 2:27, Luke 4:18*) The power of the Holy Spirit that comes upon us enables us to be effective ministers and witnesses of the Lord as we go to those in the world and to encourage and help build up our brothers and sisters in the Church as well. (*I Corinthians 12:7, 14:26*) The Holy Spirit has been sent to help release to us the finished work of the Cross of Christ in our lives personally and in the lives of others around us as well.

God has blessed us with so many wonderful gifts. The fruit of the Spirit changes us from the inside out. The gifts of the Spirit however change people from the outside in. God pours out his Spirit upon us so that we can effectively witness for him in power. In Acts 1:8 we read that Jesus said this:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to all the ends of the earth.”

We receive the gifts of the Spirit after we receive power from on high or are baptized with the Spirit. These two terms are synonymous. Although this power from on high can be a blessing to us personally at times, God has purposed that we share these heavenly gifts with others so that they too can receive the wonderful blessings of God too. We are the conductors, if you will, for the Holy Spirit to work through to dispense these God-given gifts to others that we minister to. There are nine different gifts of the Spirit. Although the Spirit may manifest these nine gifts at different times and ways to *and* through the lives of believers, they all flow from the same source that is the God.

It's interesting that Paul refers to the Trinity in our lesson text from above. God wants us to know that these gifts are not just from the Spirit but that these gifts are from the Father and Son as well. God wants us to know that all three members of the Godhead have a place or part in our lives in this matter. Our Father gives us the gifts of his Spirit so that we may serve our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit empowers us to get the work of the Gospel accomplished.

It's important to understand that when we receive the Holy Spirit we are not just receiving power but a Person- a Person that we should walk in reverential fear, obedience and awe of. We have received a person who is the third member or representative of the Godhead with whom we can have a personal relationship. The fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit are manifested in our lives as a result of our having a personal relationship with God. The longer we walk and fellowship with him, the more sensitive we become to his voice and leading. (*II Corinthians 13:14, I John 1:3*) As we

fellowship with him, hear his voice and follow him, the natural or should I say “supernatural” outcome is that we will bear his fruit and manifest his power.

Become Educated in the Gifts

“Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.” ~ I Corinthians 12:1.

It’s very interesting that the first thing that the apostle Paul taught the Corinthians concerning the gifts of the Spirit is that he didn’t want them to be ignorant about them. Why? It’s because he didn’t want these priceless and powerful gifts from God to be rendered ineffective in the lives of the saints through lack of knowledge. This teaches us that all of us as believers need to become educated in the gifts in order to understand what God has given us so that we can flow in them effectively. Not only so that we can be blessed personally but also so that we can be a blessing to others.

Paul let these Gentile converts know that prior to their conversion that they had been led astray by dumb idols that had no real or demonstrative power. When they had received the Spirit through Christ though, all that changed. They had received a God that could demonstrate his power (*and through them no less!*) to prove that he was indeed very real. Now that that they had received the one and only true God he wanted them take his power very seriously. We should today as well.

It’s important to understand that God doesn’t only give the gifts of the Spirit to those that stand in ordained offices of ministry but to all believers that have received power from on high or that which is known as the baptism with the Spirit. (*Matthew 3:11, Acts 19:1-7*) God pours out his power on us so that we can be powerful witnesses for the Lord. (*Acts 1:8*) It is God’s will that his entire Church serve him in this manner. As we receive what God has given us we can bring glory to the Lord in the earth today.

The Gifts of the Spirit are Supernatural

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” ~ I Corinthians 12:4-7

The gifts of the Spirit are *supernatural* manifestations of the Spirit. This means that they do not come from the realm of the natural but from the realm of the Spirit. The divine knowledge and power released through the gifts go beyond our natural human reasoning, knowledge, wisdom and power. The work of the Holy Spirit is to transfer these gifts from the realm of the supernatural into the natural so that we may receive God’s divine benefits. His work is also to activate and operate these gifts in the lives of believers as he determines according to the will of God. The responsibility of the believer is to yield to his divine leading in our lives by hearing and obeying his voice and working with him in mutual cooperation to release each gift in an effective and powerful way.

God Gives His Gifts for Good Purposes

⁷ *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

God is always good and so is every gift he gives. (*James 1:17*) The gifts of the Spirit are always released to do what's good or best for all. That's important to know because this is how we can tell if someone is truly operating in the gifts of the Spirit or the flesh. God is good but there is nothing good about the flesh. Paul wrote this in *Romans 7:18*

“I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my sinful nature.”

The same is true for all of us. Since there is nothing good in our flesh then our flesh can't do anybody any good. The flesh is corrupt therefore it can only corrupt others. The flesh can't profit anyone. Only the Spirit can breathe life and powerful transformation into the lives of people and situations. (*John 6:63*)

Each manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. God knows what each of us need in our lives at any given moment. We need to understand that he doesn't always necessarily give us what we want *but what he wants for us*. You've heard the saying, “Father knows best” and it's so true! Our heavenly Father always does what is best for us and for the common good of the Church as a whole.

As we grow in maturity and are sensitive to the Spirit's leading and voice, he can help us release these good gifts with clarity and accuracy. This sensitivity is cultivated over a period of time through our relationship with God as we pray, study, and meditate on his word and during times of fasting. The gifts of the Spirit are *given to us and through us* to help us or someone else during a particular time so we can accomplish some special purpose. As we study about each gift we will learn just how beneficial they can be for our lives.

The Gifts of the Spirit

“ To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the 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. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”

~ 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

There are nine different gifts of the Spirit. Although the Spirit may manifest these nine gifts at different times and ways to *and* through the lives of believers, they all flow from the same source, which is the God. Each gift of the Spirit has different purposes but at times more than one gift will be given and overlap in order to accomplish God's overall divine will and purpose. For the sake of gaining a clearer understanding of the function and purposes of the gifts and how they work together they are most often divided into three categories.

The Revelatory Gifts

- **The Word of Wisdom**
- **The Word of Knowledge**
- **The Gift of Prophecy**
- **The Discernment of Spirits**

The Power Gifts

- **The Gift of Faith**
- **The Gift of Healing**
- **The Gift of Miraculous Powers**

The Inspirational Gifts

- **The Gift of Tongues**
- **The Interpretation of Tongues**

Revelatory gifts are gifts that reveal a fragment or part of God's mind or heart to the believer. In this way we can know in part the plans, purposes and will of God pertaining to a person or situation. The Spirit's gifts of power are given to the believer so that they can heal the sick, cast out devils and raise the dead. Inspirational gifts are given to bring encouragement, hope and faith. God will use these gifts to accomplish many purposes such as to lead people to Christ, to build up faith, to heal, to expose the inner heart of the believer and deliver those that are bound. They will allow you to minister in the wisdom and power of God. In order to operate in them however we must believe.

Only Believe

"These signs will accompany those that believe..." ~ Mark 16:17

It's a tragedy that so many believers in this modern era are taught that the gifts of the Spirit are no longer valid for the Church. I say "tragedy" because these divine gifts are such a blessing to the Church and to the lost as well. God has given us these gifts to help us build up or strengthen one another in the Church and to empower us to lead souls to Christ. The Church needs to be strengthened not weakened. We need to be powerful, not pitiful. In this way we can be more effective in accomplishing God's work and truly bring glory to our Lord and Savior.

The lie that the gifts of the Spirit are not for today are propagated by men who are in unbelief concerning God's word and on a deeper level by the father of lies himself, the devil. Just think about it. What would please the devil more than if those that profess to follow Christ would actually deny or reject his power? (*II Timothy 3:1-5*) The devil knows that those who merely profess Christianity but deny the power of God are no real threat to his kingdom of darkness. Only those who believe and walk in the power of God are dangerous to him!

The unvarnished truth is that those who deny or reject the power of God are actually aiding the cause of the devil but those that accept his power are aiding the cause of Christ. *I'm sure that you would rather be pleasing the Lord and aiding his good and worthy cause rather than the devil and his evil cause.* God is pleased when we have faith in his Son and in his word and put it into practice. When we believe him we will find that God always backs up what he says with power.

There's Proof in the Power

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power." ~ I Corinthians 4:20

The Holy Spirit backs up the finished work of the Cross-by his divine power. This in turn proves that Jesus is truly Lord. The New Testament teaches us that God testifies that the message of the gospel of salvation that his Son brought to the earth is authentic or truly of him. How does he testify or witness to those in the earth of the validity of his message? The author of Hebrews tells us how.

⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (Hebrews 2:4 NIV)

The gifts of the Spirit then, along with others signs, wonders and miracles, are God's way of testifying or witnessing to the world that he exists and that his message is true. When we understand the divine purposes of walking in the power of God, then we can also understand the necessity for every believer to be educated about these divine gifts and also having the demonstration of the Spirit's power flowing through our lives as well. When the gifts of the Spirit are manifested through our lives then this is proof that God exists and that Jesus is Lord.

Believers today should be walking in the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. At Truth and Spirit Ministries we firmly believe that every believer should be trained and equipped in how to operate and flow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. After all, Jesus gave these gifts to all of his followers so that they could build each other up spiritually and also to aid them in doing the Great Commission of carrying the Gospel to the world. *(I Corinthians 12:1-11, I Corinthians 14 and Mark 16:15-20)*

The Spirit backs up the message of Christ and the Cross preached or proclaimed through believers with signs, wonders and miracles. Jesus said in Mark 16 that signs would follow or accompany the believer. Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines signs, as *being miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's.* The truth is, when God sends you to say or do something, he will fully back it up with his power.

God's Word Won't Return Empty

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." ~ Isaiah 55:11 (NKJV)

I want to share something with you that the Lord taught me years ago concerning the gifts of the Spirit. *Whenever any gift of the Spirit is released so is power.* This would include those revelatory and inspirational gifts that we speak forth from our lips. How is this possible? It's possible because the words of God contain power. In other words, the words that God speaks out of his mouth will *always* bring a manifestation of his power.

Unlike fleshly men, God's *word* is never hollow or empty but will always accomplish what he sends it forth to *do*. Just think about it! The greater One dwells in us and he says and does *nothing* in vain. When we are truly moving in the revelatory and inspirational gifts of the Spirit, it is no longer us speaking but God. When we speak forth-divine utterances from God, the Holy Spirit will move on those words to make sure it is performed or accomplished. When we move in the gifts of the Spirit we can have rock solid faith that God will do what he says. That's powerful!

The Holy Spirit's work has always been to back up what God says with power. (*Just read about the Creation account starting in Genesis 1:1-2:1-2*) This is why none of Jesus' words ever fell to the ground when he walked the earth. The Spirit's power always works in perfect unity with the words of the Son of God and he *always speaks* the will of the Father. The divine work of the Spirit is to communicate to us revelation and inspiration from God so that we can speak it forth. When we speak the words of God, the Holy Spirit will confirm those words by moving in power.

Often more than one gift will be manifested and work in conjunction together so that his power will be released. For instance, if God gives an individual a word of knowledge that someone has sickness or disease then his power will be released to heal them. God can release his power along with a word of wisdom to make it effective. If a prophecy is given, power will be released to bring his word to pass. If discernment is given that someone has a devil then power will be released or present to deliver the one bound. All of this teaches us that when we are walking or operating in the gifts of the Spirit then, we are also walking in the power of God.

If we understand the truth that no gift of the Spirit is ever released in vain, we can have absolute assurance that we will see his supernatural power manifest in our natural realm. God always has a purpose in everything he does. When he speaks, his word won't return void. (*Isaiah 55:11*) God is always watching over his word to make sure that it will be performed or fulfilled. (*Jeremiah 1:12*) When he speaks he always backs up his words with power. Whenever he speaks, great things *always* happen.

What he wants from us is to be willing vessels that he can work through. We can do this by coming into agreement with him by *speaking forth his words and acting in faith* so he can hasten to perform his will. He wants our full cooperation so that he can bring his plans, purposes and will to pass in our lives and the lives of others as well. As it's often been said, we are his hands, his feet and his mouth so that he can accomplish his work. God works through *his Church* to do his will.

This is why those that believe in the power of God love to be in the atmosphere where the gifts of the Spirit are flowing. They have expectation and excitement in their spirits because they are looking forward to what God will *say and do*. The amazing thing about it all is that

he not only lives in us but has also chosen to work through us as his holy vessels to build each other up and to glorify his name.

Gifts of Grace

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” ~ Romans 8:32

God doesn't give the gifts of the Spirit to us based on our own merits or spiritual maturity but by his free, unmerited and undeserved grace. The Corinthian's were living proof of this. They were newly converted and baptized Gentile believers that were still very carnal or worldly. This is why Paul took his responsibility of teaching them how to use these gifts in the proper way so seriously. He didn't want them to misuse what God had so graciously given them. He wanted them to grow up into spiritual maturity in every way. He wanted them to mature in not only the fruit of the Spirit but the gifts of the Spirit as well.

The situation in the Corinthian Church teaches us that the Holy Spirit will not withhold releasing his gifts to new converts. The Spirit can and will move on new converts to move in these supernatural gifts. *How* they move in them though is what is of most importance. This is where Church leadership should step in and fulfill their responsibilities.

Responsibilities of Church Leadership

“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...” ~ Ephesians 4:11-12

God has given Church leadership the responsibility of teaching the saints about the gifts of the Spirit as well as training them to effectively flow in them so that they can do the work of the ministry. (*1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Ephesians 4:11-12*) This work of the ministry that is done through the saints will be released in two ways. It will be released from *within* the Church as the body is assembled together for meetings and also from *without* the Church as we go to those in need of salvation in the world.

Since it is God's will for believers to move in the gifts of the Spirit from outside the confines of the local Church at times, it's important that Pastors and other Church leaders teach the saints to rely on Christ and his Spirit as to when they are to move in the gifts of the Spirit and not the Church leadership. The reasons why will be explained in the following paragraphs.

It's important for Church leaders to understand that it's not their job to *control* when and through whom the gifts of the Spirit are to manifest. It is the work of the Holy Spirit alone to give or release these gifts through the believers as he determines. The responsibility of the ministry is to teach the saints how to depend on the Spirit by hearing his voice, following his leading and walking by his fruit. The ministry is to provide oversight to the operation of the gifts through the saints to make sure that they are moving in these gifts in an orderly and edifying fashion in Church gatherings. They are in effect supposed to be overseeing or managing the work that the Holy Spirit is doing through the saints.

This subject must be broached in the light of the fact that certain equipping ministries today are teaching the saints that they can only operate in the gifts of the Spirit under the direct supervision (*or often called "covering"*) of the ministry within the confines of the four walls of the Church. For instance, some Church leadership teach believers that they can't prophesy to other believers without doing so in front of the Pastor or other Church leaders. They have rules in their ministry such as that believers cannot give "parking lot" prophecies. In other words, they tell believers that they are not allowed to give a prophecy outside the building without a Church leader being present. This not only infringes on the freedom that all believers have in Christ, it limits the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives as well.

Rules and regulations such as this come from man and not God. There is no scriptural basis whatsoever to impose such rules upon New Testament believers. Although Church leaders may put these rules in place because they believe that they are protecting the saints and those that they minister to, it keeps believers immature and causes them to place an unhealthy dependence on man rather than God. It is better to teach the saints to mature in the gifts and rely on the Spirit for where, when, what and who to minister to. The responsibility of the ministry is to teach them *how*.

As the saints begin to move in these gifts they are to properly guide them with teaching, counsel, wisdom and loving correction. In this way they will be able to learn how to release them in an orderly, mature and highly effective way both inside the Church and without. As the entire Church body listens to and follows the divine order and leading of the Holy Spirit, he will inspire and orchestrate the operation of his gifts as he wills or determines. As we follow him, he will make it all work out for our good and also to the glory of God.

One important factor in learning how to operate in the gifts of the Spirit is cultivating the ability to hear what the Spirit is saying. Learning how to hear from the Spirit and release these gifts in an effective way takes time. Maturity is a process and Church leadership should provide a healthy and safe Church environment where the saints can learn without being hurt or injured in the process. Believers have been given freedom in Christ to move in the Spirit as he determines. Church leadership should not forbid the saints from moving in the gifts for to do so would be tantamount to quenching the Spirit. (*1 Thessalonians 5:19*) Instead they are to encourage them to use them while providing godly oversight. Love, patience and kindness need to be exercised as believers are going through this learning process if they are to move on to maturity.

Follow the Way of Love

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." ~ 1 Corinthians 13:13

It's no accident that the Apostle Paul wrote what is commonly known as the love chapter (*1 Corinthians 13*) between his teachings on the gifts of the Spirit (*1 Corinthians 12*) and how they are to be used in public worship services. (*1 Corinthians 14*) In all of this talk about the gifts of the Spirit the most important thing to know is that we as believers should be ministering the gifts of the Spirit to others out of love.

Of all the wonderful gifts that God has given us love is the greatest. Love needs to precede everything we do, including when we minister to others with the gifts of the Spirit. This is the only way that the gifts can truly have the maximum impact on the lives of those we minister to in the name of the Lord.

It's interesting to note that Paul did not speak of the other fruit of the Spirit when he taught the Corinthians regarding the gifts of the Spirit. That's ok though because in telling them to walk in love he really had all the bases covered anyway. Love can do no wrong and to boot when we walk in love towards one another we are really fulfilling all of God's law anyway. (*Romans 13:10*) The necessity for the gifts of the Spirit will cease one day because their purpose will come to an end but love will last for all eternity.

Lesson 2: Understanding the Revelatory Gifts of Spirits.